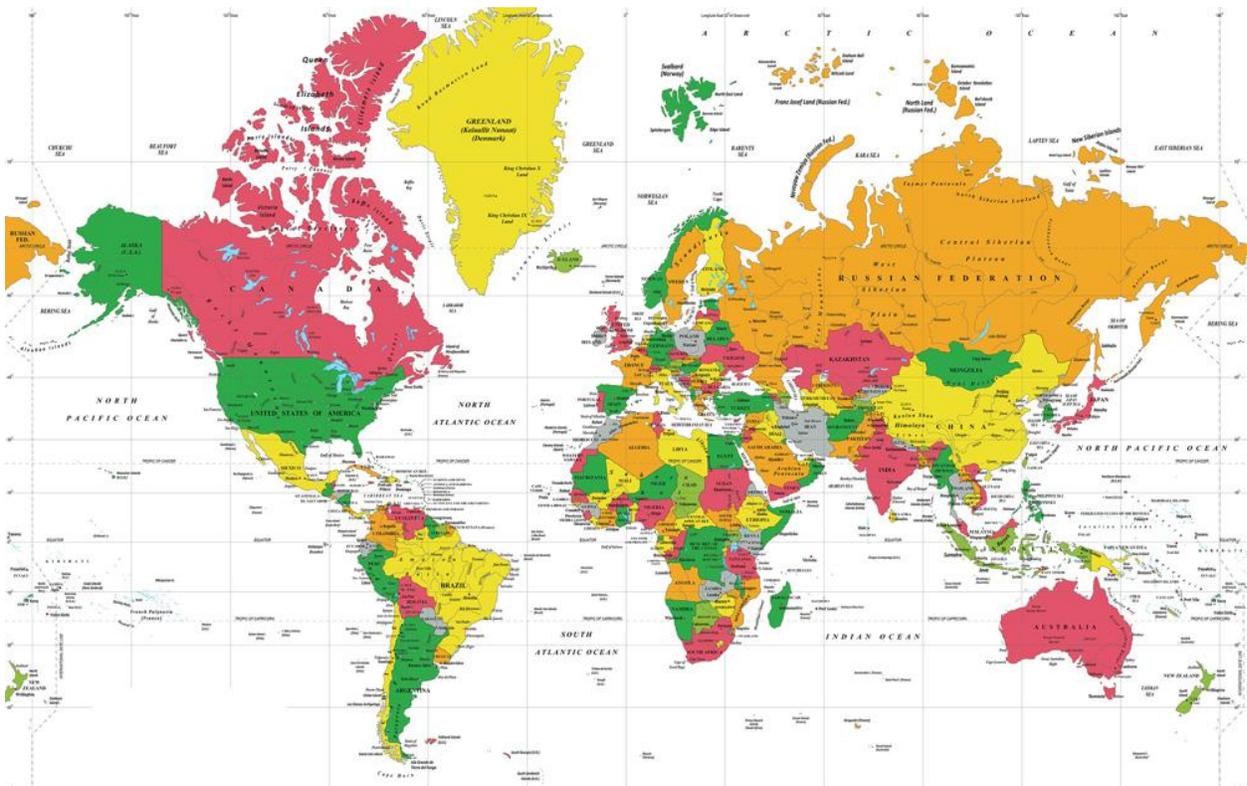


Network Council Meeting
Bengaluru, India
July 19–22, 2017

“CATHOLIC THEOLOGY WORLDWIDE” Regional Reports



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- Countries of Origin of the Delegates at the INSeCT Council Meeting 2017

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Introduction to Regional Reports

The 2017 Network Council Meeting participants, most of whom are presidents of their Catholic societies from around the world, wrote the regional reports contained herein. I asked each one for a 2–3 page report on the state of theology in their region or country. As is the custom at INSeCT's Network Council Meetings, authors will present their report orally in panel presentations. At this meeting, Network Council Meeting participants will then have a presentation and conversation with members of the faculty and student body of the Indian Catholic Community at Dharmaram College.

The purpose of these reports is to provide a glimpse of the state of Catholic theology from around the globe. They address concerns of a given region and/or country, and its understanding of the role of theology in the life of the church, academy and/or society. Since INSeCT operates in three languages – that is, English, Spanish, and French – the reports herein appear in one of these three languages. These reports offer a response to one or more of the following three questions.

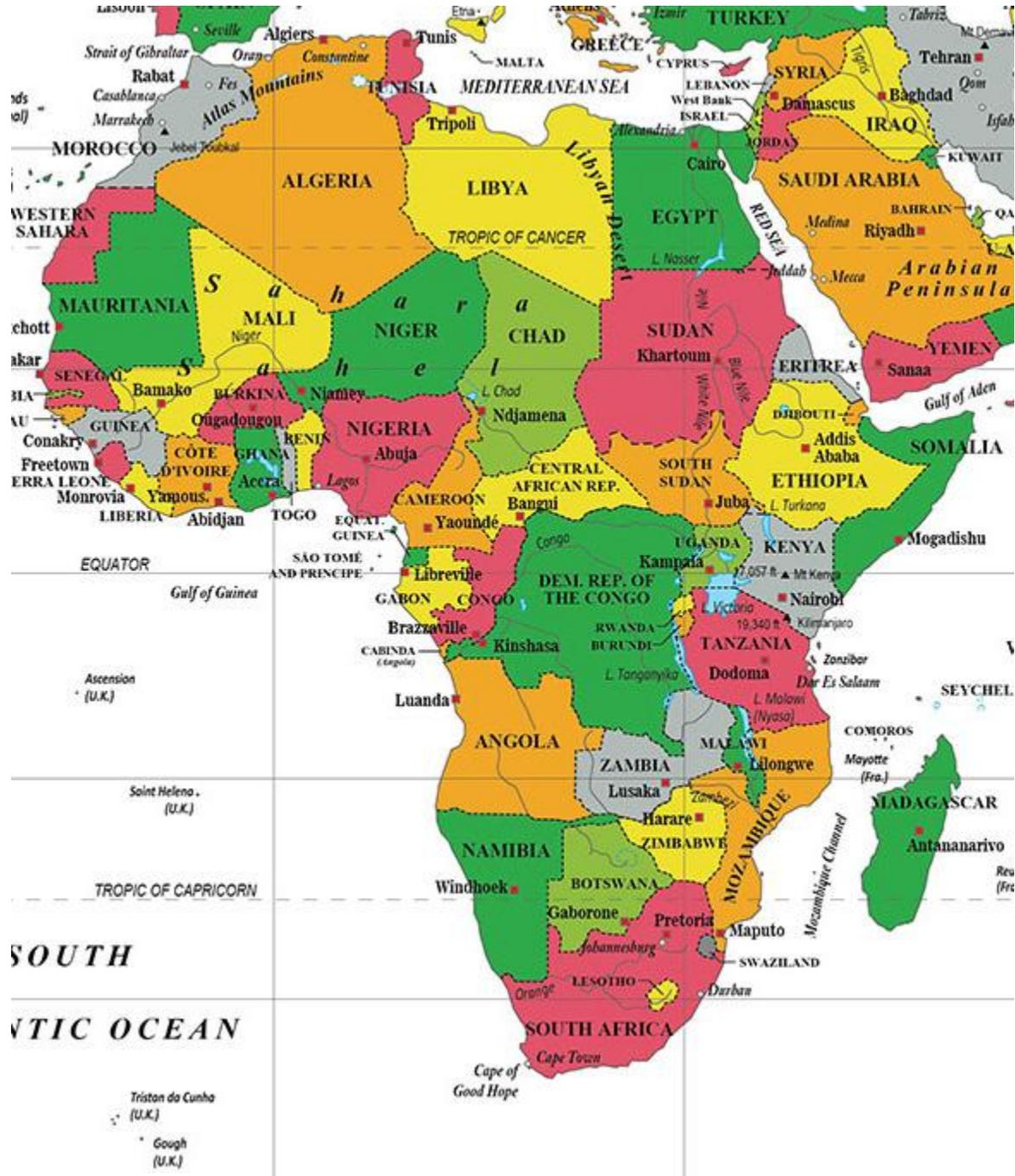
- (1) How was the 50th anniversary of Vatican II acknowledged in the theological and/or ecclesial community in your region and/or country?
- (2) As you think about the coming decades, what do you foresee as a significant opportunity for the development of theology in your region and/or country?
- (3) As you think about the coming decades, what do you foresee as a significant threat to the development of theology in your region and/or country?

Most of the authors of these reports wrote on behalf of their Catholic theological society, yet some reports were written to reflect the perspective of a given author and not that of a particular theological society.

I grouped these reports first by continent and then alphabetically by the author's last name. This regional reports document was created with the assistance of the president of INSeCT Dr. Martin M. Lintner, and with the assistance of Dr. Shaji George Kochuthara, Associate Professor of Theology at Dharmaram College is serving as our host in Bangalore, India. Thank you as well to Mr. Jack Nuelle, a graduate student at Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry, for his technical assistance.

Nancy Pineda-Madrid, Ph.D.
Vice President of INSeCT
July 21, 2017

Africa



Reports from African Theologians

- | | | |
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Prof. Patrick Chilambwe, PhD/STD
Vice Chancellor
The Zambia Catholic University
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Catholic Theology Worldwide: The Case of Zambia

Introduction

Zambia is a country in the southern part of Africa with a land area of 752,614 km²; and the population stands at about 15 million people. It got independence from Great Britain in 1964. The country is endowed with an array of natural resources that include land and various mineral deposits. The economy is mainly based on exports mainly minerals.

Catholic Christianity officially arrived in Zambia in 1891 when the first missionaries, the missionaries of Africa commonly known as the White Fathers, set up a mission at Mambwe Mwela in northern Zambia. After then, several missionaries from various congregations and parts of Europe started to set up missions in the territory to be known later as Zambia. These missionaries formed the nucleus of the church as they set up schools to educate and churches to evangelize people. Later administrative hierarchies continued to be erected by the Holy See. Hence by the time of Vatican II, Zambia had representation by the some bishops, who were at that time mainly white missionaries. Zambia will celebrate 125 years of Catholicism this year, 2017. However, it is worth noting that, Zambia is founding member of the regional conference of bishops called the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA).

AMECEA (then ITEBEA) was the idea of the Bishops of Tanganyika (Tanzania) who in 1960 proposed, through the then Apostolic Delegation in Nairobi, that there be collaboration among Catholic Bishops in the region. The countries under the Nairobi Apostolic Delegation were Kenya, Nyasaland (Malawi), Uganda, Sudan, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). When other Bishops in the region agreed to the necessity of working together, the Apostolic Delegate consulted Rome and the approval was granted. Therefore the participation of Zambia at the Vatican II should be seen in the larger context of an African church before independence.

1. Participation of AMECEA Bishops

The participation of the African Church at Vatican II may be characterized differently by various protagonists but a good section generally holds that “the presence of Africa at Vatican II was marginal and by proxy.... Although technically and juridically the Church was no longer 'missionary,' it is hardly possible to imagine that the African Church counted very much as an influence on the Council. Apart from regular interventions from the principal spokesman, Cardinal L. Rugambwa, only sporadic voices were heard from Africa....and that It is obvious from an examination of the sixteen documents that the Council was largely a forum for the concerns of the Churches of Europe and America in the 1960s....”. This view, though true, is quite pessimistic in the sense that it paints an impression that due to lack of participation Africa has not benefited anything from Vatican II. However, there are optimistic views like that of Emmanuel Ifesieh (p.63) who posits that “the growth of church in Africa in our time can be linked strongly to the role of Pope John XXIII and to the Council that he convoked: the Second Vatican Council.”

According to him “Vatican II, by its openness to the God-given values in African traditional religion and culture, has initiated a new era for the Church in Africa, when Christianity will no longer appear as a foreign religion but as one that brings to fulfillment the deepest longings of African religiosity.”(p.64). He thinks that, “Fifty years after the council, this positive and optimistic assessment bears the endorsement of several theologians and historians in Africa. Although numerically and theologically insignificant,

Africa's dignified presence and participation at the council contributed to what historian of Vatican II Alberto Melloni designates as 'multi-coloured universality' of the church." (p.65)

2. Reception of Vatican II in Zambia

Richard McBrien defines reception as the "process by which the body of the faithful, or a significant portion thereof, accepts and abides by an official teaching or disciplinary decree of the hierarchical Church." (p.18). Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator confesses that reception is a rather complex issue since in church history, councils have encountered objection, resistance, and rejection. However, according to Peter Henriot, "The Church in the Modern World has found an incarnation -- indeed, an inculturation -- in the church in the modern world of Africa and Zambia provides a good example. The relationship between church and society has been very dynamic, with a strong church's social teaching adding value to political, economic and social developments."

2.1 Liturgy and Music

After *Sacrosantum Concilium* (1963), several liturgical developments have happened. Notable ones include liturgical music, the use of local languages, and active participation of the people. Zambian liturgy is known for its vivacity. There is active participation by the laity of all forms. Zambian mass is lively as it is indeed a celebration!

2.2 Lay Participation

Since Vatican II, the lay participation in Zambia has increased exponentially. This began with the setting up of parish councils to that of the small Christian communities. The laity have come to a great degree to 'own' the church. The participation has taken various forms that include being catechists, prayer leaders, communion helpers, etc. The lay community is rather well represented by the women.

The youth movement has also taken its share of participation in the church in Zambia in that in many areas, youth groups have their own semi-autonomous organisation (semblance of a parish council).

2.3 Relationship between the church and society

Since Vatican II the Catholic Church in Zambia has over the past fifty years played a very significant role in the social and economic development of the country. This has been done through many ways. Some of these include:

- direct service provision through various institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals, orphanages, trades schools, etc)
- through explicit social/economic reflections on key issues facing the country at large
- setting up church bodies to make active civic engagement (Justice and Peace Programmes in all the dioceses, national election monitoring bodies, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection - for social policy analysis, etc)

Hence we can say that today the church is conspicuous and much respected with regard to influencing the social, economic and political life of the people, including the religious life of individuals and the community.

3. Acknowledged of the 50th Anniversary of Vatican II in the Theological and/or Ecclesial Community in Zambia

- Many people in Zambia have a poor knowledge and appreciation of the history of the church
- Not many people really understand what the church was before Vatican II; this may include the priests, religious and the laity
- Therefore, it has become difficult for many people to really appreciate the theological developments that were brought about in Vatican II
- At best what the 50th anniversary of Vatican II did was to remind the people that there was an important ecumenical council that took place in the history of the church called Vatican II, but with regard to the impact that cannot be clearly ascertained.

4. Future Significant Opportunities for the Development of Theology in Zambia

- A problem that we face at the moment is that the study of theology has largely been a reserve of the few in the Catholic Church. It is a privilege for those that have had an opportunity to go to the seminary or other house of formation. Whereas for the majority of the lay faithful they have nothing available for them that could provide them with good theological training/ teaching.
- Since seminaries are not open to the lay faithful; perhaps it is time that we opened up theological training in universities (Catholic University) that would have no boundaries between the laity, clergy, religious and even Protestants.
- Until we have opened theology to the lay faithful, the church will remain poor in terms of theological reflection and development.

5. Future Significant Threats to the Development of Theology in Zambia

- None availability of open theological institution (meaning available to all)
- Proliferation of non-Catholic theological institutions that sometimes teach theologies that are opposed to the sound tradition of the church
- The non-availability of vibrant local theologians; who would articulate the traditional faith to address local needs

Conclusion

Zambia has seen monumental developments in the church since Vatican in many areas. These include, among many others, liturgy, place of the word of God in Christian life, vocations, involvement of the laity in the church, youth, formation of the laity, etc. However there are a lot of issues that need to be attended to in the next fifty years for the church to be sustainable in various ways.

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Catholic Theological Society of Southern Africa: Annual Report 2015-2016

Executive Committee

The main work of the Society is carried out by the executive committee. Its members are: Mr. Itumeleng Mothoagae (president) Sr. Prof. Francisca Chimhanda (deputy president) Dr. Ruth Mampane (executive secretary) Mrs. Sue Mackinlay (treasurer) Fr. Dr. Anselm Laurence Prior, OFM (minutes secretary) Additional members Dr. Nontando Hadebe Dr. David Tutty Fr. Thabang Nkadimeng Mr Tshepo Sebetseli. The members are able to keep in contact through Skype and e-mail and phone. Membership The Society is open to laity, religious and priests who either have a qualification in theology or an interest in the subject which enables them to engage in theological discourse. The executive keeps in contact with all the members of the Society at regular intervals. All are invited to the annual conference which has customarily been held in September each year. The theme and call for papers are advertised at the beginning of the year. The papers are published either in a book or through journals. One journal in particular Grace and Truth which is Catholic often publishes our papers but we are not limited to it. There is a membership fee that is charged to help keep the Society viable.

The status of theology in South Africa

The status of theology in South Africa is to be understood within a context of South Africa as a predominantly Protestant Church. Since the time of apartheid up until the dawn of democracy in South Africa, institutions of higher learning in South Africa have concentrated predominantly on reformed theology. However during the struggle against apartheid theologies were united across difference and this is often the case with issues of injustice. There is a strong tradition of liberation theology in South Africa.

The Circle of Concerned African women Theologians is both ecumenical and interfaith with several Catholic women as members and represents a feminist voice rooted in African context that challenges both culture and religion in pursuit of a liberation theology for women. The Circle has through its numerous publications both in books and articles made a contribution to the liberation theology in South Africa. Currently due to the high levels of violence against women and sexual minorities (lesbians, gays, transgender, bisexual, intersex and queer – LGTBIQ) new liberation theologies are emerging at universities such as Stellenbosch and University of KwaZuluNatal. This is an example of the contextual nature of theology in South Africa that seeks to respond to local challenges. There has also been revival of a number of theologies such as Black, Public, Ecology and African theologies in response to the multiple challenges facing the region and South Africa in particular. Theology continues to be dynamic and relevant. The Catholic Church is a minority in South Africa merely 6-7% of Christians but their impact is disproportionate to their size. The status of Catholic Theologians trained at state institutions which are predominantly reformed or liberal is precarious particularly in relation to the hierarchy. As a result the Church leadership do not recognize these qualifications. This has resulted in Catholic theologians not being able to work in Catholic institutions such as the seminaries. Most Catholic theologians are employed in institutions such as secular universities. These Catholic theologians participate in various theological discourses as employees of those institutions. While it is crucial to state that not all institutions have Catholic theologians because most of them reflect the theology of the Reformed Church.

Catholic Institutions

There are three Catholic institutions of higher learning in South Africa namely, St. Augustine Institute, the Jesuit Institute and the Joseph's Oblate Scholasticate (Cedara) and St John Vianney in Pretoria. Two of these institutions offer academic qualifications up to PhD level. All three institutions participate in the theological discourse in the country. However, one of these institutions, a seminary, in country does not take part in theological discourse in the country. While these institutions both Catholic and government have active theologians, the leadership of the Church does not consult them. One example is the production of a book entitled God, Love, Life and Sex by bishops where there was no consultation with Catholic Theologians. The book has been heavily criticised for its didactic approach which does not take into account the life situation of so many citizens. The leadership does not seem to use the Catholic institutions as a pool for theological insights, even though the CTSSA was founded to fulfil such a mandate. Theological Discourse

The CTSSA participates in various theological conversations as its members are also members of various academic theological societies in Southern Africa. It is in these spaces that the members engage academically and theologically as Catholic theologians. The CTSSA participates with all other academic societies in an ecumenical joint conference of theological societies which takes place every four years and it's the only religious society that is a member. In other words, in the country the CTSSA is the only society in South Africa that bears the name Catholic or is link to a church. Lay activism

WAACSA WE ARE ALL CHURCH is a movement of Catholics in Southern Africa who are committed to the renewal of our Church envisaged by the Second Vatican Council. We believe that renewal requires freedom for responsible inquiry and debate about matters of faith and morals, and the structures and practices of our Church. Our vision is of a Church of love and justice in which the voices of all its members are heard and valued, and which is fully engaged with a changing world. Their mission according to their website is as follows:

Our mission is to strive for a Catholic church that upholds the following values:

- Upholds primacy of conscience, and the need for questioning and dialogue
- Openly addresses contemporary concerns such as priestly celibacy and women in ministry
- Engages all members in its deliberations
- Embraces all of its members without judging or excluding
- Blogspot: www.wearechurchsa.blogspot.com

WAACSA is an affiliate of the International Movement We Are Church (IMWAC), a network of independent groups representing different cultures where Catholic Christians are endeavouring to live out the message of Jesus Christ Sisters for Justice This is a group comprising of religious sisters and laity committed to social justice and have a history of activism during apartheid and continue to confront social injustice, corruption, abuse of women and other social violations of the rights of citizens.

Sodalities in parishes Every parish has sodalities that are carrying out various acts of mercy in their parishes and communities. For example Holy Trinity Catholic Church serves the homeless through daily lunch, weekly bible study and clinic. Conference 2015 This conference was held at Koinonia Retreat and Conference Centre, Johannesburg, 22-23 September. The theme was The Challenges of Pope Francis to the Southern African Church. This theme was inspired by His Holiness' call for a poor church alongside the poor.

Topics presented and discussed included:

- *Evangelii Gaudium*
- analysis of the pope's insights into economics and poverty
- the pastoral insights and strategies of Pope Francis
- the synod on the family
- the pope's contribution to change within the church
- application of the pontiff's teaching to Southern Africa.

Joint Conference of Theological Societies 2016

For the third time our Society participated in this event which occurs every two or three years. This year the meeting took place 11-15 July and altogether 14 theological societies from South Africa took part. Over 400 participants from many countries gathered at the University of Pretoria to discuss the theme: Faith and South African Realities. Topics included: • faith and education in South Africa • faith and the construction of identities • faith and cultural realities in South Africa • faith, missionality and the decolonial turn • faith, public theology, economic and ecological realities. The society took no less than eight slots in the programme. Catholic theologians were also represented in other societies, such as the New Testament Society, Church History Society, the Women Theologians' Forum and the Institute for Theology and Religion. The next joint conference will be held at the University of Stellenbosch in 2019. Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians was started in Accra Ghana in 1989 and seeks to critically engage religion and culture in issues pertaining to the oppression of women in Africa. Two of our members are part of the Circle chapter in Southern Africa. Dr Nontando Hadebe is the regional chair of the organization and Sr. Prof. Francisca Chimhanda (deputy president) is member of one of the chapters of the Circle. In their capacities as Circle members they have attended conferences and published papers related to the status of women in their diversity in relation to the challenges in Africa.

INSeCT

The Society is a member of the International Network of Societies for Catholic Theology (INSeCT). Presidents of our Society have participated in meetings in recent years. The next meeting will be hosted by the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate at Dharmaram College in Bangalore, India, 19-23 July 2017. Our presence there will depend on financial assistance. The steering committee of INSeCT keeps theological societies informed of events that are occurring around the world, particularly concerning the international research project 2014-2017: A question of gender justice: the role of women in decision making in Church and Society. The committee has also been involved in: inviting member societies to include the research project in their annual conference, the creation of a Facebook group, the regular update of INSeCT's webpage, the posting of any available information of activities of the single societies, and the publication of an annual newsletter of the president. Publication There are still copies for sale of Tradition Fixed and Mobile: Essays in Honour of Fr. Prof. Rodney Moss. It is edited by Itumeleng Daniel Mothoagae and Anselm Laurence Prior, OFM and is published by the Research Institute for Theology and Religion at UNISA. Members of the Academy of Science of South Africa evaluated the book. They reported that the publication is scholarly; it is published on the basis of the reputation of the authors. Also, the contribution they make in the field of theology is new, and shows originality and uniqueness. The book may be purchased for R150.00 from the address in the letterhead.

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African Catholic Theology in Kenya

African Catholic Theology in Kenya may be said to have carved its own space within African Theology and it continues to thrive despite some challenges. It has been encouraged by the openings afforded it by the second Vatican Council, the two African Synods, as well as the active encouragement of Popes Paul VI and St John Paul II. Despite negligible presence of Africa's impact on Vatican II, it nevertheless recognized the value of multiculturalism and theological pluralism and catalysed African theologians to promote an African theological discourse. It also enabled them to develop an African Liturgical celebration of the Mass. This rediscovery of the value of cultural and theological pluralism and of the African personality, identity and authenticity was reinforced by Pope Paul VI's 'Discourse to African Bishops in Kampala, Uganda' and in his letter, *Africae Terrarum*, 1969.

The call in this letter, for Africans to be their own evangelisers and the urge to develop their own theology saw the setting up of theological institutes and associations which afforded space for theological reflection and development of African theology. The Gaba Pastoral Institute in Eldoret, Kenya and which publishes the Journal, *Africa Ecclesial Review (AFER)*, has provided a forum for especially the fleshing out of the theology of inculturation. Theological Associations like the Ecumenical Symposium of East African Theologians was an initiative of Catholic theologians supported by MaryKnoll Fathers of New York. This association which started in 1989, continues to be a forum and avenue for doing ecumenical theology and much of it from various African Catholic Theologians like Charles Nyamiti, Laurenti Magesa, Peter Kanyandago, Sr. Nasimiyu Wasike, the late John Mary Walligo and others.

African theology has largely been crystalized around the themes, as mentioned earlier, of inculturation and has gone on to probe, interrogate and engage with realities outside the African churches with regard to morality, worship, dogma, Scripture, pastoral activities, evangelisation, and interreligious dialogue. It has also continued to engage African societies at various levels, political, social, and economic. Life in Africa is much more complex and African theology is now influenced by and open to wider concerns. The quest for African identity, political, ethnic conflicts in post-independence Kenya, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the continued impoverishment of people, sexual and gender based violence, hunger and food insecurity, the emergence of the internet and social media, the rise of militant Islam and the exponential growth of neo-Pentecostalism have fundamentally altered the African landscape.

All these issues have influenced the agenda of African theology as it engages with these issues. In the last 4 years, Theology which has been produced in various forums and conferences in major Catholic Institutions like the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Tangaza University College, Hekima University College, Marist University College among others has involved reflecting on these issues from various perspectives. Papers presented in these conferences have been published in books or Institutional Journals.

To return to Vatican II, The Institute of Theology, of Tangaza University College organized a conference on the Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes*) in 2015. The conference theme was 'Going forth of the Fourth Church'. The discussions centred on the genesis and character of the document, evaluating its impact within the contemporary situation and the way forward. The consensus was that the character, methods and focus of mission has changed tremendously and theology of mission has to be aware of these changes if it has to be relevant.

Another crucial initiative was a theological Research project – the Theological Colloquium on Church Religion and Society in Africa (TCCRSA) convened by Prof. Fr. Orobator of the Jesuit College of

Theology in Nairobi Kenya. It was a three year theological project from 2013-2015 on the 50th anniversary of Vatican II. A primary objective of the study process was to develop, model and sustain a new and innovative methodology of the process of theological reflection, research and study at the service of the African Church and the World Church. Catholic scholars from all over Africa were involved in this study. Four volumes were published out of this research project and they show the current trends in Catholic theology in Africa.

As for the rest of the people in Kenya apart from the academics, they were not aware that Vatican II had been around for the last 50 or so years. It is mainly the vibrant liturgy and the use of vernacular languages that the older lay folks may remember was a result of Vatican II reforms. In terms of the inculturation theology, African Catholic theologians are unanimous that the process has been superficial and has not impacted on the official Church. Most of the African theology produced in the academy, remains in libraries and bookshops, consumed only by our students but not the general populace. In the next fifty years, efforts should be made to blend theory with practice if theology has to be relevant to the African context. There is also need for continuous formation of the laity in order to empower them to engage in theological reflection.

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Rapport Sur l'Etat de la Theologie en Afrique Occidentale

Au cours de ces 10 dernières années, il s'est développé dans la sous-région une théologie en trois pôles : le pôle de la théologie de l'Inculturation qu'affectionne l'Université Catholique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (UCAO) ; le pôle de la théologie de l'Interculturalité privilégiée par la Faculté Théologique des Jésuites de l'Afrique et de Madagascar (FTJAM) ; le pôle de la théologie du développement tenue en grande estime surtout par les Dominicains dans leur Institut Saint Thomas d'Aquin de Yamoussoukro (ISTAY)¹.

Depuis environ trois ans on assiste à l'accentuation de nouvelles thématiques telles que la théologie de la cité, la théologie écologique et la théologie de la femme. Notre rapport se focalisera essentiellement sur ces trois derniers pôles théologiques.

1. La théologie de la cité

De nombreux défis à relever se présentent aux pays africains et à l'Eglise-Famille de Dieu en Afrique dans les années à venir. Un des défis de l'heure, qui se pose avec acuité, est celui de l'urbanisation galopante en Afrique, phénomène difficilement contrôlable du fait des flux migratoires des campagnes vers les zones urbaines. Les recherches et les conclusions très remarquables ces deux dernières décennies sur le phénomène de l'urbanisation africaine sont dignes d'éloges et fort remarquables. Les statistiques des Nations Unies, estimant qu'en 2020 plus de 60 % d'Africains vivront en ville, demeurent tout de même une interpellation pour des chercheurs que nous sommes. En effet, l'homogénéité de la vie socioculturelle en campagne bat en retraite au profit de nouvelles appartenances identitaires créées par la technologie de l'information et de la communication. La figure de ces communautés urbaines n'est pas homogène mais hétérogène. Désormais, l'interculturalité est le contexte de la vie urbaine.

En réalité, le phénomène urbain est une « nouvelle culture » qui fait de l'urbanisation un frein ou un levier pour l'inculturation et l'évangélisation en Afrique. Qui plus est, cette « nouvelle culture » qui crée un nouveau rapport à l'autre, devient un défi théologique qui en appelle, pour ainsi dire, à une théologie de la cité.

Dans cette optique l'Université Catholique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest – Unité Universitaire d'Abidjan (UCAO-UUA), dont l'option fondamentale est l'inculturation, veut faire de l'Afrique des villes d'une part, les « nouveaux aréopages » pour la « deuxième évangélisation », et d'autre part, prendre pour objet théologique le phénomène urbain. La Faculté de Théologie de ladite université a trouvé donc nécessaire de consacrer sa journée théologique du 16 février 2017 de l'année académique en cours sur le thème suivant : « **Urbanisation et inculturation en Afrique : quelle théologie de la cité pour la "deuxième évangélisation" ?** » Il n'y a rien d'humain, d'africain de surcroît qui ne trouve écho dans notre faculté.

Par une étude interdisciplinaire, dont plusieurs sous-thèmes ont constitué les différents axes principaux de cette journée théologique, la Faculté de Théologie a creusé alors à fond le phénomène urbain afin que dans un dialogue fécond et par un discours théologique, à la fois fidèle au Christ et respectueux de l'Afrique, la foi chrétienne et la raison humaine ouvrent l'Eglise-Famille de Dieu à une sensibilité kairologique pour une orthopraxie du vivre-ensemble en contexte interculturel de l'Afrique des villes.

Cette thématique appelle une autre qui est très sentie en contexte urbain : le phénomène écologique. D'où le deuxième pôle de la théologie en Afrique subsaharienne : la théologie écologique.

¹ Ces trois pôles théologiques ont déjà été l'objet d'un rapport au colloque de l'INSeCT à Belo Horizonte en 2014.

2. La théologie écologique

La responsabilité de l'Homme sur l'humanité, a fait de lui un Co-créateur aux côtés du véritable créateur de l'univers visible et invisible. Toutefois, lorsque l'on considère de façon diachronique et synchronique, la façon dont il a géré et continue de gérer le patrimoine universel laissé à ses soins, on ne saurait passer sous silence un certain nombre de questions : Quels sont les faits qui nous interpellent ? L'homme est-il effectivement co-créateur ou simple destructeur ? Quels efforts pouvons-nous encourager ? Que faire pour un mieux-être du cosmos et de l'homme qui l'habite ?

Face à ces interrogations graves, l'on ne saurait garder un silence complice. Ainsi convient-il de porter un regard critique sur les affres de la croyance naïve dans les vertus du marché et du progrès technique, qui ne saurait occulter les inquiétudes suscitées par les biotechnologies, le clonage, les organismes génétiquement modifiés (OGM) etc...

C'est à ce titre que plus particulièrement, nos réflexions à l'Université Catholique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, - Unité Universitaire d'Abidjan (UCAO-UUA) s'inscrivent à la suite de *Laudato si*, dans la dynamique d'un appel à une révolution écologique, génératrice d'un changement de paradigme : l'écologie intégrale. Ce nouveau paradigme demande de bâtir de nouveaux modèles de développement, de définir à frais nouveaux le progrès. « Il ne suffit pas de concilier en un juste milieu la protection de la nature et le profit financier... il s'agit de redéfinir le progrès » (LS194). Ce progrès ne se confond pas avec la croissance, avec l'accumulation de richesses matérielles, avec l'augmentation du PIB... le vrai progrès consiste à augmenter la qualité de la vie. Voilà un vaste domaine de recherche ouvert : comment définir la qualité de vie ? Comment la mesurer ? Comment la faire croître ? etc.

En somme, nous soutenons avec force que crise écologique et crise sociale ne font qu'un. De ce point de vue, pour le Pape François « Il n'y a pas deux crises séparées, l'une environnementale et l'autre sociale, mais une seule et complexe crise socio-environnementale... (il faut) une approche intégrale pour combattre la pauvreté, pour rendre la dignité aux exclus et simultanément pour préserver la nature » (LS139). Il convient donc de promouvoir un dialogue entre les chrétiens, les scientifiques, les politiques. Mieux, un accent particulier est à mettre sur les « personnes concernées », c'est-à-dire surtout les plus démunis des habitants affectés par des projets de « développement ». Le pape est soucieux que toutes les parties prenantes aient droit au chapitre, surtout dans les pays où la mal gouvernance et la corruption entravent les processus démocratiques.

Au pôle théologie écologique, il importe d'ajouter celui de la théologie de la femme qui attire beaucoup d'intérêt en Afrique comme ailleurs aujourd'hui.

3. Théologie de la femme

Le champ de la réflexion théologique se trouve aujourd'hui de plus en plus situé, et pluridimensionnel. C'est à ce titre que nous nous inscrivons à la suite des tenants de la théologie de la femme, différente de la théologie féministe. Qu'entend-on par théologie de la femme ? Existe-t-il un discours spécifique de Dieu sur la femme ? Et bien d'autres questions. Toutes ces questions traduisent la difficulté d'une dénomination qui n'a jamais cessé d'éveiller des soupçons tant elle est souvent identifiée à la pensée féministe avec le ton revendicateur.

De fait, plusieurs ouvrages témoignent de l'importance d'une réflexion sur la femme et sa place dans la Bible. Ainsi, parler de la théologie de la femme nécessite une distinction de celle-ci avec la théologie féministe. La différence fondamentale est que la « théologie de la femme reste dans la continuité de la tradition de l'Eglise, surtout catholique marquée par le système patriarcal subordonnant la femme à l'homme. Tandis que la théologie féministe sans s'opposer à ce rôle d'épouse et de mère, refuse de cantonner la femme.

Il convient de noter que c'est un sujet qui est d'actualité ; mieux, un sujet qui suscite réflexions et objections au sein même de la section féminine du Conseil Pontifical pour les Laïcs. Toutefois, il a à ce titre retenu l'attention des papes Jean Paul II et François qui ont apporté leur pierre de touche à la question.

Cette thématique trouve aussi écho favorable dans la réflexion des théologiens africains qui voudraient donner à la femme la place de choix et le rôle qui lui reviennent dans la société en général et dans l'Eglise en particulier. L'Université Catholique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, -Unité Universitaire d'Abidjan- (UCAO-UUA) voudrait ne pas limiter la femme à ses seuls rôles d'épouse et de mère en envisageant de se pencher sur la question. Il s'agit de recourir à une approche multidisciplinaire sur le sujet, pour mieux situer la contribution de la femme à la mission de l'Eglise-Famille de Dieu.

Les théologiens africains subsahariens ont fait leur cette réflexion du Pape François sur la femme dont nous relatons ici quelques lignes en conclusion de notre rapport : « Il est nécessaire d'agrandir les espaces pour une présence féminine plus incisive dans l'Eglise. Je crains la solution du "machisme en jupe" car la femme a une structure différente de l'homme. Les discours que j'entends sur le rôle des femmes sont souvent inspirés par une idéologie machiste. Les femmes soulèvent des questions que l'on doit affronter. L'Eglise ne peut pas être elle-même sans les femmes et le rôle qu'elles jouent. Elles sont indispensables à l'Eglise. Marie, une femme, est plus importante que les évêques. Je dis cela parce qu'il ne faut pas confondre la fonction avec la dignité. Il faut travailler davantage pour élaborer une théologie approfondie du féminin. C'est seulement lorsqu'elle aura accompli ce passage qu'il sera possible de mieux réfléchir sur le fonctionnement interne de l'Eglise. Le génie féminin est nécessaire là où elles prennent les décisions importantes. Aujourd'hui le défi est celui-ci : réfléchir sur la place précise des femmes là aussi où s'exerce l'autorité dans les différents domaines de l'Eglise » (*Evangelii gaudium*, n° 347).

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Reception and Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Vatican II in Africa: What Impacts?

On behalf of the Association of African Theologians, which granted me the great honor of being its Executive President, we would like to express our profound and fraternal gratitude to the President of INSeCT for the invitation to participate in this international meeting. Our gratitude extends to the Vice-President, the members of the INSeCT Board and particularly Rev. Dr. George Edayadiyil who welcomed us here in Bangalore at this international Conference whose Rector he is.

The Association of African Theologians was founded in February 2007 at the Catholic University of West Africa in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). It was on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Collective work *Des prêtres noirs s'interrogent*, that is to say, African Priests are wondering. This book which is a determining factor in the history of African theological thought written by young theologians from the Continent and the Diaspora who, on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, raised the question of Christianity, missionary evangelization and advocated a new proclamation of the Gospel that fully takes into account the cultural and historical challenges of their people and their time. In this presentation, the issues raised by the book *Des prêtres noirs s'interrogent* will lead us, in the first place, to the context of the reception of the Second Vatican Council in Africa. In a second step, the characteristic data of the reception of the Second Vatican Council will make it possible to know its impact and how its 50th anniversary was celebrated on the continent.

Context of the Second Vatican Council and its Reception

The work of African priests laid the foundations of contemporary African theology and made it a theology that recreates the life and culture of African peoples, within people and their culture and made them witnesses to the liberation and salvation of God in their societies. Through the work *Des prêtres noirs s'interrogent*, six years before the Council, Africa had thought of a pastoral aggiornamento at the theological level. The generation of Christian intellectuals and African theologians present in France and Italy, therefore, welcomed the convocation of the Second Vatican Council as a news which reinforces their conviction. A layperson named Alioune Diop, today beatified, gathered through the African Society of Culture, Christian intellectuals and priests to make the voice of Africa heard at the Council. A delegation of this group met with Pope John XXIII to present the proposals of Africa to the Second Vatican Council. Blessed Pope Paul VI would also be approached in the same perspective. Archbishop Tshibangu, Congolese, emeritus archbishop of Mbuji-Maye (DRC), the youngest Expert at the Second Vatican Council, reports on these initiatives in the book he published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of this event.

But when the Council came to an end and it was found that the great challenges of Africa were peripheral in its sixteenth constitutions, the idea of the Council for Africa was born. In this context, for the African theologians, then for their Pastors such as Cardinal Malula, Cardinal Zoungana and the bishops of Zaire (today the DRC), the Second Vatican Council brings a new breath to the Church, Africa cannot be satisfied with it. It is necessary to convene an African Council, a Council for the Church in Africa or the Churches of Africa.

Indeed, the Vatican Council was convened in response to problems of faith and life of faithful which mainly concern the West and are extended to other peoples. Africa was a minority of the Council at the numerical level (of the 2358 conciliar Fathers of the first session only 260 came from Africa, including 61 indigenous bishops and 299 missionaries) and concerning the issues on the agenda and the theological and pastoral leadership necessary to weigh in debates and decisions.

The bishops of Africa have especially experienced the episcopal collegiality at the Council and the need for them to promote it at the level of their continent in order to think of their problem of evangelization and to have a common pastoral care. The teachings resulting from the Council were welcomed in Africa with the attitudes of faith and obedience required of all members of the Church. Pastors, theologians and pastoral agents rely on their thought to educate the Christian communities and nurture their faith.

But as regards the specific problems of evangelization, political situations, social crises, as well as the Christianity to promote and the Christian witness today, in theological, parochial and diocesan circles, both refer particularly to theological reflections and pastoral letters whose thought carries the breath of the major ideas of the Collective work *Des prêtres noirs s'interrogent*. In this sense, the conciliar texts on which evangelization is based in Africa are those which are part of this dynamic, and touch on non-Christian religions, Africa's participation in mission, expression of faith and liturgy in local cultures, in particular *Nostra Aetate*, *Ad gentes* and also *Dei verbum* and *Gaudium et spes*.

From these observations, it seems that the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Vatican II cannot have the importance it has in the West, perhaps also in Asia and Africa, of organizing debates on its relevance, on the necessity or not, to convoke another Council, etc. to understand this, it is sufficient to remember that in the 1980s and 1970s, after Vatican II, it was not so much the reception of the Vatican that animated theological debates. This is the answer to the recurrent question of what Jean-Marc Ela calls *Le cri de l'homme africain* (The African cry) : Christianity is manifested in terms of inculturation and concrete liberation which affirms the present and future realization of the Kingdom of God in Africa. This challenge of African Christianity raised the problem of the African Council.

In the 1980s, prelates and episcopates spoke openly and expressed their request to Pope John Paul II. The Holy Father will undertake consultations which will lead to the convening of a Synod for Africa. The experience of this Synod for the evangelization of a continent will be extended to the other four corners of the world. Thus, the Pope will convene the Synod for Asia, Europe, the Americas, etc. As far as Africa is concerned, the Pope will note that the first Synod did not respond to the various problems, a second will be held in 2009. Today, the post-synodal exhortations of these two Assemblies *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae munus* take precedence over Vatican II when it comes to the teachings and orientations of the Church for the proclamation of the Gospel on the continent.

50 years of the Council: a more or less celebrated event

The celebration of the fifty years did not mobilize the Church of Africa and its institutions of theology as did the preparation of the two African synods (1994 and 2009). However, conferences and publications have marked its celebration. These are related to the themes of the Vatican that particularly affect the major challenges of the African Church that we have noted. In this analysis we will limit ourselves to the mission of evangelization around *Ad gentes*, the historical dimensions of evangelization, interreligious dialogue and liturgy, and finally the historical dimension of salvation.

Ad gentes and the Mission of the Church

In December 2015, in Congo-Brazzaville, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Congo (Kinshasa, RCD) organized an international colloquium for the 50th anniversary of the Decree *Ad gentes* (AG). Emphasis was placed on the evangelizing mission of the Church in the light of GA in the context of inculturation and the challenges of reconciliation, justice, participatory democracy, peace, development and globalization in Africa. The pontifical and pastoral documents of the bishops of Africa relating to the Mission served as a benchmark for the articulation of various reflections. Note on this subject *Evangelii nuntiandi*, *Redemptoris missio*, *Evangelii Gaudium* and the pastoral teachings of Cardinal Malula.

Around this same Decree, in West Africa, the Catholic Missiologists Association of Nigeria held in October 2016, in Lagos (Nigeria) a Symposium on the theme "Fifty Years of *Ad Gentes*: Fruits of

Mission in Africa ... Hope for the Future". In the same year, the Catholic University of West Africa, in Abidjan, will lead a theological day on the same Decree. The interest in GA is explained by the fact that this decree is particularly concerned with missionary activity with an interest in the ad intra and ad extra mission of the so-called young churches. They find in Africa, in the issue number 22, the teachings which allow them to promote inculturation from a critical and inventive perspective.

Interreligious Dialogue and Liturgy

Nostra aetate (NA) also open itself to the challenges of Africa by the importance it attaches to non-Christian religions and to the dialogue between the Church and them. It is no longer a matter of primitivity and barbarism to characterize the African Traditional Religion. However, it is not recognized and treated with the same respect as Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and so on. It does not appear like the latter in the listing of non-Christian religions that NA presents. The theologians do not fail to criticize it. They also question the fact that traditional religions are simply considered as preparatio Evangelii. The International Journal of African Catholicism published in 2013 would address this critical approach to NA and interreligious dialogue in the article entitled "Fifty Years After the Second Vatican Council: A Critical Review of the Roman Catholic Church's Approach to Interreligious Dialogue and Seeking a Way Forward Through Interreligious Friendship".

The concept of adaptation used by the Council to speak of the relationship of the Church to cultures in its mission of evangelization and liturgical renewal also appears limited. It is believed that it would make Africa adapt what has been thought and created for other churches, especially in the West. The Bishops of Africa and Madagascar at the Roman Synod in 1974 rejected the category of adaptation and opted for the rooting of the Gospel in the life and culture of Christian communities and then of inculturation at the 1994 Synod. But, the Church of the DRC will find in the conciliar text on liturgical renewal the foundations it needs for the creation of the Congolese rite of the Mass. In 2016, Catholic Institute of West Africa (Port-Harcourt, Nigeria) organized a theological week on the inculturated, critical and inventive approach of Vatican liturgical reform around the theme of "The Reception of the Second Vatican Council's Liturgical Reforms".

Concluding remarks and future prospects

After 50 years the Second Vatican Council is still unknown to the majority of Christians in Africa. Its impacts on the latter are indirect, because they depend on the reception that theologians and pastoral agents make of them. As Orobator pointed out in 2013 following Bishop Kalilombe, Vatican II, through its sixteen constitutions, appears as a Council to deal with the problems of the churches of Europe and North America in the 1960s. Those in Africa who have some knowledge of its contents speak mainly of it in order to claim rights linked mainly to the opening of the Church to the world and the participation of the laity in the life of the Church.

The documents we have dealt with in this study show it eloquently. Other texts, in particular Dei Verbum and Gaudium et spes raise the interest of people given the fact that they grant a great place to the Word of God and to the problems of the present time and invite the Church to evangelize, interpret, live and make people live the Scriptures considering the hopes and sufferings of today. These two documents particularly found the research of the Pan-African Association of Catholic Exegetes and recently that of the project of the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology (DePaul University, Chicago, USA). The latter devotes a study to African reception of Dei Verbum in the Handbook of African Catholicism (published in 2018). In 2014, the Catholic University of Central Africa devoted its seventeenth theological conference on "Faith in Africa 50 years after Vatican II. Challenges and Challenges". His reflections focus on the testimony of the Word of God and faith in the light of GS on the basis of the realities and requirements of development and evangelization in Africa.

Yesterday it was from the West that the motivations and the human and theological resources that were at the origins of Vatican II came and determined, on the whole, the elaboration and adoption of its texts by the conciliar fathers. The Africans were invited to this Council without being counted among the actors of the constitution of its main teachings. The same causes have produced the same effects for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Vatican II, as it is in turn a movement propelled by the West. Africa was invited to enter it and to present the manner in which it lived the event, following the other particular Churches especially from the North. This is normal from the point of view of the universality of the Church and of the ecclesiology of communion as well as of the vocation of the Church which is built only in unity.

If we also take into account of the fact that the universality and unity of the Church are built in the diversity of the particular Churches and that they are the places where they are affirmed, enriched and consolidated, the Church in Africa or the churches of Africa as well as those of Asia, South America, etc. Must also share with their Western sisters their major concerns and make them also motivations and resources of a new Pentecost (for example, a Council ...) for Catholicism.

Countless issues involving evangelization today might be discussed here, but I have chosen not to explore these many questions which call for further reflection and study. Nor do I believe that the papal magisterium should be expected to offer a definitive or complete word on every question which affects the Church and the world. It is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory. In this sense, I am conscious of the need to promote a sound “decentralization”.

We believe that such a challenge must be taken into account and answered so that the forthcoming celebration of the 60th anniversary of Vatican II or the draft of a Vatican III will not once again be a matter of the West. In this context, in the circle of theologians, pastors and leaders of the Church, we are called to feel like Pope Francis, “the need to promote a sound ‘decentralization’” (Evangelii Gaudium, 16). The Holy Father affirms he does not believe that one must expect a final or complete word from the papal magisterium on all questions concerning the Church and the world: “It is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment for every issue which arises in their territory” (Evangelii Gaudium, 16).

This applies to the discussions that have taken place so far. The teaching of Pope Francis would invite us to situate and to analyze with discernment, in the spirit of AG 22, the documents conciliar, 50 years later, to avoid that the issues they raise make us lose sight on the specific theological and pastoral questions in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and so on. The latter are so often different from the problems of the Church and the world seen from the West or from Rome...

Asia



Reports from Asian Theologians

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Dr. Victorino A. Cueto
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DaKateo Report 2017 for INSeCT Bangalore, India

This report is a very particular take on the Vatican II's reception in the Philippine theological/ecclesial community via the continuing journey of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs).² It is also meant to supplement the 2013 report, "Theologizing in the Philippines" as additional information is provided for particularly in the landscape of theologizing in the Mindanao Region.³

Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs)

After Vatican II, Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) sprouted in Latin America, Asia and Africa. In the Philippines, the BECs first emerged in Mindanao in the late 1960s, and later spread to some parts of Visayas and Luzon. They were initially referred to as Gagmayng Kristohanong Katilingban or Munting Sambayanang Kristiano (Small Christian Communities). These were first introduced by foreign religious missionaries and later promoted by the local clergy.

In 1991, the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) was held and the vigorous promotion and formation of BECs all over the Philippines was adopted as a pastoral priority. The plenary council came up with this decree:

"Basic Ecclesial Communities under various names and forms – BCCs, small Christian communities, covenant communities – must be vigorously promoted for the full living of the Christian vocation in both urban and rural areas."⁴

As part of the implementation of the PCP II thrust, the second wave of the emergence of BECs took place as many dioceses in Visayas and Luzon started their BEC program. There has been a phenomenal growth of BECs in these regions since then. In Mindanao where the BECs first emerged, the task was for revitalizing the BECs that have either been weakened due to military harassment or have stagnated. In almost all the dioceses in the Philippines, BECs can now be found.

Various shapes and forms of BECs have emerged in the country. There are chapel-centered communities of 30 to 200 families wherein the chapel is considered as the social space or center of the community. There are also BECs which are chapel-centered but subdivided into neighborhood cells and family groupings (8-15 families per grouping). The BEC in the barangay or village is a network of neighborhood cells. In the urban centers, there are neighborhood cells or family groupings without a chapel. These are found mostly in big cities. Most, if not all, of the activities are done in the homes of the members of the cells.

The 2005 BEC National Assembly was the first CBCP-sponsored assembly. The Episcopal Committee on Basic Ecclesial Communities of the CBCP was finally set up in 2007. The growth of BECs in the

² This is primarily from Amado L. Picardal, CSSR., *Basic Ecclesial Communities in the Philippines: A Reception of Vatican II Ecclesiology*. Picardal is the present chairperson of the Episcopal Committee on Basic Ecclesial Communities of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). His data is a result of the survey done in 2013.

³ Estela p. Padilla, "Theologizing in the Philippines: INSeCT Report 2013", <https://insecttheology.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/regional-report-philippines-theologizingphilippines.pdf>, accessed July 6, 2017.

⁴ Section 3, article 109, *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* (Manila: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1992), 267.

Philippines is the fruit of renewal started by Vatican II as part of the reception of the council. The statement of the CBCP-sponsored BEC National Assembly in 2005 recognizes the inspiration of Vatican II:

“Inspired by the Council Fathers’ call for **Aggiornamento**, BECs mushroomed in different parts of the country, seeking to make the Universal Church truly local, veering away from a Church popularly conceived as a physical or hierarchical structure, to one that is incarnated in the concrete life – settings of grassroots communities. BECs could not but thank Vatican II’s grace of inner renewal. They are indeed children of the Spirit’s workings of rebirth in our land.”⁵

PCP II has a vision of a renewed Church as a community of disciples and links its realization with the BECs:

“our vision of the Church as communion, participation and mission, about the Church as priestly, prophetic and kingly people, and a Church of the poor, that is a renewed Church, is today finding expression in one ecclesial movement, that is the movement to foster Basic Ecclesial Communities”.⁶

The Church in the Philippines continues to make the Vatican II and PCP II vision of a renewed Church a reality. In a survey conducted by the CBCP-BEC Committee in 2013⁷, 92% of the respondent-dioceses have adopted the formation of the BECs as a pastoral priority. According to the survey BECs are already established in 72% of the parishes nationwide.

In general, 75% of the respondent-dioceses classify their BECs as mostly evangelical-liturgical (BECs whose activities are limited to gospel sharing, liturgy of the Word and regular masses with social action component). Only 25% of the respondent-dioceses classify their BECs as mostly holistic (BECs that integrate evangelization, liturgy and social action).

The BECs are “not-yet-already” reality. They are already present but many have not yet made the Vatican II vision of a renewed Church fully a reality. Some are already genuine vibrant communities of the faithful that live in communion as prophetic, worshipping, and serving communities. However, there are still many who are simply gospel sharing groups where BECs are reduced to small bible-sharing neighborhood groups or liturgical assemblies that are inward-looking. There is a need to emphasize that active membership in BECs is the fruit of renewed evangelization that leads to conversion and a decision to live as genuine disciples of Jesus in community. They still have to experience what it truly means to be genuine communities capable of renewing the Church and transforming society. The journey towards a renewed Church in the BECs continues.⁸

Theological Engagement of Various Institutes and Lay Groups

Here, we simply give an overview of the theological engagements of some seminaries and institutes. As indicated in the 2013 Report, major seminaries like the University of Sto. Tomas (UST), Loyola School of Theology (LST), Seminario Mayor de San Carlos (SMSC) in Cebu and the Immaculate Conception School of Theology (ICST) in Vigan, Maryhill School of Theology (MST) and the Inter-Congregational Theological Center (ICTC) have in their own particular way practiced contextual theology with papal and Vatican documents as resource in addressing issues and challenges facing the local church from a

⁵Statement of the 2005 CBCP-BEC Assembly. <http://www.cbcpbec.com>

⁶ PCP II, # 138.

⁷ CBCP-BEC Committee, National Diocesan BEC Profile [unpublished survey] September 2013.

⁸ Ferdinand D. Dagmang shares a similar evaluation and conclusion: “...BEC project is a one lifetime process. It has to grow and foster a renewed living Church and it must never be detached from everyday life... [It] has to become an expression of the people’s culture – an internal and external ecology ... with the values of the Reign of God...” Ferdinand D. Dagmang, *Basic Ecclesial Communities: An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) in Ten Parishes in the Philippines* (Missio: n.p., 2016), 296.

liberational perspective. A few institutes also have faculty members that try to construct a Filipino theology by beginning with traditional Filipino or indigenous cultures and folk religiosity. Dr. Jose de Mesa with the Theology and Religious Education Department of De La Salle University, Manila together with its faculty has opened a new specialization for lay and religious groups who want to have formal training in contextual theologizing by offering Master of Arts in Applied theology and Doctor of Philosophy major in Applied Theology. Pre-requisite to graduation in both degrees is to produce Filipino theologies that give premium to cultural contexts of different communities or local churches.

It is worth noting also that missiology is systematically explored in the Philippines. Although predominantly Christian, the country is also home to Islam and many indigenous religious traditions. Issues like inter-religious dialogue is a primary concern. In fact, the Divine Word Institute of Mission Studies (DWIMS) was inaugurated last May 2014 in Tagaytay City. It is run by the Society of Divine Word (SVD) with the objective of “training missionaries to acquire the necessary skills, attitudes, values and spirituality to face the challenges of mission today”.

In the last decade or so, there has been a lot of interest in Mindanao, the southernmost region of the Philippines especially in the areas of inter-faith dialogue, and justice and peace. There are five major theological institutions in the region, namely, Regional Major Seminary (REMASE), Ignatian Religious Education Formation (IREF) and St. Alphonsus Theological and Mission Institute (SATMI), all in Davao City; St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Cagayan de Oro City) and St Mary’s Theologate in Ozamis City. They mainly cater to seminarians, religious sisters and lay leaders including theology / religion teachers, parish pastoral workers and BEC leaders.

In various degrees, the various institutes are engaged in addressing issues that are of particular, though not exclusive, importance for the Mindanawon. Gifted with natural resources, Mindanao faces serious ecological problems due to mining and global warming. In this regard, many theologians in Mindanao consider this as a burning concern. Home to various religious traditions (Christianity, Islam and indigenous belief systems), they are also involved in inter-faith dialogue. In fact, the late Bishop Bienvenido Tuddud of Marawi pioneered the inter-religious dialogue movement not just in Mindanao but in the whole country. With the region as hotbed of violence for decades, peace building is also another important area. A few Mindanawon theologians are part of DaKaTeo. Bro. Karl Gaspar, CSsR., Fr. Amado Picardal, CSsR., Fr. Randy Odchigue and Fr. Rey Raluto.⁹ Of the Mindanao-based theological institutions, it is only SATMI which has a yearly journal, *Budyong*, where faculty and students write theological articles mainly dealing with missiological themes.

In Mindanao, there are some women with feminist orientation that are interested in pursuing feminist theology including Sr. Esper Clapano, MA., Ms. Agnes Miclat-Cadayan and Ms. Belo Bironde-Caharian. Their group has had some publications interfacing indigenous spirituality with women's concerns and ecological issues. Other Manila-based feminist theologians like Agnes Brazal among others have co-authored and edited publications on feminist ethics, migration and ecclesiology.¹⁰ Brazal also highlights LGBTQ issues, dialogue with Muslim feminists, climate change and the cultivation of feminist organic intellectual as important challenges to feminist movement in the Philippines.¹¹

⁹ Worth noting are the recent publications of Bro. Karl Gaspar, “Desperately Seeking God's Saving Action: Yolanda Survivors’ Hope Beyond Heartbreaking Lamentations,” Winner in Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards 2015; and Reynaldo D. Raluto, “Poverty and Ecology at the Crossroads,” Finalist in Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards 2016.

¹⁰ Co-editor with Kochurani Abraham, *Feminist Cyberethics in Asia: Religious Discourses on Human Connectivity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; co-author with Emmanuel S. de Guzman, *Intercultural Church: Bridge of Solidarity in the Migration Context*. CA: Borderless Press, 2015, co-editor with Susanna Snyder and Joshua Ralshton, *Church in an Age of Global Migration: A Moving Body*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015 and co-editor with Eric Marcelo Genilo, sj and Daniel Franklin Pilario, CM, *The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, Quo Vadis?* Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2016.

¹¹ Agnes Brazal, “Feminism in the Philippine Catholic Church,” unpublished paper, 17.

Last April 29, DaKaTeo members Emmanuel de Guzman, Levy Lanaria and Ruben Mendoza together with some lay leaders initiated the formation of a lay association through a forum on, “Searching for the Face of Jesus in the Philippines Today”. The group members are coming from popular, pastoral, and professional levels of involvement in the Church and civil society for mutual and reciprocal exchange. Through critical reflections and discernment in faith, the association promotes collaborative actions of solidarity with the most vulnerable and the care for creation. It is part of an FB network, Southeast Asian Catholic Lay Theologians Interdisciplinary Network.

In the last couple of years, DaKaTeo organized the following conferences as part of its yearly assembly: “The Lineamenta on the Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World” (2015) and “Gender and Ecclesiology” (2016 with INSeCT). The association is also a part of the recently concluded Concilium 2017 Manila International Conference, “Asian Christianities: (Post)Colonial Encounters”.

Significant challenges for the development of theology in the Philippines / Region

The continuing involvement in the socio-political arena shall be a priority as the Church engages in the public sphere. However, there is a need to find more creative ways and expressions to be able to critically share its message.¹² These significant concerns are real issues for the doing of theology:

- The rise of Fundamentalism and Extremism including Terrorism particularly because of our experience of the Marawi siege;
- The Drug War and Extra-Judicial Killings as around 12,000 people have been summarily executed;
- Millennial Generation;
- The New Media;
- The Post-Truth Era;
- Populism and the Rise of Authoritarianism;
- Ecology including a possible ‘theology of tragedy’ as the country continue to be the center of calamities, natural and human-made;
- Women and Gender issues particularly LGBTQ concerns and dialogue with Muslim feminists; and
- The 500th year anniversary of the coming of Christianity to the Philippines.

¹² The Catholic Church particularly its hierarchy engaged in the public square on issues like Reproductive Health, Extra Judicial Killings (EJK) and death penalty.

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Ecclesia of Women in Asia

1. How was the 50th anniversary of Vatican II acknowledged in the theological and/or ecclesial community in your region and/or country?

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines celebrated the 50th anniversary of the 2nd Vatican Council by focusing on a particular theme, Renewed Evangelization. In its press release, the CBCP highlights the theme towards “re-proposing’ the Gospel to those who have experienced a crisis of faith due to secularization.” The Ecclesia of Women in Asia, in 2013 conference meanwhile, stresses the contribution of Catholic women to the Church via the conference theme, Liberating Power: Asian Feminist Theological Perspectives. It underscores that, due to the growing feminist consciousness, women are also learning to exercise power in a liberative model. There is a greater acknowledgement by women of their subjugated status and their vulnerability to the abuse of power, in society and in the Church. Women are refusing to remain victims of oppressive structures and relationships, and are asserting their economic agency, political space and above all, their voice. Through this liberative assertion of power women are denying the denigrating patriarchal definitions that label them the ‘weaker-sex.’ In the process they are reclaiming their dignity and personhood. While not directly addressing the Vatican theme of “new evangelization,” EWA continues its engagement with the varied, multiple and complex lived realities of Asian women, and seeing these as fertile ground for genuine, contextual and emancipatory theologizing.

2. As you think about the coming decades, what do you foresee as a significant opportunity for the development of theology in your region and/or country?

Vietnam’s growing Catholic population (about 7-8% of the total population) is a wonderful opportunity for EWA to invite women who are interested in doing theology, whether to the grassroots or to the academe, or even both. The forthcoming EWA’s 8th conference will be Vietnam in January 2018 at the Archbishop Pastoral Center, which is owned and operated by the local Catholic Church. The theme for this conference is “Foodscapes: From Gastronomy to Spirituality, Catholic Asian Feminist Theological Orientation.”

I see the conference as a wonderful sign that religion, particularly Christianity, flourishes in countries that are known for their intolerance of religion. The forthcoming conference also marks a milestone because of the growing number of participants coming from Vietnam, Korea and China.

3. As you think about the coming decades, what do you foresee as a significant threat to the development of theology in your region and/or country?

Asia is such a big place, and the magnitude of diversity in terms of culture, worldviews, beliefs and religions, is astounding. EWA’s vision is to be a forum for voices, which are muted or oppressed. The challenge that I see is in terms of representation: Whose voices have we not yet heard or given a platform?

What are the ways Asians manifest their faith or religiosity, and what theological methods are useful or meaningful, so as to make these voices heard? To whom do we speak for? These are all self-reflexive questions that I feel are important to be asked because the answers will show the way to go forward theologically.

Catholic Theology Worldwide: Indonesia

1. The 50th anniversary of Vatican II

The 50th anniversary of Vatican II was a moment to make reflection on how the spirit of Vatican II animates the life of the Indonesian Catholic Church. A book edited by Ignatius L. Madyautama and Matheus Purwatma, entitled *Setelah setengah abad, ke mana kita melangkah? Merayakan, Merefleksikan, dan Mewujudkan Roh Konsili Vatikan II (After half century where we move? To commemorate, reflect and realize the spirit of Second Vatican Council)*¹³, may illustrate the acknowledgment of Vatican II in the life of Indonesian Church. The book is divided in three parts. The first part, consists of seventeen articles, speaks of how the spirit of Vatican II inspired many peoples to participate in the mission of the Church to build the Kingdom of God in the mid of society. The authors of these articles are men and women, lay, religious and priest who inspired and moved by faith to serve others for the good of community. They are: a medic who serves the needy people in the remote area as in the jungle of Papua; a professor who participates in building public opinion through mass media; an activist who engages in educating the future politicians; a mom who inspired by St. Joseph builds a house for single mothers and unwed mothers; a teacher who promotes the organic farming; an employer who empowers his employees. All these stories tell us how the spirit of Vatican II lives in the Indonesian Catholic Church, the Church engages in the problem of the society, as noted by *Gaudium et Spes*, art. 1: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ”.

The second part of the book, consist of eleven articles, gives reflections on some documents of Vatican II and its impact in the life of Indonesian Catholic Church. Reflecting on the implementation of *Dei Verbum*, Indra Sanjaya¹⁴ noted that there are two important impacts of *Dei Verbum* in the Indonesian Catholic Church: translation of the Bible in the Bahasa Indonesia and other local languages; and dissemination and promotion of biblical study among the people. The translation of the Bible in Bahasa Indonesia was done by Catholic Biblical Association of Indonesia in cooperation with Indonesian Bible Society of Communion of Churches of Indonesia, so that there is one translation of the Bible in Bahasa Indonesia, used both by Catholic and other Christian Churches. With the availability of the Bible in Bahasa Indonesia and local languages, and due to the National Bible Month held every September, the enthusiasm of the people in biblical study increased. But, after 50 years, its enthusiasm declined sharply. The analogous situation happened with the renewal of liturgy. John Mansford Prior¹⁵ noted that 50 years ago, the Indonesian Catholic Church was very enthusiastic to follow the liturgical renewal proposed by Vatican II. All the liturgical books were translated in Bahasa Indonesia. In 1972, Liturgical Commission of Indonesian Bishops’ Conference published Indonesian Eucharistic Prayers consists of 5 eucharistic prayers for liturgical seasons, 8 eucharistic prayers for ordinary times, 1 eucharistic prayer for wedding, and 1 eucharistic prayer for mass for children. The liturgy came alive due to the use of local song, music, gesture and symbol. All people participated in the liturgy. But, after 50 years, there is a tendency that Liturgy becomes more Roman.

¹³ Ignatius L. Madya Utama, S.J. – Matheus Purwatma, Pr. (Ed), *Setelah Setengah Abad, ke mana kita melangkah? Merayakan, Merefleksikan, dan Mewujudkan Roh Konsili Vatikan II*, Yogyakarta: Kanisius 2015, xxiv + 536 pages.

¹⁴ Indra Sanjaya, “Jemaat yang membaca Firman” (*People who read the Word*), in Ignatius L. Madya Utama, S.J. – Matheus Purwatma, Pr. (Ed), *Setelah Setengah Abad, ke mana kita melangkah?*, pp. 267-296

¹⁵ John Mansford Prior, SVD, “Liturgi: Sumber Kehidupan, Daya Iman bagi Kaum Pejuang” (*Liturgy: Source of Life, Power of Faith for Warriors*), in: Ignatius L. Madya Utama, S.J. – Matheus Purwatma, Pr. (Ed), *Setelah Setengah Abad, ke mana kita melangkah?*, pp. 493-518.

The third part of the book consists of an article written by I. L. Madyautama¹⁶. He noted that there are several unfinished agendas in the renewal of Vatican II, as liturgical renewal, participation of the laity, relation with other churches and other religions, promotion of justice, peace and integrity of creation. He concludes that the main message of the Vatican II is about participation, that is: participation of the Church in the life of God, the Trinity; participation of the Church in the salvation work of God, the Trinity; participation of the Church in the struggle of human life; and, participation of all the member of the Church who serves the Kingdom of God.

What is prominent impact of Vatican II in the life of Indonesian Catholic Church is the participation of the lay people, men and women, in the life and mission of the Church. Most of the participation of the laity is participation in the mission *ad intra*. The Vatican II noted that “the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God” (LG 31). After 50 years the Indonesian Catholic Church should encourage the laity to engage in the life of society. As mention above, there are many services done by lay persons in Indonesia, but the involvement of the lay persons in political activity declined since the era of Suharto.

2. Prospects and challenges in the next decade

Indonesia is at a crossroads. On one hand, the government of Joko Widodo shows progress in good and governance, democracy, law enforcement, and against corruption. On the other hand, radical Islamic groups, such as Islamic Defenders Front (FPI: Front Pembela Islam), Council of Indonesian Jihad Fighters (MMI: Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia), are emerging and controlling public opinion. They are intolerance. They are small in numbers, but gain enormous influence in the public opinion, due to the silent of the more moderate majority of the Moslems. Joined together with Islamic hardliner political parties and supported by corrupt politicians, they have target to win the presidential election in 2019. That will lead Indonesia to be intolerance society, because they tend to use religious sentiment in gaining public opinion, and their ultimate goal is the implementation of shariah law in Indonesia. At worst that will lead Indonesia to be in ruin.

In such a situation, the Indonesian Catholic Church should support every effort to develop a democratic and plural society for the common good. The Indonesian Catholic Church should encourage lay persons to involve in political activities, to influence public policy. Because Catholic remains minority in Indonesia, the Catholic Church should work together with all people who has good will, especially with the silent majority of the society, that is, the Moslem, for example with the Nahdatul Ulama, the biggest Moslem organisation in the country. Nahdatul Ulama promotes cultural Islam, and supports a more pluralistic society.

There are at least three challenges for theology. Firstly, theology has something to do with the involvement of the people in the society. Theological reflection should encourage people to involve in the life of society, to bring the values of the Kingdom to the society. Theological reflection should be orientated to praxis. Theology should be able to give ethical considerations to the life of community. Secondly, the more participation of lay persons, especially women, in doing theology is needed. Most of Indonesian Catholic theologians are male and cleric. Usually, they live in Colleges or Seminaries, apart from the people’s struggle. It needs theologian who live among the people, who has the same struggle with the other people. Thirdly, theology has something to do with interreligious dialogue, especially with Islam. It is important to make a common language in confronting the Indonesian reality, to make possible for working together to build a new pluralistic society.

¹⁶ Ignatius L. Madya Utama, S.J., “Mau melangkah ke mana?” (Where we move?), in: Ignatius L. Madya Utama, S.J. – Matheus Purwatma, Pr. (Ed), *Setelah Setengah Abad, ke mana kita melangkah?*, pp. 522-533.

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Report for India - INSeCT Meeting July 2017

How was the 50th Anniversary of Vatican Council II acknowledged in India and the ecclesial community?

The year 2012 that commemorated the 50th anniversary of the start of Vatican Council II was celebrated as the year of Faith in India. The focus of celebrations was on faith lived through pious practices like prayers, pilgrimages, etc. not on highlighting the teachings of Vatican II.

“Apart from some theological journals like Asian Horizons, Vidya Jyoti, Jeevadhara which had some issues devoted to the anniversary of Vatican II, not much has happened in India. It has hardly made any difference to the Hierarchy in India.” (Joe Mattam sj)

Streevani an NGO run by the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, in Pune, organized a 3 day well attended national conference in January 2014 on Women and Vatican II. It took a look at the role and influence of women on the proceedings and outcomes of Vatican Council II, as well as a critical look at the documents that were produced after Vatican II, in the Vatican, the FABC and the CBCI on the role of women in Church and society. It took a look back at the changes in the lives of women and assessed how these changes have impacted the mission and life of women and the Church in India. The commitment expressed at the end was encouraging especially the launching of the Indian Christian Women’s Movement on the concluding day of the Conference. The papers of this conference were published in the book “Women as Equal Disciples – An Unfinished Task of the Church” Edited by Virginia Saldanha, Sr. Julie George SSpS and Varghese Thecknath SG.

What do you foresee as a significant opportunity for the development of theology in India?

Most of the theology developed in India is post Vatican II influenced by Liberation Theology of Latin America. The challenges thrown up by the fast changing times of the 21st century, constantly confront theologians in India to respond with gospel imperatives. Our times are defined by speedy communication, consumerism, global warming, religious extremism leading to conflict, large scale migration, impoverishment of whole communities of people in a climate of domination by systems of power that favour the rich and powerful and exclude those who do not fit in. The global political economy which impacts the local, institutionalizes exclusion by focusing on economic growth, the supremacy of the market, and uses religion to polarize people and distract from their main goal of exploitation of people and environment for profit. In such a scenario theologians in India have to play the role of prophet, to be a voice for the vulnerable and exploited peoples who only seek their basic needs to live a dignified human existence. As Michael Amaladoss s.j. puts it “The task of a theologian is not to hang on to a system presented to him by tradition, but continue to search for answers for ever new problems in the light of the Word and the Spirit.”

The Indian Theological Association (ITA) over the past 40 years and more recently the Indian Women Theologians Forum (IWTF) are two bodies in India who theologise from the Indian context. The IWTF brings a feminist perspective to its theologizing. Since 1977, “Theologizing in the Indian context promoted by the Indian Theological Association (ITA) inspired by the Vatican II, attempts to make theologizing contextual so that the proclamation of Jesus Christ and his transforming message respond to the socio-economic and religio-cultural reality of India using Indian categories of thought. The emerging

Dalit and Tribal theologies are signs of the cultural immersion of Christian faith in the Indian context.”¹⁷ This is necessary so that the least and last in Indian society develop a sense of dignity and equality after experiencing decades of oppression and exclusion. Our theologizing has to progress to help marginalized voices to be heard and their concerns addressed.

The context of the plurality of India's ancient religions and cultures is gradually becoming a global reality. Seeking an authentic contextual theology, many relevant questions are raised by Indian theologians. To be or to become a Christian is it necessary to accept the Semitic world-view or the Greek philosophical categories? What is hindering the Christian faith from becoming equally at home in the context of India's cultural and religious realities, as it became in Rome, Greece and Syria by subsequently becoming Roman, Greek and Syrian in its expressions? The various aspects of theology's partnership with the human and social sciences are necessary since the ultimate goal of all theologizing is the 'integral liberation' of humanity and the entire creation. Theologizing in context calls for a new paradigm shift in the 'mission' of the Church and for a new 'spirituality' by being 'a little flock', the catalyst, the 'leaven and salt' for a new humanity.¹⁸

The mystery of Christ and the message of Christ cannot be fully understood or explained by any one thought form or cultural expression. Therefore, both the inexhaustible mystery of Christ and the deep and varied dimensions of his message can be illumined by the resources of the cultures, and cultures can be challenged by Christ and his message especially when there are elements in the cultures that are dehumanizing and preventing authentic human unfolding and communion with God.¹⁹

What the world needs today is the impregnation of life in its different contexts by the gospel taking the human person as its starting point, coming back to the interrelationships between persons and their relation to God. (EN #20). Theologians need to challenge the discriminatory positions of the Church with regard to the empowerment and place of women in the Church, the caste system and the greater participation of the Faithful in the life of the Church to make the reign of God centre stage and not religious conversion.

We need to have the courage to question the relevance of some aspects of tradition and move on to newer methodologies in doing theology. The poor and the plurality of religions are the hermeneutical keys to open the revelation of the mystery of God in the Indian setting.

What do you foresee as a significant threat to the development of theology in India?

Fear is a great threat to the development of theology in India. Fear of the Vatican and the continual watchdog policy of the hierarchy; Most Bishops do not support or encourage any new attempts at theologizing in India. This has created a lethargy among theologians. The majority of pastoral clergy are deeply entrenched in traditional thinking and pastoral praxis which has bred the cancer of clericalism in the Church. The fear of change is coupled with the lack of knowledge or understanding of the Vatican documents. Our colonial mentality has the tendency to link religion with culture. This has prevented the true inculturation of the gospel in India. Christianity (Latin rite) has been linked to Western culture which we inherited from the European missionaries while the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara rite Christians follow the East Syrian and West Syrian culturally conditioned articulation of faith in their liturgy, theology and spirituality respectively. The few attempts of the Latin Church to introduce inculturation in

¹⁷ Parapally Jacob, “The Impact of Vatican II on Inculturation in India”, Unpublished paper presented at a “Vatican II – historical Event and stakes involved for today”, an international research programme organized by FIUC, (International Federation of Catholic Universities.)

¹⁸ Indian Theology seeking New Horizons. Eds. Kuncheria Pathil, Mathew Paikada and Majoj Pal; St. Paul’s BYB, Bandra, Mumbai, 2007.

¹⁹ Parapally, “The Impact of Vatican II on Inculturation in India.”

Liturgy did not get support from Rome and was considered syncretistic, relativistic and even a betrayal of authentic Christian faith and practices.²⁰

Resources for Theological formation in India are focused mainly on priests and religious. The laity who can contribute theologically from their lived experience do not get any encouragement or support for theological studies. Women even religious women do not have easy access to theological studies. On the other hand many laymen are doing theology in preparation for the diaconate. This shuts out women's perspectives in the development of theology. Feminist theology is still not accepted as a valid subject in many seminaries in India. There seems to be a great fear of outspoken women and men in the Church.

The lack of 'listening' to different groups/realities -LGBTQ persons calls for the urgent attention of theologians, but to date there has not been a response to this reality. The Church faces the inevitable risk of becoming increasingly irrelevant especially to the young - unless she changes herself into a modern source of meaning and inspiration to the young who live as global citizens thanks to online connectivity 24x7. Pope Francis has taken up this challenge in calling for a Synod on the Youth and putting out a questionnaire inviting any young person to fill in. Though the questionnaire is quite bland, there is scope for an "out of the box" response in the last question "Any other?". We need to listen and respond to the concerns of the youth or in the not to distant future we will be talking to an emptying Church.

To delve into Indian philosophies to help us discover new Christological models that will help express the inexhaustible riches of the mystery of Christ and also enable us to overcome the dualisms found in traditional western Christologies. These interpretations of Jesus Christ can provide us with an integrated vision of life that will be more relevant to life especially in India.

Finally, the challenge to theologians to maintain a good relationship with the hierarchy, to facilitate a dialogue with the modern world so that the Church is helped to respond to the signs of the times to be relevant to the 21st century.

²⁰ Parapally, "The Impact of Vatican II on Inculturation in India".

Australia



Report from Australian Theologian

- (1) Dr. Maeve Heaney, Australian Catholic University
Brisbane, Australia

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Dr. Maeve Heaney
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“Catholic Theology Worldwide” State of Catholic Theology in Australia (2017)

How was the 50th anniversary of Vatican II acknowledged in the theological and/or ecclesial community in your region and/or country?

In the lead-up to the 50th anniversary of Vatican II, a research project to assess the reception and implementation of Vatican II in Australia was undertaken by members of the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University. The project resulted in a volume that ranged across key areas in the life of church, *Vatican II: Reception and Implementation in the Australian Church*, ed. Neil Ormerod, Ormond Rush, David Pascoe, Clare Johnson and Joel Hodge (Mulgrave Vic: Garratt Publishing, 2012), as well as an issue of the *Australian eJournal of Theology* 19.2 (2012).

In 2012 (19-21 September), a symposium entitled “The Fruits and Future of Vatican II” was jointly sponsored in Melbourne by Australian Catholic University, Catholic Theological College, Jesuit Theological College and Yarra Theological Union, at which the results of the volume were presented as well as other papers. Three of the keynote addresses and a selection of other papers presented at the symposium were published in the ecumenical Australian journal, *Pacifica* 26.2 (June 2013) In view of the INSeCT research project on gender justice, the following three women’s contributions to these 50th anniversary volumes are particularly worth noting:

- Anne Hunt, “A Council for the Laity? The Vision of Vatican II in Empowering the Lay Faithful,” in *The Great Grace* (2015), pp. 37-56.
- Mary Ryllis Clark, “The nuns and Vatican II: Pandora’s Box or Goldmine,” *Pacifica* 26,2 (June 2013), pp. 215-225.
- Margaret Beirne, RSC, “‘Old Habits Die Hard’: The Experience of Australian Religious Women in the Wake of Vatican II,” in *Vatican II: Reception and Implementation* (2012), pp.154-175.

On 10 October 2012, the Broken Bay Institute with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference held a national e-Conference on the topic of ‘Vatican II: An Event of Grace’, which was live streamed to thousands of people nationally and internationally.

In 2013 (20-23 May), the Archdiocese of Sydney hosted an international conference, the contributions to which are collected in *The Great Grace: Receiving Vatican II Today*, ed. Nigel Zimmermann (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015). As the Editor makes clear in his Introduction, “[t]he *Great Grace* refers to the grace of the Second Vatican Council, not received as a one-off historical event, but as an unfolding gift in the life of the Church” (p. xvi).

ACTA’s annual conference for the years 2014 and 2015 targeted themes related to documents emerging from Vatican II: “Theology in the Modern World” in 2015 and “Ecclesial Life into the Future” in 2014.

In July 2017, Professor Massimo Faggioli, whose latest book is *Catholicism and Citizenship: Political Cultures of the Church in the Twenty-First Century* (2017), will be speaking at the Australian Institute of Theological Education at Broken Bay on “Leading for Mission and Catholic Identity: Insights from Vatican II.”

Regarding the interpretation of Vatican II, attention is drawn to the following three articles by Australian theologians that have appeared in the international journal, *Theological Studies*:

- Gerald O’Collins, SJ, “Does Vatican II Represent Continuity or Discontinuity?” *Theological Studies* 74.1 (2012), pp. 768-794.
- Ormond Rush, “Towards a Comprehensive Interpretation of the Council and Its Documents,” *Theological Studies* 73 (2012), pp. 547-569.
- Neil Ormerod, “Vatican II—Continuity or Discontinuity? Toward an Ontology of Meaning,” *Theological Studies* 71.3 (2010), pp. 609-636.

For Neil Ormerod, the metaphor of continuity/discontinuity remains largely descriptive; “the real issue [for a community of meaning] is that of the authenticity/unauthenticity of the developments that the council either initiated or precipitated” (p. 634). In Ormerod’s view, they “are not new doctrines as such. In each shift below as it has been enacted in the history of the Church since the council, there are elements of authenticity and unauthenticity that require a dialectical analysis ...” (p. 635).

- A shift to full and effective participation in the liturgy, particularly through the use of the vernacular (*Sacrosanctum concilium*); with a perceived correlative loss of the sense of the sacred that pervaded the pre-Vatican II Latin rites.
- An increased familiarity among Catholics with the language and content of the Scriptures and a more biblically based theology among Catholic theologians (*Dei Verbum*); and a correlative loss of accessibility to and appreciation of the genuine achievements of the Scholastic tradition.
- A growth in genuine respect for persons of other faiths, both Christian and non-Christian, and a recognition of the importance of religious freedom for all people (*Unitatis redintegratio, Dignitatis humanae, Nostra aetate*); and a correlative growth in religious relativism and indifferentism.
- A growth in a sense of the lay apostolate as a genuine participation in the mission of the Church that belongs to the laity in their own capacity, not as foot soldiers of the hierarchy (*Apostolicam actuositatem*); and a correlative loss of a sense of the special place of the committed religious life in the mission and service of the Church.
- A new appreciation of the “priesthood of all believers” with the laity sharing in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly missions of Christ (*Lumen gentium*) by virtue of their baptism; and a correlative confusion about the nature of the distinction between the general priesthood of all believers and ministerial priesthood. (Pp. 634-635)

In moving towards a comprehensive interpretation of the council and its documents, Ormond Rush articulates a set of six principles as follows:

Principle One: The Council/The Documents. The documents of Vatican II must be interpreted in the light of the historical event (the council) that produced them; and the historical event must be interpreted in light of the official documents that it promulgated. (P. 548)

Principles Two: Pastoral/Doctrinal. The council and its documents are to be interpreted in light of the council’s primarily pastoral orientation: Vatican II’s reformulation of doctrine aimed to teach in words

and actions that foster a more meaningful spiritual appropriation of God's salvation and revelation by the people of God. (P. 553)

Principle Three: Proclamation/Dialogue. The church's mission is to proclaim boldly and steadfastly God's loving offer of salvation to humanity in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, which will be ineffective without dialogical openness to the perspectives and contexts of the intended receivers of the proclamation, believers or unbelievers. (P. 555)

Principle Four: Ressourcement/Aggiornamento. Vatican II sought renewal and reform of the church by re-receiving many of the past forms and practices of the tradition and application to the present, which demands critical adaptation for new times and contexts if genuine renewal and reform are to take place. (P. 557)

Principle Five: Continuity/Reform. The church is the one community of faith through time as a sacrament of God's offer of salvation; the form this sacrament takes in a particular time and place requires continual reform and must always be adapted to that context for the sake of the church's ongoing effectiveness. (p. 561)

Principle Six: Vision/Reception. The bishops of Vatican II proposed a vision for renewing and reforming the Catholic Church: that vision requires ongoing reception and implementation by the whole people of God for its realization. (p. 564)

In view of these six principles Rush concludes that: "ongoing interpretation of the ecclesiological reforms of Vatican II should be informed by [a] rejuvenated theology of God's activity within history in the economy of salvation, to be discerned through carefully reading 'the signs of the times' in the light of the gospel" (p. 569).

As you think about the coming decades, what do you see as a significant opportunity for the development of theology in your region and/or country?

Reading "the signs of the time" in the light of the gospel, and applying the norm of authenticity/unauthenticity to the shifts initiated or precipitated by Vatican II, suggest the following opportunities for the development of theology in Australia over the coming decade

1. In collaboration with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, to prepare for the Plenary Council to be held in 2020. The ACTA Conference for 2017 is devoted to this theme.
2. Formulating theological responses to the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, whose report is due to be published later this year. The ACTA Conference for 2018 will focus, at least in part, on this task.
3. Critically reading and assessing the vision of Pope Francis for the future of the church.
4. Maintaining the emphasis on gender justice in theological thinking as pointing in faith to fundamental dimensions of the church and its prophetic voice in the public space, and as accepting that gender relations too are subject to the transforming power of God's grace.

5. One particularly significant and crucial opportunity and challenge for the future of theology is our theologians' and theological schools' ability to engage constructively about the theological tradition with teachers in our Catholic schools.
6. The old order of theological leaders is quickly dying out, and this will result in a certain rupture in the theological tradition. On the other hand there are emerging younger scholars who will bear the responsibility of maintaining and extending the tradition in creative ways. Part of the problem is what exactly theology is and what place should it have in the university and in public life. Secular prejudices remain; but the new digital world offers fresh possibilities.

As you think about the coming decades, what do you see as a significant threat to the development of theology in your region and/or country?

1. A significant danger resides in the temptation to speak only with those with whom one agrees, eschewing the realisation of the church as a 'dialogical sacrament' (Walter Kasper). This means losing the habit of 'internal' dialogue, leaving the church ill-equipped for the 'external' dialogue with other religious traditions and other approaches to life. See Richard Lennan, "The Challenge of Authority," in *Vatican II: Reception and Implementation* (2012), pp. 176-192, at p. 185. While there are attempts at dialogue, the temptation to maintain polarised positions that inhibit or threaten the development of doctrine and the growth of our understanding of the truth in a variety of theological themes, is real.
2. Another form of this first threat plays out in higher education in regards to the orientation to wider culture. There are dangers that we could either teach our students to be anti-secular and not engage with culture, an approach in which doctrine and catechism replace theology etc., or alternatively, to be too uncritical of culture and not sufficiently formed theologically. Connected to this, an unwelcome possible reaction to the Royal Commission would be one in which Church leaders and congregations don't sufficiently engage with outcomes and turn more inward, and that the theologates follow.
3. The assumption of inclusivity in terms of gender justice. The experience of INSeCT's research project on Gender Justice and Ecclesiology, while positive in terms of re-opening an essential theme for the advancement of theology and ecclesial communion, highlighted the multiple blind spots still undermining collaborative and inclusive theological research in Australia.
4. Another danger lies in the Australian educational and research system, its funding system, and the place (or lack thereof) of understanding of the role of theology (and indeed the arts and humanities as a whole) in culture and the advancement of society. The educational enterprise tends to be driven by people who are not trained in theology and therefore struggle to grasp and invest in theological research and education.
5. The decline in religious practice and knowledge of the faith in general. This may mean theology will need to return to more fundamental and apologetic themes, which presents challenges and opportunities for local theologians in their own work and capacity.

Europe



Reports from European Theologians

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Prof. Dr. Jan Jans
Tilburg University
Tilburg, Netherlands

Some Data and Remarks On the State of Academic Catholic Theology in the Low Countries, Luxembourg, England and Ireland

In Belo Horizonte during our 2014 INSeCT meeting there three years ago, I ended my brief regional report on the state of Catholic theology with the phrase: “As far as I can see, the future does not look bright”. The main reasons for this were the interlocking issues of changes in the academic standing of Catholic Theology within some of the ‘nominally’ Catholic Universities and the constant threat that students numbers might continue to be too low to allow faculties to carry on. Here, I will not repeat the historical background I provided – the 2014 report is still available on the website of INSeCT – but will concentrate on the impact of student numbers with regard to the viability of academic Catholic theology, and going also a bit beyond the ‘Low Countries’, meaning the Netherlands and Belgium.

First of all, the Netherlands. In 2017 – 10 years ago now – the new constellation imposed by Rome for teaching and research at Catholic Universities came into being: located in the cities of Utrecht and Tilburg, the Tilburg School of Catholic Theology was launched and obtained the status of the only institution granted the authority to confer ecclesiastical degrees (STB, STL, STD). At Nijmegen, at the renamed Radboud University Nijmegen, the Faculty of Theology – merged with the programs in Religious Studies and Philosophy – had taken this authority away from them during the disputes over the form and shape of the future of Catholic academic theology; this situation is still in force today. If we take a look at numbers, you must keep in mind that in the Netherlands there are also recognized programs of academic theology within various branches of the reformation; in 2013 the total number of students in these programs on the level of BA and MA was 302; in 2016 this was down to 208. Of these, Nijmegen had 17 (compared to 22 in 2013) and Utrecht/Tilburg 68 (compared to 69 in 2013). If we focus on Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, the numbers for new enrollments between 2013 and 2017 float between 38 and 44, but to this should be added that in 2015 a new Master of Religious Education was launched which attracted 13 new students in its first year and 8 in 2016. As to numbers of students within TSCT, the grand total in 2013 was 121 and in 2016 this was 132 (including the total of 19 students in the Master of Religious Education). As to the various levels: BA in 2013 had 50 students while in 2016 this was up to 60; however the premaster went down from 21 to 11 and the MA from 40 to 28. Overall, I conclude from these numbers that TSCT stands its ground, but that it remains frail and if the rules for financing would change and students numbers would become – much – more important, TSCT would suffer seriously.

Next some data on Belgium. Just before coming here, I learned that the Jesuits had decided to close their “Institute for Theological Studies” in Brussels and transfer the (few) remaining students – mostly SJ – to their Centre Sèvres in Paris. Luckily, another institution with international reputation already grounded in 1935 and also located in Brussels and known as “Lumen Vitae” continues its various programs of catechetical formation and the publication of their journal.

Not surprisingly, the two main ‘hubs’ of Catholic theology in Belgium remain located at the KULeuven (full programs in Dutch and English) and the Université Catholique de Louvain (full programs in French and partial programs in English). Again, I refer for important historical events to the presentation made in Belo Horizonte. As to the Leuven Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, the most important development is probably that a largely successful effort has been made to ‘re-invent’ the faculty by integrating at the various levels of BA, MA and PhD core notions of both theology and religious studies. The change in the name of the faculty is an indication of this but also a ‘self-imposed’ vision and program. And next to a ‘classical’ BA and MA in theology and religious studies, the faculty also offers a Master in World Religions. As to numbers: currently there is a grand total of 633 students, with 182 on BA level, 229 on MA level and 164 on PhD level (the remaining are students in various special programs). Looking at the background, 284 students are of Belgian origin and 349 are international

students coming from about 60 different countries. It is also worthwhile to note that on the level of PhD/STD, the numbers have gone from 110 students in 2001 to 161 students in 2016. Add to this many personal international contacts, the institutional support of journals and series and not to forget a truly extraordinary research library, it seems to me that the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the KULeuven is in good health. A bit unfortunately, the situation at Louvain-la-Neuve is more difficult and probably the main reason is the rather low number of students in the specific programs in theology. If taken together all the various possibilities of taking courses at the Faculté de Théologie, the number of students is currently 498, but of these there are – only – 9 in the BA program, 50 in the MA and 69 on the level of PhD/STD and on both these levels there is a tendency of a slow but steady decline. It goes without saying that the very low number of students at the BA level is of great worry. However, personally I also have to add that during the academic year 2016-2017, I was invited to teach a course on social ethics on the BA level and I was pleasantly struck by the total dedication and the resilience of the members of staff and the serious academic attitude of most of the students. And it is also of interest to mention that an MA in Religious Studies is being staged and that content wise connections with Islamic theology are being explored.

A very recent development has taken place in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (if you never heard of it, don't worry... it is a really small country enclosed by Belgium, Germany and France) where the effort has been made to 'upgrade' the teaching done at the John XXIII seminary towards the level of BA and MA by offering programs at the Sacred Heart University within the department of Humanities under the heading of Luxembourg School of Religion and Society. As for now, one can only say 'to be continued...'

To end this report, a very brief look 'across the Channel'. Many, if not most in the world of Catholic Academic Theology have learned with sadness about the structural financial difficulties of Heythrop College in London and according to the principal in her public statement of June 30, 2017, the College will close after the academic year 2017-2018. Founded in 1614 at the city of ... Louvain, and so after 400+ years of a long and sometime windy road, it is most regrettably that the doors will be closed. On the 'bright side': it seems plausible that the library will remain intact and that some form might be found to continue the "Bellarmine Institute", being the ecclesiastical faculties of Heythrop College. And hopefully, means will be found to also continue the very well known and respected Heythrop College Journal. The – near – future will make things more clear (burn some candles). Of course, there are other academic institutions in England that provide a high level of theological education – to mind comes Maryvale Institute – but I have not been able to do further research on them for this report.

From the information I received from colleagues in Ireland, it is clear that the strong tradition of religious and catechetical formation is still there but at the same time, all kinds of mergers and closing downs have been going on during the last 5 years or so. Within Dublin's Trinity College, one finds the Department of Religions and Theology but this is presenting itself under the heading of "non-denominational setting for the study of religions and theology within the humanities". Obviously, the institution to look into for this report is St. Patrick's College Maynooth, part of Maynooth University but also fully empowered as a Pontifical University. From the numbers I received, there are two tendencies: although the total student population increased from 669 in 2013 to 822 in 2015, there is also a steady decline on the undergraduate theology level: 230 in 2012 to 168 in 2015. According to the analysis of St. Patrick's the main reason for this are the rapid changes in Irish society at large and it's religious profile more specifically. On the other side, postgraduate numbers are on the rise (61 in 2013; 91 in 2015) and part-time students make up for the total growth.

To conclude: what is the balance between light and shadow three years after my somewhat pessimist formulation in Belo Horizonte? Maybe a 'typical catholic' approach might be formulated today: there is both more shadow and more light and although the direct future might not really look 'bright', there is enough light to keep our struggle with the shadows going. I myself – in the meantime also having seen and experienced the religious dynamics in for example a country like the Philippines – remain the professional optimist you have to be as a moral theologian; but not without reasons.

Dr. Gertraud Ladner
University of Innsbruck
Innsbruck, Austria

Report on the Situation of Women Theologians and Scholars of Religious Studies in Europe to the INSeCT Conference 2017

My main focus will be the situation of women theologians and scholars of religious studies in Europe as it presents itself from the viewpoint of the European Society of Women in Theological Research / Gesellschaft für Frauen in der Theologischen Forschung / Asociación europea de mujeres para la investigación teológica (ESWTR).²¹

First let me introduce you to the ESWTR, its aim, some numbers, our activities, main topics developed by our conferences during the last years. I will mention the situation as it presents itself in various parts of Europe; then I will give you more detailed information regarding the situation in the United Kingdom and Germany, as shown by two surveys. The report will close with some remarks on strategies to uplift the situation of academic women theologians in Europe.

Introducing the ESWTR

Aim

The ESWTR is an academic society, founded under Swiss law in 1986 in Magliaso, the Italian speaking part of Switzerland. Our society operates in three languages: at the beginning, these languages were English, German and French but since the 2007 conference in Naples/Italy, English, German and Spanish are the main languages.

Our first aim is to build and maintain a network of European women “who conduct research in theology and religious studies” as is stated in our statutes (art.2.1). Furthermore, our goal is to support and develop studies in feminist theology and feminist religious studies.

Our society is open to all women who conduct research in academic theology, religious studies or related fields and who live and work in Europe or who are individually admitted by the Board. As a general rule a member has to have a graduate degree and engage in research activity.

Numbers

At present the ESWTR has about 580 members. The majority of members comes from German speaking countries: Germany, Switzerland and Austria (approximately 280 from Germany, 60 from Switzerland, 48 from Austria). We also have a very good number of active members in Spain: 42. Then there are 17 from the Netherlands, 15 from Greece, 15 from Italy, 12 from the UK, 9 from Hungary, 8 from Croatia, 5 from the Czech Republic. Other members come from Island and Finland, together 6, Denmark, Norway, Belgium 5, Portugal 4, Romania 9, Sweden 9, Poland 8, and some more from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Israel/Palestine. There is also a group in the USA and Canada (8) with its annual special panel at the AAR.

Our society is ecumenical and interreligious: Protestant, Roman Catholic, Christian Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox from various countries, Muslim, Jewish, and those with no religious affiliation.

²¹ <http://www.eswtr.org/de/>
<http://www.eswtr.org/es/>
<http://www.eswtr.org/en/>

A majority shares a feminist perspective, some do research in women's issues; the majority works in various scholarly fields, a rather large part of which in biblical studies.

Activities

– European Conferences

The main activity of ESWTR on the all-European level is its international conference which, since 1987, takes place every second year. Topics of our past conferences were: Sharing the Word of Hope with the World (2015 Crete); New Horizons of Resistance and Visions (2013 Dresden/Germany), Feminist Theology: Listening, Understanding and Giving answer in a secular and plural world (2011 Salamanca/Spain), and Wrestling with God (2009 Winchester/UK). The 17th conference will be held in Vienna on “Transgression – Translation – Transformation”. The main focus of the Vienna conference are the challenges in the biblical, ethical and interreligious field; the conference takes into special consideration the migration into Europe.

– Regional Conferences of the Central and Eastern European Countries

On the regional level, there are also conferences. For instance, former conferences were held in Poland 2014 on the topic of “Friendship With The Other. Religions – Relationships – Attitudes”. In Croatia 2012 there was the conference “And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes (Is 25:8 and Rev. 21:4) - a theological approach to the suffering and hopes of women” which was a review of the history of women during the time of the “Iron Curtain” in the Eastern European countries. “Dignity of the Woman as Dignity of the Human Being: Relationships of Theology and Anthropology out of Central and East-European View” was the theme 2010 in Budapest/Hungary.

The last regional conference took place 2016 in Riga under the title “Interplay of Tradition and Innovation in a Postmodern Context”; the next conference will be the 11th one and will be organized in 2018 in the Ukraine.

In Southern Europe members of the mediterranean countries just recently had a meeting, in which they shared their situation and worked on common issues.

The Scandinavian sections of the ESWTR also have regular regional meetings.

– Activities on Country Level

Different country-groups/sections also have their conferences, either as part of a regular set-up or as a non-regular, specific event meeting.

For instance, the Spanish Section has been working with various groups trying to interlink feminist theology on an academic level Association of Spanish Theologians (ATE) with grassroots movements in the church such as Mujeres y Teología²², Col.lectiu de Dones en l'Esglesia²³ through a very lively website and blogs²⁴. For several years the Spanish section has offered a feminist theological online study called “Effeta.” The different groups in Spain have also organized conferences and various study groups on, for example, domestic violence “Cain, where is your sister? God and violence against women”, but also on topics such as “Women's diaconate”, “Another Church is possible, what do feminist believers contribute?” and others.

As the German ESWTR is the largest of our sections it is also the most active, which results in several subject groups meeting annually. They also have their own website, and are very active on their blog: www.womencomment.eu. Since 2009, this blog invites women to comment on current political, theological and church related issues. Starting in German, since 2015 it also operates in Spanish and English.

²² <http://www.mujeresyteologia.com/>, <https://mujeresyteologiasevilla.blogspot.co.at/>, <http://mujeresyteologiazaragoza.blogspot.co.at/>

²³ http://donesesglesia.cat/wp_cde/

²⁴ <https://www.asociaciondeteologas.org/>

Moreover, the German section meets every second year at a conference. “Verwundbarkeit: natürlich, göttlich, gefährlich. Christliche und muslimische Perspektiven zum Vulnerabilitätsdiskurs“ (Vulnerability: natural, divine, dangerous. Christian and Muslim Perspectives on the Discourse on Vulnerability) taking place in Münster in 2014 stressed the Muslim-Christian dialogue. At the assembly in Crete the German section also made the commitment to further engage in interreligious dialogue.²⁵ And hence, the last conference of the German section, which took place 2016 in Rauschholzhausen, dealt with “Schrift im Streit – Jüdische, Christliche und Muslimische Perspektiven” (Holy Scriptures in Conflict – Jewish, Christian and Muslim perspectives).

Throughout Europe there is a serious interest in interreligious dialogue and religious diversity.

– **Joint Conferences with the European Society of Catholic Theology (ET)**

Thanks to the former president of ESCT Martin Lintner, ET and ESWTR cooperated in several conferences during the past years: such as the ESCT-Conference, September 2015 in Leuven/Belgium on “The Name of God and the Question of Gender”, and the Symposium on “Gender and Ecclesiology: An Intercultural Dialogue” at Tagaytay, Philippines, in July 2016.²⁶ At a special event of the Vienna September 2016 conference, I had the chance to participate in a session on “The role of women in decision making in the Church and society: A question of gender-justice or gender ideology? Academic and practical challenges” with participants from Eastern and Central Europe, the Netherlands and USA discussing the accusation of “Genderism” and raising the question as to whom produced this issue and incorporating it in the political sphere and in churches.

– **Publications**

As women theologians in the academic field of theology and religious science are a minority, they have sometimes fewer possibilities to publish. In some contexts, their work and their publications are still ignored or classified as “not academic” by colleagues of their own academic field as well as in cultural and other sciences.

Therefore, the ESWTR started its own peer reviewed journal, which strengthens and further supports the possibility of publications by women researchers. Since 1993, the ESWTR Journal is edited by the ESWTR and published by Peeters Publishing in Louvain/Belgium and is a double blind peer reviewed journal.²⁷

More recently, ESWTR started its own series, called “ESWTR Studies in Religion” which is also published by Peeters in Louvain/Belgium. The goal of the series is to publish high quality volumes in the field of Religious Studies, focusing, albeit not exclusively on feminist, womanist, queer, or postcolonial issues. An international and interreligious board is responsible for reviewing the manuscripts and for producing the volumes.

A very interesting international and interdisciplinary biblical project out of ESWTR is “Bible and Women” (Bibbia e Donne / Biblia y Mujeres / Bibel und Frauen). It is edited by Irmtraud Fischer (Graz/Austria), Mercedes Navarro (Madrid/Spain), Adriana Valerio (Napels/Italy) and Christiana de Groot (Gran Rapids, Michigan/USA) in the languages German, Spanish, Italian and English. The editors share the opinion that in academic contexts religious literacy can no longer be assumed, therefore they want to provide an encyclopedia as tool for humanities.²⁸

Furthermore, there is the ESWTR website in three languages, a Newsletter which comes to the members two times a year, also in three languages. The former aims to be a resource of information for interested

²⁵ <http://womencomment.eu/kreta-beschluss-der-deutschen-sektion-der-european-society-of-women-in-theological-research-auftakt-fu%CC%88r-versta%CC%88rktes-interreligio%CC%88ses-engagement;>
<http://womencomment.eu/crete-resolution-of-the-german-section-of-the-european-society-of-women-in-theological-research-eswtr-intensified-interreligious-commitment> (9.6.2017).

²⁶ <https://insectheology.wordpress.com/category/europe/>

²⁷ <http://www.eswtr.org/en/publications/journal/journals-since-1993>

²⁸ <http://www.bibleandwomen.org/EN/>

people as well as a networking tool within the ESWTR, the second is an intern letter for members only. Of course the ESWTR also has other means of communications, such as Emailing lists etc.

The Situation as it Presents Itself in Various Parts of Europe

The situation for women researchers in the field of theology and religious science differs very much and is depending of their religious denomination in combination with the north-south-east-west scale in Europe and is depending of the existence of faculties of theology at public universities. In Spain and Italy the opportunities for women theologians to work at university level are very limited. Moreover, in Spain, during the last years, many institutions engaging in research were shut down due to a conservative policy. Women theologians with a special focus (feminist theology, human rights) were reassigned out of theological faculties or entirely lost their “missio”. In Italy researchers interested in theology often work as historians, as teachers, as sociologists and often do research in their spare time. This also applies to Spain and several countries where Christian Orthodoxy reigns. Moreover, faculties of Christian theology have been closing down, or are being transformed into faculties of religious studies or have been asked to reduce staff – all as student numbers dropped – and feminist theologians were the first to lose their jobs.

These days, the public interest in religion in Europe focuses very much on Islam. Besides a widespread popular wariness or “angst” of Islam, the academic community sees the necessity to establishment institutions to educate scholars in Muslim theology and develop a European perspective. So at present the opportunities for Muslim women theologians and religious scientists knowledgeable in Islam slowly grow.

Overall it can be said that the debate on religion and secularism, religion and state is ongoing and new borderlines and alliances are negotiated.

So far my first observations, let me now introduce you to two very specific surveys on the development in UK and Germany.²⁹

Gender and Career Progression in Theology and Religious Studies/UK

The study of Guest/Sharma/Song states that although achieving gender equality is an ongoing concern in academy, women have to “lean in”, and need to develop greater ambition to have a chance for leading positions. “In the UK, women in higher education face this predicament. How hard do they lean in for their own academic ambitions, lean on to make institutional change, and at what costs?” (p. 5)

The study observes an “imbalance with respect to gender” within theology and religious studies at UK universities. Students and women scholars speak about their environment as “they are in the minority among men, in a culture that often affects their confidence, where they observe the difficulties of

²⁹ Mathew Guest, Sonya Sharma, Robert Song: *Gender and Career Progression in Theology and Religious Studies*. Durham/UK, Durham University 2013. Maria Häusl: Mehr Professorinnen in der Katholischen Theologie – nur ein Intermezzo? Juni 2017: www.feinschwarz.net/mehr-professorinnen-in-der-katholischen-theologie-nur-ein-intermezzo/ (9.6.2017), Bernhard Emunds: Zur Lage des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses in der Katholischen Theologie. Neue empirische Ergebnisse unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Daten zu Theologinnen. Präsentation beim Studientag „Frauen in der Theologie“ des Katholisch-Theologischen Fakultätentages am 26. Januar 2017 in Vallendar: http://nbi.sankt-georgen.de/fileadmin/redakteure/Dokumente/2017/Praesentation_Nachwuchsstudie_2016.pdf (9.6.2017); Bernhard Emunds, Silke Lechtenböhmer: Studie Zur Lage des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses in der Katholischen Theologie. Bonn 2012: https://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/presse/2012-036b-Studie_Nachwuchs_Katholische-Theologie.pdf (9.6.2017).

balancing the demands of academic and family life, and where they have experienced bullying and particular challenges in obtaining promotion.” (p 5)

The numbers tell us: the number of female students at the undergraduate level is higher than male students (60,1% : 39,9%), at master´s degree level it is more balanced (41,7% : 58,3%), at doctoral level (33,2% : 66,8%) and in academic positions (29,4% : 70,6%) the numbers are almost vice versa, with even more male staff in percentage as women students on undergraduate level. (p 9) A survey at my own faculty in Austria shows the same pattern, even, at some levels, more accentuated. Whereas the highest drop out of female students in theology and religious studies in the UK is after the undergraduate level, in Austria it is after the master´s degree.

Career Progression of Women Theologians in Germany

The recent survey commissioned by the Roman Catholic Bishops Conference of Germany on theological offspring shows that the percentage of women professors at Catholic faculties could be increased from 13% in 2011 to 23% in 2016.

The former president of the German ESWTR Prof.Dr. Maria Häusl states: “As encouraging this situation is ... so little secured is it into the future. The numbers of young female scholars are pointing in a different direction.”³⁰

At the undergraduate level women represent 75% of students due to the high numbers of female students in studies gearing towards teaching Catholic Religion in school. Out of 10 female students only one continues with a masters´s degree.

Throughout all the academic and scientific fields, the average promotion rate of women and men is balanced, 50% of doctorates are achieved by women. This also applies for the studies in Protestant theology where the gender is almost balanced (2011-2015 47% female, 53% male). But it does not apply for studies in Catholic theology in Germany: Only 24% of students finishing their doctorate are female (2011-2015).

At the postgraduate level there is a general decrease of habilitations with both genders. But the scissors spread even further: In 2006-2014 only 20% of the habilitations in theology were done by women (compared to 28% for overall academics). Häusl speaks of “an alarming finding”.

Strategies

To promote careers of women in academic theology it is necessary to take into account all the same arguments/reasons as those which hinder women in other academic fields as there are:

Traditional role models are stronger buttressed when more men are in the professional field. Male life choices go hand in hand with the ethics or demands of professional research.

To pursue an academic career which includes long periods of job insecurity, women are faced more often with the decision to have or not have children. A culture of long working hours and irregular timetables for teaching add a lot of stress to finding childcare or looking for elder care arrangements and overall, to the individual work-life-balance.

The UK study also states, that there is “plenty of evidence, some of it quite shocking, of bullying of individual women”. (p 20)

These all are problems in all the sciences and academics. Strategies to cope and change these problems are well known, but are only slowly developed. The figures from the German study however show that there is also a deeper problem when women are part of the Roman Catholic church.

³⁰ www.feinschwarz.net/mehr-professorinnen-in-der-katholischen-theologie-nur-ein-intermezzo/ (9.6.2017).

Specific strategies to tackle the structural problems that hinder women theologians to go on with their studies and their research have been and further need to be developed. Whereas these strategies can be rather general, there is also a need for country specific strategies.

Conclusion

An important first step, which needs to be taken however is the recognition that women theologians contribute as much and as well to theology as do their male colleagues. The second step, which I already see in motion at this conference is working together as colleagues at eye level – as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Gertraud Ladner, University of Innsbruck, Faculty of Catholic Theology, Department of Systematic Theology; ESWTR Secretary 2011–2017

July 2017

North America



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Dr. María Teresa Dávila
Andover Newton Theological School
Newton Centre, MA, USA

Report for INSeCT on the Occasion of the July 2017 Bangalore General Council Meeting

ACHTUS' identity as an Academy of scholars and practitioners in theological and religious studies of and for Latinxs in the United States makes the particular experiences shared here unique in a number of ways: the communities from which we draw our membership and expertise are marginalized within the larger context of the United States. As such, they can include a variety of social and racial experiences, as well as a range of citizenship situations. Our experience of being Latinx Catholic scholars in the U.S. context reflects these complex dynamics and very likely challenge the experience of being Catholic scholars in the U.S. context of those colleagues from dominant social, ethnic, racial, and citizenship groups. In addition, this report, in keeping with the Latinx practice of developing theology *en conjunto*, is a product of collaboration among colleagues rather than one person defining a theological question as an individual. Please keep these notes in mind when reading our responses to INSeCT's prompts below.

How was the 50th anniversary of Vatican II acknowledged in the theological and/or ecclesial community in your region and/or country?

Recognizing that the Catholic Latinx communities in the U.S. are diverse, events acknowledging the 50th anniversary of Vatican II are hard to identify. Academically a number of ACHTUS members participated in university level symposia at Fordham University, Boston College, and the University of Notre Dame. However we note that the target audience of many of these events was predominantly the Anglo-American theological community.

We know very little of whether or how local communities marked the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Vatican II. One of our members, John Nira, who teaches at Our Lady of the Lake University, a majority Latina institution, led a discussion on the 50th anniversary of Vatican II. The planning of the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry (<https://vencuentro.org/>), a process that hopes to engage directly more than 1 million Hispanic Catholics between 2017 and 2020, echoes the efforts of the early Encuentros that were inspired by the theology of the Council.

We'd like to note, however, the reality that celebrating Vatican II was more salient outside of Latinx communities. Indeed, Pope Francis's visit to Borderlands drew more attention than celebrations of Vatican II's anniversary even if parts of that visit grow out of the impact of the Council on the Church in the U.S. More specifically, two of our members, Arturo Bañuelas and Verónica Rayas, were instrumental in making sure that this event included communities on both sides of the border. We might wonder if celebrating Vatican II was less important to our communities because it affirmed some trends within certain Latin American and Latinx churches that existed prior to Vatican II; say CEBs in Latin America and the Catholic Churches along the Southern border of the U.S., for instance. In fact, in U.S. Latinx communities, there were more commemorations of the anniversaries of the Latin American Bishops meetings in Medellín and Puebla, and the publication of Gustavo Gutiérrez *A Theology of Liberation*, than of Vatican II.

Yet Vatican II had some significant and measurable impacts on our communities. For instance, the number of lay theologians and scholars of religion is much higher now. After Vatican II, the home of scholarly theological thought shifts outside of clerical figures and institutions. Vatican II also opened up greater space for popular religion, and many liberation theologies drew on key Vatican II documents. We imagine that the centrality of vernacular music, which is really important in our Latinx churches, comes as a result of changes made after Vatican II.

As you think about the coming decades, what do you foresee as a significant opportunity for the development of theology in your region and/or country?

We need to keep in mind demographic changes. In 1965, when the Council concluded, Hispanics constituted less than 10% of the entire U.S. Catholic population. Today Hispanics are about 43% of all Catholics in the country. More telling is the fact that about 60% of Catholics younger than 18 are Hispanic. Within our community of scholars and among some Church leaders there is no denying that the future of U.S. Catholicism is being defined by Hispanic Catholics and our experiences. Another piece to keep in mind is that two thirds of Hispanics are U.S. born, which invites a new set of reflections and commitments, particularly when much of the efforts of outreach and even theological thinking have concentrated on immigrant populations. As such, Latinx communities should and could have a hand in shaping the public image of the Catholic Church to seem more relevant to daily lived struggles and issues in the U.S. Moreover, Latinxs have grassroots commitment to ownership of parish communities, and if their efforts are nurtured, then these communities can thrive.

There is increasing diversification of Catholic voices and perspectives in the United States. The U.S. is a real microcosm of the World Church. We note here the growing number of lay women and men theologians. The vast majority of Hispanic Catholics studying theology at the graduate level are lay people. This is redefining priorities, methodologies, sensibilities, and eventually practices in the life of the church.

We are also experiencing the emergence of what can be called an Ibero-American consciousness. Theologians from the Spanish-speaking world (U.S., the Caribbean, Latin America, and Spain) are working more closely envisioning a theology “in Spanish” (not necessarily in terms of language, although this is an important factor, but in terms of perspective). See the conferences and conclusion of a recent event: <https://www.bc.edu/schools/stm/formacion-continua/encuentro-ibero-americano.html>. To this we add acknowledgement of significant and growing Brazilian and Haitian influences in U.S. Catholicism as part of a hemisphere-wide consciousness of the Catholic voices from the South of the Americas.

The boundaries of theological thought from mainly intra-ecclesial dynamics and concerns to ecumenical, interreligious, scientific, political, and global conversations are expanding and shifting. A growing number of Hispanic Catholic theologians are more engaged with scholars from other fields, which opens the doors for greater collaboration. A concrete example of this is the number of Latinx parishes that have taken the lead in being sanctuary spaces; with some priests firmly stating their commitment to migrant and refugee families. In many of these cases these efforts at radical hospitality and sanctuary bring a variety of Christian denominations and other faith traditions to work together, including establishing relationships with humanist or non-Trinitarian Unitarian Universalist congregations, and Jewish and, increasingly, Muslim communities.

As you think about the coming decades, what do you foresee as a significant threat to the development of theology in your region and/or country?

We call out racism in the U.S. Catholic Church and how that has shaped the churches and academic institutions. Our Academy’s most recent gathering reflects this. Under the theme *To Set the Captives Free*, our Colloquium in June 2017 was held jointly with the Black Catholic Theological Symposium (BCTS). Together we examined the ways in which racism and the myth of white Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism dominates the criminal justice system, specifically the incarceration and detention systems that were the focus of our meeting. These injustices cannot be analyzed and addressed without an examination of conscience of how these ideologies are reflected in the larger Catholic Church throughout its history in the U.S. In the broader U.S. context dangerous and scandalous forms of racial, ethnic, and cultural biases fueled by ideological movements make cheap use of religion as a vehicle and a platform to harm flesh-and-blood people, usually vulnerable women and men in our society, mainly for political and economic gain. We are facing this phenomenon at very high levels of our government, and in our local

communities as well, challenging us to be more public agents of justice, truth-telling, and liberative practices, even at the cost of our personal and professional lives.

While the Catholic Church in the U.S. is increasingly Latinx in its membership, these same communities suffer under the specter of deportation. The negative impact of the reality or threat of deportation on Latinx youth is significant. In 2013 an estimated 5.3 million children in the U.S. were living with one or both parents without documents recognized by the federal document for residence in the country. Of the nearly 4 million deportations during the previous administration (2009-2013), at least 500,000 were parents of U.S. born children. While this statistics is for all groups deported, Hispanic communities represent a large segment of these numbers. The pastoral and theological implications of living in fear, lack of safety, work insecurity, social isolation, and other ills that accompany the practice of mass detention and deportations are hard to overlook.

We have not been able to train enough Latinxs at a high enough level to attend to our communities' needs. Partially we all face challenges with the parish structure—the way that it is so dependent on what the leader of the parish decides to do in terms of community empowerment. The training of pastoral agents, growing in popularity and numbers especially after Vatican II, is tempered by the lack of adequate pay in our churches and the lack of institutional commitment to specifically Latinx initiatives.

Catholic systems of higher education are not friendly to Latinx theology. At the moment we only have 7 tenured/tenure-track faculty in doctoral granting institutions. How can Latinx theologies be taught and expanded throughout the U.S. church if the numbers of Latinx theological faculty remain so low? In addition to the number of retirements facing a “first generation” Latinx theologians, we are unsure whether the financial situation of many institutions of higher education will allow the solid number of Latinx doctoral students to be employed and gain promotion and tenure in their field of expertise.

Within the broader religious context of the U.S., perhaps the biggest threat that all faith communities are facing is the rapid expansion of secularization. In 1991, only 3% of people in the United States self-identified as non-religiously affiliated. In 2017, about 25% of the entire population self-identify as such. By the middle of the century, if the trend continues, about half of the U.S. population will not belong to any church, and most likely will not consider any relevant role for organized religion in their lives. The closing of more than 2,300 Catholic parishes and almost 6,500 Catholic schools in recent years is symptomatic of the fact that Catholicism is losing major ground in broader U.S. society. This is negatively compounded by clerical resistance to make way for how the Holy Spirit is inspiring new ways of doing ministry and theological reflection. While Pope Francis has decried clericalism and its concomitant abuses, the U.S. Church sees this illness surface especially as it relates to the disempowerment of lay women and men capable of taking the Church in the U.S. to new dimensions in the model of servant leadership.

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Catholic Theology Today – Some Reflections on North America

Many from beyond the borders of the United States of America are surprised to learn that Roman Catholic Christians make up by far the largest single religious community in the entire country. In a 2014 Pew Forum survey, one third of US people identified as having been raised Catholic (31.7%), while 12% identified as being ‘former’ Catholics (= 41% of those who said they were raised Catholic). According to some studies, the second largest grouping in a recent survey of religious affiliation in the US self-identify as ‘former Catholics’. If all Evangelical Protestants are placed together as a single grouping, they represented 25.4% of the population while the religiously unaffiliated or ‘nones’ represented 22.8% - more than belonged to Catholics (20.8%) or the total memberships of mainline Protestant groupings (14.7%).

Both historically, with many of the earliest European settlers right across this vast land mass of the ‘New World’ being Catholics from various different European countries, down to patterns of migration in more recent decades, Catholics constitute one of the most influential religious groupings in the story of the USA. The demographic among Catholics is changing today just as it has constantly evolved and this too helps bring new gifts and challenges to Catholic theology alike.

Equally, there are distinctive theological perspectives and indeed political views among US Catholics. Social scientists have long been fascinated by the story of the development of US Catholic communities. While at times that story has mirrored much of what was happening in the rest of this global church, including the divisions within it, there have also been times when Catholicism in the US went its own way, as it did in the nineteenth century, leading Pope Leo XIII to denounce ‘Americanism’ in 1898. Yet other US Catholics at different times epitomized and indeed accentuated the divisions in the wider church, through forms of Ultramontanism and supposed unswerving loyalty to the Rome of the day, in a way that could put the most unquestioning continental European Catholics to shame by comparison. The pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI witnessed the most pronounced forms of reactionary Ultramontanism. However, as with other Christian groupings in the States in those same decades, what the latter all too often represented was a blurring of the distinction between political views and preferences, on the one hand, and religious belief and doctrine, on the other.

Some like to assume or suggest today that the divides in the wider church and those divides specific to the church in the US are passé and the controversial issues of past decades are no longer relevant or at least should not be the focus of attention. Such is mistaken and would be dangerous if encouraged on a wider scale. US Catholicism continues to be polarized and the existence, in addition to the CTSA, of the much smaller yet vociferously conservative and traditionalist Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, alongside various other pressure groups such as the Cardinal Newman Society provide proof of such continued polarization. So while some discourse about the ‘culture wars’ within US Catholicism may indeed have required more nuances, it cannot be denied that there remain deep divisions within the US Catholic Church and this includes among theologians and scholars of religion.

This is the backdrop against which contemporary Catholic theology is being done in the US today. There are 197 Catholic Universities in the US and, of course, there are many, many Catholic scholars working at other universities not affiliated with the church or religious orders in any way. Theology has changed dramatically in recent decades for so many reasons. The nature and organization of universities have changed, disciplines and interaction among them have changed and the church has changed beyond all recognition itself in so many ways. But crucially, the world that theology is practiced in and to which it speaks, the societies in which theologians ply their craft has undergone even more dramatic sea-changes.

We can take it as a given for some decades now that theology is now very much a lay-dominated discipline and in many parts of the world, its practice is slightly dominated by women. In the US, this is proving to be especially the case on both counts and is proving increasingly so in Canada, too.

Perhaps among the most significant developments in recent times is that theology is increasingly becoming much more inter-disciplinary in nature and practice. Traditional topics in, for example, systematic and philosophical theology do not dominate the classes, dissertation topics or even scholarly publications in the way they once did.

Catholic Theology in the USA in recent years has seen particular attention being given to a range of specific topics. Some of these are topics of concern to theology in general, others are particular to Catholic theology. Obviously, the pontificate of Pope Francis has given new impetus and indeed freedom to much Catholic inquiry. Topics of discussion and research which were often considered taboo by many Catholic scholars and institutions during the later years of John Paul II and the Benedict XVI papacy, are now increasingly discussed and researched in a more open and constructive fashion.

Among those areas where some of the most fruitful and creative work is being done in recent times include ecclesiology – where questions of church reform, organization, hierarchy and ministry have been encouraged by Pope Francis, himself. Ecclesial subsidiarity is no longer a taboo issue – far from it. National episcopal conferences are now encouraged to acknowledge that they do, indeed have a teaching mandate and collegiality is being facilitated in a fashion now witnessed since the aftermath of Vatican II. Dissent and enforced orthodoxy are no longer the driving force behind much Catholic theological discourse. Scholars once deemed suspect or even too risky to invite to speak on campuses are no longer shunned or persecuted in the way they were not so very long ago. This has freed a lot of energy in the US Catholic church for more constructive purposes.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been painfully slow in responding to the agenda of Pope Francis' papacy. It is fair to say it is lagging behind in many respects. And there has been a shift in the dynamics of Catholic scholarship and teaching in the US: Catholic scholars and universities that were once considered too liberal or controversial are increasingly being considered mainstream and the Vatican has formed new partnerships with many progressive scholars and institutions alike. Some of the more conservative schools and scholars who under Benedict and John Paul would have been favored and perceived as fiercely loyal and orthodox now find themselves on the periphery or out of the loop altogether.

The obsession with finding a 'middle ground' continues to preoccupy a number of scholars and many Catholic commentators but many others feel that such is not desirable, fruitful nor necessary. The election of Donald Trump, the rise in religious prejudice and discrimination, the increasing denial of rights to migrants, refugees and even permanent legal residents in the US, as well as the rise in ugly nationalism both in the US and in other parts of the world demonstrates that theology – particularly public theology and social ethics, must take a stand and not retreat to the safe middle ground where too many scholars found shelter in previous times.

One of the continuing challenges for US Catholic theology is that it continues to be too inward-looking – mirroring a predominant trend in US society in general. Therefore many scholars still focus too much on US society and Catholicism in the US in the main. At best their attention to wider issues and contexts will be refracted through a US-centric prism. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed. Some scholars are looking at wider contexts and questions and the continued growth in scholars from outside the US working in US Catholic schools can help to address this also. But it remains the case that there is too little attention given to other continents, cultures and ways of looking at the world even in US Catholic theology. For some, this can suggest vestiges of imperialism and neo-colonialism. Such trends can have a particularly negative impact on certain aspects of public theology and political theology in the US, as well as upon social ethics.

However, Catholic scholarship in theological ethics in the US is arguably the strongest field of achievement in recent times, with US based scholars helping to shape many of the global directions in which such scholarship is moving. The field of ethics is one area where US based scholars are both looking at the global questions and challenges and addressing challenges specific to US society as well. So here the balance is struck better than in some other sub-fields.

To take but a few of the most pressing challenges occupying much of the attention of Catholic scholars in the US today: The rise and increased intensity in racism is becoming an increasingly worrying phenomenon in US society and theology still needs to do a lot more to address and confront with this terrible disease across too much of US society. Institutionalized racism is especially on the increase, with over a thousand people of color and ethnic minority being killed by law enforcement officers on an annual basis in recent times, with almost none of those deaths resulting in the persecution of the officers responsible. As even one Republican politician put it during the 2016 election campaign, Donald Trump is making hatred respectable.

Many Catholic scholars have been working on issues of race for many years. Thankfully the number of students working on such issues at both undergraduate and graduate level is on the increase. Some classes and writings from theologians focus on the experiences of particular communities – the African American and Latino/a communities in particular, while others look at broader trends still. My own university, Georgetown, has been grappling with its own shameful past with regard to the ownership and sale of slaves in the nineteenth century. This led to a lengthy study and eventual report on Slavery, Memory and Reconciliation in 2016 and some major initiatives being established to try to help bring about greater reflection on such past wrongs. All too much work here still needs to be done. And many other institutions have simply refused to even acknowledge their own shameful pasts in this regard.

If racism is one of the greatest challenges that confront the US in general and so Catholic scholars just as much, more positive developments are being witnessed among the growth in scholarship attentive to the cultures, traditions and distinctive experiences of particular ethnic groups in the US. The most significant such group of course, is the Latino/a community which has a thriving professional association and whose members are active at the forefront of many of the distinctive branches of theology and wider professional associations in the US. The fields of systematics and ethics are arguably the areas where the greatest impact has been made by such scholars. Contributions from this community will continue to grow all the more as the US, in many respects, is effectively a bi-lingual nation today, even if that truth is yet to be fully acknowledged across all levels of society. To take but one anecdote, the four most popular television channels are all Spanish language channels. African American Catholics and Asian Americans have also made enormously significant and distinctive contributions in recent years, too and, again, those contributions are set to grow as increasing numbers of such communities occupy senior positions and take on leadership roles within professional associations and so on.

Several of the above questions and trends converge when it comes to another field that is rapidly growing in terms of the attention being devoted to it by scholars, the field of migration and refugee studies. Of course, this continues to be one of the most pressing challenges and so fastest growing areas of research globally. While some in the US are aloof, in many respects, to many of the challenges being faced elsewhere, particularly in the Middle East and Europe, nonetheless, some of the world's leading scholars in migration studies today are US-based Catholics and some of the most groundbreaking work in theology and migration is being done in the US. Something similar could be said for discourse on human rights, as well as for contextual theology in general.

Social justice remains an enormously important field of reflection for Catholic scholars in the US and major contributions to wider discourse on a wide variety of social justice issues come from Catholic scholars. However, two major caveats must be added here. First, the insularity of US Catholicism sometimes means that social justice issues in the US are given much more attention than those further afield – even social injustices that are the result of US government or corporate policies and practice.

Second, many Catholic universities and indeed scholars, business people as well as leaders in general have also failed to address other pressing issues that Catholicism demands be confronted: namely issues of social justice, which is something far too many Catholic universities are willing to preach yet not practice - worker justice, especially so. Some initiatives led by Catholic scholars to promote worker justice have made a significant impact but, again, more work needs to be done.

There are also increasing numbers of scholars willing to tackle other pressing challenges such as war, the death penalty, inequality and poverty and multiple contributions have been forthcoming on these and many other issues in recent times. But there still needs to be many more Catholics willing to acknowledge that these are also 'pro-life' issues. The divide between Catholics who only see abortion as a pro-life issue and who ignore that there are other more prevalent and destructive forces detrimental to human life in our societies and those who continue to work toward a consistent ethic of life remains deep. In broader terms, Catholic contributions to bioethics and healthcare ethics continue to be among the most significant areas of achievement and growth.

Many Catholic scholars are also contributing to the growth in environmental ethics and Pope Francis' call for the development of an integral ecology has helped Catholics to dovetail environmental issues with wider questions pertaining to social justice. And Catholics have also contributed to newer fields of enquiry such as animal ethics and queer theology. A combination of the atmosphere generated by Pope Francis' pontificate and the wider general inclusivity offered to the gay, lesbian and transgender communities in US society has allowed much discourse and scholarship to be devoted to the challenges faced by such communities in recent times and, again, some Catholic scholars have helped inform wider societal discussions here.

Another area where US Catholic scholarship is helping to lead the way and make significant contributions is in the field of ecumenism. Again, Catholics have been to the forefront of driving ecumenical ventures in recent times and the papacy of Francis has given renewed energy to such efforts, allowing them to be more daring and to push the boundaries of questions that once would have been deemed too controversial. In biblical scholarship, Catholic scholars are essentially so fully ingrained in the wider field that one can say there is no real dividing line of significance in biblical studies between Catholic scholars and those of other church backgrounds. So Catholic biblical scholarship is, by and large, fully ecumenical.

One could also say that US Catholic scholarship in feminist theology is also an area where great leadership has been offered in recent decades while today scholars working on questions of feminism and broader questions of gender are more likely to traverse denominational boundaries also, as with biblical scholarship. In fact, US women scholars are less likely to focus on the narrower questions of feminist theology from past decades, than to broaden their focus to still wider social and anthropological challenges. Divisions and disagreements will continue across the boundaries of feminist theology and the perspectives being offered from womanist and mujerista scholars. Of course, distinctively Catholic contributions in recent times have focused on women's ministry and ordination and the stand-off between the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the Vatican was thankfully and swiftly brought to a close by Pope Francis, allowing energies to be channeled toward more constructive ends.

Catholics have also helped lead the way in the growing fields of comparative theology and religious pluralism. Graduate programs and publications in both fields continue to grow. And, once more, the papacy of Francis has helped much of this scholarship to emerge out of the shadows and away from more 'safe' questions to the mainstream and to push the boundaries of enquiry and encounter in further constructive directions.

One cannot offer such a report on behalf of the CTSA without saying a few specific words about Canada – the CTSA is, after all, a North American association even if sometimes the US portion of the association overlooks or even forgets this! Catholics are the largest Christian denomination in Canada with 38.7% of Canadians having been baptized Catholic. There are around 27 Catholic Universities in

Canada. The story and recent experiences of the Canadian Catholic Church are also very distinctive and different to those in the USA. So, while many of the trends described above can also be witnessed in Canada, a number of the social challenges facing Canadian society, for example, are also markedly different in many ways from those in the US. And Canada has its own distinctive challenges in terms of racism, indigenous and minority rights and especially environmental ethics. In Canada, of course, there is the linguistic divide and this also impacts Canadian Catholic theology, too. The Canadian Catholic Church also has its own polarization in parts that mirrors some of those divides in the church of their southern neighbors.

Canadian Catholic theology continues to be especially strong in the fields of systematic theology and ecumenism. Canada also continues with its influential tradition of producing canon lawyers, even if, in terms of numbers, the output is relatively small. Canadian Catholicism also continues to offer ongoing contributions to the social scientific approach to the study of religion. Catholic universities continue to flourish across Canada and many have especially strong graduate programs. Canadian scholars punch well above their weight in regional and international professional associations, with their activities and leadership roles in the CTSA being especially demonstrative of this.

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International Network of Societies of Catholic Theology (INSeCT) - Bangalore, India – July 2017 Regional Report for French Canada

Canada has two learned societies dedicated to theology : the *Canadian Theological Society* for English Canada and the *Société Canadienne de Théologie* (SCT) for French Canada. This report focuses on the situation of theology in French Canada, which is concentrated, in practice, in two provinces : Québec and Ontario (specifically the city of Ottawa).

In our 2014 regional report, we had presented the transformations of theology centers and their student cohorts, and their effects on the contents of our teaching and our research. We then identified:

- (1) An interesting development, that of interdisciplinarity, and;
- (2) The interest for spirituality studies, and finally;
- (3) In the medium term, the risks of certain institutional transformations impacting theological institutions in public, secular universities.

In Québec, the apprehended institutional transformations mentioned in the 2014 report came about much more rapidly than had been anticipated. After stating the unfolding of events, we will present the issues for the future of our theology.

The Events

At the time of our last conference (July 2014), held in Belo Horizonte (Brazil), four public Québec universities had faculties of theology: Université Laval, Université de Montréal, McGill University and Université de Sherbrooke.

At Université de Sherbrooke, the *Faculté de théologie et d'études religieuses* (Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies) was abolished in 2015 and replaced by the *Centre d'étude du religieux contemporain* (Center for Studies of Contemporary Religion). The professors of the former faculty are now affiliated to this center, which is neither a faculty nor a department, and whose academic staff belongs to a diversity of disciplines. The theology professors were dispersed in various departments: medicine, history, sociology, etc. The theological programs were eliminated and substituted with programs in "contemporary religious studies". The theology professors simply had to be retrained or recycled.

At Université de Montréal, the *Faculté de théologie et de sciences des religions* (Faculty of Theology and Religious Sciences) became the *Institut d'études religieuses* (Institute for Religious Studies) in 2017. It benefits from legal protections until 2022 to continue teaching theology, together with religious sciences and spiritual studies (Christian and others). Until then, all newly vacant faculty positions will be filled. This institute is without canonical status. Its members will hereby have the stimulating yet difficult task, as theologians, of rethinking their theological project in a new context (see below).

At McGill University, in May 2016, the *Faculty of Religious Studies* became the *School of Religious Studies* in the Faculty of Arts. It remains affiliated with the *Montreal School of Theology*, an ecumenical body of theological formation, which the Catholic Church is not a part of (McGill has never had a canonical relationship with the Catholic Church).

Two (2) ecclesiastical Catholic faculties were abolished in a two-year span, leaving only one in Québec: the *Faculté de théologie et de sciences des religions* of Université Laval (Faculty of Theology and

Religious Sciences). Its survival is mostly owed to the development of private chairs, whose incumbents replace emeritus staff and are less costly to the university.

This transformation is limited to public universities, whose ecclesiastical institutions and seminaries are, of course, independent. The Faculty of Theology of Saint-Paul University, the Dominican University College (Ottawa, Ontario) and the *Institut de pastorale des Dominicains*, the aforementioned's branch institution in Montreal, were also not affected by these transformations.

The causes of this situation are cultural and financial. Student numbers have diminished significantly over the last 20 years. Reversing this trend would mean reversing the process of secularization, that is, a cultural trend both powerful and long-lasting, spanning the West. Given how this situation goes hand-in-hand with a constant decrease in public funding of universities during the last 25 years, academic disciplines with weak recruitment face the challenge of proving that their historical, cultural or theoretical relevance justify the money invested – even more so when the governance of universities is increasingly determined by financial circles, which value medicine, law and applied sciences rather than the humanities, arts and letters.

The following are some of the consequences of this irreversible transformation of a historical magnitude.

Consequences and Tasks

Confessional theology and theology in the concert of humanities & social sciences

For 50 years, theology as practiced in public and non-confessional universities has had to prove its relevance not only on a church level, but also on social and cultural. Since the last decade, this has generated tensions and differing expectations:

- (1) the Church expects a formation in accordance with canonical requirements, and pastoral circles desire a formation both fully theological and pastoral;
- (2) the university community expects a contribution be made to the advancement of a secular knowledge.

Theologians are now tasked with demonstrating the social and cultural relevance of theology, and doing so daily and convincingly, for it is the only field now valued by the magisterium and its administrators. This can only transform the areas of research and teaching, some hereby manifesting a loss in relevance, others gaining a newfound relevance.

Abolition of canonical statutes and renewal of relationships with communities

With the abolition of its canonical status, the theology of the concerned public universities needs to revisit its relationship to faith communities. It will become informal, rather than official and juridical, and will vary from one context to another. The Church will have recourse in a variable manner to these university centers for the basic theological formation of its pastoral personnel. However, given the decline of said personnel and the Church's financial resources, the basic theological formation is already impoverished in many dioceses – a situation of great concern in an increasingly educated society. As a forerunner of unexpected partnerships that could occur in the future, the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of Université Laval, though it remains the only ecclesiastical Catholic faculty among the Québec universities, a research chair in Evangelical theology has been created, thanks to private donors.

Disciplinary coherence vs the standard of interdisciplinarity

Theology faces a new challenge, that of managing the tension between its disciplinary coherence and the demands for an interdisciplinary study of religion (sociological, anthropological, historical, etc.). This

interdisciplinarity is currently highly valued and certainly beneficial for studying complex issues. Theology therefore has to prove its particular relevance in each of these interdisciplinary fields. However, this is only possible among disciplines which are firmly established. How then can administrators be convinced to fill the position of the sole Old Testament scholar, rather than hire a second specialist of Islam? Why teach an annual fundamental theology class to a handful of theology students, rather than a class on radicalization to a large and multidisciplinary group?

One of the crucial issues in this tension regards the future of theological programs of study. Will theology be diluted in vaster disciplinary areas (religious studies, bi-disciplinary programs)? Will it become no more than a sector of religious studies? Or, will new theological programs rather present theology in a radical new light? And which would that be?

New Practical and Theological Tasks

The future places and spaces of theology

What will university theology be in 10 years? The center of gravity of theology could move towards confessional and private institutions (institutes, seminaries, Christian study centers). Moreover, theology as practiced by community or activist organizations could take more importance in the theological landscape of French Canada. We would therefore end up with, on the one hand, theologies *in culture*, strongly contextualized, where academic theologians could provide leadership, and on the other hand, a Church theology more concerned with ecclesial life than with social impact. In both cases, it's quite predictable that theology will have decreasing access to the resources offered by the public university, and will have to rethink its practical arrangements.

Social prophetic alternatives

The situation of theology centers is a reminder to them that the Christian faith was born of a crucified God and of the utopia of the Kingdom. Theology, just like the Christian faith, can survive in a post-Christian world and find their sources once more: they are on the side of the poor and not that of Cesar (or of neo-liberalism). Tomorrow's theology will have the task of partaking in the search for social alternatives together with civil society, with its foremost concern being that of survival: not its own, but that of societies, just as intellectuals from various disciplines have also committed to this task.

Among the social questions that should interest theology: interfaith dialogue as an alternative to identity politics and fundamentalism; an eco-theology and a theology of hope; a macro-ecumenical theology instead of globalization; the deconstruction of religious forms of discrimination and of violence against women and sexual minorities, and the construction of alternatives to this end.

Spirituality

In Canada, the exit from religion has created an emergence of new spiritual needs, clearly identified as such by the population – no doubt an effect of the ageing of this population. The search has turned to secular spiritualities, unaffiliated with religious institutions, which can be found in philosophy, in a generic buddhism (without belonging to any community), in nature and ecology, etc. These quests are important. Therein lies an opportunity for theology to put forth its long tradition of a hermeneutic of the self and of the world, in relation to transcendence.

A growing role for the Société canadienne de théologie

In this context, the SCT is updating its investments. The theological community needs to reflect collectively in order to renew itself, and meetings are a necessity, more than ever. The SCT has recently launched study days, in addition to its annual conference. Since 2016, the SCT has decided to hold its annual conference with the *Association catholique des études bibliques au Canada* (ACEBAC), in order

to decompartmentalize theology and biblical studies. The association now accepts, within a specific membership, people with a graduate degree in theology but who are not affiliated to academic institutions : they need a place and space for their discipline. The SCT also plans to engage in activities for the general public aiming at contributing theological insights to issues of public interest. In short, the urgent matter for theology is not to defend its relevance in principle: it is to show it, *de facto*.

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The future of theology in and from the perspective of North America

I have been asked to comment briefly on three matters: (a) how was the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of Vatican II recognized in North America?; (2) what significant opportunities are there for the development of theology in North America; and (3) what potential threats exist to the development of theology. My responses follow.

- A. Getting a grasp on the recognition of Vatican II's 50th anniversary in North America is not easy. A Google search turns up approximately a quarter of a million hits. My approach to an answer will then be somewhat impressionistic, looking briefly at how each of several constituencies attended to the anniversary.
1. The respective bishops' conferences in the U.S.A. and Canada were relatively low-key. The USCC seemed to focus more on recognition of the anniversary of specific documents, above all that of *Nostra Aetate*. The Canadian bishops took time at their 2015 meeting to inject a personal side to the remembrance. With the collaboration of Salt+Light TV, they watched a video of reflections by five retired Bishops on the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. The Most Reverend Remi De Roo, Bishop Emeritus of Victoria, the Most Reverend James Hayes, Archbishop Emeritus of Halifax, the Most Reverend Jacques Landriault, Bishop Emeritus of Timmins, the Most Reverend Laurent Noël, Bishop Emeritus of Trois-Rivières, and the Most Reverend John O'Mara, Bishop Emeritus of St. Catharines, shared their experiences at Vatican II either as Fathers of the Council or as advisors. The video included reflections on the Council by the President of the Conference Archbishop Durocher Cardinal Collins and Cardinal Lacroix, from their perspectives as Bishops 50 years after the Council. The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=18&v=ianRtCJL0Oo>.
 2. The more theological responses were the work of three different groups. Many of the more than 200 Catholic universities held symposia or invited speakers to address the theme, while journals like the *National Catholic Reporter*, *Commonweal*, *U.S. Catholic* and *America* devoted numerous articles or even whole issues to an assessment of the Council's legacy. Catholic publishing houses produced a plethora of books on the Council, including *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis, and the Renewal of Catholicism* (Richard Gaillardetz), *Pope Francis: Tradition in Transition* (Massimo Faggioli), *A Church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium* (edited by Richard Gaillardetz and Edward Hahnenberg), and many, many others.
- B. This and the answer to follow can only be my personal opinion and may not reflect the views of all or even most North American Catholic theologians. It seems to me that the influence of the present pope is important, not so much for any particular impetus he has given to theological work but rather for the more open atmosphere he has tried to create, which has to have had the effect of allowing the theological community to breathe more freely. A second important consequence of the present papacy is the greater openness to theologies of liberation, coupled with the conviction that the poor must be placed at the center of the church's concern, which must in its turn have an effect on theology. That effect I would describe as the turn towards practical theology. Beyond the impact of Pope Francis, two other important impetuses to theological reflection are (a) the growing voice of Latino/a, Asian-American and African-American Catholic theologians, and (b) the struggle to mount a theological response to the deplorable political situation, both the depredations of democracy by the Trump administration and the almost

deafening silence of the U.S. bishops in face of a political perspective that in most instances runs counter to the deepest impulses of Catholic theology. Both these latter two impulses, of course, strengthen the shift of theological energies to matters of praxis.

- C. The potential threats to theological development are in large part the obverse of the opportunities. So, an early end to the Francis papacy or the loss of morale that would attend the continuance of our present political woes into a new normal would be serious. A more immediate threat comes from the increasing corporatization of our Catholic colleges and universities, resulting in declining resources for the traditional humanistic disciplines, including theology and philosophy, and the concomitant reduction of tenure-track and tenured academic positions. If our younger generation of theologians cannot obtain full-time or permanent position, how long can they be expected to persist in research and teaching? It is possible that private Catholic schools may turn out to be the last bulwark of true humanistic education, and perhaps turn the tide, but the future is an open question. Finally, the church in North America, despite the help of immigration, is declining numbers and in patterns of participation even among those who continue to count themselves as Catholics, and one has to ask what is the likely end of the gulf between what is currently an active and vibrant theological community, and an ecclesial community that take as a whole is lackluster, deficient in religious literacy and well on the way to becoming indistinguishable from America as a whole.

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Amenazas y oportunidades significativas para la teología en nuestro país en las próximas décadas.

*Teología es un término que incluye toda investigación académica sobre el hecho religioso realizada desde el compromiso con un grupo de personas, no una empresa dogmática confesional.*³¹

La situación socio-política en México es injusta para la gran mayoría de sus habitantes, en especial para las mujeres y las niñas. Según el Informe de UNICEF, “Todos los Niños y Niñas Cuentan”,³² 4.5 millones de niñas mexicanas se casan antes de ser mayores de edad. Esto pone a México como un país con uno de los más altos índices de matrimonio de adolescentes en América Latina. Además, la tasa de natalidad entre adolescentes y jóvenes es la más elevada de Latinoamérica, ya que el 9.55% de las adolescentes mexicanas entre 15 y 17 años han estado alguna vez embarazadas.³³

En 2013, 2.5 millones de niños y niñas trabajaban en México, de los cuales 25% lo hacían para ayudar económicamente a su familia. 981,353 niños, niñas y adolescentes de entre 5 y 17 años realizaban únicamente tareas domésticas y no asistían a la escuela. El 70% de esta población son mujeres, y 30% hombres.³⁴ En el campo de la educación, el 14% de niñas hasta de 15 años abandonan la escuela, por falta de recursos, por embarazo prematuro, por no tener acceso a una escuela o por no contar con el apoyo familiar, Comisión de Derechos Humanos (CNDH)³⁵.

El 41% de todos los hogares dirigidos por mujeres en nuestro país se encuentran en situación de pobreza, a este fenómeno se le llama feminización de la pobreza, de acuerdo a los datos del Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL)³⁶.

Los índices de violencia en nuestro país son muy elevados, diariamente mueren 7 mujeres asesinadas, según datos del Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI)³⁷.

En cuanto al sector religioso se refiere, en México existe una gran paradoja, ya que es uno de los países más laicistas del continente Americano y, sin embargo, la religión, en general, y la religión católica en particular, ha desempeñado un papel central en la vida pública nacional.³⁸ Así mismo, persiste un marcado y mayoritario tradicionalismo dentro de la jerarquía de la iglesia católica mexicana, y es claro que sigue habiendo una gran ignorancia, preconcepciones y prejuicios entre muchos grupos sociales en nuestro país, lo cual no sólo no ha coadyuvado a mejorar la situación socio-política, antes descrita, sino que la sustenta y la refuerza.

³¹ SCHÜSSLER F. Elisabeth. “*Los caminos de la Sabiduría. Una introducción a la interpretación feminista de la Biblia*”. Sal Terrae-Santander, España. 2004. pp.117.

³² <https://www.unicef.org/spanish/sowc2014/numbers/>. Consultado el 2 de junio, 2017.

³³ Supra.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ www.cndh.org.mx. Consultado el 2 de junio, 2017.

³⁶ www.coneval.org.mx/Medicion/Paginas/PobrezaInicio.aspx. Consultado el 2 de junio, 2017.

³⁷ www.inegi.org.mx/saladeprensa/aproposito/2016/violencia2016_0.pdf. Consultado el 2 de junio, 2017.

³⁸ BLANCARTE Roberto, en *Scripta Nova* Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Barcelona. ISSN: 1138-9788. Depósito Legal: B. 21.741-98 Vol. VIII, núm. 168, 1 de julio de 2004.

En el año 2000, recién egresadas de la licenciatura de Teología un grupo de mujeres nos sentimos confrontadas tanto por la situación que padecen las mujeres en nuestro país como por las enseñanzas de corte patriarcal que habíamos recibido en la Universidad.

Fue así como, unos años más tarde, gracias al acompañamiento de teólogas feministas, decidimos constituirnos legalmente como asociación civil para trabajar a favor de las personas más desprotegidas y marginadas de nuestra sociedad, empezando por las mujeres. Desde entonces, las socias que integramos la Asociación Mexicana de Reflexión Teológica Feminista (AMERTEF), nos hemos dedicado a estudiar, difundir y promover la teología feminista, impartiendo cursos, conferencias y talleres.

Consideramos que ésta es una vía de toma de conciencia crítica que contribuye a visibilizar y a denunciar las injusticias y la opresión que sufren las mujeres, ya que la teología feminista, parte de la afirmación que Dios ha creado al ser humano con igual libertad y dignidad. Al ser una teología crítica de liberación, establece y fortalece redes liberadoras que dan esperanza a quienes sufren violencia y marginación. Además, la teología feminista tiene un enfoque ecológico y, en ese sentido, es guardiana de la biodiversidad pues integra el cuidado del universo entendido como el *oikos*, la *casa común*.

Sostenemos que la principal amenaza al desarrollo de la teología feminista en los años por venir en nuestro país es la persistencia del patriarcado como sistema estructural de poder.

La teóloga feminista, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza con la intención de redefinir la categoría analítica de patriarcado, acuñó el neologismo *kyriarcado*, a partir de los términos griegos *kyrios* (señor) y *archein* (gobernar o dominar). Ella lo entiende como: “un complejo sistema piramidal de entrelazadas y multiplicativas estructuras sociales de dominio y subordinación de mando y opresión”.³⁹ Además, Schüssler Fiorenza afirma que el poder kyriarcal opera en torno a ejes no sólo de género, sino también de raza, clase, cultura y religión.⁴⁰

Nosotras relacionamos el kyriarcado a la Hidra de Lerna,⁴¹ monstruo mitológico de múltiples cabezas. Según la mitología griega este animal gigantesco de apariencia reptiliana, regenera dos cabezas por cada una que pierde, lo que hace muy difícil exterminarlo, más no imposible. Sabemos que Hércules venció a esta temible bestia policéfala, cortando las cabezas y cauterizando la herida de inmediato con un hierro candente impidiendo que volviesen a crecer, y por último cortó y enterró la cabeza central.

El kyriarcado es entonces, la cabeza central, entendida como poder hegemónico piramidal, jerárquico y heteronormativo que ha regido y gobernado nuestro mundo durante siglos. Las demás cabezas son las ramificaciones y distintas manifestaciones de ese poder absoluto, tales como: el capitalismo, el colonialismo, el neoliberalismo, el nacionalismo, el androcentrismo, el totalitarismo, el sexismo, el racismo, el militarismo, la jerarquía eclesiástica, los fundamentalismos religiosos, entre otros.

Las múltiples cabezas de la hidra, emplean los mismos mecanismos de control que la cabeza central que impone el miedo y manipula la información. Todas en conjunto pronuncian el mismo discurso dualista que ha opuesto y dividido a la humanidad en categorías, estereotipos y roles pre-asignados conforme a una “ley natural”. Entre los muchos dualismos, mencionaremos los siguientes: hombre/mujer, mente/cuerpo, cultura/naturaleza, activo/pasivo, público/ privado, bien/mal, fe/razón, ricos/pobres, norte/sur, primer mundo/tercer mundo, blancos/negros, heterosexuales/homosexuales, cristianos/judíos, occidente/oriente, sagrado/mundano.

³⁹ Op. Cit. SCHÜSSLER F. Elisabeth. “*Los caminos de la Sabiduría...*” pp. 277.

⁴⁰ SCHÜSSLER F. Elisabeth. “*Pero ella dijo. Prácticas feministas de interpretación bíblica*”. Editorial Trotta, 1996, Madrid, España. pp. 162.

⁴¹<http://www.seresmitologicos.net/terrestres/hidra>. Consultado el 4 de junio, 2017.

De ahí que sea todo un reto re-estructurar una sociedad que acepte que los individuos son a la vez iguales y diferentes, y que pueden crearse relaciones interpersonales de reciprocidad y mutualidad. Sabemos que es muy difícil lograr cambios, más no imposible.

Al igual que Hércules pudo terminar con la bestia policéfala, nosotras tenemos puesta nuestra esperanza en las iniciativas y en las acciones de grupos y asociaciones alternativos que, con gran conciencia ética y crítica, y de manera articulada, elaboran propuestas antisistémicas que intentan establecer relaciones interpersonales equitativas. Estos grupos y asociaciones, han ido surgiendo en nuestra sociedad poco a poco y desde hace ya varias décadas. Es muy esperanzador constatar que cada vez son más y más los grupos que reaccionan en contra del poder opresivo, y trabajan esforzada y conjuntamente en aras de lograr una verdadera transformación socio-política-ecclesial.

En el ámbito teológico feminista, muchas teólogas, buscan y acuñan distintas metáforas capaces de nombrar este tipo de grupos emergentes o modelos socio-político-ecclesiales alternativos al kyriarcado. Nuevamente recurrimos a la teóloga Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza que emplea el marco teórico de *wo/men ekklesia*⁴² como imagen con la que nos sentimos ampliamente identificadas, puesto que elimina todo dualismo, es incluyente y abarcadora. Schüssler Fiorenza la describe de la siguiente manera:

“como lógica de la igualdad radical se puede teorizar la *wo/men ekklesia* como un ámbito de luchas feministas para transformar las instituciones. El constructo democrático de *wo/men ekklesia*, es a la vez una realidad histórica e imaginada, ya parcialmente realizada pero por la que todavía se debe luchar. Histórica y políticamente, esta imagen, entendida en el sentido de la asamblea democrática o del congreso de las *wo/men*, es una combinación de términos contradictorios con la finalidad de articular una alteridad política feminista”.⁴³

Queremos felicitar a todas las asociaciones que conforman esta “asamblea democrática” llamada INSeCT, por las redes que han creado, por su compromiso, esfuerzo y trabajo en la búsqueda de un bien común. En definitiva, por ser fuente de esperanza de que “un mundo mejor es posible”.

⁴² Op. Cit. SCHÜSSLER F. Elisabeth. “*Los caminos de la Sabiduría...*” pp. 274.

⁴³ Op. Cit. SCHÜSSLER F. Elisabeth. “*Pero ella dijo...*” pp. 170.

South America



Reports from South American Theologians

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INSeCT: Catholic Theology Worldwide El caso de Chile

Para esta presentación se nos ha pedido responder a tres preguntas. La primera es objetiva: cómo ha sido la celebración del 50° aniversario del término del Concilio Vaticano II en el año 2015.

Para nuestra Sociedad de Teología, la principal celebración fue la participación activa en un Congreso que organizó la Sociedad Argentina de Teología junto con la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad Católica Argentina para celebrar los 50 años del Concilio y los 100 años de la Facultad, del 1 al 3 de setiembre de 2015 en Buenos Aires, Argentina: Congreso Internacional de Teología: “Concilio Vaticano II: Memoria, Presente y Perspectivas”. Se invitó al Cardenal Walter Kasper y al teólogo español Santiago Madrigal a exponer sobre el Concilio; al teólogo brasileño Mario de França Miranda, sobre la recepción en América Latina; a Carlos Galli y Virginia Azcuy, sobre su recepción en Argentina; y a Rodrigo Polanco y Sandra Arenas, sobre su recepción en Chile. Hubo participación de otros teólogos y teólogas de Chile en los comentarios a las ponencias principales y en las comunicaciones que se presentaron. Fue, por lo demás, la jornada anual de nuestra Sociedad con la mayor participación: casi 40 miembros (siendo lo habitual entre 20 y 30).

Las otras dos preguntas se refieren a las oportunidades y amenazas que, a juicio del expositor, se puede prever que va a enfrentar la teología en las próximas décadas en su país o región. Las respondo juntas, porque me parece que oportunidades y amenazas suelen ir juntos, como las dos caras de una moneda, en los desafíos que los seres humanos vamos enfrentando en la vida. Y lo mismo creo que vale para las disciplinas y las instituciones, que son llevadas adelante por seres humanos.

Antes de proponer mi respuesta hago dos observaciones.

1°. Para hacer esta presentación me valgo de una distinción de los diversos públicos a los que se dirige la teología como disciplina científica: la academia, la iglesia y la sociedad (una idea desarrollada, entre otros, por David Tracy). Aunque, como es obvio, la teología que hace un determinado teólogo esté más orientada a uno de los tres, no puede desconocer los otros dos, porque el cristianismo afirma que Dios es universal, en el sentido de que todo es creación suya permanente, en camino a su destino que es la plenitud en Su Reinado escatológico.

2°. Un desafío transversal es, a mi entender, que en la iglesia crezcamos en dos capacidades que se condicionan mutuamente y se potencian: por un lado, la capacidad de discernir los procesos culturales y las situaciones de personas y de grupos y, por otro, la capacidad de diálogo. Para esto es preciso aprender el difícil arte de ponerse en el lugar del otro y comprender su punto de vista; así evitaremos, hasta donde nos es posible, juzgar sus acciones, actitudes y expresiones desde nuestro horizonte, desde nuestras coordenadas, y no desde las suyas.

Desafíos de la academia

En Chile, la teología académica se da en las Universidades Católicas; se han ido desarrollando en las últimas tres décadas muchos centros de teología a lo largo del país, en su gran mayoría servidos por teólogos laicos, con creciente presencia de mujeres. Ese desarrollo debería seguir, porque desclericaliza el ejercicio de la teología, trayendo a ella la vida real.

Un riesgo posible es el control estricto de los obispos sobre la ortodoxia de los profesores; control al que pueden ser muy sensibles los profesores laicos, porque de su trabajo depende la mantención de su familia.

Otro riesgo es que en la academia la disciplina teológica sea vista como un asunto poco serio, al moverse dentro de universidades confesionales; o, peor, como ideología que está al servicio de la institución eclesial y de sus intereses.

Sin embargo, estar en la academia le da a los teólogos la posibilidad de dialogar con las demás disciplinas, de llevar adelante investigaciones en conjunto; y les plantea el desafío permanente y saludable de pensar con seriedad la fe cristiana, no contentándose con repetir lo ya pensado por otros ni, peor aun, con favorecer una fe vivida solo desde la emoción y/o la acción, pero sin reflexión.

Desafíos de la iglesia

La iglesia en Chile está perdiendo autoridad moral y peso numérico a pasos agigantados. En este proceso hay factores que aporta la misma iglesia, como los escándalos de sacerdotes (y obispos) que manipulan las conciencias de los fieles (y luego, a veces, también sus cuerpos); o el intento de autoridades eclesial de imponer a toda la sociedad mediante leyes su moral confesional (ha sido así en discusiones legislativas sobre la ley de divorcio, sobre la ley que permite un acuerdo de vida en pareja también entre personas del mismo sexo, y en la discusión actual sobre la ley que despenaliza el aborto en tres causales). Pero interviene también un factor social y cultural, de fuerza crecientemente arrolladora, sobre todo entre los jóvenes; se lo puede denominar agnosticismo, aunque está estrechamente vinculado a un fenómeno no religioso como es el descrédito –en vías de rápida generalización– de toda institución.

Ante este panorama, cunde en muchos –no sólo obispos y clero, sino también laicos– la tentación, que considero fatal, de replegarse, de convertirse en un grupo cerrado, que pretenda inmunizarse contra toda influencia del mundo en torno y que pierda, por lo mismo, todo interés en influir en él con el Evangelio. Sería traicionar el envío de Jesús a proclamar su buena noticia. Los teólogos/as debemos ejercer ante esta tentación un aspecto de nuestra tarea profética, manteniendo viva la urgencia de la evangelización de las personas, pero sin sacarlas del mundo actual sino desde sus diversas culturas.

Pensando en la jerarquía, pienso que podemos hacer dos aportes. Por un lado, debemos mantener vivo el valor del *sensus fidelium*, al que también deben estar atentos los obispos y el clero, respetándolo y aprendiendo de él; para hacer un buen aporte, debemos justificarlo teológicamente. Por otro lado, debemos ayudar a la jerarquía y al clero a tomar conciencia real, no solo nocional, de que ya no vivimos en régimen de cristiandad, porque la sociedad ha dejado de ser “cristiana”; y que, por consiguiente, hay que diferenciar claramente entre la retórica que se emplea en el discurso intraeclesial y la que se usa para dirigirse a la sociedad.

Pensando en los creyentes en general, clero y fieles, podemos aportarles una presentación clara y con buenas razones de un rasgo fundamental de la fe en Jesús: ella hace a todos los discípulos de Jesús hermanos entre sí, aboliendo toda diferencia que pueda dañar al otro (Gal 3,28). Al escribir a Filemón, Pablo le hace ver que su esclavo Onésimo, que se había fugado, yendo a refugiarse donde Pablo, vuelve ahora como su hermano, porque se ha convertido a la fe en Jesús. Sabemos por la historia que esa manera de ver al esclavo demoró siglos en hacer su camino hasta que quedó claro un rotundo no a la esclavitud. Pero ya estaba en germen en las afirmaciones de Pablo. ¿Cuántos otros gérmenes deberán ir desarrollándose en el futuro? Pareciera que empieza a germinar el del respeto por la dignidad de la mujer, igual a la del varón.

Desafíos de la sociedad

Los desafíos de la sociedad a la teología constituyen hoy un océano inmenso, por momentos aterrador. Escojo tres, a los que creo que los teólogos en Chile podemos dar un aporte significativo.

1°. La dignidad del ser humano. Esta dignidad deriva de la fe en que Dios ha creado a todo ser humano y lo ha invitado a ser su hijo. Vinculada a esta concepción está la praxis de defensa de los derechos humanos realizada por la Vicaría de la solidaridad, tal como la vivimos durante la dictadura militar en Chile (1973-1990). Fue una defensa que no tuvo en cuenta las creencias ni las ideologías de los que la necesitaron.

2°. La opción de Dios por los pobres. La toma de conciencia de esta opción ha permitido a muchos cristianos un acercamiento nuevo a la realidad de los pobres y el consiguiente descubrimiento tanto de sus valores culturales y religiosos como de la opresión que sufren debido a las estructuras de la sociedad. Esto ha derivado en un compromiso de muchos, cristianos y no cristianos, con su liberación.

3°. La responsabilidad ecológica y la tecnociencia. La naturaleza es vista en la fe como creación de Dios. Es cierto que el mismo Dios la ha puesto en nuestras manos, pero no como si fuéramos sus dueños o el “amo y señor” según creía Descartes. Somos responsables ante Dios de lo que hacemos en la naturaleza y de lo que le hacemos a la naturaleza. De ahí debería brotar en los creyentes algo análogo a la “ética del respeto reverencial por la vida” que propuso Albert Schweitzer. Se trataría de una actitud ante la naturaleza que también los no creyentes podrían compartir y que podría llevarnos, juntos, a enmendar el rumbo actual de depredación y contaminación. Para ello, me parece, se requiere fortalecer la reflexión crítica sobre la tecnociencia actual, una tarea que debería ser central en la academia, y en la que las Universidades Católicas podrían asumir un liderazgo efectivo.

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Report of the Argentine Society of Theology

The Argentine Society of Theology has more than forty years of existence, in which it has developed, almost uninterruptedly, its task of animating the theological life in Argentina.

Its main activity has been the preparation of the Society's annual week, which for years was carried out in the city of La Falda, in the province of Cordoba, and in the last two triennia has been displaced from place to place to carry an Integration project to different areas of the country and its universities.

In the last two triennies, in turn, an interdisciplinary dialogue of theology has been sought not only with sciences that have traditionally been related to it (such as philosophy) but also with hard sciences, a dialogue that is arduous and for which we have had to travel unknown paths.

In the last two triennies, in turn, an interdisciplinary dialogue of theology has been sought not only with sciences that have traditionally been related to it (such as philosophy) but also with hard sciences, a dialogue that is arduous and for which we have had to travel unknown paths.

This was the main effort undertaken during the triennium 2010-2013, chaired by fr. Dr. Jorge Scampini.

The year 2013, beginning the presidency of the Pbro. Dr. José Carlos Caamaño resolved to carry out a triennium with an explicitly theological axis, so that the theological virtues and their incidence in life marked the three moments. At the same time, it was decided to try to specify the presence of the SAT week in various regions of the country.

In 2014 the week was held in the town of Luis Guillón, in the province of Buenos Aires, and was called the main exhibitor the Pbro. Dr. Angel Cordovilla to animate the theme "*Charity and joy as paradigms of the gospel*". In turn, this week they decided to carry out three publications to join the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. The first, on the presence of the Argentine bishops in the Second Vatican Council, in charge of the R.P. Dr. Luis Liberti. The second on the reception of the Council in theology, by Fr. Dr. Jorge Scampini and Pbro. Dr. Carlos Schickendantz and the third on the *Dei Verbum*, with the title *Host the Word*, by the Pbro. Dr. Gerardo Söding.

The year 2015 found the SAT collaborating in the preparation of the centenary of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina. During the month of September, this meeting took place, in which the Society participated institutionally in its annual meeting. In this meeting the SAT coordinated a panel with the theme "*Faith and testimony*". It was intended to show leading figures in the evangelization that through their word and commitment gave body and plasticity to the proclamation of the Gospel.

At the assembly held during this Congress, the SAT partners resolved to carry out the week of 2016 in the city of Salta and in agreement with the Catholic University of Salta. This linking to a university in its organization was motivated by the interest in making theology visible within university life. So it was held in September at the Campus of the Catholic University of Salta, with sessions reserved for members and sessions open to the entire University community.

They were invited as exhibitors, Pedro Trigo (Caracas, Venezuela) Nuria Fernandez Gayol (Comillas Spain), William Cavanaugh (Chicago, USA) and the theme was "Hope that fecundates history." Pedro Trigo spoke about the historical dimension of hope, Nuria Fernández on the theological dimension of history and William Cavanaugh on the martyrdom dimension of hope.

The rich experience lived in Salta in relation to the host University encouraged us to accept the proposal of the members of Santa Fe to carry out the week in the city of Santa Fe and in agreement with the Catholic University of that capital.

In the assembly of Salta was re-elected the Pbro. Dr. José Carlos Caamaño and it was decided to carry out a triennium with the axis placed in the dialogue of theological disciplines with the fundamental theology. The demands of the plural world put us before the challenge of revising our languages and we believe that to review them from the lens of the fundamental theology can allow to cross roads of fecundity. Thus it was decided to organize the triennium with the following themes:

Human beings and creation: Subjects, searches, limits. Different paradigms and rationalities in this relationship. Possible dialogues on the crisis, ethics and spirituality of an integral ecology (LS). Original wisdom, scientific and technological scenarios, etc. The cry of the land and the cry of the poor. In this instance, anthropology, the theology of creation and the like seem to prevail.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit: Searches for the "historical Jesus", memories, stories, resurrection. Need and testing of a more explicit dimension of Latin American pneumatology.

In this instance, the question of Christian origins and systematics (in particular, christology and pneumatology) in dialogue with the experiences and practices of believers seems important.

Church(es), Christianity and religions: Against the background of the question of God, ecclesiology(es) emerges here in a pluralistic context that demands a rethinking of identity in dialogue and difference. In this instance ecclesiology and theology of religions seem important, in dialogue with the most diverse social and cultural studies on beliefs (and unbelief).

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Teología en Brasil y el Vaticano II

Teología y Brasil

La Teología en Brasil, presenta hoy fuerte carácter académico y está conectada con el campo de las Ciencias de la Religión. Hay dos grandes sociedades donde la Teología está representada: La sociedad de Teología y Ciencias de la Religión – SOTER – y la Asociación Nacional de Estudios de Postgrado de Teología y Ciencias de la Religión – ANPTECRE. Además, existen sociedades menores especializadas: Asociación de Biblistas, Liturgistas, la Sociedad Brasileña de Teología Moral – SBTM – y ahora en fundación, parece, la Sociedad Brasileña de Teología Sistemática, las tres últimas, católicas.

Hay que empezar diciendo que la situación de Brasil ha cambiado dramáticamente en los dos últimos años. Es que históricamente la realidad brasileña es una de las más injustas del mundo. Considerando solo el índice Gines, Brasil aparece siempre entre los más desiguales del mundo. La educación es una de las peores del mundo, con un analfabetismo funcional de más del 75% de la población. Los sectores más fuertes de la economía son todavía las commodities, es decir, la explotación de recursos naturales y exportación de producción agraria el agrobusiness. Es natural que la mayor parte de los aportes científicos y tecnológicos estén concentrados en esas áreas: Petróleo, Biotecnología etc.

¿Pero, que fue lo que cambió la situación para peor? Los gobiernos de izquierda solamente lograron las victorias electorales con el compromiso de no cambiar estructuras. Aunque más de 20 millones de pobres hayan salido de su condición de miseria extrema, la diferencia entre las clases no se cambió. La creciente concentración de riqueza se mantuvo, con su efecto colateral de corrupción generalizada de todas las instituciones democráticas, incluso la justicia. Esta alianza contradictoria llegó a su límite el año 2014 con una victoria difícil de Dilma Rousseff para su segundo gobierno. La economía de consumo, con rasgos de estado de bienestar social, ya no tenía como sostenerse sin profundos cambios en las relaciones de concentración de riqueza, una reforma económica. Para la oposición la cuarta victoria consecutiva de la Alianza contradictoria no le gustó y con la aparición de los escándalos de corrupción fue posible el golpe, aunque no menos corrupto con votos pagos en plata y puestos.

Lo que ahora está pasando, aunque esté en sintonía con muchas de las líneas de la economía mundial y con ropajes de “modernización” à la Trump y otros, es una destrucción sin precedentes de un estado democrático y social. Es un proyecto explícito en favor de la concentración de riqueza y de miseria social, de violencia y narcotráfico. La educación será todavía más excluyente y tecnocrática. En mi universidad, que es católica, y una de las más importantes de Brasil, el jueves pasado empezó la demisión de más de 100 docentes e investigadores porque ya no hay dinero para mantener la calidad de enseñanza e investigación. Es algo absurdamente contradictorio que en un país donde la mayor parte de la población sigue analfabetizada, la educación sea tratada como un negocio más.

¿Qué pasa con la Teología?

Lo primero que se debe decir es que sigue muy fuerte la conexión entre la reflexión teológica y la realidad social, económica y política en Brasil. Han sido publicadas obras sobre la violencia y la fe, sobre el reino de Dios y la liberación, el método de la teología en contacto con la realidad. El sujeto de las migraciones y de la ecología ha sido objeto de estudios diversos. En segundo lugar, por primera vez en la historia de Brasil, y aun bajo las condiciones de fuerte secularización de un estado laico, la Teología tiene líneas oficiales de contenido expresadas en términos válidos para todas las confesiones y religiones, con exigencias académicas para su reconocimiento oficial como grado de Bachillerato. Eso exige que la Teología tenga que explicitar su función social, la reflexión de la realidad, no sólo eclesial y religiosa, sino también cuestiones de género, Ecología, Derechos Humanos entre otros. Sin embargo, es posible mantener estudios estrictamente eclesiásticos, pero entonces sin un reconocimiento público.

Concilio Vaticano II

Durante los últimos años mucha investigación ha sido hecha en torno al Concilio Vaticano II, su historia, recepción y recuperación para el cristianismo actual en Brasil.

Creo que la obra más importante es el *Dicionário do Concílio Vaticano II*. Resultado de un gran número de investigadores de Brasil y de los centros de estudio de Teología y Ciencias de la Religión, trata de los temas y personas del Concilio. Hubo varias publicaciones introductorias a los documentos individuales e algunas obras colectivas sobre los más importantes, sin olvidar que también *Inter Mirifica*, por su importancia ha tenido atención especial por los sectores de comunicación de la Iglesia.

Además de esos estudios de los textos del Concilio hay que destacar la publicación de testimonios históricos del concilio, como las cartas de Hélder Câmara, o la traducción del *Journal* de Congar, bien como las investigaciones históricas respecto de la participación de Brasil en el Concilio.

Documentos más estudiados

Los documentos más estudiados, como tenía que ser, fueron la *Lumen Gentium* y su recepción en Brasil. Los temas de la Iglesia Común, de los ministerios, del pueblo de Dios, de la importancia de los laicos, del *sensus fidelium*, de las iglesias particulares, fueran los objetos de estudio más destacados. También en Brasil, como en otros países hay “conflictos” de interpretación. Y en la recepción es posible reconocer una línea de solo cambios superficiales, subrayando los temas ministeriales y jerarquía. Hay centros de estudio de Teología, todavía fijados en la Escolástica y manualística, con fuerte segregación de lo social y de la realidad. Mientras de otra parte, sigue la valoración del pueblo de Dios, de las Comunidades de Base y de las parroquias como comunidades de comunidades.

La *Gaudium et spes*, por su impacto social y por las cuestiones de ciencia, paz, justicia social y doctrina social de la Iglesia tuvo un impacto muy significativo. Aunque haya obras dedicadas específicamente al estudio de la Constitución conciliar, parece que lo más importante es la recepción de su espíritu. Especialmente el tema de la violencia ha llamado la atención del pensamiento teológico. Brasil, además de la violencia estructural – la injusticia estructural – es también un país marcado por la violencia con un promedio 30 asesinatos por 100.000 habitantes, lo cual sumado a las muertes de tránsito, resulta en más de 100.000 muertes violentas al año. De ahí la importancia de la reflexión sobre la persona humana como imagen y semejanza de Dios, los derechos humanos fundamentales y los poderes políticos. La autonomía de las realidades terrestres está muy presente en los debates sobre el estado laico y las exigencias éticas en las investigaciones científicas. También los temas recientes de la Ecología integral son conectados con *Gaudium et Spes* y desarrollados en base las investigaciones y el Magisterio actual, especialmente después de *Laudato si'*.

La *Dei Verbum* engendró estudios específicos y está presente en la pastoral bíblica, las traducciones de la Biblia, la metodología teológica y en la lectura popular. Por primera vez, después de Concilio, tenemos una traducción litúrgica de toda la Escritura. Con otros documentos, como la *Optatam Totius* y, más recientemente, la nueva *Ratio Studiorum* da forma a los estudios de Teología.

Ecumenismo y Dialogo Interreligioso

Con la inspiración de *Unitatis redintegratio* y *Nostra Aetate* el diálogo ecuménico e interreligioso tienen una atención creciente. Hay varias publicaciones resultado de los diálogos ecuménicos y de investigaciones académicas tratando de los temas en abierto con las Iglesias de la Reforma, pero también con las Iglesias Pentecostales más antiguas. Durante el año 2016 empezaron estudios sobre el documento *From Conflict to Communion* y están en curso otras publicaciones. La recepción del documento *Nostra Aetate* y *Dignitatis Humanae*, además de los diálogos con hebreos y musulmanes ofreció también un reconocimiento de las religiones indígenas y afro-brasileñas. En este sentido el congreso recién celebrado de SOTER, con una primera publicación, *Religiões em Reforma: 500 anos depois*, es un testimonio de inclusión religiosa en el sentido de que todas las religiones necesitan la permanente reforma para tener presente las condiciones de la realidad. El Congreso anterior de SOTER había reflexionado sobre *los tiempos del Espíritu* buscando la conexión con el Pentecostalismo, la Espiritualidad y las espiritualidades.

Teología y sociedad

Lo primero a registrar es que aunque la Teología Feminista tenga expresión significativa, las investigaciones específicas sobre el rol de la mujer en la Iglesia y en la sociedad no han tenido la necesaria atención por buena parte de la Teología católica en Brasil. Menor todavía es la presencia de las reflexiones sobre género. Alguna excepción puede verificarse en la Teología Moral. Por el contrario es visible la gran resistencia y oposición de parte de las autoridades eclesiásticas. Aquí hace falta un cambio profundo de las mediaciones hermenéuticas.

De otra parte, la Teología de la Liberación, aun con su diferenciación interna, sigue dando forma a reflexiones sistemáticas en el campo de la Cristología, la Teología Trinitaria, Antropología Teológica y Moral Social. Hay algunos desarrollos específicos como la Teología Pública ante los desafíos de una sociedad laica y a veces con rasgos anti-religiosos.

Finalmente, merecen destaque todavía el número significativo de publicaciones sobre mística(s), las obras de Ecoteología, e investigaciones importantes sobre el diálogo con las Ciencias Naturales (Creación y evolución, Cosmología, Neurociencias, Internet etc.).

Teología y Bispo Francisco de Roma

Especialmente el tema de la misericordia e la Iglesia en salida, con la inspiración de la Teología del Pueblo, están catalizando reflexiones y publicaciones.

Oportunidades ante el futuro

Aunque la Iglesia católica esté perdiendo en importancia numérica, hoy teniendo solamente unos 54% de la población, los desafíos de la realidad para la misma Iglesia y el ambiente universitario exigen que se produzca buena Teología, es decir, pensante, honesta, creativa y comprometida con los más pobres en las más diversas formas. Por supuesto parece que la Teología tendrá que hacerse cargo de la pasión del mundo.

Amenazas del futuro

La sustitución de la Transcendencia por la violencia y la idolatría, la indiferencia y la ocultación de Dios. Y en la Iglesia, un retorno al “autoreferencialidad”, con su alejamiento del mundo y de las personas con su realidad.

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2014–2016 Triennium: Second Conference of Women Theologians

In cooperation with AGENDA, the Forum of Catholic Women Theologians in Germany

The Second Conference of Women Theologians, “Spaces of Peace: Signs of Our Times and Women’s Stories,” was held March 28-31, 2016 with the support of the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina’s Department of Theology. The conference was planned, organized, and presented by Teologanda and AGENDA, the Forum of Catholic Women Theologians in Germany, under the scientific direction of Virginia Azcuy (Argentina) and Margit Eckholt (Germany), within the framework of the existing agreement between the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina and the University of Osnabrück. The conference had the local ecclesial support of Cardinal Mario A. Poli, Archbishop of Buenos Aires and Primate of Argentina, and of Monsignor Juan Espinoza Jiménez, Secretary General of CELAM (Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Conference) and Director of CEBITEPAL, the Pastoral-Biblical-Theological Center for Latin America and the Caribbean (Bogotá, Colombia). In addition to theologians from Argentina (Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and Rosario) and Germany, the conference included participants from Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Perú, Brazil, Guatemala, El Salvador, England, the United States, Venezuela, and Mexico.

Panels and academic activities

Along with other Latin American participants, women theologians from the two organizing countries played a major role in the conference’s *principal panels* and a great variety of other academic activities including: *thematic roundtables* with over 100 presentations; *mini-courses* and workshops for deepening knowledge of specific subjects; *theology cafés* for the open exchange of ideas. A selection of the panels will soon be published in Spanish and German.

The general theme of the Conference and its key concepts were of great interest and were developed in a creative dialogue with the reality existing in each of the distinct countries that participated. The *opening panels* were published in the journal *Teología* 119 (2016) 115-207 and were authored by Margit Eckholt, Virginia Azcuy, Judith Könnemann, Diana Viñoles, Gabriela Di Renzo, and Nancy Pineda-Madrid. See the copy of the journal *Teología* attached to this report.

Along with the discussions related to the question of “Spaces of Peace” through the lenses of different disciplines, a distinguished panel on “Human Rights in Argentina” was offered, with Argentine Nobel laureate A. Perez Esquivel, Norma Morandini, Sr. Martha Pelloni and Monsignor Jorge Casaretto. This panel merits a special mention on the part of the speakers and received institutional support during its development and preparation from the Academic Council of the Department of Theology.

Careful attention was given to the relationships with the leadership of the Department of Theology and the Metropolitan Seminary of Buenos Aires. It is noteworthy to mention the participation of this Department’s professors and students, as it was of fundamental importance to institutional integration, one of the objectives of the 2016 Second Conference of Women Theologians. The thematic engagement of space, coordinated by Gabriela Di Renzo, met with the participants’ general approval.

As part of the conference atmosphere and with the collaboration of Teologanda assistant Verónica Masciadro, an exhibit was set up of around 100 women activists for peace. It consisted of photographs and mini-biographies of women who received or were nominated for the Nobel Prize. Preference was

given to women from Germany and Latin America as well as those of continental importance. This exhibit was complemented with the important testimonies of women in the thematic roundtables and with the presentation of an acknowledgment titled “Women Artisans of Peace,” coordinated by Nancy Raimundo, Annegret Langenhorst, and Carolina Bacher. These acknowledgments were presented at the end of the conference.

Executive coordination

The executive tasks of the conference secretariat were handled by Mirta Jauregui, Teologanda assistant, together with two collaborating students from the Department of Theology: Cecilia Cofrancesco and Mariela De Lío. The country’s inflationary situation presented us with several challenges which were addressed with patience and responsibility on the part of the secretary general, the conference treasurer, Eloísa Ortiz de Elguea, and the professional advice of an accountant. The priority was to assist and facilitate the participation of women theologians with few resources.

The Second Conference of Women Theologians had the financial support of the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), of ADVENIAT (Adveniat Bishops’ Action Committee), and of SCLA (the U.S. Bishops’ Conference Subcommittee for the Church in Latin America). We also received support in the form of services from Teologanda, the UCA Department of Theology, and other individuals and institutions that provided their assistance in different ways.

The general logistics were complicated, because the conference venue did not have the resources to offer meals and lodging for the participants and there were no homes in the area with the necessary space to house the speakers. Lunches were provided off-site; four homes in the area were used to house the participants, and minibuses were hired for transportation from the homes to the conference venue.

Mass was celebrated daily with different bishops from the dioceses neighboring Buenos Aires: Msgr. Fernando Maletti, Msgr. Alejandro Giorgi, and Msgr. Jorge Casaretto. There was also a team led by Marisa Riquelme, Teologanda assistant, that was in charge of ecumenical celebrations and artistic presentations during the conference.

During the conference, there was a Book Fair and Sale, with approximately 1,000 titles authored and/or edited by the participants. Later in the conference, theology publishing companies set up stands to sell their own books, setting aside a percentage of their profits for the Department and another portion for Teologanda. Some stands also set up exhibits of artisan crafts and regional products; in return for their participation, they offered gifts to the event leadership and dignitaries.

Final assessment

The Second Conference of Women Theologians represents a very important step in the institutional integration of the Teologanda organization in the UCA’s Department of Theology and in the local Church. The participation of women theologians from Latin America and the Caribbean, while varied by country, was a new sign of the regional relevance of the itinerary of women in theology. The theme that focused the conference discussion was original, contextual, and purposeful. The hope is that publishing the panel and other presentations will be a way to commemorate and disseminate the diverse contributions that were offered and discussed during the conference. Lastly, this Second Conference consolidates the work we have begun and deepens the systematic and moral contribution of women theologians in the academy without neglecting their work’s spiritual and pastoral aspects.