

THE WAY

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THE REFORMATION A Gift from God?



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Coming from an Evangelical background, Beth Dickson found that it was the idea of consolation that first struck her when she encountered Ignatian spirituality. Later on she discovered that her own evangelical spirituality had prepared her well to appreciate other Ignatian concepts and insights. She offers here an account of her path through these discoveries.

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On first encountering Jesuits, Nicolas Stebbing, an Anglican religious priest, wondered whether they would be 'steely-eyed fanatics, full of counter-reformation zeal'. What he found instead drew him more deeply into ecumenism, and to becoming a giver of the Spiritual Exercises. He speaks of a journey confirmed by the election of Francis, the first Jesuit Pope.

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Roman Catholics can tend to think of the Eastern Orthodox Church as having been relatively untouched by the upheaval of the Reformation. Yet, Norman Russell argues here, its effects were actually profound. He traces them in the life and work of an eighteenth-century Orthodox monk and theologian, St Nikodemos the Hagiorite.

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The widespread rediscovery of the Spiritual Exercises in their individually guided form coincided, in the early 1970s, with the birth of a retreat movement within the Methodist Church. This in turn led to Methodists recognising aspects of Ignatian spiritual direction in the ministry of John Wesley. Adam Wells here outlines some of this history in the British Methodist movement over the last forty years.

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Most Christians identify with a particular denomination. Yet Ignatian spirituality seems to have the capacity to work across these divisions, and even influence those who think of themselves as entirely undenominational. Johannes Pedersen describes how he and his wife have established and run an ecumenical retreat house in Denmark.

FOR AUTHORS

The Way warmly invites readers to submit articles with a view to publication. They should normally be about 4,000 words long, and be in keeping with the journal's aims. The Editor is always ready to discuss possible ideas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Autobiography</i>	'Reminiscences (Autobiography)', in <i>Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings</i> , translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)
<i>Constitutions</i>	in <i>The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms</i> (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
<i>Diary</i>	'The Spiritual Diary', in <i>Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings</i> , translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)
<i>Dir</i>	<i>On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599</i> , translated and edited by Martin E. Palmer (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
<i>Exx</i>	<i>The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius</i> , translated by George E. Ganss (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992)
<i>Jesuit Life and Mission Today</i>	<i>Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 31st – 35th General Congregations of the Society of Jesus</i> (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2009)
<i>MHSJ</i>	<i>Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu</i> , 157 volumes (Madrid and Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1898–)

FOREWORD

IN RECENT MONTHS I have been in correspondence with a few members of the Protestant Alliance, which publishes a journal entitled *The Reformer*. The correspondence began when I questioned some details of an article on the Jesuits in their pages. One courteous response explained that I was probably not among the intended audience for the piece, since the journal existed in part to 'play an important role in reminding Protestants that the "Reformation" was an act of the Holy Spirit'. It is not surprising that the events of which we mark the five-hundredth anniversary this year are viewed in this way by Protestants. But how might Catholics now understand them? Can I recognise the Spirit of God acting in and through what happened in Reformation years, and has continued subsequently?

The spread of the Spiritual Exercises over the last five decades, and of the Ignatian spirituality of which the Exercises are the foundation, has clearly not been confined to the Roman Catholic Church. Even without having to adopt the oft-repeated assertion of Gerry W. Hughes that the Exercises are a gift 'for Catholics, for Protestants and for pagans', it is undeniably true that denominations across the Christian spectrum have been touched by the work of Ignatius of Loyola. Nor has the influence all been one way. By coming into contact with different understandings of Christian life and worship, as with any good experience of inculturation, the practice of giving the Exercises has itself had to adapt and develop.

This special issue of *The Way* does not set out, then, to contrast Loyola and Luther, or to praise the one and critique the other. It has, rather, invited a number of writers from across the Christian Churches to reflect upon their own experience of the Exercises, as those who have made the exercises themselves and those who direct others. Many of the articles reflect upon the contemporary situation in different parts of the world; some offer aspects of the historical context. Backgrounds range from Eastern Orthodoxy and high Anglicanism to the Plymouth Brethren, from Latvia to South Africa and Australia, and the time frame stretches from that of Luther himself through the eighteenth century to the present-day.

Our two Methodist contributors, Adam Wells and Hugh Jenkins, both find in Ignatius one who shares many aspects of a common outlook with John Wesley, such that a knowledge of the latter can shed light upon the work of the former. Beth Dickson, too, believes that the Evangelical spirituality in which she was brought up offered an excellent preparation for her own later discovery of the Exercises.

An interesting pair of articles come from two members of the Anglican Community of the Resurrection, popularly known as the Mirfield Fathers. Nicholas Stebbing describes his own encounters with Ignatian spirituality, which began with a healthy suspicion of Jesuits! Now responsible for parts of the ordination training of younger members of the Community, he has recently led one such member, Stefan Matthias, through the experience of the Exercises, and Stefan here reflects upon the specifically Anglican expectations that he brought with him to that experience, and how these were taken up and transformed in the course of his retreat.

The Lutheran Archbishop of Riga, Janis Vanags, first encountered the *Spiritual Exercises* in a pirated copy bought illegally in Soviet times, and he was not greatly impressed. More recently, though, he has been introducing them to key members of his clergy team. A husband and wife from Denmark, Johannes and Heidi Pedersen, were sufficiently moved by their own forays into Ignatian spirituality that they established, and now run, a retreat house that operates on wholly ecumenical lines.

Eastern Orthodoxy here is represented by Norman Russell's article outlining the history of an eighteenth-century monk, St Nikodemus the Haghiarite, who adapted the *Spiritual Exercises* to strengthen the faith of his lay compatriots, as well as a number of other devotional works by Jesuit authors. That Jesuit writers could still have an impact upon those from other Churches who would reject many of their theological presuppositions is also shown by Victor Houlston's analysis of the influence of the *Book of Resolution* by the Elizabethan Jesuit Robert Persons among Protestants of his time.

Finally two of our contributions deal more directly with Martin Luther himself. Robert Opala seeks for psychological factors to help explain Luther's experiences and actions, and turns to current thought on the importance of the 'mid-life transition' as a useful tool. The Quaker Alan Kolp's piece returns us to the question posed at the beginning of this foreword: how might all Christians, and not least Roman Catholics, be able to recognise the Spirit of God at work in the processes that Luther set in motion?

Taken together, the articles in this issue bear powerful witness to ‘what the Spirit is saying to the churches’ (Revelation 2:29) through the ecumenical experience of, and developments in, Ignatian spirituality both historically and in recent years.

Paul Nicholson SJ
Editor

ALL UNAWARES

Evangelical Spirituality as a Preparation for the Ignatian Encounter

Beth Dickson

‘THE WAYS OF GOD are deeply consoling.’ These words were the first live signal that I received about Ignatian spirituality. I had taken up a post teaching English at St Aloysius College, a Jesuit school in Glasgow. I attended a series of twilight sessions to educate all new members of staff about who the Jesuits were and what they stood for: Ignatius’ work on education was a key focus. I remember thinking that, of all the things that could have been said about God, the idea of consolation was a positive one; it was also one that I had never heard in exactly that form before. Being a Protestant Evangelical, brought up in a fundamentalist sect known as the Open Brethren (sometimes called the Plymouth Brethren or the Christian Brethren), I was not perhaps the most likely person to be hearing those words in that place.¹ Aspects of my earlier Christian identity, however, did make it possible for me to relate positively to Ignatian spirituality; I shall fill in a bit more autobiographical detail which will identify these before going on to discuss more generally those areas in which Ignatian spirituality speaks cogently to Evangelical experience.

Brethren

I was born into a deeply committed Christian family. Evangelical Christianity went back at least four generations on each side. I have no memory of a time when I did not know who Jesus was. I was brought

I am indebted to the generosity of Dr I. Randall, Ridley Hall, Cambridge, whose references considerably strengthened the second half of this essay.

¹ The Open Brethren are distinguished from the Exclusive Brethren (also sometimes called Plymouth Brethren) as the result of a split in the Brethren movement in 1848. The differences between them are chiefly structural rather than theological.



Gospel Hall, St Andrews

up on bible stories in home and at church. Each Sunday I learnt a memory verse for Sunday school, where there were songs, quizzes, stories and teaching. As I grew older I also attended a teaching service on Sunday afternoons where we sang hymns—some of which were from the classical Protestant tradition—and listened to the Bible being read and expounded. On Sunday evenings we attended an evangelistic service: bible readings, often from the Gospels but sometimes Old Testament narratives, were the basis of clear and simple explanations of the gospel. This service—aimed at those who did not profess Christianity—featured jollier singing (of the Moody and Sankey variety). On Tuesday evenings there was an intercessory prayer service and a conversational bible study in which men sat round, read a passage of scripture and then discussed what it meant.

The main service, or ‘meeting’ (Brethren eschewed ecclesiastical language), which I did not attend until the age of fourteen, was ‘the morning meeting’. This was a communion service which focused on the life, death and coming again of Jesus Christ. Men would give out hymns from *The Believers’ Hymnbook*, a large proportion of which were written for that service. Older Scottish traditions of unaccompanied singing held good and we required a precentor to ‘start the singing’. There were readings from scripture and prayer. Preaching or expounding scripture was not appropriate for this service; neither was thinking about ourselves

or our sins. The service existed to bring glory to Christ and, ambitiously, to honour the Son for those reasons for which he was honoured by the Father. This meeting was a key carrier of Brethren spirituality and identity. Every week of the year it could take on the atmosphere of Good Friday, because the climax of the service comprised communion prayers which centred on the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus at Calvary.

Because of the pervasive sadness of these services, my mother did not think it wise to take children to it. Even when I did start attending, I was intensely aware of the sacredness of the occasion, when ordinary men with no clerical training, often drawn from business people and the working classes, took on the role of priests and led worship which, at times, expressed a depth of commitment and love that provoked miners and shopkeepers, fishermen and engineers to weep over the death of their Saviour—this in a culture where men rarely showed emotion, far less shed tears, in public.²

By the time I was ready to go to university, those aspects of the Brethren that I found irritating—uneven quality in the preaching, unwillingness to use any bible translation except the King James version, unwillingness to find any musical instrument other than an electric organ acceptable, experiences of God's guidance which seemed to me exaggerated, a private hymn list I called *These You Have Hated*, the complete unwillingness even to contemplate an extended role for women in the Church—were more apparent to me than the grounding of a faith in which my spiritual life could grow and deepen. However, my experience did leave me with a clear sense of whether or not I had had a spiritual experience, as well as a personal Geiger counter which could identify nugatory or unreal spiritual experiences, no matter how sincerely they were presented to me by others. Even I knew that if you asked God for bread, God would not give you a stone.

At university an understanding of Reformed theology mediated by James Packer's *Knowing God* and the clarity of John Stott's *Basic Christianity* filled in my doctrinal gaps—that is, most Protestant doctrines apart from those I already understood, which were justification by faith and a dramatic, if somewhat unusual, set of ideas about eschatology.³ The interface with

² For a more detailed account of spirituality among Scottish Brethren, see Neil Dickson, *Brethren and Scotland 1838–2000: A Social Study of an Evangelical Movement* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2002).

³ See James Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1973); John Stott, *Basic Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1958). In reading both these authors I was blithely unaware of the main

Evangelicalism enabled me to develop my Christian thinking in terms not only of what the faith actually meant but also of how it related to other areas of thought and behaviour. I became less fundamentalist and more Evangelical, by stages sloughing off the dogmatic approaches to Christianity that had characterized me, and enjoying the transdenominationalism of Evangelicalism. This provided a degree of spiritual relief, and I became active in contemporary debates about the role of women within the wider reaches of the Brethren when I became the news editor for *Aware* (formerly known as *The Harvester*), a magazine that served the more progressive elements of the Brethren in the UK. I also served on the Council of the UK Evangelical Alliance.

Meeting other editors of the magazine for which I was writing, I found Brethren who were much more open to working with Christians from other denominations and who seemed to have fingers in every Protestant evangelical pie. I was also introduced formally to the history of the Open wing of the Brethren. Of its foundational leaders, the one whose ideas appealed to me most was Anthony Norris Groves, who encapsulated one of the early motivations of meeting as ‘brethren’: an early nineteenth-century frustration with the barriers that meant a Christian from one denomination could not take communion in another denomination. Groves had written:

I therefore know no distinction, but am ready to break the bread and drink the cup of holy joy with all who love the Lord and will not lightly speak evil of his name. I feel every saint [Christian] to be a holy person, because Christ dwells in him, and manifests Himself where he worships; and though his faults be as many as the hairs of his head, my duty still is, with my Lord, to join him as a member of the mystical body, and to hold communion and fellowship with him in any work of the Lord in which he may be engaged.⁴

I found this assertion of a common life very congenial, as it swept away at a stroke all the interminable arguments with which Christians seemed preoccupied. (I had enough discernment even then to know that the study of theology was not for me.) The idea that you could leave arguments

divergences in Evangelicalism in the twentieth century between Reformed and Anglican expressions. See Ian M. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism, 1918–1939* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999).

⁴ *Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves*, edited by Mary Groves (London: James Nisbet, 1857), 48.

to one side and just try to get on with people because they loved Jesus seemed deeply consoling.

Despite seemingly firing on all cylinders, I was aware of a personal lack. First, I could not get out from under an unshakable sense of guilt. Cerebrally, I knew that I trusted in Christ for salvation and I believed that his work was able to do this for me. In my head all was well, but not in my heart. If ‘all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags’ (Isaiah 64:6; KJV), then how could anything I did ever be worthy? Any good action would have to be shot through with sin somehow, and continual misdemeanours—how could they be accounted for after conversion?

Secondly, I could not sustain a regular personal prayer life. Like other Evangelicals, Brethren advised a daily period of personal devotion known as the ‘Quiet Time’. This took the form of reading a passage of scripture and thinking about what it meant for your behaviour that day before praying. It could have come close to *lectio divina*—for some people it possibly did, but I had tied myself up in at least two sets of knots. First, the action of God in scripture was hermetically sealed in history. Divine activity did seem to take place in foreign missions, but was not obvious to me in my own surroundings. Secondly, I was suspicious of people saying that, when they had been reading the Bible, God had told them to do this or that—mainly because it seemed to me just to be a way of saying that God had given them permission to do what they wanted to do anyway.

Spiritual life consisted of highs and doldrums. Sometimes it would lift me up to be with other Christians for a weekend of worship and preaching, and sometimes music and singing would also pacify me, but none of these things seemed to last. What did last was the gnawing



St Aloysius College, Glasgow

feeling that I did not have the same sense of being a Christian that other people seemed to project. And I could not understand why I was not able to pray. But I just could not sustain it. The years passed.

By the time I arrived at St Aloysius, I had a husband and two children, the younger of whom was just beginning school. I was very happy to have secured the post. The College gave me a permanent income for the first time; it was a private school, which meant different pressures from those in the state sector. It took its religion seriously; moreover it was a Catholic school and I was a Protestant—so my arrival was a delicious insult to west-of-Scotland sectarianism, as well as a confirmation of my own view that Christians *qua* Christians were my relations in Christ. At a deeper level of quiet, of which I was unaware, silently and surprisingly, the strong foundations and the patchwork experiences of life had prepared me to encounter, and benefit from, Ignatian spirituality.

Evangelicalism and Ignatian Spirituality

When, along with the rest of the staff, I was asked to consider various ways of deepening my spiritual life, I opted to begin the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life. I began around October 2000 and completed them in July/August 2001. The first encouragement was that I had, at last, been able to sustain a reasonably regular prayer life. I kept being so surprised that I was still praying, that prayer was possible, and that what I presented to the director seemed to be not laughable. I was basing my prayer on the Bible, which I loved and with which I was so familiar.

Setting out on the First Week, I was not reading the *Spiritual Exercises* but was entirely dependent on my director. His skill in giving the Exercises I now regard as crucial in enabling me to continue. The issue of sin was neuralgic to me and could easily have derailed me. The prayer with which I finished the First Week did deal with feelings of fear,

A
profound
sense of being
a Christian

horror, panic, need and limitation, but also of divine strength, protection and an overwhelming willingness, without any reluctance, to put that love at my disposal. Later I realised that, during the Exercises, God had not chided me about my own sin. It seemed to be much less important to God than I had been led to believe. There had been no shouting, no anger, no raging, no banging of lecterns, no sendings to hell, no interminable castings of doubt on the quality of Christian living. Since then I have had a profound sense of being a Christian. I did not produce this sense, or achieve it; it

was done in me; I was given it through grace alone by faith alone. During the Second Week I did come to a clear realisation that God was not only active in the Bible and in history but *had been active in my life* as I was enabled to connect times of peace and love with God's presence.

My experience, as I have presented it so far, is a worked example of those aspects of Evangelicalism which prepared me to respond positively to Ignatian spirituality. Now I would like to move from a personal narrative to a more formal discussion in which to frame the relationship between Ignatian and Evangelical spirituality. Personal accounts have their uses, but their strengths are also their limitations: age, gender, specificity of context (both geographical and denominational), personal capacity and personality. Not all Evangelicals are like me. I cannot report any influence from Ignatian spirituality on Brethren groups as far as I know, but the picture is different when we look at Evangelicalism more broadly.

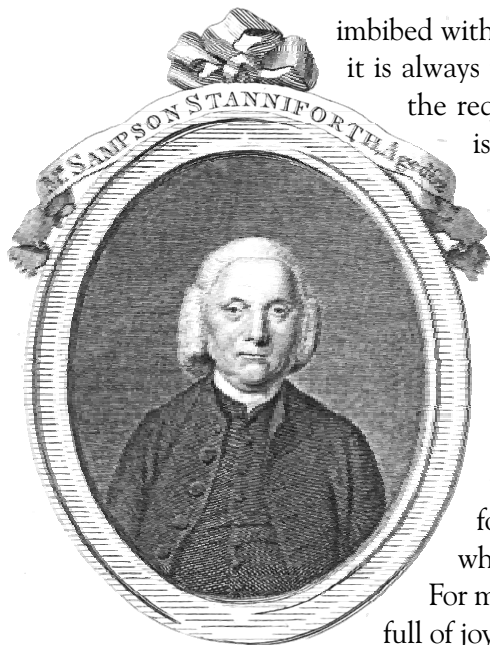
Because Evangelicals uphold credal expressions of Christianity, theological differences with Roman Catholicism are of limited use in explaining how Evangelicals are prepared for the Ignatian encounter. Evangelicalism, a product of the Enlightenment much influenced by Romanticism, is perhaps more effectively approached historically and through its spirituality. Evangelicalism has been defined by one of its key historians as having four aspects to its Christian culture, which it holds together in such a way as to make its identity distinctive. These are:

Conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; Biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.⁵

Of these features biblicism, pre-eminently, prepares someone for the Ignatian encounter. Many Evangelicals will have experience of private bible reading, and of listening to the Bible being the basis of preaching. They will have an elevated view of scripture, regarding it as *the* authority for faith and life: 'The principle of applying the Scriptures to daily life is fundamental to evangelical spirituality'.⁶ Bible knowledge may have been

⁵ David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 8.

⁶ Liz Hoare, *Using the Bible in Spiritual Direction* (London: SPCK, 2015), 87.



imbibed with varying outcomes for spiritual well-being, but it is always fertile ground for a director. For Evangelicals, the request to think about a passage from the Bible is the most normative way imaginable in which they could be invited to deepen their spiritual life.

Many Evangelicals will have experienced a conversion. They will point to an occasion during which the claims of Christ on their lives became real to them and when they trusted in him for salvation. This event depends entirely on view that the death of Jesus on the cross—the shedding of his blood for the forgiveness of sins—achieved the means by which human beings could be put right with God.

For many the conversion event is deeply emotional—full of joy, or a sense of relief, a sense of freedom, a sense of being whole and being loved. One of Wesley's early preachers, Sampson Staniforth, gave this account:

As soon as I was alone, I kneeled down and determined not to rise, but to continue crying and wrestling with God, till he had mercy on me. How long I was in that agony I cannot tell; but as I looked up to heaven I saw the clouds open exceeding bright, and I saw Jesus hanging on the cross. At the same moment these words were applied to my heart, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'. My chains fell off; my heart was free. All guilt was gone, and my soul was filled with unutterable peace.⁷

The confluence of the death of Christ and its meaning for the believer drawn into a moment of time can be intensely powerful. Indeed, it gave rise to a form of evangelistic outreach known as 'giving one's testimony', in which a person recounts his or her conversion, and these accounts can have a profound effect on those who listen. This is not so much a matter of the contingent drama of the event, but of the inherent drama of the gospel, that God, because God wanted to, gave Godself freely for ordinary people—for those who live next door or get the same bus to

⁷ Sampson Staniforth, 'A Short Account of Mr Sampson Staniforth, in a Letter to the Rev. Mr Wesley', *The Arminian Magazine*, 6/2 (February 1783), 72, cited in Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 5.

work. Sometimes the psychological release experienced on such occasions can be the spiritual well spring for the rest of a person's life.

Spiritual experiences of conversion, clearly linked in Sampson Staniforth's account with crucicentrism, show similarities with experiences of the First Week of the Exercises. The issues of the sinfulness of sin in the context of God's forgiving love in Christ and the peaceful security obtained through faith are distinguishing features of both Ignatian and Evangelical spirituality.

Some Evangelicals go on to mistake the lack of emotional fizz in the years following their conversion for a lack of commitment in themselves, rather than an invitation to deepen their prayer life. But because of the links in the First Week with the past and the future, the Exercises can provide balm for those whose entire spiritual life rests on a brief experience which cannot, by its theological nature, be repeated, but for whose intimacy and warmth they continue to yearn. The poet and hymnodist William Cowper's complaint, 'Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?', articulates this feeling precisely.⁸ The First Week is also useful for any Evangelicals whose movement towards following Christ was more gradual and not so sharply defined, and for children brought up in Evangelical families whose experience of 'conversion' would, of necessity, be age-related.⁹

Jesuits are no strangers to activism, the remaining characteristic by which Bebbington defines Evangelical identity, and neither are Evangelicals. The *Contemplatio* at the end of the Exercises prepares directees for a life of Christian service. The purpose of Evangelical activism—to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19)—is similar to that of Ignatius in its scope, focus and ambition. Evangelical work in social welfare has a long history, in the campaigns to abolish slavery led by William Wilberforce, the work to alleviate the conditions of child workers led by the Earl of Shaftesbury and the work to abolish child prostitution led by Josephine Butler. David Bebbington cites the example of Thomas Chalmers, a Scottish minister who was later to become a leader in the Disruption that led to the creation of the Free Church of Scotland.

⁸ William Cowper, 'O for a Closer Walk with God', in *The Task and Selected Other Poems*, edited by James Sambrook (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 242.

⁹ Beth Dickson, *The Secret Life of an Evangelical* (London: Partnership, 2005).

In his early ministry he was not an Evangelical. After the satisfactory discharge of his duties, Chalmers commented at the time, 'a minister may enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure'. After his conversion, by contrast, Chalmers was reputed to have visited 11,000 homes in his Glasgow parish during a single year. Evangelicalism brought about a striking change of attitude.¹⁰

Chalmers is by no means the only Evangelical titan. 'Overseas missions were to remain a permanent expression of the energy that characterised the Evangelical movement.'¹¹ For countless Evangelicals activism was no hindrance to a mature spiritual life.

If these areas are fertile grounds for spiritual directors, they are also fertile ground for the bad spirit. Each of the facets of evangelical identity can generate difficulties for the believer. Biblicism can lead to not being able to see the wood for the trees: a veneration of scripture that avoids the encounter with Jesus as it focuses on cerebral, rather than emotional, responses and may be inclined to devalue the life of emotions.¹² Conversionism may focus on spiritual birth at the expense of growth. Crucicentrism can lead to feelings of unworthiness, especially if there has been undue emphasis on the iniquity of sinners. The bad spirit subtly twists these contexts of grace into bonds that imprison the person, who may develop a sense of being responsible for 'saving the world' and enter into self-blame when that does not happen.

However, it is often the predominance of activism which colours these other aspects. While the Ignatian way advises a balanced diet of activism and spirituality, for Evangelicals the balance is often disproportionately taken up with activism. While the importance of prayer is an acknowledged priority, not a few Evangelicals will express frustration that their experience of prayer, though dutiful, is dry or intermittent. This frustration is acute among those who in all other aspects seem to be maturing as expected. More work is usually prescribed (either by the self or another trusted friend or leader) as a solution. The lurking danger is burnout, as Christians with an ethic of sacrificial commitment can lack the

¹⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 11, citing Thomas Chalmers, *Observations on a Passage in Mr. Playfair's Letter to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh Relative to the Mathematical Pretensions of the Scottish Clergy* (Cupar: R. Tullis, 1805), 11.

¹¹ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 42.

¹² See Tim Mountain, 'Spiritual Direction and Baptists', *The Baptist Ministers' Journal*, 322 (April 2014), 10–14.

physical or spiritual self-care to deal with the workload they have willingly undertaken. Twisted from its gospel place, such activism can mean that, even though Evangelicals know that they are justified by faith, the workload they have shouldered becomes too heavy and they begin to feel as if they are sanctified by works.

There is very little understanding in Evangelicalism of what contemplative prayer is, or its place in the Christian life, as an element—just like activism—which enables the Christian life to be lived in a healthy way. Similarly, if activism is not understood by outsiders as a form of prayer, it will be hard for non-Evangelicals to account for the relentless activity undertaken by Evangelicals, whether they are called to it or not. Getting Evangelicals to understand that *ora* can be more than *labora* is another crucial point addressed by the Exercises as one learns to order one's desires. Asking them to consider scripture imaginatively gives the mind something to do which it regards as healthful. Helping them to notice where God is in their lives, discerning God's will for them and receiving God's strength through a revitalised prayer life has the potential for personal and collective edification.

Those features of Evangelicalism outlined above prepare Evangelicals to learn from the Spiritual Exercises and for that encounter to be satisfying for both director and directee. There are some smaller issues which may raise problems for some from an Evangelical background. The first is that many Evangelicals will be unfamiliar with the visual culture of Catholicism; they are very likely to be unused to frequent encounters with images of the Virgin Mary. Some may have a belief that it is wrong to make images of God, though for others this may make little difference.

The second issue is related to the role of the director. Many Evangelicals, on hearing about the Exercises, will want to try to do it for themselves by reading a book. Both James Wakefield's *Sacred Listening* and Larry Warner's *Journey with Jesus* are useful guides for Evangelicals and Protestants more generally.¹³ Wakefield's book has a helpful glossary of spiritual terms which may be unfamiliar to Protestants. However, the dialogic nature of the Exercises cannot be ignored. Without a director to explain the phenomenon and purpose of desolation it would be very easy

¹³ James Wakefield, *Sacred Listening: Discovering the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006); Larry Warner, *Journey with Jesus: Discovering the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010).

to become discouraged and give up. Evangelicals are likely to be greatly calmed by Ignatius' insistence that directors need to allow 'the Creator to deal immediately with the creature and the creature with its Creator and Lord' (Exx 15). But without a director, who will enable directees in heady periods of consolation, who really do feel that they can save the world, to rein themselves in?

In conclusion, within the Body of Christ, there is no Reformation, there is no Catholic or Protestant for we are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28), charged to keep 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3). That said, during the five hundred years since the Reformation, the relationship between Catholics and Protestants has often been turbulent and sometimes hostile. The decline of Christianity in the UK means that, as the 'last men standing', Catholics and Evangelicals are more likely to meet each other and to be aware of each others' views. There is within the Evangelical tradition a great deal of material which, if sifted through the Spiritual Exercises, could, along with similar Catholic material, become a revitalising dynamic in the life of the Body of Christ. Instead of seeing each other as the Other, we may come to recognise in each other, ourselves, in Christ. The ways of God are deeply consoling.

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MARTIN LUTHER'S CONVERSION EXPERIENCE AND THE MID-LIFE TRANSITION

Robert Opala

When the Reformation came, the providence of God raised Martin Luther to restore the gospel of pure, costly grace. Luther passed through the cloister; he was a monk

Luther had left all to follow Christ on the path of absolute obedience. But God shattered all his hopes. Once more he must leave his nets and follow. The first time was when he entered the monastery, when he had left everything behind except his pious self.

This time even that was taken from him¹

THERE ARE STILL MANY unanswered questions concerning the sixteenth-century Reformation in the Western Church that need exploration. A number of these relate to one of its most influential figures: Martin Luther. It is still commonly believed that Luther's act of nailing his 95 theses to the door of Wittenberg Castle Church precipitated the storm of the Reformation. Contemporary historians, however, would disagree with such a simplistic viewpoint, maintaining that this single action could not have effected such a dramatic change in the course of history. Nonetheless Luther's involvement remains crucial, and I would like to present a different perspective, which can possibly shed more light on the motives and impulses that inspired him.

A number of scholars have attempted to create a psychological portrait of Luther. In 1958, Erik Erikson, a German-born US psychologist, published *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*. With

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, translated by R. H. Fuller (London: SCM, 1996), 39–40.

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others, he shared the opinion that Luther's unhappy childhood affected his adult life and was, perhaps, the spark that ignited the Reformation.² This likewise seems too simple. Scholars attempting to understand Luther do it in many different ways, but the picture is never complete. Roman Catholics may have particular difficulty understanding Luther's mind, not just because of the inevitable struggle to eliminate the myths, stories and prejudice that have gathered around him, but also because it requires a very different way from their own of approaching the Protestant world—its philosophy, its theological language, its notions and values. Luther's discovery and subsequent emphasis upon the justifying grace of God proved to be a catalyst for change in his own life, but also in the life of the Church and of the whole of Western civilisation. This change came about even though Luther himself never tried to become a founder or a prophet. He was all too aware that his personality could overshadow his theological ideas. So, it is wise to reflect on his life experience and psychology before studying his thought.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one of the most inspirational theologians in the twentieth century, had a profound admiration for Luther and, in his brief reinterpretation of Luther's life, he emphasized how its particular stages provide a unique history of obedience to divine grace. By studying Luther's psychology and spirituality throughout his life, it is possible to trace a passage from the sharp evangelical character of the first phase of Luther's Reformation to a later, more balanced and traditional, path of religious expression.

Pursuing this idea, I hope to focus on what I consider to be Luther's most essential life transition, which was marked at its beginning by his conversion experience, and to go on to consider its significance at other stages of his life. Luther's conversion cannot be understood simply as a discrete event, occurring at a specific time and place, in which a person's life and personality are completely changed by an external power. St Paul's conversion (Acts 9:3–9) is not a prototype for Luther's. Luther's conversion was, rather, a long process of existential transformation, beginning with a spiritual and emotional crisis, and completed by the liberating intellectual discovery of a new theological approach, which

² Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Norton, 1993 [1958]), 28.

profoundly affected his whole personality. The fact is that Luther went through several conversions, but the one defined as the 'Tower Experience' was unique and intrinsically the most powerful in 'raising him', as Bonhoeffer says, 'to restore the gospel of costly grace'.³ This experience marked in Luther's life what the psychologist Daniel J. Levinson has called the 'mid-life transition'—the point at which a man passes from early to middle adulthood.⁴ My aim here will be to propose that Luther's conversion experience and mid-life transition were pivotal for his entire life. It will not be an easy task, as Luther's personality was profoundly complex, he was an extremely creative person, and his theology was highly advanced.

Luther's Early Life

Martin Luther was born in 1483 into a hard-working, middle-class Saxon family. He was a bright child and eager to study, so it was no surprise that his ambitious and dominant father, Hans Luder, wanted him to be a lawyer. But something unexpected happened, which shocked the whole family. In 1505, after a terrifying experience during a thunderstorm, the scholarly Martin decided to join a religious order and become a friar. His father was furious.

According to Levinson's psychological framework, this step clearly marks Luther's 'early adult transition'—the move from childhood into the beginnings of adulthood—and some scholars would say that it was also the psychological beginning of the Reformation.⁵ Becoming an Augustinian friar was for Luther a sign of disobedience and rebellion against his father. Erik Erikson sees in this brave action a psychological explanation of the outbreak of the Reformation, which was in some sense a continuation of this first rebellion. During the period of his early adulthood in the monastery, Luther went through a major developmental crisis. He searched for a gracious God who would liberate him from his existential anxiety, but he also suffered from fear because of his father. In the meantime, however, he stabilised his professional and social status by becoming a priest, a theologian and a university lecturer.

³ Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, 39.

⁴ See Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Ballantine, 1978), 23–34. Note that Levinson is here explicitly discussing men and the male life cycle.

⁵ Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 72–78; Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 23–29.

<p>4. Late Adulthood</p> <p>1546—Martin Luther dies at Eisleben (63)</p> <p>1545—Writes against the Roman papacy (62)</p>
<p>4a. Late Adulthood Transition</p> <p>1540—Questions the sense of the Reformation (57)</p> <p>1538—Suffers from fears and anxiety (55)</p> <p>1536—Writes against Anabaptists (53)</p>
<p>3. Mid-Life Adulthood</p> <p>1534—The German Bible is completed and published (51)</p> <p>1529—Writes Small and Large Catechisms (46)</p> <p>1527—Composition of A Mighty Fortress (44)</p> <p>1526—Clarifies theology of the Eucharist (43)</p>
<p>3a. Mid-Life Transition</p> <p>1526—Suffers from intense depression (43)</p> <p>1526—Son Hans born (43)</p> <p>1525—Writes The Bondage of the Will (42)</p> <p>1525—Writes against the peasants' rebellion (42)</p> <p>1525—Marriage to Katharine von Bora (42)</p> <p>1523—Translates the New Testament into German (40)</p> <p>1522—Ten months of isolation at Wartburg Castle (39)</p> <p>1521—Captured and hidden at Wartburg Castle (38)</p> <p>1521—Attends the Diet of Worms (38)</p> <p>1520—Receives the papal bull of excommunication (37)</p> <p>1519—'Tower Experience': conversion (36)</p>
<p>2. Early Adulthood</p> <p>1517—Nails the 95 theses to the church door (34)</p> <p>1516—Lectures on Epistle to the Romans (33)</p> <p>1512—Begins teaching at university (30)</p> <p>1512—Becomes a doctor of theology (29)</p> <p>1507—Ordained a priest (24)</p>
<p>2a. Early Adulthood Transition</p> <p>1507—Experiences a spiritual and religious crisis (24)</p> <p>1505—Enters the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt (22)</p> <p>1505—Thunderstorm experience (22)</p> <p>1505—Obtains the degree of Master of Arts (21)</p>
<p>1. Childhood and Adolescence</p> <p>1501—Matriculates at Erfurt (17 years old)</p>
<p>1a. Early Childhood Transition</p> <p>1483—Martin Luther is born in Eisleben, Saxony</p>

The psychological stages and most significant events in Martin Luther's life

In developmental psychology, each stage of the life cycle has its own importance and meaning. The mid-life transition, however, seems to be the most crucial and essential of all. It is a kind of bridge that connects two important phases in human life. Psychologists note that all possible kinds of change—biological, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and religious—can appear. According to Carl Jung, there is 'a significant change in the human psyche'.⁶ Daniel Levinson lists three major tasks that a man has to complete at this stage: to terminate the period of early adulthood and to judge what he has done with his life so far; to take the first steps towards the initiations of middle adulthood; and to deal with all the polarities that create divisions in his life.⁷

How then did Luther go through this transition? In his case, there was a certain precise event that marked the beginning of his mid-life transition. It is known as the 'Tower Experience', and through it he discovered a merciful and a gracious God.

The 'Tower Experience'

This event happened at a crucial time during the early Reformation, two years after Luther had nailed his 95 theses to the church door. Studying in the monastery tower at Wittenberg, Luther was suddenly overwhelmed by a sense of the grace of God. The experience immediately released him from a chronic intestinal condition that had long plagued him. As Sam Keen, a US philosopher and psychologist, describes the event:

After years of being constipated and compulsive, it occurred to him that his life was of ultimate worth, not because of any work he accomplished, but because he was accepted by God even as he remained a constipated sinner.⁸

The 95 theses had ended the stage of Luther's early adulthood which had seen the first steps in his academic achievement. After a series of major doubts and psychological sufferings, his spiritual conversion was inevitable. Liberation from his old scruples came at the beginning of the second half of his thirties, possibly at the same time as he received the

⁶ See Carl Gustav Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, translated by W. S. Dell and Carry F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1933), 107.

⁷ Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 191–192.

⁸ Sam Keen, *Fire in the Belly* (New York: Bantam, 1991), 150.

Pope's bulls of excommunication. Luther's conversion or, as some scholars prefer to name it, his 'theological discovery' is crucial to understanding his thought and the major ideas of the Reformation. It was this event that gave the beginning of his Reformation its evangelical character.

There is enormous creativity among the various biographers of Luther who attempt to give their own interpretations of this crucial experience. Though there is insufficient evidence to determine how it actually came about, there is one essential source of information on Luther's conversion: his own testimony. It was written in Wittenberg in 1545, in the preface to a complete edition of his Latin writings. 'All at once', Luther wrote, 'I felt that I had been born again and entered into paradise itself through open gates. Immediately I saw the whole of Scripture in a different light.'⁹ Luther never specified any exact time frame for his conversion experience, although the preface suggests that it happened in the same year, 1519, that one of his greatest opponents, Johann Tetzel, died. Whenever the event took place, this experience was much more important than nailing his 95 theses on 31 October 1517. In such a storm of events, thoughts and emotions, it may have been too difficult for him to remember all the details of the experience. And, as Bernhard Lohse explains, 'the Reformation insight was so significant for Luther, existentially as well as theologically, we ought not to assume that he one day discovered that he had suddenly solved all important problems'.¹⁰

The Mid-Life Transition and Beyond

Luther's achievements during his mid-life transition, inaugurated by the 'Tower Experience', were very significant: he had lit the fire of a religious rebellion which swept through the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of Europe within a few months; he had found the ability to say *no* to the highest ecclesial authority; he had won victories in several public disputations over the best theologians of Rome. We know that, about the age of 35, he changed his name from Luder to Luther, or *Eleutherius* (liberated by God), which already indicates some significant adjustment in his life.

⁹ 'Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings', in *Luther's Works*, volume 34, *Career of the Reformer IV*, edited and translated by L. W. Spitz (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 337.

¹⁰ Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1987), 151.



Twin portraits of Martin Luther and Katharina von Bora, Luthers Sterbehaus museum, sixteenth century

A major event which helped Luther to appraise the past and caused him to modify the whole structure of his life was his marriage with the former Cistercian nun Katharina von Bora. The relationship was not a romantic love story, though the couple were well matched. There are many interesting anecdotes about Luther's relationship with his wife, who helped him to manage the difficulties relating to his mid-life transition. He later acknowledged that it was much easier to build the bridge between his previous life as a friar and his new one as an influential reformer with his wife's help. The role of a husband helped him terminate the guilt caused by his father's excessive criticism and anger towards his celibacy. It really transformed his life for the better. For the first time he could say that his father was right, as the 'suicide of celibacy' in his life was overcome.¹¹ Also, the birth of his first son, Hans, significantly helped him in the process of adjusting to his new life.

¹¹ Quoted in Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 161.

Luther's mid-life transition was, however, a painful experience, as it is with many men who encounter profound developmental crises during that period of their lives. They find it impossible to go on as before, but need time either to choose a new path or modify the old one. Someone going through this stage often senses the loss of youth, though he does not feel himself to be old.

***A profound
anxiety
concerning
his own
salvation***

Luther went through many crises, but the one that occurred in January 1527 had a special character. Erikson describes it as a 'severe manic-depressive state', and questions how it could happen at a time when Luther was so happy with his marriage and fatherhood.¹² But it is precisely at such a time that a man discovers himself as a member of a new generation and feels a growing responsibility for the next one. This stage, beginning in mid-life, profoundly influences his old age. In 1527, at the age of 44, Luther unexpectedly felt the need to confirm that his theology of justification, the doctrinal essence of the Reformation, was correct. He was forced to do so by a profound anxiety concerning his own salvation. Erikson explains this by saying that Luther perceived that if his theological doctrine contained errors, he and all his followers would never enter the kingdom of heaven; they would simply die without achieving immortality.¹³

According to Levinson, during the mid-life transition a person has to deal with the four polarities of Young/Old, Destruction/Creation, Masculine/Feminine and Attachment/Separateness.¹⁴ In Luther's life, the work of these polarities, especially that of Young and Old, seems very visible. In this particular experience, Luther's struggle with his own Young/Old polarity may be seen as fear of the loss of youth. He felt that the Young within him was dying and the image of his own death totally preoccupied his emotions and thinking.

Theological and Spiritual Meaning

Luther admitted that his life changed when he understood the true meaning of the biblical passage 'For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith' (Romans 1:17). Previously,

¹² Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 243.

¹³ Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 241.

¹⁴ Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 197.

this verse had always affected him very painfully. He confessed: 'I hated that word "righteousness of God"', which he had understood as 'the formal or active righteousness, as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner'. Enlightenment came when he read, with new understanding, the second part of the verse: 'The one who is righteous shall live by faith'. The following lines confirm Luther's discovery:

I began to understand that in this verse the justice of God is that by which the just person lives by a gift of God, that is, by faith. I began to understand that this verse means that the justice of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive justice, i.e. that by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: 'The just person lives by faith'.¹⁵

The angry and punishing God, never satisfied by human endeavour, had now become the God of justifying grace and love. The novelty of Luther's insight was that God's righteousness was passive (*iustitia dei passiva*) and could be received only through faith—the principle of *sola fide*. Adopting a monistic model of human nature, Luther believed that the justified person, who is still totally sinful and corrupted (*totus homo peccator*), cannot be saved by his or her own righteousness, but only by grace from above.¹⁶ This view uncompromisingly underlines the significance of God's action in the process of salvation. In his polemical work against Erasmus, *De servo arbitrio*, Luther stresses that the human person is unable to do anything for his or her own salvation, because people's free will is totally constrained. He writes, 'salvation is beyond our own powers and devices, and depends on the work of God alone'.¹⁷

Hans Küng maintains that Luther's experience of the reality of God's justifying and saving power is essential, not only for Luther and the Protestants but for the whole of Christian theology and spirituality: 'without exaggeration we can say ... that it is the theology of justification that lies at the root of the still continuing theological battle over the

¹⁵ Luther, 'Preface to the Complete Edition', 337.

¹⁶ Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, in *Luther's Works*, volume 25, *Lectures on Romans, Glosses and Scholia*, edited by H. C. Oswald and translated by W. G. Tillmans and J. A. O. Preus (St Louis: Concordia, 1972), 26, 57, 65–66.

¹⁷ Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, in *Luther's Works*, volume 33, *Career of the Reformer III*, edited and translated by P. S. Watson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 64.

true form of Christianity'. And this doctrine is rooted in the complex nature of Luther's personality.¹⁸

The crisis of adolescence had led Luther to the Augustinian Order, in which he was formed in a specific spirituality and devotional tradition. Later, his intellectual formation in Wittenberg conspired to turn him away from scholasticism; and then the people with whom he came into contact pointed out to him the road to the gospel. During Luther's breakthrough, his concept of grace and justification was still considerably Augustinian, but it was because of this that he was able later to develop his own doctrine concerning these two issues—*sola gratia* (by grace alone) and *sola fide* (by faith alone)—which became the key notions for the Reformation.

From his early years, he had searched for a gracious God and had always desired to surrender to that God. His 'Tower Experience' helped him to emerge from his spiritual suffering and the inner experience of hell because it compelled him, as Rowan Williams writes,

... to draw together, to weld into a single weapon, the thoughts of many years and the torment of many years; it drew from him the strong statement of what he had found to be good news of Christian preaching.¹⁹

It is fascinating that Williams is even ready to compare Luther's spiritual sufferings with the inner experience of the famous reformer of the Carmelite Order, St John of the Cross. He stresses that in this experience the Spanish mystic 'had been into the same desert and the same hell as Martin Luther'.²⁰ And although their methods of reforming the Church led them to completely different places, they both experienced *metanoia*—a moment of transformation when the gracious God appeared bringing relief.

Luther's spiritual conversion, however, was not a mystical experience. It certainly influenced his theology, but this experience had a pure existential character founded on exegetical meditation on the scriptures.

¹⁸ H. Küng, *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*, translated by T. Collins, E. E. Tolks and D. Grandkou (London: Burns and Oates, 1965), 9.

¹⁹ Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge: Christian Spirituality from the New Testament to St John of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981), 143.

²⁰ Williams, *Wound of Knowledge*, 160.

Although Luther admired the medieval masters of German mysticism, they contributed only marginally to the construction of his *theologia crucis*.

This theology would never have been realised without his experience of the mid-life transition. There is a visible contrast between the early period of Luther's life, when he cried out for radical reform of the Church, and his mid-life and late adulthood, when he became embittered in his opposition to different groups of Protestants. During that time he even allegedly intended to return to Roman Catholicism, and he never allowed his Reformation to turn into the radical wing of the whole rebellion. The second part of his life journey was much more balanced and reserved because trying to manage honestly all the troubles of his mid-life transition later allowed him to celebrate the wholeness and integrity of his own self. It led him to reach true wisdom and peace.

As he stressed himself in one of his famous 'table talks', 'No great saint lived without errors'.²¹ Luther had a very honest, down-to-earth understanding of his own personality and was able to laugh at himself. At the end of his life, he said: 'They are trying to make me into a fixed star, but I am only an irregular planet'.²² This, I believe, shows that he always truly cared for the condition of the Church, even though, when we analyse the stages of his life, it remains an



Dawn: Luther at Erfurt, by Joseph Noel Paton, 1861

²¹ Martin Luther, *Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe. Tischreden*, volume 5 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus, 1919), n. 6287.

²² Martin Luther, *Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe. Tischreden*, volume 5, n. 3578.

open question whether the old Luther would repeat the same phrase that the young Luther declared so vehemently in April 1521 before Emperor Charles V: 'Here I stand; I can do no other'?

Robert Opala was born in Silesia (south-west Poland) where one of his ancestors, Fr Albert Opala, a Catholic priest, became in 1532 one of the first Lutheran ministers in the duchy of Silesia. Robert holds a doctorate in historical theology (Reformation) from the Christian Academy of Theology in Warsaw where he lectured on Protestant theology. He completed extensive research and study on Lutheran and Carmelite spirituality at Jesuit colleges in London (Heythrop) and Dublin (Milltown). As a Carmelite priest Robert worked in retreat centres in Oxford (Boars Hill) and Preston (Tabor). He now ministers as an Anglican priest in the diocese of York.

A PILGRIMAGE THROUGH METHODISM AND IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

Hugh Jenkins

Methodists and Protestants

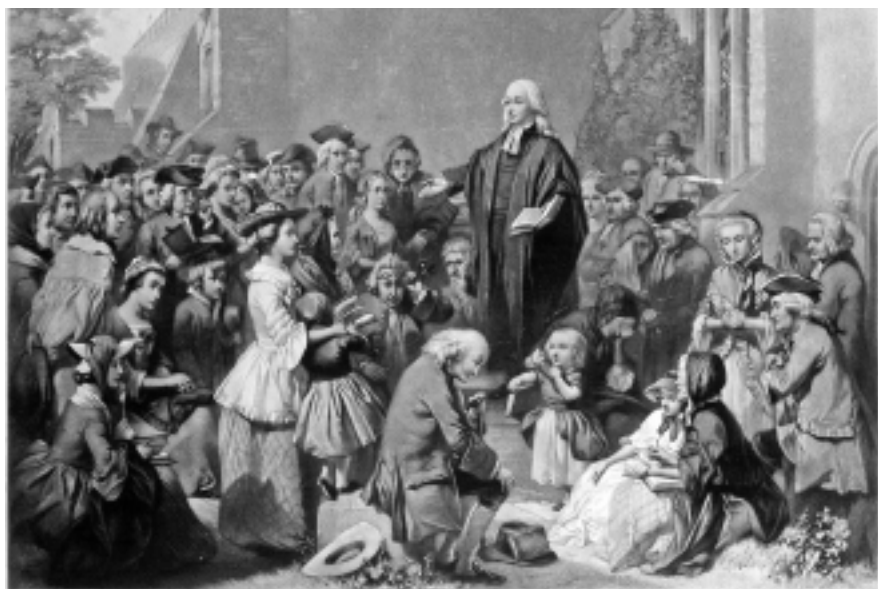
WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL in South Africa in the 1970s the consciousness I had of the Methodist Church, of which I had been a part since infancy, was of a Protestant Church quite similar to the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches that worshipped nearby. This sense of being Protestant was shared with the Baptists, Dutch Reformed and Lutherans as well. The Dutch Reformed were not that prominent in Durban, where I grew up and to which I later returned; the city was predominantly English-speaking among the white community. We were largely isolated in our racial pockets—such was the policy of Apartheid—but being part of a denomination of many races opened up opportunities to cross barriers and question government policy.

I did notice how Dutch Reformed church buildings occupied central places in Afrikaner-dominated towns, and how there were road signs saying ‘Silence: Sundays 9 a.m.–11 a.m.’ near some of these churches, indicating the centrality of the Dutch Reformed ethos in such places. I learnt that the Dutch Reformed Church was Protestant; moreover it was Calvinist, like the Presbyterian. I learnt a little about Calvin and Luther in a history course on the Reformation in my first year of high school. I even visited a Dutch Reformed church as part of Methodist confirmation, in which we each had to attend a service of another denomination.

The Lutheran Church was outside my early experience, as there were no Lutheran churches in our part of Durban. I remember, years later, attending a combined service in King William’s Town in the Eastern Cape at the Lutheran church. Some people referred to it as the German Lutheran church, although the pastor firmly said that it was simply the

Lutheran church, reminding them that the services were in English. Before the service a minister from Northern Ireland told a group of us that the interior reminded him a great deal of a Roman Catholic church somewhere in the British Isles—surely a reminder of origins. The Roman Catholic Church was largely anathema to us as ‘Protestants’, even though my father had been a Catholic (he switched to the Methodists before I was born). Catholicism was largely held at arm’s length through clichés about Mary, the Mass, Latin liturgy and the Pope.

Thus in the wider church milieu in which I grew up, ‘Protestant’ was the heading under which Methodism fitted. Strictly speaking, however, the Methodist Church is not a Protestant Church in origin—the word initially referred to the *protest* by followers of Luther against the Diet of Speyer in 1529. The Methodist Church arose much later, as an attempt to bring reform to the Anglican Church in the 1700s under the leadership of John Wesley, who remained an Anglican priest until his death. This Methodist movement was characterized by outreach to many outside the established Church, most of whom were working-class people; emphasis on evangelical salvation; focus on personal and social holiness; small group meetings called *bands* and *classes* in which accounting for the state of one’s soul was vital; heartfelt expression and experience of faith; and singing one’s faith—especially since John Wesley’s brother



John Wesley preaching outside an Anglican church

Charles was a prolific hymn-writer and included many aspects of doctrine in his hymns.

Despite its origins in Anglicanism, the Methodism I knew was far more like the Protestant Churches than the Anglican Church. Methodism had become another form of Protestantism, despite having a different history and way of emerging. Like Lutherans and Calvinists, after all, Methodism had sought to be a reform movement, changing an established Church from within. In the 1500s Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others sought to reform the Roman Catholic Church, but were soon heading movements separate from Roman Catholicism. In the 1700s Wesley likewise desired to bring change within the Anglican Church, but the Methodists could not stay snugly within the parent body and soon were, in practice, a separate movement and then a denomination.

We arrive in 2017, at the five-hundredth anniversary of Luther's nailing of his theses to the church door in Wittenberg, which is considered the decisive event marking the beginning of the Reformation. Methodism feels like a latecomer to any reflection on the continuing impact of the events of 500 years ago. Methodism's participation in a wider Protestant ethos makes sense of this, because it has accepted the older label of Protestant. But we always need to recognise that the founder of Methodism drew on many Christian sources, including Roman Catholic ones, linking together different streams of Christianity, and we must not place Methodism in a single tradition where it does not entirely fit.

Methodism associated itself readily with Protestantism because the 'low church' of Anglicanism embraced the Protestant ethos to a large extent and because Methodism had some similarities with older Protestant groups. In addition, Wesley emphasized salvation by grace through faith—with Ephesians 2:8, a cornerstone of Protestant expression, being a text of particular importance. His sermon on this text, 'Salvation by Faith', comes first in the book of his published sermons.¹ Going beyond this sermon, Wesley expounded the experience and order of a grace wider than a moment of salvation. He did this by delineating *prevenient* grace (grace experienced before salvation that prevents one from being outside the effects of grace), *justifying* grace (enabling salvation) and *sanctifying* grace (grace that enables holiness to take effect and grow).

¹ John Wesley, *Forty-Four Sermons* (London: Epworth, 1944 [1746–1760]), 1–10.

Wesley's famous 'Aldersgate experience' of 1738, when his heart was 'strangely warmed' and he felt a sense of trust in Christ and assurance of salvation, occurred while listening to someone reading Luther (the preface to his commentary on Romans) at a meeting in Aldersgate Street, London.² This link with Luther is surely more than coincidental. We do not need to wait until 2038 for the three-hundredth anniversary of this life-changing experience before we link Wesley back to the Reformation and its impact.

Encountering Ignatius

This impact is not simply a matter of Protestantism, however. One significant figure of the time whose influence can still be felt is Ignatius of Loyola. While he was very much a loyal Roman Catholic, and anti-Protestant, Ignatius was a reformer, too, bringing in an impulse for change into the Roman Catholic Church that has rippled down the centuries. Ignatius' spirituality has had an impact on Roman Catholicism well beyond the society he founded, the Jesuits, and has also touched Protestantism, sometimes quite deeply. The influences are now going both ways or, more correctly, several ways, considering the variety of traditions and expressions that are now interacting.

In my own experience, being in the Methodist Church has never felt isolated or parochial. The Methodists drew from and interacted with several Christian streams from the beginning: Anglican, Moravian and Calvinist among others. There were also inevitable differences in outlook that emerged within the Methodist movement itself. On some aspects of doctrine firm positions were taken—Wesleyan Methodism embraced an Arminian disposition towards free will rather than Calvinistic predestination. Yet Methodism has emerged as a broad Church seeking to give space for a variety of expressions. It is interesting that Pentecostal and charismatic presentations on second blessing often draw on Wesley, although usually in a different way from Methodist interpretations.

Personally, I have felt the longing and need to read and interact within and beyond the denomination that I call home, and in Methodism the space is given to do so. I have always considered myself Christian first and Methodist second. There are many good emphases in Methodism,

² See *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 18, *Journal and Diaries I (1735–1738)* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 250.

though they are not always well practised and get neglected at times too: small-group life, preaching, singing, holiness, practical outreach, salvation and the life of discipleship. However, because our origins were in a revival situation, some vital aspects of Christian life did not penetrate deeply into Methodism. In such a situation the Methodist response was about growth, converts and emphases particular to the situation at hand. This meant that the practices and value of contemplative prayer, retreat and silence were not easily grasped in Methodist circles.

In the second half of the twentieth century, Methodism saw the need for deeper spiritual experience and rootedness amid theological debates involving biblical criticism and an over-emphasis on service, with a corresponding lack in prayer and devotional life in some people. For these reasons, and because of Methodism's openness to other traditions—probably combined with other reasons as well—retreats were put on the schedule for Methodist ministers before I entered the ministry. I found Methodist ministers' retreats were a mixed bag, and they created a mixture of feelings in me: something wonderful was being evoked, but there was also a maddening sense of curtailment. There were times when deep connection with God was fostered—and then noise, activity, seminar-style presentations and distraction intervened. This was often to the detriment of fostering relationship with God, though sometimes snatches of silence and the feeling of community were highly enriching.

Having tasted the experience of a retreat, I felt the desire for more, along with dissatisfaction at what the Methodists had imported as a 'retreat', but often diluted. So I was drawn into a search. Once I got a taste for silence, retreat, spiritual direction and contemplative prayer I needed to look more widely. This exploration involved seeking to find out why retreats were desired or thought necessary, and from where the forms of retreat came. I began reading and praying, and considering Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Anglican ways of retreating. I was open to whatever was Christian and helpful to me. I also had a pull towards further academic studies, and decided to switch focus from New Testament studies, in which I had done my degree, to a Masters in Christian Spirituality. My interest in retreats was now focused on both academic study and a longing to grow spiritually. Once I had got some momentum, my reading, inevitably, was pointed towards Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*. I was thrust into Ignatian spirituality, which was allied to informal ways of experiencing Ignatian-style prayer. This has been one of the most

vital paths that I have travelled on my journey, and it led me to take a course in spiritual direction run by the Jesuit Institute of South Africa.

Inevitably, and deliberately, this path has been about experience. The desire is to experience relationship with God, and thus it is about prayer, because communication is central to this relationship. I am still on a journey of discovering new ways to pray and experience God within the Christian fold. Experience is integrally part of Methodist faith—being a Methodist is meant to involve experiencing Jesus in daily life—so this is very much a journey within my own tradition, though it extends beyond that tradition.

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral

John Wesley sought to validate spiritual experience by placing and evaluating it alongside three other factors: scripture, tradition and reason. These four have been called the ‘Wesleyan quadrilateral’.³ I find the quadrilateral helpful in considering new experiences, experimenting with prayer practices and being open to various expressions of spirituality, and I shall make use of it now in thinking about my own Ignatian experience within Methodism and the wider Protestant ethos. The quadrilateral is particularly relevant to Ignatius’ practice of discernment, which involves using scripture, the tradition of the Church, careful reasoning (for example systematically evaluating the pros and cons of two possible choices: Exx 181) and experience—even considering the possible experience of what is yet to be encountered on the basis of what has already been experienced.

Scripture

Scripture, of course, has the primary place for Protestants in terms of authority. This is the case for Methodists even within the dynamics of the Wesleyan quadrilateral. Ignatian spirituality is bathed in the scriptures, which makes it easily welcomed by Methodists and others who love the Bible. Writing about evangelicals’ attraction towards Ignatian spirituality, Joyce Huggett asks: ‘Why Ignatian spirituality in particular? One reason

³ This expression was coined by Albert C. Outler and has been in use since the early 1970s. See Ted A. Campbell, ‘The “Wesleyan Quadrilateral”: The Story of a Modern Methodist Myth’, *Methodist History*, 29/2 (January 1991),

is that the *Spiritual Exercises* are so bible-based that they might accurately be renamed “Biblical Exercises”.⁴

Ignatius’ approach helps Methodists and others who have been drawn into studying the Bible, preaching and listening to sermons, reading books that expound scripture and discussing biblical themes in small groups and seminars—the diet of a devoted Methodist and many other Protestants—to experience the Bible in a new way. The result is that where Ignatian spirituality is expressed ecumenically we usually find a number of Methodists. The approach to the Bible laid out in the *Spiritual Exercises* is imaginative, encourages feelings, is designed to facilitate encounter with God and is necessarily subjective. This subjectivity does not mean that absolutely anything goes, because Ignatian spirituality is rooted in the Church and church teachings. However, its affective way of encountering the Jesus of the scriptures and its openness to expressing feelings in relationship with God are helpful to people who have previously received the message that emotions are to be distrusted and that the emphasis needs to be on the factual nature of responding to the Bible.

**Openness to
expressing
feelings in
relationship
with God**

Many Methodists have found such an imaginative way of reading and then praying using biblical texts to be a wonderful window into spiritual experience. They discover a long-cherished spiritual way, seemingly—for those outside—hidden within Roman Catholicism, which they feel a licence to follow because it is so bathed in scripture. They find space to develop using the Bible in living encounter with God, in ways that have familiarity because they are used to reading and meditating on the scriptures, but which then open up new experiences of meeting Christ through using the Bible. Ignatius’ emphasis on desire is also helpful for those who experience a longing for ‘something more’ in their spiritual lives. Desire is noticed, nurtured, encouraged and shaped. The desire for the Bible to be deeply relevant is then enhanced by Ignatian practices.

Tradition

Despite being mistrusted in some Protestant circles, tradition is an inevitable part of Christian expression. All of us in the Christian fold express faith based on what has gone before, even if we do so by radically breaking away from the past. Even disjunctures result in new traditions.

⁴ Joyce Huggett, ‘Why Ignatian Spirituality Hooks Protestants’, *The Way Supplement*, 68 (1990), 25.

Since Methodism had its roots in Anglicanism and never sought to break from the Anglican Church's foundational principles, although it expressed faith differently, the Anglican tradition was basic to early Methodism. John Wesley drew on his Anglican heritage and also read widely from other Christian streams including Roman Catholic ones. Philip Sheldrake asserts that the evidence for the direct influence of Ignatian sources on Wesley is slight, although a secondary influence is quite possible. Certainly, Wesley read a biography of Ignatius, as he recorded in his journal in 1742.⁵

Ignatian spirituality is firmly based in traditions of imaginative meditation, active service, devotion to Christ, scriptural devotion—and the Roman Catholic Church. Some of Ignatius' suggestions may grate on the ears of Protestants, especially Methodists, whose own tradition is a simple expression of faith, often allied to a suspicion of ostentation, of devotion to Mary and of the role of the saints. The use of the imagination, which is so integral to Ignatian practice, is also distrusted by many Protestants. The imagination can go down destructive paths, making space for sinful thoughts and giving rise to fantasies that draw people away from practical reality. Also some streams of Protestantism have included imaginative visualisation with rosaries, statues and crucifixes among idolatrous expressions of Christianity.



⁵ Philip Sheldrake, 'The Influence of the Ignatian Tradition', *The Way Supplement*, 68 (1990), 80.

However, imagination is a gift from God (though, like most gifts, it can be abused) that may be found in scripture itself, in storytelling—including Jesus' parables—poetry and songs. In addition, some Protestants who seek to use the imagination in sanctified ways find art and the pictorial helpful. The vital place of the sanctified imagination in the Bible and in church history affirms that Ignatius' way in his Exercises is a wonderful gift to the Christian tradition beyond Catholicism and the Jesuits. The imaginative use of senses in gospel contemplation opens the way for the actual use of the senses in prayer and worship.

The traditions of Catholics and others can be used by Methodists without having unquestioningly to embrace every aspect of them. I find that I maintain a readiness to learn, but my Protestant and Methodist view remains in place. I bypass some references to Mary and some other presentations that do not fit in with my view or ways. However, I am prepared to find out more about aspects of spirituality that I might easily have overlooked before, without feeling that I have to view Ignatius in exactly the same way as a Roman Catholic would. I have found that the tradition Ignatian spirituality has forged for itself generally resonates with my own and the wider Christian tradition. We share the use of scripture, the focus on Jesus, the importance of confession and repentance, and the desire to encounter the living Christ. Also there are aspects of Ignatian spirituality that have opened new vistas to me because I have been alert to traditions wider than Methodism.

Experience

Experience is perhaps the main reason why Protestants, including Methodists, embrace aspects of Ignatian spirituality. The Jesus encountered in church, in conversion, through the Bible, in preaching, through service, in prayer of various types and in other ways is experienced with newness in Ignatian gospel contemplation, the Examen and the Ignatian Act of the Presence of God (Exx 75; a practice of 'looking at God looking at you'), all of which build upon and add to what has already been experienced. Ignatian spirituality is an addition that often colours the whole of the Christian experience, but it does not usually operate as a total takeover that requires us to dump our previous learning and leanings. Rather it enables people with a certain style of praying out of their Protestant heritage to pray in new ways which are found to be life-giving and have their effects on service and daily life.



The experience is often of a deeper encounter with Jesus, with scripture being a gateway to actual conversation with Christ. Ignatian spirituality helps people into experiential spiritual expression that does not have to be focused on initial conversion or some other particular life event. It is thus appealing to Methodists and others who have travelled some way down the Christian path and need help, mostly gentle help, in their everyday relationship with God.

For those who long to grow in faith, Ignatian spirituality provides a vocabulary to explain their experience and ways of sifting out God-given and destructive desires. Embracing desire, even if it often needs to be channelled or refined, enables people to realise that their desires can be very helpful in experiencing God. Ignatian-style prayer helps in the process of experiencing sanctification through encounter with God and its outworking in practical living. As sanctification is such an integral part of Wesleyan theology, Ignatian spirituality can readily be incorporated into experiential Christian life for Methodists.

Reason

The use of reason involves examining actions, strategies, theology and experience while asking whether a course of action makes sense in the light of scripture and what builds up in terms of faith expression and

relationships, along with what is helpful, moral, compassionate and just. Sometimes Protestantism gets accused of relying too heavily on reason, resulting in expressions of faith that are unbalanced by too much attention to minor details, by overly intricate formulation and teaching, and by coldness within groups or towards outsiders.

Methodism seldom had this kind of over-emphasis on reason, although Wesley gave it an important place. Rather, early Methodism was accused of extravagant religious emotion or ‘enthusiasm’, a term treated as negative by outsiders (despite meaning having God within). Reflection on spiritual experience cannot rely purely on reason, for such experience is transrational: it goes beyond what can be explained by rational means alone. This does not mean that reason must be excluded, but there are limits to its use in the consideration of phenomena of faith. Reason has a vital place in thinking about our own religious tradition and others, but the way in which reason can limit our openness to God’s ways needs careful consideration.

Ignatius’ rules for discernment display a high degree of reasoning. These rules are helpful to any Christian who thinks carefully about making important decisions, offering valuable ways of considering one’s own life and of helping others. The rigorous self-examination of the First Week of Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises also requires the extensive use of reason—in conjunction with the grace to avoid an unnecessary focus on scruples. Even the Ignatian emphasis on desire is not opposed to reason. For reason is often part of a desire and reasoning is integral to considering our desires, framing them in new or transformed ways and evaluating them.

Bringing reason to bear on how we approach Ignatian spirituality from outside the Catholic fold helps us to see anti-Catholic arguments and sentiments clearly. By using a deliberately evaluative and rational mindset, I have found expressions of devotion and faith in Ignatian spirituality with which I have much in common and from which I learn and gain much. Where I do differ and find it unhelpful to embrace some Ignatian themes, reason helps me to make a distinction without throwing out the whole package. Methodists can remain Methodists while incorporating Ignatian ways and practices. Actually, many who do so become better Methodists. (And this does not only apply to Methodists, of course.) In making such judgments, reason plays a vital role.

Ignatius the Reformer

Ignatius of Loyola continues to have a message beyond the Society of Jesus of which he is the founder and beyond the Roman Catholicism to which he remained loyal, because, though not a Protestant, he was nonetheless a reformer and an innovator. Paradoxically, his message currently has a profound effect on a significant number of people who belong to Protestant groups. His emphasis on the scriptures and on encounter with God, especially through the person of Jesus, means that he had much in common with the Reformation's major themes of scripture, salvation, grace, faith, the centrality of Jesus and relationship with God. These themes are important to my own Methodist tradition, out of which I encountered the Ignatian heritage. It is no surprise that, half a millennium after the beginning of the Reformation, Protestants find common ground with Ignatian spirituality and valuable, even life-changing, input from it. Considering Ignatian spirituality in terms of the Wesleyan quadrilateral of scripture, tradition, reason and experience helps Methodists and others to see how much they have to gain from it. I am glad to have encountered Ignatius through his writings and followers, trusting that this helps me to grow as a Methodist and a follower of Christ.

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ANGLICANS AND IGNATIUS

Nicolas Stebbing

IN 1983, I COMPLETED the three-month course in Apostolic Spirituality at St Beuno's Ignatian Spirituality Centre, hoping thereafter to be able to give individually guided retreats. So it turned out; moreover what I learnt was extraordinary, and the experience of giving retreats and the full Exercises over more than thirty years has been a rich one. How would I sum it up?

I arrived at St Beuno's with quite a small knowledge of Jesuits. How would they deal with me as an Anglican? Would they be steely-eyed fanatics, full of counter-reformation zeal? Would I find Ignatius very different from all I had learnt so far? The answers to these questions were a really pleasant surprise. First of all, the Jesuits were delightful! The team at St Beuno's, led by Gerry W. Hughes, dealt with the ecumenical problem of the presence of three Anglicans by ignoring it. They treated us simply as fellow Christians on a journey with Christ. That was very refreshing. Once or twice a problem arose, but was quickly solved. They and the others on the course showed wonderful acceptance of us and seemed to think we were just as Christian as they were.

The Search for Unity

This way of approaching ecumenism has been immensely important to me. Since 1991 I have been involved with the International Interconfessional Congress of Religious.¹ Every two years we meet as Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants and Anglicans in different religious houses where we simply celebrate the unity we already have as religious. There are usually about sixty of us, embracing different languages and charisms. We

¹ See my 'International Interconfessional Congress of Religious', *One in Christ*, 42/2 (December 2008), 407–410, available at <http://www.oneinchrist.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/INSET-Dec-08-TO-USE.pdf>, accessed 19 August 2017.

pray the offices together. We celebrate the Eucharist together according to our different traditions. There is usually some problem about who can and cannot receive communion, and that tests our charity. Apart from that, we all have our eyes opened to the riches of religious life in other traditions. We form friendships, have a lot of fun and go on our way rejoicing. We make no pronouncements and nor do we discuss much ecumenical theology. We simply live together and pray in the religious life, and that is the contribution we can make to the search for unity.

***We make
friendships,
pray together
and work
together***

The search for unity has, indeed, turned out to be more complicated than we thought it would be in the euphoria after Vatican II. Then it seemed a simple linear progression, as commissions got together, sorted out misunderstandings and restated theology, that would quite quickly evolve a new structure embracing more and more Churches in one Church. This has not happened. The theological commissions have made great progress and are essential to the process, but they only account for one part of it. There is a long history to be dealt with. We have spent 500 years persecuting each other, being rude about each other or ignoring each other. That long history cannot simply be abandoned. The story needs to come together. Hurts must be healed and misunderstandings cleared away. We make friendships, pray together and work together; then slowly we find the Churches moving together, like ships on a great ocean. Will they crash, or simply go on in parallel? Or will they some how learn to join together?

As we found that the theological commissions were going to take much longer than we thought, so it became more important to do nothing apart that we could possibly do together. It is here that Jesuits have made one of their most generous gifts to the ecumenical process. Instead of talking about ecumenism, they have given us the Exercises. Not only did they share this gift with us few Anglicans on the St Beuno's course, but they encouraged us to share it too, with others well outside the Roman Catholic fold. That is practical ecumenism. It has transformed the lives of untold numbers of Anglicans and other kinds of Christians.

Learning to Pray

Such ecumenism has been particularly important in recent years as traditional Anglican structures of prayer have disintegrated. It is easy to idealize the past, but for much of the twentieth century Anglicanism had a spirituality based on sober sacramental life, preached retreats and

regular prayer. It was undramatic, but solid and sustaining. Various influences since then have eroded this spirituality, and prayer has become sentimentalised, influenced by the current secular world in which what matters is what *I* like. Prayer must be a good experience. If it is not then I must give it up, or look for another way of doing it. Individually guided retreats have helped many people rediscover the seriousness of prayer, and that it involves work! They learn that prayer is something that starts from God and is directed to God. It is not all about what makes me feel good. Of course, the personal aspect has a part to play, but Ignatian spirituality gives us a context in which we can create a healthy, balanced diet of prayer.

When I arrived at St Beuno's I expected that the Exercises would include a lot of spiritual square-bashing, since Ignatius was a soldier. Of course, they are not like that at all. As I expect all our readers know, they are a wonderful walk through the life of Christ, with Christ himself showing the way. Doing the Exercises, I found that the Old Testament was not all about a God of violence and retribution, but also about a God of gentleness, tenderness, compassion and love. Doing the Exercises, I found that Christ was a real person who went to parties, wept, laughed, got angry and did wonderful things as well. In fact, I really came to know and love the Bible through the Jesuits—rather a surprise for someone of an Anglican (though not Protestant) tradition.

As a retreat director, I have enjoyed passing this on to others. Anglo-Catholics arrive with clear ideas about a very sacramental Christ, one who dresses up in vestments and is very hierarchical. They are astonished to find a scruffy, peasant Christ; a baby Christ who laughs and cries, and does poos; sometimes even a stroppy, teenage Jesus. Evangelicals doing the Exercises have a lovely relationship with scripture, though some find it a real problem to pray it. Often, so they tell me, they study scripture and do exegesis primarily in order to teach it to others. Using scripture imaginatively in the Ignatian way can be a real adventure beyond exegesis. Curiously, Mary does not often turn out to be a problem. Once they meet her in the stories she takes her rightful place as the Mother of Jesus. One or two have struggled a bit to find her in the Triple Colloquy: a lady Baptist minister told me 'I cannot possibly pray to Mary'. I said, 'Well, just try'. When she came back she said to me, 'That was wonderful. Now I have a friend in heaven who understands me as a woman!'

The Exercises always amaze me. St Ignatius is so clever, so subtle, so penetrating. I am amazed, too, by my retreatants, who seem to do the Exercises so much better than I did. It is very moving to listen to a young priest, with two toddler children waking him up every night, who still manages the morning hour of prayer, or to see a student embracing hours and hours of prayer and discovering depths and riches of God which he had never suspected were there.

There are so many of these moments that reassure me of the presence of the Holy Spirit. One, which never fails, is in the First Week when the retreatant's prayer suddenly breaks down into emptiness and a terrible consciousness of sin. I say, a bit smugly, 'Well, you were praying for shame and confusion, or a deep knowledge of your sin. God has given it to you.' Time and again you find the Spirit really is there.

The Exercises and Justice

At St Beuno's, with Gerry Hughes, we were encouraged to see the Exercises as one of the ways we have of engaging with issues of justice. This was meat and good beer to me: I grew up in Zimbabwe and knew racial injustice at first hand. In the war of independence I was on a mission near St Paul's, Musami. There I visited the Jesuits often, scrounged meals and sometimes a bed off them. We passed each other on our motorbikes as we went to our postings. We shared the same dangers, exchanged gossip and news. And I went to their funeral when they were shot, along with four Dominican Sisters, by an unidentified group of assailants on 6 February 1977. I remember that funeral for its mixture of sorrow and pride—sorrow for the friends we had lost, and a touch of fear for all of us as we faced an increasingly violent future, but pride and thankfulness that we had known such martyrs. These Jesuits and Dominicans had offered themselves to God and the offering was accepted, if not quite in the way intended. I remember being shamed by one of my own African sisters a few weeks later when I despaired of the fighting ever coming to an end: 'Father, do not you believe our friends from Musami are praying for us?', she asked.

In South Africa, we likewise struggled together against apartheid, supporting young white boys who tried to avoid conscription into the regime's armed forces, and encouraging young black people not to throw their lives away in violence, but to find better ways of resisting the evil of apartheid. After independence in both countries the problems of

injustice remain. It no longer has a clear colour code: the greed for money, power and honour infects people of all backgrounds.

Every time I give the Spiritual Exercises, the Two Standards makes a particular impact: the devil offers wealth, honour and power while Jesus offers poverty, dishonour and humility. It is so obvious! This is where all the evil starts and where the Christian cure for it can be found as well. Jesus said it two thousand years ago. He fought the devil on exactly the same terms in the wilderness. Ignatius puts it



The Tempter, by William Blake, 1816–1818

into the Exercises over and over again in one form or another. Yet we go on being taken in by the Enemy of human nature: tyrants in Zimbabwe, black plutocrats in South Africa, mega-rich executives in Europe, the US government led by Donald Trump. Even the Church is infected by it. Do we never learn?

What Is Ignatian?

A group of us have been giving week-long individually guided retreats for years now. Our clientele is very varied: largely Anglican, but from a surprising range of traditions. Some have very odd ideas of Church and God. Is what we give them Ignatian? Mostly, we give them scripture and encourage them to pray in imaginative ways, so that ticks one of the Ignatian boxes. Occasionally, we give them something from the Exercises: the Call of the King and the Two Standards are often appropriate. Sometimes their prayer is just walking the labyrinth or sitting by the fish pond thinking about God.

Perhaps what makes it Ignatian is that all of us giving the retreats have done the Exercises and have that in the background of our minds.

We take seriously Annotation Two, where Ignatius tells us just to outline the prayer matter and not give lots of information—the Holy Spirit can be trusted to do that—and Annotation Fifteen, where Ignatius firmly tells us not to direct the person's life but to leave that to God. Maybe the most Ignatian thing we do is to trust the Holy Spirit of Christ. He is present; he will be there.

And now, of course, we have Francis, the first Jesuit Pope. A Jesuit told me that a groan went round the world when they heard he had been elected, yet what a surprise he has been! A group of us religious brothers and sisters went to Rome: two Anglicans, two Catholics, a Lutheran, a Swiss Reformed and an Orthodox, all come together to listen to a Jesuit Pope. I think Ignatius would have liked that. This really is the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation as we rediscover our Christian life together and pray for the day that we will all be one.

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AN ANGLICAN JOURNEY WITH IGNATIUS

Steffan Mathias

I DID MY TRAINING for the Anglican priesthood at the College of the Resurrection, a seminary in West Yorkshire which is associated with the religious Community of the Resurrection. One of the monks of the community, Nicolas Stebbing, recently took me through the Spiritual Exercises, completing the first two weeks as the Nineteenth Annotation during term time, and the second two weeks as a retreat.

I came to the Exercises having little idea what to expect, so was lucky not to have too many theological prejudgments. There was a huge amount that was life-giving. As someone schooled at different times within both the Evangelical and Catholic wings of the Church of England, I found the experience, in many ways, to be a synthesis of the best of both traditions.

There was the deep encounter, on different levels, with the real person of Jesus, which is the great gift of the Evangelical movement. But in the Exercises this came with a more Catholic focus on the incarnate Jesus and his whole life, beginning in the first exercise with the Trinity looking down in love on the world. It opened parts of the gospel story up, through meditations on the hidden life of the teenage Christ or by engaging with the figure of St Joseph, who is rather forgotten in Anglicanism. This contrasted with the often narrow Protestant focus on Jesus as the atoning sacrifice¹ (*Why did God become man? To die on the cross*), and a tendency to use the Pauline epistles as the source for understanding Jesus, rather than his life in the Gospels.

The emphasis on the beauty of the person of Jesus, his demonstration of love and the experience of his tenderness in the contemplations helped

¹ A common Christmas sermon I encountered as a teenager declared that the nativity and the fun of Christmas did not matter as they were not about satisfying the wrath of God by the cross.



Hell, illumination from a late fifteenth-century manuscript of St Augustine, City of God

to flesh out a spiritual basis for evangelism and the whole understanding of salvation. On the Evangelical side this can be characterized as ‘saving souls from hell’, while on the Catholic side people are often more comfortable talking about liturgy and vestments than evangelism or even—perhaps out of British reserve—about Jesus himself.

That said, there were theological difficulties, and it would be interesting to know how far they are shared by contemporary Catholics (as opposed to those of Ignatius’ time) and how many resulted from my own tradition. Some

of the visceral descriptions of Hell jarred with our tendency to talk about Hell more in the abstract (*Hell is the absence of God ...*). These challenges were there from the first prelude of the first meditation, as I found myself unsure whether Ignatius was suggesting that everyone who lived before Christ was condemned. Similar perplexities arose when Ignatius mentioned the devil, a figure who tends to be excised from Anglican liturgy and preaching. Connected with this was an unease at his describing the enemy as a woman (Exx 325), and with some of the militaristic imagery such as the language of ‘conquer[ing] the land of the infidels’ (Exx 93). In the meditations themselves, however, this kind of imagery was surprisingly easy, and I could begin to understand it through fantasies such as *The Lord of the Rings* or *Game of Thrones*.

There were challenges engaging with contemporary scholarship, especially about scripture, which can make the meditations on Christ’s early life especially difficult, though ultimately persistence led to a greater appreciation of their beauty; there was something lovely in seeing how Ignatius had imagined the piety of Mary (such as the reference to her

home, with its 'oratory', in Exx 220). It is a great relief in the Exercises to leave behind unresolved theological questions: in the Third Week the focus is on Jesus in the passion, as presented in the Gospels, but there is no need to regurgitate the models of atonement we learnt in Introductory Theology.

This means that while current issues preoccupying the Church of England (same-sex relationships, women in the episcopacy, managerial reform, empowerment of the laity) popped up in my mind from time to time, the focus was always centred on Christ. The importance given to imitating Jesus was refreshingly foreign to me; while he is often the focus of worship or of intellectual discussion, or taken as a model for social justice, the question Ignatius seemed to be posing was different: not *How do I become a better Christian?* (as if that were within my own power alone) but *How do I make myself as much like Jesus as possible, in response to my experience of his grace?* And the imitation of Mary in response to the call of God allowed a deeper falling in love with her, suspending some of the questions that an Anglican—even one of Catholic persuasion—might ask about how much devotion to her is appropriate.

One of the biggest culture shocks for me came in appreciating the primacy of grace in my own understanding of salvation, a definite inheritance from the reformed tradition, when I read, for example, Exx 369: 'we ought not to speak so lengthily and emphatically about grace ...'. I experienced a negotiation during the Exercises between, on the one hand, entering into them as fully as Ignatius had intended and, on the other, feeling the need to defend some of the fruits of the Reformation, such as salvation being entirely by the merits of Christ through free gift. At times it felt, especially in the First Week, that salvation was contingent on my being sorry enough. This connected elsewhere with suggestions about penance 'making satisfaction for past sin', which seemed foreign to the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and to the great declaration in the Anglican prayerbook of Christ's 'full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world'.

This came out again during the Third Week, when I found myself being asked to suffer with Christ, having been formed in an Evangelical tradition according to which Christ has suffered so that we do not have to. By the end of the Exercises, however, I began to see my hesitation

as rooted in a rather ‘cheap’ understanding of grace: a grace in which everything is given and nothing asked, in contrast to the joy that comes from offering everything to Christ and the specific sense of Christ as the one to be imitated, the one who has loved me greatly and calls me to love him in return, even if this love is costly.²

As the Exercises progressed I began to wonder what parts of my theology were Anglican, Reformed, Evangelical or Catholic, and how far I simply baulked at the suggestion that we are created solely to serve God, or that our sin goes deeper than the things we do. One lasting consequence of this seems to be that I now engage with the penitential parts of the liturgy more readily, yet the process of contrition conversely brings more joy than I thought was possible.

One of the biggest challenges of the Exercises for me as an Anglican was, surprisingly, not theological but institutional. The general model of vocation to the priesthood in the Church of England consists of an intense period of discernment of a call; followed by three years of training; then a curacy agreed in negotiation with the diocese, with a £24,500 per annum stipend (I realise this may risk inducing some envy in Roman Catholic clergy) and free accommodation (frequently, for unmarried curates, with enough spare bedrooms to make an extra £1,000 a month).

So much of our Church’s discernment of vocation is focused on our call from God (*Is it I, Lord?* accompanied by a modest blush), that there is surprisingly little emphasis on sacrifice, on giving yourself to the Church, on being sent or on compromising your own goals. This began to create tensions as Ignatius repeatedly asked what you can give for Christ, pushing you to pray, ultimately, for poverty. Connected to this, institutionally there is relatively little room in the Church of England for different forms of vocation, aside from joining one of the few monastic communities or supporting yourself in a ministry through secular employment. There is no equivalent in form or charism to an order such as the Jesuits, in which you can be ‘sent’, you give up autonomy, you pool stipends to support more clergy, or exercise priestly ministry outside the role of ‘priest-in-charge’ of a parish or a chaplain.

² I am thinking here of Bonhoeffer’s understanding of ‘cheap grace’: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, translated by R. H. Fuller (London: SCM, 2015 [1959; German 1937]), 4–5.

I came to the realisation that the Anglican model not only does not aid in imitating Jesus, but can actively work against it, as you become content that the zenith of following Christ, the great sacrifice of ministry, is accepting the stipend and the house but in a slightly less appealing postcode. It is one of the enduring challenges that I will take away from the Election that the question of my vocation has shifted from *Am I called to be a priest?* to *What kind of priest am I called to be? What am I to do with the resources I have been given? What sacrifices of my money, time and status might God be asking in order to do something wonderful? How can I think creatively about living out my calling differently?*

To conclude: I have preached a couple of times since completing the Exercises and I have led a Lenten quiet day. I have felt a shift in my preaching priorities away from a kind of didactic model of what I feel the people need to know about the scripture, or the season, or the world, to a model where I pray with a passage, and the focus is on meeting the person of Christ. In this, the gift of Ignatian spirituality has been a kind of beautiful humility: the words of the sermon are not only about the people I am addressing meeting Christ but also about my meeting Christ with them. In offering Christians the opportunity to meet Jesus, and to help others meet him, Ignatian spirituality is a huge gift to all denominations. It takes you back to encounter Jesus as he walked in Galilee, before the various divisions within my own Church came into being, let alone those between different Churches; it allows



you to meet him without the label of 'Anglican', 'Methodist' or 'Roman Catholic', simply together as followers of Christ, in the presence of the one who calls us to be one.

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‘CONSIDERATION’ IN ENGLISH REFORMATION SPIRITUALITY

**Robert Persons’s *Book of Resolution and
Christian Directorie* (1582–1585)**

Victor Houliston

AT THE VERY BEGINNING of Shakespeare’s *King Henry V*, the archbishop of Canterbury describes Prince Hal’s transformation from tavern wastrel to responsible monarch:

The breath no sooner left his father’s body,
But that his wildness, mortified in him,
Seem’d to die too; yea, at that very moment
Consideration, like an angel, came
And whipp’d the offending Adam out of him,
Leaving his body as a paradise¹

The agent of this ‘reformation’, or conversion, or amendment of life, is ‘consideration’, an angel who reverses the Fall. Instead of expelling Adam and Eve from Eden, this angel drives the old Adam out of Prince Hal and restores him to original innocence.

As a word with many shades of meaning, ‘consideration’ provides a fascinating glimpse into the development of a vocabulary of devotion, for both Protestants and Catholics, in Reformation-era England.² The idea was extensively treated in the twelfth century by St Bernard of Clairvaux, who was a major influence on many reformers.³ Not surprisingly, then, the word is prominent in the King James version of the Bible (1611), John

¹ *King Henry V*, I.i. 25–30.

² I gratefully acknowledge my debt to Professor Susannah Breitzi Monta for this insight, and for the later reference to William Perkins.

³ See A. N. S. Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux* (Princeton: Princeton Theological College, 1996).



Donne's sermons (1615–1631), and Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* (1650) and *Holy Dying* (1651), and is the focus of several chapters in William Perkins's *Treatise of Mans Imaginations* (1607).⁴

It is also central to the Jesuit Robert Persons's *First Booke of the Christian Exercise, Appertayning to Resolution* (1582), known as the *Book of Resolution*, which was revised as *A Christian Directorie* (1585).⁵

The word 'consideration' may originate with the Latin noun *sidus*, a constellation. The verb *desidero* meant, at first, to look in vain for a constellation; hence to feel loss and desire.⁶ By analogy, *considero* might mean to bring a constellation into view and so to bring a consideration into the picture, transforming the prospect. Thus to 'consider' would

mean to add a new element to one's perspective: this is how John Donne (1572–1631) used it in a sermon preached in about 1624–1625: we start with one proposition (God's judgment—likely to lead to despair), but then we add another (God's loving purposes in judgment) and so the *con*-sideration of the two will make us rejoice.⁷ We see here a further aspect: the probing to a deeper level, an understanding beyond the immediate, which also brings to mind the idea of a constellation that was formerly obscured coming into view.

One of the most striking contemporary applications of the word was made in a widely read work by the English Jesuit Robert Persons (1546–1610). He is best known as the ever-industrious director of the Jesuit mission to England, the founder of English colleges in Valladolid,

⁴ See J. H. Walter's discussion of the passage in his Arden edition of *King Henry V* (London: Methuen, 1954), xvii–xxi.

⁵ *The First Booke of the Christian Exercise, Appertayning to Resolution* (Rouen: Fr Persons' Press, 1582), hereafter referred to as the *Book of Resolution*; and *A Christian Directorie Guiding Men to Their Salvation* (Rouen: Fr Persons' Press, 1585), referred to as *A Christian Directorie*. In quotations, punctuation and spelling have been modernised.

⁶ Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), s.v. *considero* and *desidero*.

⁷ *The Sermons of John Donne*, edited by Evelyn M. Simpson and George R. Potter, 10 volumes (Berkeley: U. of California P, 1953), volume 9, 408.

Seville and St Omer, and an unashamed promoter of schemes to overthrow the Elizabethan government by force. In his day, he was also renowned for his book of devotion, the *Book of Resolution*, first published after his flight from England and the execution of his missionary partner Edmund Campion (1540–1581).

Its rapid success prompted a Protestant minister, Edmund Bunny (1540–1618), to produce a London edition (1584) that was safe for Protestants to read.⁸ Persons duly expanded and republished it in 1585, with the new title, *A Christian Directorie*. Over thirty Protestant and Catholic editions were printed during the rest of Shakespeare’s lifetime. I do not claim that Shakespeare was alluding to the book, although it is quite possible that he knew it, especially if he had met Campion in Lancashire in 1580, as is sometimes averred.⁹ My purpose, rather, is to analyze how Persons’s use of the term ‘consideration’ evolved in the revision process and how it both reflected and challenged alternative applications, especially among Protestant readers and writers. What might this tell us about the inflection of Ignatian spirituality in the English mission?

The Book of Resolution (1582)

The *Book of Resolution* seeks to bring its readers to a state of resolution in the ‘true and zealous service of God’ (148). What is required is ‘consideration’:

We believe in gross the mysteries of our Christian faith: as, that there is a hell, a heaven, a reward for virtue, a punishment for vice, a judgement to come, an account to be made, and the like: but, for that we chew them not well by deep consideration, nor do not digest them well in our hearts, by the heat of meditation, they help us little to good life, no more than a preservative put in a man’s pocket can help his health Consideration is the key which openeth the door to the closet of our heart, where all our books of account do lie. It is the looking-glass, or rather the very eye of our soul, whereby she seeth her self, and looketh into all her whole estate, her riches, her debts, her duties, her negligences, her good gifts, her defects, her

⁸ Edmund Bunny, *A Booke of Christian Exercise, Appertaining to Resolution, That Is Shewing How That We Should Resolve Our Selves to Become Christians in Deed* (London: N. Newton and A. Hatfield, for John Wight, 1584).

⁹ See Gerard Kilroy, *Edmund Campion: A Scholarly Life* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 355–357.

safety, her danger, her way she walketh in, her pace she holdeth, and finally, the place and end which she draweth unto. (18–20)

Such a notion chimed with the purposes and methods of the Jesuit English mission itself: to encourage and instruct lay Catholics in the practice of their faith, to convert heretics and to draw wavering or conforming Catholics back to resolute allegiance to Rome. Persons's *Book of Resolution* would take the place of a Jesuit priest in directing a lay person. Its argument followed the contours of the first week of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola: the purpose for which we were created, the account we must render, the day of judgment, and the rewards and punishments of heaven and hell. Persons then dealt with factors that might inhibit people from making their resolution despite these overwhelming considerations.

Like the *Spiritual Exercises*, the *Book of Resolution* offers to establish the exercitant in the service of God. Persons himself had turned to a new life when he made the Exercises in Louvain in 1574, 'which', he testified, 'did move me so much as to leave the world and enter into religion', adding, more mundanely, 'or at leastwise to change my studies of Physick into Divinity'.¹⁰ Consideration, in a strictly Ignatian sense, enables a choice of life, beginning with the meditation on the Two Standards of Jesus and Satan; later we are invited to reflect, like Persons's reader, on the end for which a person is created.¹¹

A contemporary Jesuit, Melchor de Villaneuva (1547–1606), developed the distinctions between consideration and other forms of reflection.¹² But Persons avoided technical terms such as 'motions', and 'consolation' and 'discernment', so his work had less of a Jesuit stamp than might have been expected. For ways of presenting his considerations, he turned to the popular Dominican writer Luis de Granada (1505–1588), drawing on material chiefly from his *Sinner's Guide*.¹³ The force of Persons's

¹⁰ 'The Memoirs of Father Robert Persons', in *Catholic Record Society: Miscellanea II* (London: privately printed, 1906), 23.

¹¹ Exx 135–36, 169; Exx 135 has *considerar* in Spanish, *considerationem* in Latin; Exx 169 uses *mirando* in Spanish and *spectemus* in Latin.

¹² *Libro de la oración mental* (Toledo: Piero Rodriguez, 1608); see Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (Chicago: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1964), 272–273.

¹³ Luis de Granada, *The Sinner's Guide*, translator unknown (Philadelphia: Eugene Cummiskey, 1883); Spanish original, Luis de Granada, *Guía de pecadores* (Lisbon: João Blávio, 1556). For a list of borrowings, see *The Christian Directory* (1582): *The First Booke of the Christian Exercise, Appertayning to Resolution*, edited by Victor Houlston (Leiden: Brill, 1998), appendix 3, 393–394.

rhetoric, which drew many admirers and was a significant factor in the success of the work, was much indebted to de Granada though it went beyond him. It represented a fusion of Ignatian and Dominican elements.

Consideration, in this context, takes the form of an overpowering persuasion: that is, a particular motive that compels the reader to act. An excellent example is the amplification of the *memento mori* theme, conventional in meaning but enforced by a personal application of a particularly intimate and engaging kind:

Imagine then (my friend), thou, I say, which art so fresh and frolic at this day, that the ten, twenty, or two years, or perhaps two months, which thou has yet to live, were now ended, and that thou were even at this present stretched out upon a bed, wearied and worn with dolour and pain, thy carnal friends about thee weeping and howling, the physicians departed with their fees, as having given thee over, and thou lying there alone mute and dumb in most pitiful agony, expecting from moment to moment the last stroke of death to be given thee. Tell me: in this instant, what would all the pleasures and commodities of this world do thee good? What comfort would it be to thee, to have been of honour in this world, to have been rich and purchased much, to have borne office, and been in the prince's favour? to have left thy children or kindred wealthy, to have trodden down thine enemies, to have stirred much, and borne great sway in this life? What ease (I say) or comfort would it be to thee, to have been fair, to have been gallant in apparel, goodly in personage, glittering in gold? Would not all these things rather afflict than profit thee at this instant? For now shouldst thou see the vanity of these trifles: now would thy heart begin to say within thee: O folly and unfortunate blindness of mine! Lo, here is an end now of all my delights and prosperities: all my joys, all my pleasures, all my mirth, all my pastimes are now finished Oh that I had lived so virtuously as some other[s] have done, or as I had often inspirations from God to do: or that I had done the good deeds I might have done: how sweet and comfortable would they be to me now in this my last, and extremest distress? (114–116)

If we compare this with the source passage in *The Sinner's Guide*, we see how all that is implicit in Luis de Granada is made explicit; all that is brought to mind is dramatized in an imaginary scene and a dialogue with the self. De Granada writes:

Bear in mind, therefore, that you are a man and a Christian. As man, you must die; as a Christian, you must, immediately after death, render an account of your life A time will come, and you know not

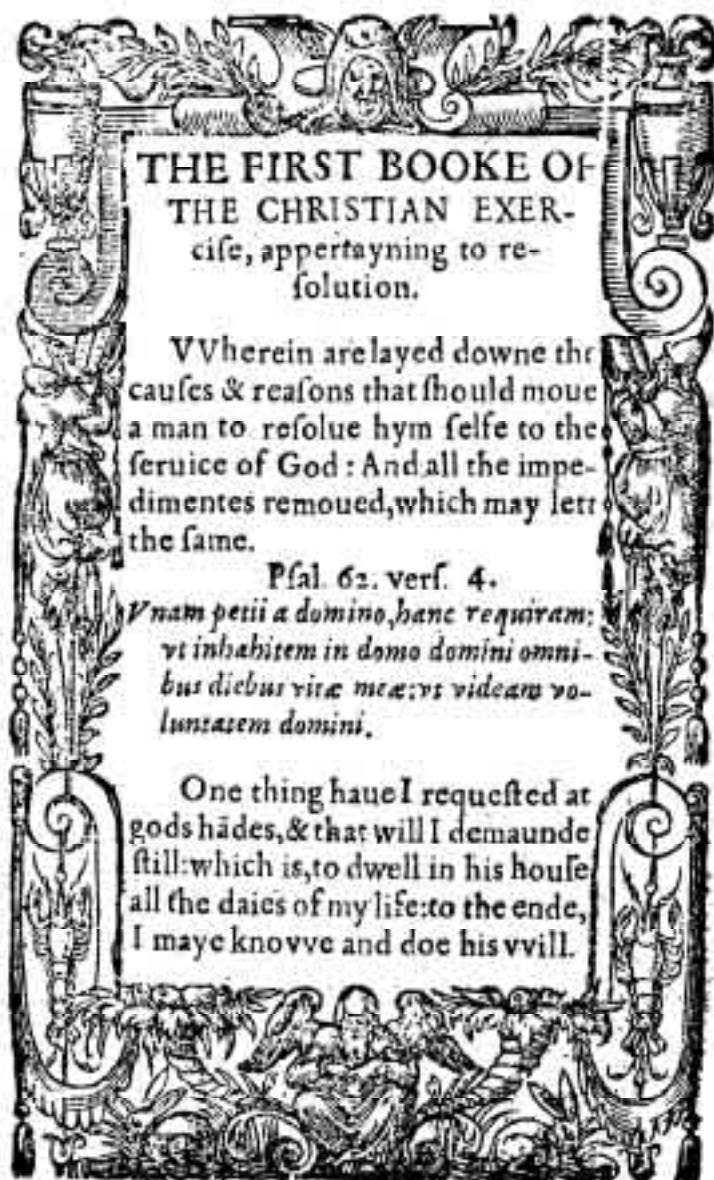
whether it be this present day or tomorrow, when you who are now reading my words, in perfect health and in full possession of all your faculties, will find yourself stretched upon a bed of death, a lighted taper in your hand, awaiting the sentence pronounced against mankind—a sentence which admits neither delay nor appeal Who can express the anguish of the moment when the severity of the sickness, or the declaration of the physician, undeceives us and robs us of all hope of life? The parting from all we hold dear then begins to rise before us. Wife, children, friends, relations, honors, riches are fast passing, with life, from our feeble grasp¹⁴

There is nothing in Persons's version that is not familiar, but it is animated and heightened by the rhetoric of consideration, which works by the simple but powerful juxtaposition of seeing and judging, vision and resolution. Consideration begins as a reasonable, discreet and circumspect disposition (113–114), but is galvanized into a driving force, worked up to a pitch of realisable intensity. Linguistically, all the objects of consideration have become vivid and immediate, rather than general and abstract; rhetorically, there is a move from invention to elocution, from commonplace to eloquence; psychologically, the text moves from apprehension to will. On the one hand, it corresponds roughly to the Ignatian 'composition of place', which appeals to the memory, understanding and will in turn; on the other, it appropriates the direct and compelling tone of the Dominican preacher.

The connection with Luis de Granada partly explains the popularity of the *Book of Resolution*. English Protestants were not yet familiar with de Granada's works, but from the 1580s onward translations appeared in abundance. They did not only circulate in subversive Catholic editions, but were printed by several London stationers for the general market. Alexandra Walsham argues that they contributed to 'the parallel programmes of evangelical conversion and moral renewal' that characterized the Protestant and Catholic reformations.¹⁵ Persons himself reached out to Protestant readers, inviting them to put aside differences and join in amendment of life (4). Even Puritans could make common cause.

¹⁴ De Granada, *Sinner's Guide*, 77–78.

¹⁵ Alexandra Walsham, 'Luis De Granada's Mission to Protestant England: Translating the Devotional Literature of the Spanish Counter-Reformation', in *Publishing Subversive Texts in Elizabethan England and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*, edited by Teresa Bela, Clarinda Calma and Jolanta Rzegocka (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 129–154, here 130.



Title page of the Book of Resolution (1582)

Consequently, Edmund Bunny had very little work to do, in fact, in adapting the *Book of Resolution* for Protestant readers, and the leading Puritan Richard Baxter (1615–1691) found it very congenial.¹⁶ After reading the *Book of Resolution*, Baxter registered the effect of Persons's rhetoric of consideration: 'the same things which I knew before came now in another manner, with Light, and Sense, and Seriousness to my Heart'.¹⁷ Catholic readers reacted similarly: 'As the instrument of my conversion [the divine mercy] laid before me the book of Resolution, written by Father Persons of happy memory. When I had read it, a certain marvellous light appeared to me', wrote Thomas Poulton in 1613, confirming the power of the rhetoric: 'Tears streamed down from my eyes for several days. The tremendous judgment of God sounded continuously in my ears.'¹⁸

A Christian Directorie (1585)

Persons undertook the revision of the *Book of Resolution* in 1584 under politically fraught circumstances. At the time, he was resident in the Jesuit professed house in Paris, where the superior was Claude Matthieu, former Provincial of France, close associate of the Duke of Guise and an enthusiastic partisan of the Catholic League. Plans were eagerly being discussed for an invasion of England.

It was not the moment for Persons to discover that his *Book of Resolution* had been repackaged for Protestants. He had already completed his revision, *A Christian Directorie*, but had not yet printed it, when he realised what Bunny had done. In response, he inserted a 'detection of the foule and false dealing of M. Edm. Buny Minister' into the preface, and waged ferocious battle with his adversary in the sidenotes. Yet the new version already had a much clearer Catholic identity. For example, it contained a new chapter on 'Examples of True Resolution', which echoed the reports of contemporary persecution to be found in his own *De persecutione Anglicana, epistola* (Rouen: George Flinton, 1581/2) and in much of his correspondence. *A Christian Directorie* thus became a

¹⁶ Brad S. Gregory, 'The "True and Zealouse Service of God": Robert Parsons, Edmund Bunny, and *The First Booke of the Christian Exercise*', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 45/2 (1994), 238–268.

¹⁷ Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (London: T. Parkhurst, J. Robinson, F. Lawrence and F. Dunton, 1696), 3.

¹⁸ *The Responsa Scholarum of the English College, Rome*, edited by Anthony Kenny, Catholic Record Society 54–55, 2 volumes (Bromley: CRS, 1962–1963), volume 1, 234 (my translation).

mainstay of English Catholic piety over the next decade. In some respects, indeed, the new version was calmer, more measured and reflective than the *Book of Resolution*. In it, the treatment of ‘consideration’ took a significant turn.

Distancing himself from the common ground with Protestants, Persons now went beyond urging the reader to a change of life—a *metanoia*—and envisaged a steady, disciplined approach to the practice of Catholic piety under difficult circumstances. He thus adapted the term ‘consideration’ to apply to long-term, regular lay Catholic devotion, of a generally Ignatian cast, loosely corresponding to the practice of the Nineteenth Annotation, in which the Spiritual Exercises are adapted to ‘a person who is involved in public affairs or pressing occupations but educated or intelligent’, and made available to all (Exx 19). Accordingly, *A Christian Directorie* offered two programmes of meditation: ten days of recreative reading for times of weariness and passivity, and two weeks of purposeful reading designed to stir up the affections and move one to action.¹⁹ This change did not reverse the move from thinking to feeling and action, but encouraged a dynamic of mutual reinforcement, where the feelings and actions of one day might be shaped by consideration, and the next day’s consideration informed by the feelings and actions of the day before.

***A steady,
disciplined
approach to the
practice of
Catholic piety***

Consideration was presented here as a settled attitude of mind, a resolute and daily discipline, to whatever business the reader had to attend. *A Christian Directorie* devoted a full chapter to consideration, referring extensively to St Bernard. In *De consideratione*, Bernard wrote:

[Consideration] ... purifies the very fountain, that is the mind, from which it springs. Then it governs the affections, directs our actions, corrects excesses, softens the manners, adorns and regulates the life, and, lastly, bestows the knowledge of things divine and human alike. It is consideration that brings order out of disorder, puts in the links, pulls things together, investigates mysteries, traces the truth, weighs probabilities, exposes shams and counterfeits. It is consideration which arranges beforehand what is to be done, and ponders what is accomplished, so that nothing faulty, or needing correction, may settle in the mind.²⁰

¹⁹ *A Christian Directorie*, 21–22, and the unpaginated section, ‘A Breefe Methode’, at the very end of the book.

²⁰ St Bernard of Clairvaux, *Saint Bernard on Consideration*, translated by George Lewis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908), 26–27.

Here, consideration is a faithful companion to action, qualifying every deed.

Again, Protestants were not slow to appropriate the meaning. The Puritan preacher William Perkins (1558–1602) carefully distinguished ‘*Spiritual consideration* ... from earthly plotting care, whereby natural men shew themselves wise and provident for the things of this life’. He defined it as ‘any action of the minde renewed and sanctified, whereby it doth seriously think on those things which may further saluation’.²¹ The Anglican divine Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667) chiefly used the term to mean something that should be taken into account at every moment of the day; for example, when seeking purity of intention, we should consider ‘that *this exercise* is of so universal efficacy in the whole course of a holy life, that it is like the *soul to every holy action*, and must be provided for in every undertaking’.²² What is said here specifically of purity of intention also applies to consideration more generally, as imparting a particular spiritual quality to all action.

But Persons was being papist rather than ecumenical. Bernard had been writing for the benefit of Pope Eugenius III (reigned 1145–1153), trying to ensure that the newly appointed pope, a former pupil and neophyte, would not lose his Cistercian vision in the mundane tasks of papal administration. Now Pope Gregory XIII (reigned 1572–1585), whom Persons knew personally, had Bernard’s treatise read to him at table, no doubt for similar reasons.²³

The form of meditation prescribed by the *Christian Directorie* was not, however, the same as that practised in the English monasteries and convents that were beginning to emerge at this time of Benedictine renewal. Persons’s own niece, Mary, became a Benedictine nun, and he played an important role in nurturing and guiding the English Bridgettines, some of whom may have been at Lyford Grange when Campion was taken there in 1581.²⁴ Whatever practice of consideration and whatever particular considerations moved them, these nuns and monks cultivated a more contemplative mode. Bernard himself distinguished consideration from contemplation:

²¹ William Perkins, *A Treatise of Mans Imaginations*, edited by Thomas Pierson (Cambridge: John Legat, 1607), 191–192.

²² Jeremy Taylor, *The Rules and Exercises of Holy Living* (Oxford: Parker, 1886), 25 (chapter 1, section 2).

²³ A Priest of Mount Melleray, ‘Introduction’, *St Bernard’s Treatise on Consideration* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1921), viii–ix.

²⁴ Kilroy, *Edmund Campion*, 217–218.

The latter is concerned with the certainty of things, the former more fitly with their investigation. Accordingly, contemplation may be defined as the soul’s true unerring intuition, or as the unhesitating apprehension of truth. But consideration is thought earnestly directed to research, or the application of the mind to the search for truth; though in practice the two terms are indifferently used for one another.²⁵

By consideration (‘thought earnestly directed to research’), Bernard means asking searching questions about oneself—about what is above, below and around one—as well as self-examination. To put it in Persons’s terms, this is a process required not just at the outset, but throughout the life of resolution.

Bernard’s distinction was to be echoed by Augustine Baker (1575–1641), mentor to the English nuns at Cambrai. He characterized two kinds of devout people. The first have a,



St Bernard of Clairvaux in chapter, from Jean Fouquet, Les Heures d’Étienne Chevalier, fifteenth century

²⁵ St Bernard’s *Treatise on Consideration*, 41.

... propension ... of such a nature that it inclines them much to busy their imagination and to frame in their minds motives to the divine love by internal discourse, so that without such reasoning and use of images they can seldom with any efficacy raise or fix their affections on God. Such dispositions are not patient of much solitude or recollection more than shall be necessary to enable them to produce and maintain a right intention in outward doings and works of charity, to which they are powerfully inclined

This might almost be a caricature of Persons's resolved reader, leading a life of consideration. Still, Baker recognises the 'vigour' of such people's devotion. Of vigour Persons possessed a great deal, and he was filled by a great desire to instil it in others. Baker wrote that devout people of the second kind,

... seek rather to purify themselves and inflame their hearts in the love of God by internal, quiet and pure actuations in spirit, by a total abstraction from creatures, by solitude, both external and internal, so disposing themselves to receive the influxes and inspirations of God.²⁶

We may detect here some traces of the tension between the Jesuit mission and the growing Benedictine enterprise.

The Angel of Consideration

As a man of action and intrigue, Persons became a target of John Donne's critique, both in *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610) and *Ignatius His Conclave* (1611). Donne accused him of trying to lure Catholics into pointless self-sacrifice. And yet Donne, too, had absorbed something close to Persons's view of consideration. He had family connections with the Jesuits, so it is plausible that he read one of the versions of Persons's work during his period of religious enquiry and decision-making in the 1590s. He would most likely also have been familiar with Shakespeare's *King Henry V* (c.1595).

In a sermon preached on All Saints' Day 1623, he effectively brought together Shakespeare's swift and violent angel of consideration with Persons's circumspection, in the figure of the angel of Revelation 7:2–3.²⁷

²⁶ Augustine Baker, *Sancta Sophia, or, Directions for the Prayer of Contemplation* (Douai: John Patte and Thomas Fievet, 1657), 13.

²⁷ 'I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, saying,



The angel from the east, Queen Mary Apocalypse, early fourteenth century

According to this text, the angel comes from the east, bringing protection and salvation. It goes further even than God, who merely invites us to repent: it drives us towards a vigorous taking hold of the means of salvation.

This Angel's Commission determines ... That we be taken from the Common, into God's inclosures, impayled in his Park, received into his church, where our salvation depends upon the good use of those means God compels no man. The Master of the feast invited many; solemnly, before hand; they came not ... he sends a servant to compel some to come in. But that was but a servants work, the Master only invited; he compelled none.

But the angel also works from within, using our consideration, the best part of us, that reasonable process by which we consider the end for which we were made:

Let us therefore looke first to that which is best in us naturally, that is, Reason; for if we lose that, our Reason, our Discourse, our

“Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads”.

Consideration, and sinke into an incapable and barren stupidity, there is no footing, no subsistence for grace.²⁸

Donne might well have been thinking in this sermon of the conversion of St Augustine. Persons quoted and paraphrased the *Confessions* at length in the *Book of Resolution* (228–237) to register the struggle that so many have in making their resolution:

How I did beat and whip my own soul, to make her follow thee? ... What is this? what suffer we under the tyranny of sin? unlearned men ... do take heaven by violence: and we with all our learning, without hearts, behold how we lie grovelling in flesh and blood!²⁹

He understood that violence must be used at the beginning; for his part, Donne was so aware of this that he famously called upon the Holy Trinity to ‘batter my heart’.³⁰

Persons, Shakespeare and Donne come very close to allegorizing ‘consideration’—as an angel or, in the *Book of Resolution*, as a looking-glass. The effect is to treat it as a clearly distinguishable agent of change or source of energy. If violence is needed at the beginning of conversion, it will require an intense focusing of energy, derived from consideration. We have, as it were, to give ourselves over to the angel, or behold ourselves quietly and steadfastly in the looking-glass, if we are to bring that power into our lives.

Persons’s *Book of Resolution* introduces us to the life-transforming action of consideration; his *Christian Directorie* establishes it as a sustained, life-long occupation. Elaborating the concept in the latter work, he accumulates his metaphors into an irresistible force:

It is the watch or alarm-bell, that stirreth up and awaketh all the powers of our mind; the match or tinder, that conceiveth and nourisheth the fire of devotion; the bellows that enkindleth and inflameth the same; the spur that pricketh forward to all virtuous, zealous, and heroical acts; and the thing indeed, that giveth both light, and life, and motion to our soul. (15)

²⁸ John Donne, ‘A Sermon Preached upon All Saints’ Day’, in *The Sermons of John Donne*, edited by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson, volume 10 (Berkeley: U. of California P, 1962), 63, 46.

²⁹ Persons, *Book of Resolution*, 230, quoting Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.7.18.

³⁰ John Donne, ‘Batter my heart, three person’d God’, in *The Complete English Poems*, edited by A. J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1996), 314. This is variously numbered as Holy Sonnet 14 and Holy Sonnet 10.

The succession of images here suggests not just one overpowering assault, but a continuous pressure.

The New Cambridge edition of *King Henry V* glosses ‘consideration’ rather perfunctorily as ‘(1) spiritual contemplation, (2) careful thought’.³¹ As I have tried to show, it is a word and a concept of much stronger definition and purchase in early modern religious discourse. From the forceful effect of dwelling on the purpose of life and the account we must render, to the infusion of daily life with a regular recurrence of these themes, Persons’s use of the term enriches the lexicon of early modern English devotional language. It registers both the overlap and the distinction between his vision of the Christian vocation and the aspirations of the seculars, the monks and nuns, the Puritans and King James’s preachers.

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³¹ William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, edited by Andrew Gurr, rev. edn (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 81.

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GOD'S 'PLAN B'

The Spiritual Exercises through the Eyes of a Lutheran

Jānis Vanags

MY WAY IN THE Lutheran Church of Latvia started in the mid 1980s. As a young teacher of chemistry I was secretly baptized in an old village church, but the authorities found out and I was fired. This episode was typical of the life of the Church in the Soviet Union: spreading religious literature was a crime. Christian books were illegally sold on certain days in a forest near Riga, and there I got my first copy of the *Spiritual Exercises*. It was a Russian samizdat—a secretly photocopied book (we did not care about copyright back then). One of my Roman Catholic friends, a young engineer—now the archbishop metropolitan of Riga—had told me that the Exercises were a marvellous instrument for making committed Christians. I opened the book in anticipation of a life-changing spiritual experience. Alas, it did not make any sense to me. I did not know that the Exercises are not done by reading the book.

The experience I was looking for came much later, in 2010, after twenty years as a bishop. The Ignatian term 'election' was not yet familiar to me, but I had to make an important decision about my life and was searching for a time and place to do so. The Soviet Union had vanished, and the whole world was open to me. Online searches brought me all the way to Melbourne in Australia—to the website of the Jesuit College of Spirituality. They advised me to try Loyola Hall in Rainhill, UK. I applied for the thirty-day retreat and was accepted. For some reason these wonderful people admitted me to the full Exercises with no prior experience of guided retreats. Perhaps the team was intrigued to see a female archbishop, as they thought, from a post-Soviet Lutheran Church (it took a couple of e-mails and my bearded photo to prove that I am a man although my name is Janis). Thus Loyola Hall became my second spiritual birthplace.

Latvia and the Reformation

In Latvia Ignatian spirituality is not the most natural way for a Lutheran bishop. Painful memories of Counter-Reformation struggles are still alive. Riga, now the capital of Latvia, was arguably the very first city on the planet officially to accept the Reformation, by a decision of the city council to appoint a reforming archdeacon in 1522. Eventually it became the centre of Lutheranism in the entire Baltic region. Quite early the Lutheran Church also took root in the duchy of Courland and Semigallia, and other parts of what is now Latvia. But in 1582, after the Livonian war, the land came under the rule of King Stefan Batory of Poland. He insisted that, by means of the war, he had acquired Livonia as *tamquam tabulam rasam* (a clean slate) and could use his royal authority *ad extirpandas haereses et fidem catholicam plantandam*—to eradicate heresies (that is, Lutheranism) and plant the Catholic faith.

Antonio Possevino—a papal legate and the first Jesuit on Latvian soil—urged the king to take a resolute action. Possevino also set up a Jesuit college in Riga, which was founded in 1584. Batory was reluctant to countenance the use of force in religious matters. He chose Jesuit missions as the tool for his enterprise, which was an undeniable success.



King Stefan Batory, by Marcina Kobera, 1586

Despite the exceptionally good relationship between Catholics and Lutherans in Latvia nowadays, the meme of a Jesuit as the cunning adversary of the evangelical faith still lingers in the memory of many Lutherans. I keep hearing questions such as: *Do you not ask yourself why Jesuits are supporting your training and retreats? What is their sneaky, underhand plan with you? Can anything good come from Ignatius Loyola? Is it possible to reconcile his Exercises with a Lutheran identity?* All I can do in response is to share my experience.

Making the Spiritual Exercises as a Lutheran

Ignatius remained a faithful son of the Roman Catholic Church, and we cannot expect his *Spiritual Exercises* to be a textbook of Lutheran dogmatics. It contains statements that are scarcely compatible with Lutheran doctrine. It is surprising, though, how little of an obstacle these are to a Lutheran in benefitting from the Exercises. Most of the problematic texts do not belong to the material of the four Weeks but to the Annotations and supplements. The most conspicuous is the section known as Rules for Thinking, Judging and Feeling with the Church (Exx 352–370), which was intentionally written to draw a line between Roman Catholic and Lutheran positions on some matters of dispute. Michael Ivens writes:

The rules must be read in an awareness of their purpose and essential method. Their purpose is to inculcate in the exercitant and provide norms for recognizing in others, a *sentido*, or fundamental ecclesial attitude, and Ignatius achieves this mainly by illustrating how such a *sentido* will express itself in relation to certain contentious issues especially alive in the age of the Reformation [These rules commend particularly 'those things which the heretics of our time, or those showing affinity to their doctrine, are prone to attack or scorn in their books or sermons or conversations'].

Ivens notes, however, that 'for all their defensiveness of purpose, the rules bear no trace of the acrimony that was a dominant trait of theological controversy at the time of Ignatius'.¹

Much thought has been given to whether these rules should be proposed to exercitants in the course of the Exercises. They were not given to me. The *Directories* insist that the rules should be given not as a matter of course but only to those who need them—that is to say, if the exercitant's relationship with the Church emerges in the Exercises as an issue integral to the processes of conversion or election.² If these rules are proposed, the question arises as to whether they should be given in their original form with some commentary, or in an adapted form which retains Ignatius' main points but omits some details or adjusts them to the present situation. Probably Lutherans will have to replace them with their

¹ Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2008), 248, 249, quoting Dir 20.

² Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 250.

own guidelines. This will be a task for the emerging generation of Latvian Lutheran retreat directors. Or perhaps the Rules can be rewritten jointly with our Roman Catholic partners, taking into account the achievements of ecumenical dialogue. That would be a stimulating enterprise which might deepen common understanding and promote Christian unity.

Another issue that is questionable for Lutherans is found in the Annotations. It is the notion that human efforts are a merit which is even greater when achieved in the state of perfection, that is, by professed religious (Exx 14). Reformers have explicitly rejected these beliefs. However, Lutheran exercitants can disregard these annotations with no harm to their Exercises.

A more substantial snag which a Lutheran encounters during the Four Weeks comes with the Triple Colloquy, in which the exercitant has to turn to our Lord's mother. Authentic Lutherans do not share the allergic attitude to Mary that some Protestants have. Till the end of his days, Luther retained his reverence and fondness for Our Lady and encouraged believers to call her the Mother of God. The same is affirmed in the Lutheran confessions:

As the angel Gabriel testifies, she bore a man who is truly the Son of the most high God. He showed His divine majesty even in His mother's womb, because He was born of a virgin, without violating her virginity.³ Therefore, she is truly the mother of God and yet has remained a virgin.

However, Lutherans are not supposed to turn with prayers to the saints, though it is admitted that the saints might intercede for us before God. According to Melancthon, a belief that the saints know our thoughts and understand all languages would ascribe to them attributes of omnipresence and omniscience that belong only to God.⁴ This is what reformers definitely wanted to avoid in all realms of faith and church practice. Thus, in order to remain faithful to their doctrine, Lutherans have to be inventive. During the Triple Colloquy some have turned to the Holy Spirit, while others reduced it to a double colloquy. Experience suggests that this does not do great damage to the process of the Exercises.

³ Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration 8.24, in *Concordia—the Lutheran Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord*, edited by Paul Timothy McCain, translated by William H. T. Dau and Gerhard F. Bente (St Louis: Concordia, 2007), 586.

⁴ 'The Apology of the Augsburg Confession', 21 (9). 11, in *Concordia—the Lutheran Confessions*, 203.

Having said all this, I was amazed at how Lutheran the Spiritual Exercises are. To start with, the evident parallels between the spiritual biographies of Ignatius and Luther struck me. How did it happen that these two great lovers of Christ have become such symbols of controversy? This is a topic for dissertations. Bywords often used to summarise the tenets of the Lutheran Reformation are the five '*solas*': *sola scriptura* (scripture alone), *sola fide* (faith alone), *sola gratia* (grace alone), *solus Christus* (Christ alone) and *solī Deo gloria* (to the glory of God alone).

Of all forms of Christian spirituality known to me, the Exercises of Ignatius are the most focused on scripture. At Loyola Hall I was doing literally what Martin Luther told me to—I absorbed the word of God with joy, rubbed the written word between my fingers as a sweetly fragrant herb, I ruminated the scripture, swallowed it and digested in my guts, I meditated it with greatest of diligence, read and reread it carefully, attentively and contemplatively in order not to let it in at one ear and out at the other. For thirty days my life was confronted with scripture alone. At long last I was studying theology Luther's way—by *oratio, meditatio, tentatio*.⁵



St John eating the book (Revelation 10:9), late thirteenth century

⁵ 'I want to point out to you a correct way of studying theology, for I have had some practice in that This is the way taught by holy King David (and doubtlessly used also by all the patriarchs and prophets) in the one hundred nineteenth Psalm. There you will find three rules, amply presented throughout the whole Psalm. They are *Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio*.' (Martin Luther, 'Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther's German Writings', in *Luther's Works*, volume 34, *Career of the Reformer IV*, edited and

The meditations of the First Week about sin and hell purged me of any residual hope in anything apart from God's grace alone. Ignatius reminded me again and again that we cannot achieve anything by our own endeavours but depend solely on God's mercy.⁶ That sounded like something from the writings of Luther. When meditating on The Kingdom, exercitants who are religious have been advised 'to hear the call articulated by the founder of their institute': why should Lutherans not turn their eyes to Luther, or Melanchthon?⁷

The Principle and Foundation (Exx 23) was like a deeper exposition of *solī Deo gloria*, which brought a wonderful relief—not through health or sickness, wealth or poverty, fame or disgrace but through faith in Christ alone. The Contemplation to Attain Love, too, was like a hymn to the glory of God alone. Presenting myself to His Divine Majesty brought answers to my big questions—and continues to do so. There was also a solemn reminder of the truth that is stated in the Lutheran Confessions—repentance is hypocritical if not followed by fruits of sanctification and good works. 'What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?' (Exx 53)

What Ought I to Do for Christ?

**A treasure
for the entire
Western
Church**

I realise that looking at the Exercises through eyes of a Lutheran might feel strange or alien to some Roman Catholics—and to quite a few Lutherans as well. However this was my discovery: the Exercises are not about indoctrination or conversion to some other faith. They are a personal encounter with God in which Creator speaks with creation. All experiences and insights from this encounter can and should be interpreted within the framework of the exercitant's Church. This makes the Exercises a treasure for the entire Western Church and allows me to speak about the Ignatian spirituality with peace of mind.

After the Exercises are completed, the question arises—what was the purpose of this experience apart from my own spiritual growth? Where

translated by L. W. Spitz [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960], 285). See also Martin Luther, 'Preface to St Paul's Epistle to the Romans', in *Luther's Works*, volume 35, *Word and Sacrament I*, edited and translated by E. Theodore Bachmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 365.

⁶ See, for example, Exx 322: 'we cannot by ourselves bring on or retain great devotion, intense love, tears, or any other spiritual consolation, but that all these are a gift and grace from God our Lord'.

⁷ Marian Cowan and John Carroll Futrell, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola: A Handbook for the Director* (New York: Le Jacq, 1981), 68.

do I go from here? For the companions of Ignatius this was a question about joining the Society of Jesus. But what is it for a Lutheran bishop? What ought I to do for Christ?

What I did was to enrol in the spiritual accompaniment course at Loyola Hall and become a retreat director. During the training I developed a vision of how Ignatian spirituality could cater for a long-felt need in our Church. For several years a task force had worked on a system of spiritual care and support, primarily for the clergy but eventually also for everyone else. We had renovated an old manor house for the needs of a retreat centre. The only thing we were lacking was the content of the retreats and directors who could conduct them.

Ignatian spirituality seemed to fill this gap with its clear and tested form, extensive training opportunities, abundant literature and available resources. Loyola Hall was unbelievably supportive. Five of my colleagues completed the Exercises and the spiritual accompaniment course. Then a group of twelve retreatants from Latvia was invited to Loyola Hall, and four freshly trained Latvian directors guided them under the supervision and instruction of the team. This created the base for developing our own system of retreats and training. Finally, two of our new directors shadowed the team on the accompaniment courses in order to learn how to organize the training for spiritual accompaniment. This last step took place in St Beuno's retreat centre because Loyola Hall had been closed down—what a great loss! Yet, the seed was planted. We now have our own team, which is capable of giving the Exercises and shorter Ignatian retreats as well as instructing new retreat-givers. Several groups have been trained already. Next autumn the full Spiritual Exercises will be offered for the third time.

Modern people are attracted by genuine spirituality. Ignatian retreats are gradually gaining popularity and our old manor house is full. Believers discover unknown dimensions of their faith. 'Lutherans on vacation', who only sporadically attended church services—or even agnostics—read the Bible, contemplate the word of God, perform the Examen and pray during the Exposition.⁸ At the end of the retreats they often ask for more. Modern people tend to trust their own experience more than the authority of the Bible or a priest. A directed retreat is a perfect place for them to experience an encounter with the Risen Christ. Thus

⁸ The Lutheran doctrine of the holy eucharist teaches, 'take, eat and drink'. Adoration is normally not practised. An icon, not a host, is displayed during the Exposition.

Ignatian retreats and weeks of guided prayer serve as a form of evangelism and an instrument for deepening faith.

Plan 'B'

Nothing of this could happen without the empathy, wisdom and generosity of some very special people. After the collapse of the Soviet empire the iron curtain fell, only to be replaced by a golden one. Latvia is still one of the poorest countries in Europe. With an average salary of €600 per month, Latvians can hardly afford to make the Exercises and take courses in the UK, but Loyola Hall offered us a very friendly rate. The Society of Retreat Conductors, which bore half of the cost, also generously sponsored us.

I think Ruth Holgate, then director of Loyola Hall, was prophetic in apprehending the potential of my vaguely formulated vision. She supported us in all possible ways. Ruth got up at 3 a.m. to drive me to the airport. She persuaded the Society of Retreat Conductors to continue supporting us when they perhaps thought this was enough for Latvia. She admitted to the Exercises a strange group of people with no experience, who were sent by their bishop rather than choosing to come. Sometimes you have to think outside the box and do extraordinary things to achieve greater goals.

When I came to Loyola Hall to make the Exercises, I expected that a sophisticated Jesuit padre would direct me—but there she was, Vron Smith, a cheerful laywoman and my brilliant director. Vron, and later Karen Eliassen as my supervisor, gave me a valuable insight about the role of laity and women as spiritual directors. This was important for a bishop in a Church that does not ordain women.

And, of course, there was Stephen Hoyland, who helped us to organize the Exercises in Latvia for the first time. Once in his life he had experienced a glimpse of -15° Celsius. Now he came to the Latvian winter to suffer long weeks of -32° C! A hot-water bottle was a must. Stephen directed the Exercises and supervised me during my first attempt as a director. He also conducted an introductory course in spiritual accompaniment and a week of guided prayer for the local parish. He broke the first ground here and did it so well that many still remember him as a model director. I think back with fondness on my fellow exercitants. It is one of the miracles of the Exercises that people become so close just by walking a silent road together. The listening groups where the former co-retreatants continue to share their prayer experiences, joys

and concerns are a salutary contribution to the well-being of our clergy and the whole Church.

Looking back at these people and events I ought to ask with the psalmist: 'What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?' (Psalm 116: 12) A good answer seems to be close at hand. As no one else here has such an established training programme, we have been approached with a request to train directors from the Roman Catholic Church, too. Catholic and Lutheran retreat directors have started regular meetings to learn from each other. The *Spiritual Exercises* and related books have now been translated into Latvian and we are working on a universally accepted terminology.

A blessed change has taken place since Reformation. In the sixteenth century King Stefan's plan for Jesuit missions in Latvia was to uproot the Lutheran Church. I believe that Three Divine Persons looked at the surface or circuit of all our land and gave us a better 'plan B'—to help each other in seeing the Lord Jesus more clearly, loving him more dearly and following him more nearly. There is much more of the misery of unbelief around today than in the time of Ignatius and Martin Luther. *Ite inflammare omnia!*

Jānis Vanags is the archbishop of Riga in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia.



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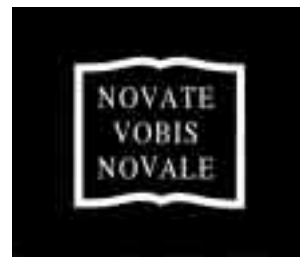
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ST NIKODEMOS THE HAGIORITE AND THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC REFORMATION

Norman Russell

WE DO NOT USUALLY THINK of the Reformation as having any direct effect on the Eastern Orthodox Church. Yet the repercussions on the Orthodox world were profound. On the theological level, the sixteenth-century confessions of faith issued by the Lutherans and Calvinists, together with the Roman Catechism published in 1566 after the Council of Trent, put pressure on the Orthodox to define their own faith in the new confessional mode. The Orthodox responded with the Latinising *Orthodox Confession* of Peter Mogila, metropolitan of Kiev, which was ratified by the Synod of Jassy in 1642 and again, with modifications, by the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672. It remains for the Orthodox an authoritative statement of the Christian faith.

On the spiritual level, the influence of the Reformation was manifested less formally but penetrated the consciousness of the Orthodox more deeply. It is evident from many publications of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that one of the chief consequences of the Reformation for both Catholics and Protestants was the interiorisation of spirituality. Devotional emphasis moved away from the confraternities, processions and popular festivals characteristic of the late Middle Ages to the earnest cultivation of the individual's inner life. It was this aspect of the Reformation that exerted the greatest influence on one of the most important Orthodox figures of the renewal of spiritual life in the eighteenth century, St Nikodemos the Hagiorite (1749–1809).¹

¹ The best overview of Nikodemos, with a full bibliography, is in Italian: Elia Citterio, 'Nicodemo Agiorita', in *La Théologie byzantine et sa tradition*, volume 1, XIIIe—XIXe s., edited by Carmelo Giuseppe Conticello and Vassa Conticello (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 905–997. Also important is Daniel Stiernon,

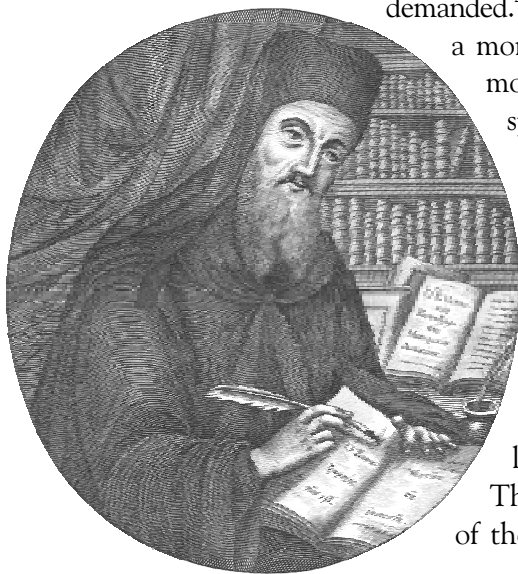
Nikodemos and the kollyvades Movement

Nikodemos was born on the Aegean island of Naxos, to pious parents, and baptized Nicholas. He was educated first on Naxos by a learned archimandrite and then at the celebrated Greek 'Evangelical School' of Smyrna. On completing his studies in 1770, he returned to his home island, where he found employment as the bishop's secretary. A bright pupil such as Nicholas would normally have gone abroad for university studies. Nicholas's family had the means to enable him to do so, but while he was working for the bishop of Naxos he met Makarios, a former metropolitan of Corinth, who inspired him to enter the monastic life.

Makarios was one of the leaders of a group of zealous monks known as the *kollyvades*, who acquired their sobriquet as a result of their opposition to holding memorial services for the dead (at which *kollyva*, or boiled wheat, was offered) on Sundays rather than on weekdays as tradition demanded.² The *kollyvades*' initial protest soon became

a more general movement of return to strict monastic observance and to the earlier spiritual traditions of Orthodoxy. Nicholas, on being tonsured and given the name Nikodemos, embraced the principles of this movement with intelligence and enthusiasm.

From the beginning, the leaders of the *kollyvades* movement had in view not only the renewal of monasticism but also the intensification of the Christian life of the Orthodox faithful in general. They were traditionalist in their observance of the canons and emphasis on the spiritual



'Nicodème l'Hagiorite', *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1935–1995), volume 11, 234–250. In English one may consult Constantine Cavarinos, *St Nikodemos the Hagiorite* (Belmont: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1974); George Brebis's introduction to Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain, *A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel*, translated by Peter A. Chambers (Mahwah: Paulist, 1989), 5–65; or, more briefly, Norman Russell, 'Nikodemos the Hagiorite', in *The Orthodox Christian World*, edited by Augustine Casiday (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 318–324.

² The dispute arose in 1754, when the monks of one of the Athonite monasteries, the Skete of St Anne, began, for the sake of convenience, to hold memorial services for deceased benefactors on Sundays rather than Saturdays in order to leave Saturdays free for other activities, such as visiting the weekly market at the monastic centre of Karyes.

teaching of the Greek Fathers, yet fully up to date in their interest in new ways of communicating the Christian faith. Although hostile to the Roman Catholic Church, they consciously mirrored several aspects of the Catholic Reformation, notably its popular preaching, its internal missions and its production of spiritual handbooks for the Christian laity.

The economic and cultural situation of the Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire had improved considerably by the mid-eighteenth century. Although Christian institutes of higher learning were forbidden by the Ottoman authorities, education was highly prized. Many who had studied at Greek schools went on to pursue university studies in the West. The most famous of these was Nikodemos' exact contemporary Adamantios Korais (1748–1833) who, after medical studies at Montpellier, went to live in Paris, where he experienced the French Revolution at first hand. He welcomed it enthusiastically as the birth of liberty and worked indefatigably to commend its principles to his fellow Greeks.

Most Western-educated Greek intellectuals, however, returned to the Ottoman Empire at the conclusion of their studies, where many entered the clergy, the only career that offered them positions of leadership in Greek society. Although generally less radical than Korais, they often brought with them the ideas of the Enlightenment. The outstanding cleric of this type was Eugenios Boulgaris (1716–1806), an admirer of Locke, Voltaire and Wolff who nevertheless taught in the 1750s at the monastic academy on Mount Athos and in the 1760s at the patriarchal academy in Constantinople, before going on to become an archbishop in Russia. It was partly to counter the influence of teachers such as Korais and Boulgaris that Nikodemos embarked on his own programme of spiritual renewal under the guidance of Makarios of Corinth.

Catholic–Orthodox Relations in the Eighteenth Century

The Reformation did not touch the Orthodox world in an immediate fashion. The issues that were important to the reformers, such as the relation between faith and reason, the operation of grace, the role of the human will in attaining salvation and the nature of papal authority, had arisen out of the concerns of Western scholasticism. They hardly impinged on the Greek world, which was orientated much more towards the monastic and patristic traditions. Indeed, the Orthodox regarded the

dispute between the Protestant reformers and the papacy as a purely Western matter of little concern to them.

By contrast, the leaders of the Reformation on both the Catholic and the Protestant sides were keenly interested in the Orthodox. In their dispute it would have been an advantage for either side to be able to claim the support of an ancient Church of indisputably apostolic origin. In 1574 the Protestant theologians of the University of Tübingen began a seven-year correspondence with Patriarch Jeremias II of Constantinople with a view to winning his approval of the key Lutheran confessional statement, the *Confessio Augustana* (1530). The patriarch explained that he was unable to agree with the Protestant theses and eventually broke off the correspondence. On the Catholic side, the Jesuit Antonio Possevino put forward a project for church union in 1584 which was likewise rejected by Jeremias, not least because the Ottoman authorities had indicated that in the event of union with Rome they would suppress the patriarchate and close all the Greek churches.

Most patriarchs of Constantinople naturally felt a greater affinity with the Roman Church, with which the Orthodox had been dealing for centuries, than with the new and unfamiliar Protestant communions. In the early part of the seventeenth century relations were particularly warm, largely because the Orthodox hierarchy was greatly impressed by the new orders of the Catholic Reformation, especially the Society of Jesus. Jesuits were invited to preach and hear confessions in Orthodox churches. Jesuit professors were even employed to teach at the monastic theological academy on Mount Athos.³

By the end of the seventeenth century, however, all this had changed. The reason was that the Orthodox gradually discovered that the Jesuits who lived among them held the view that redemption was not possible outside the Roman Catholic Church and were working to bring about conversions to Rome by undermining confidence in the Orthodox Church as a reliable vehicle of salvation. This soteriological exclusiveness (a consequence of the decisions of the Council of Trent) was brought home to the Orthodox by several publications in the later part of the century, particularly a work in the Greek vernacular by a French Jesuit, François Richard, called *Shield of the Roman Faith* (Rome, 1658), which

³ For more on these friendly relations (and how they deteriorated), see Timothy Ware, *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (Oxford: OUP, 1964), 16–33.

taught that the Greek Church was in error and that outside the Roman faith it was impossible to please God. The book so alarmed the ecumenical patriarch Parthenios IV (especially because it was in the vernacular) that he procured its suppression by the Ottoman authorities.⁴

By the mid-eighteenth century relations between Catholics and Orthodox had reached a particularly low point, chiefly in consequence of the defection of a large part of the patriarchate of Antioch to Rome. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century a schism arose which split the Antiochene Church in two. The occasion for the schism—not for the first time at Antioch—was a succession dispute. Two rival patriarchs were elected, one (Sylvester) being supported by the Orthodox of Aleppo, the other (Seraphim) by the Orthodox of Damascus. In October 1724 Seraphim who, not unusually for an Orthodox cleric at that time, had studied at the College of Propaganda in Rome, was consecrated and enthroned in Damascus as Cyril VI. A week later Sylvester was consecrated for the same patriarchal throne by the ecumenical patriarch Jeremias III in Constantinople. The Ottoman government accordingly withdrew recognition from Cyril VI and gave it to Sylvester.

Cyril, deposed and excommunicated by Constantinople, fled to the Lebanon. In 1729, however, he won recognition from Pope Benedict XIII as the legitimate patriarch of Antioch, thus initiating the Melkite schism. A majority of Syrian bishops followed Cyril, becoming known as Greek Catholic Melkites. In support of the Melkites, Propaganda issued a directive in the same year (1729) forbidding *communicatio in sacris* with the ‘dissident Orientals’ (that is, with the Orthodox). Partly in response to this directive and the flow of converts to Catholicism that it encouraged, the Home Synod of Constantinople (or more probably, as recent scholarship has shown, the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria and Jerusalem simply acting in concert)⁵ resolved in 1755 to regard Catholic baptism as invalid.⁶

⁴ I have discussed this episode and its ecclesiastical context in greater detail in Norman Russell, ‘From the “Shield of Orthodoxy” to the “Tome of Joy”: The Anti-Western Stance of Dositheos II of Jerusalem (1641–1707)’, in *Orthodox Constructions of the West*, edited by George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou (New York: Fordham UP, 2013), 71–82, 286–294.

⁵ Vassa Kontouma, ‘La Définition des trois patriarches sur l’anabaptême’, *Annuaire de l’École Pratique des Hautes Études*, 121 (2012–2013), 255–268.

⁶ This decision is not regarded as binding on the Orthodox Church—according to previous practice Catholic converts to Orthodoxy were not rebaptized but were received simply by chrismation—but the scrupulous still observe it.

Nikodemos' Literary Activity

Such was the lamentable state of Catholic–Orthodox relations at the time Nikodemos became a monk. Yet the cultural and theological bonds between the two sides were never entirely broken, as Nikodemos' own ambivalent attitude indicates. On the one hand he was hostile to the Roman Catholic Church, upholding the decree of 1755 as fully canonical and regarding the Latins as unbaptized heretics.⁷ On the other, like his Western counterparts of the Catholic Reformation, he sought to engender in the Orthodox laity an intense devotion to the person of Christ through spiritual reading, scrupulous self-examination, personal asceticism, and frequent communion.

The best known of Nikodemos' works is his compilation, with Makarios of Corinth, of the anthology of patristic spiritual texts known as the *Philokalia* (Venice, 1782). In the nineteenth century the *Philokalia* was translated into Russian and, in the twentieth, was published, with unexpected success, in English.⁸ Nikodemos also wrote a compendium of canon law, a martyrology of the new martyrs of the Ottoman era, a confession of faith, works of patristic exegesis and a number of books of spiritual edification. His massive commentary on the Church's canons, the *Pedalion* ('rudder'), insists on the rigorous observance of the canons by all, laypeople as well as clerics, if they are to avoid perdition. It reflects the *kollyvades*' emphasis on the responsibility of individuals for their own salvation, as opposed to relying for salvation on the communitarian solidarity of the faithful.

The same attitude is indicated with particular clarity and power in Nikodemos' *Neon martyrologion* ('new martyrology') (Venice, 1799). The primary purpose of this work was not to encourage a sense of Orthodox solidarity in the face of a steady loss of converts to Islam, as is often supposed. It was to strengthen the resolve of individual

⁷ On the treatment of Western baptism by Nikodemos in his canonical work, the *Pedalion* (Leipzig, 1800), see the important article by John H. Erickson, 'On the Cusp of Modernity: The Canonical Hermeneutic of St Nikodemos the Haghiortite (1748–1809)', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 42/1 (1998), 45–66.

⁸ The unexpected success was achieved by Faber's publication in 1951 (on the recommendation of T. S. Eliot, then an editor at Faber) of an anthology entitled *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, translated by E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer. The full edition followed much later: *The Philokalia: The Complete Text compiled by St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth*, translated and edited G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979–), four volumes published so far.

Christians who had become Muslims and wished to make public their return to Orthodoxy. Such an open repudiation of Islam incurred the death penalty, usually after terrible tortures imposed by Ottoman judges to make the apostate recant. The ecclesiastical authorities strongly discouraged these voluntary declarations of apostasy from Islam, partly because of uncertainty as to whether the returning apostate could endure the torture that would ensue, and partly because of the



Icon of the New Martyrs under the Turkish Yoke

mob violence which, under the circumstances, could easily be provoked against the Christian community.

Even Muslim judges sometimes advised apostates to go away to a place where they were not known and live there quietly as Christians. Nikodemos, however, took a different line. He believed that each person should take full responsibility for his or her own actions. He developed a special apostolate in this regard, preparing for martyrdom those returned apostates who were deeply troubled by the saying in Matthew's Gospel, 'Everyone ... who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven' (Matthew 10:32–33; and compare Luke 12:8–9), and wanted to free themselves from the condemnation of the second part. He did not do this lightly, but only after prolonged prayer and deep probing of the spiritual state of the would-be martyr.

Among Nikodemos' spiritual works are, remarkably, adaptations of several books published originally in Italian in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These are *Combattimento spirituale*, a practical manual on the struggle for spiritual perfection by the Theatine Lorenzo

Scupoli;⁹ *Esercittii spirituali di S. Ignazio*, an adaptation for the laity of St Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, and *La religiosa in solitudine*, a guide to private meditation for women religious, both by the Jesuit Giampietro Pinamonti;¹⁰ *Il Confessor istruito* and *Il Penitente istruito*, two handbooks on confession by another Jesuit, Paolo Segneri;¹¹ and *La Filosofia morale*, a work on moral philosophy based on Aristotle by a former Jesuit, Emanuele Tesauro.¹²

Scupoli's work, in an edition where it was combined with a work on the attainment of interior serenity by a Franciscan author, Juan de Bonilla, was used very extensively by Nikodemos in a book entitled *Aoratos polemós* ('unseen warfare') (Venice, 1796);¹³ Pinamonti's two books were adapted by Nikodemos as *Gymnasmata pneumatika* ('spiritual exercises') (Venice, 1800); Segneri's manuals for confessors and penitents were closely followed by Nikodemos' *Exomologetarion* ('confessional') (Venice, 1794); and Tesauro's *La Filosofia morale* made a substantial contribution to Nikodemos' *Symbouleutikon encheiridion* ('handbook of counsel') (Vienna, 1801).¹⁴ Two questions immediately arise from this surprisingly extensive but barely acknowledged use of Western publications. First, given that Nikodemos did not read Italian, how did he gain access to these books?¹⁵ Secondly, in view of his hostility to the Roman Catholic Church, what is it that attracted him to them?

The first question is the easier to answer. Despite attempts to argue that Nikodemos had a working knowledge of Italian or had come across

⁹ Lorenzo Scupoli, *Combattimento spirituale* (Venice, 1589) republished by another Theatine, Carlo de Palma (Rome, 1657), with the addition of *Della pace interiore ovvero sentiero del paradiso* by the Spanish Franciscan Juan de Bonilla. For full bibliographical details of Nikodemos' spiritual works and his Italian sources, see Citterio, 'Nicodemo Agiorita', 927–930.

¹⁰ Giampietro Pinamonti, *Esercittii spirituali di S. Ignazio* (Bologna, 1698), and *La religiosa in solitudine* (Bologna, 1695).

¹¹ Paolo Segneri, *Il Confessor istruito. Operetta in cui si dimostra a un confessor novello la pratica di amministrarli con frutto il Sacramento della penitenza* (Brescia, 1672) and *Il Penitente istruito* (Bologna, 1669).

¹² Emanuele Tesauro, *La Filosofia morale derivata dall'alto fonte del grande Aristotele Stagirita* (Turin, 1670). Emanuele Tesauro (1591–1675) left the Jesuits in 1634 and became a secular priest.

¹³ An English translation has been published of the expanded Russian version: *Unseen Warfare, Being the Spiritual Combat of Lorenzo Scupoli as Edited by Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain and Revised by Theophan the Recluse*, translated by E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer (London: Faber and Faber, 1952).

¹⁴ Published in English translation as *Handbook of Spiritual Counsel* (see n. 1 above).

¹⁵ Emmanouil H. Phranghiskos, 'La Questione della conoscenza delle lingue straniere in Nicodemo l'Aghiorita', in *Nicodemo l'Aghiorita e la Filocalia*, edited by Antonio Rigo (Magnano: Qiqajon, 2001), 205–222.

French translations, the simple fact is that Modern Greek translations of these and other contemporary Catholic works already existed at the great monastery of St John the Theologian on the island of Patmos.¹⁶ From 1717 to 1758 the monastery's secretary was a Cretan called Manuel Romanites. As Italian was widely spoken in Crete, which had been a Venetian possession from the beginning of the thirteenth century until its fall to the Turks in 1669, it is not surprising that Romanites should have been fluent in the language. The translations he made of Italian works have mostly not been published but are still preserved in a series of manuscript volumes in the monastery's library.¹⁷

It is these that Nikodemos used, especially the translations of Scupoli and Pinamonti. Nikodemos himself is not known to have visited Patmos, so we cannot visualise him poring over Theatine and Jesuit authors in the library there. But his mentor and literary collaborator, Makarios of Corinth, was a frequent guest at the monastery. It seems



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Monastery of St John the Theologian, Patmos

¹⁶ Citterio, 'Nikodemo Agiorita', 930.

¹⁷ Romanites' translations of Segneri's manuals for confessors and penitents found their way to Constantinople, and from there were sent to Venice for publication in 1742.

fairly safe to assume that Makarios borrowed Romanites' translations and made them available to Nikodemos. In large sections of *Aoratos polemōs* and *Gymnasmata pneumatika*, Romanites' version is reproduced word for word.

The second question is more complicated. To take *Aoratos polemōs* as an example, on the title page Nikodemos acknowledges that he is only editing and correcting with a great deal of care the work 'of a certain wise man'. He does not reveal the name of the original author (Lorenzo Scupoli), let alone the fact that the work is of Roman Catholic origin. Nikodemos' adaptation is in fact a very faithful translation of Scupoli, but with the addition of many supporting quotations from authors important to the Greek monastic tradition, particularly Basil the Great (fourth century), Isaac the Syrian (seventh century), Maximus the Confessor (seventh century) and Gregory Palamas (fourteenth century). Despite being padded out with the Greek Fathers, however, the work retains a strong Latin flavour, with exhortations to overcome the passions 'by the merits of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints', and an insistence on the necessity that God's justice should be satisfied. When Theophan the Recluse came to make his Russian version (first published in 1885), he judged it necessary to rewrite a number of passages, particularly on Eucharistic doctrine, spiritual communion and the practice of perpetual prayer, calling his work 'a free rendering rather than a literal translation'.¹⁸ In Greece Nikodemos' original version, however, has always been popular. It was reprinted twice in the nineteenth century and three times in the twentieth, most recently in 1965.

The *Gymnasmata pneumatika* closely follows the Ignatian system. Out of Pinamonti's 41 meditations Nikodemos has reproduced 34, adding a further 30 brief meditations of his own, one for each day of the month. Each of the longer pieces is divided into a meditation, an examination of conscience and texts for spiritual reading. The purpose, as Nikodemos states in his preface, is to assist the reader to pass from imperfection to perfection, in accordance with God's command to Adam to till the garden and keep it (Genesis 2:15) and Paul's exhortation, 'Train yourself in godliness' (1 Timothy 4:7). From Segneri, Nikodemos

¹⁸ Kadloubovsky and Palmer, *Unseen Warfare*, 69. The changes introduced by Theophan are analyzed by H. A. Hodges in his valuable introduction to this translation at 60–67.

has taken in particular the advice given to confessors on how to conduct themselves and how to question penitents in order to uncover hidden sins.

What Nikodemos seems to value most in the Catholic handbooks he draws upon is the psychological insight they exhibit, together with the way most of them are specifically designed to be used by laypeople. Theatine and Jesuit spirituality, with its meditation on Christ's passion, its exhortation to frequent communion and its daily examination of conscience, fitted well with the ideals of the *kollyvades* movement. The social and intellectual developments that were taking place among the Orthodox of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century required a deepening of the spiritual life of the individual in a practical manner. In the counsels of Scupoli, Segneri and Pinamonti, Nikodemos found a sophisticated, up-to-date approach to the spiritual life that he could combine with elements of the Orthodox monastic and ascetical tradition to help laypeople appropriate the life in Christ with fervour and conviction. But if he wanted to win readers among devout Orthodox, it would have been counter-productive to have drawn attention to the Catholic provenance of his texts. What in his view outweighed any confessional consideration was their practical utility.

A sophisticated, up-to-date approach to the spiritual life

Nikodemos succeeded in his mission. His works found a constant readership throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1955 he was canonized by the ecumenical patriarch Athenagoras I, and in the following year the Holy Synod of the Church of Russia also inscribed him among the saints. In 1959 the monk Theokletos of the Athonite monastery of Dionysiou (where Nikodemos himself began his monastic life) published the standard Greek life of Nikodemos, in which he hails him as 'the most Orthodox Saint Nikodemos'.¹⁹

Not all Orthodox are as laudatory as Theokletos. Christos Yannaras regards Nikodemos' writings as marred by a legalistic approach and concerned mainly with the individualistic achievement of virtue and avoidance of sin.²⁰ He finds Nikodemos' teaching on repentance

¹⁹ Theokletos Dionysiates, *Hagios Nikodēmos ho Hagioreitēs. Ho bios kai ta erga tou (1749–1809)* (Athens: Astēr, 1959; repr. 1978 and 1990).

²⁰ Christos Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West* (Brookline: Holy Cross, 2006), chapter 12, 'Vigilance and Resistance'.

dominated by an Anselmian ‘metaphysics of exchange’—the demand for satisfaction for the offence given to divine justice. Only a writer who accepts a ‘Frankish’ God who punishes sin in his Son’s person, Yannaras says, could write: ‘The only payment of this infinite debt of sin was the infinitely precious blood of God, and only the Cross and the nails and the passion could balance the weight of sin’.²¹ The thoroughly Westernised mentality of Nikodemos is confirmed for Yannaras by the fact that the Hagiorite is known to have petitioned the patriarchate in 1806 for an indulgence in favour of a fellow monk on Mount Athos, enquiring at the same time about the sum he should send as a fee.²² So far as Yannaras is concerned, Nikodemos exemplifies in an Eastern context what he calls the ‘religionizing’ of ecclesial experience, ‘its transformation into self-centred moralism with legalistic presuppositions’.²³

Yannaras characterizes very powerfully the chief features of what is widely regarded as the period of the Greek Church’s ‘Babylonian captivity’, a period lasting from the sixteenth to the mid-twentieth century, when Western theological notions dominated the thinking of Orthodox theologians.²⁴ He is right about the moralising and legalism—Nikodemos, for example, wanted to ban dancing and singing at weddings as conducive to sin—but it is difficult to maintain that Nikodemos thereby betrayed his Orthodox heritage. Rigorism has a long history in Orthodox teaching. To meet the spiritual needs of his own time Nikodemos did not hesitate to use all the means available to him, combining the Orthodox canonical and ascetical traditions with the spiritual and psychological insights of his Western contemporaries. He judged rightly that the communitarian dimension of ecclesial experience needed to be complemented by the development of the interior life of the individual. Many Greek commentators today are willing to see him as a great teacher of the mystical life of enduring importance.²⁵ Not everyone agrees with

²¹ Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, 133, quoting Nikodemos’ *Exomologetation* (Athens, 1963 [1794]), 134.

²² Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, 97.

²³ Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, 137.

²⁴ For Yannaras this ‘captivity’ mirrors the Russian experience as presented by Georges Florovsky in his book *The Ways of Russian Theology* (Belmont: Nordland, 1979).

²⁵ For example, Antonios-Emilios N. Tachiaos, ‘Nicodemo l’Aghiorita: un esempio di vita per i laici ortodossi’, in Rigo, *Nicodemo l’Aghiorita*, 193–204.

that, but here is no doubt that Nikodemos ‘has left an indelible mark on Orthodox thought’.²⁶

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²⁶ Erickson, ‘On the Cusp of Modernity’, 66.

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THE IMPACT OF IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY ON BRITISH METHODISM

E. Adam Wells

How Methodists Encounter Ignatian Spirituality

Though the concept may have been unfamiliar to many at the time, as long ago as the 1970s Methodists in Britain were exploring the possibilities of spirituality and retreats. The Methodist Retreat Group, which has now taken the name Reflect, gives a very succinct outline of how this took place.

After his term as President of the Methodist Conference, the Rev. Harry Morton set up the President's Commission on Spirituality, which reported to the Conference of 1974 One topic which the Commission explored was the adoption of a Rule of Life—a daily pattern of prayer and discipline—for Methodists. In addition, it encouraged the Connexion to promote church retreats, quiet days and church family weekends, for fellowship, study and spiritual enrichment.¹

The overall impact of the commission would be hard to quantify, but nonetheless its work was seen to bear fruit: 'The result was a growing take-up of church away times, and themed weekends, and an increased interest in the Retreat movement'.² A part of this phenomenon was that more Methodists than previously were coming into contact with the practice of Ignatian spirituality.

When the Methodist Retreat Group joined the UK-based Retreat Association in 1979, Methodists gained closer ties to the retreat movement

¹ See Reflect's website, <http://www.reflectretreats.co.uk/about.php>. The Methodist Church describes its national body as 'the Connexion': <http://www.methodist.org.uk/who-we-are/what-is-distinctive-about-methodism/the-connexion>.

² <http://www.reflectretreats.co.uk/about.php>.

in its increasingly ecumenical context.³ The Retreat Association today has four denominational member groups comprising Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists and Baptists.⁴ Each year the Association lists 230 retreat houses and their programmes, including many that are Ignatian in nature.⁵ A lot of these retreat houses have Methodists, lay or ordained, on their staff or as guest retreat directors. A good example is St Antony's Priory Ecumenical Spirituality Centre in Durham, which on its website clearly offers Ignatian spirituality as a substantial part of the programme.⁶ For many years St Antony's has had a Methodist minister, Rev. Paul Golightly, as its director; and a number of other staff members are practising Methodists or from a Methodist background.⁷ Not only has Ignatian spirituality enriched the lives of Methodists, both lay and ordained, it has also become the career and the passion of some.

Furthermore, much of the ecumenical work in this area has involved lay and ordained members of the Methodist Church in the ministry of spiritual direction and prayer guiding. Around the UK many spiritual direction and prayer guiding networks grew up in the latter half



© St Antony's Priory

St Antony's Priory, Durham

³ See The Retreat Association, <http://www.retreats.org.uk/about.php>.

⁴ The Retreat Association denominational groups: <http://www.retreats.org.uk/memborgroups.php>.

⁵ <http://www.retreats.org.uk/retreatshandbook.php>.

⁶ St Antony's Priory, Ignatian spirituality: <http://www.stantonyspriory.co.uk/ignatian-spirituality/4574185060/>.

⁷ Information based on a conversation with Paul Golightly, 24 July 2017.

of the twentieth century. Not all of this work will have been in an Ignatian context, but a good proportion of it has been. There are good examples of Methodists involved in such Ignatian ecumenical work.

In Durham in the mid-1990s, Dr Marion Way, a retired Anglican laywoman, approached Paul Nicholson SJ and myself with a view to organizing some weeks of guided prayer. The team comprised the three of us and other local contacts, mainly people who knew Dr Way. From this small group, with much support and input from others, and after a great deal of prayer, thought, consideration and training, the North East Prayer Guides Network was eventually founded.⁸ As with other such networks, the impact of its ministry has been to broaden the spiritual diet of Methodists as well as members of other Churches. The first weeks of guided prayer took place at North Road Methodist Church, an ideal venue because it has a large number of suitable rooms. No member of the church could have failed to be aware of the initiative during the six weeks of guided prayer.

Another way in which Ignatian spirituality has found its way into the lives of Methodists is through large Christian events such as ECG (Equipping Calling Going) and Spring Harvest.⁹ Those who attend are offered a varied array of workshops and seminars. Some sessions explore types of prayer, including prayer influenced by Ignatian spirituality—even though this may not always be explicitly stated. For example, one of the types of session offered at Spring Harvest 2017 was described as ‘reflection’, but some of those who led it were influenced by Ignatian spirituality in their treatment of the Bible and prayer.

The impact of Ignatian spirituality has also been felt by those in training for ordained ministry in the Methodist Church. In the latter half of the twentieth century theological education began to be undertaken in a much more ecumenical way. The Cambridge Theological Federation was created in 1972 with Wesley House, then a Methodist ministerial training college, as one of its founder members.¹⁰ Since 1970 the Queen’s

⁸ North East Prayer Guides Network, <http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/news-and-events/news-article.aspx?id=424>.

⁹ See ECG, <http://www.ecgevent.org.uk/history/>, and Spring Harvest, <http://www.springharvest.org/programme/>.

¹⁰ Cambridge Theological Federation, <http://www.theofed.cam.ac.uk/>, embraces nine institutions across the Anglican, United Reformed, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches; see also Wesley House, www.wesley.cam.ac.uk.

Foundation in Birmingham has trained students for ordination in both the Church of England and the Methodist Church.¹¹ In the late 1980s the Wesley Study Centre was established in Durham, working alongside the evangelical Anglican Cranmer Hall as part of St John's College in the University of Durham.¹² As a result of these collaborations people training for Methodist Ministry were increasingly introduced to the spirituality of the wider Church.

Links with Roman Catholic places of learning were set up, and student exchanges took place. Relations were easy to establish and maintain in Durham between the Wesley Centre and Ushaw College, which at that time provided training for the Catholic priesthood.¹³ In Birmingham the proximity between the Society of Jesus at Manresa House and the Queen's Foundation enabled a very easy interchange of students.¹⁴ Those training at Queen's had the opportunity to acquire a significant experience of Ignatian spirituality and some knowledge of the Spiritual Exercises. Any student training at either Birmingham or Durham who had the slightest interest in exploring Ignatian spirituality, attending a quiet day or engaging in some training in spiritual accompaniment would have been able to do so. The choices available for students were enriched, and for some this led to a life-changing pattern of prayer in their own lives.

I trained at Wesley House in Cambridge between 1987 and 1990. At that time Westcott House, the Church of England theological college, had a Roman Catholic lecturer on the staff who played a part in introducing me to Ignatian spirituality and particularly encouraged my interest in the ministry of spiritual direction.¹⁵ As part of my training I undertook a placement at Robinson College where, at a Lent Group, I was introduced to some Ignatian ways of praying. Prior to entering theological training my knowledge of different Christian spiritual traditions was not extensive. Discovering that imagining a gospel scene, which I had done instinctively since my teens, was a form of prayer was transformative in my personal faith journey.

¹¹ Queen's Foundation, <http://www.queens.ac.uk/about>.

¹² Wesley Study Centre, <http://community.dur.ac.uk/wsc.online/>; Cranmer Hall, Durham <https://community.dur.ac.uk/cranmer.hall/>; St John's College Durham, <https://www.dur.ac.uk/st-johns.college/>.

¹³ Ushaw College closed as a seminary in 2011.

¹⁴ Manresa House Birmingham, <http://www.jesuit.org.uk/manresa-house-novitiare>.

¹⁵ Westcott House Church of England theological college, <http://www.westcott.cam.ac.uk/>.



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Wesley House, Cambridge

A colleague who left Wesley House in 2011 describes what seems to be a more extensive experience of Ignatian spirituality in her training, including some work on spiritual accompaniment. Conversations with others who have recently entered full-time ministry from various theological institutions also clearly indicate a knowledge, if not always an embrace, of Ignatian spirituality.

For those who wish to pursue an active involvement in Ignatian prayer guiding there are many courses that deliver training. From 1991 to 1993 I attended a spiritual direction course at the Jesuit Craighead Spirituality Centre at Bothwell, near Glasgow.¹⁶ Clearly intended to be ecumenical, it was described as being for 'Priests, Ministers, Deacons and Deaconesses'. I was one of only two Methodists on the course, along with others from the Church of Scotland, Scottish Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church. A parallel course was run on Saturdays intended for lay members of the Churches.

A decade or so later, when I attended the Llysfas Spirituality Workshop, there was also a good ecumenical mix, including lay and ordained members of the Methodist Church.¹⁷ The lay Methodists present

¹⁶ See <http://www.iscglasgow.co.uk/history.html>. Craighead's successor is the Ignatian Spirituality Centre (ISC), Glasgow.

¹⁷ Llysfas Spirituality Workshop, <http://llysfas-spirituality-workshop.org.uk/workshop>. Founded by an Anglican bishop, a Jesuit and a Catholic religious sister, this workshop offers Ignatian courses in different parts of the country.

had been led to the course through the work of the Retreat Association. It is reasonable to assume that a similar denominational mix was and is found on other similar courses and workshops. The growing number of these available today has contributed to the impact of Ignatian spirituality on Methodists: those who have attended such events have subsequently shared the fruits of their experience and learning in their own ministry.

Clearly, therefore, the ecumenical nature of theological training from the latter part of the twentieth century onwards has exposed generations of Methodist ministers to St Ignatius of Loyola and Ignatian spirituality. When, during training, Ignatian spirituality has become important to a minister's faith, it gets passed on and introduced to those among whom he or she subsequently works. Methodist lay people, particularly if they are local preachers, are very good at passing on what they have learnt and experienced, applying it to their local church context.¹⁸ The benefits and riches of Ignatian spirituality have undoubtedly been passed around by word of mouth and thus become part of the variety of spiritual treasure enjoyed by many members of the Methodist Church, even when the word Ignatian is not mentioned and other words are used to describe these types of prayer. In many cases the people in the pews are not aware that the form of prayer being used comes from the Ignatian tradition.

In any consideration of the impact that Ignatian spirituality has had on British Methodism, the influence of the many books written in this field in the last thirty years has to be considered. Books by those who espouse an Ignatian spirituality abound. From my own journey I would mention *Spiritual Direction for Every Christian* by Gordon H. Jeff, which strongly supports a model of pastoral ministry that would include spiritual direction for all members of a Church.¹⁹ *Sadhana: A Way to God* by Anthony de Mello SJ was recommended to me by my first spiritual director.²⁰ *Oh God, Why?* by Gerard W. Hughes SJ is the only Lent book I have ever used twice, and I have recommended it on several occasions.²¹

¹⁸ Local preachers are laypeople within the Methodist Church who are accredited to preach at services. See Methodist Local Preachers FAQ, <http://www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/local-preachers/local-preacher-faqs>.

¹⁹ Gordon H. Jeff, *Spiritual Direction for Every Christian* (London: SPCK, 1991).

²⁰ Anthony de Mello, *Sadhana: A Way to God: Christian Exercises in Eastern Form* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978).

²¹ Gerard W. Hughes, *Oh God, Why? A Journey through Lent for Bruised Pilgrims* (Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship, 1993). Later editions have an alternative subtitle: *A Spiritual Journey towards Meaning, Wisdom and Strength*.

Joyce Huggett's *Finding God in the Fast Lane* is a good example of a book aimed at assisting busy Christians on their faith journeys.²² The catalogue of books on Ignatian spirituality is vast and readily available, and has played an important part in the increasing awareness and experience of Ignatian spirituality in the Churches in general and Methodism in particular. Many Methodists feed their spiritual life with a wide variety of spiritual reading. The *Methodist Recorder* often carries reviews of books on Ignatian spirituality and contains regular articles on various aspects of prayer.²³

To summarise, Ignatian spirituality has become very much a part of the spiritual diet available to Methodists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This has come about because of the will of some Methodists to think more seriously about spirituality, the increasingly ecumenical nature of retreats and prayer guiding, and the ecumenical training of clergy and lay people.

Compatibilities between Ignatian and Methodist Spirituality

At the heart of traditional Methodist spirituality is the so-called Wesleyan Quadrilateral of defining principles.²⁴ In the words of the *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 'Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience and confirmed by reason'.²⁵

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral

In the Spiritual Exercises, at the beginning of the Third Week, the journey from Bethany to Jerusalem for the Last Supper is recalled. In this First Contemplation the retreatant is invited better to appreciate the truth that Christ 'suffers all this for my sins' (Exx 197) through recalling the story 'in imagination' (Exx 192), seeing the people and entering into the emotions and truth of the events. For Methodists, whether evangelical or liberal, for whom scripture is fundamentally important, such imaginative

²² Joyce Huggett, *Finding God in the Fast Lane, as Well as in Life's Lay-bys* (Buxhall: Kevin Mayhew, 2004).

²³ *The Methodist Recorder*, Britain's only weekly Methodist newspaper, <http://www.methodistrecorder.co.uk/>.

²⁴ For further discussion see Hugh Jenkins, 'A Pilgrimage through Methodism and Ignatian Spirituality', 33–44 above.

²⁵ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2016* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 2016), 57.



Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, by Pietro Lorenzetti, 1320

contemplation provides a marvellous way to engage with biblical stories—one that may be new to some, but is also very much in sympathy with Methodist tradition.

Likewise the practice of *lectio divina*—reading and reflecting on scriptural passages—which Ignatian spirituality inherited and developed from early monasticism, is gaining increasing familiarity among Methodists and others, who find that it deepens their prayer life and their understanding of the person and work of Christ.²⁶ Many different terms are used to describe this form of scriptural contemplation, but it is interesting that the interdenominational Scripture Union’s website ‘WordLive’, which offers daily bible readings online, makes specific provision for *lectio divina*.²⁷

The second element in the Quadrilateral is tradition. Methodists are very good at discovering the riches of other Christian traditions and incorporating them into their own spirituality. A good example of this is seen in J. Neville Ward’s book on the Rosary, *Five for Sorrow, Ten for*

²⁶ See Douglas J. Leonhardt, ‘Praying with Scripture’, available at <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-what-how-why-of-prayer/praying-with-scripture>.

²⁷ See ‘Your Sacred God Moment—Lectio Divina’, at https://www.wordlive.org/147185.id?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIncXKuJaq1QIVLrftCh0VrwGEEAAYASAAEgLiVvD_BwE.

Joy, which was once described to me as the best book there is on the rosary.²⁸ Wittingly or unwittingly Methodists have incorporated the Ignatian spiritual tradition into their own, as we have already seen from their involvement in retreats, prayer guiding and spiritual direction.

Anyone who has encountered Ignatian spirituality or undertaken the Spiritual Exercises will testify that it is a significant experience. For me it was the experience of using imaginative contemplation that opened up a whole new way of praying and listening to God. Thus Ignatian spirituality reflects the third, experiential aspect of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

The fifth point of the Contemplation on the journey to Jerusalem says, 'Consider how [Christ's] divinity hides itself; that is, how he could destroy his enemies but does not, and how he allows his most holy humanity to suffer so cruelly' (Exx 196). This is an invitation to make use of our reason. In the Spiritual Exercises the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (Exx 313–336) have always struck me as a good application of reason to the process of discerning what God requires of us. For example, when dealing with 'persons who are going from one mortal sin to another' (Exx 314), it is suggested that the director, 'making use of the light of reason [*el síndere de la razón*] ... will rouse the sting of conscience and fill them with remorse'.²⁹ A part of the process that is going on involves reason, the fourth part of the Quadrilateral.

Spiritual Accountability

From the beginning of Methodism small groups have been important. John Wesley's first local Methodist societies were subdivided into 'classes' for weekly meetings. Each class meeting would have an appointed leader who was expected to perform certain duties as defined by the rules of the class meeting. The leader was required:

To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order: (1) to inquire how their souls prosper; (2) to advise, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occasion may require; (3) to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the preachers, church, and poor.³⁰

The first two points here are clearly a form of spiritual direction. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, however, the number of weekly class

²⁸ J. Neville Ward, *Five for Sorrow, Ten for Joy: Meditations on the Rosary* (New York: Seabury, 2005).

²⁹ Translation by Louis J. Puhl (Chicago: Loyola, 1951). Ganss translates the phrase as 'their good judgment'.

³⁰ See *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* 2016, 77–80.

meetings has declined greatly, which has left a gap in terms of spiritual discipline. The midweek groups that currently meet rarely include this type of spiritual accountability. For some Methodists the gap has been filled by Ignatian spirituality, through seeking spiritual direction, attending retreats or quiet days, or simply reading.

The rules of the class meeting talk specifically about reproving and comforting. There is here a clear sense of accountability for the way in which one has lived as a Christian. In the *Spiritual Exercises* this accountability is expressed through the Examination of Conscience (Exx 43), confession (Exx 44) and penance (Exx 82–89). In my experience only a few Methodists practise individual confession with a minister or spiritual director, even though ‘A Service for Repentance and Reconciliation’ is included in the *Methodist Worship Book*.³¹ Fewer still use the language of ‘internal penance’ (Exx 82). The Examination of Conscience, however, is a part of Ignatian spirituality that is often used on Methodist retreats. In 1992, on my pre-ordination retreat at Ushaw College, I remember being struck by the way that most (but not all), ordinands were very much at home with the Examen. For some Methodists, Ignatian spirituality and elements of the *Spiritual Exercises* have filled a gap that in previous generations would have been filled by the class meeting.

Christian Perfection

A central doctrine of the Methodist Church, and one of the utmost importance to John Wesley, is that of ‘Christian perfection’. As Lars Svanberg writes:

[Wesley] was sure that there is a transforming power in grace. In the moment of justification the new birth takes place. Here begins the process of sanctification, of a growth in holiness towards Christian perfection.³²

Svanberg points out that biblical references to ‘perfection’ use the Greek word ‘τέλειος’, carrying the sense of a goal or something towards which to move.³³ In the *Spiritual Exercises*, St Ignatius says, ‘one should perfect

³¹ *The Methodist Worship Book* (London: Methodist Publishing, 1999), 422.

³² Lars Svanberg, ‘Wesley on Personal Holiness’, at http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/wc_Eur_Wesley_on_Personal_Holiness_Lars_Svanberg.pdf.

³³ For example Matthew 19:21: ‘Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect”’

oneself as much as possible' in accordance with a particular life choice that has been made (Exx 173). This also carries the sense of a goal towards which we should be moving with God's help. Later in the *Exercises*, in the second rule of the 'Second Way of Making a Good and Sound Election' (Exx 184), he writes:

I will imagine a person whom I have never seen or known. Desiring all perfection for him or her, I will consider what I would say in order to bring such a one to act and elect for the greater glory of God our Lord and the greater perfection of his or her soul. Then, doing the same for myself, I will keep the rule which I set up for another. (Exx 185)

I am not contending that the thoughts of John Wesley and St Ignatius Loyola are the same in relation to perfection. It does seem, however, that both are concerned with a person growing in his or her relationship with God and aiming to be more Christ-like. Thus it can be seen that much in the *Exercises*, and in Ignatian spirituality in general, fits well with traditional Methodist theology and practice.

The Impact of Ignatian Spirituality on the Methodist Church

The impact of Ignatian spirituality has been felt by Methodists in many ways. More Methodists and their churches now go away for quiet days or retreats, either as individuals or groups; and some of these events take place in an Ignatian context or are influenced by Ignatian spirituality. The impact of this on individuals has undoubtedly been to enrich their relationship with God and deepen their prayer, reasoning and appreciation of the scriptures. Ignatian spirituality has contributed to Methodist people having and seeking more quiet places to be, while at the same time finding a spirituality that clearly resonates with Methodist theology.

The experience of those in training, particularly for ordained ministry, has been broadened and enriched by experience of Ignatian spirituality and teaching from an Ignatian perspective. The career paths of some Methodists have been shaped as they have felt called to work in the area of Ignatian spirituality. Many who have never undertaken an Ignatian retreat will have read a book by someone writing from an Ignatian perspective. Undoubtedly a part of the impact of Ignatian spirituality is that those who find it attractive have as a result been led into a more ecumenical experience of the Church.

For myself, Ignatian spirituality has heightened my experience of scripture, so central to the Methodist tradition, engaged my desire to apply reason to my own spiritual journey and made me better able to consider the journeys of others I have encountered during my ministry. More than this, it has been illuminating to discover that the experience of justification, sanctification, holiness and Christian perfection—so close to John Wesley’s heart—can also be seen in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola. I have enhanced my personal journey through a broader and richer Christian experience of spirituality, and I am glad to worship in a tradition and live at a time in which it is so easy to access the riches of Ignatian spirituality. Given the number of Methodists who attend Ignatian retreats and quiet days I dare to believe that the impact felt by me is also shared by others.

In the last forty years, the Methodist Church has become a more reflective Church. Ordinands and those in ministry have been encouraged to be ‘reflective practitioners’. More Methodist worship makes use of quiet and imagination, and various different types of prayer. I am sure that this can at least in part be traced to the impact of Ignatian spirituality which, in my life, was and continues to be transformative.

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REFORMATION AS SPIRITUAL INNOVATION

Alan Kolp

ON 31 OCTOBER 1517, Martin Luther, a theology professor at Wittenberg University in the Electorate of Saxony and a Roman Catholic priest, nailed 95 theses to the church door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg. And so began the Protestant Reformation.

This simple origin story is supposed to explain a complex time of theological, political, social and economic turbulence. Luther's world was, to use language originally drawn from the military, VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous). Typically, there is no blueprint for coping and creating in a VUCA world. Luther had no blueprint; the Catholic Church had none. Other Reformers, such as Calvin and the Radical Reformers, did not have a blueprint either. In the maelstrom of such a world, they were all figuring out how to be Christian—amid their own mixture of destiny, freedom and the presence of the Holy Spirit. But from this world and these times a new reforming movement evolved and, in time, became a number of different reforming traditions. In the United States, particularly, these different traditions in turn became a dizzying number of Christian denominations.

The reforming process also led to changes within the Roman Catholic Church, among which we can certainly identify the growth of the Jesuits. I purposely want to tie this reforming process to the idea of evolution. It is within the evolutionary process of reform that we can locate the threefold action of destiny, freedom and the Holy Spirit. Let us look back at the last five hundred years from an evolutionary perspective. We should not see these years of Christian reformation merely in terms of conflicts, winners and losers. I imagine these five hundred years to be the co-creative work of the Holy Spirit, in and through people both inside and outside the Church. I celebrate this because the work of the Spirit did not destroy the unity of the Church, so much as evolve the Church's complexity and diversity.

Reformation, Evolution and Incarnation

Ilia Delio, a US Franciscan sister, offers a creative way to understand the interconnectedness of God, the world and humanity. Using her evolutionary theology, we can appreciate what has happened within the Christian Church in the past five hundred years and start to anticipate what we might expect in the next five hundred. The first point to note is that God is involved in history. I like the way Delio portrays the nature of God, which helps us understand that God was involved in the sixteenth-century evolution of the Church.

The name of God points to that in which being and act are one and the same; if the act of God is dynamic evolution wherein change is integral to developing life, then God too must be God in relation to change. To say 'God is love' is to say that the name God refers to the divine energy of love that is dynamic, relational, personal, and unitive; hence God is most dynamic, relational, personal, and unitive. God does what God is—love.¹

God is love and, Delio adds, 'Love is the fundamental energy of evolution'.² So when God is present—which is all the time—the fundamental energy of evolution is at work. The enduring characteristic of both the world and humanity, then, is change.

This certainly does not mean that change is always positive. Sin cannot be denied. But the gospel is not only a gospel of love; it is also always a gospel of hope. And that is how the sixteenth century and later centuries should be understood. I am confident that Pope Francis sees it this way. In a recent comment, he said of Martin Luther: 'There was corruption in the Church, worldliness, attachment to money, to power, and for this reason he protested. He was intelligent and took a step forward'³ Luther protested; in this sense he became a Protestant. It seems Pope Francis agrees: he would have protested, too. It was a VUCA world. But people of faith are never simply trapped in a VUCA world. People of faith affirm the Spirit—the God of love—is part of a world that is also evolutionary. And this is the hope.

¹ Ilia Delio, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2013), 93.

² Delio, *Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 20.

³ 'The Pope Answers Questions from Journalists on the Return Flight from Armenia', available at <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/06/27/160627f.html>.

Theologically, the affirmation that the Spirit is always present in and to the world is rooted in the incarnation. The doctrine of the incarnation is central, but that doctrine can be misunderstood. Delio is again helpful: 'The doctrine of incarnation requires faith in God's self-involvement in history'.⁴ The incarnation, therefore, has two aspects. As Christians we can affirm God's self-involvement in history as a good. But because God is this energy of evolution, the incarnation is dynamic and may be felt as something disruptive: it is an agent of change. Christians affirm Jesus to be uniquely incarnated with and by the Spirit, but this does not make the incarnation a one-off event. Rather it is the release and the recognition of the ongoing nature of incarnation. The incarnation is potentially the spreading of love in all places at all times. According to Delio, 'Jesus is a new Big Bang in evolution, an explosion of love that ignites a new way of thinking about God, creation, and future'⁵ This is a powerful way for us to understand the revelation of the New Testament.

**The
spreading of
love in all
places at all
times**

Certainly, one thing the Reforming movements wanted to do was to call Christians back to life based on scripture: *sola scriptura*—scripture alone. Luther and the Reformers looked back to scripture in order to look forward to where they felt God was leading. This emerged as a threat to the institutional Catholic Church of the time. Luther was intelligent enough to know that *sola scriptura* was a challenge to authority. But to say 'scripture alone' was not enough. Scripture itself is diverse, multi-layered and complicated. In a famous comment from his *Tischreden* (table talk), Luther wisely noted, 'To be sure, the Holy Scriptures are sufficient in themselves, but God grant that I find the right text'.⁶

It is not surprising that Luther the theology professor wanted to find the right text, and find an appropriate way of interpreting it. But Luther's audience was not only his students. That audience was the people of the Church: the scriptural text is for the Church. And the Reformation period accordingly raised the ecclesiological question: who or what is the Church? A corollary issue is that of authority. Where does authority within the Church lie?

⁴ Delio, *Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 135.

⁵ Delio, *Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 142.

⁶ *Luther's Works*, volume 54, *Table Talk*, edited and translated by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 51.

Inevitably, the Church exists in some institutional form. The form is the particular way the Body of Christ—the authentic Church—appears in any historical period. Luther’s challenge put pressure on the particular institutional form of the sixteenth-century Catholic Church. In that Church, with the corruption and worldliness described by Pope Francis, Luther and the other Reformers were disruptive evolutions.

But as Ilia Delio writes,

If the Church is a living organism, as I believe it is, then we should expect that the Church is also a part of the evolutionary reality of our world. To put it positively, the Church inevitably experiences the dynamism of evolution.⁷

The Innovation of Vatican II

There has been one moment of evolutionary change in my own lifetime comparable to that of Luther’s Reformation, and that is Vatican II.

I think Vatican II is the most important event in Christianity since Luther precipitated the sixteenth-century Reformation. Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli became Pope John XXIII in October 1958. The new Pope surprised the world the next year by calling for an ecumenical council. The Pope’s opening words link the Spirit of the New Testament and the Spirit present in Rome that very day.

As regards the immediate cause for this great event, which gathers you here together at Our bidding, it is sufficient for Us to put on record once more something which, though trifling in itself, made a deep impression on Us personally. The decision to hold an ecumenical council came to Us in the first instance in a sudden flash of inspiration. We communicated this decision, without elaboration, to the Sacred College of Cardinals The response was immediate. It was as though some ray of supernatural light had entered the minds of all present: it was reflected in their faces; it shone from their eyes. At once the world was swept by a wave of enthusiasm

At the time I appreciated the papal acknowledgement that Vatican II was not primarily about doctrine. He said a council was not needed for that. ‘What is needed at the present time is a new enthusiasm, a new joy

⁷ Delio, *Unbearable Wholeness of Being*, 146.

and serenity of mind in the unreserved acceptance by all of the entire Christian faith'⁸ Those prescient words of Pope John XXIII were true for the 1960s and are equally true in our own day.

As a young Quaker, I had no clue that the Spirit was at work in Rome in this extraordinary event of innovation as reformation. And I had even less reason to believe that the Pope's calling for a council would drastically change my life. I am confident if Vatican II had never happened, my own appreciation of the Catholic Church and my



The opening session of Vatican II

involvement with it would be minimal, at best. Luther nailed his invitation to dialogue to a church door, but Pope John XXIII simply opened the door. I walked in and, as a consequence, I have grown as a person of faith and as a Quaker. From the Catholic Church I learnt above all what it means to be *catholic*—that is, a member of the universal Church, the Body of Christ.

My Personal Journey

I had a mentor in the process of Catholic–Quaker dialogue. Douglas Steere was a personal, albeit not close, friend. Steere was a long-time philosophy professor at Haverford College in the Philadelphia suburbs. He was one of the most well-known twentieth-century Quakers. He wrote a doctoral dissertation on Baron Friedrich von Hügel and had spent time in 1933 at the German Benedictine Abbey of Maria Laach. Douglas was the

⁸ John XXIII, 'Opening Address to the Council', available at <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=3233>, accessed 6 September 2017.

first Quaker I knew who spoke in the language of 'spirituality'. He and I became friends in the 1980s, when I was dean of the Quaker seminary in Indiana. With Steere's help, and some guidance from a Jesuit, the seminary faculty created a spirituality component in the curriculum, becoming one of the first non-Catholic schools to 'do' spirituality and not simply religion or theology.

Because of Steere's academic and personal interest in spirituality, he was a natural for the ecumenical work that erupted out of the Spirit's movement from the mid-1950s onwards. Steere was involved in Catholic-Protestant dialogue which anticipated Vatican II and blossomed subsequently. We get a sense for this in a letter Steere wrote to Thomas Merton on 23 April 1963. Steere says,

I have just been up to Harvard for this Roman Catholic-Protestant Colloquium and found a most generous temper there on both sides. I was hardly prepared for the rate at which this friendliness has come. Father Weigel in his banquet speech together with the president of Harvard University, said that things were coming in such a rate that he thought within a short time it might well be that the Jesuits might even join the Roman Catholic Church!⁹

Steere, along with his wife, Dorothy, would go to Rome in 1963 as an official Quaker Observer-Delegate at Vatican II. In another letter to Merton, dated 30 September 1963, he writes: 'The opening yesterday was the greatest spectacle that I have ever witnessed'.¹⁰

We get a further glimpse of Steere at Vatican II in his introduction to *Quaker Spirituality*, which he edited for the Paulist Press Classics of Western Spirituality series in 1984. Interestingly, he begins his account with reference to revelation: 'One of the first things that the Quakers would accent is that revelation is still going on'.¹¹ And he immediately illustrates the importance of 'continuing revelation', as Quakers call it, with a story from Vatican II. Steere offers a contrast between two Cardinals at the Council debating the issue of charisms in the Church:

In the autumn of 1963 at an early meeting of the second session of Vatican II Council, Cardinal Suenens of Belgium rose to criticize what

⁹ E. Glenn Hinson, *Love at the Heart of Things* (Wallingford, Pa: Pendle Hill, 1998), 30.

¹⁰ Hinson, *Love at the Heart of Things*, 32.

¹¹ *Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings*, edited by Douglas V. Steere (Mahwah: Paulist, 1984), 5.

he insisted was a serious omission in the draft of the schema before the council that dealt with the nature of the Church. In the entire schema, Cardinal Suenens complained, he found no mention of the charisms (the gifts, the holy nudges) that often come in the course of the services of the Church, not only to bishops or priests, but to lay members of the congregation.

Steere then switches to the second figure in the dialogue, Cardinal Ruffini. Ruffini, 'deplored the suggestion that Cardinal Suenens had made and said that he fervently hoped the commission would reject it'. The Sicilian cardinal continued: 'Now ... the Canon of Scripture is closed and the Apostolic Age is over. Now the Holy Spirit speaks through the Magisterium of the Church.'¹²

Steere clearly prefers one side. He quips, 'Happily, in my judgment at least, the commission accepted the suggestion of Cardinal Suenens'. But what difference does this make to a Quaker? Steere poses a series of questions that lead to his answer:

Cardinal Ruffini with his usual clarity has raised a most searching question. Is the Apostolic Age really over? Does the Holy Spirit still



Douglas Steere

¹² *Quaker Spirituality*, 5.

speak to ordinary people? Is all revelation concluded? It is at this point that an account of Quaker spirituality and its presuppositions might comfortably begin.¹³

We can say the simple question is whether the Church—the Body of Christ—is a closed system or an open system.

Quakers opt for an open system. I agree with Steere that the ongoing work of the Spirit continually brings the possibility of the new and of renewal. That is how the Spirit evolutionarily works. But the Spirit also has to work with the freedom humans have to shape the evolutionary possibilities being offered. With this perspective I shall share a couple more moments on my own Quaker journey of the Spirit, and in my developing relationship with the Roman Catholic Church.

When I was in seminary and doctoral studies, I became aware of and fascinated with the monastic movement and its history within the Church. I discovered a group of men and women drawn to that way of life, based more on experience than doctrine. This is how my own tradition engages the presence of the Spirit—both personally and communally. It was because of Vatican II that I was able to imagine becoming a Benedictine oblate, as I have now been for some decades. Benedictine hospitality made possible an affiliation I could own.

I appreciate the way Kathleen Norris describes her experience of living as a lay Protestant among Benedictines:

The Benedictines, more than any other people I know, insist there is time in each day for prayer, for work, for study, and for play Liturgical time is essentially poetic time, oriented toward process rather than productivity, willing to wait attentively in stillness rather than always pushing to ‘get the job done’.¹⁴

This resonates with my own Quaker spirit, which needs silence and some solitude, and has a deep desire to live a life from the Centre. It is a spirituality captured well in some of my favourite words from Thomas Kelly’s *A Testament of Devotion*:

Deep within us all is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continuously return. Eternity is at our hearts, pressing upon our time-torn lives,

¹³ *Quaker Spirituality*, 6.

¹⁴ Kathleen Norris, *The Cloister Walk* (New York: Riverhead, 1996, xix.

warming us with intimations of an astounding destiny, calling us home unto Itself It is a dynamic centre, a creative Life that presses to birth within us.¹⁵

There is such a dynamic centre in each of us—in every one of the 7.5 billion people in the world. This is not just a Christian phenomenon; it is a human phenomenon. Vatican II had that vision and called the Catholic Church to live it out. In the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, promulgated by Pope Paul in 1965, we see how Vatican II understands the Church within the larger world.

Hence this Second Vatican Council, having probed more profoundly into the mystery of the Church, now addresses itself without hesitation, not only to the sons of the Church and to all who invoke the name of Christ, but to the whole of humanity. For the council yearns to explain to everyone how it conceives of the presence and activity of the Church in the world of today.¹⁶

This issue of the presence of the Church in the world is even more pressing today. And it is not simply a Catholic question. To address it appropriately, we need an understanding of Jesus and the Church that embraces its full breadth and complexity. Ilia Delio writes: ‘Jesus was a “wholemaker”, bringing together those who were divided, separated, or left out of the whole. He initiated a new way of “catholicity”, a gathering together of persons in love.’¹⁷ I conclude with two experiences of my own participation in this ‘wholemaking’.

The first comes from my days as a graduate student in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Not only was I studying at Harvard, but also at the Episcopal seminary in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and at the Jesuit seminary, Weston (now part of Boston College). My most memorable experience proved to be the classes, and the friendship, of Fr George MacRae, an internationally known New Testament scholar who was also a Jesuit. To be sitting in a classroom in a Jesuit seminary with a Jesuit scholar-priest at that time was a testament to the power of Vatican II to change my world. By the time of his death in 1985, Fr MacRae had become the Dean of Harvard Divinity School.

¹⁵ Thomas R. Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 3.

¹⁶ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 2.

¹⁷ Delio, *Unbelievable Wholeness of Being*, 125.

My work with Jesuits continues to this day. Currently I serve as a member of the Lay Leadership Advisory Committee for the Jesuit Retreat House in Cleveland, Ohio, which has served the diocese of Cleveland since 1898. Taking a cue from Pope Francis's address to the US Congress in September 2015, I taught a four-week series of classes on the Pope's US models. These four individuals—Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr, Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day—were people of faith who offer a creative 'way of seeing and interpreting reality'.¹⁸ I appreciated the irony. My reality was that of a Quaker in a Jesuit Retreat House, teaching a mostly Catholic audience about four compatriots, two of whom were non-Catholic. Such are our world and our opportunities.

I celebrate that world and am eager to embrace its opportunities. And I am convinced our current Pope Francis, himself a Jesuit, celebrates and embraces our world and opportunities, too. Advisedly, I call him 'our' Pope. He is 'our' Pope because we are all in it together—we and our world. The Pope sees that. I join him in the spirit of his initial encyclical, *Laudato si'* (2015):

In the meantime, we come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast. In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God, for 'if the world has a beginning and if it has been created, we must enquire who gave it this beginning, and who was its Creator'. Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.¹⁹

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¹⁸ Pope Francis, 'Visit to the Joint Session of the United States Congress: Address of the Holy Father', in *The Allure of Goodness and Love: Pope Francis in the United States* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2015), 23.

¹⁹ *Laudato si'*, n. 9.

IGNATIAN-INSPIRED SPIRITUALITY IN A SCANDINAVIAN ECUMENICAL SETTING

Johannes Pedersen

THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN encourages us to look back, and in that spirit I would like to look back here on the journey that my wife, Heidi, and I have made over the last twenty years. In that time the spirituality of which the Examen is a part has challenged us and formed our lives, during the process of physically, mentally and spiritually building and leading an Ignatian-inspired retreat house, Ådalen Retræte, in the Lutheran country of Denmark.

Following a Dream

Heidi and I grew up in a nondenominational local church, of which I was pastor for some years until the beginning of 2001. At that time we knew nothing of Ignatian spirituality. My first encounter with the way of Ignatius was in an ecumenical context in Sweden during March 2001. I was in my mid-forties and going through what some would call a serious life crisis. On the outside everything looked good. I was in the prime of my life, happily married with two lovely teenage daughters, and following what I thought to be my calling. But in the midst of all this, I felt an emptiness that seemed to suck the life out of me, a sense of loss of direction that seemed to be growing.

A friend recommended that I should go on a retreat in Sweden. I really had no idea what that meant—but a few years earlier, I had picked up a book by the Swedish author Magnus Malm. Something in his writing was disturbing me and calling out to me—but at the beginning I just did not seem to be able to grasp what that was. It so happened that the retreat I was able to attend was led by Magnus Malm. What I did not know at the time was that he is very much inspired by Ignatian spirituality

and, outside the Jesuit community, he is probably the person who has had the biggest influence on Ignatian thinking and spirituality in Scandinavia. Something very significant seemed to happen to me on that first five-day silent retreat. It started me out on a quest for a deeper and more holistic form of spirituality. Every year for the next five years, I made a five-day Ignatian retreat in Sweden. My interest in Ignatian spirituality gradually increased, and I started reading and studying as much Ignatian literature as I could find.

In 2004, Heidi joined me on retreat for the first time. Afterwards both of us felt a longing to deepen our own commitment to Christ, and to share our experience of Ignatian spirituality through silent retreats with other people in Denmark. The dream of starting an ecumenical Ignatian retreat house in Denmark was born in us—but we had no idea how this could ever become a reality. At the beginning we were quite ignorant of the fact that there was already a retreat movement in Denmark. We had never heard of the concept of silent retreats before I found myself doing one. We began meeting others who had been going on such retreats for a number of years. We found that several of them, Catholics as well as Protestants, had an encouraging attitude towards our dream.

The religious climate in Denmark is very much under the influence of the Lutheran state Church, of which a large part of the Danish population are members. Being from a non-Lutheran church background, with little experience in ecumenical work, and being inspired by Roman Catholic Ignatian spirituality made our dream quite a challenge. We still find that this keeps us in contact with our daily need for God's grace and guidance!

One of the main obstacles to Ignatian spirituality in Denmark is that, until recently, the story told about Ignatius and the Jesuits in Danish pastoral training has not been a flattering one. The focus has been very much on the clash between the Lutheran Reformation and the Jesuit Counter-Reformation. Lately there has been some change, in that a more nuanced perception is spreading. In some areas—including pastoral training—there is an increasing curiosity about the spirituality of Ignatius and how it can be understood and applied in a Protestant context.

In many ways we find that we can see our own experiences in the story of Ignatius: starting to notice the movements of the spirits—what brings life and what leaves us lifeless; and starting to find a way through discernment—what is God's will? What desires, gifts and possibilities has God sent into our lives? Where are the doors open and where are they

closed? At times things were blurred and difficult to discern, but the practical spirituality of Ignatius helped us to step forward and try—even when the waves threatened to swallow us. As in many other situations, it is often helpful to look back and see God’s hand at work. We see it in the gift of other people who came our way and brought clarity and ability. Together with our two fish and five loaves, this gift proved to be more than enough for our needs.

In 2009, I made the Spiritual Exercises in a thirty-day retreat at Loyola Hall in the UK. In many ways, this was a life-changing experience! I found myself meeting Christ in his humanity and walking with him; seeing his struggles, tears and frustrations helped me bring my own humanity together with my spirituality. The idea of God becoming human and meeting us where we are was life-giving. ‘Finding God in all things’ came alive. ‘Consolation’ and ‘desolation’ became more than just words. The retreat helped me to begin understanding myself and my relationship with God in a new and deeper way.

**Meeting Christ
in his humanity
and walking
with him**

Ignatius speaks about being motivated by wanting to ‘be of benefit to souls’ (*ayudar las almas*).¹ I guess there could be quite a discussion about exactly what that means. One thing that has been extremely helpful for my soul is encountering and living through the Ignatian way of seeing God’s will and my will as friends. I have come to see the deeper longings and desires of my soul as reflections of God’s will, and learned to discern and understand the things that help me move in the direction of what God longs for me to be. And I have seen how the gifts, longings and desires that God has placed in me can indeed be part of that movement, helping me find my way.

I think it is fair to say that from my early youth, I had seen my will and God’s will more as rivals or even enemies. But Ignatian spirituality has given me a clearer vision of myself as being created in the image of God. Even though sins and faults have blurred it and distorted it, God’s image—God’s gifts, longings and desires—is still there. If God’s will and mine are friends instead of enemies they can start to work together in finding a way forward. Not that it always is easy; even as friends, there are things to be worked on and disagreements to be sorted out. But this does seem to be a very different perspective, one that is filled with hope.

¹ *Autobiography*, n. 54.

Building the Reality

During 2010, the practical side of the retreat house started to come together. For some time we had been speaking openly about our dream and, during the spring, we asked some people who shared it if they would be part of a board of directors so that we could work on it together. From the beginning, we were aware of the fact that we needed people around us to support and guide us in the development of the project.

We had the dream of creating the retreat house in an ecumenical setting, with people from different church backgrounds bringing their unique experience and gifts with them. At the same time we wanted to focus on Ignatian spirituality and its ability to accommodate diversity. This was not an easy process. Open working relationships seldom are! There have been a number of challenges and bumps on the road but, all in all, we have discovered the capacity to work together. It is our experience that the path of Ignatian spiritual accompaniment—depending on the Holy Spirit as the true guide—gives room for a spacious and respectful way of moving forward together, even for people from different backgrounds. We do not have to leave our homes to walk together. We just need to respect each other on the road.

We were presented with the opportunity of purchasing an old restaurant, which we had been looking at for a couple of years. The building was in bad shape but perfectly situated in the middle of some of Denmark's most beautiful scenery. Again the timing was perfect, as God called forth the right people at the right moment. The finance for purchasing and renovating the old structure, as well as adding a new building with twenty modern, en suite rooms, was raised. The framework for the new Ignatian-inspired retreat house was taking shape.

There is a time for building and a time for resting. The next year and a half was used for renovating and building. We gathered a team of hard-working people who saw this as their contribution to the Kingdom of God. Spirituality is practical, and sometimes laborious. It became obvious to us that our past lives suddenly turned out to be gifts contributing to the process that God had in mind for us. Part of my professional life had been spent in the building industry. As a young man I trained to be a carpenter, and worked in different areas of management in a building company in our home town. This is probably part of the reason why I love the story of Jesus in his home town of Nazareth: 'Is not

this the carpenter?’ (Mark 6:3) Yes, he is! He is more than that—but he is also the carpenter! The incarnational aspect of Ignatian spirituality helps us to defeat a dualism that has had a tendency to shadow Christianity throughout church history. Christ stepped right into our world, and picked up a hammer and saw. Spirituality is about real life!

In 2012 I did the spiritual accompaniment courses at Loyola Hall. This became part of the preparation for our work at the new retreat house, which was beginning to take shape in the beautiful countryside, 12 km west of the city of Randers in central Denmark. The same year we opened the doors for our first official retreat, with twenty retreatants staying in the new facilities. In a sense this was the beginning of a new life for Heidi and me; we were now the hosts of an ecumenical, Ignatian-inspired retreat house. The dream planted during our first retreat together in Sweden in 2004 had been incarnated in real life. Here, once again, we saw the different stages of our life being turned into gifts. Heidi’s work life had been filled with organizing and planning. This was something that came in handy in the course of setting up the day-to-day programme and schedule for the retreat house. Her natural gift and talent for cooking good healthy and tasty food became an important part of our work as hosts and administrators of the house.

In the five years that have passed since our first retreat, we have seen many people meet themselves and God in numerous ways. It does not cease to amaze me what silence can do for a person. There is a great



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The main building at Ådalen Retræte



The chapel

deal of truth in something that Magnus Malm once said to me: ‘The most important thing for a spiritual guide is *not* to get in the way of the Holy Spirit when he meets the retreatant in the silence of the retreat’.

During this time we have established a balance between three main groups of activities that more or less fill up the calendar.

- **Ignatian spirituality and retreats.** Even though they only take up about a third of our capacity, our main focus is on Ignatian spirituality and Ignatian retreats. To help us with this, we have a group of retreat leaders and retreat guides with whom we work closely. Most of them are from different Protestant denominations and backgrounds, and a number of them have been on the same path as us during the last two decades. We also have a Catholic St Josef Sister in the group. In 2014 a team from Loyola Hall visited us and helped out with different workshops in spiritual accompaniment and other aspects of Ignatian spirituality and thought.
- **Other retreats.** Besides our primary focus on Ignatian spirituality, another third of our capacity goes to different Protestant and Catholic groups that rent our facilities to host their own retreats. Besides filling the house and giving other groups the possibility of coming away to a silent place, this also offers us the inspiration of seeing other ways of doing retreats. The ecumenical fellowship and the fact that God meets us as we are—with all our differences—never cease to amaze us.

- **Pastoral and leadership gatherings.** The remaining third of our capacity goes to pastoral and leadership gatherings. This has been a very helpful way of meeting pastors and leaders from all areas of the Danish Church. I do not think there is a single group that has been here who have not, in one way or another, commented on the spiritual atmosphere of the house. Some of the groups have been coming annually since the first year we were here. It is a blessing just to see them settle down and breathe in the quietness and peace. Another gift of having different Christian leaders and pastors in the house is the opportunity to share our passion for silent retreats and Ignatian spirituality.

A Spiritual Awakening

Our experience has convinced us that Ignatian spirituality has something to contribute to all corners of the Church in Denmark and even beyond the borders of the Church. In meeting those who have left the Church searching for a spirituality that they have not been able to find within it, we also hear stories of Ignatian spirituality being helpful. During the last decade we have seen the Danish Lutheran bishops appointing pastors to work with the spirituality of people on the margins of the Church: people who are seekers but have a hard time with church. For years, the spiritual climate in Denmark has been formed by a secular system of thought, which in many ways has left a vacuum and a longing for a spirituality that is personal, practical and relational. This, I think, plays a role in the search for spiritual fulfilment both outside and inside the Churches.

Retreats and Ignatian spirituality, together with the new-found popularity of going on pilgrimage—finding God in nature along some of the old pilgrim routes in Scandinavia—are all part of what might be seen as a spiritual awakening in our secular Scandinavian society. We find this very inspiring, and see how Ignatian spirituality has the ability to strengthen what Christians of diverse backgrounds have in common and how it gives a framework for ecumenical coming together: seeking for and finding God in all things.

Another development that we see in Denmark arising from Ignatian inspiration is spiritual accompaniment in daily life. In our group of retreat leaders, we have a Baptist pastor and a pastor from another Protestant Church who spend most of their time on Ignatian spiritual accompaniment.

It is highly unusual among the Danish Churches to see pastors taking on spiritual accompaniment as a major part of their role. Moreover a number of people, again pastors from various different backgrounds, offer spiritual accompaniment in daily life. There is a growing awareness of the need for spiritual accompaniment as a way of growing in a personal relationship with God and finding the way and the will of God in everyday life. In this process the Ignatian principal of being contemplative in action takes on a practical form. When we discover our inner God-given life—the spring of living water—and learn to reflect upon it with a competent spiritual guide, this can help us to discover our God-given purpose. Our activities, choices and actions can begin to grow out of our inner convictions and desires.

From the very beginning it was obvious to us that the spread of spiritual accompaniment called for a place offering support and supervision. Thus, when we invited the team from Loyola Hall in 2014, they set up a workshop introducing us to the group supervision model that was created at Loyola Hall. This has been a great help to us in the years that followed. We have a group of pastors from different church backgrounds, other retreat leaders and guides who now meet regularly for group supervision. We share with each other and support each other in the task of spiritual accompaniment. The contemplative model has proved to be a good way of keeping us focused on the main objective. Supervision within the mindset of Ignatian accompaniment—listening to the Holy Spirit who is the main guide and supervisor—has proved fruitful and has helped us to avoid the temptation of ‘case discussion’ focused on different views and methods. Exploring different views and methods can, of course, be done outside contemplative supervision and can also have its value when it is open and unconditional.

Looking ahead, we are very much aware of the need for support in maintaining and developing the different aspects of Ignatian spirituality—and discerning how this looks in the context of a Danish ecumenical retreat house. At all events, we remain Ignatian-inspired, and well aware of the fact that our history is short and we need to put down deeper roots. We need help from others who have been travelling this road for longer than we have. Our relationship with the Ignatian retreat movement in Sweden and Norway has been and remains a good support. In many ways the Scandinavian countries have a closely linked history and culture, and this helps us to put our Ignatian inspiration in perspective



Johannes and Heidi

in our own setting. At the same time, it has been a great blessing for both Heidi and myself, and a number of the other retreat leaders with whom we work, to do retreats, courses and training, formerly at Loyola Hall and now at St Beuno's in Great Britain. This also encourages us to hope that the Ignatian inspiration in Denmark will grow stronger over the years to come.

As a part of this development, we are happy to be welcoming a guest from St Beuno's during the autumn of 2017. Karen Eliassen is Danish and has been working at Loyola Hall and St Beuno's for a number of years. We consider her visit to be a great gift that will enable us to build more on what we have already achieved. We are offering a range of talks, courses, gatherings and retreats—all with the aim of sharing and deepening the understanding of Ignatian spirituality in a Danish ecumenical setting. Karen is facilitating the Spiritual Exercises by training and supervising a group of Danish retreat leaders who will be giving the Exercises to others—some on a thirty-day retreat and some doing the First Week on a ten-day retreat. We hope to see the fruit of this valuable work in the years to come.

To sum up, for us the adventure of discovering and growing in Ignatian spirituality in the framework of an ecumenical retreat house has a great deal to do with finding God in all things—seeing the gifts of God in each person we encounter, and seeing God in the practicalities of everyday life. Whatever spirituality is, it must be seen in the ordinary

lives of the individuals and groups that profess to practise it—not in perfection, but in the nitty-gritty of life as it is. The story of Ignatius is a large part of our inspiration: trying, succeeding, failing, getting up and trying again, through consolation and desolation, discerning and finding our way together. This has been our experience and it is our hope that we will be able to share it freely with those who wish to join us on the journey in the years to come and, as Ignatius would say, ‘to be of benefit to souls’.

Johannes Lind Pedersen, together with his wife, Heidi, manages the Ignatian-inspired retreat house Ådalen Retræte in Denmark (www.aadalenretraete.dk; info@aadalenretraete.dk).