the ecumenist

a journal of theology, culture, and society

Vol. 42 No. 3 • Summer 2005

The Cardinal and the Pope (I)

In 2002, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger published a new book, *Glaube, Wahrheit, Toleranz,* which appeared in English translation in 2004 under the title *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions.*[1] This volume, written in Ratzinger's magnificent German prose, is a collection of learned articles that analyze the unique place of Christianity in the history of the world religions and the threat to Christianity posed by the contemporary historical situation. Some of the articles are lectures given by Ratzinger decades ago, which he later edited and annotated for the present volume. References in the text and the footnotes reveal that the author follows contemporary literature in Christian theology and the history of religions. Because of the author's elegant writing style, it is a pleasure to read this profound and carefully argued book.

Since I am well acquainted with the teachings of John Paul II, I am struck by the difference between the theology of the Cardinal and the ideas of the Pope. This difference may be due, in part at least, to the fact that the Cardinal writes as a theologian while the Pope speaks as the universal pastor. One may expect that as Benedict XVI, Joseph Ratzinger, now shouldering the pastoral responsibility of a pope, will not preach his own theology, but instead interpret the Gospel as a message serving the Church's and the world's well-being. In his first homily of April 24, 2005, the new Pope actually said:

> My real programme of governance is...not to pursue my own ideas, but to listen, together with the whole Church, to the word and the will of the Lord, to be guided by Him, so that He himself will lead the Church at this hour of our history.[2]

It is nonetheless legitimate to study Joseph Ratzinger's book published in 2002 and compare its theology with the pastoral teaching of John Paul II. In the present article, I compare the Cardinal's approach to religious pluralism with that of John Paul II, and in a subsequent article I shall contrast the Cardinal's interpretation of modernity with that of his predecessor.

The World Religions and Cardinal Ratzinger's Theology

In his book on Christian truth and the world religions, Ratzinger does not deal with the question that has preoccupied theologians over the centuries, namely whether salvation is available in the world religions. With great confidence, the Cardinal simply refers to God's gracious presence in the whole of human history. Nor does he touch upon the urgent pastoral issue of how the Church

Contents

should react to the new religious pluralism in European and American cities and what policy the Church should adopt in a world increasingly divided along religious lines. What interests the author instead is the place of Christianity in the history of the world religions. Here he offers an original interpretation, based on research he did while he was still a professor at the university.

There were three ways, the Cardinal argues, in which people in antiquity escaped the arbitrary rule of the gods and the fear and superstition inspired by polytheistic religion. There was first the mystical way present in the Hindu tradition. Here the spiritual guides came to believe that hidden in the many religious symbols was a single divinity, an incomprehensible divine presence, a gracious God to be encountered in faith, first as a 'Thou' to be worshipped, and, finally, as the true Self in which the human 'I' would disappear altogether. In this tradition the many gods are not discarded: instead they are interpreted as symbols of different aspects of the one incomprehensible divinity. According to the mystical way, all religions are in some way true; all mediate access to the one God, even if they formulate their faith in divergent ways. Seen from this perspective, the 'I-Thou' relationship to God in the monotheistic religions appears as an arrested stage, destined to be transcended by the experience of the identity of 'I' and 'Thou.' We shall see later that Ratzinger regards this mystical way as a dangerous challenge to contemporary Christianity.

The second way to escape the arbitrary rule of the gods was what Ratzinger called the "classical Enlightenment" represented by philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Here trust in the metaphysical competence of human reason led to the recognition of a single divine origin of all beings. The Greek authors reluctantly acknowledged the gods to whom the people prayed because these gods protected the values of society and thus fulfilled an important function, even though they had no being.

The third way to overcome polytheism was the monotheism of Abraham and his offspring: they recognized a single divinity, dethroned the pagan gods, and denounced as sinful all forms of idolatry. In this context, Ratzinger makes a stimulating point that was quite new to me. He argues that the early Christians, standing against the polytheism of ancient Rome, regarded the classical Enlightenment as an intellectual ally. While theologians have often regretted the early Church's reliance on Hellenistic categories, Ratzinger demonstrates the liberating power of the Church's dialogue with the classical philosophers. Yet he also reminds the reader that, in modern times, reason has been reduced to scientific rationality and hence no longer discloses the meaning of human existence. Against this modern trend, Catholicism has defended metaphysical reason as an ally of biblical faith.

Truth and the Dangers of Pluralism

In today's world, Ratzinger regards the mystical way, first followed in the Hindu tradition, as a serious threat to the Christian Church. Monotheism presupposes a clear distinction between the Creator and the creation, between God and the human person. Even in the mystical tradition of Christianity, the 'I' of the believer is never fully dissolved in the divine 'Thou,' ever retaining its personal identity for the age to come. Ratzinger fears that Christians in Asia are being tempted by the Hindu tradition and that even Christians in the West, urged by the idea of tolerance, come to believe that all religions are equally true, that all of them offer access to the divine mystery, and that debates about true or false have no place in the sphere of religion. The Cardinal complains that there are even Catholic theologians who adopt a relativistic approach to religious pluralism and are unwilling to defend the absolute truth of the Christian faith. These theologians argue that more important than defending the truth is solidarity with humanity: they therefore search for a Christian discourse that serves reconciliation in a deeply divided world. They focus on 'orthopraxis' rather than orthodox belief.

To affirm the truth against this dangerous trend, we read in the book, the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith – which the Cardinal chaired – produced in the year 2000 the document *Dominus Iesus: On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*[3] and investigated the writings of the Belgian theologian Jacques Dupuis SJ, who had spent his academic life in India and written about the Asian religions with great sympathy.[4] *Dominus Iesus* reaffirmed the faith of the Catholic Church as the one true faith and referred to the beliefs of other churches and of the world religions in words that expressed their spiritual defects. The document even criticized "the ideology of dialogue." Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, we are told, is not without danger because dialogue with partners on an equal footing appears to imply the relativism of truth. According to *Dominus Iesus*, Catholics must look upon ecumenical and interreligious dialogue as part of the Church's mission to proclaim the truth and invite

outsiders to join them. When Protestants and Jews expressed their shock and disappointment, they were told that *Dominus Iesus* was intended as a message to Asian Catholics not to water down the truth of Christianity.

For Ratzinger the truth question is at the centre. Since two monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam, lay claim to a truth that excludes the other, are we not inevitably heading for a major conflict? In his book, Ratzinger mentions this problem in a short paragraph, but does not deal with it.

What bothers the Cardinal is the possible misunderstanding of the invitation extended by John Paul II in 1986 and 2002 to representatives of the world religions to join him at Assisi and pray with him for peace of the world. To prevent these two events from being interpreted as signs of religious relativism, the Cardinal distinguishes between 'multireligious' and 'interreligious' prayer. In 'multireligious' prayer, the participants are not joined together in prayer: instead each prays in accordance with his or her own tradition. In 'interreligious' prayer, the participants are united in a common prayer addressed to the identical God. Catholics, the Cardinal argues, are not permitted to engage in 'interreligious' prayer since such a practice implies that all religions have access to the true God and hence fosters the evil of relativism. What happened at Assisi, the Cardinal assures the reader, was 'multireligious' prayer. Despite the appearances, the Pope and the invited representatives did not really pray together. To prevent any misunderstanding in the future, the Cardinal urged that gatherings of this kind not be multiplied.

How did John Paul II understand Assisi events? In his address to the religious representatives gathered at Assisi on October 27, 1986, the Pope explained that the invited guests had not come to seek religious reconciliation in a common truth or to make concessions to religious relativism. Then he continued:

> The coming together of so many religious leaders to pray is in itself an invitation today to the world to become aware that there exists another dimension of peace and another way of promoting it which is not a result of negotiations, political compromises or economic bargainings. It is the result of prayer, which, in the diversity of religions, expresses a relationship with a supreme power that surpasses our human capacities alone.[5]

The last sentence suggests that the Pope regarded the gathering as an occasion of interreligious prayer: he did not feel the need to make the distinction introduced by the Cardinal.

In my opinion, Cardinal Ratzinger's critical reflection did not pay sufficient attention to the fact that the common prayer at Assisi was for peace, for peace in a world of violence. According to classical Catholic theology, the deep yearning for peace and justice in a sinful world, wounded by injustice, aggression and cruelty, is always 'supernatural,' i.e. always the fruit of divine grace, always the sign of God's redemptive presence. Rejecting the ideologies that justify oppression and exclusion while yearning for justice and peace in the world is to participate in the prayer of Jesus to the Father in the Holy Spirit.

The Teaching of John Paul II

John Paul II approaches the topic of the Church and the world religions quite differently. Needless to say, he professes – with the Cardinal and the entire Church – God's unreserved and definitive self-donation in Jesus Christ as the merciful divine gesture that embraces the whole of humanity. But prior to articulating the Church's faith, the Pope examines the present historical situation. Following the method of John XXIII and the Vatican Council, he searches for "the signs of the times," i.e., the significant historical events to which the proclamation of Christian truth must now address itself.

The Pope recognized the increasingly divided world – marked by political conflicts and outbursts of violence – he fault lines of which included the divisions over religion. The Pope worried about the tensions produced by religious pluralism in the cities of Europe and, more importantly, he feared the growing rift between the Muslim world and the West. He expressed his disapproval of American foreign policy and opposed the first as well as the second American war in Iraq. In response to Samuel Huntington's thesis of "the clash of civilizations" embraced by the Christian Right in the United States, the Pope promoted "the dialogue of civilizations" supported by the United Nations. In this dangerous historical situation, the Church's commitment to the absolute truth of the Gospel demands that it foster justice and peace, emphasize what the religions share in common and encourage interreligious dialogue.

In his encyclical *Redemptoris missio* (1990) John Paul II presented the Church's mission as the mission to give witness to Jesus Christ and invite all men and women to put their faith in the Lord. At the same time,

he also demanded that the Church engage in open and trusting dialogue with members of the world religions. In this dialogue, he argued, Catholics are guided by the faith that God's grace is operative in all religious and sapiential traditions. John Paul II wrote:

> Dialogue does not originate from tactical concerns or self-interest, but is an activity with its own guiding principles, requirements and dignity. It is demanded by deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who blows where he wills. Through dialogue, the Church seeks to uncover the "seeds of the Word," a "ray of that truth which enlightens all men"; these are found in individuals and in the religious traditions of mankind. Dialogue is based on hope and love, and will bear fruit in the Spirit. Other religions constitute a positive challenge for the Church: they stimulate her both to discover and acknowledge the signs of Christ's presence and of the working of the Spirit, as well as to examine more deeply her own identity and to bear witness to the fullness of Revelation which she has received for the good of all.(#56)[6]

This teaching differs strikingly from the theology of Cardinal Ratzinger who denounced the ideology of dialogue, warned against the temptation of relativism, and thought that the purpose of dialogue was the conversion of the others to the Christian truth. John Paul II does not deny the paradoxical character of the Church's mission. The Church is sent by the Spirit to proclaim the name of Jesus and, in today's world of conflict and violence, also sent by the Spirit to honour the differences of religion and foster mutual respect, reciprocal understanding, and co-operation in the service of justice and peace. That the commitment to absolute truth of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ demands of the Church respect for otherness is an insight that is new in Christian history – brought about by the response of faith to a world threatened by violence.

One of the boldest documents published by John Paul II is the "Decalogue of Assisi for Peace" composed in the year 2000. The fifth commandment reads:

> We commit ourselves to frank and patient dialogue, refusing to consider our differences as an insurmountable barrier, but recognizing instead that to encounter the diversity of others can become an opportunity for greater reciprocal understanding.[7]

What John Paul II does not tell us are the principles that allow the Church in a particular situation to decide whether to proclaim the name of Jesus or to engage in interreligious dialogue. In actual fact, the churches in the cities of Western Europe and North America, the home of recent immigrants from all parts of the world, have decided to respect the religion of the immigrants, defend their religion against popular prejudices and hostile attacks, and abstain from any effort to convert them to the Christian faith. The paradoxical character of the Church's mission in today's world is well expressed in a recent statement made by the bishops of Quebec.[8] In Quebec's present situation, the commitment to the one truth of the Gospel obliges Catholics to show respect for members of other religions and foster dialogue and co-operation with them in the service of the common good.

The Words of Pope Benedict XVI

After the election of Joseph Ratzinger as the new pope, now called Benedict XVI, I followed his public speeches with great attention. Would he offer his own theology focusing on the danger of dialogue? Or would he follow the lead of John Paul II and commit the Church to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue? I mentioned earlier that at the very beginning, Benedict XVI announced that he would not promote his own ideas but listen with the entire Church to the message of Christ and offer this truth to the world.

In his address to the delegates of the Christian churches and representatives of the world religions on April 25, 2005, Benedict XVI committed himself to the approach of John Paul II in supporting the ecumenical movement and promoting interreligious dialogue in the service of justice and peace. He said:

> In the footsteps of my Predecessors, especially Paul VI and John Paul II, I feel strongly the need to reassert the irreversible commitment taken by the Second Vatican Council and pursued in recent years, also thanks to the activity of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The path to the full communion desired by Jesus for his disciples entails, with true docility to what the Spirit says to the Churches, courage, gentleness, firmness and hope, in order to reach our goal.... How can we not recognize in a spirit of gratitude to God that our meeting also has the significance of a gift that has already been granted? In fact, Christ, the Prince of Peace, has acted in our midst: he has

poured out friendship by the handful, he has mitigated points of disagreement, he has taught us to be more open to dialogue and in harmony with the commitments proper to those who bear his Name.

...I turn now to you, dear friends from different religious traditions...I offer warm and affectionate greetings to you and to all those who belong to the religions that you represent. I am particularly grateful for the presence in our midst of members of the Muslim community, and I express my appreciation for the growth of dialogue between Muslims and Christians, both at the local and international level. I assure you that the Church wants to continue building bridges of friendship with the followers of all religions, in order to seek the true good of every person and of society as a whole.

The world in which we live is often marked by conflicts, violence and war, but it earnestly longs for peace, peace which is above all a gift from God, peace for which we must pray without ceasing. Yet peace is also a duty to which all peoples must be committed, especially those who profess to belong to religious traditions. Our efforts to come together and foster dialogue are a valuable contribution to building peace on solid foundations. Pope John Paul II, my Venerable Predecessor, wrote at the start of the new millennium that "the name of the one God must become increasingly what it is: a name of peace and a summons to peace" (*Novo millennio ineunte*, #55). It is therefore imperative to engage in authentic and sincere dialogue, built on respect for the dignity of every human person, created, as we Christians firmly believe, in the image and likeness of God.[9]

Several weeks later, on June 9, 2005, Benedict XVI addressed a delegation of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultation.

In the years following the Council, my predecessors Pope Paul VI and, in a particular way, Pope John Paul II took significant steps towards improving relations with the Jewish people. *It is my intention to continue on this path.* The history of relations between our two communities has been complex and often painful, yet I am convinced that the "spiritual patrimony" treasured by Christian and Jews is itself the source of the wisdom and inspiration capable of guiding us toward "a future of hope" in accordance with the divine plan (cf. Jer 29:11). At the same time, remembrance of the past remains for both communities a moral imperative and a source of purification in our efforts to pray and work for reconciliation, justice, respect for human dignity and for that peace which is ultimately a gift from the Lord himself. Of its very nature this imperative must include a continued reflection on the profound historical, moral, and theological questions presented by the experience of the Shoah.[10]

It is obviously too early to interpret the teaching of the new Pope, yet his first public statements seem to reveal that in his approach to ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, he does not follow the theology of Cardinal Ratzinger, warning against the danger of relativism, but instead follows the pastoral wisdom of Pope John Paul II promoting love, justice, and peace.

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[1] Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger, *Glaube-Wahrheit-Toleranz* (Freiburg: Herder, 2002); *Truth and Tolerance* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004).

[2] Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Mass, Imposition of the Pallium and Conferral of the Fisherman's Ring for the Beginning of the Petrine Ministry of the Bishop of Rome, St. Peter's Square, April 24, 2005. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050424_inizio-pontificato_en.html (accessed July 7, 2005).

[3] See Gregory Baum, "The Theology of Cardinal Ratzinger: A Response to *Dominus Iesus*," *The Ecumenist*, 37 (Fall 2000):1-3.

[4] David Kendall and Gerald O'Collins, eds., *In Many and Diverse Ways: In Honour of Jacques Dupuis* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003).

[5] *Address of John Paul II to the Representatives of the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities Gathered in Assisi for the World Day of Prayer,* October 27, 1986. www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1986/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19861027_prayer-peace-assisi_en.html (accessed July 7, 2005).

[6] *Redemptoris Missio,* www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0219/__P7.HTM (accessed July 7, 2005).

[7] Letter of John Paul II to All the Heads of State and Government of the World and Decalogue of Assisi for Peace, March 4, 2002. www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20020304_capi-stato_en.html (accessed July 7, 2005).

[8] Le Comité de théologie de l'Assemblée des évêques catholiques du Québec, "Est-ce que toutes les religions se valent?" 16 juin 2005. www.eveques.qc.ca/aeqdoc_ct_2005_6_16_f_0.html (accessed July 7, 2005).

[9] Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Delegates of Other Churches and Ecclesial Communities and of Other Religious Traditions, Clementine Hall, April 25, 2005. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20050425_rappresentanti-religiosi_en.html (accessed July 7, 2005).

[10] My italics. Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to a Delegation of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, June 9, 2005. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20050609_jewish-committee_en.html (accessed July 7, 2005).

Religious Diversity and the Market

Surprisingly little has been written on the role that ethnicity played in shaping Canada's Christian churches, although experience tells us that it has been significant. For example, the hub of the Toronto Slovenian community to which my family belonged was Marija Pomagaj (Mary, Help of Christians) Roman Catholic Church. There we went to Mass, studied the Slovenian language and literature, participated in Slovenian sports clubs and Scouts, attended concerts and various cultural events, met members of the extended family, and saved money at the credit union that operated out of the basement for a while. The advertisements at the back of the church bulletin featured notices by two uncles (one for a real estate business, the other a travel agency), highlighting the church's role as the centre of business connections among Slovenians. No major event in the community failed to feature the parish priest as honoured guest. Feast days (especially Christmas), national holidays, as well as baptisms, weddings, and funerals all brought the community together.[1]

This is quite a common story. However, it is not one that has often been told – at least not in the scholarship on Canadian religion. To address this lacuna in the scholarship, Paul Bramadat (University of Winnipeg) and I organized a three-part research project on Religion and Ethnicity in Canada. However, despite our sensitivity to the difficulties that religious groups (especially minority communities) face in an increasingly secular society, we failed to address sufficiently the full nature of Canadian secularism. In this paper, I argue that scholars should take seriously Talal Asad's definition of secularism as a *project* undertaken by actors in Canadian political and economic society. Secularism, Asad argues, cannot be separated from the state and the market. While the first volume of the Religion and Ethnicity project analyzed the effect of several secular institutions (the state, health care system, and public education, among others) on minority religious communities, it largely failed to address those economic forces that affected them. In fact, scholars of religion (like most theologians) most frequently fail to take the impact of capitalism on religious identity and solidarity seriously. Vincent Miller's new book, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture*, outlines how the commodification of religion that takes place in a market society seriously challenges religious identity and solidarity while allowing new opportunities for religious agency and creativity. I use Miller's book to raise questions that need to be asked about how the market, just as much as the secular state, affects religion as it intersects with ethnic identity in Canada.

Religion and Ethnicity in Canada

Given the centrality of ethnicity in the religious lives of so many Canadians, and of religion in their ethnic lives, one would think that the literature on religion and ethnic identity in Canada would be extensive. It is not. For example, the most recent textbook on the history of Christianity in Canada by some of the best writers in the field focuses almost exclusively on English and French Christianity. The writers touch on some of the other European communities (German Lutherans, for example) but ignore most ethnically defined Christian communities. Almost no mention is made of Chinese Baptists, Croatian Roman Catholics, Korean Presbyterians, Seventh Day Adventists from the Caribbean, Mennonites from Vietnam, or Anglicans from Africa.[2] Today, these religio-ethnic communities are often the most dynamic and sometimes the only growing groups in the Christian churches. While scholars of religion have often overlooked the issue of ethnicity, students of Canadian multiculturalism have most frequently ignored religious diversity. Even so, there are signs of change. For instance, the well-known Canadian political philosopher Will Kymlicka has recently argued:

> The challenges Canada faces today are different from those we faced 10 years ago. The most obvious change concerns the salience of religion in debates about Canadian diversity.... This is partly due to the events of 9/11, which have put Muslim communities under a spotlight through the West. But the discovery of religion as a pivotal issue predates September 2001.[3]

In response to the paucity of scholarship on religious diversity in Canadian society, Paul Bramadat and I launched a three-part project on religion and ethnic identity in Canada under the auspices of the University of Victoria's Centre for the Study of Religion and Society.[4] The first volume of that project, entitled *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada,*[5] appeared this year and is already being used successfully in undergraduate and graduate courses across Canada. In the first part of the book, authors explored six of the largest minority religious communities in Canada: Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs,

Jews, Muslims, and adherents of Chinese religion. In the second part, they looked at three pressing public policy concerns affecting both those communities and the broader Canadian society: health care, education, as well as citizenship and multiculturalism. Because of the size and variety of the Christian churches as well as their importance for Canadian society and culture, the project team decided that Christianity required its own volume. The third and final volume will examine aboriginal spirituality in Canada.

The Ethical Background

Beyond the social scientific aim of having a more accurate picture of what was really going on, there was an important ethical impetus for the Religion and Ethnicity project. The participants shared three main ethical concerns in highlighting the diversity of the Canadian ethno-religious landscape: democratic participation, cultural recognition, and social justice – even if they understood these differently. The refusal to address religion in public debates and scholarship hid the existence of religious communities and rendered them mute. It also hid the latent Christian structure of Canadian society that disadvantaged members of religious minorities.[6] The religio-cultural marginalization of religious minority groups often paralleled and supported the socio-economic marginalization of members of these groups – especially the recent immigrant and refugee communities.

The second section of the book recognized the public policy (read: real life) implications of this marginalization. The examples of health, education, as well as citizenship and multiculturalism demonstrated how a failure to recognize religious diversity had concrete and pernicious consequences for members of these religious minority groups. This section also demonstrated that the failure to recognize these groups allowed Canadians to pretend that their secular society was "neutral," rational, and fair by ignoring the hidden Christian values and structures of their secularized society (the seven-day week with Sunday as a day of rest, and Christmas and Good Friday as statutory holidays are obvious examples).

In both sections of the book, the authors of the Religion and Ethnicity project call for a certain de-privatization of religion as defined by José Casanova.[7] They argued that Canadians had to recognize the ethno-religious diversity of their society, allow religious actors to participate in public debates, encourage them to create their own unique institutions, and address the real questions of discrimination and marginalization of religious minorities. This public recognition of religious diversity would constitute one element in the project of creating a more fully participatory and just society. The first step was to document how these religious communities struggled in a society that defined itself first as Christian and then more and more as secular. Consequently, Bramadat introduced *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada* with a nuanced discussion of Canada's Christian past and increasingly secular present.[8]

The Missing Element: The Market

While our goals are laudable, there is a missing element in our analysis of the privatization of religion and its consequences for ethno-religious minorities. In his *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Talal Asad protests against the conception of secularization as an inevitable, authorless process arising from the mechanics of modernization.[9] He argues that secularism is a modern project initiated by the absolutist state in order to make citizenship the primary principle of identity. Consequently, the identity of persons as citizens must transcend identities based on class, gender, religion, and, in multicultural societies, local nationalities and ethnicities. Asad argues that secularism "is an enactment by which a *political medium* (representation of citizenship) redefines and transcends particular and differentiating practices of the self that are articulated through class, gender, and religion."[10] The discussion of Canadian politics and culture in *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada* incorporated Asad's emphasis on citizenship and its effect on ethnicity. However, Asad pushes on to argue that secularism arose only in connection with the system of the capitalist nation-states in the context of uneven development, military competition, and colonization.[11] He insists we cannot abstract the development of the project of secularism from the spread of the free market, the wars between the European powers, and the spread of Western political and economic power around the world. The secular world is the world created and maintained by those projects.

From this starting point, we can more clearly see that the absolutist state and the free market constitute the axes of the Canadian social project. The fates of the aboriginal peoples, the *Acadiens*, and *les canadiens* serve as reminders that this project was obviously part of European imperialism and competition. Institutions and actors in economic and political society often

operated as partners, often at odds with each other, but mostly united in the construction of a liberal democratic, free-market society to the exclusion of all other social projects. Today, this partnership is most apparent in Canada's integration into the globalization of the market economy under what is called the "Washington consensus," that is, the program to liberalize global trade in order to usher in an era of prosperity, address poverty and world hunger, spread democracy, and unite the world's nations.

No less than the nation-state, the free market demands secularization and the privatization of religion as part of structural differentiation with its emphasis on the division of labour and specialization. Market actors demand to operate according to the rationality of their own operations rather than any religious logic. Nothing must stand between the investor and profit, the consumer and product, the worker and wages. Consequently, in Christian societies, factories operate on Sunday, capitalists collect interest on loans (even to kin), and traditional religious morality is constantly challenged by new forms of consumption and production (everything from pornography to stem cell research). In the search for the maximization of profits, religion and religious difference become insignificant. Utilitarian values and the logic of cost/benefit analysis increasingly settle all disputes. Consequently, the logic of capitalism pushes people to think in purely instrumental terms (how do we maximize our material benefits?) and to leave substantive issues (what is the good?) behind. This dynamic marginalizes the discourses of the various religious communities.

Given that the economic forces of secularization are at least as powerful as those emanating from political society, how is it that the authors of *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada* largely ignored them? I would say that the political sensibilities of the group were decidedly more progressive than average. Despite our good intentions, however, we failed to discuss the intersection of these social forces largely because the subject of the market's power in religious lives is almost entirely absent in the academy. Even critical theologians sometimes ignore the market and economic injustice as they intersect with other forms of marginalization and oppression.[12]

Religion in a Consumer Society

Given my experience on the Religion and Ethnicity project, I have begun to look more seriously at the effects of our economic context on religion in Canada. Recently, Vincent Miller's book *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture*[13] has inspired me to reflect on a more subtle way in which the market society privatizes religion and frustrates the goals of democratic participation, cultural recognition, and social justice espoused by the Religion and Ethnicity team. In his book, Miller highlights how a consumer culture challenges the integrity of religious communities not merely by promoting a parallel or conflicting set of values, but by redefining how people relate to values, beliefs, culture, and, by extension, religion. Miller argues that consumerism "is primarily a way of relating to beliefs – a set of *habits of interpretation and use* – that renders the content of beliefs and values less important."[14] Relying on the analyses of a number of postmodern thinkers, Miller outlines how the rise of capitalism promoted the translation of religious beliefs, practices, art, etc. first into commodities and then into signs, abstract signifiers which modern people use to signal to others elements of their identity and status but which have no connection to tradition, community, and the demands of social justice. The commodification of culture thus trains people to relate to all culture as cultural products, to transform them into the object of consumer choice, to consider them in competition with other products, enjoy them, and discard them.

Miller begins with Marx's analysis of the commodity fetish. Marx used the term commodity to refer to objects created for the purpose of exchange. "Commodity fetishism" referred to the habit of interpretation that saw value in the commodity itself rather than the social relations that the commodity represented. Miller gives the example of people who withdrew thousands of dollars of cash in anticipation of the meltdown of the American government on January 1, 2000 as a result of the Y2K problem, as if the value of the green notes themselves could survive the disintegration of the government that issued them and the social relations that validated them. Miller explains: "Commodities appear on the scene, as if descended from heaven, cloaked in an aura of self-evident value, saying nothing about how, where, and by whom they were produced."[15] He gives the example of the chicken breasts we find in the store that appear almost if by magic; we consume them without thinking about the well-being of the farmer, butcher, and workers who produced them, or the environmental sustainability of the means used to raise the chickens. He adds, "We nourish ourselves on food from nowhere

and dress in clothes made by no one."[16] Postmodern thinkers have shown how corporate cultural production commodifies culture itself.

Socialized into these "habits of the heart," we treat religion in the same way. Increasingly, we consume religious artifacts, music, theology, and practices without reference to tradition, community, or social justice. More and more, we listen to hymns written by no one and adopt meditation practices created nowhere. Miller argues that the elements of religion are fragmented into "discrete, free-floating signifiers abstracted from their interconnections with other doctrines, symbols, and practices."[17] This weakens their ability to change or sustain the concrete practices of daily life. It also frees them for use for means alien to themselves. (In this last regard, I always think of an advertisement I saw on the Toronto subway featuring a slim, attractive woman in jeans sitting in the lotus position. The ad read: "Levis. It's a state of mind.") More and more, Miller argues, we see the emergence of individual "seekers" interested only in "spirituality," not "religion"; in effect, these seekers consume religious products as commodities for their own ends. About a decade ago, a CD called *Vision: The Music of Hildegard von Bingen* topped the pop charts in some of the most secularized countries in the world. Young Europeans consumed von Bingen's music without reference to the Christian tradition, community, or worldview (except that the exoticism of von Bingen's life and times provided a useful sales "hook" for people's nostalgia for things of a putatively "richer" past). Miller's point is that their everyday acts of consumption trained young Europeans to enjoy things without reference to their contexts and religious cultural products receive the same fate as any other.

Miller warns against an easy nostalgia for pre-market society and culture, especially the naïve belief that medieval Christians automatically practised a "more authentic" form of religion. What people are doing in our highly individualistic, commodified society is not *entirely* different from what they have done in the past. Christians have always retrieved, borrowed, and stolen music, art, theology, and practices from the past or from other cultures, reinterpreted them in the context of their day, and put them to new uses. This is the ordinary process of a living tradition. Moreover, the freedom allowed by the structures of our society provides new opportunities for authenticity, agency, and creativity. For example, the postmodern authors he cites argue that people in late capitalism appreciate commodities not so much for their exchange value but their "sign–value." We consume to communicate to others (and ourselves) our identity and status. Wearing tweed, knowing the difference between Chardonnay and Pinot noir, and listening to opera communicate a status that riding a motorcycle, drinking Molson's, and listening to heavy metal do not. Consequently, Miller argues, religious consumption offers the possibility of new forms of agency as adherents become *bricoleurs*, fashioning more intense religious identities in the name of creativity, experimentation, and authenticity.[18] Despite the real dangers of religious adherents slipping into the role of passive and rootless consumers, he argues, there are also new opportunities for agency. Buying books on liberation theology, listening to Latin American music, and displaying an iconic image of Oscar Romero may all mark participation in a commodified religious culture, but among some of my students they also bolster a religious identity that leads to real acts of solidarity with the poor and oppressed.

Commodification and the Participatory Society

Why then should Christians be concerned? Isn't this simply another example of inculturation as the Good News adapts to the cultural norms and social structures of our changing society? Miller argues that the structure of market societies poses entirely new challenges to religion. He worries that the commodification of religion promotes 1. a shallow and utilitarian attitude towards religion, 2. a passivity among religious consumers, and 3. a distortion of religious tradition. 1. People relate to religious products only in the most superficial way; abstracted from the moral horizon of our lives, religious beliefs, practices, values, and forms of community lose their power to command our loyalty. We seize and manipulate them; they do not seize and change us. 2. Miller uses postmodern thinkers such as Guy Debord, Jean Beaudrillard, and Frederic Jameson to argue that consumers devolve into passive spectators in a society of spectacle. Corporations create, we consume. Moreover, corporations rely on the social scientific manipulation of desire, shaping the contours of our desires and values. In this way, the commodification of culture threatens all forms of identity and agency – including those associated with religion. 3. Miller argues that only those elements of religion that readily lend themselves to commodification (music, art, and certain practices like meditation) are highlighted. Von Bingen's commitment to obedience, celibacy, and poverty was useless to the

market actors who promoted her music. A consumer society necessarily reshapes religious traditions in its own image.[19]

The commodification of religion, I would argue, frustrates the three ethical goals of the Religion and Ethnicity project. It discourages

1. democratic participation by loosening people's attachment to community and by encouraging passivity;
2. cultural recognition by encouraging appropriation of elements of other peoples' cultures while refusing to engage them in the real world and by adopting a shallow appreciation of all culture; and
3. social justice by hiding the origins of our products, alongwithquestionsofenvironmentalsustainability and social justice, and by distancing actors' beliefs and values from their life practices.

Religion and the Market

Miller demonstrates that the commodification of religion encourages the further privatization of religion. Yes, the expansion of the market demands, from a structural point of view, the privatization of religion as part of the process of differentiation. This has been true since the very beginnings of the industrial revolution. However, in late capitalism, the spread of consumerism accelerates this process. Scholars of religion have not yet sufficiently addressed either fact. If we did, we would start to ask different questions. For example, in the Religion and Ethnicity project, we would ask:

1. What are the features of Canadian capitalism? What are its unique characteristics? What is its history? How does it compare to other forms?
2. How do the values and practices typical of a market society change the values and practices of immigrants? For example, we might ask to what degree have Chinese Canadians adopted the commodified form of elder care common in Canada? How many buy elder care on the market (seniors' residences, visiting nurses, etc.) and how many try to provide it through family structures?
3. What transformations do the various religious communities undergo in the Canadian market society compared to their counterparts in the rest of the world? How do the accommodations that Hindus in South Asia make in the face of the free market, for example, compare to those made by Hindus in Canada? In *Religion and Ethnicity*, Harold Coward and Sikata Bannerji outlined the transformation of the Hindu burial ritual under Canadian law. What about the transformation of this ritual by free marketism in India and in Canada, now that Hindus have access to commodified burial rituals that are more common in the West?
4. In the first volume, we examined the impact of Canadian culture on women and the second generation in six major minority religious traditions. What is the impact of participation in wage labour and the market society on both these groups?
5. What effect does that commodification of religion with its promotion of individualism, abstraction, and self-centredness as well as its new opportunities for agency have on the ethno-religious communities of Canada?
6. How do questions of ethnic and religious diversity intersect with issues of economic exploitation and exclusion? What barriers to full participation in the Canadian economy and society do particular ethno-religious groups face?

Scholars have rarely asked these kinds of questions because traditional training in the study of religion in Canada has not included a basic literacy in economics or the social scientific study of how life in a market society changes both the content and very definitions of identity, social relations, culture, and religion. However, these types of questions are compelling and we need to explore them if we want to understand how Canada's secular context challenges and shapes religion. Moreover, the ethical project of promoting democratic participation, cultural recognition, and social justice shall remain forever abstract and powerless unless we take the whole of Canadian secularism seriously. Without taking into account the capitalist structure of Canadian society, we can never fully understand how secularism affects our increasingly diverse religious communities for good and ill.

David Seljak

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[1] Lest this portrait seem too nostalgic, I should note that conservative Catholicism also bolstered social hierarchy, conservative gender roles, strict sexual ethics, a latent authoritarianism, and other features of Slovenian-Canadian life.

[2] See *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada,* eds. Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996). Even less is made of the ethnic diversity of the Christian churches in the authoritative history of Canadian Christianity that preceded the Murphy and Perin text, namely the three-volume *A History of the Christian Church in Canada*, produced in 1967 under the general editorship of one of Canada's most venerable church historians, John Webster Grant.

[3] Introduction, *Canadian Diversity/Diversité canadienne*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 2003): 3.

[4] The project was funded by the CSRS at the University of Victoria, the Metropolis Project, and the Multiculturalism Program at the federal department of Canadian Heritage.

[5] *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada,* eds. Paul Bramadat and David Seljak (Toronto: Pearson Longman, 2005).

[6] John Biles and Humera Ibrahim, "Religion and Public Policy: Immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism – Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada,* 154-77, 167-68.

[7] José Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[8] Paul Bramadat, "Beyond Christian Canada: Religion and Ethnicity in a Multicultural Society," *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada,* 1-29.

[9] Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

[10] Asad, 5. In premodern societies, he argues, the state mediated local identities without aiming at transcending them.

[11] Asad, 6-7.

[12] For example, in *Intersecting Voices: Critical Theologies in a Land of Diversity*, eds. Don Schweitzer and Derek Simon (Ottawa: Novalis, 2004), remarkably few of the articles address the economy in a serious and sustained way.

[13] New York: Continuum, 2003.

[14] Miller, 1.

[15] Miller, 3.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Miller, 174-76.

[19] Miller, 73-106.

Beyond Borders: Diversity as Moral and Spiritual Resource[1]

In her foreword to *Intersecting Voices: Critical Theologies in a Land of Diversity*, Mary Jo Leddy states that "one of the new criteria for measuring the authenticity of any theology is whether it has the capacity to intersect with other perspectives and realities."[2] How are we able to respond faithfully to the fact of diversity – to "the condition in which elements, including persons, differing from one another are manifested in the same region/space/organization/institution?"[3] Learning to live in right relationship with God, self, others, and creation requires careful attention and compassionate practice to engage rather than to contain diversity. I am interested in ways to navigate the moral multiplicity that arises in the jumble and beauty of diversity in social and spiritual ecologies. I situate my discussion initially in two contrasting narratives of diversity in Canada. Then I explore how an ethics of diversity can encourage crossing borders of injustice. I concur with those who focus on both diversity and its complexity as necessary features of an ethics where justice-love is central to moral imagination. I conclude by examining hospitality to strangers and neighbours as a religious practice that generates moral energy for resistance to domination; in this practice, hope is rekindled in the midst of complex diversity.

Diversity challenges who we are and where we stand; it can be either harmful or a means of grace and growth. Shawn Copeland tells us that spirituality is not a spectator sport:

> Our spirituality is our capacity to relate to God, to other human beings and to the natural world. Through these relationships, we give meaning to our experience and attune our hearts and minds to the deepest dimensions of reality. Thus spirituality is integral to ways in which we live our lives. It is about the kinds of persons we are and the kinds of persons we hope to become.... What is most necessary in our lives? For what are we living? What does it mean to be a human person?[4]

These questions about virtues, values, responsibilities, and vision have multiple responses. Multiplicity, however, does not mean lack of moral norms or purpose in life. To be human is about loving and being loved. We must recognize and respect our finitude; we must face our capacity to help or harm ourselves and others. We must also engage diversity in the midst of the radical human freedom to treat each other well or to treat each other badly. In this struggle to embrace the gift of life, "the central expectation – and single standard for relationships," Marvin Ellison declares, "should be *justice-love*, understood as mutual respect and care and a fair sharing of power."[5] Justice-love is a moral vision that calls us into being, sustains us, and invites us to act with dignity and joy.

However, insecurity and fear, uncertainty and anxiety, poverty and suffering, characterize the lives of people in many regions of the world. Acknowledging these psycho-social conditions and the ambiguity of di-

versity, we need an ethics that allows us to negotiate our engagement with diversity. With the help of more complex understandings of structural oppression, this ethics must first reframe the dominant notion of diversity that masks or distorts its complicity in sources of suffering. Second, this ethics will name and cross barriers of injustice. There are many borders or boundaries that can function as rich resources of identity and belonging or as divisions that damage and maim – boundaries of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nation. In a diverse world we need "boundary practices" of imagination and action that do not exclude but welcome and value the gifts of those inside and beyond borders.

"Selling Diversity" and "Complex Diversity"

Diversity discourses spin multiple tales of virtues, values, responsibilities, and visions of the good life. In Canada, there are reigning and alternative moral economies of diversity. The dominant model is "selling diversity," where official multiculturalism policy is used to make diversity a commodity for business and government interests. Moreover, when multiculturalism leaves whiteness unmarked it functions to protect the majority culture's power to control; all others are "included" but peripheral to this group. The alternative model, which I refer to as critical or complex diversity, is rooted not in an exclusion-inclusion ethic but rather in overlapping and interactive complex differences. Here diversity is not a flattened array of colour and culture; it is created by differences within and among persons who are deeply shaped by historical processes that define social relations of power along axes of race, gender, class, sexuality, and religion. Each model of diversity has implications for identity and community as well as public well-being and belonging. Each model offers a moral economy of diversity, that is, notions of what and who counts, who we are and why we are of value, what we should be about, and what sort of world we should yearn and risk living for.

In 1971, Pierre Elliot Trudeau changed Canadian federal government policy from assimilation to multiculturalism. This national policy accepted cultural and ethnic diversity as legitimate and integral to Canadian society; the equality of Canadians of all origins was enshrined in the 1982 Constitution Act, especially its Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act. While immigration policy is the source of Canada's increasing ethno-cultural and racial diversity, multicultural policy addresses the value of this diversity for the Canadian nation. More recently, the neo-liberal emphasis on "managing diversity" to serve as a competitive lever for Canada in world markets has challenged the hope that the official multiculturalism of Trudeau's "just society" could promote a more equitable Canada.

Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel have examined how diversity is playing out under conditions of neo-liberalism.[6] In 1986 diversity was initially embraced in terms of the slogan "multiculturalism means business." This policy focus since the 1990s has emphasized hiring "visible minorities" to capture markets at home and abroad and to acquire cheap labour. The policy assumes that free markets are efficient allocators of goods and services. Consequently, among the values extolled by neo-liberal ideals are "competitiveness, efficiency, unfettered choice, profitable outcomes, and consumerism."[7] Himanni Bannerji has argued that diversity in Canada

> is not a neutral concept. By concentrating on ethno-cultural diversity as its main expression, the term diversity has diverted attention away from injustice issues in areas of job discrimination, and maintained racialized structures through a hierarchy of colour (as women of colour with gradations from pale brown and yellow to dark/black).

This is what Bannerji calls "sexist racism." She advocates a complex diversity and stresses the need for alliances across differences that connect struggles against oppression arising out of lived experience.[8]

Those of us who are committed to intersecting with other perspectives and realities need an epistemology beyond borders; we need the generation of knowledge beyond rigidly differentiated material and spiritual categories. As Mary McClintock Fulkerson asserts, complex diversities challenge us to overcome the societal conditioning that would have us ignore our differences or treat them with suspicion or contempt, arrogance or conceit. Difference instigates a new pedagogy by which to educate ourselves critically about ourselves, about "other" and different women (and men), about our interrelations in situations of domination and oppression.[9]

Particular practices sustain our abilitiy to live without fear, to be well, and to take courage together amidst diversity. We will appropriate radical religious traditions, be aware of our voices and those marked and excluded by discourses that "manage" diversity, develop moral imagination, and embody openness to multiple meanings in seeking justice-love.

Engaging Diversity across the Border of Race/Ethnicity

As an alternative to reigning neo-liberal notions of diversity, let us imagine "complex diversity." This notion recognizes that we do not speak in one voice, that injustices exclude and oppress groups of people, and that we are all implicated whether we want to be or not – even if we mean no harm. Janet Jakobsen assesses diversity as the ongoing production "of differentiation that creates social categories which form the matrix of social life into which each individual is born and within which each lives."[10]

For example, recent demographics for the city of Toronto where I live estimate that by the year 2017 people who are "visible minorities" will comprise more than half of the city's population (and one-fifth of the nation). According to one report, "we've had plenty of practice stitching newcomers into the national fabric."[11] On the surface this statement is descriptive or benignly inclusive. But can we assume that there is one fabric that "newcomers" must be made part of? Or is diversity a process of negotiation and contestation as well as of weaving together various threads to create a new fabric and pattern altogether? The newspaper statement just cited conceals the fact that, unless we are aboriginal, we are all immigrants to Canada, which was constructed as a white settler colony. It discourages the interrogation of whiteness as a construed identity and obscures the class basis of social relations. For example, I am a fourth generation Canadian or First World woman of Irish, Scottish, and English Protestant ancestry; I am privileged as a white, well-educated person with a secure income who is married to a supportive spouse. I do know what it means, however, to be objectified and demeaned because I am female. In what ways is this personal positioning implicated in wider social and spiritual processes that connect, marginalize, and exclude? Locating ourselves encourages us to imagine how we are each related in particular ways to and within the global and local moral economies of diversity. Unless whites have a sense of their own identities as located in specific cultures with historical narratives, whiteness remains the unmarked norm against which Otherness is defined and eurocentrism is validated. Therefore, recognizing how our own complex multiple identities are produced in relation to others amidst many communities and their social histories is essential to the work of criss-crossing borders, for instance, of official multiculturalisms when they function as cultural imperialism. Knowing where and how we are located influences the choices we can make. Getting outside of my taken-for-granted worldview helps me see the complex forces at work that have profoundly shaped individual choices and that both bring us together and keep us apart.[12]

As Jakobsen elaborates, "This world is marked by diversity and complexity – diversity created by differences within and among persons and a correlative complexity created by multiple criss-crossing power relations and resulting contradictions."[13] Imagination and moral energy emerge from acting on commitments to do something rather than nothing in the midst of uncertainties and contradictions spawned by diversity that is complex. Injustice or oppression describes the structural and historical shape of social relations. Iris Marion Young has helpfully drawn and analyzed five faces of oppression: exploitation, powerlessness, marginalization, cultural imperialism, and violence.[14] Being able to identify these relations of domination and subordination requires various theoretical insights, to understand, for example, how racialized class formation has been central to current conceptions and practices of citizenship and culture and how racism is also sexist.

How is it possible to deal differently with the complex particulars of one particular oppressive barrier to creating community and being fully human – that of race/ethnicity? Nancy Ramsay speaks of the distorting effect of inadequate definitions as one difficulty in confronting racism:

> many [whites] seem to hold operative definitions that describe racism as a system of disadvantage based on race. This definition assures concern for confronting racism only as someone else's problem.... A more adequate definition of racism describes racism as an interlocking system of advantage and disadvantage. By including the fact of racial privilege or advantage in the definition of racism, whites have to confront [their] often unwitting complicity in racism by failing to resist or confront practices and assumptions that reproduce it.[15]

Like any oppression, white supremacy or racism affects all of us, whether it is because we are victims of various unjust power relations or because we are reaping the benefits of white advantage. Because white Europeans in Canada have come to spatially, politically, and culturally dominate through colonialism, some citizens are raised with social, economic, and cultural

privileges on the basis of assumed membership in a grouping named "white." This membership translates into what is called white privilege, unearned entitlement or certain kinds of "presumed innocence." This process of self-critical locating and learning to think about how our multiple identities are produced in terms of complex diversity is particularly hard for most white people. Grace often arrives through invitations to solidarity.

In the process of creating relational diversity, we practise moral discernment in struggles against oppression (like white racism) by learning to connect ourselves as individuals and as part of groups with historical and communal identities. For example, white people can imagine and do the moral work of becoming allies as a practice of co-operative power. Janet Jakobsen writes:

> Diversity and complexity in women's moral voices implies a need to develop solidarity among women across difference. Solidarity does not imply an identity of moral voices, for example between white women and Aboriginal or African [Canadian] women, but a recognition of the relationship among moral voices.[16]

> This work seeks justice/love where struggle may be the name of hope for some and hope may be a place of creative dwelling for others.[17]

Practising Hospitality: Sustenance for Complex Diversity

Let us return to Mary Jo Leddy's norm for a valid religious theory and practice: how does engaging diversity as complex and relational enlarge our capacity to intersect with other perspectives and realities? Sharon Welch's notion of "an alchemy of desire" is a way to imagine the nature of the practice of an improvisational ethic of diversity without hegemonic borders: "Our desire is in the present in its abundance and wonder, our desire for justice a way of honouring the integrity of that which is, our political work an exuberant 'virtuosity in the face of adversity.' "[18] A practice is an ongoing, shared activity of a community of people that partly defines and partly constitutes them. A spirituality of desire, like engaging complex diversity, is expressed through many practices. "Christian practices are things Christian people do together over time in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world."[19] Imagining diversity as resource inspires religious communities to define their practices in relationship to their wider setting, to live in a web of connections with a new vision of becoming "households of life." Then relationships with local, regional, national, and global movements of solidarity for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation become necessary, not optional, for moral energy and responsible living which come from a vision of God's realm that is contradicted by existing social arrangements of domination and subordination. If church means "grace-enabled moral community," parishes and congregations that know themselves to be part of this wider ecology and cosmopolitan nation could hardly be content with privatized, limited understandings of faith. They will seek instead to practise what Douglas John Hall calls "hospitality to difference."[20]

Hospitality, philoxenia, is a practice that can subvert xenophobia, the hatred of strangers. "Unlike xenophobia...hospitality is a welcoming of strangers out of a delight in the possibility that in that opening of community God might be present."[21] In biblical terms, hospitality is a metaphor of compassion to practise justice and care for those who are other and for those who are in need (Luke 10: 25-37). For Lucinda Huffaker, hospitality becomes a metaphor for empathic attunement where creating a receptive space anticipates mutual sharing and transformation.[22] Hospitality is a style of interaction that creates a climate of openness to difference. Hospitality creates a safe and welcoming space for persons to find their own sense of humanity and worth. In short, hospitality to the other is not the vocation of helping or liberating the oppressed other; it is the work we do to liberate ourselves in relation to the oppressed other.[23]

Conclusion

Relational responsibility in a world of diversity is a process of learning to engage multiple differences. Complex diversity can be a matrix of possibility that releases moral energy for justice/love. Injustices constructed by dominant approaches to diversity constitute borders of material and political differences that interact in complex ways. Alternatively, the notion of complex diversity is a theoretical, moral, and spiritual resource to learn about the ways we can be moral agents who acknowledge our finitude as well as our strengths. Such moral respect requires having to think through the implications of how we are related and socially located in complex matrices of power that form and deform us in different ways. As William Chase puts it,

> Diversity, [then] is not casual liberal tolerance of anything and everything not yourself. It is not polite accommodation. Instead, diversity is, in ac-

> tion, the sometimes painful awareness that other people, other races, other voices, other habits of mind have as much integrity of being, as much claim on the world as you do.... And I urge you, amid all the differences present to the eye and mind, to reach out to create the bond that...will protect us all. We are meant to be here together.[24]

Justice is a collective mutuality rooted in compassion in which we share one another's fate, promote one another's well-being, and learn to cross borders that defy our being here together.[25] Complex diversity requires us to imagine an ethics and praxis of resisting various oppressions and co-operating with others in struggles to work for, rather than against, life. Traditions of holy hospitality and improvisation that welcome strangers where we are not only hosts but also guests around much larger tables of God are practices of sharing brokenness and belonging where we feed and are fed.[26] Then, as Sharon Welch says,

> Our communities, our work for justice, can be as audacious as the compositions of [jazz musicians]. As we listen to each other, as we are open to seeing and playing off our limits and strengths, weaknesses and possibilities, what happens with all of our strategies, our coalitions, our communities, even our work for justice? It swings.[27]

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[1] This article is adapted from a lecture given at the St. Jerome's Centre for Catholic Experience at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo, Ontario on April 7, 2005. I thank especially David Seljak for his invitation and hospitality.

[2] Mary Jo Leddy, "Foreword," *Intersecting Voices: Critical Theologies in a Land of Diversity*, eds. Don Schweitzer and Derek Simon (Ottawa: Novalis, 2004), 7.

[3] This definition of diversity is from *That All May Be One: A Resource For Educating Toward Racial Justice*, ed. Wenh-In Ng (Toronto: Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations of The United Church of Canada, 2004), 80.

[4] Shawn Copeland, "Saying Yes and Saying No," in *Practicing Our Faith*, ed. Dorothy Bass (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 59.

[5] See Marvin M. Ellison, *Same-Sex Marriage: A Christian Ethical Analysis* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004), 142.

[6] On this assessment of the dominant model of diversity, see Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel, *Selling Diversity: Immigration, Multiculturalism, Employment Equity, and Globalization* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002).

[7] Abu-Laban and Gabriel, Selling Diversity, 168, 173, 21.

[8] Himani Bannerji, "The Paradox of Diversity," in The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism, and Gender (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2000), 15-61. See also Wenh-In Ng, "Diversity and Difference in the Work of Gender Justice," *Making Waves: An Ecumenical Feminist Journal* 1/1 (Fall 2000):13-20.

[9] Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 4-5.

[10] Janet R. Jakobsen, *Working Alliances and the Politics of Difference: Diversity and Feminist Ethics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 5.

[11] Joseph Hall, "Weaving a New Canada," *Toronto Star* (Wednesday, March 23, 2005), B1.

[12] In this section of engaging diversity I am drawing on the salient feminist ethical method and practice of Elizabeth M. Bounds, "'Realist Dreams'," in Beverly Wildung Harrison, *Justice in the Making: Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. Elizabeth M. Bounds et al. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 231-233. See also Fyre Jean Graveline, *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1998).

[13] Janet Jakobsen, *Working Alliances*, 4.

[14] See Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 39-65.

[15] Nancy Ramsay, "Teaching and Learning in Racially and Culturally Diverse Classrooms," in *Theology and Religion* 8/1 (2005), 18.

[16] Janet Jakobsen, Working Alliances, 56.

[17] See, for example, Pamela Brubaker, *Globalization: At What Price? Economic Change and Daily Life* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001); Melissa Chamberlain et al., *Hope Is the Struggle: A Community in Action* (Etobicoke: United Church Publishing House, 1996); Ada Maria Isasi Diaz, *En La Lucha: In the Struggle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Lucinda A. Stark Huffaker, *Creative Dwelling: Empathy and Clarity in God and Self* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998); James Poling, *Deliver Us from Evil: Resisting Gender and Racial Oppression* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd, ed., *Story after Story: Canadians Bend Bound Theology* (Winnipeg: On Edge Publishing), 2003.

[18] Sharon Welch, *After Empire: The Art and Ethos of Enduring Peace* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 25.

[19] Practices include honouring the body, hospitality, household economics, keeping Sabbath, discernment, forgiveness, healing, and shaping communities. These and other everyday activities are called practices because "they address fundamental human needs and conditions through concrete human acts. Practices are done together and over time. And through them we come to perceive how our daily lives are all tangled up with the things God is doing in the world." Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass, "Times of Yearning, Practices of Faith" in *Practicing Our Faith*, ed. Dorothy Bass (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 5.

[20] Douglas John Hall, "Christianity and Canadian Contexts: Then and Now" in *Intersecting Voices: Critical Theologies in a Land of Diversity*, eds. Don Schweitzer and Derek Simon (Ottawa: Novalis, 2004), 24.

[21] Letty Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville: Westminister John Knox Press, 1993), 152.

[22] Huffaker, *Creative Dwelling*, 127-28.

[23] See Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 4.

[24] William M. Chase, "The Language of Action" *The Workbook*, 19/1 (Spring 2004).

[25] This formulation of justice and community is adapted from David Wellman, *Sustainable Diplomacy: Ecology, Religion and Ethics in Muslim-Christian Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 40-41.

[26] See Betsy Anderson's "Holy Hospitality," *Trinity-St. Paul's United Church Newsletter*, 15/6 (May 2005): 1.

[27] Sharon Welch, *Sweet Dreams in America: Making Spirituality and Ethics Work* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 26.

Amazing Church

The following excerpt is the concluding chapter from Gregory Baum's new book *Amazing Church: A Catholic Theologian Remembers a Half-century of Change* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2005). Baum reminds us that there has been a sea change in the Church's official teaching on important theological and social issues. His target is the three-fold conservative fiction that 1) the Church never errs, but moves from truth to greater truth; 2) the Church's essential teachings do not change; and 3) the Church never learns from society – that is, never adopts ideas and values from so-called secular sources. In a few brief, masterful chapters, Baum shows that on the important questions of religious pluralism, civil liberties, peace, social justice, and God's redemptive presence in human history, the Church in the twentieth century (and especially at the Second Vatican Council) dramatically changed its teaching. As society changed, he argues, the ethical horizon of the Church changed with it. For example, the nineteenth-century Church was at home with aristocratic forms of government, while the Church under John Paul II supported democracy and criticized all undemocratic societies. Responding in faithfulness to the Gospel, Church leaders rearticulated the good news of Jesus Christ in the new context. Religious liberty – openly condemned by Pius IX and his successors – was embraced and celebrated at Vatican II. In fact, John Paul II became a world leader for religious freedom. The Church had learned from the new situation. Baum counters the self-serving explanations of those who argue that the Church, in its defence of the integrity of individual conscience, always defended religious liberty. Surely this abstract argument, he states, is cold comfort to those who were silenced, imprisoned, tortured, and killed over the centuries in the name of orthodoxy.

In the end, *Amazing Church* is a testament to Baum's commitment to dialogue. Through dialogue with other Christians, adherents of other faiths, and people of good will, the Church has both learned and taught. Dialogue for Baum is not an abstract intellectual project; it is an exercise of love. Only by committing to the justice, peace, and well-being of others can we enter into the genuine, face-to-face encounter between equals that God wills for us ("You shall love your neighbour as yourself"). At certain grace-filled moments, the Church has opened itself to this dialogue and changed its mind on important teachings.

After the election of Pope Benedict XVI in April 2005, members of the media focused on how conservative the new pontiff was. Later, they were surprised that his first homily was on ecumenism. Had Fr. Joseph Ratzinger given that homily in 1955 (as a young priest and theologian) instead of in 2005, he would most certainly have ended his promising career. Like so many others, he would have been silenced and he would have been hounded from his post at the Higher School of Philosophy and Theology of Freising. What was considered near-heresy fifty years ago is now announced as official policy by a *conservative* pope! This change – the topic of Baum's book – is amazing. The Church is not perfect, however, and much remains to be done. Baum reminds us of the formula *ecclesia semper reformanda est* (the Church is always in need of reform). The gift of reform is an amazing grace – one still needed by our amazing church.

David Seljak

Amazing Church: The New Teaching

In the preceding chapters, we have seen that as the Church entered a new ethical horizon, it had to review its official teaching. Challenged by the egalitarian culture of modernity and its betrayals in conquest, colonialism and death-dealing exclusions, the Catholic Church, reflecting anew on the Word of God, affirmed some modern aspirations and rejected others – both on theological grounds. I repeatedly expressed my amazement at the extraordinary evolution of the Church's official teaching. The ecclesiastical magisterium changed its mind regarding religious liberty and human rights in general, and moving beyond its previous teaching, it recognizes freedom, equality and participation as values sustained by divine revelation. New in the Church's official teaching is the understanding of human beings as historical subjects responsible for their own lives and their society. Gaudium et spes recognizes with approval "the birth of a new humanism in which human beings are defined first of all by their responsibility toward their brothers and sisters and towards history." (#55) To express this new humanism John Paul II introduced a new word into the Church's vocabulary: he spoke of the "subjectivity" of human beings (i.e., their freedom to see, judge and act) that must be respected by all governing authorities.

John Paul II insisted that people's subjectivity may not be curtailed because he believes that the drama that takes place in people's conscience seeking to do the right thing is the source of their great dignity. This inner drama is described in *Gaudium et spes*:

> In the depth of their conscience, people detect a law they do not impose upon themselves, but which holds them to obedience.... For humans have in their hearts a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of humans; according to which they

will be judged.... Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of human beings. There they are alone with God, whose voice echoes in their depth. In a wonderful manner conscience reveals the law which is fulfilled by the love of God and neighbour. (#16)

According to the last sentence of this paragraph, the drama taking place in a person's conscience is listening and responding to a divine summons to love God and neighbour. This means, in scholastic terms, that this drama is "supernatural." In their conscience people have an encounter with God, listen to God's Word and respond to the Holy Spirit. God's gratuitous self-donation proclaimed and celebrated in the Church is a redemptive mystery that affects every human being in his or her conscience.

This new understanding of human beings has persuaded theologians and eventually the official Church to retrieve the ancient Logos Christology and acknowledge God's creative and redemptive presence in the whole of human history, as we saw in Chapter 2. According to the recent popes studied in this book, human beings cannot be understood apart from the divine summons that challenges them. Thanks to God's mercy, revealed to us in the Incarnation and Christ's willing surrender on the cross, human beings are not simply defined by their human nature wounded by sin; they are also defined by the redemptive summons that sounds in their conscience and addresses them in spiritual texts and the good example of their neighbours. In the strict theological sense, the people of the world are our brothers and sisters.

Because God's merciful self-donation is universal, the followers of Jesus Christ willingly commit themselves to universal solidarity: they want to embrace in love the entire human family, including members of other religions and people without religion. Let me again quote the first sentence of Gaudium et spes:

> The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.

According to this remarkable sentence, universal solidarity pays special attention to the poor and afflicted. This is a brief reference to the evolution of Catholic social teaching calling for the preferential option for the poor. This evolution – examined in Chapter 3 – has lifted the commitment to social justice to the spiritual order as an indispensable dimension of the life of faith, hope and charity. This evolution has also redefined Catholic social teaching in radical terms as the reading of society from the perspective of its victims and the commitment to solidarity with their struggle for justice. This is the subversive aspect of today's Catholic social teaching.

The option for the victims does not allow us to interpret society in organic terms or trust the good will of the dominant political and economic elites. Presupposed in this option is a profound consciousness of human sin. In this fallen world, every society is wounded by two destructive trends that must constantly be resisted: the increase in the inequality of condition between the powerful elites and the ordinary members of society, and the ongoing inflation of society's own self-image leading it to feel superior to other societies and eventually to despise them. Both of these trends marginalize groups of people; both of them create victims and eventually lead to violence.

At the same time, the option for the poor serves the common good of society and creates the possibility for a solidarity that is truly universal. At this time, we are not in solidarity with the pharaohs of this world. As Christians we refuse to demonize them; we resist them but respect them as human beings; we pray for their conversion; and once the structures of oppression have been dismantled, we are ready to embrace them and extend our solidarity to them. That is why universal solidarity begins with the poor and afflicted: it supports the struggle for social conditions that allow solidarity to become truly universal, embracing all members of society.

New and startling in the teaching of John Paul II is the urgent plea for "a culture of peace," examined in Chapter 4. Against the clash of civilizations theorized by Samuel Huntington, against the hegemonic political, cultural and economic policies of the United States and its allies, and against the blind and destructive reactions of religious fundamentalists, John Paul II pleads for "the dialogue of civilizations" and advocates a politics of recognition and mutuality. His Ten Commandments of Peace is a document for which there is no precedent in the Church's official teaching. In the name of Christ, the bringer of peace, the Pope expresses respect for difference, also in matters of religion, even if there is as yet no clear theological warrant for it. I have called this the emergence of a new form of Catholicism, *le catholicisme solidaire*.

Moved by his commitment to peace in a dangerously divided world, John Paul II offers a positive interpreta-

tion of religious pluralism. I mentioned that religious thinkers in other religions also wrestle with the double task of respecting otherness and remaining faithful to their own tradition. Implicit in the Pope's commitment to the dialogue of civilizations is the principle of universal solidarity, according to which, thanks to God's self-donation for the reconciliation of the sinful world, the common good of the Church is subordinated to the common good of humanity. In practical terms, if an action is good for the Church but bad for humanity, we shall refrain from it.

Also startling is the new attitude of the Catholic Church to other Christian Churches, the Jewish people and the world religions. This extraordinary development was examined in Chapter 5. Moving beyond the negative verdict of Pius XI, the Vatican Council recognized the ecumenical movement as summoned forth by the Holy Spirit. While Pius XI still thought that Christians in disagreement with the Catholic Church in matters of belief and government were neither grafted upon Christ's body nor alive in his Spirit, Vatican Council II recognized other Christians as Christians grafted unto Christ by faith and baptism, and other Churches as Churches mediating salvation to their members.

In regard to the Jews, the Catholic Church made a 180-degree turn! While the Good Friday liturgy in use until Vatican Council II prayed for the conversion of the Jews blinded by a veil and located in darkness, the Council acknowledged the ongoing validity of God's ancient covenant with the Jews and honoured their fidelity to the tradition of Judaism. This new teaching was repeatedly confirmed by John Paul II.

The Church's official teaching has also learned to respect the other world religions. The Church recognizes interreligious dialogue and co-operation as actions sustained by the Spirit destined to transform all participants. The Church's faith in Jesus Christ as God's ultimate self-revelation does not prevent it from seeing in dialogue and co-operation with other religions a source of renewal: renewal of its own ecclesial life and renewal of the other religions. In this context the Church's official teaching embraces religious pluralism as part of God's design for humanity.

Despite ecclesiastical documents cited in this study, many Catholics, including members of the hierarchy, are unwilling to embrace the new teaching. The transformation of religious consciousness is a process that takes time. Admittedly, the ecclesiastical hierarchy does not make a great effort to put its bold teaching into practice. How can we explain the extraordinary evolution of the Church's official teaching in regard to human rights, God's redemptive presence in history, the preferential option for the poor, the culture of peace and the openness to religious pluralism? As I mentioned in the preface, this development is due to the ecclesiastical magisterium's openness to new pastoral experiences and new theological ideas fostered by various movements in the Church. It would be possible, for each of these five areas, to give the titles of theological studies and pastoral projects that defended the innovative positions that were eventually adopted by the magisterium. Some theologians were censured and penalized by the Holy Office, yet because they remained faithful to their inspiration, they rendered a service to the Church and eventually helped the magisterium to formulate its new teaching. The Second Vatican Council was the great ecclesiastical event that brought the bishops into dialogue with the rest of the Church and allowed the new theological currents to influence the Church's official teaching. But even when less visible, the dialogue between the magisterium and theologians continues in a process that is not always free of conflict.

The Sinister Side of Modernity

The changes in the Church's official teaching were a creative response to the new ethical horizon produced by modernity, in particular by egalitarian democracy. The Church was challenged by the ethical horizon of liberal society. Yet in fidelity to the message of the Gospel, the Church unmasked the sinister side of modernity, especially its betrayal of human solidarity. The ecclesiastical documents denounce the new individualism, the eager promotion of self-interest, the maximization of utility, the priority assigned to competition, the dedication to consumerism, the commodification of sexuality, the indifference to social justice, the absence of a transcendent ethic and the waning of faith in God. The ecclesiastical documents lament the indifference of the middle classes and their political leaders to the death-dealing maldistribution of power and wealth in the world that excludes ever-greater sectors of humanity from the resources of life. As mentioned above, the Church recognizes two sinful trends in society: one that widens the gap between the dominant classes and ordinary people, eventually leading to the inhuman treatment of society's lower sector, and one that nourishes in society a false sense of superiority that diminishes outsiders and eventually

deems them to be less than human. Both of these trends create victims; both violate God's gracious design for the world; both demand constant supervision, critique and resistance.

In reading ecclesiastical documents, I am particularly sensitive to their critique of modernity. This is due in part to my Augustinian sense of the omnipresence of sin and in part to my respect for the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School initiated in the 1920s.[1] According to the Frankfurt philosophers, the Enlightenment has become the great obstacle for the emancipation of humanity.[2] What do they mean by this? They argue that in the present, Enlightenment rationality has abandoned reliance on substantive reason, reason concerned with ends, and collapsed into instrumental reason, reason concerned with means. While science and technology are important, they have no ethical content; they blind society to transcendent values; they are unable to reflect on the meaning of liberty, equality and solidarity. Recent modernity, according to the Frankfurt philosophers, has betrayed the original vision of the Enlightenment by looking upon the world of human beings as a collection of objects to be manipulated by techno-scientific reason for the benefit of the strong and the clever. No longer respected as responsible agents, human beings are increasingly seen as determined by internal or external mechanisms, as puppets who have no control over their lives. Science is increasingly turned into an instrument of domination. According to these philosophers, some of whom were Jewish, the Holocaust was not produced by a regression of a society to a pre-modern barbaric practice, but an historical manifestation of modernity's sinister side, the techno-scientific control of people as objects, in this case eliminating them according to the wishes of the powerful.

At the same time, the Frankfurt philosophers strongly objected to the complete rejection of the Enlightenment by conservatives, existentialists and fascists in the 1920s and 30s – and by postmodern thinkers in the 80s and 90s. The Frankfurt School offered a passionate defence of the Enlightenment's ethical achievement, the human rights tradition, and dreaded what would happen to people if their human rights were no longer respected. Nor was the Frankfurt School opposed to instrumental reason: rather, it advocated the de-centering of techno-scientific reason in order to make room for the retrieval of substantive rationality. The urgent task of society, according to these philosophers, was the retrieval of an authentic Enlightenment ethics, especially the ethics of Immanuel Kant: the categorical imperative, the commitment never to treat human beings simply as means, the axiom that an action is ethical only when the tenet that guides it can be applied universally. Yet the Frankfurt philosophers were pessimistic: they doubted whether modern society had the moral resources for the needed spiritual conversion.

I have been greatly impressed by the affinity between Frankfurt School Critical Theory and the Church's complex theological response to modernity studied in this book. The great difference between these two stances is that the Church promotes the retrieval of a substantive ethics, not by a return to Kantian idealism, but by the conversion to the Christian Gospel. John Paul II has expressed his hope that the world religions, standing together and raising their voice, will uphold the sacredness of human life, defend human rights, promote human solidarity, call for social justice, offer support for the poor and vulnerable, and demand respect for the natural environment.

The Magisterium Changes Its Mind

The present study has shown that as the Church entered the ethical horizon of modern society, it wrestled with the new set of values and eventually accepted some of them on theological grounds, even if it meant changing its previous teaching. In some cases, the changes were quite dramatic: the recognition of religious liberty after it had been condemned by the papacy for over a century; the appreciation of the ecumenical movement as a work of the Spirit after it had been repudiated by Pius XI; the acknowledgment of the abiding nature of God's ancient covenant with the house of Israel, correcting the teaching of the Council of Florence that Jews went to hell after they died; and the new teaching of the dialogue of religions and civilizations amending the picture of the world drawn in the ancient Good Friday liturgy.

Yet we do not customarily admit that the magisterium changes its mind. The well-known theories of the development of doctrine try to establish the unbroken continuity of the Church's teaching, passing from truth to greater truth. As I mentioned several times in this book, the Catholic Church has, throughout its history, been faithful to the Scriptures as interpreted through the early ecumenical councils, especially the doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity; yet the meaning of these doctrines for the self-understanding of believers, their relationship to one another and to outsiders, and their divine mission in the world has always been worked out in dialogue with the Church's cultural context. In this

study we have shown that the Church's entry into the ethical horizon projected (and betrayed) by modernity has allowed it to change some of its teachings.

Is the claim that the Church has changed its teachings the result of "a superficial reading" of the evidence that can be refuted by "an attentive reading" of the same data? This was Cardinal Ratzinger's proposal in the famous *Nota* of July 1, 2001, which I discussed in Chapter 1. In this brief document, Ratzinger argued that the decision of his Congregation to lift the condemnation made in 1887 of propositions drawn from Rosmini's writings appear contradictory only to "a superficial reading" of these acts, while "an attentive reading" of them recognizes the unchanging constancy of the magisterium. Yet a careful analysis has shown that Ratzinger's proposal is not persuasive.

Some Catholic theologians apply the same reasoning to the doctrinal development that has led to the affirmation of religious liberty. According to Thomas Stock, an attentive reading of this development recognizes that the Church's Declaration on Religious Liberty did not contradict its previous teaching, but was in perfect keeping with it. All that was modified was the tone.[3] Affirming religious liberty is not a new teaching, Stock argues, because the Church has always taught that people are morally obliged to follow their conscience and that force may not be used to promote the Catholic faith.

Yet, for several reasons, the argument that in making the Declaration on Religious Liberty the magisterium did not change its mind is not persuasive.

First, the advocates of religious liberty at Vatican Council II realized that this was a principle at odds with papal teaching. They constantly discussed among themselves how to overcome this difficulty. At a meeting of the English-speaking bishops in Rome, where this topic was debated – I remember this well – an Australian bishop put the question, possibly as a joke, "Can't we simply say that the popes were wrong?" Since certain anti-Catholic propagandists in the United States used the official Roman position on religious freedom to deny that Catholics could be trusted, the American bishops gave passionate support for the conciliar declaration intended to correct the Church's previous teaching.

Second, Cardinal Ottaviani, then the President of the Holy Office, along with several cardinals of the Roman Curia, strongly opposed the declaration on religious liberty on the grounds that it contradicted the constant teaching of the popes for over a century. I heard this argument many times during the Vatican Council. Yet after the declaration had been promulgated by the Council, the same voices claimed that no change had taken place at all, that religious liberty had always been recognized by the Church, at least implicitly. This performance was not edifying.

Third, the Vatican Council's teaching on religious liberty was experienced as a liberation by the victims of the Church's previous teaching. During the Council I became good friends with Paolo Ricca, a Waldensian minister who belonged to a Church oppressed in Italy over the centuries and marginalized even under a secular government due to the Church's cultural power. Paolo Ricca was surprised by the Decree on Ecumenism and the Declaration on Religious Liberty, yet he remained skeptical. As a victim, he had a hard time believing that the Church was serious. Would he really be respected as a Christian brother, a baptized and believing Christian in vital, though incomplete, communion with Catholics? Paolo invited me to speak to his congregation in the mountains and explain the Church's new teaching. (I spoke French; he translated into Italian.) When I told the people that the Church endorsed the principle of religious liberty and extended its solidarity to non-Catholic Christians, they screamed at me. They would not believe me; they said, we know the Catholic Church better than you do. I was not offended. The change was too sudden. In due time the new teaching changed the spiritual atmosphere and the Waldensian Christians breathed more freely.

A fourth reason why we must admit that the Catholic magisterium has changed its mind on religious liberty is the rehabilitation of Catholic thinkers who were censured for disagreeing with the magisterium on this issue. John Courtney Murray, previously in trouble with Rome, was invited to be one of the principal drafters of the conciliar declaration.

What I conclude from this fourfold reflection is that we must admit that on the issue of religious liberty, the Church has changed its mind. To deny this would render invisible the victims of the older teaching. If we ask Jews and other non-Christians whether the Catholic Church has changed its teaching in their regard, they would say yes without hesitation. Why? Because the Council of Florence sent them all to hell, while the Vatican Council spoke about them with respect, appreciated the true and the good in their traditions and recognized in their religion an echo of God's eternal Word. The silver thread of continuity that theologians detect between the old and the new position may not be used as an argument to demonstrate that the Church has not changed its teach-

ing. We do not want a theology of the magisterium that hides the victims created by the teaching of the past.

In Chapter 1, I mentioned my encounter in the 1950s with a young Catholic woman of Pax Romana – I called her Margaret – who defended the principle of religious liberty and insisted that the popes were wrong. I was embarrassed by her at the time, but at the Vatican Council I learned that she had been right. Is it appropriate to disagree with the Church's official teaching? As the Church enters a new ethical horizon, it rereads the Scriptures and rethinks its teaching in a process that involves debates on all levels of the Catholic community and eventually leads to a modification of the official position. In such historical situations, disagreement with the magisterium may render an important service to the Church, helping it to respond to the signs of the times in the light of the Catholic faith. After long reflection, study, prayer and conversation in the believing community, disagreement with the Church's official teaching may be a duty of conscience. While I call this the Margaret principle, I could also have called it the Jaegerstätter principle, after the courageous Austrian who decided to act in disagreement with the Church's teaching and was subsequently executed by the German army for refusing to serve in it.

Does the extraordinary evolution of the Church's official teaching studied in this book weaken the binding force of the ecclesiastical magisterium? I think so. Catholics want to be personally convinced before they commit themselves to the Church's official teaching. The Canadian theologian André Naud has explored this theme in a recent book.[4] Catholics believing in God's revealing Word embrace the Church's teaching only when they are inwardly persuaded by the Spirit dwelling in their own reflections.

The reluctance to conform to the official teaching shows itself especially in regard to three issues that the hierarchical Church has so far refused to review in response to today's ethical horizon. The first issue is the Church's authoritarian centralism, which contradicts its official teaching on collegiality, subsidiarity and the co-responsibility of people for their institutions. The second issue is the Church's refusal to review what the equality of men and women means in the light of God's revelation. It is puzzling to hear John Paul II, the great advocate of dialogue, tell Catholic women what their vocation is, instead of first listening to their spiritual aspirations and their painful experience of exclusion. I think that many Catholic women would accept the Church's opposition to abortion if they were convinced that the male hierarchy was on their side and appreciated their wisdom. The third issue is the Church's refusal to allow Catholics in their various cultures to review the meaning of sexuality in the light of their faith. A group of celibate old men should not want to be the teachers of sexual ethics for the entire world. When Paul VI appointed a mixed commission of men and women, married and single, professional and lay, to evaluate the practice of birth control, the commission arrived at a conclusion that differed from the Church's official teaching.[5] Yet the Pope did not follow them. Inquiries into the behaviour of Catholics reveal that in matters of sexual love Catholics apply the Margaret principle: they clarify their conscience independently of the magisterium.

The Continuing Catholic Identity

The extraordinary evolution of the Church's official teaching, I wish to insist, is in continuity with the Catholic theological tradition and differs in several ways from the evolution of Protestant thought that has wrestled with the same issues in fidelity to its own tradition. In responding to new historical situations, every great tradition wants to remain faithful to its particular genius. In the following paragraphs I want to point to six aspects of *le catholicisme solidaire* that reveal its fidelity to the Catholic tradition.

1. In the Catholic tradition, divine salvation has always been looked upon as an historical drama of rescue and new life, involving the whole of human history and even the cosmos. The Easter Vigil liturgy, with its biblical readings and the magnificent Exsultet prayer, celebrates Christ's death and resurrection as the redemptive event of universal significance, rescuing from sin, restoring and elevating God's work of creation. Seen in this perspective, even the gift of grace to an individual, a private event in the intimacy of the human heart, is at the same time an entry into the redemptive drama at work in the world, preparing the ultimate reconciliation of nature and humanity with the triune God. The Church's new official teaching interprets this divine drama as God's gracious presence in history, summoning and empowering people to promote peace, justice and reconciliation in the service of God's coming reign.

2. While the official Catholic teaching has, for the most part, restricted divine salvation to the faithful members of the Catholic Church, it always acknowledged a set of common values that Catholics share with the rest of humanity. The natural law tradition, supported by the Church, was based on the trust that despite the distortion

of rationality by the dominant culture, a deeper reason was at work in human intelligence that had access to ethical norms of universal validity. The mainstream of Catholic theology held that this deeper reason allowed people to acknowledge the existence of God and bow down before God in acts of "natural religion." The theology of certain Church fathers recognized in the common values and the turn to God the saving presence of the divine Logos, yet their theology did not affect the Church's official teaching. Still, the theological mainstream and the ecclesiastical magisterium always reached out for a maximum of common ground between the Church and humanity.

We saw that Catholic social teaching initiated by Leo XIII was based on the trust in humanity's shared intelligence. Later, with John XXIII and his successors, Catholic social teaching was increasingly guided by reason and revelation, thus lifting the quest for social justice to the order of faith, hope and love. Presupposed in recent Catholic social teaching is the faith that God's Word and God's Spirit were at work in the world's sapiential traditions and people's conscience everywhere. Yet already the older natural law tradition based on reason alone revealed that seeking a common bond uniting the Church with the rest of humanity has been an abiding concern of the Catholic tradition.

3. The Catholic tradition has preserved a confidence in metaphysics that is not shared by the modern world. According to classical philosophers, the world of experience had a depth dimension that escaped observation and the natural sciences, yet revealed itself to the reflective mind. Philosophers spoke with confidence of spiritual reality, the soul and the existence of God. While modern empiricism has undermined this trust in metaphysics, the Catholic tradition has refused to abandon it. The Church recognizes the distortion that marks the dominant form of reason, yet it trusts the reflective ability of human intelligence to move beyond these distortions and enter into a creative dialogue with divine revelation. The Church's new official teaching, recorded in these chapters, while not wedded to a particular philosophy, takes for granted a depth dimension in human and cosmic existence that is hidden from the eyes and overlooked by the sciences, yet that permits us, in reliance on divine revelation and human reasoning, to speak of God's redemptive presence in the world and God's coming reign beyond history.

4. *Le catholicisme solidaire*, while oriented towards action in the world, communicates trust in God and not in human willpower. This is in perfect continuity with the Catholic tradition. The recognition of God's redemptive presence in history protects the Church's call to action from the Pelagian illusion that humanity can save itself with good works and good will. The good we do, according to biblical teaching, is God's gift to us. Standing for human rights, opting for social justice, promoting a culture of peace and extending our solidarity to all people, be they religious or secular, is not the work of flesh and blood, if I may use this biblical term, but the work of the Spirit, a gratuitous gift granted to us as prisoners in a world of death-dealing inequality, presently moving in the wrong direction. According to texts of John Paul II quoted above, we can never fully escape the ambiguity of human existence because we participate willy-nilly, at least minimally, in the sinful structures of society. Even courageous activists who take risks and make sacrifices rely on God's mercy.

5. Because the Church's new teaching assigns priority to universal solidarity, it creates a new bond with the saints, the brothers and sisters who have died in God and now live in the divine light. Since God does not want to be God without us,[6] we do not want to think of God or worship God without acknowledging the bond of solidarity that unites us with the communion of saints.

6. In continuity with the Catholic tradition, the new official teaching of the Church generates an intense spirituality. Solidarity with the poor and oppressed creates great sorrow in our hearts: we mourn living in a world where millions of people cannot feed their children while there is no shortage of food. We grieve over the devastation created by armed conflicts and wars that leave innocent people dead or maimed. The crucified Jesus reveals to us the condition of humanity's hidden majority. Some Christians lose their faith over this state of affairs, unable to reconcile the waves of suffering rolling over humanity with belief in God; other Christians believe that the wound in their heart is God's doing, creating in them a sense of universal solidarity. The deep yearning for the liberation of the victims and the reconciliation of the human family in love, justice and peace is the dwelling place of the triune God in the human soul. God lives in our passion. Opening ourselves to God in prayer, we do not turn our back on suffering humanity. In fact, the closer we are to God, the more we yearn for the rescue of the wounded.

Turning to God, we surrender ourselves to the transcendent Mystery of reconciliation acting as Word and Spirit in the hearts of human beings, summoning forth movements of love, justice and peace. Yet the Bible does

not tell us whether God's gracious presence among us will eventually lead to the reconciliation of humanity on this earth, or whether every civilization will eventually undermine its existence by its sin and God's design will be fulfilled only in the age to come. We want to rejoice in the Good News, be grateful for the many gifts received, celebrate Christ's resurrection and marvel at the unknown God – without forgetting the human torment. I have often called this dancing with a wounded leg. The contemplative life, carried by a yearning for universal reconciliation, is in perfect harmony with le catholicisme solidaire.

[1] See Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School, 1923–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973).

[2] Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972).

[3] Thomas Stock, "Catholics and Religious Liberty" on the website www.catholic-pages.com/dir/religious_liberty.asp

[4] André Naud, *Les dogmes et le respect de l'intelligence* (Montréal: Fides, 2000). See Gregory Baum, "André Naud's Bold Theological Proposal," *The Ecumenist*, 39 (Fall 2002):12–15.

[5] Robert Blair Kaiser, *The Politics of Sex and Religion: A Case History of the Development of Doctrine 1962–1984* (Kansas City: Leaven Press, 1985).

[6] The expression "God does not want to be God without us" is taken from Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 126.

The Ecumenist: A Journal of Theology, Culture, and Society is published quarterly by Novalis-Saint Paul University and is © Novalis 2005.

Editor: David Seljak – **Editor Emeritus:** Gregory Baum – **Contributing editors:** M. Shawn Copeland, Lee Cormie, Charles Curran, Virgilio Elizondo, Scott Kline, Marilyn Legge, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Harold Wells – **Design:** Gilles Lépine – **Layout:** Martin Roy – **Copyeditor and Proofreader:** Nancy Keyes

Subscriptions: $15 (postage and taxes included). **To order:** Periodicals Dept., Novalis, 49 Front St. E., 2nd Floor, Toronto ON M5E 1B3

Tel: 1-800-387-7164 Fax: 1-800-204-4140

ISSN: 0013-080X

Address editorial correspondence to: Novalis, Saint Paul University, 223 Main St., Ottawa ON K1S 1C4

Printed in Canada

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40063645