



FORUM FOCUS

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INTERCULTURAL MINISTRY: The Creative Imagination of Ecumenism

When people say “ecumenism,” they are usually talking about different denominations talking and working together. Ecumenism is more than this.

At its best, it is the “Lund Principle”—which came out of the 1952 Faith and Order Conference of the World Council of Churches in Lund, Sweden—that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately. “Ecumenism” has often been reduced to doing “ecumenical things,” while the Lund principle calls for church people to *do things ecumenically*—in particular, to do things together which are already a part of their normal life. This requires creative acts of imagination.

Ecumenism is more difficult than we expect, and at the same time more full of possibilities than we anticipate. Ecumenism is challenging and requires us to discover a new set of tools and resources for being a people of faith. Ecumenism represents a different way of being a Church than most of our history has taught us. Intercultural ministry is one of the spaces where those resources are being discovered, developed, and learned.

Through most of Christian history we thought in terms of us and the “other.” David Bosch in his book *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* describes an “Emerging Ecumenical Missionary Paradigm”¹. Key to this is that it is “emerging”. It is not *yet*, but we are learning to move into a new way of being. For Bosch, ecumenism is much more than denominations talking and doing things together. It includes a rethinking of the “other,” our place in the world, and our missiology. It also includes considering culture and theology, justice, relationships with other living faiths, liberation, the presence of God in places not before acknowledged, and context.

“Ecumenism is more difficult than we expect, and at the same time more full of possibilities than we anticipate”

This emerging ecumenical paradigm is a seeking of a faithful response to a major disruption and shift in the history of the Church. We are living our faith within this emerging ecumenical paradigm when

we consider what it is to be Christian in a pluralistic context and a postmodern culture.

While the Protestant theologian Bosch describes the emerging paradigm, several well-known Roman Catholic thinkers describe the shift that requires new ways of living the faith. Bernard Lonergan described a movement from a classicist to an empirical notion of culture². In the classicist notion, culture and Christian faith and theology are normative, universal, and fixed laws that are unchanging from time to time and place to place. The empirical notion opens the door to there being as many cultures, meanings, values, and experiences of faith as there are contexts.

Karl Rahner describes a “third epoch” in the history of Christianity³. The first is the short lived period of Jewish Christianity. The second—the majority of Christian history—was a Christianity shaped by Hellenism and European culture & civilization. Today we recognize that while this is not the only Christianity of the past 2000 years, it is the Christianity that has most shaped the faith and culture of Canada. Rahner argues that a third epoch of Christianity—that of a World Church—has only just begun, and made itself observable officially at Vatican II.

The wonderful problem faced by the Church is that, as we move into this new paradigm or epoch, most of our Christian history doesn’t provide us the tools or resources for what we are moving into. The Canadian feminist theologian and ethicist Marilyn J. Legge argues that what is required is imagination; “[The role of imagination] is to seek and create spaces beyond the places that exist. Not confined by what is, or what is known, imagination is the art of creating what does not exist”.⁴

One such source of creativity and imagination is intercultural ministry.

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Recommended Resources

Interculturalism: A View from Quebec.

Bouchard, Gerard.

The rest of Canada has much to learn from Quebec's experience of interculturalism, its place in Canada, and the Canadian policy of multi-culturalism. While describing the Quebec experience the author clearly articulates the issues and defines interculturalism in a way that is helpful in any context. University of Toronto Press



Reserve 107: Reconciliation of the Prairies

www.reserve107thefilm.com

What do you do when you discover you are living on land that was stolen? This just released documentary is a firsthand account of the land, treaties, reserves and settlers today. The largely Mennonite and Lutheran community and the Young Chippewyan people of the small Saskatchewan town of Laird give us a glimpse of the work of reconciliation.

Reflections to Spark Conversation on Christian Theology

Ecumenical Working Group on Residential Schools

Downloadable at: <http://www.holytrinitytoronto.org/wp/2016/01/ecumenical-working-group-on-residential-schools/>

This paper contends that Canadian Christian theology is “not yet sufficient to address the churches’ complicity in historical violence and injustice against Indigenous peoples, perpetrated in Christ’s name, or to confront the injustices that continue”. If we were to heed the challenges of this paper our church would be radically changed.



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It is here that the Church moves from intellectual notions of ecumenism to the often joyful, and equally often difficult and messy, on the ground work of relating to others who do not experience the world or faith in the same ways we do. While ecumenism produces meaningful carefully worded statements, documents and programs, intercultural ministry is the day to day messy and full of mistakes how to be in relationship.

Intercultural ministry is conflict, misunderstandings, differing ways of decision making, the realities of different access to power and influence, wrestling with how all can be included, knowing ourselves and our culture as we approach the other, and having our eyes and hearts opened to different ways of experiencing and knowing the Creator... just to name some of the creative work that is required.

It is in intercultural ministry that we are discovering and creating a new set of tools and resources for being a people of faith. In this work intercultural ministry is the required imagination of ecumenism.

Rev. Jonathan Schmidt is the director of the Canadian Churches’ Forum and enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program at the Toronto School of Theology.

¹ Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission.* 1996. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books. 368ff

² Dadosky, John D. *Methodological Presuppositions for Engaging the Other in Post-Vatican II Context: Insights from Ignatius and Lonergan.* *Journal of Interreligious Studies.*

³ Rahner, Karl. *Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II.* *Theological Studies* 40:4 (1979: Dec) p716ff.

⁴ Legge, Marilyn J. *In the Company of God and One Another: Feminist theo-ethics, heterogeneous publics and intercultural churches.* in Monro, Anita and Stephen Burns (eds). *Public Theology and the Challenge of Feminism.* 2015, Routledge.

A Memo . . .



*Carmen Ramirez, DUIM
intercultural mentor*

Carmen Ramirez, a Latina Pentecostal pastor, has served as intercultural mentor for a number of the Toronto Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry (DUIM) programs, and has been a long-time supporter and shaper of the programs. The intercultural mentor is someone with a lifetime of living between their birth culture and Canada’s dominant culture. They provide pastoral care, eyes and ears from the margins, support, and challenge to the participants in the program. These are her words on the closing day of the first DUIM program in 2013.

A MEMO...

What I would like for you to remember

If I raise my voice it does not mean that I am angry

Remember I sometimes I break the law to protect or feed my family,
understand I am just trying to survive

Remember I may not look black but I may be black

Remember that I might hate myself because I want to be you, if you
observe this in me encourage me to love myself

Remember sometimes I may not want to talk to you, but love will
prevail over any evil and rejection that has been experienced by me

Remember I will know if your love is genuine, just like an abused
woman knows when her abuser is about to strike.

Remember you must love the other in order to be effective in your work.
So I ask will you hesitate when your son or daughter wants to marry
the other?

Remember that I am smart and capable of solving my own problems;
sometimes I just need some tools, other times it’s the English language
that is difficult for me

Remember that sometimes I miss the family members I left behind, so
I have fiestas in order to fill in the empty spaces, this self care for me

Remember that sometimes we need to sit and talk about “fixing the
world” as a community even though no action is taken

Remember not to give up on us just because we are “complicated”
people

My ancestors are indigenous women who were raped by Spanish
men, African men and women who were slaves, some inter-married
because they loved and here I am

Remember that my family is most important to me, everything I do, I
do for them

Most importantly, remember that I would die protecting my family.

Carmen Nuñez-Ramírez

DUIM Intercultural Mentor

Summer 2013

Remembering Marjorie Powles



*Marjorie Powles and her
husband Cyril.*

In 2010 Marjorie and Cyril Powles were the first recipients of the Canadian Churches Forum “Katharine Hockin Award,” given to Canadians who have contributed in a significant way to Global Mission and Ministry.

At that award event there was an account of Marjorie’s significant contributions: to Canadian approaches to mission; students (Canadian and global); women and lay people in ministry; the life of the Anglican Church of Canada; the Canadian Council of Churches; and peoples and churches in places including Japan, Korea, the Solomon Islands, Madagascar, Mauritius, the Seychelles, and China.

Marjorie Powles passed away this year. Her obituary and reflections by Maylanne Maybee, Principal of the Centre for Christian Studies, another institution in which Marjorie played a significant role, can be found at: ccsonline.ca/2016/08/remembering-marjorie-powles/

2016 FORUM PROGRAMS



Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry

2016 saw a growing number of people connecting with the “Engage Difference Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry” (DUIM) program across Canada. DUIM was offered for the first time in Saskatoon, SK and Vancouver, BC. The program was again offered in Toronto as well as, in partnership with the Sandy Sauteaux Spiritual Centre, in Manitoba. 2016 saw conversations in Quebec toward a 2017 offering in Montreal. We also began talking with a group in Peterborough, ON as we look to offering a DUIM program shaped by intercultural ministry in smaller urban and rural areas.

Each of the offerings of DUIM looks and feels different as the local context intentionally shapes the program. Beyond the design of the program, the unique mix of participants in each setting shapes and drives the conversations. Some highlights of 2016: In Toronto a panel of newer immigrants giving an honest and frank description of their experience of the church in Canada; In Manitoba different ways of doing decision making between indigenous and non-indigenous participants meant at one point setting aside the planned program to wrestle with the intercultural dynamics of the group; Conversations in Montreal and a unique Quebec experience of interculturalism that has much to teach the rest of Canada; The blanket exercise as part of the program in Saskatoon; A Vancouver program whose participants reflected the growing Asian population and the relationship between cultures of the lower mainland.

2016 also saw the launch of a regular DUIM alumni and friends e-mail as a platform for building community and sharing resources for the now almost 200 people who have been involved in the program as participants, facilitators, or resource people. It is this group of people and the ways they are shaping their ministries that is the most inspiring part of this work. In an interview on Anglican.ca one of the alumni of the Saskatoon program, Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers, articulated a beautiful description of the reason for the DUIM program:

“If there was ever a mission for the Christian churches in today’s conflict-ridden world, it is to help us all to learn to welcome and embrace the one who is different as we are all children of the one God. The DUIM course, with its sensitively integrated and local approach, challenges persons of faith to choose listening before judging, sharing before walking away, receiving before dismissing, and loving before condemning. If we can help one another learn to do this a bit more each day, maybe we will live into a renewed relationship, both with God and with one another in all the complexities and diversity of this broken yet beautiful world God has created.”

Mission Personnel Programs

For the first year in its 95 year history the Canadian Churches Forum has not offered programs for Mission Personnel. Changing approaches to Mission, decreased capacities of national denominations, and an increase of local expressions of the Church as the focus of mission are all behind this change. Our member denominations recognize the importance of good process in supporting people engaged in this ministry so several consultations were held to determine how best to resource global partnerships while the Canadian Churches Forum continues to hold as a resource well designed programs of discernment, orientation, and re-entry for longer term global partnership relationships as well as the Learning for International Faith Engagement (LIFE) program for short term travel.

Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry

5-day interactive program with practical skills for intercultural ministry in your own context

Register now for 2017 programs.

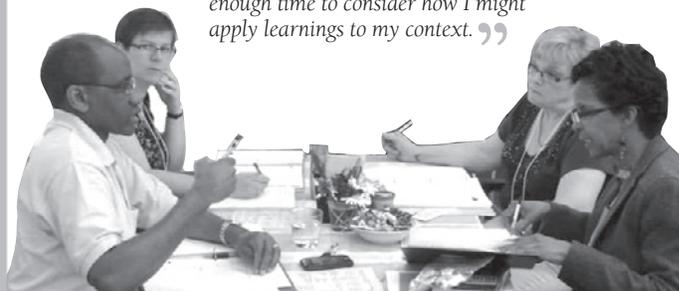
For more details and to register, visit: www.ccforum.ca

Fun, challenging, and useful for any ministry setting!

Join an exciting learning community with trained facilitators, an intercultural mentor, and diverse resource guests offering:

- A faith based approach to theories of culture and healthy relationships across difference.
- Understanding one’s own culture and how it shapes ministry with others.
- Examples of how diversity shapes ministry.
- Activities to apply learning to your context.

“It was one of the best learning events I have attended, in that it allowed me enough time to consider how I might apply learnings to my context.”



Learn more about
us and our programs

www.ccforum.ca

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Facebook

www.facebook.com/CanadianChurchesForum



Follow us
on **Twitter!**

twitter.com/canchurchforum

Why Support The Canadian Churches' Forum?

We provide a venue for dialogue, leadership development, and program innovation—all uniquely shaped by the Canadian context.



The current landscape for ecumenical collaboration is filled with opportunities and challenges.

Now more than ever, the Canadian Churches' Forum needs strong support from people who value the work we do, and value the richness ecumenical partnerships bring to global and Canadian intercultural mission and ministry.

You can help by telling others about our work and programs. Please also see the enclosed donation card and support our work with your contribution.

Founded in 1921, the Forum has been working for almost 100 years to respond to the changing context of Mission and Ministry. The Forum is a strong ecumenical connection for its partner denominations—and in the wider community—that is engaged in theological reflection on global, cultural, and faith issues. It is a resource to hundreds of individuals and congregations engaged in the important task of being faithful people in God's Church in the world.

Who We Are

As a program agency of the Canadian Council of Churches, we work ecumenically to foster intercultural leadership, learning, and ministry. Our members are the Anglican Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, Scarboro Missions, and the United Church of Canada. In addition, we work collaboratively with dozens of other faith-based agencies in Canada and internationally.

What We Do

We offer programs for people involved in intercultural mission and ministry, provide forums for dialogue, publish a number of resources, and encourage cross cultural and international dialogue. Our programs include:

Engage Difference! Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry

Engaging Others facilitator training

Mission Discernment

Re-entry for International Personnel

Orientation to Canada

Learning for International Faith Engagement (LIFE) Seminars

DUIM Alumni Network

Workshop Facilitation including Inter-Cultural Development and Anti-Racism Training

Publications

Sojourning:

A Leaders Guide for Short Term Mission Travel

On Your Way:

A Guide to Your Overseas Intercultural Experience

Forum Focus Annual Newsletter



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