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Exchange of gifts experience of Global Christian Forum

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EXCHANGE OF GIFTS EXPERIENCE OF GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM

The Global Christian Forum is a movement of representatives from diverse Christian churches, organisations and traditions meeting on an equal basis, to foster mutual respect and to address common challenges together.

The Global Christian Forum offers new opportunities for broadening and deepening encounters on the way to Christian unity. It especially promotes relationships between and among Christian churches and traditions which have not been in conversation with each other previously.

Discerning the future of the Global Christian Forum. We experience the space created by the Global Christian Forum (GCF) as a gift from God. We affirm the GCF committee's leadership and urge them to continue seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance in shaping the Forum's future, offering the following as our contribution to this discernment.

(www.globalchristianforum.org; *Guidelines*, Manado 2011).

Key words: Global Christian Forum, contemporary ecumenism, ecumenical movement, "exchange of gifts"

1. Introduction. 2. A spiritual impulse. 3. Sharing faith journeys. 4. Exploring a way for contemporary ecumenism. 5. Conclusion

1. INTRODUCTION

From participating in the Consultation of Global Christian Forum (GFC) in Tirana, the capital of Albania (2015) and attending the 3rd Global Gathering in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia (2018), one thing in particular stands out for me. The theme of the gathering is "let mutual love continue". I experienced during the Consultation in Tirana Christian unity not only rationally, but perhaps more significantly, emotionally.

Ecumenism is an act of love. This love springs from the desire to be one, as Christ prayed for us (John 17, 21). Ecumenism is therefore affective: it is an impulse of hope, of humility, of awe, and above all, of love. Ecumenism is not only a rational matter of the head, a discussion of doctrinal, theological, structural,

or hermeneutical differences between Christians. Ecumenism is also an affective movement of the heart, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Ecumenism is a holistic exercise, which is what we experienced during GCF. It involves learning from each other and understanding each other's beliefs (as it happened during our individual encounters, lectures, seminars, and workgroups). But it is also about common prayer and worship, table fellowship, embracing each other as friends, and helping each other as Christians. At the deepest level, ecumenism is, as pope John Paul II declares, "an exchange of gifts"¹. For me, this exchange was the heartbeat of GCF. We came together from many traditions to share one another's gifts. When I now reflect upon GCF, what I remember most is the people and the relationships, rather than just the formal learning.

Thus, what I want to explore here is the spirituality behind the ecumenical endeavour. First, I will discuss what is meant by spiritual impulse, before delving into Christian unity as a gift exchange. Finally, I will consider receptive ecumenism as a new approach which emphasises the more affective dimensions of our encounter.

2. THE SPIRITUAL IMPULSE

The purpose of the Global Christian Forum is to be an open space wherein representatives from a broad range of Christian churches and inter-church organisations, which confess the triune God and Jesus Christ as perfect in His divinity and humanity, can gather to foster mutual respect, to explore and address together common challenges (www.globalchristianforum.org).

The ecumenical movement began as an impulse of the Spirit. As such, considering the spiritual dimension within ecumenism is important to understand this endeavour as a whole. Recognising the spiritual roots of ecumenism is one of the major themes taken up by the Ninth Report of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC (JWG). The report seeks to "remind Christians of the spiritual impulse that has driven the ecumenical movement from its inception, and to consider fresh ways that churches can nurture these spiritual roots [...] by offering some practical recommendations"².

Spirituality speaks to the depths underlying ecumenical dialogue, the silences without words, and the mystery that concepts alone cannot convey, where the spark of the Holy Spirit is found. Ecumenism is a spiritual activity, and it must also be practised as such, particularly with regard to the setbacks the ecumenical movement is facing. As the Joint Working Group stated: "Fresh focus on the spiritual roots of

¹ Cf. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint. On Commitment to Ecumenism*, 1995, 28. Here-after referred to as UUS.

² Report of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, *The Spiritual Roots of Ecumenism. A Fresh Look with Some Practical Recommendations*, in: *Ecumenical Visions for the 21st Century. A Reader for Theological Education*, ed. M. Lorke, D. Werner, Geneva: WCC Publications 2013, 173.

ecumenism is an appropriate response to contemporary challenges among churches and within the world”³.

While the spiritual aspects of ecumenism have been acknowledged since the beginning⁴, the importance of spirituality appears to be undergoing something of a rediscovery. The JWG describes the roots of ecumenism as combining “efforts of Christians to discern God’s will and to be receptive to the Holy Spirit”⁵. Spirituality encompasses the very core of ecumenism. It embraces key concepts such as the unity of the church as act of the Holy Spirit, ecumenism as Christ’s will and prayer, and unity as given by God. The purpose of ecumenism is not to create unity, but to uncover the unity that already exists, given by the Spirit. In that sense, it is a spiritual as well as an academic or practical exercise.

In catholic theology, the term spiritual ecumenism can be traced back at least to the 1930s⁶. In particular, spiritual ecumenism is influenced by the work of Abbé Paul Couturier (1881–1953). Couturier founded the Groupe des Dombes and established the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. He is often considered to be the father of spiritual ecumenism. Walter Kasper calls him “the grand apostle and pioneer of spiritual ecumenism”⁷. Kasper himself draws attention to the fact that the catholic ecumenical movement can be considered as beginning with spiritual ecumenism, as “the very first impetus of the ecumenical movement”.

Officially, it was the promulgation of *Unitatis redintegratio* (UR), the Decree on Ecumenism in 1964, which not only launched Roman Catholic involvement in ecumenism, but has fundamentally fashioned the framework for Catholic ecumenical dialogue over the decades since the Second Vatican Council. Significantly, spiritual ecumenism can be seen as underlying UR, and UR declares spiritual ecumenism as “the soul of the whole ecumenical movement”⁸.

The Decree on Ecumenism attests that the core of spiritual ecumenism is a focus on interior conversion. As the Decree announces: “There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion”⁹. This *metanoia* is marked by hope for the future and trust in the Holy Spirit. It is repentance for the sins of the past (such as witnessed during the 10th Assembly of the WCC), as well as hope in the future.

The foundations for spiritual ecumenism laid by Vatican II were expanded by pope John Paul II, particularly in his encyclical *Ut unum sint* (UUS). John Paul II repeatedly affirmed the Catholic Church’s commitment to ecumenism as “irreversible” or “irrevocable”¹⁰.

³ *Ibidem*, 175.

⁴ Here considered to be dated from the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh.

⁵ Report of the Joint Working Group Between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, *The Spiritual Roots of Ecumenism...*, op.cit., 176.

⁶ L. Régis, *Spiritual Ecumenism*, in: *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Lossky Nicholas et al., Geneva: WCC Publications 2002, 1069.

⁷ W. Kasper, *That They May All Be One. The Call to Unity Today*, London: Burns and Oates 2004, 156.

⁸ Vatican II Council, *Unitatis Redintegratio. Decree on Ecumenism*, in: *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents. Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, ed. A. Flannery, New York: Costello Publishing Company 1996, 8. Hereafter referred to as UR.

⁹ UR, 7.

¹⁰ See UUS, 3 for one instance of John Paul II making this statement. For examples of scholars

“Ut unum sint” (1995) is a landmark document for catholic ecumenism. As Edward Idris Cassidy points out, it is “the first encyclical letter ever written on the subject of ecumenism”, and has “made a vital contribution to the ecumenical movement”¹¹. In this encyclical, John Paul II emphasises that unity is God’s will, and as such, it is intertwined with God’s plan of salvation for humanity. Ecumenism is, at its heart, conversion.

Therefore, the practice of ecumenism is a spiritual one. Fundamentally, spirituality is about relationship, deepening communion between the church and Christ, between ourselves and God, and between each other. In ecumenical practice, we do not meet denominations; we meet people. Spiritual ecumenism is about recognising where one tradition may have a gift others can benefit from. As Kasper writes: “Ecumenical spirituality means listening and opening ourselves to the demands of the Spirit who also speaks through different forms of piety; it means a readiness to rethink and convert, but also to bear the otherness of the other, which requires tolerance, patience, respect and, not least, goodwill and love”¹².

One key characteristic of ecumenical spirituality, if it is to be genuinely relational, is that of both offering and accepting gifts from others, for our own interior conversion. This brings us to consider ecumenism as an exchange of gifts.

3. SHARING FAITH JOURNEYS

“The practice of sharing personal and community faith journeys is central to the GCF, and we believe it is one of the Forum’s unique contributions to the body of Christ. It demystifies and bridges differences between us, leads to mutual appreciation, encourages humility, and helps us to recognize the work of the same Holy Spirit in each other’s lives” (*Guidelines*, Manado 2011).

In UUS, John Paul II emphasises that ecumenical dialogue is ‘not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way it is always an “exchange of gifts”¹³. Building upon Vatican II’s recognition that “many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of [the church’s] visible structure”, opens the way for the church to look at others in the sense of an exchange of gifts. UUS conveys: “Communion is made fruitful by the exchange of gifts between the churches insofar as they complement

quoting his statement, see O’Gara Margaret, *Ecumenism’s Future*, Commonweal 132 (July 15, 2005), 11; Cross Peter, *John Paul II and Ecumenism*, in: *John Paul II. Legacy and Witness*, ed. R. Gascoigne Robert, Strathfield: St Pauls, 2007, 121; E. Cassidy, *Ut Unum Sint in Ecumenical Perspective*, in: *Church Unity and the Papal Office. An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II’s Encyclical Ut Unum Sint (That All May Be One)*, ed. C.E. Braaten, R.W. Jenson, Robert W., Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001, 11; W. Kasper, *The Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century. Presentation at the Event Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC*, 18th November 2005. The Catholic Church’s irreversible commitment to ecumenism was reaffirmed by Pope Benedict XVI after his election in 2005.

¹¹ E. Cassidy, *Ut Unum Sint in Ecumenical Perspective*, *op.cit.*, 10.

¹² W. Kasper, *That They May All Be One*, *op.cit.*, 160.

¹³ UUS, 28.

each other”(Ibid., 57). This exchange of gifts is for the benefit of all, as John Paul II observes: “Everything that the Spirit brings about in “others” can serve for the building up of all communities” (Ibid., 38). The dialogical nature of ecumenism is necessary as the church exists within the eschatological awareness that she is yet to fully realise herself. In continuity with the humble tone of UUS, John Paul II describes ecumenism as a “long and arduous pilgrimage”, performed with an ‘attitude of conversion to the will of the Father and, at the same time, of repentance and absolute trust in the reconciling power of [...] Christ” (Ibid., 82).

Therefore, UUS attests that “ecumenism implies that the Christian communities should help one another so that there may be truly present in them the full content and all the requirements of the “heritage handed down by the Apostles”. Without this, full communion will never be possible. This mutual help in the search for truth is a sublime form of evangelical charity” (Ibid., 78).

The exchange of gifts emphasises the fact that ecumenism cannot be carried out alone. This search for truth and pilgrimage towards conversion must be undertaken with others, “whereby communities strive to give in mutual exchange what each one needs in order to grow towards definitive fullness in accordance with God’s plan” (Ibid.). In this spirit, John Paul II reflects upon the achievements ecumenism has already offered: “We are aware, as the Catholic Church, that we have received much from the witness borne by other churches and ecclesial communities to certain common Christian values” (Ibid.). He goes on to state that ‘at the stage which we have now reached this process of mutual enrichment must be taken seriously into account” (Ibid.). Moreover, he attests that this ‘process of mutual enrichment’, grounded in the ‘communion which already exists as a result of the ecclesial elements present in the Christian communities’ will “be a force impelling towards’ the ‘desired goal of the journey we are making” (Ibid.). Therefore, the exchange of gifts, which is possible due to the real but partial communion which already exists amongst Christians, leads to the mutual enrichment of the churches, and ultimately towards the goal of ecumenism, which is no less than “full and visible communion” (Ibid.).

In perhaps the best-known passage of *Ut unum sint*, John Paul II offers an example of this exchange of gifts regarding the Petrine ministry. Not without justification, Peter Cross describes this section of UUS as “a bombshell”¹⁴. Acknowledging that the papal office “constitutes a difficulty for most other Christians”¹⁵, the pope asks: “Could not the real but imperfect communion existing between us persuade church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his church and allowing ourselves to be deeply moved by his plea “that they may all be one [...] so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17, 21)?”¹⁶.

The importance of this section is attested to by Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson in their edited volume devoted to offering an ecumenically representative response

¹⁴ P. Cross, *John Paul II and Ecumenism*, op.cit., 124. 415.

¹⁵ UUS, 88.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 96.

to this one part of the encyclical¹⁷. The humility expressed in the request, and as Henn notes, the implied “openness to modify the present forms of the exercise of this ministry”¹⁸ reflect the shift in attitude towards ecumenism brought about by Vatican II. Such a statement represents substantial changes since encyclicals such as *Mortalium animos* (1928). Evoked in this passage is the sense of a pilgrim church open to conversion and a beneficial exchange with other Christians, and the gifts they have to offer.

Ecumenism as gift exchange is also a prominent theme taken up in the work of catholic ecumenist Margaret O’Gara. She states: “In ecumenical dialogue, each Christian communion brings one or many gifts to the dialogue table, and each receives riches from their dialogue partners as well”¹⁹. In recognition of the humility required for conversion, M. O’Gara posits that ecumenism should be a beneficial sharing of each other’s gifts, leading all towards a greater fullness than would be possible on one’s own. She rejects a charge frequently levelled at ecumenism, that it seeks to be ‘a kind of melting pot’, leading to the ‘elimination of the distinctive gifts of the many churches’ and a “loss of identity”²⁰. Instead, she argues, “the gift-giving enriches all of the partners, since we do not lose our gifts by sharing them with others”²¹.

She provides some examples garnered over her years of ecumenical experience, which is worth quoting at length: “Where my Anglican partners have a rich understanding and practice of the conciliarity of the church, they need and are seeking the leadership in teaching that can be provided in the Roman Catholic communion by the bishop of Rome. Where my own Roman Catholic communion has emphasized the communal character of faith and decision-making, we need to receive from my partners in the Disciples of Christ their effective emphasis on the personal appropriation of faith within the community of baptized believers. [...] Where one communion is clear about the priority of grace, another is clear about the implications of the gospel for the social order. Where one communion is open to the opportunities provided by modern culture for proclaiming the gospel, another is clear about the centrality of our Trinitarian foundations”²².

For Margaret O’Gara, ecumenism as a gift exchange is the fundamental basis for ecumenical activity. This conception of ecumenism shapes her overarching vision of ecumenism, as she writes: “The gifts exchanged in ecumenical dialogue are more like a mosaic, where every piece is valuable and every piece is needed for the full picture of the one church of Christ”²³. Here, she emphasises John Paul II’s teachings on dialogue as fundamental to the nature of the human person, and essential to the church²⁴. Moreover, she explains: “The mosaic picture is damaged if any of the

¹⁷ Cfr. *Church Unity and the Papal Office*, *op.cit.*, 1.

¹⁸ W. Henn, *Ut Unum Sint and Catholic Involvement in Ecumenism*, *The Ecumenical Review* 52 (2), 2000, 243.

¹⁹ M. O’Gara, *The Ecumenical Gift Exchange*, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press 1998, VII.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, VIII.

²¹ *Ibidem*, VII.

²² *Ibidem*, 3.

²³ *Ibidem*, VIII.

²⁴ UUS 28, 31.

pieces is missing”²⁵. It is only through dialogue with one another, through conversation, that the church can become fully what she is. This is why ecumenical dialogue is essential to the Catholic Church. As John Paul II asserts, ecumenism is “not just some sort of “appendix”. [...] Rather, ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does” (UUS, 20).

As such, the notion of hospitality can be seen as underpinning the concept of the ecumenical gift exchange. Christine Pohl describes hospitality as welcoming strangers, and selflessly ministering to others²⁶. It involves ‘attentive listening and a mutual sharing of lives, [...] an openness of heart, a willingness to make one’s life visible to others, and a generosity of time and resources’²⁷. Pohl states that “acts of hospitality participate in and reflect God’s greater hospitality”²⁸, accentuating the link between hospitality and humility, and touching on a broader context of hope. M. O’Gara emphasises hospitality as a powerful resource for ecumenical dialogue, stating: “Ecumenical friends and colleagues from other church communions offer each other intellectual and emotional hospitality on the journey towards full communion”²⁹. The ecumenical gift exchange can only be properly undertaken within a spirit of hospitality. As she asserts, “real ecumenical collaboration calls for willingness to enter into relationships, to risk vulnerability for the sake of the common effort, and to reject competition”³⁰. Therefore, practicing hospitality towards each other rather than competition is essential for the success of ecumenism.

To view ecumenism as a gift exchange deepens the understanding of ecumenical hospitality. Rather than just accepting the otherness of the other, and giving without a sense of reciprocity, the gift exchange pushes ecumenism to another stage: that of actively receiving gifts from the other. This next step is the vision of receptive ecumenism.

4. EXPLORING A WAY FOR CONTEMPORARY ECUMENISM

Relational Culture of GCF

- *Participation Only*. Since many of churches who gather in the Forum could not be members of the same body, there is no membership, only participation.
- *Relational, Testimonial, Doxological*. The Forum is focused more on birthing, extending, and deepening relationships between churches than on theological dialogue producing consensus texts. Its theological mode is more testimonial and doxological than theoretical and analytical.

Like many others, Paul Murray sees a need for a fresh approach to ecumenism. He outlines certain factors that have led both to the slowing down of the ecumenical

²⁵ Cfr. M. O’Gara, *The Ecumenical Gift Exchange*, viii.

²⁶ Cfr. Ch.D. Pohl, *Making Room. Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Michigan 1999, 4.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, 13.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ M. O’Gara, *Witnessing the Ecumenical Future Together*, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 46 (3), 2011, 376.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 373.

movement and a shift away from optimistic expectations in general. Among them, he lists “immense disappointment” caused by the ‘failure of high-profile initiatives’, such as the 1969 and 1972 Church of England-Methodist unity schemes, and the negativity of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith during the first stage of AR-CIC³¹. He asserts that there is a perception of a divide between the commitment of grassroots ecumenists and the official levels of the Catholic Church. Frustration with slow progress has led to a move away from concentrating on doctrinal or theological matters towards emphasising more practical aspects, such as mission³². Murray also emphasises a trend of increasingly insular Christian communities, who place an emphasis upon reasserting their unique identity and rejecting the ecumenical spirit³³.

Despite negativity surrounding the ecumenical endeavour, however, Murray recalls that the ultimate goal of ecumenism is eschatological, in light of the now but not yet³⁴. In view of the current ecumenical climate, Murray proposes a new strategy: receptive ecumenism. Receptive ecumenism is a fresh ecumenical methodology stemming from the call for ecumenical renewal. Receptive ecumenism is described as a process whereby ‘each tradition should focus first on the self-critical question: “What can we learn, or receive, with integrity from various others in order to facilitate our own growth together into deepened communion in Christ and the Spirit?”’³⁵.

This is the fundamental methodology of receptive ecumenism: each tradition should critically reflect upon what they can learn from another tradition. This is undertaken because doing so will enrich one’s own community – without ‘making others’ learning a precondition to one’s own’³⁶. This implies the interior conversion advocated by Vatican II as the essence of ecumenical dialogue. In line with this, Murray goes on to attest that ‘receptive ecumenical awakening is properly a matter of the heart before it is a matter of the head’³⁷. He describes it as “a matter of falling in love with the experienced presence and action of God in the people, practices, even structures of another tradition and being impelled thereby to search for ways in which all impediments to closer relationship might be overcome”³⁸.

Murray elaborates that receptive ecumenism “requires the churches to make an analogous move to that advocated more generally by the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas in calling for a fundamental shift from each assertively defending their own perceived rights in competition with each other, to each instead prioritizing the need to attend to and to act upon their specific responsibilities revealed in the face of the other”³⁹.

This immediately recalls O’Gara’s emphasis upon ecumenism as hospitality, not competition. As Murray explains: ‘For this to happen [...] it requires to take

³¹ Cfr. P. Murray, *Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning: Establishing the Agenda*, *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 7 (4), 2007, 285.

³² *Ibidem*, 286.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, 287.

³⁵ P. Murray, “Preface”, in: *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning. Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, ed. P. Murray, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008, ix.

³⁶ *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning...*, *op.cit.*, 290.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, 291.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 290.

responsibility, to take the initiative, and this regardless of whether others are ready to reciprocate"⁴⁰. Receptive ecumenism focuses, therefore, more upon the benefit to be gained by one's own tradition through discovering the other, rather than any type of quid pro quo ecumenical competition.

Receptive ecumenism is steadily increasing in significance. Building on two international conferences held at Durham in 2006 and 2009, a third international conference was held in June 2014. Receptive ecumenism evokes a high level of popular appeal, particularly from a lay level.

It is not asking an ecumenical activist to detail the differences between, say, the catholic and Lutheran understanding of the doctrine of justification. Rather, it asks a more open question: what can Catholics learn from Lutherans? David Carter, in reflecting on receptive ecumenism, writes that: "Charles Wesley's line "thy truth we lovingly receive" sums up the spirituality that inspires receptive ecumenism. It is an expression of our love for God and most particularly of our thankfulness for the gifts that he gives us through his inspiration of others in their leading of the Christian life in all its fullness. It is important to be able to receive those gifts graciously and humbly"⁴¹. Therefore, while it's full potential is yet to be discovered, receptive ecumenism offers a methodology which focuses on the affective, as well as the theological, levels of ecumenism.

5. CONCLUSION

Relational Culture of GCF

- *Who Is Missing?* All churches are invited to the Forum table. If any church is missing, the usefulness of the Forum is diminished. In response to God's call for unity and the contemporary ecclesial situation of fragmentation, the GCF is always asking 'who is missing from among us? Who still should be invited to gather?
- *Half And Half.* Approximately half of the participants in any Forum gathering are leaders of the older churches (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Anglican) and half are leaders of the younger churches (Evangelical, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Independent, e.g. African Instituted, mega churches, migrant churches).

In conclusion, the experience of GCF in Tirana led me on a deeper journey towards the spirituality behind the ecumenical endeavour. This reflection was undertaken by firstly investigating the meaning of spiritual ecumenism, then considering ecumenism as a gift exchange, before finally, discussing receptive ecumenism as a possible strategy which operates on the affective as well as theological levels of ecumenism. Ecumenism is not an optional extra for the Catholic Church. Ecumenism is an imperative, a task we are called to by Christ. While we may each practice ecumenism in a variety of ways, it is pertinent to remember that we all undertake this task out of love. As Scripture reminds us: "Let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God [...]. Since God loved

⁴⁰ *Ibidem.*

⁴¹ D. Carter, *Receptive Ecumenism – An Overview, Presented at Receptive Ecumenism: The Call to Catholic Learning, St Mary's Catholic Church, Chelsea: Cadogan Street 2007.*

us so much, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4, 7–11). And here lies the very heart of ecumenism: “God is love” (1 John 4, 8).

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WYMIANA DARÓW DOŚWIADCZENIE ŚWIATOWEGO FORUM CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKIEGO

Streszczenie

Artykuł opisuje duchowe podwaliny Globalnego Forum Chrześcijańskiego i składa się z następujących części: 1. Wstęp; 2. Impulsy duchowe; 3. Współdzielenie wiary w drodze; 4. Odkrywanie drogi dla współczesnego ekumenizmu; 5. Zakończenie.

Autor był uczestnikiem Konsultacji Globalnego Forum Chrześcijańskiego w stolicy Albanii Tiranie (2015). Obecnie z uwagą spogląda on na program kolejnej światowej konsultacji Forum Chrześcijańskiego jaka jest przygotowywana w Bogocie (Kolumbia) w 2018 roku. Tematem tego zgromadzenia jest biblijna myśl: „Niech trwa wzajemna miłość”.

Chrześcijańska jedność jaka jest doświadczana przez uczestników Forum Chrześcijańskiego dotyczy nie tylko sfery rozumowej i woli politycznej ale również emocjonalno-afektywnej. Dążenia do jedności ekumenicznej posiadają również swoją stronę afektywną. Ekumenizm jest aktem miłości chrześcijańskiej o jaką Chrystus modli się w Ewangelii (J 17,21). Praca ekumeniczna polega nie tylko na dyskusjach doktrynalnych i teologicznych o różnicach hermeneutycznych wśród chrześcijan. Ekumenizm jest również poruszeniem serca pod wpływem działania Ducha Świętego. W głębszym rozumieniu ekumenizm jest duchową „wymianą darów” jak to ujął Jan Paweł II w encyklice „Ut unum sint”, 28.

Słowa kluczowe: współczesny ruch ekumeniczny, Globalne Forum Chrześcijańskie, duchowy ekumenizm, ekumeniczna wymiana darów, Paul Couturier, Grupa z Dombes, nawrócenie, dialog ekumeniczny, encyklika „Ut unum sint”, kultura relacji

EXCHANGE OF GIFTS EXPERIENCE OF GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM

Summary

The article presents spiritual foundation of Global Christian Forum and it consists of the following parts: 1. Introduction; 2. Spiritual impulses; 3. Sharing faith on the way; 4. Discovering the way towards contemporary ecumenism; 3. The end.

The author was a participant of Global Christian Forum in the capital of Albania Tirana (2015). Now he is carefully looking at the program of the next world consultation of Christian Forum which is to take place in Bogota (Colombia) in 2018. The subject of this meeting is a biblical thought "Let mutual love remain".

Christian unity which is experienced by participants of Christian Forum touches not just mind and will but also emotions. The desire for ecumenical unity has its affective side. Ecumenism is an act of Christian love for which Christ is praying in the Gospel (J 17:21). Ecumenical work does not consist only of doctrinal and theological discussions about hermeneutic differences among Christians. Ecumenism is also a stirring of heart under the influence of the Holy Spirit. In its deeper sense ecumenism is a spiritual "gift exchange" as it was defined by John Paul II in the encyclical letter "Ut unum sint", 28.

Key words: contemporary ecumenical movement, Global Christian Forum, spiritual ecumenism, ecumenical exchange of gifts, Paul Couturier, Dombes group, ecumenical dialog, encyclical letter "Ut unum sint", relational culture

Nota o Autorze

Ksiądz **Andrzej Piotr PERZYŃSKI** – prezbiter archidiecezji łódzkiej, jest doktorem habilitowanym i profesorem zwyczajnym nauk teologicznych, kierownikiem Katedry Teologii Ekumenicznej na Wydziale Teologicznym UKSW w Warszawie. Wykłada teologię dogmatyczną w Wyższym Seminarium Duchownym w Łodzi oraz zagadnienia ekumeniczne w UKSW w Warszawie. Działalność naukowo-dydaktyczną w zakresie ekumenizmu łączy z pastoralnymi inicjatywami na rzecz jedności chrześcijan w całej ich dynamicznej różnorodności. Angażuje się w popularyzowanie Biblii zarówno w środowisku warszawskim jak i w rodzimej diecezji. W bieżącym roku bierze czynny udział w kilku przedsięwzięciach związanych ze wspólnym upamiętnieniem 500-lecia Reformacji. Współinicjator powstania Polskiego Forum Chrześcijańskiego i jego sekretarz. Mieszka w Łodzi.