

A REVEALING DIALOGUE

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INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IS NOT JUST a particular variety of the academic study of comparative religions in which one can participate as an uncommitted scholar. Rather, interfaith dialogue is something that takes place between two or more committed members of different religious communities. It is a communication that happens on the religious level of interpersonal encounter. My own involvement in such interfaith dialogue has been as a member of the Catholic Church. Therefore, in exploring how interreligious dialogue can be a revealing encounter, I would like to examine the experience of dialogue of the faith community to which I belong. This experience of the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) has developed into one of the most revealing encounters in the field of interfaith relations. In what follows, I will examine the four types of dialogue in which the Catholic Church has been involved in order to present some of the kinds of insights that have been revealed in this new interreligious adventure.

I. The dialogue of life

In 1984, what is now the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue published a document entitled 'The attitude of the Church towards the followers of other religions'.¹ This document was written after twenty years of experience in interfaith dialogue and presents, among other things, what the Catholic Church considers the four most important and typical forms of dialogue. The first type that is mentioned is what is referred to as the 'dialogue of life'. This type of interfaith dialogue is above all else 'a manner of acting, an attitude and spirit which guides one's conduct' toward persons of other faiths.² This dialogical attitude is one of 'concern, respect, and hospitality towards the other'.³ One should relate to persons of other faiths in a manner that respects the others' identities, faiths and values. With this attitude, one can begin a particular dialogue on subjects of common interest.⁴

Now, at this point it is important to note that the goal of all interfaith dialogue is not just the imparting and obtaining of information. Nor is its goal the conversion of one's interlocutor. Rather, true dialogue is the meeting and communicating of hearts and minds between two committed believers on the religious level of human encounter.⁵ The real goal of

this communication of religious life is a greater mutual understanding and respect among persons of different religions and among the communities to which they belong. One can see in this first kind of dialogue the type of humane interfaith relationship that one would hope to find among the members of all religions. Indeed, the Catholic Church has stated that the dialogue of life should be understood as a part of the vocation of all Christians. All Christians, not just religious experts, are called to cultivate this kind of positive interfaith relation with persons of other religions.

What is revealed in this type of dialogue? I think that the primary insight that is revealed in the dialogue of life is that in confronting another's religion, one is also confronting one's own religion from a new perspective. In dialogue, one comes to understand and appreciate the particular features of the other's religion. And by comparing those features to one's own faith, one rediscovers one's own religion from the new vantage point of the dialogue itself. In reflecting on this dialogical rediscovery, Francis Cardinal Arinze of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue says:

Interreligious dialogue helps each participant to grow in his own faith when he encounters another of a different religious persuasion and confronts his faith with that of the other. Truth is often better reached . . . understood and lived when met by other views. Also such encounters can purify and deepen one's own faith.⁶

In deepening this dialogue of life, one also begins to look past the various 'elements of faith' being discussed to the 'persons of faith'. What is discovered at this point is a greater appreciation for our common humanity. One senses a certain 'human kinship' with the other persons and with the communities to which they belong. I think that this human kinship is revealed when one discovers shared religious ideas, values, experiences and ideals. This religious commonality, even with the various differences that make each tradition unique, sensitizes those engaged in dialogue to their common humanity. This dialogical revelation brings with it another discovery. One discovers interfaith dialogue to be a means of building a more united world in which persons of all religions recognize a human kinship with one another. In other words, one sees in the dialogue of life a means of furthering the growth and reconciliation of humankind toward what has been described as 'the dream . . . of people and communities fully alive. That fullness of life is ultimately a communion of life among individuals, among communities and with God.'⁷

Finally, with the revealing of this ideal of a pluralistic unity of peoples of different faiths fully alive, there is also a revealment of the various forces that threaten this communion. These threats that we all face as human beings include such things as poverty, the exploitation of the environment, militarization, discrimination, structural injustice, economic desperation, corruption, etc. One can find in interfaith dialogue a means of empowering persons and communities to stand together in solidarity across social, ethnic and religious boundaries to work for a more humane world. The dialogue of life leads those who participate in it to build a common front on the basis of their sense of kinship in order to address the great human and social problems of our day. This, in turn, leads to the second type of dialogue, the 'dialogue of deeds and collaboration'.

II. The dialogue of deeds and collaboration

The dialogue of deeds and collaboration is a means by which persons of various religions can address together the common problems faced by humankind. This type of dialogue is described as one of 'deeds and collaboration with others for the goals of a humanitarian, social, economic, or political nature which are directed towards the liberation and advancement of mankind'.⁸ The field of collaboration that is envisioned here is extremely broad. It can involve grassroots issues that arise in family life, schools, neighbourhoods, health-care centres, etc. Or it can involve collaboration of religious groups in addressing issues of economic, social or political importance at the national and even international levels. Through this kind of dialogical interaction, a 'fabric of affinity can be woven'.⁹ Interfaith partnerships between groups and organizations of different religions at all levels can give new life to the multireligious communities of humankind.

A number of valuable insights are revealed in this second type of dialogue. Of primary significance is the fact that interfaith collaboration brings to light the importance of our shared spiritual values. For example, when religious groups face together threats to family and community life that arise from our modern consumeristic culture, the members of these groups become more fully aware of how a loss of spiritual values can lead to an overwhelming preoccupation with the acquisition of material wealth and comfort. This consumerist mentality often leads to political actions and economic structures that fail to respect persons, communities, nations and the environment. Interfaith collaboration can put into relief our shared value for the dignity of the human person and for the inherent worth of creation. This same

common, spiritual value for person and nature can also be a shared foundation for addressing the roots of poverty, injustice, discrimination as well as racial, ethnic and religious violence. Given our pluralistic world, these kinds of threats to humankind can only be dealt with in a satisfactory manner through the co-operation of persons of all faiths.

In this kind of interfaith dialogue of deeds, the new sense of kinship coming from the dialogue of life is strengthened and developed. People begin to see themselves as co-workers for a more peaceful and just world order that respects the sacredness of human life and of our natural world. In religious terms, they begin to see each other as 'spiritual brothers and sisters' on a journey towards a more full communion of all peoples, nature and the divine. For Christians, this dialogical activity is perceived as preparing the way for the reign of God. Concretely, it is a dialogical activity that seeks to promote, foster and preserve the rich variety of cultural, ethnic and religious heritages in the just and peaceful context of a unity that celebrates diversity.

Two commonly given examples of dialogue on this level are the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), and the Focolare Movement's collaboration with other religions. The WCRP has held international meetings since 1970 and today has chapters in many individual countries and regions. It has developed numerous local, national and international projects that address common concerns such as the problem of political refugees in Africa, emergency aid to war-torn areas, development in Asian countries, etc. One group that is active in the WCRP is the Focolare Movement that comes from the Roman Catholic tradition.¹⁰ For years, collaboration with Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and Hindus has been common in the Movement. In 1982, the Focolare began a school for dialogue in Tagaytay, the Philippines, which prepares persons for grassroots dialogue in Asia. In 1985, the Focolare and the Buddhist Rissho Kosei-kai organization collaborated to hold the Asian Interreligious Youth Forum in Manila that addressed the problems of development and peace in Asia.

Enzo Fondi, one of the directors of the Focolare's interfaith activities, has discussed how their dialogue of life has evolved to a dialogue of deeds and then on to a theological dialogue of experts to which we will turn next.¹¹ Fondi says that a dialogue of life involves listening to the other, discovering the other's faith life, and appreciating the other's faith. This kind of dialogue leads to mutual understanding, appreciation and trust which lay the basis for a mutual collaboration in the dialogue of deeds. Fondi points out that when the persons and communities involved in these kinds of dialogues share and work more closely together, they feel a

need to understand more about the religion of those with whom they are relating and collaborating. This leads to the study of the other's religion as a preparation for a more conscious and prepared theological encounter.

III. The dialogue of theological discussion

In Fondi's presentation of his community's experience of dialogue, one can see the developmental interconnection between the first three forms of dialogue.¹² For theological dialogue to be truly successful, it should be based on a certain rapport developed between the individuals and communities involved in the encounter. This third type of dialogue is referred to in the Pontifical Council's 1984 document as 'the dialogue of specialists'.¹³ In his more recent reflections on interfaith dialogue, Cardinal Arinze uses the phrase 'dialogue of theological discussion'.¹⁴ But regardless of what we name this type of dialogue, it refers to the theological discussion by which religious experts exchange information about their beliefs and practices. The goal here is to seek a greater 'mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's spiritual values and cultural categories and promote communion and fellowship among people'.¹⁵

What is revealed in this type of dialogue? The answer to this question depends heavily on the traditions involved in the dialogue. For example, the kinds of things a Christian will learn about in dialogue with Muslims will be decidedly different from what he or she will learn about in dialogue with Taoists. However, one kind of revelation that is universal to the theological dialogue among all forms of religions is the following. There is a strong consensus among all who participate seriously in theological dialogue that a deeper understanding of another person's faith helps one to deepen one's understanding of one's own faith. One gains a clearer perspective of one's own faith when confronted with the faith of another.

I mentioned this dialogical phenomenon of rediscovering one's own faith in the above section on the dialogue of life. What becomes clearer in the theological dialogue is that in the very process of dialogical clarification of certain truths, one comes to realize that all involved in the dialogue are 'fellow pilgrims' moving into a fuller understanding of the truth. One senses in the theological dialogue that the process of this dialogue itself has a transforming effect on the participants. One feels that all are being brought to a fuller understanding of the truth concerning the matters under discussion by the very process of the dialogue itself.

The theological dialogue also reinforces what has been revealed in the first two types of dialogue. For example, the theological truth that all humankind comprises a single reality in which we are all brothers and sisters strengthens the revelation of our common kinship found in the dialogue of life. And the theological critiques of certain modern social, political and economic structures expose more clearly the threats that humankind faces today and give thereby a greater urgency to the dialogue of deeds and collaboration. In this way, interfaith dialogue on all of its levels is revealed to be a very powerful means to further humankind's journey into a more united, just and peaceful world community. In the words of the Asian bishops' statement mentioned above: 'Religions have an indispensable role to play in preserving and promoting the rich variety of culture and ethnicity, and in promoting harmony within this variety'.¹⁶

These, then, are some of the kinds of insights that one gains in the general process of probing the truth through theological interfaith dialogue. But what about specific insights that have developed from particular theological dialogues? To try to summarize all the kinds of insights that have been gained in theological dialogues would be impossible. But, I can mention one example from the Buddhist-Christian dialogue in which I am personally engaged. In 1984, I became a member of a Buddhist-Christian theological encounter group organized by Masao Abe and John B. Cobb, Jr.¹⁷ The first dialogue of this group was held in that year and the topic was the Buddhist and Christian understandings of suffering and the human condition. I believe that this is a fitting starting point for any theological dialogue. It addresses the burning question asked by Vatican II, 'What is man? What is this sense of sorrow, of evil, of death, which continues to exist despite so much progress? What is the purpose of these victories, purchased at so high a cost?'¹⁸ It is also very fitting from the Buddhist point of view since the Buddha himself took the question of human suffering as his philosophical starting point.

From this initial encounter, which produced a very revealing dialogue in itself, we went on to discuss what I see as the central theological issue in the Buddhist-Christian dialogue. This is the issue of our different understandings of ultimate reality: what is the relationship between the Buddhist notion of Emptiness and the Christian notion of God? One of the most probing advances towards an answer to this question has been made by Masao Abe in his essay, 'Kenotic God and dynamic emptiness'. Versions of this seminal essay have been published in two books with responses by some of today's leading Christian and Jewish theo-

logians.¹⁹ Abe develops his views in the context of the Kyoto School of modern Buddhist philosophy of which he is now one of the leading figures. He argues in this essay that since Jesus is the self-utterance of God, the ‘*kenosis*’, or ‘self-emptying’, of Jesus mentioned by Paul in Philippians 2:5–8, reveals something of the nature of God-self. That is, since ‘God is love’ (1 Jn 4:8), the *kenosis* of the Son out of love for humankind reveals the kenotic nature of God’s essence as love. Abe explores the dynamic of kenotic love in the Trinitarian life of God and concludes that the total and mutual *kenosis* of the Persons of the Trinity makes them both one and unique at the same time. For example, in the Father emptying himself to be one with the Son, he just is the Father.

Abe goes on to compare this notion of the *kenosis* of God with the Buddhist notion of Emptiness. Emptiness is ultimate reality for Buddhism. It is an ‘Absolute Nothingness’ in that it is totally empty of itself in an absolute identity with all existence. Emptiness ‘just is each and every thing’, to use Abe’s terms.²⁰ Abe suggests that the God of Christianity can also be seen in this way. That is, he suggests that the *kenosis* of God in Jesus reveals that God has emptied out any transcendent reality to be fully immanent. God, too, just is each and every thing. It should be evident from this comparison that Abe is looking at the *kenosis* of God through a Buddhist lens. The questions here for Christian theologians are: ‘Has Abe revealed something true to Christians about the kenotic love of God? And is there some truth to his comparison of God to Emptiness?’ The corresponding questions for Buddhist philosophers are: ‘Can there be some truth to the notion of a kenotic God within the Buddhist way of understanding of reality? And is there some truth to Abe’s comparison of God and Emptiness?’

I cannot seek to answer these questions here. But I encourage the reader to examine both Abe’s important essay and the theological responses from the Christian and Jewish side of the dialogue that do try to grapple with these questions. The point I do want to make here is that one can see from this example that the theological dialogue is indeed a journey of pilgrims into a deeper mutual examination of the truth. Both sides of the dialogue are challenged and enriched on this journey. It is also my view that one is led in this journey to the fourth kind of dialogue, namely, the ‘dialogue of religious experience’.

IV. The dialogue of religious experience

My own work on the comparison of *kenosis* and Emptiness began with Masao Abe in 1984. In 1991, I published my response to Abe’s comparison as well as to similar comparisons proposed by other

members of the Kyoto School.²¹ Since that same year, Abe has been here at Purdue with me. Again, this is not the place to go into specifics. However, the title of my book, *Spirituality and emptiness*, indicates that in my dialogue with Abe I found that one cannot address this comparison on the theological level alone. One must look at the experiences of *kenosis* and Emptiness in the spiritualities of the traditions. In Christianity, *kenosis* is a Trinitarian dynamic of God-Love that must be lived in both individual and communal kenotic spirituality to be truly understood. In Buddhism, Emptiness is the dynamic of life and hence cannot be just contemplated but must be lived to be truly understood. So, one can see in this example that the theological dialogue progresses naturally into the dialogue of religious experience.

In the Catholic Church's 1984 document on dialogue, this kind of encounter is defined as a sharing of 'experiences of prayer, contemplation, faith and duty, as well as their expressions and ways of searching for the Absolute'.²² Here we come to the deepest practice of interfaith dialogue. It is the attempt to communicate between traditions that which is most spiritual and difficult to understand. What are the dynamics of prayer, meditation and contemplation? How do the practices of silence, fasting, pilgrimage and liturgy impact on the spiritual life? What are the kinds of experiences of the Ultimate found in the mystical life of the traditions?

These are questions that seek to reveal the deepest experiences possible to humankind. Here, interfaith dialogue is most demanding and yet most promising. It demands that one enter the dialogue with a committed faith experience and yet with an openness to the faith experience of the other. It demands that one be willing and able to discuss one's most personal religious practice and deepest religious experience with someone who has a very different religious language. For this kind of communication to be truly revealing, one must to some degree enter into the spiritual practice and experience of the other's tradition. In this way, one can journey beyond terms and concepts into the religious experience of the other. Then with a proper understanding of his or her religious language, one can truly contribute to a mutual understanding of the meaning of the experiences of both traditions.

John B. Cobb, Jr, has argued that this process of 'passing over and coming back' can lead to a mutual transformation of both traditions.²³ This is not a call for syncretism or eclecticism. Rather, in our Catholic experience of spiritual dialogue, this transformation is a movement of persons into a deeper unity with one another on the journey into a great revelation of the mystery of life.²⁴ In the words of Thomas Merton on

this issue, the transformation sought is a 'transformation of the religious consciousness'.²⁵ During Merton's own journey to the East, he said:

I come as a pilgrim who is anxious to obtain not just information . . .
but to drink from ancient sources of monastic vision and experience . . .
to become a better and more enlightened monk myself.²⁶

I want to emphasize that this mutual transformation on the spiritual level is not just of the religious consciousness of individuals, but of the spiritual relationship between those individuals. In the previous paragraph, I have called this 'a deeper unity'. Merton calls it 'communion', and says that 'it is something that the deepest ground of our being cries out for, and it is something for which a lifetime of striving would not be enough'.²⁷ Henri Le Saux (*Abhishiktananda*), another pioneer in interfaith spirituality, makes a similar point:

For a fruitful dialogue it is necessary that I reach . . . in the very depth of myself, to the experience of my brother . . . so that my brother may recognize in me his own experience of his own depth.²⁸

Through this revealing dialogue, there can emerge a spiritual 'communion of life and discovery of the Spirit in each other'.²⁹ So, the spiritual dialogue not only transforms one more deeply in the spiritual life, but also generates a communion between those who are on this spiritual journey in different religious traditions.

One place where this kind of spiritual encounter has developed quite successfully is in the intermonastic dialogue. Pietro Rossano, in addressing Benedictine abbots in 1980, said that we have entered a 'new era' in interfaith relations 'which has given rise to experiences unknown in times past, even in the history of monasticism'.³⁰ What has been revealed in this new intermonastic era is a 'monastic archetype' which has been a source of joy and encouragement for monastics around the world. I might add that this new era really began at a meeting of Christian monastics in Bangkok in 1968. There Thomas Merton died on the second day of the meetings: 'His death had the same effect of the seed, which in dying produces much fruit'.³¹

Today, there are numerous and fruitful intermonastic interfaith spiritual exchanges and monastic hospitality programmes in the context of which deep and insightful dialogues on religious experience take place. The shared monastic experience gives the participants in the dialogue a practical basis to discuss such things as the various ascetic practices on the levels of body, mind and heart. In this regard, it is clear

that for both Buddhists and Christians the opening to the Ultimate does not depend just on these practices. This opening comes from a deeper Source. They also discuss the various forms of monastic living and their effects on the spiritual life, the role of the spiritual director, the ways of facing the aridities and the night journeys that are encountered in the spiritual life.

In the exploration of these aspects of monastic life, both Buddhists and Christians *discover* each other as brothers and sisters in the spiritual life and *rediscover* their own vocation as Buddhist or Christian monastics. Through the discovery of the other, there is a deeper revealing of what is universal in monasticism, namely, the process of the inner journey that leads from death to new life, from a *kenosis* of attachments and the false self to a fullness of freedom. Through the rediscovery of one's vocation, there is a deeper revealing of what is unique to one's own tradition. For the Buddhist, this often means a greater appreciation of the fundamental experience of the Buddha-nature as the silent ground of all and the source of true life. For the Christian, this often means a new appreciation for a 'reality' of divine presence that can be touched and lived in Christ.³²

V. Conclusion

It should now be clear that the four types of dialogues discussed above are interconnected. One begins with a dialogue of life in which people discuss, as committed members of religious traditions, certain topics of common interest. Friendships are established and mutual trust, understanding and appreciation begin to grow. In some cases, people begin a dialogue of communal collaboration on the basis of shared values in order to address problems that they perceive as threatening their communities and, indeed, humankind as a whole. Just as in a friendship, as the relationship between the communities grows, there is often a desire to know more about each other. This leads to a theological dialogue that explores the teachings of both traditions. Finally, one realizes in these theological discussions that one must look to the religious experiences behind the ideas fully to understand the religious mind and heart of the other.³³

As I have tried to point out, this fourfold journey of dialogue is a revealing one. First, one understands more clearly what it is to be a truly human person and what threatens our common humanity. Second, one understands what it is to be a religious person and to be united with persons of other religions in order to build a more just and peaceful world community. Third, one understands the truths, values, practices

and ideals of one's own faith more clearly by better understanding the views held by persons of other faiths. And fourth, one understands the deeper aspects of the spiritual life that are shared with others and that are unique to one's own tradition.

Finally, speaking from a Christian point of view, there is another level of fourfold revelation that I have tried to emphasize. First, one discovers a human kinship: that we are all brothers and sisters, children of God. Second, one discovers that we can be spiritual co-workers in the building of the reign of God. Third, one discovers that we are fellow travellers on a journey into the truth. And fourth, one discovers that we are fellow pilgrims in the spiritual life. It is this fourfold revelation of human and spiritual fellowship, or 'communion' as Merton put it, that is so central to the project of interfaith dialogue. This project is seen by the Catholic Church as 'a path' towards the reign of God.³⁴ Interfaith dialogue is a path to the actualization in the modern world of that fundamental communion between all persons united with God and in harmony with nature which is more clearly revealed in the process of interfaith dialogue. One can only hope that humankind will choose to walk this path of dialogue and realize its goal of a more united, just and peaceful world community.

NOTES

¹ 'The attitude of the church towards the followers of other religions', Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Bulletin* XIX/2 (1984); hereafter referred to as ACTFOR.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ 'Declaration of the international theological conference on evangelization and dialogue', Nagpur, India (1971), n 24.

⁵ Francis Cardinal Arinze, 'Interreligious dialogue: problems, prospects and possibilities', Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Bulletin* XXII/3 (1987), p 248.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p 252.

⁷ 'Final statement on interreligious dialogue: fresh horizons for communion and cooperation today', Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences' Institute for Interreligious Affairs, Hua Hin, Thailand (1991), n 2; hereafter referred to as FSID.

⁸ ACTFOR, p 137.

⁹ FSID, n 4.

¹⁰ Donald W. Mitchell, 'The Focolare Movement and a Buddhist-Christian dialogue of deeds and collaboration', *Buddhist-Christian Studies* vol 5 (1985), pp 195-202.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp 200-201.

¹² For the sake of completeness, Enzo Fondi has pointed out that the Focolare is also involved in the fourth type of dialogue, the spiritual dialogue on religious experience.

¹³ ACTFOR, p 138.

¹⁴ Arinze, p 250.

¹⁵ ACTFOR, p 138.

¹⁶ FSID, n 6.

¹⁷ This group has been popularly known as the 'Abe-Cobb Group' and includes such Christian members as Hans Küng, Schubert Ogden, Gordon Kaufman, Rosemary Ruether, David Tracy and John Cobb. On the Buddhist side are such people as Masao Abe, Taitetsu Unno, Jeffery Hopkins, Rita Gross, Geshin Tokiwa and Sulak Shivaraksha. The proceedings of the encounter group are published from time to time in *Buddhist-Christian Studies*.

¹⁸ *Gaudium et spes* 10, 1.

¹⁹ The original version of this essay with a response by Hans Küng appears in Roger Corless and Paul F. Knitter (eds), *Buddhist Emptiness and Christian Trinity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990). The longer version with seven Christian and Jewish responses appears in John B. Cobb, Jr and Christopher Ives (eds), *The emptying God: a Buddhist-Jewish-Christian conversation* (Maryknoll NY: Oribis Books, 1990); hereafter referred to as TEG.

²⁰ TEG, p 16.

²¹ Donald W. Mitchell, *Spirituality and emptiness: the dynamics of spiritual life in Buddhism and Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).

²² ACTFOR, p 138.

²³ John B. Cobb, Jr, *Beyond dialogue: toward a mutual transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982). See especially Chapters Four and Five.

²⁴ FSID, n 7.

²⁵ Thomas Merton, *The Asian journal of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1968), p 311.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p 312-313.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p 315-316.

²⁸ *Vidyajyoti*, Delhi, n 45 (1981), p 214.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p 221.

³⁰ Pietro Rossano, 'Address to the congress of abbots of the Benedictine confederation', Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Bulletin XVI/1* (1981), p 52.

³¹ Simon Tonini, 'Intermonastic dialogue: beginnings and development', Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Bulletin XXIII/1* (1988), p 12.

³² For an interesting look at the personal impressions of Christian and Buddhist members of a monastic encounter see 'The Montserrat intermonastic encounter', *Buddhist-Christian Studies* vol 10 (1990), pp 189-208.

³³ Here, I disagree with Jacques Dupuis who argues that the order of the last two types of dialogue should be reversed. He feels that the spiritual dialogue is prior to the theological dialogue since religious experience precedes theological discourse. For Dupuis, sharing on the former lays the foundation for sharing on the latter. See Jacques Dupuis, 'Forms of interreligious dialogue', Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Bulletin XX/2* (1985), p 168.

³⁴ *Redemptoris missio*, n 57.