



FORUM FOCUS

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MOVING TOWARD A *JUST* MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

By Rev. Dr. Sonia Hinds

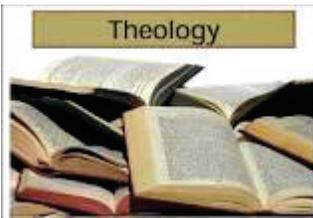
I am proposing the concept of a just multicultural church at this juncture and reclaiming the concept *multicultural*. However, I have qualified multicultural with a term that carries biblical weight - *just*. Robert McAfee Brown highlights that “if you read your Bible you will discover that justice appears to be God’s middle name,”¹ and Iris Marion Young maintains that “God’s justice, or putting things right, includes the absence of oppression, not just the presence of distributive rights.”²

If the proposal of a just multicultural church is to help churches of Canada to recognize their special role in society as it reflects on cultural diversity, then there are areas for further research that are being prompted.

Theological Education and Training

With the assumption that God is already working in the lives within and outside the Church, and that God uses all sorts and conditions of human beings to bring about God’s reign on earth, theological education and training is a critical component. There are two related areas to bear in mind. First, it (education and training) must be with the Bible read “as if we were on the other side;”³

and second, it must not be professionalized. As persons who are involved in theological education and training, reading the Bible “as if we were on the other side”... is “to become decolonizing readers who seek to build true conversations of equal subjects in our post-colonial and multicultural world.”⁴



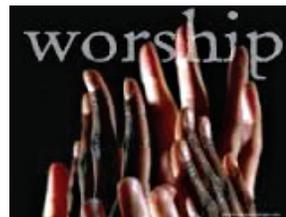
Theological education and training must not be professionalized. By that, I mean that those trained are not to be seen as persons who will be provided with marketable skills. Ideally, those trained are called to be about God’s mission as they are equipped and engage in equipping others to be part of God’s mission on earth. I believe that the laity must be actively involved in the curriculum planning, and teaching of the program.

This approach means that the seminars, classes, forums are to be at venues that are easily accessible. For example, parish halls and community centres are locations that can be used rather than having theological teaching and training confined to the lecture halls and classrooms of the divinity schools.

Qualitative Research into Worshipping Practices

Qualitative research into how parishes, in their worshipping practices, are responding to the growing multicultural communities is important for the growth of cultural diversity. Further research might give some clues about how these congregations can be spiritually strengthened and thus develop deeper relationships with God.

Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and Action



Ecumenical partners, other religious faith partners, and non-governmental organizations must also be at the table with resources from institutions such as the Toronto School of Theology being made available for this important work. The ecumenical partnerships and interfaith dialogue on issues such as immigration, faith, and culture involve “intellectual vitality and enlightened respect that enables the dialogue partner both to think about the other in one’s own terms and to articulate that thought in terms the other can grasp.”⁵

continued on page 2

¹ Robert McAfee Brown, “The ‘Preferential Option for the Poor’ and the Renewal of Faith,” quoted in Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 106.

² Iris Marion Young, “Justice and the Politics of Difference,” quoted in Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 106.

³ Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng, “Reading the Bible As If We Were on the Other Side: An Invitation to Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation,” in Ng, *That All May Be One*, 58.

⁴ Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 100.

⁵ Jacob Neusner, quoted in Michael Cook, *Justice, Jesus and the Jews: A Proposal for Jewish-Christian Relations* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 2.

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FORUM CELEBRATES 24 YEARS OF MINISTRY WITH PATTI TALBOT



Patti Talbot of The United Church of Canada was on the Board of the Canadian Churches' Forum for 19 years after serving as staff from 1989 – 1994. Her first involvement with the Canadian Churches' Forum was as a young child in the 1965 Mission Orientation Conference when she and her family were preparing for overseas ministry. With changes to her work portfolio, Patti left the Forum Board in 2013 but continues to collaborate closely in her role within the Church in Mission Unit of The United Church of Canada.

The Board celebrated Patti's tremendous contribution to the Forum with a special lunch and celebration at the 2013 Annual General Meeting on June 19.

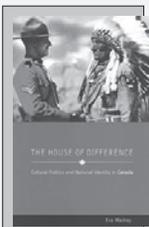
Patti Talbot with gift from the Forum Board

Recommended Resources

The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada

Eva Mackey. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2002.

Important reading for anyone wanting to understand the creation of the "Canadian Identity" as a uniquely inclusive, tolerant, and welcoming society. This book will either shake your view of Canada or give words to your nagging suspicions. As our churches are shaped by the beliefs of the Canadian identity, this book calls them to contemplate their approaches to inclusion, tolerance, or welcome.



Journey to Justice

Directed by Roger McTair. National Film Board of Canada. 2000

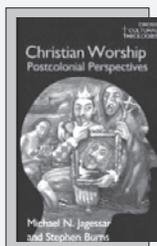
This documentary pays tribute to Canadians who stood up to racism in Canada. Focusing on the 1930's to the 1950s this movie tells of struggles of people of colour to fight laws and practices barring them from Canadian restaurants, movie theatres, towns, and employment.

Watch online at: http://www.nfb.ca/film/journey_to_justice/

Christian Worship: Postcolonial Perspectives

Michael Jagessar and Stephen Burns. Equinox Publishing. 2011.

Accessible application of postcolonial Biblical and theological criticism to Christian worship and liturgical practice. "Jagessar and Burns' critique is all the more persuasive for being informed by their status as members of confessional communities, for whom liturgy and worship are both political and personal. They show that postcolonial themes cut to the heart of living and loving as worshipping communities." *The Expository Times*.



MOVING TOWARD A JUST MULTICULTURAL CHURCH* *continued*

Developing a Just Multicultural Spirituality

This fourth area for further research is recognizing that the formation of a just multicultural church is accepting the invitation from God to develop a just multicultural spirituality. Donald Dorr calls this kind of spirituality an implicit theology, for "if we are reflective and articulate, we may eventually become explicit - and then it is very convincing because it [spirituality] represents a truth that is lived."⁶

Like Jesus, we must teach, preach, and practise an alternative to any system that robs human beings of their dignity. This is critical to ministry of a just multicultural church in a society where many might be faced with racial injustices. Robert Hovda states:

"We cannot do anything right in our ministries if we are still carrying around the burdens of sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other manifestations of the tendency to make one's self, one's group, one's culture the 'norm,' the 'standard' that measures all others. While it is true that life has laid these burdens on every single one of us (none has escaped), it is also true that God can and does liberate us."⁷

Persons practicing this kind of spirituality are likely to exhibit appreciation for and celebration of all persons, regardless of - and perhaps even because of - their differences. The mission is to help all to be no *Longer Strangers in the land of diversity*.⁸



*Excerpt from Rev. Dr. Hinds' dissertation entitled, *A Perspective of Cultural Diversity in an Anglican Setting*. Rev. Hinds received her Doctorate of Ministry from Trinity College in Toronto in 2103. Her research and ministry passion focus on foundations for vibrant intercultural ministries within the Christian Church, particularly among Anglicans in Canada. She is a member of the Forum Board and part of the team designing and facilitating the Canadian Churches Forum *Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry* program.

⁶ Donald Dorr, *Spirituality and Justice* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984).

⁷ Robert Hovda, "The Amen Corner," in *Liturgy in a Multicultural Community*, quoted in Mark Francis, *Liturgy in a Multicultural Community*. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 55.

⁸ It is a combination of two books *No Longer Strangers: Ministry in a Multicultural Society*, Romney Moseley, and *Intersecting Voices: Critical Theology in a Land of Diversity*, Schweitzer and Simon, eds.

2013 FORUM PROGRAMS



Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry

The Canadian Churches Forum successfully launched its new focus in 2013. Drawing on over 90 years of experience in global, cross-cultural ministry we are now a centre resourcing intercultural ministry in Canada. This is lived out in new programs, events, resources, and bringing together people as a 'forum'.

The centre piece of this work is the 6-day *Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry* (DUIM) program. A team of trained facilitators worked together to design the program drawing on the Forum's networks of resource people and organizations, anti-racism work, and the content of its overseas personnel programs.

In the spring of 2013 the first DUIM program gathered 15 participants from The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, Our Lady's Missionaries, and the Sisters of Notre Dame (USA). Offered in Toronto in 2013, it will be offered in other locations beginning in 2014. For more detailed program information and updates, follow us on Facebook or visit www.ccforum.ca.

October Re-Entry

Ten participants from The United Church of Canada, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, The Episcopal Church, and the United Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ joined this 4-day residential program October 17-20 in Toronto. The group included individuals returning from short-term international theological internships and accompaniment placements as well as from long-term service in Tanzania, Zambia, Israel/Palestine, Peru, Nicaragua, and Jamaica. The re-entry program provides a critical space for returning ministry personnel to contemplate how they integrate their international experiences into their lives in Canada and the US.

For more information about Forum activities follow us on Facebook or visit www.ccforum.ca



Don't Miss Spring L.I.F.E Seminar at Tatamagouche, NS, April 5 – 6, 2014

For more information and to register, visit www.ccforum.ca

Learning for International Faith Engagement (LIFE) Seminar

September 21-22: Eight participants from The United Church of Canada participated in the Fall seminar. Participants included Kuriko Fujiyoshi, visiting partner from the Dohoku Centre in Japan. She was joined by others contemplating visits to Israel/Palestine and to Jamaica.

November 11-22: The Forum and The United Church of Canada offered an expanded 10-day LIFE Seminar hosted by Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Palestine/Israel to 10 participants from The United Church of Canada. The visit included tours of Holy pilgrimage sites, theological reflection, and participation in portions of Sabeel's 9th Annual International Conference, *The Bible and The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. Embedded in the itinerary was content for LIFE leadership to prepare participants to lead future "Come and See" visits in response to *A Moment of Truth: Kairos Palestine* document.

Mission Discernment Event

This 3-day event helps participants discern their interest in and suitability for placement with global partners and for the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. It was offered late in the fall of 2013.

Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry

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

Register now for winter and spring 2014 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.

“I loved it – thanks for a transformative week, and for your gentleness and wisdom as facilitators.”

- participant, June 2013 DUIM





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Like us on Facebook!

The Canadian Churches Forum's Facebook page is a growing wealth of resources for intercultural ministry including recommended readings, videos, pictures, reflections and events.

If you are not a Facebook user, you can look at our page like any website. If you are on Facebook you can support us by "liking" us and sharing our posts with others.

Why Support The Canadian Churches' Forum?

Our work weaves together a history of over 90 years of ecumenical intercultural ministry and global engagement.



The current landscape for ecumenical collaboration is filled with opportunities and challenges. Now more than ever, the Forum needs strong support from individuals who value the work we do and the richness of ecumenical partnerships for mission and ministry. Please see the enclosed appeal and support our work with your contribution.

Founded in 1921, The Canadian Churches Forum has been working ecumenically for over 90 years to respond to the changing context of Mission and Ministry. The Forum is a strong ecumenical presence among its partner denominations and in the wider community 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

We are an ecumenical agency that works in partnership 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, Scarborough 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:

- Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry*
- Mission Discernment*
- Re-entry for International Personnel*
- Orientation to Canada*
- Learning for International Faith Engagement (LIFE) Seminars*
- 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
- Coming Home:**
A Re-entry Workbook for Returned Missionaries and Volunteers
- Here Among Us**
A Guide to Intercultural Experience for Visitors to Canada
- Forum Focus Annual Newsletter**



FORUM FOCUS

Canadian Churches' Forum 2013

Revenue	Actual 2012	Estimated 2013
Partner Churches	85,500.00	72,800.00
Donations/Bequests	4,493.00	4,000.00
Program Fees	170,896.00	51,125.00
Investment	23,783.00	20,000.00
Publication Sales	2,351.00	1,210.00
Total Revenue	\$ 287,023.00	\$149,135.00
Expenses	Actual 2012	Estimated 2013
Staff	134,946.00	131,483.00
Programs	117,895.00	37,045.00
Publications	4,256.00	4,250.00
Rent & Insurance	19,229.00	17,500.00
Administrative & Office	15,786.00	13,800.00
Total Expenses	292,112.00	204,078.00

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Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Canadian Churches' Forum