PRINCIPLES FROM INCULTURATION

AS A KEY TO INTERRELIGIOUS PRAYER:

BEING RELIGIOUSLY REVELATORY AND EDUCATIVE IN A DIVERSE WORLD

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DISSERTATION

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Mitakuye Oasin! All my relatives!

Namaste! The Divine Light in me bows to the Divine Light in you!

Baruch Ha-Shem! Thanks be to God!

Al-hamdu lilah! Praise God!

Sat Nam! There is one God, one Truth!

Alleluia! Praise God!

Namu Shinnyo! To become one with our true nature!

Ad majorem Dei gloriam! For the Greater Glory of God!
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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

Introduction

This researcher’s interest in inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and prayer can be traced back to a course taken at Catholic Theological Union, in Chicago, in the fall of 1987. The course was titled, *Training for Cross-Cultural Ministry*, and involved reading the following books: Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1974, Vincent Donovan’s *Christianity Rediscovered: An Epistle from the Masai* (1978), Edward T. Hall’s *Beyond Culture* (1977), Paul F. Knitter’s *No Other Name?* (1985), and William Stolzman’s *The Pipe and Christ* (1986). The course examined questions of culture, contextualization, liberation, and what it means to be a global citizen.

In addition to the aforementioned books, the course involved a visit to the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota and participating in religious ceremonies of the Lakota people. This cross-cultural immersion experience broadened the researcher’s understanding of God, Christianity, religion, and prayer. The activities and coursework allowed participants to experience God outside the Christian/Roman Catholic tradition.

The long drive from Chicago to the Rosebud reservation was a kind of pilgrimage that included a stop at Pipestone National Monument in Minnesota. The red rock indigenous to this area is used to make the bowl of the pipes that are sacred to many Native American religious traditions. This researcher learned about the Lakota belief that different rock formations, some with the shape of human faces, are believed to contain the spirits of ancestors that whisper to the living.

At the Rosebud Reservation, students observed the poverty endemic to many reservations in the United States. All of the students on the trip were prepared in advance
and sensitized about the importance of respecting the residents and making themselves as inconspicuous as possible so as not to be disruptive or disrespectful. Special permission was needed to participate in the Lakota ceremonies.

The Inipi ceremony is a purification/healing ceremony that takes place in a sweat lodge and involves the literal sweating out of impurities under the guidance of an experienced spiritual leader of the Lakota religion (Wikipedia contributors 2016a). The sweat lodge ceremony was very similar to a sauna. Water was poured over hot rocks which created intense heat for those seated in the center of the tent. The experience included prayer and singing in the Lakota language including during preparation and the heating up the rocks. The Medicine Man provided some translation and explanation in English. One of his messages was, “no one is any better than anyone else.”

The Lowanpi/Yuwipi ceremony is another healing ceremony (The Singing Stone 2013). Preparation included the making of small tobacco pouches. As each cloth pouch was made and filled with tobacco, prayers were recited for the intentions and healing of the participants. The ceremony involved the sacrifice of a puppy, which was used for a soup consumed at the end of the ritual. The dog is a beloved and sacred animal for the Lakota as they warn inhabitants of the village of danger. On a recent trip to Mexico, this researcher heard the tour guide mention the sacrifice of dogs within the Mayan culture based on the belief that the sacrificed animals will lead people into the afterlife (Wikipedia contributors 2016b). The ceremony takes place in a darkened room and, like the Inipi ceremony, involves prayers and singing accompanied by drummers. Participants sit in a circle throughout the ceremony. A manifestation of spirits was experienced through sounds and the flickering of lights in the darkened room. The darkness of the
ceremony was similar to the darkness of the sweat lodge tent. The meal, consisting of the puppy soup, concluded the ceremony.

These experiences have been the inspiration for the researcher’s interest in inculturation, interreligious prayer, and interreligious dialogue. The sacred words of the Lakota “mitakuye oasin,” or “all my relatives,” describe the predisposition for entering into interreligious dialogue and prayer (Wikipedia contributors 2016c). These words express the Lakota understanding— as well as those of many religious traditions— that all living beings both human and nonhuman are in relation with one another. This connection demands understanding and respect for all beings.

Since this researcher’s visit to the Rosebud Reservation, there has been concern over allowing non-Native Americans to participate in the ceremonies previously mentioned. The Protection of Ceremonies was issued in March, 2003 (Looking Horse 2003, 1-5). This document, written by Chief Arvol Looking Horse, was endorsed by other tribal leaders. It discusses abuses taking place within the ceremonies, unauthorized leaders, and spiritual services being sold for financial gain. Whether to allow outsiders or non-Native American individuals to participate in the ceremonies is a continuous source of debate within the Native American community (Dupree 2011, 1-8).

Other examples of resistance to or prohibition against participation in an interreligious prayer service are found in reactions to 9/11/01 attacks and the Newtown, Connecticut school shootings. Because the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) prohibits “joint worship services,” Pastor David Benke was suspended after participating in an interreligious service held at Yankee Stadium to pray for the victims of the 9/11 attacks, and the Rev. Rob Morris was reprimanded after the interreligious service
following the Newtown school shootings. However, Rev. Matt Cremins of the Newtown Congregational Church, made this statement at the service after the incident: “We are not here to ignore our differences or to diminish the core beliefs which define our many different faith traditions” (Bell 2013, 2). While LCMS declared that participation in these services is to be avoided, it also stated: “the Missouri Synod does not unanimously agree on what joint worship is. The denomination is still attempting to define it” (Bell 2013, 2).

In a related case, a political science associate professor, Larycia Hawkins, is being threatened with termination at Wheaton College, an evangelical college in Illinois. The reason is because she made a controversial statement on Facebook that Muslims and Christians worship the same God (An 2016, 1).

Reasons for resistance to interreligious prayer are further explored in chapter two. It argues that a large part of the resistance to interreligious prayer is based on an understanding of revelation that is something that can be possessed by a particular religious tradition as a set of truths from the past, contained in sacred scriptures or tradition. This understanding of revelation has led to a modern notion of distinctly different Christian, Jewish, and Muslim revelations thus creating a competition between religious traditions that each claim to be the one, true religion.

In Believing in a Revealing God, Gabriel Moran (2009, 4) states:

Each religion has a right to claim, and does claim, to have the most accurate interpretation of God’s revealing activity. But no religion can claim to possess God’s revelation. When each religion is understood to have an interpretation of divine revelation, that language allows different religions to live together peacefully and makes it possible for one religion to learn from another without abandoning the truth it knows.

He restates this point, “The Catholic Church has to avoid the posture of possessing the treasure. While holding on to the best in its own tradition, it has to be a
learner in relation to other traditions” (59). A statement made at an interreligious prayer service succinctly expresses this point, “No religion is an island; there is no monopoly on holiness.” The caution in Moran’s statement refers to any religious tradition that would make the claim of having a “monopoly” on holiness, or to “possess” revelation. It is the researcher’s observation that this is often one of the assumptions informing the perspective of those who object to or resist interreligious prayer. As a paraliturgy, interreligious prayer can shed light on this foundational religious assumption and possibly lead to transformation through critical reflection.

This researcher’s experiences have led him to adopt a stance that resonates with Moran’s outlook and that stands in contrast to the perspectives of those who resist or reject interreligious prayer. Specifically, in 2004, after attending an interreligious prayer service at Memorial Methodist Church, White Plains, New York, the researcher was compelled to plan and facilitate an interreligious prayer service to promote interreligious dialogue, peace and justice. This endeavor has continued for the past eleven years. Representatives from the world religions are invited to offer a prayer or statement of peace that promotes living together in peace and interreligious harmony. For examples of this service, the World Days of Prayer at Assisi, Pope Francis at the 9/11 Memorial Interfaith Service, and other interreligious services see chapter four and the Appendix.

In summary, the cross-cultural course coupled with the Lakota immersion experience and reflection on the interreligious prayer services mentioned above, have been the impetus for this researcher’s interest in inculturation and interreligious prayer.
Background Issues

This research builds upon the religious education theories of Maria Harris and Gabriel Moran. They identify prayer as one of several different curriculum/forms of religious education (Harris 1989; Moran 2007). It will also draw insight from the religious education theory of Thomas Groome (1991). He affirms Harris’ perspective, namely that prayer forms, nurtures and educates (339). This teaching is found in the Vatican II document Sacrosanctum Concilium which states that liturgy not only has a primary intent of worshipping God, but “contains much instruction for the faithful” (Flannery 1975, #33, 11). The *General Directory for Catechesis* states: liturgy must be regarded as “an eminent kind of catechesis” (Congregation for the Clergy 1997, # 70).

It should be noted that the ecclesial documents cited in the above paragraph refer to the official liturgies within the Roman Catholic tradition, specifically as they relate to the celebration of the Eucharist. The other official Roman Catholic liturgies include the Liturgy of the Hours (USCCB 1976), and the Sacraments, along with other official Rites of the Church (Bouley 1992). The focus of this research is on interreligious prayer as paraliturgy and not as an official liturgy found within the Roman Catholic tradition.

The distinction between liturgies and paraliturgies for the purposes of this research is significant. Official liturgies of the Church are concerned with official books such as the Roman Missal, the Lectionary—which contains the Sacred Scriptures that are read within the various liturgies—and other books that contain specific prayers said within the liturgies. Episcopal Conferences have the responsibility of examining and approving changes to the liturgy including cultural adaptations. Additionally, the process of adapting liturgy to a local culture is understood as a double movement: “By
inculturation, the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures, and at the same time introduces people, together with their cultures, into her own community (Redemptoris missio #52 (1990) as quoted in Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments 2001, 190). Successful examples of this are explored in chapter three through the experiences of Matteo Ricci in China and Roberto di Nobili in India. While initially, both their efforts at inculturation were condemned due to disagreements and misunderstandings over what is or is not compatible with the Gospel and Catholic teaching, they would later receive approval from the Church for the principles they applied and the success they enjoyed.

Interreligious prayer as a paraliturgical service is not an official liturgy and does not fall under the authority of the Apostolic See, the Congregation for Divine Worship and regulations approved by Episcopal Conferences (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments 2001, 214). While it is forbidden to replace the readings of Sacred Scripture with nonbiblical ones, interreligious prayer as a paraliturgy could include an appropriate selection of sacred writing from different religious and nonreligious traditions (204).

Anscar Chupungco (1992) uses the terms “creative liturgies” and “alternative liturgies” to describe what this research will call paraliturgies (52-53). He defines these liturgies as planned for special occasions, oftentimes for youth, and to include features from the liturgical tradition or contemporary life and culture not found in the official rite, such as the previous example incorporating sacred scriptures from other religious traditions. He locates this creativity in the history of inculturated liturgies so that the
message could be understood by all gathered to worship (Chupungco 1992). More is attended to on these liturgies in chapter four and the Appendix.

The term “nonliturgical prayer” is used in the instruction by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that is titled *Instruction on Prayer for Healing* (2000). Under section II, Disciplinary Norms, in Article 2, it makes a distinction between liturgical prayer and nonliturgical prayer. “Prayers for healing are considered to be liturgical if they are found in the liturgical books approved by the church’s competent authority; otherwise, they are nonliturgical” (2000, 7).

Despite the differences between liturgy and paraliturgy, they are both forms of worship and both can be revelatory of the Divine. Hence, the researcher proposes that principles and guidelines developed for inculturation of official Roman Catholic liturgies can be used to guide the development of interreligious prayer as paraliturgy. The researcher argues that interreligious paraliturgies based on principles of inculturation hold the possibility of being authentic revelations of the Divine or Transcendent and religiously educative.

**Primary Research Question**

Drawing insight from the researcher’s experience of facilitating, planning, and attending interreligious prayer services, the central question of this research is: In the diverse and multi-religious world in which we live, can principles of inculturation be the key to developing interreligious prayer that is religiously revelatory and educationally formative? Furthermore, can an understanding of one revelation of one God be a bridge (rather than a barrier) among religious traditions that can enable them to come together for interreligious prayer?
Thesis

The research identifies principles of inculturation that can guide the development of interreligious prayer as a paraliturgy. This in turn holds the possibility of interreligious prayer being both revelatory of the Divine and religiously educative in the diverse and multi-religious world of today. This is the thesis of the study. Moreover, interreligious prayer can be religiously educative and transformative as it promotes dialogue among differing religious traditions before, during, and after interreligious prayer experiences.

Turning now to the transformative and revelatory nature of interreligious prayer, in the document Revelation: Catholic and Muslim Perspectives (2006), the U.S. Catholic bishops state, “This revelation breaks into human life in surprising ways, challenges the usual assumptions of this world, transforms human awareness, and invites humans to a loving communion with God” (8). This work demonstrates the validity of this statement not only through the work of Gabriel Moran, previously mentioned, but also the work of Karl Rahner about the “liturgy of life.” For Rahner, God’s grace has embraced and pervaded the world since its very beginning in the form of God’s self-communication. Peter Phan (2004) writes, “These universal experiences of God and mystical encounters with God’s grace in the midst of everyday life, made possible by God’s self-gift embracing the whole human history, always and everywhere, Rahner calls the ‘liturgy of the world,’ or the ‘Mass of the world’” (Rahner 1976, 174 in Phan 2004, 268-269). Rahner and Phan focus on the universal experience of God first within and then beyond the official liturgies of the Church. Building on their insights, this research affirms the potential for a universal experience of the abiding presence of the Absolute and Holy Mystery in an interreligious prayer service.
Root Metaphor


1. When trying to understand another religion, you should ask the adherents of that religion and not its enemies.
2. Do not compare your best to their worst.
3. Leave room for “holy envy” which is the willingness to recognize elements in another religious tradition that one admires or wishes were part of one’s own religious tradition.

In summary, Holy Envy as a root metaphor describes the source of the author’s motivation behind the research and interest in how principles of inculturation are applied to interreligious prayer. The Three Rules of Religious Understanding are excellent principles and describe an appropriate predisposition for entering into interreligious prayer and dialogue.

Purpose and Significance of Research

The primary purpose of this research is to show how principles of inculturation are used to guide the development of interreligious prayer so that it is authentically revelatory and religiously educative in a religiously diverse world.

This purpose is achieved by exploring the history of inculturation of the liturgy and identifying elements of both culture and other religious traditions that have impacted
liturgical adaptation in meeting the needs of the people of a certain time and culture and that reveal or shed light on the mystery of God. Building upon the exploration of the history of inculturation, this research identifies principles of inculturation that can enhance interreligious prayer as a paraliturgical experience that is religiously educative.

Another purpose of this research is to highlight revelation as a bridge (rather than a barrier) among religious traditions and to discuss how interreligious prayer is a revelatory experience that encourages mutual exchanges that enhance a conversation among people of various religious traditions gathered together to pray.

The researcher explores post-Vatican II ecclesial documents that open the door to interreligious dialogue by welcoming the prayer of the other when it is “true and holy.” It also identifies resistance to interreligious prayer and dialogue. The researcher considers ways of moving beyond such resistance so that the Church can remain open to what is “true and holy” in other religious and/or non-religious traditions. The research argues that such openness is necessary for the fruits of the interreligious conversations of the past fifty years to continue to flourish rather than come to an end. It is critical for the purpose of this research to explore different examples or models of interreligious prayer that express a theology of unity and foster peace and justice among all people.

This research project contributes to conversations about interreligious education by exploring interreligious prayer as a curriculum of the church that is profoundly educational. It is unique in that it explores ways in which principles of inculturation can guide the development of interreligious prayer as a paraliturgical form of worship that is outside of the traditional framework of the official liturgy of the Church. This research adds to the body of knowledge within the field of religious education by arguing that
interreligious prayer is a new paradigm and form of religious education that can complement the official liturgy as a curriculum. Previous religious education theorists have focused primarily on the official liturgies within their respective traditions and not on an interreligious prayer service representing different traditions.

**Research Methodology**

This research project is a humanistic study. It views interreligious prayer as not only a curriculum within religious education but as a prayer experience that “seeks to improve the state of humankind in a global context” (Plummer 2012). The research is also interdisciplinary. First, a methodology of theological analysis is used in discussing how people can be open to the possible revelation of truth within more than one religion tradition. Second, the researcher offers a historical and theological analysis of how liturgy has been modified over time. As Chupungco explains, “no culture is static, the liturgy will be constantly subjected to modifications” (Chupungco 1982, 62). In the same way that the official liturgy of the Church is subject to revision, interreligious prayer as a paraliturgical prayer may also undergo changes depending on which religious and nonreligious traditions participate in the service. Hence, the analysis is guided by the question: How has and how can principles of inculturation foster interreligious prayer that is expressed and made concrete by various traditions with the purpose of worshipping a divine reality, and the seeking of a better world?

This research project employs the historical methodology developed by Marianne Sawicki (1987). Sawicki views history as affecting “both our ways of teaching and planning religious education, and our grasp of what it is that we teach and that we plan for.” She regards religious education as “a traditioning, a handing on of what has been
handed down: the stories which describe the origins of the community; values and rules of believing that delimit what is appropriate for the community; rituals and customs that express and enshrine those meanings. Religious identity is tradition’s gift” (375). She views tradition as handing down religious meanings “that can be taken up anew, retold, actualized.” For Sawicki, “tradition makes adaptation possible and necessary” and tradition gives the receivers of the tradition “a responsibility to contemporize it, to engage it with the crucial issues of an ever-changing world” (376).

The United States is the specific cultural and religiously pluralistic context for this research given the inherent danger such interreligious services can pose in other turbulent parts of the world. In places such as the Middle East, the Islamic State seeks to kill those participating in interreligious initiatives. Other parts of the world are equally as dangerous. In the current Ukraine/Russia conflict, a Ukrainian Catholic priest was kidnapped and threatened with death for organizing an interreligious prayer service. Other participants were beaten and murdered (Karapinka 2015, 13).

Two events are worth highlighting that contribute to the need for interreligious dialogue and paraliturgies in the United States. The birth of the interreligious movement in the United States arguably occurred at the World’s Congress of Religions at the World’s Columbian Exposition, in Chicago, Illinois in 1893. Twenty-four speakers representing the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions of Christianity, along with representatives from the Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Shinto, Confucian, and Zoroastrian traditions gave various talks to help others understand their religious traditions (Hanson 1894, 15-16). This event would give way to the future meetings of the World Parliament of Religions.
The second event is the impact of the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, which allowed immigration into the United States from countries other than Europe. As a result, a “Christian country” has become “the world’s religiously most diverse nation,” with Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, Hindu, Jew, Sikh, Zoroastrian, Islamic, African, and Afro-Caribbean traditions well represented” (Eck 2001 in Phan 2004, xix). Both of these events contribute to the ever-changing religiously pluralistic culture in the United States.

This research explores the historical development of inculturation within the Roman Catholic liturgical tradition that shows a development in the relationship of the Church to other non-Christian religious traditions. Overall, this research identifies the history of liturgical inculturation principles and guidelines that can be “taken up anew” to provide a foundation for interreligious prayer thus bringing people into deeper relationship with God and one another.

The historical methodology expounded by Jack Seymour (1987) illuminates the study. Seymour views history as an “interpretation” that gives meaning. He states, “the fundamental educational question is a historical question with religious dimensions of how a tradition is transmitted and reformed as it moves through time” (357). He continues, “When we ask whether and how religious education is catechesis or critical reflection, we are asking how it transmits faith through ritual, myth, and practice to a new generation, and how it empowers that new generation to participate in the continual reconstruction of that tradition” (357). This research argues that interreligious prayer that is deeply rooted in established religious traditions yet shaped by the need to adapt liturgical and paraliturgical forms to contemporary social and cultural contexts can be a teaching-learning experience that enables people of differing religious traditions to share
their beliefs while teaching and learning from one another. It connects people to the established faith traditions and practices of the past while also being transformative of people’s lives and faith in the present. It also brings people of various religious and non-religious traditions together to pray and mark significant life moments with prayer.

**Review of the Literature**

*Primary Sources*

This research would not be possible without the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council document *Nostra Aetate, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, (1965)*. *Nostra Aetate*, which can be considered the primary document regarding the Roman Catholic Church’s relation to non-Christian Religions, states, “The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men” (Flannery 1975, #2, 739). This research shows how the rays of that truth shine within interreligious prayer. This researcher restates the above quote in a positive manner that is conducive to principles of inculturation, interreligious prayer, and dialogue: The Catholic Church accepts what is true and holy in these religions. This researcher argues that this includes the sacred scriptures, prayers, statements, and silence found in other religious and non-religious traditions. *Nostra Aetate* opened the door to interreligious dialogue and prayer within the Roman Catholic tradition as well as other religious traditions that were challenged by it. This researcher builds upon the insights of this important document.
*Sacrosanctum Concilium/The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* is the first of the sixteen major documents of the Second Vatican Council (Flannery 1975, 1). Anscar J. Chupungco (1982) considers it to be the Magna Carta of liturgical adaptation within the Roman Catholic tradition (42). Chapter 1, in particular Section III on The Reform of the Sacred Liturgy and letter D on Norms for Adapting the Liturgy to the Temperament and Traditions of Peoples, suggest principles for the cultural adaptation of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church which can also serve as guidelines when discussing the development of interreligious prayer. Some of these principles are: “not to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or good of the whole community” [and to] . . . respect and foster the qualities and talents of the various races and nations” (Flannery 1975, 13).

Several other Vatican II documents are explored because they offer support for the principles proposed in this research. They include, *Lumen Gentium/The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, *Gaudium Et Spes/The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, and *Ad Gentes Divinitus/Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity* (Flannery 1975).

*Lumen Gentium* (LG) speaks of the oneness of humanity through the expression “the People of God” (Chapter II, 9). “At all times and every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right has been acceptable to him” (cf. Acts 10:35). Paragraph 13 repeats this theme:

All men are called to belong to the new People of God. The one People of God is accordingly present in all the nations of the earth, since its citizens, who are taken from all nations, are of a kingdom whose nature is not earthly but heavenly. Since the kingdom of Christ is not of this world (cf. Jn. 18:36), the Church or People of God which establishes this kingdom does not take away anything from the temporal welfare of any people.
Rather she fosters and takes to herself, in so far as they are good, the abilities, the resources and customs of the peoples. In so taking them to herself she purifies, strengthens and elevates them.

All men are called to this catholic unity which prefigures and promotes universal peace. And in different ways to it belong, or are related: the Catholic faithful, others who believe in Christ, and finally all mankind, called by God’s grace to salvation. (364-365)

Paragraph 16 is significant for counting those who have not yet received the Gospel among the People of God. These include those from the Jewish and Islamic traditions, those who seek the unknown God, and:

those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation. Nor shall divine providence deny the assistance necessary for salvation to those who, without any fault of theirs, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, and who, not without grace, strive to lead a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is considered by the Church to be a preparation for the Gospel and given by him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life. (367-368)

*Ad Gentes Divinitus* (9) affirms the principles of inculturation that are based on respecting the rites and culture belonging to other people and nations. It recognizes “elements of truth and grace which are found among peoples, and which are, as it were, a secret presence of God;” and, “So whatever goodness is found in the minds and hearts of men, or in the particular customs and cultures of peoples, far from being lost is purified, raised to a higher level and reaches its perfection, for the glory of God, the confusion of the demon, and the happiness of men” (Flannery1975, 823).

Paragraph 22 speaks of the young churches that “take over all the riches of the nations which have been given to Christ as an inheritance” (cf. Ps. 2:8).

They borrow from the customs, traditions, wisdom, teaching, arts and sciences of their people everything which could be used to praise the glory of the Creator, manifest the grace of the savior, or contribute to the right ordering of Christian life. Thus a way will be opened for a more profound
adaptation to the whole sphere of Christian life. This manner of acting will avoid every appearance of syncretism and false exclusiveness; the Christian life will be adapted to the mentality and character of each culture, and local traditions together with the special qualities of each national family, illumined by the light of the Gospel, will be taken up into a Catholic unity. So new particular churches, each with its own traditions, have their place in the community of the Church, the primacy of Peter which presides over this universal assembly of charity all the while remaining intact. (839-840)

This research would not be possible without a liturgical perspective towards interreligious prayer. The works of Anscar J. Chupungco, *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy* (1982), *Liturgies of the Future: The Process and Methods of Inculturation* (1989), and *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechesis* (1982) provide this liturgical expertise and perspective by offering three basic principles of inculturation that are viewed through the lens of theology, liturgy, and culture. According to Chupungco, the adaptation of the liturgy over the course of millennium “to various native genius and tradition is not a novelty but fidelity to tradition” (Anscar J. Chupungco 1982, 3). Chapter four explores how “various native genius and tradition” are expressed through examples found in various interreligious prayer services.

Chupungco provides a valuable discussion of the historical development of inculturation as found in the rite of baptism, and other liturgical rites and forms of prayer. This study draws insight from his work in offering principles of inculturation to guide the development of interreligious prayer.

Alyward Shorter’s book, *Toward a Theology of Incarnation* (1988), is an excellent complement to and support for the work of Chupungco’s work on inculturation. Shorter offers clarification of terms used and gives an historical look at Inculturation and the Post-Reformation Missions including the stories of how Matteo Ricci and Roberto di
Nobili offered successful examples of inculturation that were initially condemned by the Church authorities and later supported.

In her book *Fashion Me A People, Curriculum in the Church* (1989), Maria Harris identifies liturgy as one of the curriculums of the Christian church (16). While Harris does not address paraliturgies, she identifies four considerations that are critical for personal and corporate prayer: spirituality, refusing to divorce prayer and action from justice, the importance of designing a service that fosters multiple roles and multiple involvements and a center for resources (102). All of these considerations are taken into account in chapter four when discussing how an interreligious prayer service can be religiously educative.

Gabriel Moran’s *Religious Education as a Second Language* (1989) proposes a positive view of religious pluralism and its relationship to religious education that is integral to this research. “Pluralism today is the demand that each religion be affirmed as important but only in relation to the others: that is, the plural and the relative are understood positively” (229). Moran argues that a positive view of religious pluralism was necessary for the development of religious education as a field of academic inquiry and that now, “religious education is the condition for sustaining religious pluralism” (230). According to Moran, there are two aims of religious education: a better practice of one’s own religion and a deeper understanding of another religious tradition. “One cannot intelligently and freely practice any religion today without some understanding of the other, some backdrop of comparison” (230).

In *Believing in a Revealing God* (2009), Moran explains that one of the best ways for a Christian to gain a better understanding of Christian teaching is to be involved in
interreligious dialogue. He states, “A Christian interpretation of believing in a revealing God is best situated within an interreligious dialogue” (126). This researcher draws insight from Moran’s work in discussing how interreligious dialogue can be religiously educative.

Moran also makes a very helpful clarification regarding revelation when it comes to the number of religious and non-religious traditions that gather for an interreligious prayer service. He recognizes:

Each religion has a right to claim, and does claim, to have the most accurate interpretation of God’s revealing activity. But no religion can claim to possess God’s revelation. When each religion is understood to have an interpretation of divine revelation, that language allows different religions to live together peacefully and makes it possible for one religion to learn from another without abandoning the truth it knows. (4)

This is explored in chapter two and throughout this research.

Moran’s *Both Sides: The Story of Revelation* (2002) offers helpful information regarding the logic of revelation as it relates to other religious traditions. He states: “The Christian church will never have a consistent comprehensive meaning of revelation until Christians have an extensive conversation on the topic with Jews and Muslims” (viii). For Moran, this conversation should include the truths of each religion as they have experienced them, and for each tradition to discover a “universal relevance, even though every formulation of experience is particular” (187). This research argues that each of the unique and particular contributions of prayer, scripture, or silence can be expressions of the universal within an interreligious prayer service.

This research supports the “passing over” theory of John S. Dunne, in his book *The Way of All The Earth: Experiments in Truth and Religion* (1972) as a desirable outcome that comes about through an experience of interreligious prayer. The “passing
over” theory of Dunne starts with an experience from one’s own religious tradition that “passes over” into another religious tradition, via prayer or dialogue. An individual emerges from this encounter with a different perspective of both his or her own tradition as well as of the other’s. This research affirms this process that can be a result of an encounter with another religious tradition through experiences of prayer, scripture and silence found in an interreligious prayer experience. It can further lead to conversation with the “Other” be that “Other” an understanding of God or a deeper understanding of another religious tradition.

The Transformational Education theory of Jack Mezirow summarized in *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (1991) starts with the preconceptions one brings to an experience and moves to an experience that causes someone to reflect critically on their assumptions which can lead to a place of “perspective transformation” (Mezirow 1990). The end result is a transformational learning experience or “emancipatory learning.” This perspective is valuable in chapter five of the study.

**Secondary Sources**

Peter C. Phan’s *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue* (2004) contains a chapter on liturgical inculturation. Phan upholds the value of diversity that is key to this research. “Diversity and plurality, which otherness implies, are seen not as curses to human flourishing to be exorcised or as threats to human unity to be suppressed. Rather, they are to be vigorously promoted and joyously celebrated as natural endowments necessary for genuine peace and justice” (xviii). He also addresses the resistance to interreligious prayer that is a result of a threat to the institutional order and well-being of the church. He raises the question central to this research: “How can
the church not only respect but also incorporate into its own life and worship the teachings and practices of other religions in order to be enriched and transformed by them?” (xix).

A feminist view of cultural pluralism and a different way of recognizing inculturation can be found in Jeannine Hill Fletcher’s, *Monopoly on Salvation? A Feminist Approach to Religious Pluralism* (2005) and Mary Catherine Hilkert’s article “Experience and Tradition—Can The Center Hold?” (1993). Fletcher uses the term “hybridity” to complement what this research calls “inculturation.” In chapter four of her book, she proposes that “We are all hybrids” (82) and addresses the close relationship between the Jewish and Christian culture and religions and the Christian and Greek cultures and religions noting that there are “points of contact and overlap” (97). She proposes that our “hybrid religious identity challenges the ‘fact’ of religious pluralism” that tends to divide groups according to religious traditions as distinct entities (99).

“One’s ‘Christian’ identity ought not be thought of as isolated from other communities, nor as unaffected by so-called ‘non-Christian’ communities (religious or cultural). The categories themselves can be envisioned as unbounded and permeable, where identities are forged in the shifting between” (99).

Mary Catherine Hilkert provides a critique of revelation, in chapter two, that applies a feminist hermeneutic in which the experience of women is excluded from an understanding of revelation. This is due to a sexist and androcentric interpretation of scripture and tradition and a patriarchal hierarchy that has dominated the leadership and decision making in the Church. This important critique fosters an openness to the revelatory nature of other religious traditions.


Michael Amaladoss’s *Beyond Inculturation: Can the Many Be One?* (1998), offers a positive understanding of “syncretism” that challenges the traditional pejorative view of syncretism when applied to an interreligious prayer service. Judith Berling’s

**Organization of the Study**

*Chapter 1: Introduction and Organization of the Study*

This chapter introduces and provides background to the study. It discusses the research question, thesis, the root metaphor, purpose and significance of the research, the methodology, review of literature, and the organization of the work.

*Chapter 2: Revelation as Common Ground for Interreligious Prayer*

Interreligious prayer becomes problematic for a religious tradition when some of its adherents are resistant to the idea and practice of praying together with people of other religious traditions. This researcher argues that one of the sources of this resistance is a misunderstanding of revelation as something that can be exclusively possessed by any one group. Many base this assumption primarily on past events rather than on an understanding of the present as a time in which everything can be revelatory of God’s activity. The research argues this misunderstanding sets up a competition between religious traditions and assumptions regarding superiority, inferiority, and which tradition is right or wrong.

This chapter identifies revelation as common ground for interreligious prayer drawing insight from the work of Gabriel Moran. Moran identifies one God and one revelation that has particular expressions. Each unique expression is also one that expresses the universal. This chapter explores the two meanings of “uniqueness.” For Moran, revelation is not something that a particular religious tradition possesses, such as a Christian, Jewish, or Muslim revelation. This chapter explores revelation as a present
reality, without excluding the past and future, inviting human beings to respond and participate in the revelatory experience, and to learn from other traditions while not viewing them as a threat. It will include an understanding of revelation that is rooted in the relation “between divine activity and human response.”

Helpful to this chapter is a feminist critique of revelation and an exploration of different manifestations of revelation as found in the Vatican Council I document *Dei Filius* (1870), the Vatican Council II document *Dei Verbum* (1965), and various models of revelation as summarized by Avery Dulles (1983).

*Chapter 3: A Historical Survey: Liturgical Adaptation Revealing Principles of Inculturation for Interreligious prayer*

As a first step in discussing how to re-envision interreligious prayer so as not to be problematic, this chapter first explores historical examples of principles of inculturation that can guide interreligious prayer. The first section explores the development of the rite of baptism from New Testament times up to the present day. An understanding of one revelation, established in chapter two, of one God humanly expressed through various religious traditions, makes it easier to incorporate elements from one religious tradition into the other. The influence of these mystery rites and cultural elements on the rite of baptism provided greater meaning for the participants in the ritual and supports such additions that can be found in an interreligious paraliturgy.

The second part explores two attempts at inculturation that were successful but were eventually condemned by church authorities only to have their condemnation reversed years later. These are the Chinese Rites Controversy with Matteo Ricci in China and the controversy concerning the missionary methods of Roberto di Nobili within a Hindu culture in India. The condemnation was largely due to resistance to religious
plurality and diversity in a Chinese and Hindu cultural context regarding the incompatibility of both the religion and culture of Christianity. This resistance is often attributed to the fact that each religious tradition has its own understanding of revelation and claim of superiority.

Building on the historical analysis provided, the chapter analyzes various methods of inculturation. In the final section, the chapter explores the history of liturgical adaptation at Vatican II and in the post-Vatican II era. Based on the historical survey provided, the chapter concludes by discussing principles of inculturation that can guide interreligious prayer as a paraliturgy. Given an understanding of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through various religious traditions, an interreligious paraliturgy can be an experience that permits various religious traditions to express their unique prayers and rituals, while leaving room for worship that is inclusive of all traditions gathered for prayer.

Chapter 4: Principles of Inculturation and Models of Interreligious Prayer

This chapter situates interreligious prayer within four models, or paradigms of interreligious prayer (Pratt 1997, 1998, 2006): a shared multi-religious act, a contiguous multi-religious act, a combined multi-religious act and, finally, a coherent-integrated interreligious prayer. Thomas Ryan (2008) provides additional models and insights on interreligious prayer to supplement the categories of Pratt. The second part examines interreligious prayer through the models of response and hospitality. The responsive model is concerned with occasions of communal crisis and civic celebration. The hospitality model is concerned with the roles of host and guest. Specific examples of interreligious services are examined in the World Days of Prayer for Peace in Assisi,
Italy that were started by St. John Paul II and continued with Pope Benedict XVI. Each of these days of prayer inspired countless other interreligious prayer services and opportunities for interreligious dialogue within the United States and around the world.

The chapter explores the role that prayer, sacred scriptures and silence play in the format of interreligious paraliturgical prayer services and concludes with principles of inculturation that were identified in chapter three. These principles can be adapted for paraliturgies and serve as a guide in discussing how to move beyond present-day objections to interreligious paraliturgical prayer. Moving beyond an understanding of multiple revelations to one revelation of one God humanly expressed through various religious traditions can allow for acceptance and openness to each prayer and ritual element of the service.

Chapter 5: Inculturation and Interreligious Prayer as Religiously Educative: Curriculum Proposals for the Church

This chapter begins with situating interreligious prayer within the curriculum of prayer or leiturgia as a form of religious education and a paraliturgical experience of prayer within the framework of the two sides of religious education: teaching and learning how to be religious in one’s own tradition and practices, and teaching and learning about other religious traditions in comparison to one’s own religious tradition. This chapter relies primarily on the work of Gabriel Moran and Maria Harris. Following a summary of the two sides of religious education the chapter establishes important principles for the educational form of schooling as a foundation and preparation for interreligious prayer as an educative and revelatory experience. Specific examples are given for classroom discussion from the Jewish and Muslim traditions by examining the language, ritual practices, and beliefs from each religious tradition. The role of justice
education is also explored in each religious tradition as further preparation for interreligious prayer being a result of collaborative social justice activity that might precede or follow a prayer experience. Following these examples, the chapter explores the impact of the null curriculum, and how interreligious prayer can be revelatory and transformational through the transformational education theories of Jack Mezirow and John S. Dunne. The chapter concludes with practical recommendations, the application of the root metaphor of the research, “holy envy,” and the limitations of the study.
CHAPTER 2: REVELATION AS COMMON GROUND FOR INTERRELIGIOUS PRAYER

Resistance to interreligious prayer is oftentimes a result of participating religious traditions feeling their religious traditions, doctrine, and way of praying are incompatible with other religious traditions. At the Assisi days of prayer explored in chapter four, this resistance was described thusly: “We gather together to pray, but we do not pray together.” This researcher argues that one of the sources of this resistance is a misunderstanding of revelation as something a religious tradition possesses based primarily on past events rather than on an understanding of the present as a time in which everything can be revelatory of God’s activity. This misunderstanding creates tension between religious traditions based on questionable assumptions as they vie for the right to claim religious superiority.

This chapter includes the development of the meaning of revelation from a pre-Vatican II interpretation found in the Vatican Council I Dogmatic Constitution, Dei Filius (1870) up to and beyond the Vatican Council II Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum (1965). Included in this exploration will be an exploration of the many different dichotomies and classifications for revelation. Next, a serious critique of the meaning of revelation is explored within a feminist hermeneutic and an interreligious context. This exploration presents the problem of whether or not other religious traditions are salvific and revelatory given the fullness of revelation found in Jesus Christ in the Christian tradition. Building on the work of Gabriel Moran, the researcher argues that one revelation of one God, uniquely and humanly expressed through various religious traditions, provides a common ground for interreligious prayer. Each unique, particular expression is also one that expresses the universal.
The chapter continues exploring the two meanings of “uniqueness.” For Moran, revelation is not something that a particular religious tradition possesses, such as a Christian, Jewish, or Islamic revelation. Rather, this chapter will explore revelation as a present reality, without excluding the past and future, inviting human beings to respond and participate in the revelatory experience, and to learn from other traditions while not viewing others as a threat. The chapter will conclude with six assumptions of revelation that can be either problematic or bridge building not only to interreligious dialogue, but also common ground for interreligious prayer. It is this understanding of revelation that will support the remaining chapters of the dissertation.

Pre and Post-Vatican II Meanings of Revelation

Vatican Council I Dogmatic Constitution Dei Filius

Dermot Lane (1981) offers a background to the Vatican I Dogmatic Constitution Dei Filius (1870) by exploring fideism, rationalism, and certain forms of deism (45). Fideism is the belief that reason was not necessary for an understanding of Christian truths given the primacy of faith and convictions of the heart. Rationalism is the opposite belief that nothing could be perceived as true unless it was true according to human reason. Deism is belief in a totally transcendent God who, after creation of the world, was no longer involved in the world.

Vatican I and Dei Filius addressed each of these beliefs. Against fideism the document affirmed the power of human reason to know God. Against rationalism it affirmed a supernatural revelation that was absolutely necessary for understanding the final destiny of humanity. This revelation consists of the communication of divine mysteries, the doctrine of faith, the deposit of faith and revealed truths. A distinction was
made between natural and supernatural revelation. Very little was said about the role of
Jesus Christ as a source of revelation. Instead, emphasis was placed on revelation as a
body of truths passed down from Scripture and Tradition that demanded obedience (Lane
1981, 45). The following statements are from chapter two on Revelation in *Dei Filius*.

The same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning
and end of all things, may be certainly known by the natural light of
human reason, by means of created things; but that it pleased His wisdom
and bounty to reveal Himself, and the eternal decrees of His will, to
mankind by another and a supernatural way.

Furthermore, this supernatural revelation, according to the faith of
the universal Church, as declared by the holy synod of Trent, is contained
in the written books and in the unwritten traditions which have been
received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself; or, through the
inspiration of the Holy Spirit have been handed down by the apostles
themselves, and have thus come to us. (Manning 1871, 210)

The interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures as having God as its author, under the
inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was to be determined by the teaching office of the Church.
No one was permitted to interpret the Scriptures apart from this teaching office of the
Church.

Vatican I characterized revelation with dichotomies and dualities that existed
between: faith and reason, natural and supernatural revelation, natural and supernatural
reason, and Scripture and Tradition. Revelation was understood primarily as a fixed body
of unchanging truths found in Scripture and Tradition with the teaching authority of the
Church as the sole interpreter. This understanding of revelation was based on
propositional truths, which, in Vatican I, can be described as a propositional model.

According to this model, God communicated basic truths to a specific group of people in
history, who then wrote down the truths in human language conditioned by culture and
religious experience and passed on through Scripture and the Tradition of the Church.
This Divine verbal communication took place between God and the world through the chosen people of the Jewish tradition found in the patriarchs and prophets. It continues through the apostles as messengers of God and the life of Jesus. Scripture is understood as the literal Word of God with revelation understood as God speaking to man (locution Dei) (Lane 1981, 30). This understanding of revelation is not concerned with other religious traditions except to exclude them from being receivers of this revelation. When revelation is understood as a deposit of truths, it “must be jealously guarded and defensively protected by the Church” (29).

Having looked at an understanding of revelation as a body of revealed truths in Dei Filius, that expresses a propositional model of revelation, this chapter now examines the shifts that occurred with the Vatican Council II document Dei Verbum.

Vatican Council II Dogmatic Constitution Dei Verbum

The Second Vatican Council started with a first draft of Dei Verbum in 1962 that continued the thought of Vatican I on revelation as a body of revealed truths passed down through Scripture and Tradition. The final draft of 1965 followed four additional drafts that presented revelation in a new and different perspective. However, continuity with Dei Filius was found in the opening paragraph of Dei Verbum (1) (Lane 1981, 46).

Following then in the footsteps of the Councils of Trent and Vatican I, this Synod wishes to set forth the true doctrine on divine Revelation and its transmission. For it wants the whole world to hear the summons to salvation, so that through hearing it may believe, through belief it may hope, through hope it may come to love. (Flannery 1975, 750)

The biggest change between Dei Filius and Dei Verbum is the movement away from understanding revelation as simply a body of supernatural truths contained in Scripture and Tradition and taught by the Church. Dei Verbum emphasizes the personal
and relational self-communication of God and God’s self to humanity in Christ. In *Dei Verbum* there is a movement away from revelation “as simply *revelata* (truths disclosed) to *revelatio* (personal disclosure)” (Lane 1981, 46). “It is the experience of the personal presence of God in history interpreted by the discernment of faith in community” (47). This includes the interpretation of Scripture in faith and its reception by faith in history and, more importantly, in the present experience of believers. Thus, there is an indissoluble relationship “between the experience of revelation and the faith interpretation of that experience” (47). This creates a unity between revelation and faith as found in Scripture and Tradition which takes place through words and deeds in history united together. The words lead to an interpretation of salvation history and proclamation of this history in the present experience of the believers. Thus, the language of Vatican II is dynamic, experiential and personalist. *Dei Verbum* also states that revelation is Trinitarian in that it is an act of God’s love expressed through Christ so humanity might share in God’s divine nature in and with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, revelation is a personal invitation to humanity calling for a response to enter into the divine life of God in the present life of believers (Lane 1981, 46).

*Dei Verbum* has a Christocentric focus. It claims that the most intimate truth is found in Christ, “who is himself both the mediator and sum total of Revelation (2)” (Flannery 1975, 751). *Dei Verbum* (4) notes: “The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord, Jesus Christ” (752). The statement expresses the idea that there can be growth and development that can be experienced through: listening to the Word of God in Scripture, the celebration of the
sacraments—especially the Eucharist, the teaching of the Church by the Magisterium, and the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Christian community and the world at large (Lane 1981, 47). The statement does not express the belief that God is no longer active in the world or that God is no longer communicating God’s self through the personal experience of humanity. All of Lane’s (1981) examples of revelation found in Christ show how an understanding of revelation developed beyond a Vatican I view of revelation as a body of truths based on past events or found solely in Scripture and Tradition.

The *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes* (1965) states that the Church has a responsibility to read and interpret the signs of the times in “language intelligible to every generation,” “in light of the Gospel (4)” (Flannery 1975, 905). This discernment of events, needs, and language “may be genuine signs of the presence of the purpose of God” (912) in the present life of the community of faith. The whole people of God, along with pastors and theologians, “with the Holy Spirit,” are called upon “to listen to and distinguish the many voices of our times and to interpret them in the light of the divine word, in order that the revealed truth may be more deeply penetrated, better understood, and more suitably presented” (946). The closing of revelation of God in Christ is an opening of revelation for humanity in the life of the Christian community (Lane 1981, 47).

For Lane, *Dei Verbum* recognizes a line of continuity with an understanding of universal revelation and a Jewish and Christian revelation. This observation affirms a notion of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through various religious traditions that guides this research. He writes, “The universal revelation of God to
mankind continues to take place in the world; it is discerned and interpreted through the 
lenses of Christian revelation which is normative for the followers of Jesus” (Lane 1981, 
47-48). This lens views continuity through Abraham, Moses and the prophets, to Jesus 
the Christ which is evidence of the unity of God in created realities and the revelation of 
God in history. This unity is different from the Vatican I view that there is a dichotomy 
and dualism between natural and supernatural revelation (48).

*Dei Verbum* situates all revelation within the world created by the Word and 
graced from the beginning of time. It emphasizes that the response to revelation is one of 
the whole person and not just an intellectual decision. This response is to God who 
reveals God’s self in the person of Christ as distinct from being revealed in a body of 
truths. *Dei Verbum* alludes to the role of experience in the process of revelation. 
According to *Dei Verbum* revelation is about the personal communication and dialogical 
relationship that exists between God and humanity in past and present history. What is at 
stake is a living faith versus a defense of a body of truths. If revelation is understood as 
going “beyond a body of truths into the deeper realms of interpretation, the experiential 
and the historical, then the concern of the Church will be to express that relationship in a 
language and practice that is in touch with people’s present, personal, historical 
experience of God” (Lane 1981, 49). This can only be achieved by understanding the 
present revelation of God through the Spirit in the Church and the world. *Dei Verbum*, 
Lane writes, “challenges the Church to perform this theological task by focusing on 
revelation as primarily a relational and personal encounter with the reality of God in 
Christ” (49).
In summary, in *Dei Filius* Vatican I presents a propositional model of revelation. It emphasizes that a body of truths passed down through Sacred Scripture and Tradition as interpreted by the official teaching office of the Church is the source of revelation. Scripture is understood as the literal Word of God communicated to specific people within the Jewish tradition. It is also communicated through the Apostles and the life of Jesus Christ in the Christian tradition. Vatican I responded to various beliefs at the time of the document including fideism, rationalism, and deism. *Dei Filius* was based on various dualities and dichotomies such as the dualities of natural and supernatural revelation and natural and supernatural reason.

Like *Dei Filius*, *Dei Verbum* speaks of a transmission of revelation through Sacred Scripture and Tradition and the ability to know God through human reason. *Dei Verbum* offers more of a biblical than a general meaning of revelation context (Moran 1992, 42-43). The biggest difference between *Dei Filius* and *Dei Verbum* is that the latter emphasizes the central role of Christ as the source of revelation, who is himself both mediator and the sum total of revelation. It also emphasizes a personal encounter with Christ that calls for human beings to commit their entire selves to God with a full submission of intellect and will. This meaning of revelation continues to be the official understanding in the Roman Catholic Church today.

Other documents of Vatican II recognize that revelation may be present in the events, needs, and desires of the modern world. The interpretation of these events is to take place within the community of faith in the present experience of believers and the Church. This research brings attention to interreligious prayer as one of the signs of the
times that calls for discernment and that can be potentially revelatory and educative of the presence and purpose of God within various religious traditions.

Rather than maintain a dichotomy between natural and supernatural revelation, *Dei Verbum* avoids these words and affirms a continuity between universal revelation and the Jewish and Christian experiences of revelation. All of revelation is created by the Word, and grace allows humanity to have the faith to accept and believe these truths (*Dei Verbum* 3,4 in Lane 1981, 48).

Having examined the development of revelation within the context of the Vatican I document *Dei Filius* (1870) and the Vatican II document *Dei Verbum* (1965), this chapter will now explore various categories and dichotomies of revelation using the work of Avery Dulles (1991) and his five models of revelation and various theologians associated with these models.

**Models of Revelation: Avery Dulles**


Revelation as doctrine is expressed through propositional statements affirming attributes of God and beliefs in God as authoritative teacher and Supreme Being. Protestants experience this through the Bible as inspired and inerrant teachings. Catholics experience this revelation through sacred Scripture and sacred Tradition under the authority of the Magisterium (Dulles 1983, 27).

An understanding of revelation as doctrinal or propositional truth can be critiqued for failing to consider how historical, social, and cultural circumstances shape biblical
accounts. As a result of this doctrines or propositions based on the bible will always be limited by the biblical context and can never reveal God fully. Lastly, an understanding of revelation that is limited to the bible implies that God has stopped revealing God’s self to humanity and has withdrawn from the world, which revisits some of the aspects of deism mentioned earlier (Lane 1981, 30).

Revelation as history is based on the works and deeds through which God is revealed in the stories of salvation history. The Bible and church teaching are seen as embodiments of revelation that report on what God has done and serve as witnesses to revelation (Dulles 1983, 27). This view of revelation is supported by the twentieth century theologian Oscar Cullmann (1902-1999), who locates revelation within “salvation history,” a term used by J.C.K. von Hofmann (1810-1877) and the Erlangen school, which was a German, Lutheran school of theology in the 1850’s and 1860’s (56). A Catholic understanding of revelation in salvation history is offered by Jean Daniélou (1905-1974) in *The Lord of History* (1958). Danielou makes the distinction between a propositional revelation found in doctrine and revelation revealed in the stories of the Bible.

Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014), located revelation not only within salvation history but in universal history as well. According to Pannenberg, faith is not necessary to recognize revelation found in history. Rather, the self-manifestation of God through history elicits a response of faith and “a lively trust and hope in God’s saving power” (Pannenberg 1968, 135-139 in Dulles 1983, 59).

Because historical events uncover a revelation that is self-evident, the role of grace and faith are downplayed. So revelation in history is a matter of “scientific
investigation and rational discovery” (Lane 1981, 30-31). Neither the propositional nor the historical views of revelation give any attention to nonbiblical religious traditions, making both positions “irrelevant to the contemporary religious scene” (Dulles 1983, 68). This is due to the narrow interpretation of revelation that is rooted in the biblical backgrounds of Judaism and Christianity to the exclusion of the gifts that other religious traditions have to offer in their own scriptures and beliefs.

Revelation as inner experience upholds the importance of personal experiences of grace and communion with God. Some add that inner experience is mediated by Christ (Dulles 1983, 28). Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) was a German theologian who joined other theologians in locating revelation within the experience of the believer who had encountered Jesus in the New Testament (69). Other theologians located revelation within the “inner experience of God’s redeeming presence” and within the mystical experiences found in all religions (Ibid.).

A fundamental tenet of this model of revelation is that God is both transcendent and immanent. God can be experienced in any given moment, with some identifying receptivity to God as grace. These authors reject the dichotomy of natural and revealed religion since they envision religions as originating with particular experiences of the divine.

In critiquing the view that revelation is an inner experience, it can be noted that this view can lead to “excesses of interiority, individualism, and pietism” (Dulles 1983, 80). Because it rejects the external deeds and divine doctrines of the first two models this view of revelation is in tension with traditional church teachings and was officially
condemned by the Roman Catholic Church and conservative Protestant churches. Yet, it finds support in the mystical traditions of Catholicism and Protestantism (79).

Revelation as dialectical presence holds that God cannot be fully known through the objective evidence of the Bible, or history or other propositional teachings. An utterly transcendent God is a God who is both revealed and concealed simultaneously through personal experience (Dulles 1983, 28). Dulles identifies three theologians who champion this model: Karl Barth (1886-1968), Emil Brunner (1889-1966), and Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976). They share in an understanding of revelation as the highly mysterious self-communication of God. They understood the mystery of God as a paradoxical presence and absence via affirmations and denials, statements, and counterstatements (85).

All three theologians contend that the content of revelation is God’s self-communication in Jesus Christ as found in the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection (Dulles 1983, 86). Due to this emphasis on Jesus Christ, these theologians reject “the revelatory capacities of nature, of religious experience, and of non-Christian religious traditions” (87). Given the role of Christ as the content of revelation, they view revelation as “intrinsically salvific” (87). All three claim that the Bible and preaching witness to revelation, but are not revelation itself. The dialectical model of revelation can be critiqued for reducing revelation to a faith decision that creates a split between present faith and past history. It neglects the role of tradition and the Christian community as the interpreter of God’s revelation to humanity (Lane 1981, 31). It is also resistant to interreligious dialogue and even leads to negative views towards non-Christian religions, given that it is based on the presupposition that revelation can only come through Jesus Christ, the Word of God (Dulles 1983, 96).
The final model is revelation as new awareness. According to this model, the previous models of revelation are too authoritarian and their focus on personal experience is too individualistic. This model holds that revelation is an expansion of consciousness or a communal shift in consciousness and perspective that is found in secular history. God is not understood as an object of experience. Rather, human experience is seen as participating in the divine life (Dulles 1983, 28, 98). Theologians and religious educators who adopt some form of this model include: Gregory Baum (1923-), Gabriel Moran (1935-), Paul Tillich (1886-1965), and Karl Rahner (1904-1984). For Baum, faith and acceptance of revelation leads to “an entry into a new self-consciousness and a new orientation toward the world” (Baum 1969, 27 in Dulles 1983, 102). Paul Tillich believed that revelation is related to human questions coming out of a particular cultural and historical context. Revelation involves speaking to these questions in the present (Tillich 1951, 110 in Dulles 1983, 102). All of these scholars are in agreement; revelation is beyond revealed truths. God is present in human consciousness. The final part of this chapter will deal with Gabriel Moran’s understanding of revelation. Dulles comments that the new awareness model avoids rigidity and authoritarianism and offers greater flexibility in the reinterpretation of Scripture and Tradition (Dulles 1983, 110).

This model can be critiqued for not maintaining fidelity to Scripture and Tradition, since it focuses on God acting in the present and the reinterpretation of the past rather than a simple acceptance of the truth of Scripture and Tradition as established in the past. In viewing revelation as ongoing this model downplays the importance of tradition. At the same time, its validation of Christ revealing himself through non-Christian religions and secular ideologies moves it beyond the traditional understanding
of “revelation communicated once and for all in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, as witnessed by the apostolic Church” (Dulles 1983, 111-112).

In summary, these five models of revelation can all help us to understand revelation. However, all are limited. Revelation is more than just past truths, doctrines, or propositions that are affirmed as a way of responding to God in the present. It is more than just an inner experience. Moreover, the dialectical model of revelation and revelation based on doctrine and history do not provide a way of recognizing the revelatory nature of other religious traditions, and this presents problems for interreligious dialogue and interreligious prayer in our present world.

Dermot Lane (1981) offers theological principles for understanding revelation. First, he claims that revelation must be a personal, relational, and dialogical category that mirrors the relationship of human experience (32). This revisits the understanding of revelation in Dei Verbum. He uses the analogy of the human experience of relationships to describe one’s relationship with God. Over time a mutual trust, confidence, and communion develops between two people. Self-disclosure takes place through deeds and words that are consistent and have integrity and unity. An invitation is extended that requires a response in order for the relationship to continue. If accepted, the relationship moves to a new level of consciousness that is expressed through the language of love. These same dynamics are found in the process of divine revelation between God and humanity (32-33). Second, Lane claims that there is a fundamental unity between faith and divine revelation (33). There is no faith without divine revelation and no divine revelation without faith. Revelation also involves a process of conversion. It is received through human experience by both an individual and a community (34). Revelation is
always incarnational, sacramental, and experiential. There are no unmediated revelations of God in which God speaks directly or through theophany. Revelation relies on interpretation in linguistic symbols, narratives, stories, and doctrinal statements. These concepts will be attended to more fully later in this chapter.

The next section examines additional critiques of revelation from a feminist perspective and critiques based on a concern for interreligious dialogue. In the pluralistic and religiously diverse world of today, questions are raised as to who can be saved and the role of Jesus Christ, expressed in *Dei Verbum*, as both the mediator and sum total of Revelation.

A Feminist Critique of Revelation: Can the Center Hold?

A feminist theology of revelation takes place within the experience of women. It tackles questions of marginalization and the exclusion of women and how women experience God’s revelation.

Mary Catherine Hilkert (1993) raises important questions regarding the role of women in the Christian community: Who has the authority to interpret events, persons, symbols, writings, or teachings as revelatory of the divine and normative for the Christian community (Hilkert 1993, 60-61)? Claims of divine revelation have limited, critiqued, or denied women full participation in the Church on an equal level with men. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood (*Inter Insigniores*) (1976) relies on “a normative character” and “unbroken tradition throughout the history of the church” to justify an ordained ministry only for men (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1977 in Hilkert 1993, 61). Feminist theologians object to dogmatic appeals to the teaching and
ministry of Jesus and the unbroken tradition of the church because there is no recognition in these appeals of the patriarchal influence on biblical sources and the church’s tradition (61). A key question becomes, is the feminist perspective compatible with the Roman Catholic tradition?

With *Dei Verbum* (1965) there was a shift to a relational and dialogical model of revelation as divine-friendship in which God invites and human beings respond with their whole being. An understanding of revelation as a body of supernatural truths, authoritatively defined by an all-male magisterium with calls for full submission and obedience of faith and will, has been rejected by feminist theologians. Instead, they adopt a richer understanding of revelation as relational, dialogical, and experiential (Hilkert 1993, 64). Rosemary Radford Reuther describes revelatory experiences as “breakthrough experiences beyond ordinary fragmented consciousness that provide interpretive symbols illuminating the means of the whole of life” (Reuther 1983, 13 in Hilkert 1993, 64). As examples of experiences of revelation feminist theologians offer various accounts of conversion in friendship and other love relationships. Hilkert (1993) writes, “For feminists, not only is friendship a paradigm for the divine-human encounter, but human friendships are profoundly revelatory in themselves” (64).

In emphasizing the interconnectedness of human life with all of the natural world feminists find support in *Dei Verbum* (6), (1965). It states, “God, the first principle and last end of all things, can be known with certainty from the created world, by the natural light of human reason” (Flannery 1975, 752). Beyond the natural world and history as sources of God’s revelation, *Gaudium et Spes* (22), (1965) describes how “all men of
good will” can be partners with God and share in his friendship, “in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery” (924).

Hilkert points out that despite this possibility of every person sharing in God’s plan of salvation, in Christ, “nowhere in the documents are the religions of the world or human experience named as revelatory” (Hilkert 1993, 65). On the other hand, feminist theologians rely on multiple sources of revelation that include both religious traditions beyond Christianity and human experience.

If, as the Vatican II documents suggest, the natural world through creation and history can be revelatory, then revelation is an ongoing process that “must be expressed and symbolized anew in every age and culture” (Hilkirt 1993, 65). Feminists add that not only are time and culture sources of revelation but so are race, gender, class, and other factors that affect a person’s human experience of God. Hilkert finds the concept of revelation in the Vatican II documents to be undeveloped insofar as it does not attend fully to the ongoing unfolding and ever new nature of revelation (65).

The perception of revelation as ongoing stands in contrast with the traditional Christian view that revelation ended with the apostolic age. For Hilkert, this understanding of revelation focuses on revelation as a “deposit of faith” (65). Feminists offer three other interpretations of revelation to counter this view. First, while some feminists maintain that Jesus is the unique and definitive revelation of God they also “clearly emphasize the liberating and inclusive love of God that Jesus embodied and preached” (Hilkert 1993, 65). A second interpretation uses the female metaphor of Wisdom (Sophia) rather than the traditional metaphor of the incarnate word (Logos), which is associated more with the masculine gender of Jesus (65). A third position
identifies the limits of “any historical revelation of the mystery of the unknown God” (65). This is done by retrieving the apophatic spirituality and theology of the unknown God. The incomprehensibility of God remains and even the revelation of God in Jesus has limitations. This view is explored in the next section in a discussion of the work of Edward Schillebeeckx (1990). Some would say that claims about the uniqueness and normativity of Jesus Christ are arrogant and exclusive. They do not challenge Jesus as a liberating, prophetic figure (Hilkert 1993, 66). Yet, questions such as the following are raised: “Is the Christian tradition compatible with feminist experience? Can a feminist remain a Christian and a Catholic” (66)? The feminist challenge to understanding revelation and the uniqueness and normativity of Jesus Christ raises questions about tradition and how one remains faithful to tradition in a radically new situation.

Another feminist interpretation of tradition uses the metaphor of a quilt. The quilt can be made up of pieces from treasured garments as well as pieces from discarded scraps. The question becomes, who designs the quilt and who decides what pieces are to be included? From what sources or scrap bags are the pieces taken for the Christian quilt? How is “usable tradition” determined? Are there privileged pieces that must be included that are central to the quilt of the Christian tradition? Who decides what is to be treasured and what is to be discarded (66-67)?

While feminist theology, like other theological perspectives, looks to both the past and the present, it puts forth a distinctive perspective by raising the question: “Whose experience counts?” The differences between feminist and other perspectives are most prominent when the liturgy of the Church in the celebration of the Eucharist is examined. From a feminist perspective, an androcentric worldview, patriarchal control, and a male-
dominated sacramental system are incompatible with the experiences of women and cannot contribute to the formation of communities that are inclusive of the experience of women (Hilkert 1993, 71). This is the basis for the subtitle of Hilkert’s chapter, “The Center Can No Longer Hold.” Based on a feminist critique of liturgy, alternative communities of worship are being formed that are more inclusive of women’s experiences (71). Recently, two of these alternative communities met in Philadelphia during the visit of Pope Francis to the United States: The Women’s Ordination Conference and Women’s Ordination Worldwide (Fox 2015, 1, 13).

In summary, a feminist critique of revelation begins with a questioning of a theology of revelation that is male-dominated, patriarchal, and androcentric, and that marginalizes and excludes the experience of women within tradition, Sacred Scripture and liturgical participation. Instead, the feminist hermeneutic finds common ground with other theological perspectives in the Vatican II document Dei Verbum that understands revelation as relational and dialogical. Women identify with the relational and dialogical as found in the experiences of friendship and love. Feminist theologians also accept the idea that human life and the rest of the cosmos are interconnected as found in the traditional Catholic teaching on natural revelation. Because feminists locate the sources of revelation both within and beyond Christian traditions, a feminist perspective can be used to support research on interreligious prayer. Christian feminists recognize other religious traditions as revelatory and salvific. The identification of revelation within the specific lived experience of women inclusive of experiences of race, gender, class and other factors, is compatible with an effort to develop principles of inculturation that can apply to interreligious prayer. The feminist critique of revelation raises questions about
the compatibility of feminism with the Christian tradition and whether or not the experience of women will ever be recognized as revelatory of God. However, the feminist critique of the claim that Jesus Christ is the exclusively unique and definitive revelation of God includes an emphasis on the liberating and inclusive love of God that Jesus embodied and preached. Feminists also use a female metaphor found in wisdom/Sophia rather than the traditional metaphor of the incarnate word as Logos, which is more closely identified with the masculine gender of Jesus.

The next section examines the interreligious critique of revelation as it continues to examine the idea that Christ is both the sole mediator and sum total of revelation within the context of a religiously diverse and pluralistic world.

**The Interreligious Critique of Revelation**

From an interreligious perspective one can raise the issue of whether or not non-Christian and non-biblical religious traditions can be both salvific and revelatory. *Dei Verbum* (1965) states: “The most intimate truth which this revelation gives us about God and the salvation of man shines forth in Christ, who is himself both the mediator and the sum total of Revelation” (Flannery 1975, 751). The previous section addressed Jesus Christ as the normative means of salvation through the interpretive lens of a feminist critique of male leadership that excludes and marginalizes the experience of women in the Church. This section examines how pre-Vatican II sources and Vatican II documents discuss the salvific nature of revelation as it applies to other religious traditions. It then explores the identification of a universal, divine reality in all religions, theistic or nontheistic, in the work of John Hick. It also examines the interpretation of Jesus Christ as the norm of revelation for other religious traditions in the works of Edward
Schillebeeckx. In exploring other religious traditions as having a revelatory and salvific nature, the special relationship between Christianity and Judaism is discussed.

The Pre-Vatican II Documents and Revelation Concerning the Religions of the World

Peter Phan (2004) identifies religious plurality and diversity as threats to the institutional order and well-being of the Church given the importance of upholding centralization and uniformity (xxii). Interreligious prayer, as a paraliturgy, can be and, in fact, has been, seen as a threat to the uniformity of the official liturgy of the Church, and as such there has been resistance to its practice. Examples of this resistance are found in pre-Vatican II documents including the Decree for the Jacobites of the Council of Florence in 1442 which states: “those who remain outside the Catholic Church, including pagans, Jews, heretics, or schismatics, will go to the ‘eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,’ unless before their death they join the Catholic Church” (xxii). The Catholic Church no longer holds this position in the light of the teachings of Nostra Aetate and other Vatican II documents.

Pope Pius XI in Mortalium animos (1928) expressed a resistance to religious plurality and diversity that some may use today to discourage interreligious dialogue and prayer. The document refers to meetings attended by “infidels of every kind, and Christians, even those who have unhappily fallen away from Christ or who with obstinacy and pertinacity deny His divine nature and mission.” Today, the phrase “infidels of every kind, and Christians” would be considered a negative judgment of other religious traditions including other Christian traditions.
The Vatican II Documents and Revelation Concerning the Religions of the World

Nostra Aetate (2), (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (1965), embraces what Pope Pius XI called a “false opinion” regarding religious plurality, diversity and interreligious dialogue. The document calls for a respectful recognition of “primitive religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism” (Phan 2004, 139). It notes:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from its own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men. (Flannery 1975, 739)

The Catholic Church accepts what is true and holy in these religions. This researcher contends that the recognition that non-Christian religions can reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women can support the claim that other religious traditions can be revelatory.

Nostra Aetate (4) clearly recognizes the special relationship between Judaism and Christianity acknowledging the “spiritual ties which link the people of the new covenant to the stock of Abraham. The Church of Christ acknowledges that in God’s plan of salvation the beginnings of her faith and election are to be found in the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets” (Flannery 1975, 740). Nostra Aetate recalls Paul’s teaching that “the Jews remain very dear to God, for the sake of the patriarchs, since God does not take back the gifts he bestowed or the choice he made” (741).

Phan (2004) points out that the Jewish tradition is not considered just one of the non-Christian religions open to interreligious dialogue affirming the recognition of Judaism as a revelatory religion. He notes, “Rather, it affirms explicitly and unambiguously the reality of divine relation and grace—and not merely ‘elements of
truth and grace’ or ‘secret presence of God’ or ‘seeds of the word’ — in Judaism as well as the continuing validity of God’s covenant with Israel” (139). Further evidence of this special relationship between Judaism and the Catholic Church is found in the fact that the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews is located in the Roman Curia of the Catholic Church within the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity rather than the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (139). *Nostra Aetate* (4) also addresses the historical anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism that has been part of Jewish-Christian history, and rejects any charges of deicide brought against the Jews.

Given the special relationship between the Catholic Church and Judaism, there is recognition of the irrevocable covenant between God and Judaism that recognizes Judaism as a way of salvation separate from Christianity. For Phan, this “exacerbates the problems posed by religious pluralism, since it is claimed that at least one non-Christian religion, namely Judaism, is a way of salvation (‘a saving covenant with God’) apart, at least *prima facie*, from Christ and Christianity” (Phan 2004, 141).

This inclusion and acceptance of Judaism, as a non-Christian religion with a unique way of salvation apart from Christianity, could justify the inclusion and acceptance of other religious traditions as unique ways of salvation. It could also serve as an example of how we should understand the claim that there is one revelation of one God that is humanly expressed in differing ways among various religious traditions. Phan argues that if Judaism and other religious traditions are “part of the plan of divine providence and endowed with a particular role in the history of salvation. They are not merely a ‘preparation’ for, ‘stepping stones’ toward, or ‘seeds of Christianity and destined to be ‘fulfilled by it. Rather, they have their own autonomy and their proper role
as ways of salvation at least for their adherents” (Phan 2004, 143). This supports the claim that different religious traditions can be revelatory of one God while being uniquely expressed in differing ways.

This acceptance of the salvific nature of Judaism apart from Christianity affirms that other religious traditions have redemptive and salvific qualities that are indicative of one revelation of one God. Moreover, an understanding of multiple revelations is likely to foster competition and attitudes of superiority, inferiority, and exclusivity between religious traditions. Such attitudes are not conducive to interreligious dialogue.

While *Nostra Aetate* set a new standard for the Church’s relationship to non-Christian religions, Phan (2004) notes that “Vatican II self-consciously refrains from affirming that these religions as such function as ways of salvation in a manner analogous, let alone parallel, to Christianity” (139).

The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium 16)* affirms the possibility of salvation for Jews, Muslims, and those from other religious traditions and others “who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation” (Flannery 1975, 367).

The *Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity (Ad Gentes Divinitus 3, 9)*, (1965), speaks of God’s universal plan of salvation for mankind (Flannery 1975, 814). It recognizes the presence of “elements of truth and of grace which are found among peoples, and which are, as it were, a secret presence of God” (823). In Article 1: Christian Witness (11), Christians are called to be familiar with the “national and religious
traditions and uncover with gladness and respect those seeds of the Word which lie hidden among them” (825). The document notes that through “sincere and patient dialogue” with other religious traditions Christians might “learn of the riches which a generous God has distributed among the nations” (825). Collaborative efforts are encouraged between the Christian and non-Christian religions “in the right ordering of social and economic affairs” (826).

While looking at the Vatican II documents that are open to religious plurality and diversity, the question of the meaning of revelation is once again raised. Does the recognition of “elements of truth and of grace” in non-Christian religions represent an understanding of those religious traditions being revelatory of one God? Does recognizing that non-Christian religions can become “seeds of the Word” that lead others to the “true God” indicate that other traditions are regarded as revelatory of God? Is there an understanding of multiple revelations, with the Christian revelation being the norm and superior revelation? Or, does it represent an understanding of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through the various religious traditions of the world? This researcher will argue the Vatican II documents that speak of the role of the Holy Spirit “at work in the world before Christ was glorified” (Ad Gentes Divinitus 1965, #4 in Flannery 1975, 816), and “the Holy Spirit that offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery” (Gaudium et Spes 1965, #22 in Flannery 1975, 924) can support this understanding of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through the religious traditions of the world.

In Redemptoris missio St. John Paul II (1990) states that the Holy Spirit is present “not only in individuals but also in society and history, peoples, cultures, and religions”
(28). Once again, for St. John Paul II, the question of the meaning of revelation must be raised. Does St. John Paul II think there are multiple revelations or does he hold that there is one revelation of one God humanly expressed in different ways through various religious traditions? In discussing St. John Paul II’s writings on interreligious dialogue, Phan argues that other religions may be “ways of salvation and that religious pluralism is part of God’s providential plan” (Phan 2004, xxiii).

*Dominus Iesus (DI)* (2000) issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, expresses concern that religious plurality and diversity may lead to relativism. It clearly reaffirms the Christian doctrines of the “fullness and definitiveness of the revelation of Jesus Christ [and] . . . the unicity and universality of the salvific mystery of Jesus Christ [and] . . . the unicity and unity of the Church” . . . and the unity between the reign of God and the Church (*Dominus Iesus* 2000 in Phan 2004, 140).

*DI* states, “Jesus Christ has a significance and value for the human race and its history, which are unique and singular, proper to him alone, exclusive, universal, and absolute” (*DI* 15, 2000 in Phan 204, 141). It rejects the “theory of the limited, incomplete, or imperfect character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which would be complementary to that found in other religions” (*DI* 6 in Phan 2004, 141). It condemns the view of the church as “one way of salvation alongside those constituted by the other religions, seen as complementary to the Church or substantially equivalent to her, even if these are said to be converging with the Church toward the eschatological kingdom of God” (*DI* 21 in Phan 141). *DI* makes a negative judgment towards other religious traditions when it states: while, “the followers of other religions can receive divine grace, it is also certain that *objectively speaking* they are in a gravely deficient situation in
comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation” (DI 22 in Phan 2004, 141).

DI affirms what Christianity and the Church believe about the salvific role of Jesus Christ, as “unique, and singular, proper to him alone, exclusive, universal, and absolute” (DI 15). It is resistant to religious plurality and diversity and fosters an understanding of multiple revelations that does not find common ground with one revelation of one God humanly express through various religious traditions. It notes:

It is clear that it would be contrary to the faith to consider the church as one way of salvation alongside those constituted by the other religions, seen as complementary to the church or substantially equivalent to her, even if these are said to be converging with the church toward the eschatological kingdom of God. (DI 2000, 21)

This truth of faith does not lessen the sincere respect which the church has for the religions of the world, but at the same time it rules out in a radical way that mentality of indifferentism “characterized by a religious relativism which leads to the belief that ‘one religion is as good as another.’” If it is true that the followers of other religions can receive divine grace, it is also certain that objectively speaking they are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the church, have the fullness of the means of salvation. (DI 2000, 22)

Dominus Iesus (2000), however, offers some positive statements concerning non-Christian religions, “Certainly the various religious traditions contain and offer religious elements which come from God and which are part of what “the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions” (DI 21).

This researcher suggests that this statement supports interreligious prayer and an understanding of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through various religious traditions. But, a reversal takes place in the same paragraph. It states, “One cannot attribute to these, however, a divine origin or an ex opera operato salvific efficacy, which is proper to the Christian sacraments” (DI 2000, 21). This statement contradicts the recognition of Judaism as a non-Christian religion with a way of salvation separate from
Christianity, and also negates, or contradicts, the statement from *Nostra Aetate* (1), “One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth. (1) One also is their final goal, God” (Paul VI, 1965, 1).

In summary, pre-Vatican documents did not consider other religious traditions worthy of salvation. The documents of the Second Vatican Council opened the doors to interreligious dialogue with the document *Nostra Aetate*, which explicitly recognizes various non-Christian religious traditions with respectful recognition of some of their beliefs and traditions. In this document, the presence of the Holy Spirit is seen as working and present within our cultures, customs, and religious traditions. The document *Dominus Iesus* (2000), on the other hand, offers a strong affirmation of the salvific role of Jesus Christ within the Christian tradition and Catholic Church. Unfortunately, it shows signs of resistance to religious plurality and diversity and adopts a position of religious superiority, and negatively judges the religious traditions of non-Christians as inferior or “gravely deficient.” Overall, the document is more of a barrier than a bridge to interreligious dialogue and interreligious prayer. It does not support the understanding of revelation presented in this research.

The next section discusses two additional interpretations of revelation as it relates to other religious traditions. John Hick (1922-2012) proposes an understanding of one Divine Being or Divine Reality which can provide a foundation for all religious traditions. Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-2010) proposes ways Christians can interpret the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the fullness of divine revelation in relationship to other religious traditions without absolutism or relativism, without discrimination or a posture of superiority.
Interreligious Interpretations and the Unique, Salvific Role of Christ

John Hick (1922-2012) a minister within the Presbyterian Church of England experienced a conversion based on his encounter with the pluralism that surrounded him in Birmingham, England among a large Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Jewish population (Knitter 1985, 146). Hick proposed a “new map for the universe of faiths” that could be located in “one Spirit, the one Divine Reality or Absolute, the one Logos behind all the religions.” He recognized how different religions conceive of this one Reality theistically (personal) or nontheistically (nonpersonal) “embodying different historical and cultural circumstances” (Hick 1973, 131 in Knitter 1985, 147-148). While this position would lead to charges of relativism or the reduction of all religions into a lowest common denominator, Hick recognizes the differences in each religious tradition that were not insignificant (Knitter 1985, 148). In his article On Grading Religions (1981) he recognizes that relativity does not mean equality. “If we think for a moment of the entire range of religious phenomena, no one is going to maintain that they are all on the same level of value or validity” (Hick 1981, 451 in Knitter 1985, 148). Hick believed all religions shared a “common ethical ideal” to seek the transformation of humanity, which is seen as being in need of liberation and salvation. Hick argues that the ultimate evaluation of whether one religious tradition surpasses another, or is superior to another, will be determined eschatologically, at the end of time (Hick 1981, 465-467 in Knitter 1985, 148-149).

Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-2010) holds that there can be no revelation without experience, but that revelation transcends any human experience (Schillebeeckx 1981, 11 in Dulles 1983, 82). He likewise holds that interpretation and interpretive elements are
essential to understanding experience (Schillebeeckx 1981, 13; 1980, 49-54 in Dulles 1983, 82). The Christian revelation includes the interpretation of the experience of salvation found in the death and resurrection of Jesus and no other (Schillebeeckx 1979, 392-392, 548-549 as found in Dulles 1983, 82). In his later book, The Church: The Human Story of God (1990), Schillebeeckx qualifies this statement when addressing the universality and historical contingency of Jesus’ career. He advocates an identity and self-definition of Christianity that is in relation with other religious traditions. According to Schillebeeckx, Christian interpretation of the historical Jesus of Nazareth is within a particular historical context that is regional and limited.

Anyone who overlooks this fact of the specific concrete humanity of Jesus, precisely in his quality as a human being, which is geographically defined and socially and culturally recognizable and therefore limited, makes the man Jesus a ‘necessary’ divine emanation as a result of which all other religions are volatilized into nothingness. (165)

Thus, for Schillebeeckx, there is no individual historical particularity that can be absolute, including the revelation of God in Jesus. “Therefore through the relativity present in Jesus anyone can encounter God even outside Jesus, especially in our worldly history and in the many religions which have arisen in it” (166). He further affirms a religious plurality in the world in stating “there is more religious truth in all the religions together than in one particular religion.” He adds: “this also applies to Christianity” and “the multiplicity of religions is not an evil that needs to be removed, but rather a wealth which is to be welcomed and enjoyed by all” (166-167).

Schillebeeckx affirms the identity and uniqueness of Christianity that is found in the limited particularity of Jesus of Nazareth. At the same time, he notes that in the preaching of Jesus as found in the parables and praxis of the Kingdom of God, one finds a symbol of openness and inclusion that places Christianity in a positive relationship to
other religions. In Schillebeeckx’s earlier writings, the interpretation of the salvation experienced in Jesus and no other develops into an interpretation of Christology in which the God of Jesus is the exclusive redeemer of all humanity.

The proposals of John Hick and Edward Schillebeeckx are helpful introductions to the final section of this chapter on revelation in the works of Gabriel Moran. Similar to Hicks, Moran proposes one revelation of one God expressed through the various religious traditions of the world. Edward Schillebeeckx recognizes that no religion has a monopoly on the truth, and that the fullness of revelation cannot be claimed by any one religious tradition. Moran, as will be discussed below, makes a similar claim.

**Gabriel Moran and Exclusive and Inclusive Revelation: The Paradox of Uniqueness**

This section elaborates on Moran’s (1992, 2002) understanding of uniqueness as a paradoxical term describing both that which is similar and that which is different. The section also explores how Moran uses the term uniqueness in discussing the various religious traditions of the world, and in developing an understanding of exclusive and inclusive revelation that is helpful for this research. Moran also supports an understanding of revelation as a common ground on which interreligious prayer can take place. Martin Buber’s writings from a Jewish context are also explored to support Moran’s understanding of revelation. The section will conclude with a succinct summary of problems in understanding revelation.

For Moran (2002, 1992), the paradoxical term “unique” provides a way of understanding the relationship between the particular and the universal. The unique can be understood as what is most exclusively particular and what is most inclusively universal. The paradox is that what is most particular can be the most nearly universal
That is, the common understanding and root meaning of unique is to be different from others and not to be equal. Thus, whatever is unique is particular, one of a kind, exclusive. Yet, Moran points out that to emphasize that the particular is different is to fail to see that anything considered unique already belongs to a class or is in relation to other things. It thus always implies a comparison with other things and is not a term that lacks comparison. This comparison can go in one of two directions: The direction of increasing exclusion or toward increasing inclusion. For Moran, the typical meaning is the exclusion of sameness. Yet, when applied to human beings, to be unique is to be increasingly inclusive (166-167, 182). This can be understood if one looks at each person belonging to the human family. Despite all the differences of culture, race, language, religious tradition, and other factors there is an inclusive uniqueness among all human beings. Each person is born unique with a vocation to become more unique. Whenever a particular person becomes more unique, the person is included more fully in humanity, in the group of unique persons who make up the human race.

When one considers uniqueness as exclusive, one can note that an exclusive revelation is one that would be understood as having an exclusive possession of truths. Thus, an exclusively unique Christian revelation would belong only to the Christian tradition and other truths would be viewed as threats (Moran 1992, 46). When one considers uniqueness as inclusive, one can note that an inclusive revelation is one in which relationships are established with other religious traditions and the meaning of revelation is discovered or rediscovered through important experiences of life and from communication and dialogue with other people (46).
When revelation is seen as being exclusive revelation, a particular religious tradition is viewed as the only one of its kind that experiences itself through words, rituals, and symbols. It is not one way among many others, it is the only way. “The affirmation of this way is the negation of that way” (Moran 1992, 47). Competitive religions are usually ignored or given very little acknowledgement. One’s religious tradition is distinguished from the pagan religions, or the unholy, profane life. This can make a religious tradition seem intolerant of other religious traditions (47).

A qualification to intolerance towards other religions can develop from an awareness of one’s incompleteness or limitations. While the Christian religion finds its way in and through “Christ-Church-sacraments,” it realizes there are others outside this way that cannot all face condemnation by a merciful God (Moran 1992, 47). The Noahtide laws in Judaism served as a means for Gentiles to enter into the world that is to come. In addition to this, there can be a recognition of religion being the source of arrogance and conflict. An exclusivist view of revelation can also lead to attitudes of superiority and competition between religious traditions. Thus, it is difficult for followers of a particular religious tradition who adopt an exclusivist view to make the claim that “one religion is as good as another” (47).

As embodied in particular religious traditions in the past, an exclusive revelation was “equated with knowledge, with texts, with interpretations of texts, and with memories handed down orally” (Moran, 1992, 48). Revelation was based on what was revealed to a specific person at a specific time and contains the secrets of the universe. As a way of addressing other sources of revelation, categories were created in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that described a “natural” and “general” revelation.
The Protestant tradition used the terminology of general and special revelation, and Catholics used the terms natural and supernatural revelation. These categories of revelation did not promote tolerance among religious traditions, but simply attempted to make one’s own religious tradition more exclusive and different from other traditions (49). Religious traditions were simply placed in a category of “generalized otherness rather than particular groups from which something could be learned about the particularities of that religious tradition” (50).

Moran points out that an inclusive view of revelation is part of the origins of each religious tradition, and the more genuine strand of the tradition (Moran, 1992, 50). An inclusive revelation cannot be equated with doctrine or information, since that would lead to an exclusive revelation. Rather than view revelation as a body of knowledge based on past truths or events, an inclusive revelation adopts an open stance towards “all knowledge and to silences beyond knowledge” (51). The bearer of an inclusive revelation is a community of persons rather than an individual’s personal experience of revelation.

Moran speaks of Franz Rosenzweig’s (1969) understanding of revelation as an orientation situating people in a place and giving them a sense of direction (Rosenzweig 1969, 119-120 in Moran 1992, 52). For Paul Ricoeur (1980) revelation is a “present encounter which alters the past and provides the possibility of a future. All reality and all modes of discourse become potentially revelatory” (Ricoeur 1980, 73-118 in Moran 1992, 52).

The orientational terms for an inclusive understanding of revelation are community, experience, and the present. These three terms are bearers of revelation. For Moran, “Revelation is not the moments, the rituals, the texts; but revelation needs
concrete embodiment in moments, rituals, and texts” (Moran 1992, 53). No religion possesses a revelation but revelation has a need for a people or community with symbols, expressions, forms, and embodiments of revelation (53). An inclusive revelation is not an abstract body of ideas but an immediate practical experience. Moran gives an example of this from the Jewish tradition. “When was the Torah given?” asks the Midrash. “It is given whenever a person receives it” (53). In another example that is taken from Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem (1961) states, “instead of one act of Revelation there is a constant repetition of the act” (Scholem 1961, 9 in Moran 1992, 54). For Moran, the same can be said of the Christian mystics, “Revelation is a daily act, the experience of the presence of God” (Moran 1992, 54).

An important part of the present experience of revelation is the response to the experience and the responsibility that is part of the response. Moran highlights how Martin Buber, in his book I and Thou (1958), provides a Jewish example of the way revelation through instruction from the Torah culminates in the response of the human community. Buber adds, “The present exists only insofar as presentness, encounter and relation exist. Only as the Thou becomes present does presence come into being” (Buber 1958, 63 in Moran 2002, 201). In the Eclipse of God (1957) Buber notes the human response is not just through knowledge and beliefs but through actions that give meaning to revelation. Examples of these actions include acts of justice. The person and their actions are essential to the revelation that takes place (Buber 1957, 39 in Moran 2002, 202). Moran notes that the problem with associating revelation with doctrines and dogmas is that they can sometimes have very little to do with action (Moran 2002, 221). In his article “The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible,” (1968) Buber also includes all of
creation as a part of the instruction from the divine teacher. “Natural events are the carriers of revelation, and revelation occurs when he who witnesses the event and sustains it experiences the revelation it contains” (Buber 1968, 9 in Moran 2002, 202). In *Between Man and Man* (1965) he repeats this claim: “The world, that is the whole environment, nature and society, ‘educates’ the human being” (Buber 1965, 89 in Moran 2002, 202). For Buber it’s not just the world of nature that reveals the divine teacher but the one who witnesses it and responds that makes it revelatory.

Moran also highlights Buber’s understanding of the relationship of “responsibility” and “uniqueness” to revelation. For Buber responsibility leads to moving on from the uniqueness we are born with to the uniqueness of a life in community. This means moving out of one’s unique individual self to finding in one’s life purpose an increasing inclusivity. Thus, the primary responsibility of human persons is based on the “instinct for communion” (Buber 1965, 88 in Moran 2002, 202). It is the relationship with the divine teacher that resolves the conflict between a uniqueness that is exclusive and a uniqueness that is inclusive and that enables persons to move toward communion with others (Moran 2002, 202).

To be open to the experience of God in relation to the other, especially the religious other, does not deny the role of sacred texts as a necessary interpretative element, but locates revelation in the present experience. Without abandoning the Jewish embodiment of revelation or the Christian expression of revelation, each tradition can learn more about revelation by listening to the other (Moran 1992, 54). The location of revelation within the present experience of the human race and a particular community moves away from an understanding of revelation as being contained in past truths, or
within a revelation that has ended with the apostolic age. Instead these writings or past truths are seen as providing an interpretation of a never-ending process of revelation (Moran 1992, 55). For Moran, “revelation is the present, personal, and more than personal experience of all peoples” (56).

The conversation should not be about a Christian revelation or Jewish revelation, but “the only revelation there is, the one in which Jews and Christians participate” (Moran 1992, 56). A sense that Christians and Jews share a universal revelation of God can lead to an ongoing conversation about the meaning of revelation. This can also lead to ongoing conversations with other religious traditions that have an understanding of revelation. Perhaps, some traditions may need a word other than revelation, but this can only be discerned if a conversation starts about the word and the meaning of the word. The principles of inculturation and dynamic equivalence, outlined in chapter three, may be helpful in a search to find alternative words for revelation in other religious traditions as part of the interreligious dialogue.

In summary, for Moran, revelation is more than a set of past truths, or something a religious tradition possesses. It is based on a present experience that calls for a human response without rejecting the past. An exclusive revelation is based on a body of truths. Those who adhere to an exclusive understanding of revelation look upon alternative beliefs and religious traditions as threats and competition. In contrast, an inclusive revelation is open to knowledge wherever it can be found, including other religious traditions. An inclusive understanding of revelation will be utilized throughout the rest of this research. The researcher suggests that an inclusive understanding of revelation can provide a common ground for interreligious prayer. One revelation of one God that is
shared among religious traditions and embodied by various religious traditions in their own distinctive ways can provide common ground for interreligious dialogue and prayer. There is one revelation that has Christian expressions, Jewish manifestations, Muslim embodiments, etc. Here we can find religious common ground.

The writings of Martin Buber highlight an understanding of revelation that goes beyond a conception of revelation as contained in the Torah and Talmud, understood only by scholars. Buber discusses how God speaks in the present and how revelation takes place through all of creation and the events of the world. According to Buber, revelation cannot take place without the participation of humans who respond by their actions to God’s call. Buber connects his understanding of a responsibility to respond to God as part of revelation to an understanding of uniqueness. He posits that the uniqueness of each person evolves as the person discerns and responds to the unique purpose of his/her life to contribute to the community. For Buber, personal growth involves exclusive individual uniqueness into an inclusive uniqueness for the good of the community. Overall, Buber’s conception of revelation is helpful for understanding one revelation of one God humanly expressed in various ways, including in various religious traditions. The conclusion of this chapter will address many of the aspects of revelation that were explored in this chapter, focusing on six points for examining the problem of revelation.

**Conclusions: Six Points for Examining the Problem of Revelation**

The first point it is important to recognize the problems caused by the term “Christian revelation,” which incidentally is a term of modern invention. A better way of expressing the unique expressions of the one revelation is by talking about Christian perspectives on revelation or Jewish expressions of revelation, or Muslim articulations of
revelation. Discussions about the various perspectives of the one revelation of God can provide a foundation for a conversation among the various religions of the world (Moran 1997a, 25). Additionally, Divine revelation includes both secular science and religious accounts of life. The second point is that God not only speaks in the past, through the sacred scriptures and texts of the various traditions, but also continues to speak today (25). The third point addresses how revelation highlights propositional truths about God, but also includes the languages of “command, promise, forgiveness, comfort, care, love” (25). The fourth point concerns the relation between human speaking and revelation, and holds that the formula of speaking are not the means that lead to the realization and revelation as an end. Rather, there are varying degrees of revelation that take place through human speaking. Speech alone cannot fully reveal who a person is, since a human being is not transparent enough to fully reveal who they are. The fifth point addresses the issue of mediation and revelation. It can be claimed that revelation requires a “middleman” who communicates God’s word to a people. This middleman can be an institution, a group of leaders, a book, or a code of practices. For instance, a Christian revelation is sometimes seen as being dependent on a Christian tradition acting as a mediator between God and humanity. Alternatively, one can hold as a basic point for understanding revelation that “religiously, the meaning of divine is mediated through everything that is” (Moran 1997a, 27). For instance, nature can be revelatory of God. “The divine spirit is always blowing; it is the sails of human listening that may or may not be raised” (27).

Finally, the Christian belief in Jesus as the Christ can be presented as a propositional truth. Yet, this understanding of belief in Jesus Christ is often equated with
Jesus being the great middleman. Assent to “Jesus Christ” as a propositional truth is equated with acceptance of the revelation of God (Moran 1997a, 28). In contrast, one can think of the living, dying, and rising of Jesus as God speaking, and one can envision God continuing to speak to us through Jesus present as the Spirit. However, Moran makes the distinction between this being “the” revelation of God and it being “a” revelation of God (28). Overall, the limitations of human beings allow only for glimpses of divine truth. This is why humans “have to listen carefully to one another, to whatever wisdom has been gathered, through past centuries or to a divine voice that still commands, promises, threatens, and comforts in the events of daily life” (28).

In conclusion, this chapter began with a discussion of the development of the meaning of revelation from Vatican I Dogmatic Constitution Dei Filius (1870), up to and past the Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution Dei Verbum (1965). In Vatican I’s Dei Filius revelation was looked upon as a body of truths based on past events, coupled with the understanding that revelation called for submission of one’s whole being to the teaching of the Church and Magisterium. The Vatican II document, Dei Verbum established continuity with Dei Filius, but focused more on the role of Jesus Christ as the sole mediator and sum total of revelation. Revelation was also understood as personal, relational, and dialogical, based on the human response to God’s call.

Pre-Vatican II Church documents did not consider other religious traditions as having salvific and revelatory merit. Several Vatican II documents, including Nostra Aetate (1965), began to recognize and respect the different religions of the world. There was a recognition of the salvation that could be received by those of other religious
traditions, in and through Christ, without explicitly recognizing the religious tradition as having salvific or revelatory value.

Five different models of revelation were explored in the writings of Avery Dulles to develop further analysis of revelation presented in the chapter. It was noted that each one contributes to an understanding of revelation, while also having shortcomings. A feminist hermeneutic of revelation was explored. This analysis raised questions about the experience of women, long marginalized and excluded from the Christian scriptural and liturgical tradition, including: What role does the experience of women play in the Christian understanding of revelation? Is the experience of women compatible with the Christian message? The idea that Jesus Christ is the one mediator and sum total of revelation was interpreted in terms of his inclusive mission and message, and by using feminine forms of God as found in Sophia, a metaphor for divine Wisdom, rather than Logos which represents a more masculine image of God.

The ideas of John Hick and Edward Schillebeeckx, were explored to develop further an understanding of revelation in which various religious traditions are taken into account. John Hick proposed one Divine Reality that included the expression of all the unique religious traditions of the world. Edward Schillebeeckx provided helpful guidance regarding the role of Jesus as the sole mediator and sum total of revelation.

Finally, Gabriel Moran provides rich insights into the meaning of revelation by exploring exclusive and inclusive models of revelation based on the paradoxical nature of uniqueness. The exclusive model focuses on revelation as a past body of truths to which Christians must give propositional assent while waiting for the Parousia. From this perspective, other religious traditions are viewed as a threat. The inclusive model calls for
an understanding of one revelation of one God that is humanly expressed through the various religious traditions of the world. Rather than view each religious tradition as having the revelation, Moran views each religious tradition as an embodiment of the one revelation. This concept of revelation, this researcher postulates, establishes a common basis for interreligious prayer.

The next chapter explores the development of the rite of baptism as it incorporates cultural and religious elements to enhance the meaning of the sacrament in specific contexts. The missionary journeys of Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili will be explored as examples of how inculturation took place during their time, respectively, in India and China.
CHAPTER 3: A HISTORICAL SURVEY: LITURGICAL ADAPTATION
REVEALING PRINCIPLES OF INCULTURATION FOR INTERRELIGIOUS PRAYER

Chapter three provides a historical survey of liturgical adaptation that starts in the world of the New Testament with the Christian practice of baptism. It reveals how, over time, other religious traditions and the Greco-Roman culture influenced this rite of baptism. Many of the symbols and language that are now part of the sacrament of baptism originated in other religious traditions and cultures. This researcher proposes that the influence of these other religious traditions confirm the value of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through different religious traditions.

After examining the historical development of baptism, the study will focus on two important developments in the Church that arose through the missionary travels of Matteo Ricci (1552-1603) in China, and Roberto di Nobili (1577-1656) in India (Shorter 1988, 157-158, 160). Matteo Ricci asked the question of whether newly converted Chinese Christians could continue the practice of honoring the ancestors or if it was contrary to their new faith and subject to prohibition and condemnation. Di Nobili raised similar issues when he travelled to India. Despite the Hindu caste system, di Nobili was able to appeal to the highest caste (Brahmins) and approved a variety of cultural practices that he found compatible with the Gospel. Like Ricci, he would face controversy. However, Ricci’s work was ultimately affirmed by Pope Pius XII in Instructio Circa Quasdam Caeremonias Super Ritibus Sinensibus (1939), which approved Chinese funeral rites and the cult of the familial dead; and di Nobili’s work was approved following the founding of Propaganda Fide in 1623. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) would further affirm principles of inculturation.
The third part of the chapter examines examples of liturgical adaptation from the post-Vatican II era that reveal principles of inculturation that can be applied when developing interreligious paraliturgical prayer services.

**Baptism in the New Testament: Water and Word**

There are many examples of baptism through water and the word recorded in the New Testament. One such example can be found in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians within the context of the relationship between wives and husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:25-26)

Other passages further develop a Christian understanding of baptism. For example, Paul’s letter to the Romans adds a theological and catechetical meaning to baptism when it discusses how Christians are baptized into the death of Jesus that they may also rise to newness of life.

Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ first was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. (Rom 6:3-4)

Over time, baptism came to be closely associated with initiation and incorporation into an existing Christian community. Peter’s speech at Pentecost is an example of initiation through catechesis that takes place prior to baptism (Acts 2:14-47). Those who accept the message and choose to be baptized are to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and receive the Holy Spirit.

Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the
gift of the holy Spirit. Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day. (Acts 2:36-39)

Similarly, the story of Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40), depicts a process of catechesis that parallels the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A) today. The period of *Evangelization and Precatechumenate* parallels Philip’s encounter with an Ethiopian eunuch who was reading the prophet Isaiah. When Philip asks him, “Do you understand what you are reading?” the Ethiopian replies, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” Phillips explanation of the meaning of the Isaiah passage in relation to Jesus corresponds to the period of *Catechumenate, or formal instruction*. The *Rite of Election and Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation* corresponds to the journey of the two individuals until the Ethiopian sees water and says, “Look, there is water. What is to prevent my being baptized?” The final period of *Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy* parallels the Ethiopian’s joy and elation as he continues on his way as a newly initiated Christian (International Commission on English in the Liturgy 1988, 14).

Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and he baptized him. When they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but continued on his way rejoicing. (Acts 8:38-39)

Another passage concerns the inauguration of the mission to the Gentiles with the vision of Cornelius, a God-fearing Gentile, “who used to give alms generously to the Jewish people and pray to God constantly” (Acts 10:2). He has a vision in which an angel tells him to go and visit Simon who is called Peter. The next day, Peter has a vision of a tablecloth descending from the sky covered with animals that were considered both clean and unclean according to Jewish law. The voice of God tells Peter to “Slaughter and eat.” Despite Peter’s reluctance to eat the unclean food, God says to Peter, “What God has
made clean, you are not to call profane.” This happens three times, until the objects are taken back up to the sky. When Peter and the family of Cornelius finally meet, a controversy arises because it is unlawful for Jews to associate with Gentiles. Peter responds to this controversy by reinterpreting the message God delivered to him about the eating of unclean animals saying, “but God has shown me that I should not call any person profane or unclean” (Acts 10:28).

The Holy Spirit is described as falling upon the uncircumcised Gentiles to which Peter says, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the holy Spirit even as we have?” “He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:47-48).” While this story recounts that baptism was done in the name of Jesus, eventually the Trinitarian formula taken from Matthew 28:19 is recited during the baptism ritual: “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” In this passage, baptism is linked to a profession of faith in the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit that transcends the distinction between Jews and Gentiles and overcomes divisions based on purity codes.

To conclude, there are a few passages in the New Testament referring to the ritual of baptism through the essential elements of water and word, without specifics of what the words were except that they were in the name of Jesus Christ. A deeper theological and catechetical meaning of baptism developed as baptism became the culmination of a process of initiation into the Church. This process came to focus on the central role of baptism to incorporate Christians into the dying and rising of Christ. The baptisms of the Ethiopian and of Cornelius and his family depict how the theological meaning of baptism
and the profession of faith in the Triune God became central to how baptism was understood.

The next section will move beyond the New Testament to the understanding of baptism in the early church of the first and second centuries. A key document, the Didache (50-120), will shed further light on the development of the rite of baptism, along with the writings of Justin Martyr (d. 165) and Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235).

The Didache (Teaching of the Apostles) 90 AD/CE

The following passage is found in the Didache, also referred to as the Teaching of the Apostles. This document was found in a monastery in Constantinople and published in 1883. While it has disputed dating, ranging from 50 to 120, it is considered a credible account of life in the early church (Early Christian Writings 2016). The following passage is taken from the document concerning the rite of baptism.

On Baptism:

7:1 But concerning Baptism, this is how you shall baptize.
7:2 Having first recited all these things, baptize in living water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
7:3 But if you do not have running water, then baptize in other water;
7:4 And if you are not able in cold, then in warm.
7:5 But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Sanctus Theological Institute 2016, 4)

By 90 A.D., the Didache mentions baptism performed with the Trinitarian formula “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Chupungco 1995, 4). The Didache also describes water that is flowing, as if from a stream or river, and does not talk about still waters such as a pool or reservoir. The pouring of water over the head of the person seems to have been a practice that developed when water was scarce. The bodies of water described suggests baptism by total immersion, which is
consistent with the Greek word “baptezein,” which means “to be plunged into.” In contrast, the description of pouring the water on the person suggests a cultural adaptation of the ritual of baptism when total immersion was not possible (5).

The Didache mentions the addition of fasting for a day or two prior to the rite of baptism. Fasting was an element that could be found in ancient nature rites and mystery rites. Examples of fasting in the New Testament are not associated with or included as a part of preparation of baptism. This addition is an early example of cultural adaptation that involves borrowing elements from the religious and cultural practices of the time and making them part of the preparation for baptism (1995, 5).

In addition to the Didache, documents written in the second and third century by Justin Martyr, First Apology, and Hippolytus of Rome, Apostolic Tradition, shed light on the further development of the ritual of baptism and the influence of other religions. Justin Martyr mentions the influence of mystery rites in the ritual of baptism in his First Apology, written between the years 148-161. Justin Martyr studied philosophy under the Stoics and Platonists. This gave him a familiarity with the mystery rites (1995, 6). However, he confirms a Trinitarian formula for the rite of baptism:

There is invoked over the one who wishes to be reborn and who has repented of one’s sins, the name of God, the Father and Master of all. . . Furthermore, the one being illuminated is washed also in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit who predicted through the prophets everything concerning Jesus. (Chupungco 1995, 6)

In the third century, Hippolytus, adds a question and answer format to the ritual of baptism for each immersion.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty? I believe. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died, was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand
of Father, and will come to judge both the living and the dead? I believe. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church, and the resurrection of the body? I believe. (Chupungco 1995, 4)

Mystery rites evolved out of ancient nature rites that were performed to renew the fertility of the earth. Ritual elements included reference to the natural elements of water, fire, and wind, but also included initiation into a community of believers. Justin Martyr incorporates into Christian baptism a sense of initiation into a community of believers when he mentions scrutinies that involved a pledge to live according to the teachings of the Church, “what we say and teach” (1995, 7). He also uses the word photismos, meaning enlightenment, from the mystery rites, along with consecration and rebirth to describe the effects of baptism (Ibid.).

An initiation meal was part of many mystery rites, including the initiation rites of the Persian god Mithras. The first Eucharist took place after baptism towards the end of the rite. In discussing the Eucharist, Justin Martyr mentions and makes a connection with the Mithraic initiation meal which consists of water and bread. However, he makes a clear distinction between the Christian elements of bread and wine as the elements Jesus used at the Last Supper, and the “falsification of the Eucharist fabricated by the devil, surely in order to sow confusion among Christian believers,” as found in the Mithraic ritual of initiation that used water and bread (Chupungco 1995, 7).

Chupungco (1995) mentions that while elements of the mystery rites were incorporated into Christian rituals like baptism, the church “absolutely condemned idol worship and refrained from the use of anything that had to do with such worship: temples, use of incense and candles, and pompae or the ornate carriages of idols” (7-8). Chupungco, citing an article by E. Yarnold (1972), also points out similarities between Christian and pagan ceremonies that include: “scrutinies, catechesis, the learning of
sacred formulas, fasting, stripping, anointing, immersion, the putting on of a white robe, consignation (even with a permanently visible sign in the form of a tattoo or brand), a meal of initiation (a honeyed drink forms part of both the Eleusinian rites and the neophyte’s first communion) all feature in both Christian and pagan rites” (Chupungco 1995, 17).

In conclusion, the Didache as well as the writings of Justin Martyr and Hippolytus of Rome show continuity with the ritual of baptism as found in the New Testament. Development of the rite leads to the recitation of a Trinitarian formula and creedal statements that are recited with each immersion. Fasting is mentioned as preparation for baptism, though not found in the New Testament for this purpose. Parts of other initiation rites and language from mystery rites are incorporated into the Christian ritual of baptism. While pagan elements that shed light on the Christian meaning of baptism were acceptable, the Church clearly condemned other pagan elements as “devil worship.”

Baptism in the Early Church: Third and Fourth Centuries

Just as the Didache, Hippolytus of Rome, and Justin Martyr described the developments of the baptismal rite and cultural adaptation using elements from the mystery rites, Tertullian (d. 225), added additional elements borrowed from the mystery rites and other socio-cultural rites. In Tertullian’s book On Baptism, he describes the anointing of neophytes for the first time. He also presents an epiclesis prayer that is to be said over the waters used for baptism. He mentions the church in the baptismal formulas, and Easter and Pentecost are noted as preferred days for baptism to take place (Chupungco 1995, 8). For Tertullian, the biblical typology used to explain the post-baptismal anointing of the neophytes was the anointing of Aaron by Moses into the
priesthood. The oil was to be generously poured on the neophyte so as to have it flowing down their bodies. Hippolytus of Rome describes a pre-baptismal anointing and two kinds of baptismal oils: oil of thanksgiving, which would become Chrism, and oil of exorcism, which would become known as the oil of catechumens. The presbyter was directed to say at the time of anointing, “Let all evil spirits depart from you” (9).

Ambrose (d. 397) in his mystagogical catechesis, *The Sacraments*, shifted the meaning of these words to the socio-cultural milieu of the athlete in the arena, “You were anointed as an athlete of Christ, as one who will fight the battle of this world” (Chupungco 1995, 10). A century after Tertullian, Ambrose explained in *The Mysteries* to the neophytes: “You were anointed that you may become a chosen race, priestly, precious; for we are all anointed unto the kingdom of God and unto priesthood with the spiritual grace” (9).

Biblical typology from both the Old and New Testaments was used “among the Fathers for reorienting cultural elements to the Christian mystery” (Chupungco 1995, 9). For example, Tertullian applied typology to the baptismal water by referring to the stories of the waters of creation, the flood in the Noah story, the crossing through the Red Sea, and the passing through the Jordan River in order to reach the promise land. These images continue to be part of the prayer over the waters in the rite of baptism today.

Chupungco (1995) mentions oriental versions of the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus in which candidates for baptism face the west as they renounce Satan and face the east while saying a creedal formula before baptism with the words, “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I believe in you, I bow before you and place myself at your service” (10). The Roman Church did not consider facing west while renouncing Satan appropriate,
given the association of the west with darkness and the setting of the sun. While the
Emperor Aurelian declared the *Sol Invictus*, the unconquered sun, the god of the Roman
Empire, Christians saw Christ as the *Sol salutis*, or sun of salvation who ascended toward
the east, was resurrected at dawn and who will return on the last day from the east (Ibid.).
The application of the titles of the sun god of the Romans to Christ is itself an example of
a principle of inculturation known as “dynamic equivalence” in which terms from one
culture or religious tradition can apply to another religious tradition deepening and
enriching the meaning for Christians. Chupungco points out that up to the seventh
century the Church of Rome “faced the east at some parts of the Mass like the *Gloria* and
the collect” (1995, 11).

Tertullian mentions a cup of milk mixed with honey that was offered to neophytes
between the reception of the consecrated bread and wine. The explanation for this
practice that was given to the neophytes linked the cup to the Israelites entering the
promised land flowing with milk and honey. Yet, Chupungco connects this practice with
one that comes out of a Roman culture and is incorporated into the baptismal rite.
Ancient Romans would give a drink of milk mixed with honey to newborn infants as a
symbolic way of strengthening them against sickness and the influence of evil spirits and
as a way of welcoming them into the family.

In addition to this Roman cultural practice, Chupungco (1995) mentions a practice
in the Eleusinian mystery rite that involves the newly initiated into a community
receiving a cup of milk and honey. While referring to the cup is a way of explaining
baptism as an entering into the promised land of the church and the kingdom of God,
drinking from a cup of milk and honey is not a practice within the Old and New
Testament tradition. Use of the cup shows the influences of the Roman and Eleusinian mystery rites on how baptism was understood and practiced (12). Over time, the custom of drinking from the cup of milk and honey ceased to be part of the baptismal rite. However, two additional symbols became part of the rite of baptism: the white garment and the lighted candle.

Chupungco (1995) identifies Ambrose of Milan (d. 397), Gregory of Nysaa (309), and Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386) as the church fathers that mention the white garment and lighted candle given to neophytes in the baptismal rite. He notes, “The white garment was explained as a symbol of Christian dignity or of the church’s baptismal innocence” (12). Ambrose describes the meaning of the white garment in *The Mysteries*: “You received the white garment as sign that you had put off the covering of sins, and had put on the chaste robes of innocence” (12-13).

Chupungco (1995) then discusses two other practices that could explain why a white garment was incorporated into the baptismal rite. A white garment or toga was given on two occasions. The *toga candida* was worn to identify Roman citizens and by those seeking public office. The *toga virilis* was worn by Roman boys at the end of their fourteenth year, which is typically when boys move from childhood to adolescence. The Mithraic mystery rites also employed the use of a white garment as part of their initiation rites (13). When Christians incorporated the white garment into the baptismal rite it could have been seen, according to Chupungco, as symbolizing the neophyte entering the “heavenly city” or becoming a member of the Christian community.
The use of candles becomes a part of the baptismal rite in the fourth century to symbolize the meaning of baptism as *photismus* or enlightenment. Prior to this, candles were rejected because of their association with pagan worship (Chupungco 1995, 13).

Another practice that is no longer a part of the baptismal rite but that is now a part of the Holy Thursday ritual is the washing of feet. Ambrose of Milan in *The Sacraments* describes this practice as taking place when the neophytes came out of the baptismal pool. He mentions that, in the Church of Rome, it experienced a decline for practical reasons as often, large numbers of people would be baptized at the same time. Ambrose defended this practice: “In all things I desire to follow the Church in Rome, yet we too have our common sense. Others elsewhere have the right to keep their practices; we also have as much right to keep ours” (1995, 13).

Not only were symbols and gestures taken from the mystery rites incorporated into the rite of baptism, but words from the mystery rites and legal terms found in the juridical world were also included: “*photismos* or enlightenment, *loutron* or bath, *mystagogia* or the initiatory instruction, *mystes* or the instructor, and *myomenos* or the initiate were words pagans shared with Christians” (1995, 14).

Tertullian mentions examples from the juridical world in his book, *The Crown*. He notes that the word *eiuratio*, a legal term that describes the end of contractual service, was used during the baptismal rite to describe the renunciation of sin, evil, and satan (Ibid.). In another book, *The Spectacles*, Tertullian uses the words *sacramenti testatio* and *signaculum fidei* which were legal terms describing the oath of allegiance soldiers swore to the emperor. Within the context of baptism, these terms were used to describe the solemn vow to be obedient to Christ. The seriousness expressed by the legal terms
reminded the neophytes of the gravity of renouncing sin and placing their faith in Christ (1995, 14).

In summary, Chupungco shows how cultural adaptation occurred with the rite of baptism from the New Testament period up through the third and fourth century when the influences of mystery rites begin to decline. He begins by noting that the essential elements of baptism in the New Testament are water and words. As the practice of baptism evolved it became standard practice for water to be the living water of springs and rivers with immersion and submersion being normative. However, as noted in the Didache, simply pouring water on the head of the candidate three times while the Trinitarian formula was recited became acceptable if water was scarce. This showed how baptism continued to be adapted to local circumstances.

By the third century, the Trinitarian formula developed into creedal statements that were used in a question and answer format during baptism. This endured up to the ninth century, before the shorter Trinitarian formula was introduced in the Western Church, the practice still in use today.

The mystery rites, born out of ancient nature rites, influenced what elements were added to the baptismal rite. These elements included fasting before baptism, having a pre-baptismal period of catechesis or instruction, and inclusion of a sacred meal. Both the period of instruction and sacred meal mark baptism as an initiation rite as does the use of the white garment and lighted candle.

One of the reasons language from the mystery rites was incorporated into the rite of baptism was that Christians such as Justin Martyr were familiar with these rites as a result of their education by Stoics and Platonists. Tertullian introduced legal, juridical
language to describe baptism. Some practices that were incorporated into baptism were later dropped from the rite such as the drink of milk and honey taken in between the reception of the consecrated bread and consecrated wine, and the washing of feet upon leaving the baptismal pool.

In reorienting cultural elements to the Christian mystery, early Christians sought to align them with typology from the Old Testament/TANAKH and New Testaments. This was the primary way of avoiding eclectism or the “random, indiscriminate, and undigested borrowing of alien doctrines and practices regardless of whether or not they accord with the faith received from the Apostles” (Chupungco 1995, 3). The early church attempted “to bring the Christian liturgy closer to the experience of people” (16). They did this by using language and practices taken from the religious and cultural traditions of the day to help believers understand the meaning of baptism. At the same time, they aligned these elements with established beliefs and practices within Christianity. While the apostolic and original rite of baptism centered on washing in water and recitation of the Trinitarian formula, other elements were added to the introductory or explanatory aspects of the rite. According to Chupungco, this inculturation, or cultural adaptation rendered the baptismal rite more accessible to people, with words, actions, and symbols enhancing and enriching the meaning of the rite for the Christian community (Ibid.).

This researcher proposes that when applying the understanding of multiple revelations the influence of other religious traditions upon Christianity is made more difficult and can create tensions related to superiority or competition that may result in a resistance to how one religious tradition can enrich another through interreligious dialogue and specifically, the dialogue of religious experience. An understanding of one
revelation of one God humanly expressed through different religious traditions allows for a more organic development that can occur through the influence of other religious traditions. This can lead to an enrichment of one religious tradition and a better understanding of the ritual, or interreligious paraliturgy taking place.

Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili: Two Significant Moments of Inculturation in China and India

The study now turns to two well-known attempts at inculturation by two Jesuit missionaries Matteo Ricci (1552-1603) and Roberto di Nobili (1577-1656) (Shorter 1988, 157-158, 160). Both of their efforts at inculturation—for Ricci in China and di Nobili in India—were initially successful. However, after investigations and a judicial process found their attempts to be incompatible with Church teaching and the Gospel, Church authorities condemned them. For Ricci, the Chinese Rites controversy began after his death in 1610 and ended with the publication of the papal bull *Ex quo singulari*, in 1742. It involved two religious communities in the Far East, the Dominicans and the Jesuits, and five Popes (Chupungco 1982, 38). Di Nobili lived to see the judicial process rule in his favor, after a thirteen-year investigation during which he was forbidden to baptize. However, after the death of di Nobili, the Church abandoned his experiments of inculturation in India (Shorter 1988, 160).

While the Communist overthrow of China and subsequent Christian persecution contributed to the loss of China and Indochina to the Church, lack of support from the Church and condemnation of their efforts at inculturation undid any progress the two missionaries made. While their efforts would later be approved by the Church, this research argues that resistance still continues within the Church regarding liturgical inculturation and interreligious prayer.
Matteo Ricci was an Italian Jesuit sent to China to be a missionary (1553). The Jesuit missionaries sought to identify elements within the Chinese culture, customs, and language to express Christian concepts. China considered itself to be “the Middle Kingdom” superior to all other nations (Song 2002, 2). In the words of Ricci, “the Chinese are accustomed to consider their country as the center of the world, and to despise all other nations” (Lach 1965, 802 in Song 2002, 2). The Jesuits were hoping to contribute a Western perspective to the field of science and technology as a way of entering into the Chinese culture and contributing to its scholarship.

In order to assimilate into the Chinese culture, Ricci chose to dress and live like a Buddhist monk. This was due in part to the fact that Buddhists were less critical of Christianity than the Confucianists thus, Christianity could be associated more easily with Buddhism than Confucianism. However, this strategy backfired because Buddhism was not the dominant religion of China, and Christianity like Buddhism, was rejected by many as a foreign religion (Shorter 1988, 157). In addition, the Buddhists who wore the robes, known as bonzes, had reputations of ill repute and the educated looked upon them in contempt (Song 2002, 4-5). Because of this, Ricci adopted the persona of a Confucian scholar in order to appeal to the intellectuals and a society dominated by Confucian ideas (Shorter 1988, 158).

Beginning in 1595, Ricci made successful inroads with high ranking diplomats and bureaucrats, even entering the imperial city of Peking. He adopted the Chinese name ‘MaDou’ and contributed much to Chinese scholarship by writing twenty works in Chinese (1988, 158). While living in Nanchange from 1595-1598, Ricci befriended two royal princes who requested he write a book on friendship. A Treatise on Friendship, a
dialogue between the Prince and Ricci, would be his first book written in Chinese. In it he included the Western thought on friendship from all of the European philosophers and saints Ricci could remember (Cronin 1955, 128 in Song 2002, 6). This book would receive widespread recognition and, as a result, many Confucius scholars became friends with Ricci (Song 2002, 6).

Deeply immersing himself in the Chinese culture and learning the Chinese language was not the only reason for Ricci’s success. He also held new converts to a high standard of spirituality and moral conduct which set an example and led to more converts (2002, 4). In addition to holding converts to high standards, Ricci made every effort to be sociable and friendly and to learn the basic manners of Chinese high culture, including sending gifts to significant people (5-6). He also improved his language by being a great listener interacting with both scholars and peasants (7). The failure of the Jesuit mission in Japan, with not learning the language and treating Japanese Jesuits as second class citizens, were lessons Ricci learned and would not repeat (2-3).

The Jesuits used classical principles of inculturation such as a Christian reinterpretation of the Chinese culture which facilitated the development of a Chinese interpretation of Christianity. These principles would later be affirmed by St. John Paul II in Redemptoris missio (52) (1990), when he described a double movement that takes place between Christianity and the cultures and religions Christianity encounters. “By inculturation, the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures, and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community” (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments 2001, 190). The Vatican II document Gaudium et spes (58) also affirmed the principles of inculturation
applied by Ricci in China. This document acknowledges that God speaks through cultures in every age and acknowledged how the Church “utilized the resources of different cultures in its preaching to spread and explain the message of Christ, to examine and understand it more deeply, and to express it more perfectly in the liturgy and in various aspects of the life of the faithful” (Flannery 1975, 962). Ricci successfully found elements in the Chinese culture that were compatible with the Gospel. The fruits of this inculturation and evangelization were evidenced in the three thousand Chinese that were baptized at the time of Matteo Ricci’s death in 1610 (Shorter 1988, 158). This researcher would cite these documents as being supportive of the application of these same principles of inculturation to interreligious paraliturgical prayer services that can deepen an understanding of the Christian tradition while more perfectly expressing various aspects of the culture and beliefs of various religious traditions.

Ricci approved significant and constitutive elements of the Chinese culture and some “Chinese rites,” which he found compatible with the Christian Gospel, faith, and morals. They were: the traditional Chinese title ‘Lord of Heaven’ to address the God of Christianity, the periodic rituals that honored Confucius, and rituals honoring the familial dead or ancestors that involved “prostrations, the burning of incense and the offering of food at graves” (Shorter 1988, 158.). Ricci and his Jesuit colleagues granted permission to converts to perform, under certain restrictions, the rites in honor of Confucius and their ancestors. Confucius was shown a ritual obeisance. The Chinese cultural rites involved tablets bearing the names of the ancestors toward which the Chinese would ceremonially show reverence. The Jesuits made adaptations on the tablets with the sign of the cross and the instruction, “Worship the true Lord, Creator of heaven, earth, and all things that show
filial piety to ancestors and parents” (Chupungco 1982, 39). Converts were taught to reject the belief that the spirits of ancestors dwelt in the tablets and derived sustenance from food offerings. Ricci even had new converts destroy the articles connected to a superstitious religion including books, images, and relics that were either burnt or placed in the toilets (Gutheinz 1983, 107 in Song 2002, 9).

While all of these examples were considered “as probably not superstitious” by Ricci (Shorter 1988, 158), the actions connected to these rites were considered by the Dominicans to be examples of idolatry and religious sacrifice. They were also condemned by missionaries from Manila as examples of idolatry (Chupungco 1982, 39). Those who denounced these practices cited superstitious habits that Ricci never allowed, and their condemnations failed to make the distinctions that Ricci made (Shorter 1988, 159).

In response to the controversy, an instruction written by Propaganda Fide in 1659 under Pope Alexander VII, reminded the Vicars Apostolic to China of the incompatibility and absurdity of transplanting a European culture onto a Chinese culture (Chupungco 1982, 39). The instruction laid down principles of cultural adaptation in the missions and made a distinction between the faith expressed through a European culture and how faith “does not repudiate nor destroy the rites and customs of any peoples provided they are not perverse” (39). The instruction affirmed principles of inculturation that the rites and customs inherent to a particular people and culture “be preserved intact, in order, no doubt, to make use of them as cultural vehicles of the Christian message in those places” (Ibid.).
The significance of this Instruction was muffled in the midst of the controversy until Pope Pius XII restated the principles of adaptation in 1939 in his encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*. This Instruction would later influence the principles of adaptation in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 37 and the previously mentioned documents:

> Even in the liturgy the Church does not wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather does she respect and foster the qualities and talents of the various races and nations. Anything in these people’s way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy, and, if possible, preserves intact. She sometimes even admits such things into the liturgy itself, provided they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit. (Flannery 1975, 13)

Despite this instruction written by Propaganda Fide, supporting principles of inculturation, in 1693, 83 years after Ricci’s death, Charles Maigrot, the Vicar Apostolic of Fukien, began the judicial process to examine Ricci’s missionary work. A special commission of Cardinals was appointed to examine the charges and, in 1704, Pope Clement IX issued a decree condemning the Chinese rites approved by Ricci. Pope Benedict XIV finalized the condemnation in 1742 with his decree *Ex Quo Singularia* (Shorter 1988, 159).

It would take two hundred years for the condemnations to be rescinded and the accomplishments and successful attempts at inculturation in China to be recognized. In 1935, Pope Pius XI approved the rituals venerating Confucius, considering them to be non-religious and therefore not opposed to Catholic doctrine (Shorter 1988, 159). In 1939, Pope Pius XII approved the traditional Chinese funeral rites and the cult honoring the family ancestors in his *Instructio Circa Quasdom Caeremonias Super Ritibus Sinensibus* (Ibid.).
In 1939, the Propaganda Fide reviewed the case and published the Instruction *Plane compertum*. It allowed Christians to participate actively in ancestral rites based on certain conditions and assumptions: 1) if the ancestral rites were clearly social affairs devoid of cultic significance and, 2) passive participation was called for if they were found to be superstitious. The Congregation maintained that the change was permissible since the ancestral rites had become merely social and without religious meaning. The changes, however, came too late. Before they could be implemented China fell to communism, Christians were persecuted and Christianity was rejected as a foreign element in the Chinese culture (Chupungco 1982, 39-40; Shorter 1988, 159).

The incorporation of the ancestral rituals into the Christian liturgy would take place in Taiwan after the Second Vatican Council by the Catholics of Nationalist China (Shorter 1988, 159). The eventual acceptance of the efforts of Matteo Ricci to gain acceptance for rituals honoring Confucius and rituals honoring family ancestors then provided a precedent for people in other cultures who venerate their ancestors to make further cultural adaptations. For instance, Zimbabwe offers a new Catholic funeral rite that has elements of the Shona culture veneration of ancestors incorporated into the funeral rite (Muchemwa 2007).

Like Matteo Ricci, Roberto di Nobili was a Jesuit missionary who was sent to India. Born in 1577 to a noble Italian family, he desired to appeal to the higher Indian castes. His intellect led him to become the first European with a command of Sanskrit and the ability to read the Hindu scriptures, the Vedas, and the Vedanta in the original languages. He, like Ricci, adopted the costume and way of life of a Hindu holy man who was given the title *Rajah Sannyasi* or ‘noble holy man’ (Shorter 1988, 160).
The Hindu caste system presented a problem because of the ‘untouchable’ outcasts who were forever resigned to this station. Given di Nobili’s goal of converting the elite and his desire to enter into the world of scholarship and learning, any association with the outcasts was problematic because it prevented him from also developing contacts with the highest caste, the Brahmins. Like Ricci, di Nobili approved a variety of cultural practices by making distinctions between civil and religious rites and customs. This led to di Nobili authorizing much of the Brahmin culture as being compatible with the Gospel. Consequently, an important Brahmin scholar, Sivadarma, converted to Christianity while “retaining his former way of life” (1988, 160).

By the time di Nobili left Madras there were four thousand Christians there. Yet, in 1610, his methods of inculturation were censured. For the next thirteen years, di Nobili appealed the decision to Rome, and in 1623, just after the founding of Propaganda Fide, a verdict was returned in his favor. Di Nobili was forbidden to baptize during the thirteen years of the judicial process. Despite his success, after his death and retirement in 1656, the Church in India abandoned his experiments at inculturation (Shorter 1988, 160).

However, following the Second Vatican Council, Christian Sannyasi reappeared, along with Christian ashrams or prayer centers, modeled after the Hindu ashrams. One could call Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili bridges that connected the European Christian culture and religious traditions to the Confucian in China and the Hindu in India. Modern day bridges between Christianity and Buddhism are found in the work of Robert E. Kennedy, a Jesuit priest and Zen Master (1995, 2004), and Paul F. Knitter who writes about interreligious understanding (2009). Bridges between Christianity and Hinduism are also found in Abhishiktananda, the name taken by a French Benedictine...
monk Henri le Saux, who incorporated Indian spirituality into his life in his book *Prayer* (2006), and Anthony de Mello, whose books on Indian spirituality, *Sadhana: a Way to God* (1978), and *Taking Flight: A Book of Story Meditations* (1988) offer much to assist those striving to understand Indian spirituality and inculturation. Like di Nobili, de Mello’s writings were censored and are still unacceptable according to Church authorities.

In the *Notification Concerning The Writings of Father Anthony De Mello, SJ* (1998), issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, under the leadership of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the later publications of de Mello are noted for “a progressive distancing from the essential contents of the Christian faith. In place of the revelation which has come in the person of Jesus Christ, he substitutes an intuition of God without form or image, to the point of speaking of God as a pure void” (1998). It is evident from this statement that a specific Christian understanding of revelation is expressed, suggesting multiple revelations belonging to each religious tradition. The conclusion of the notification is that de Mello’s positions are found to be incompatible with Christianity. This researcher would propose that an understanding of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through various religious traditions can foster respect for the beliefs of other religious traditions while not making the claim that all religions are the same. An understanding of multiple revelations sets up dynamics of competition, superiority and an inability to incorporate elements of other religious traditions into one’s own tradition through principles of inculturation explored in this research. These elements can ultimately deepen and enrich one’s religious tradition.
The resistance to accept the ancestral rites in China and India seemed to be motivated by the Christian traditional attitude of antagonism toward pagan ritual. As in the first centuries of Christianity, whenever the Church was “a minority surrounded by the forces of paganism,” she tended to reject any contact with that which was considered pagan (Chupungco 1982, 40). This attitude became apparent when converts themselves refused to adopt pagan rituals and even the architecture inherent to the culture of the people. The opposite problem occurred with the Chinese converts who refused to abandon their ancestral rites which were a constitutive dimension of their culture. Chupungco points out that the Church’s antagonism towards pagan culture has not been consistent in every period of history and the policy of the Church in the first four centuries should not be regarded as the only (Ibid.).

In conclusion, Matteo Ricci and the Chinese Rites controversy, and the controversy over inculturation in India with Roberto di Nobili, set the stage for future cultural adaptation, or inculturation of the liturgy as explained in the 1659 instructions by Propaganda Fide. Discussion of cultural adaptation would make its way into the Second Vatican Council document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* which affirms principles of adaptation of rites and customs inherent to a particular people and culture. Ricci and di Nobili’s attempts at inculturation met up with resistance from Church officials and religious communities. They made charges that cultural elements were examples of idolatry. In addition to this, the Chinese people failed to abandon or adapt ancestral rites that were too important to their cultural identity.

The work of Ricci and di Nobili continues through modern day theologians and Christians who act as bridges between Christianity and Buddhism and Christianity and
Hinduism and who have also experienced condemnation or censure from church authorities. This research argues that the eventual acceptance of inculturation in China and India in the twentieth century facilitated further acceptance of inculturation of the liturgy. These principles of inculturation can apply to interreligious prayer as a paraliturgy that includes various prayers, symbols, and cultural and religious elements as part of the paraliturgy.

This researcher would further argue that an understanding of multiple revelations was behind the suspicion of the Church being open to the civic customs and religious traditions found in the Chinese/Confucian, Buddhist context that Matto Ricci encountered and the Hindu culture that Roberto di Nobili encountered. An understanding of one revelation of one God expressed through different religious traditions can be a bridge, rather than a barrier, to the principles of inculturation that the Church would later come to accept in the work of Ricci and di Nobili.

**Principles of Liturgical Inculturation**

The development of the rite of baptism in the early centuries of the Church revealed the incorporation of elements of ancient mystery rites that enhanced and enriched its meaning for the Christian community. The missionary efforts of Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili in China and India encountered resistance and censure from Church authorities for the use of methods of inculturation found incompatible with the Gospel and Christian beliefs. These decisions were reversed by Pope Alexander VII in the instruction of Propaganda Fide in 1659 that recognized the incompatibility and absurdity of transplanting a European culture onto a Chinese culture. Principles of inculturation were further affirmed by Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*...
in 1939, which would later be included in the Second Vatican Council document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (37) which stated: “Even in the liturgy the Church does not wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or good of the whole community. Rather does she respect and foster the qualities and talents of the various races and nations” (Flannery 1975, 13). Given this background, this section will now seek to identify principles of inculturation from the Second Vatican Council document *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, continuing with the work of Chupungco, and then adding other theorists who support or further develop his ideas.

Chupungco (1982) states a principle of the official liturgy of the Church found in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*SC*) 33 that can carry over into an interreligious paraliturgical prayer service: an experience of liturgy should be the worship of God as the divine mystery and should express how belief in God can be experienced in the life of a community, and should contain much instruction for the faithful (63). For Chupungco, liturgy should offer a personal encounter with God, and if this is lacking one can question whether or not it is even liturgy or worship of the divine Mystery (Ibid.). Additionally, how and why the Christian community worships needs to be explored. Michael Warren (1997) asks a key question regarding the motive and meaning given to the liturgy and worship of the local community: Does worship express the life of the community as it ritualizes what is intended by the tradition of the community (39)? The central issue here is how a personal encounter with God during liturgy connects with principles of ethical living which will then be expressed or embodied in the life of a community. If, for example, most religious traditions believe in a God of love who calls people to love God and neighbor can ask, how does liturgy celebrate the love of God and call people to
express this love through their relations with all sentient and even non-sentient beings? Does an interreligious prayer service celebrate this love? If liturgy becomes a historical curiosity and is no longer an expression of the life and intention of the community it can begin to “fade.” Warren cites Sri Lankan theologian Aloysius Pieris, who explains how “a religion fades out of history when its symbols and institutions lose their capacity to evoke among its followers the distinctive salvific experience that defines its essence” (Pieris 1987, 57 in Warren 1997, 40). For Warren, this essence for the Christian community is “an embodiment, an enfleshing of Jesus’ teaching” that “makes the local church an effective sacrament of God’s living presence” (Warren 1997, 11). An additional question is how and what does the liturgy teach or instruct the faithful? Is the love of God and neighbor learned and lived out?

The questions asked here about liturgy could also be asked of interreligious paraliturgical services. Does an interreligious paraliturgical prayer service instruct the community about what various religious traditions believe? An interreligious paraliturgical prayer service must foster a personal encounter of God in ways that also connect people with their communities and expresses principles of ethical living that can guide them in all of their relationships.

Thomas Finn offers the anthropological axiom “that people express in ritual what moves them most” (Warren 1997, 12). While the context in which Finn speaks is the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, he expands upon his previous statement by stating how rituals “reveal the deep convictions and experiences of a community” (19-20). For those who gather for an interreligious paraliturgical prayer service this research raises the questions: Does interreligious prayer express what moves a community the
most? Does it reveal the deep convictions and experiences of a community? Moreover, does it connect the deep convictions of people with a God of love, a God who calls all people to love God and neighbor and to seek greater peace and justice in the world? The small turnout for many interreligious paraliturgical prayer services may be a sign of how much interreligious prayer does not express what moves the larger community the most and that it is not a part of the deep convictions they have. In contrast, a well-attended service may be a sign of how much various religious traditions share a connection with one another and value dialogue and ongoing relationships that work towards common goals of peace and justice.

Chupungco (1982) points out that the liturgical renewal of Vatican II sought to restore the Roman genius of simplicity of structure and clarity of expression in order to promote active and intelligent participation. The renewal sought to foster liturgies that were “flexible enough to admit variations according to different cultures” (42).

The new rite is a model and is intended for the entire world using the Roman liturgy. This means that it has to be adapted to the particular genius of every local church. Without sacrificing the essential message of the liturgy, the Roman Rite has to give way to new cultural expressions, to reinterpretation, modifications and variations. A universal Roman Rite means unity in essentials and diversity in cultural forms. (1982, 42-43)

The Roman culture from which the Roman Rite derives, is not a universal one. This is recognized in Sacrosanctum Concilium (37), which reproduces the encyclical letter Summi Pontificatus written by Pope Pius XII in response to the Chinese Rites controversy that was mentioned in the introduction to this section. In addition to the Church not wishing to impose a rigid uniformity in the liturgy, the article states: “Anything in their way of life that is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact” (Flannery 1975, 13).
For Chupungco (1995, 167), “the Roman model is everybody’s and nobody’s; it is universal but not local.” The Roman model needs to be adapted to local cultural forms in order for the liturgies to be meaningful worship experiences. The same can be said of interreligious paraliturgies.

Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili provided principles of inculturation when they translated Christian teaching into the language and culture of China and India. Just as there is a need to translate the language of the Church into the language of the people, it is equally important to develop new liturgical books in the language of the people and, for Chupungco (1982, 73), “anything less falls short of the goal of SC.” For purposes of this research, this adaptation is key in creating interreligious paraliturgical prayer services that are fully expressive of the various religious and nonreligious traditions participating in the service. This principle also allows for new prayers to be composed outside of a specific religious tradition that may capture the values and universal beliefs many religious traditions share, such as love of God and neighbor, or social justice and right relationships within the human family.

The recent translation of prayers in the Roman Missal, Third Edition (2011) into English results in a more literal translation of the Latin disregarding English nuances. This translation represented a shift in the Roman Catholic translation of liturgical texts. The Consilium Instruction *Comme le prévoit* (Consilium 1969) permitted the creation of new texts closely approximating the best versions in a particular language. *Liturgiam Authenticum* (2001) superseded previous documents and called for “fidelity and exactness in rendering the Latin texts into a vernacular language,” rather than concern for “creative inventiveness” (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the
In contrast, in the Jewish Reform Movement, a new prayer book was released recently that included gender-neutral blessing for transgender people, and changes “bride and groom” to “couples.” Rabbi Hara Person, remarked on the potential transformation that could take place as a result of this new translation: “We want you to feel like you cannot just read the words and walk in and out of here, but that some kind of transformative experience goes on” (Boorstein 2015, 2). Rev. Ruth Meyers, Chair of the liturgy and music commission of the Episcopal Church, made this comment about the ever-changing nature of liturgy: “We’re trying to see ourselves in continuity with historic tradition, but worship is always changing because the world around us changes and people change and theological understandings shift” (Ibid.).

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* (14) also speaks of the importance of “full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.” In Chapter III on *The Other Sacraments and the Sacramentals* (79), it states: “the primary principle of enabling the faithful to participate intelligently, actively, and easily” (Flannery 1975, 23). Chupungco (1992) gives examples of this active participation by citing the use of the vernacular (*SC* 63b: Chupungco 1992, 67), the presence of an assembly (Ibid., 87), the role of various liturgical ministers or participants (Ibid.) and ritual actions as well as other symbolic expressions (Ibid., 89). He states that active participation is not “dissociated from the culture and traditions of the people” (Chupungco 1992, 89). The variety of participants from various religious traditions that participate in an interreligious prayer service in different roles highlights the principle of full, active, and conscious participation by the leaders and gathered assembly at the service. This principle calls for an experience of liturgy that does not result in “religious
voyeurism” but active participation that provides the potential for transformation through a unique experience of God revealed through the various religious traditions that share their prayers, scriptures, and what means most to them.

Chupungco (1982) uses the imagery of the incarnation as a theological principle of liturgical adaptation. “Adaptation is thus not an option, but a theological imperative arising from ‘incarnational imagery’” (58).

Since no culture is static, the liturgy will be constantly subjugated to modifications. In this sense the incarnation of the Church’s worship will be an on-going process. Liturgical pluralism is an incarnational imperative, rather than a concession of Vatican II. Liturgical pluralism is a necessary corollary to the premise of the Church’s obligation to be local and native. (Ibid., 62)

In conclusion, liturgical inculturation begins with an understanding of liturgy or paraliturgy as first and foremost worship of God and instruction for the gathered community. Then, important questions need to be asked:

- Does the liturgy or paraliturgy express the life of the community as it ritualizes what is intended by the tradition of the community from a Christian perspective of love of God and neighbor and the struggle for human liberation through social justice?

- Does the liturgy or paraliturgy express in ritual what moves the gathered community the most and that reveals the deep convictions and experiences of a community?

- How and what instruction takes place as a result of the liturgical or paraliturgical service?
Answers to these questions reveal further principles of liturgical inculturation that relate to the desire to continue interreligious dialogue beyond the interreligious prayer service.

Vatican II sought to restore the simplicity of the Roman rite to allow for adaptations to other cultures. Essentially, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* recognizes elements of the liturgy that are immutable and those that can and should be changed. A critique of the Roman rite by Chupungco and Phan highlights how the Roman rite is a particular cultural expression that is not universal. Phan (2004) also raises another question that is critical to this research: “Religiously, how can the church not only respect but also incorporate into its own life and worship the teachings and practices of other religions in order to be enriched and transformed by them”? Building on Phan’s question, when the texts or language of the Roman liturgy have been changed, do the changes and translations enrich and transform those gathered to pray or simply represent a Eurocentric culture and language that is imposed on them? In contrast, within the Jewish Reform Movement changes were made to the official prayers so that when the Jewish assembly gathers to pray its prayers express what means most to the people.

*Principles of Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy*

As shown through the development of the rite of baptism, in the New Testament and early church and the work of Ricci and di Nobili, the integration of worship and culture must contain cultural elements that people can identify as their own. The validity of the adaptation is dependent on the reception of the people who gather to worship and whether worship leads the people into a genuine encounter with God and right relationships with one another. This section explores principles of cultural adaptation
taken from the work of Anscar Chupungco, Peter C. Phan, and Aylward Shorter.

Chupungco (1982) speaks of culture in general terms as the “sum total of human values, of social and religious traditions and rituals, and of the modes of expression through language and the arts, all of which are rooted in the particular genius of the people . . . Every culture is in constant evolution . . . Culture is self-rejuvenating” (75-77).

For Chupungco (1982), when cultural forms like rituals, language, and art are able to express adequately a particular genius, Christian worship is better able to be expressed and celebrated within that culture (78). He recognizes that in the same way that religion and cultic rituals can be appropriated by the culture and reduced to “mere social affairs,” religious traditions can also “sacralize culture” (Ibid.). Examples of this are makeshift shrines or altars decorated with candles or other objects, and symbols that are set up at the location of a tragic accident involving a fatality. One sees these shrines, often with a cross and flowers, along the highways or neighborhood streets, or on street corners where the death took place via accident or violence. Often, when a celebrity has died, these shrines can be set up at the hospital or outside their residence.

Chupungco (1982) recognizes that the official liturgy of the church “is not an independent unit of ecclesial life.” Successful and meaningful liturgies depend upon catechesis to teach members the meaning of worship and a theological understanding of how the liturgy celebrates the paschal mystery (79). For Chupungco, liturgical adaptation has to develop together with the adaptation in theology. An indigenous liturgy can contribute to the development of an indigenous theology (80). Cultural adaptation or inculturation calls for a knowledge of the culture or religious tradition that Christianity encounters. It is through this process of discernment, dialogue, and critical reflection with
other cultures that can reveal common values that can find expression within the official liturgy or within interreligious paraliturgies. This presupposes sensitivity, respect, and appreciation for the genius of the other cultures/religious traditions.

For example, earlier in this chapter, Church fathers like Justin Martyr, Hippolytus of Rome, Tertullian, and Ambrose had a knowledge and respect for the mystery rites and the Roman culture that allowed them to incorporate elements from these rites into the Christian rite of baptism. They also incorporated language from the legal world and athletic world to catechize the faithful preparing for baptism.

There were also examples of religious and cultural elements that did not remain a part of the rite of baptism such as the cup of milk mixed with honey and the washing of the feet at baptism. The meaning taken from the culture did not have the same meaning for Christians within the context of baptism. In addition, Justin Martyr made a clear contrast between the Mithraic initiation meal, considered the work of the devil, and the tradition instituted by Christ at the Last Supper with the elements of bread of wine.

Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili had great respect for and knowledge of the Chinese and Hindu cultures. Both immersed themselves in learning the language of the culture they were studying. Ricci wrote twenty works in Chinese leading him to incorporate into the Christian tradition Chinese rituals that honored their ancestors. Di Nobili had first-hand knowledge of Sanskrit and was able to read the Hindu scriptures, the Vedas and Vedanta in the original languages. Because of this, he was able to incorporate elements from the Brahmin culture into Christianity that led to a greater understanding of Christianity in India in an expressly Indian culture. Both missionaries
modeled principles of inculturation by learning about another culture and language in order to incorporate these elements into the Christian tradition.

The same principles of inculturation apply to interreligious prayer. In order for the prayer to be meaningful the participants need to have a basic understanding of the various religious traditions or, at least have a genuine sense of respect and sensitivity for the various traditions. It is only in having an understanding of the other tradition that knowledge of differences as well as an appreciation for common ground and values can occur. Examples of this process are found in chapter five. This understanding can also make it possible for prayers composed for an interreligious paraliturgy, or from a particular religious tradition, to include words, images, or meanings shared by more than one tradition. Some examples of these prayers will be given in chapter four. Sometimes, the novelty of an interreligious paraliturgical service sparks curiosity leading participants to seek more information about other religious traditions and pursue interreligious dialogue, study, or participation in common acts of justice.

This point is supported by Peter Phan (2004) who discusses two important guidelines or principles expressed by the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC). The first, liturgical inculturation must be done in partnership with other religious traditions via interreligious dialogue and work for human liberation through peace and justice (241). He identifies two areas in which liturgical inculturation is to take place: the metacosmic, represented by the various religious traditions in the Asian context (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Islam, Shintoism, and others); and, the cosmic religion that is expressed through the popular religiosity that takes place at home and in the family (241). Phan applies this principle to the United States by relating
liturgical inculturation to the African American and Latino cultures and their religious traditions and styles of worship.

While Phan does not give specific examples of this, the following reveals how elements from both the African American and Latino cultures have been incorporated into the official liturgy of the church and celebrated through paraliturgical services and customs belonging to popular religiosity. In *Rise ’N’ Shine: Catholic Education and the African-American Community* (1996), Father Cyprian Davis, OSB provides five characteristics of black spirituality: power of the word, community oriented, holistic (body and soul), joyful and emotional, and contemplative (Chineworth 1996, 56-57).

The power of the word is characterized by a) a love of scripture, b) powerful, prophetic preaching, c) and identification with stories of liberation, especially the Exodus story. The community is made up of family and extended family that includes the larger community or neighborhood. In some churches, the sign of peace is allotted a significant amount of time at a Sunday Mass, allowing for the community to greet one another throughout the church. This cultural expression of community is contrary to the rubrics for the sign of peace made clear in the instruction from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004). In article 72, the instruction states: “that each one gives the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner.” However, the instruction leaves the manner in which the sign is expressed to the local Conference of Bishops “in accordance with the dispositions and customs of the people” (#72).

A Gospel choir often captures the joy and emotion of a service, and liturgical dance can be found in some African American celebrations along with other spontaneous
acclamations and words of praise. Worship offers a contemplative opportunity to reflect on how God has been present in their lives, especially through the hardships of life. Dr. Nathan W. Jones, writer and educator, considers these “non-negotiables” for religious education and evangelization (Chineworth 1996, 57).

Sr. Thea Bowman (1937-1990) was a gifted educator, writer, consultant and inspiration within the African American community. Two quotes not only capture the flavor of the African American community but also principles of inculturation affirmed by this research. While Sr. Thea uses the term *catechesis*, the process of preparing Catholics for the sacraments, it could easily be replaced with *liturgy* and/or *paraliturgy* “rooted in the spirituality of the people and couched in language they best understand.”

“To bear good fruit, catechesis must be rooted in the spirituality of the people and couched in the language they best understand” (Cepress 1993 in Chineworth 1996, 13).

The Hispanic/Latino population in the United States is the fifth largest in the world. It is made up of twenty-two Latin American countries, and the Caribbean (Cervantes 2002, 10). Each country has its own celebrations of popular religiosity. For example, Our Lady of Guadalupe has tremendous meaning and evokes fervent devotion for Mexican Americans. Holy Week dramas, sacramental celebrations, and quinceañeras celebrating the rites of passage of young Latinas at the age of fifteen, are all celebrated with unique similarities and differences (17). In *Liturgy in a Multicultural Community* (1991), Mark Francis makes a distinction between the Mexican Christmas celebration of the *Posadas* (the inns) and a distinct Puerto Rican custom called *Las Parrandas* (the revels) which is celebrated on the feast of the Epiphany. Having an intimate knowledge
of the culture of the local community and the variety of customs they celebrate are key to making the liturgy meaningful.

Given the context of the official liturgy of the Church, Phan (2004) cites Michael Amaladoss (1998) and Aylward Shorter (1988) who believe that “inculturation is always interculturation” (Phan 2004, 242). The term interculturation was coined by Bishop Joseph Blomjous to emphasize the reciprocal character of mission. It was a way of critiquing the view that “inculturation” is simply the transfer of faith from one culture to another or the insertion of Christian elements into another culture suggesting a one way process (Shorter 1988, 13). For Blomjous, (1980, 393) “the process of inculturation must be lived in partnership and mutuality.” For Amaladoss and Shorter, inculturation via interculturation is among at least three cultures: The Bible, the Christian tradition, and the local community to whom the gospel is being proclaimed. Without this interplay there is a risk of imposing a particular culture, such as the Roman, Eurocentric model, upon others, as was the case with the Spanish and Portuguese conquest of Central and South America, Asia and elsewhere (Shorter 1988, 156-157). In the same way, the Hispanic/Latino and African American communities would not thrive liturgically if the various customs, and characteristics, previously mentioned, were not acknowledged and celebrated, and if a European model of worship was imposed upon them.

Given the context of an interreligious paraliturgical service, the interplay would be between the Bible, the Christian tradition and the scriptures, prayers, beliefs, and symbols of various religious traditions. Helpful to this interplay is an understanding of revelation as proposed in chapter two and study of other religious traditions as an academic subject explored in chapter five.
The struggle for liberation was seen in the tension of Roberto di Nobili as he chose the Brahmin caste over the untouchables, or “Dalits.” If liturgical inculturation ignores the Dalits, which means “broken,” liturgy can become a celebration for the elites and dominant class, or a “disguised form of cultural chauvinism” (Phan 2004, 242).

Thomas Groome (1991) expresses how the prophets of Israel modeled ways of incorporating the struggle for liberation within liturgy (and paraliturgy for the purposes of this research) when they sought to create liturgical encounters with God “to transform people’s lives and to empower them as transformers ‘for the life of the world’” (343). The prophet Isaiah preached how “worship is ‘worthless’ before God, unless the people ‘learn to do good, make justice [their] aim, redress the wronged, hear the orphans’ plea, defend the widow. . . set things right’” (Isa 1:13, 17-18). Amos, often quoted by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., expressed God’s disgust with the worship of the House of Israel when Israel did not practice acts of human liberation: “I hate, I spurn your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemnities. . . . But if you would offer me holocausts, then let justice surge like water and goodness like an unfailing stream” (Amos 5:21-24) (1991, 344).

Groome quotes Kathleen Hughes’ article, “Liturgy, Justice, and Peace,” (1983) and draws insight from Kenneth R. Himes’s article “Eucharist and Justice: Assessing the Legacy of Virgil Michel,” (1988), in discussing the disconnect that occurs when justice or the struggle for human liberation is divorced from liturgy (or paraliturgy). Hughes (1983) expresses the spirit of the prophets of Israel, when she states: “Worship is an expression of right relationship or it is worse than worthless; it is an abomination to the Lord” (Hughes 1983, 192 in Groome 1991, 344). And, Himes (1988) expresses

The second guideline that Phan takes from the FABC is that it is important to take into account the role of popular religion in the lives of people. Phan reviews the seven features that characterize popular religion presented by Aloysius Pieris (1993) in his article “An Asian Paradigm: Inter-religious Dialogue and Theology of Religions” He writes, “it has a this-worldly spirituality, it is animated by a sense of total dependence on the divine, it longs for justice, it is cosmic, it accords women a key role, it is ecological, and it communicates through story” (Pieris 1993, 131-132 in Phan 2004, 243). In order to properly account for these features in liturgical and cultural adaptations, one must begin with respect for the people engaged in this popular religion and start a dialogue to gain a better understanding. The next step is to identify which of the features express or connect to the Christian tradition, and how elements of the Christian tradition can be explained to the believers of this popular religion in language that expresses what is most important to the community.

In conclusion, the integration of worship and culture must contain cultural elements that people can identify as their own, and the validity of the adaptation should be based on the acceptance of the people who gather to worship. Michael Amaladoss and Aylward Shorter offer an important understanding of inculturation as always interculturation, a term coined by Bishop Joseph Blomjous, to critique inculturation as a one way process of the Christian tradition inserted into another culture. By this they mean that inculturation via interculturation is an interplay among at least three cultures: the Bible, the Christian tradition, and the local community to whom the Gospel is being
proclaimed. When applied to an interreligious paraliturgical service, this interplay adds
interreligious dialogue and various elements from the participating religious traditions.
Without this interplay there is a risk of imposing a particular culture, like the Roman rite,
on other cultures, or the potential for disrespect and resistance to what is true and holy in
the other religious traditions. A final consideration, supported by the Federation of Asian
Bishops’ Conferences (FABC), is that liturgy should work for human liberation and
social justice otherwise it becomes empty worship that does not result in right
relationships between people and between different religious traditions.

**Acculturation and Inculturation**

This section will clarify the terms *acculturation* and *inculturation* as they relate to
interreligious paraliturgical prayer services. There is significant development on the
clarification of these words in the work of Chupungco in his two books: *Cultural
Adaptation of the Liturgy* (1982) and his *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals,
Religiosity, and Catechesis* (1992). A significant influence on Chupungco is Alyward
Shorter’s *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (1988). Shorter defines *acculturation* as
“the encounter between one culture and another, or the encounter between cultures”
based on mutual respect and tolerance (7-8). A formula that illustrates this is A + B =AB.
In this formula, there is not substantial or qualitative change between the two cultures
(Chupungco 1992, 27). Chupungco sees acculturation as a preliminary step for
inculturation (Chupungco 1989, 27). When applied to an interreligious paraliturgy that
includes the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions the formula would be: J + C + M =
JCM. In this formula, each religious tradition participates but there is no substantial or
qualitative change among the three.
In *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy* (1982), Chupungco describes *liturgical acculturation* “as the process whereby cultural elements which are compatible with the Roman liturgy are incorporated into it either as substitutes or illustrations of euchological and ritual elements of the Roman rite” (81). This definition suggests more substantial or qualitative change to the liturgy than Shorter’s definition, which holds that there is no discernible change between the two cultures.

Shorter traces the origins of the term *inculturation* to the Jesuits and specifically Fr. Joseph Masson, SJ, who first used the term before the opening of the Second Vatican Council. In his article *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* (1962) Masson wrote, “Today there is a more urgent need for a Catholicism that is *inculturated* in a variety of forms (*d’une façon polymorphe*) (Masson 1962, 1038 in Shorter 1988, 10). The first assembly of the Asian Episcopal Conferences in April, 1974 spoke of “an indigenous and inculturated church” and the 32nd Congregation for the Society of Jesus used the word “inculturation” frequently in its texts and included a decree on inculturation. Fr. Pedro Arrupe, the Jesuit Superior General, issued a letter on the subject of inculturation to the whole society on April 15, 1978 (Arrupe 1978, 172-181 in Shorter 1988, 10). The word “inculturation” is used for the first time in an ecclesial document in 1979 in the Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae (On Catechesis in Our Time, 53)*, written by St. John Paul II (John Paul II 1979, 10). This document lacks the nuanced meaning of interculturation and fails to discuss the interplay of the Christian tradition with the various elements of other traditions. The document’s understanding of inculturation is closer to a one way process of inserting the Christian tradition into another culture, rather than an understanding of partnership and mutuality. For instance, St. John Paul II states:
For this purpose, catechesis will seek to know these cultures and their essential components; it will learn their most significant expressions; it will respect their particular values and riches. In this manner it will be able to offer these cultures the knowledge of the hidden mystery (95) and help them to bring forth from their own living tradition original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought. (John Paul II, 1979)

Shorter (1988) defines *inculturation* as “the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture or cultures. More fully, it is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures” (11). A dialogue assumes partnership and mutuality, otherwise it would be a monologue, or a one-way conversation without interest in establishing a relationship or openness to transformation from the other conversation partner. Within the context of interreligious dialogue and prayer this would manifest itself as a creative and dynamic relationship with various religious traditions.

Shorter (1988) identifies three notable traits of inculturation. First, faith and culture are both part of a developing process, therefore there must be a continuous dialogue between them. Inculturation is an ongoing process that never comes to an end (12). Second, the Christian faith cannot exist except in a cultural form. Examples were given earlier from the African American and Hispanic/Latino cultures. Additionally, Chupungco and Phan spoke of dangers of the Roman rite in its European form being imposed on non-European cultures, especially indigenous cultures when Christians have failed to recognize that the Roman rite is an expression of Christian faith in European form. Shorter believes acculturation needs to take place before inculturation when Christianity “seeks expression through elements proper to the new culture” (12). Third there is a “reciprocal and critical interaction between the Christian Faith and culture.” Shorter finds this stage presupposes a measure of reformulation and reinterpretation that
can result in the development of doctrine. This applies as well to interreligious dialogue and prayer and an understanding of revelation (12-13).

Chupungco’s formula for inculturation is $A + B = C$ (1992, 29). Both parties do not lose their identity, but there is mutual enrichment that creates an interior transformation; this is the $C$ in the equation. When applied to the previously mentioned paraliturgical prayer service the formula would be $J + C + M = \text{TER}$—a Transformative Educationally Revelatory experience. The distinct religious identities of each tradition are not lost in the service, but instead an interior transformation occurs that is educational and revelatory according to the understanding of revelation explored in chapter two.

For Chupungco, (1992) within the context of the official liturgy of the Church, *Liturgical inculturation* is “the process of inserting the texts and rites of the liturgy into the framework of the local culture. As a result, the texts and rites assimilate the people’s thought, language, value, ritual, symbols, and artistic patterns” (30). The process of inculturation involves the preparation of the typical editions of the liturgical books with the permission of the competent, territorial ecclesiastical authority to approve any revisions (33).

Along with the typical editions of the liturgical books, Chupungco highlights that the cultural pattern of the people needs to be understood. This is “the typical mode of thinking, speaking, and expressing oneself through rites, symbols, and art forms. . . . It is a people’s prescribed system of reflecting on, verbalizing, and ritualizing the values, traditions, and experiences of life” (1992, 35). Given this cultural pattern, Chupungco recognizes the typical editions are “immediate sources,” in which “the Church transmits the apostolic tradition and the original meaning of her rituals.” Thus, “adaptation
necessarily implies the composition of new liturgical texts. Anything less than this falls short of the goal of SC 37 and 40” (Chupungco 1982, 73). Chupungco offers principles for the new translation: 1) liturgical texts should be composed in the vernacular, or mother tongue of the people and not in Latin, 2) and, that the language be intelligible and understandable to the majority of the worshipping assembly (1982, 73-74).

Within the context of an interreligious paraliturgical prayer service, each tradition would offer or recite prayers from their own tradition, and the new “liturgical texts” would consist of prayers composed that express the beliefs and values of the participating religious traditions that are outside of the official prayers of that tradition. More examples will be given in chapter four and the Appendix when various interreligious paraliturgical prayer services will be explored. The next section will explore methods of liturgical inculturation that can apply to both official liturgies and interreligious paraliturgical prayer services that will be discussed more fully in chapter four and the Appendix.

Three Methods of Liturgical Inculturation

Within the context of official liturgy, Chupungco identifies three methods of inculturation: dynamic equivalence, creative assimilation, and organic progression (Chupungco 1992, 37). Dynamic Equivalence involves replacing an element of the Roman liturgy with something in the local culture that has an equal meaning. The dynamic equivalence is still based on the typical editions of the liturgical books; they are not fabrications based simply on the imagination (37-38). This means “the linguistic, ritual, and symbolic elements of the Roman liturgy are reexpressed following a particular pattern of thought, speech, and ritual” that can be affirmed by the local worshiping community (38).
Chupungco (1992) discusses the opposite of dynamic equivalence, which he calls stationary or static equivalents. For example, consider the words: “mystery,” “sacrament,” “dignity,” “in memory of” (anamnesis), and “come upon,” (epiclesis) (38). These are words that do not usually have a dynamic equivalent in the pattern, history, and life experience of many cultures. Hence, it can be difficult to find alternative language to express the meaning of these words.

An example of a mistake with dynamic equivalence occurred during the early Jesuit missionary periods in Japan with Francis Xavier. Xavier chose the name Dainichi for God, which turned out to be a name for a local deity, hardly fitting an application to God. Given hundreds of other names of local deities, Xavier chose the Latin term Deus to refer to God. The reason for the mistake was largely due to the missionary’s lack of understanding of the Japanese culture and relying too much on informants (Ellison 1991, 34-35 in Song 2002, 3).

Chupungco (1992) gives examples from the Philippines and Nigeria of how static equivalents have been addressed. For anamnesis, which refers to the ritual memory of Christ’s paschal mystery becoming present in the worshiping assembly, the Filipino phrase, “how clearly we remember” is used (38-39). This phrase is also used as a Tagalog phrase to begin the narration of a historical event (Ibid.). The word for epiclesis, which refers to the calling down of the Holy Spirit, is expressed by a Filipino phrase and Tagalog verb meaning “to protect, to gather under the wings, or to brood,” or “may the Holy Spirit take under his wings” (40).

In the Igbo language of Nigeria, people have been able to find an equivalent for dignity in the expression “to wear an eagle’s feather” (Chupungco 1992, 40). This is
connected to an idiomatic expression that refers to the custom of an eagle feather being placed in a person’s hair that “indicates the dignity and position a person holds in society” (Ibid.).

Within the context of an interreligious paraliturgical prayer service the use of technical terms and the official liturgy are not necessary. What is helpful for this research is how very different metaphors and concepts within the Filipino and Nigerian cultures and religious traditions express a similar meaning to the terms used in the official liturgy. In the same way, this research would argue that similar thoughts expressed within a common prayer could convey the meaning of values and beliefs of those gathered for the interreligious service. This would be an example of dynamic equivalence applied to an interreligious prayer service via the creation of new texts or prayers. It also affirms words for peace such as “Shanti” within the Hindu tradition, “Salaam” within the Muslim tradition, and “Shalom” within the Jewish tradition that can result in a confirming “Amen,” from the participating religious traditions.

In summary, within the context of official liturgy, dynamic equivalence refers to elements of the Roman rite that are replaced by something in the local culture that has an equal meaning or value, as shown in the examples of Ricci and di Nobili. From the life of Ricci the best example is his “magnum opus” Tien-chu Shih-i (translated as The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven), in which he sought to explain to the Chinese “the existence of a personal and almighty God that the ancient Chinese traditions have called ‘the Lord of Heaven’ and how he briefly appeared in Jesus Christ” (Song 2002, 7).

Peter Phan (1998) provides further examples of what can be called the use of dynamic equivalence outside of a liturgical context by summarizing key points from
Ricci’s book. They include the exposition of the existence of one God, refuting false opinions regarding the Lord of Heaven found in Chinese religious and moral traditions, refuting various doctrines regarding reincarnation; and, affirmation of the moral life and heaven and hell in which our good deeds would be remunerated (118-119).

Di Nobili allowed recent converts of Christianity to continue to wear hair tufts (kudum), wear the holy thread (vajnopavit), and use sandal-paste (tilakam) to make a mark on their foreheads. He did not consider these practices to be incompatible with Christianity or the Gospel, regarding them as being only social customs (Henn 2014, 7). Practicing these customs allowed Christians in India to maintain their Indian culture without it being suppressed by a European one. Similarly, in his work to explain Christian concepts to the people of India, the importance of di Nobili’s efforts to master the Indian languages of Sanskrit and Tamil cannot be underestimated. In effect, di Nobili sought to find dynamic equivalents for core Christian concepts in these languages while at the same time enabling Indian converts to Christianity to continue to practice social customs that were not incompatible with core Christian beliefs (65-67).

A second method of inculturation is creative assimilation. This method is found in the “linguistic expressions, religious or otherwise, used by contemporary society” (Chupungco 1992, 44). Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Ambrose shaped the rite of baptism by assimilating into it anointing, the drinking of a cup with milk and honey, and the washing of the feet of the neophytes. They also included words from the mystery rites and the legal/juridical world. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the rite of baptism began with “washing in water with the word” before becoming a full liturgical celebration that included a) anointing both before and after baptism, b) the act of
renunciation (toward the west) and profession of faith (toward the east), c) the blessing of the baptismal water, d) anointing with chrism, e) wearing a white garment, and f) giving the lighted candle (45).

An example of non-linguistic creative assimilation is Matteo Ricci beginning his mission in China dressed as a Buddhist. He later realized he would be more effective dressed as a Confucian scholar in order to reach the educated and literate members of China including the Emperor himself. Di Nobili would do the same in India dressing as a sannyasin or “scholarly monk” (Henn 2014, 72).

The third method of liturgical inculturation is organic progression. This involves supplementing and completing the shape of the liturgy established by Sacrosanctum Concilium and the Holy See (Chupungco 1992, 47). Chupungco states that since the typical editions do not say everything, there is room for further developments in the postconciliar revision of the typical editions. However, the order of Mass does not change. Chupungco emphasizes the importance of organic progression. “If organic progression does not influence the work of inculturation among local Churches, the liturgy for the local Church has little prospect of becoming a reality” (51). He notes lacunae in Sacrosanctum Concilium and the typical editions of the postconciliar liturgical books. As a result of this, SC 77 calls for the rite of marriage to be “revised and enriched so that it will more clearly signify the grace of the sacrament and will emphasize the spouses’ duties” (Flannery 1975, 23).

An example of organic progression from the Jewish tradition is found in the celebration of Rosh ha-Shanah. There is minimal information found in the Tanakh/Torah
(Old Testament) about Rosh ha-Shanah. Specifically, the only passage about Rosh ha-Shanah states:

And the LORD spoke unto Moses saying: Speak unto the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no manner of servile work. (Lev 23:23 -25)

As the tradition of Rosh ha-Shana developed, many other interpretations from the Oral Law, found in the Mishna and Talmud, were linked to the day and many other elements were added to its celebration. Added elements included: the celebration of the New Year or Festival of Trumpets, in reference to the “blast of horns;” the transposing of the Hebrew letters of the month in question (B-tishrei) to reveal the very first word of Scripture: B’reishit, meaning “In the Beginning;” with the ancient sages determining the holiday to be a celebration of the anniversary of the creation of humanity through Adam and Eve; and, further developing the holiday to be one of repentance and personal introspection. This example of organic progression can be understood as the Oral Law and Rabbinic traditions filling in the blanks of the Written Law.

Interreligious paraliturgical prayer services are examples of organic progression in that they provide alternative liturgies outside of the official liturgies of the Church. They are especially needed given how the liturgical documents of the church make it clear no interreligious elements are to be part of the liturgy of the Eucharist. “Finally, it is strictly to be considered an abuse to introduce into the celebration of Holy Mass elements that are contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books and taken from the rites of other religions” (Redemptionis Sacramentum 2004, 79).
The next section will further justify and affirm the role of interreligious paraliturgies in the Church as a form of prayer that is outside of the official liturgies of the Church.

_Toward Liturgical Creativity_

After Chupungco (1992) covers the three methods of inculturation, he speaks about liturgical creativity, which addresses the issue of interreligious prayer the topic of this research. He begins by referring to _Comme le prévoit_ (1969), the instruction on the translation of liturgical texts that states, “texts translated from another language are clearly not sufficient for the celebration of a fully renewed liturgy. The creation of new texts will be necessary” (Consilium 1969, 7). According to Chupungco, (1992) liturgical creativity ranges from the development of completely new forms of liturgy to cases of simple adaptation. Moreover, he refers to new forms of liturgical prayer as “creative liturgies.” He also uses the term “alternative liturgies” (52-53). A liturgical dynamic equivalent of the term “alternative liturgies” is “paraliturgies,” which is the term chosen for this research. The term “nonliturgical prayer” was used in the instruction by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that is titled _Instruction on Prayer for Healing_ (2000).

Paraliturgies, such as the interreligious prayer services, can be important because they can help to renew the liturgy of the Church. Chupungco (1992, 53-54) writes:

_Inculturation alone cannot fully satisfy all the requirements for a truly renewed liturgy of a local Church. Creativity, which has always been an inherent feature of the Church’s worship, is sometimes not a mere option but an imperative for a local Church that wants its liturgy to be relevant and have impact on the life of the faithful.

An example of this type of creative, alternative liturgy is _A Service of Renewal_ that took place at the Westchester Jewish Center, attended by this researcher. While an
ordinary Sunday evening service would have been attended by approximately twelve people, this “alternative liturgy” had three hundred. The room was large enough to accommodate this number but it was not as large as the main synagogue. The lighting was dim and candles added to the intimate ambience. The prayers and songs were in Hebrew and English, some of which were traditional prayers. The music was appropriate and beautiful and the pianist and other musicians were quite accomplished. The leaders of song were also excellent. As a Christian attending this Jewish Service of Renewal, I felt renewed and enjoyed the contemporary and traditional nature of the service.

In conclusion, this chapter explored the development of the rite of baptism from the New Testament accounts through the third and fourth centuries. The rite initially involved only water and words, other elements were added over time. These include the symbols of oil, chrism, a white garment, and a lighted candle, all of which are borrowed from the mystery rites of the ancient world. Language from other cultural contexts, including the sports arena and legal circles, was applied to the rite of baptism over time to further develop and adapt the ritual to local contexts.

This chapter also examined the missionary activities of Matteo Ricci in China and Roberto di Nobili in India. The Chinese rites controversy involved the adaptation of Chinese customs that concerned veneration of ancestors and Confucius through incense offered and ritual gestures directed towards wooden tablets. The attempt to apply a Christian meaning to the custom was seen as unacceptable at the time. Attempts to discourage Christian Chinese converts from the practice were not successful because the custom of ancestral worship was a constitutive dimension of the Chinese way of life. A positive outcome of the Chinese rites controversy was that the Vatican wrote instructions
that supported inculturation of the liturgy. They were incorporated into the writings of the Second Vatican Council, and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in particular.

In this chapter various principles of liturgical inculturation were identified that can be applied to the experience of interreligious prayer. They include the following: a primary purpose of worshiping God and instruction for the assembly, a prayer that invites the assembly to full, conscious, and active participation, a variety of ministerial roles for various participants in the service that include scripture readings, prayers, music, and other cultural elements from the various religious traditions that participate. Chupungco identifies methods of liturgical inculturation that are concerned primarily with the official liturgy of the Church. These included: dynamic equivalence, creative assimilation, and organic progression. However, these methods can be used in the development of paraliturgies. Moreover, Chupungco’s “creative liturgies” pertains to interreligious prayer as a creative paraliturgy that can enrich the religious tradition of all who participate.

In addition to the work of Anscar J. Chupungco, Alyward Shorter and Peter C. Phan offered important insights to liturgical and cultural inculturation. Shorter states that inculturation is always interculturation among three cultures—the Bible, the Christian tradition and the local community to whom the gospel is being proclaimed. Without this interplay there is a risk of imposing a particular culture, such as the Roman rite, on other cultures. Within the context of interreligious prayer, the interplay of prayers, beliefs, scriptures, language, and symbols of various religious traditions is added. A final principle is that liturgy should work towards human liberation and social justice.

The researcher proposes that a presumption of multiple revelations of the sacred presented a barrier that was behind the Ricci and di Nobili controversies and that the
civic and religious traditions in China and India were based on (false) revelations of the sacred that are incompatible with the revelation of God in the Christian traditions. In contrast, there is a need in the Church today to have a consistent and clear conviction of one revelation of one God that is uniquely and humanly expressed through differing religious traditions. Beginning with this conviction and applying principles of inculturation, enables Christians to show how, for instance, veneration of ancestors and other civic and religious traditions found in China and India are compatible with Christian teaching.

The next chapter examines various examples of interreligious prayer and specifically, the Assisi World Days of Prayer started by Pope John Paul II in 1986 and continued by Pope Benedict XVI in 2011. These prayer services inspired other interreligious prayer services. Principles of liturgical inculturation will be applied to the services.
CHAPTER 4: PRINCIPLES OF INCULTURATION AND MODELS OF INTERRELIGIOUS PRAYER

The previous chapter looked at the development of the rite of baptism and the influence of other religious traditions and elements that were added to the rite. This was followed by a discussion of the missionary work of Matteo Ricci in China and Roberto di Nobili in India which served as examples of inculturation. Both missionaries mastered the languages of the Chinese and Indian cultures along with an understanding of the religious and civil customs of the people. This knowledge allowed both missionaries to accept and incorporate elements of these cultures into the Christian tradition. While their efforts at inculturation created controversy and ecclesial investigations, they were eventually affirmed by Church leadership. The chapter concluded with an exploration of various principles of inculturation that could be supportive of an interreligious paraliturgical prayer service including: dynamic equivalence, organic progression, creative assimilation, and creative liturgies.

This chapter explores different paradigms of interreligious prayer services proposed by Douglas Pratt (1997, 1998, 2006) including: three modes of interreligious prayer; two modes of responsiveness, and two modes of hospitality that are constitutive dimensions of such prayer. Pratt’s paradigms will be juxtaposed against various modes of prayer developed by Thomas Ryan in his book Interreligious Prayer (2008), and Jacques Dupuis whose book Christianity and the Religions (2002) offers theological considerations that support common prayer within an interreligious service.

After addressing these different modes of interreligious prayer, the discussion will turn to Michael Amaladoss’s book Beyond Inculturation: Can the Many Be One? (1998) and the issue of syncretism as well as Jeannine Hill Fletcher’s work on hybridity in her
book *Monopoly on Salvation? A Feminist Approach to Religious Pluralism* (2005). Fletcher regards all individuals as hybrids based on the many influences that shape individual identity. The following section will include an examination of different historical periods in which a diversity of religious traditions led to a creative assimilation of different religious elements. This discussion will include the work of Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili.

The four days of World Prayer for Peace that took place at Assisi will then be analyzed. These days both encouraged interreligious prayer services, while also raising questions about whether such services could be seen as examples of syncretism and relativism, suggesting all religions are equal or the same. The chapter concludes with the application of the principles of inculturation explored in chapter three and the revelatory nature of these services as they relate to chapter two.

**Different Paradigms of Interreligious Prayer**

In his article *Interreligious Prayer: Prospects and Parameters* (2006), Douglas Pratt speaks of interreligious prayer as being “comparatively novel and relatively rare” (1). However, in the past year, this researcher has attended, or been part of, the planning of many interreligious paraliturgical services that are the impetus of this research. The four Assisi gatherings convened by St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have brought both support and resistance to interreligious paraliturgical prayer services.

Yet, in *Parameters for Interreligious Prayer: Some Considerations* (1997), Pratt mentions a joint consultation on interreligious prayer that took place in Bangalore, India in July 1996. He makes the following observation, “Interreligious prayer is not an optional activity restricted to an elite group but an urgent call for a growing number of

As additional models of interreligious prayer, Pratt also discusses four modalities of encounter and engagement identified as the *responsive type* and *hospitality type*. The *responsive type* consists of events that respond to a communal crisis or tragedy and those that are civic celebrations. Examples of this type would include the interreligious paraliturgical services that followed the events of 9/11 and those that bring the community together to celebrate Thanksgiving and World Interfaith Harmony Week. The *hospitality type* provides the dynamics of being a host and guest at an interreligious event. In discussing this type Pratt uses the metaphor of the culinary openness of a gourmand that results in “a wider appreciation of a diversity of nourishment and enrichment” (Pratt 2006, 6). Such openness to spiritual diversity and other religious traditions only enhances our spiritual being.

In his book *Interreligious Prayer* (2008), Thomas Ryan identifies different forms of interreligious prayer: just being there, multireligious prayer, integrative religious prayer and leadership of prayer at an interreligious gathering. These are compared with Pratt’s models. The next section explores each of the modes of interreligious prayer.

*The Multireligious Act or Shared Multireligious Act*

For Pratt (2006, 2), the *multireligious*, or *shared multireligious* act involves presentations from a number of participating religious traditions in a planned order of
service (1). He evaluates this kind of service as lacking coordination and any particular level of mutual acceptance or agreement. Each of the contributions from the different religious traditions are observed rather than received. Some would describe this observation without reception as religious voyeurism. While a common theme or occasion might be the purpose for the gathering, it does not seem to be an event that is coordinated thematically, or critically and intentionally planned. Pratt describes it as “a spiritual or liturgical ‘pot-luck’ as to the smorgasbord-like spread of differently sourced religious items contributed to the event” (1-2).

The United Act or Combined Multireligious Act

For Pratt (2006, 2), the united act or combined multireligious act is the most “problematic” mode of interreligious prayer. The problem is due to the liturgical act being “integrative” in which a single act of prayer has a “blended unitary content” that is reflective of the various groups gathered together to pray. For Pratt, this constitutes “the lowest common denominator approach . . . a blend belonging to no particular tradition . . . outside of the orbit of the religions concerned . . . a liturgical orphan . . . a spiritual hybrid . . . a reductionist enterprise.” He notes that many people assume that interreligious prayer means united prayer consisting of a combined multireligious act. He believes that in this form of prayer the distinctive and particular are lacking “in order that a base-line of harmony and acceptability may prevail,” thus making this type of prayer the “lowest common denominator” (2).

The Contiguous Multireligious Act

Pratt’s contiguous multi-religious act, added to his later 2006 article, is concerned primarily with the three Assisi World Days of Prayer for Peace convened by St. John
Paul II in 1986, 1993, and 2002 although Pratt does not mention the 1993 gathering. Because the religious traditions present are given their own space in which to pray, the rites, customs, and integrity of each is maintained. Thus, there is no compromise, reductionism, or relativism, no overt corporate acts of interreligious sharing, and no creeping syncretism. People are gathered together to pray, but they are not praying together (Pratt 2002, 2).

The Coherent Interreligious Prayer

For Pratt, the coherent interreligious prayer or coherent-integrated prayer is the best experience of interreligious prayer as it is “carefully coordinated and sensitively constructed” (2006, 3). This prayer service contains the following elements: a theme that critically coordinates the prayers from the various religious traditions, and a particular need or common point of reference. There is respect and tolerance for any differences between the participating religions.

Additionally, Pratt discusses what this interreligious prayer is not by repeating some of the points enumerated in his discussion of a united act of prayer: namely, it does not unite the various religions under an all-inclusive, supra-religious identity that embraces each tradition; there is no attempt to blend the various religions into a spiritual porridge or smorgasbord; no religious tradition is compromised; and, there is not a reduction of essence nor denial of the identity of any of the participating religious traditions. For Pratt, the end result of this service is one in which a greater wholeness can emerge with “an intuition of a larger context, a wider or deeper sphere wherein a unifying spirit is at work” (3).
Pratt affirms that “Prayer embraces a dimension of self-encounter and the transcending of self in order to go beyond self.” (2006, 3). He considers interreligious prayer as “a meeting point” and “an opportunity for significant religious interconnection” that serve as a sign of hope. This religious interconnection can act as a relational bridge interconnecting people and faith communities.

Interreligious prayer gives opportunity to acknowledge the sacredness that is presented in and by the other; it affirms and honors that sacredness; it may even evoke and manifest—that is, bring-into-present-being—an overarching sense of sacredness in which the particular moment of interreligious prayer is situated, and which is at the same time not inappropriate to the participating traditions. (Pratt 2006, 3)

*Hospitality Type or “Inner-facing” Interreligious Event*

In addition to the other modes of interreligious prayer, Pratt offers a *hospitality type*. This type or model is found in an “inner-facing” interreligious event in which there are the reciprocal roles of host and guest that set the parameters for the interaction (Pratt 2006, 5). He concludes his discussion of the *hospitality type*, or religious engagement using cuisine and culinary openness as a metaphor to describe the transformation that can take place when passing over to another religious tradition and returning with greater insight into one’s own tradition. Opening oneself up to another “culinary cuisine” can lead to “an expansion of cuisine; modifications of eating patterns, perhaps; the acquiring of new tastes” resulting in “an increase range of options, an expansion of flavors, a wider appreciation of a diversity of nourishment and enrichment” (5). Thus, the culinary experience is analogous to the religious and spiritual realm.

Interreligious prayer provides an opportunity, on the hospitality model, to enhance our spiritual being through exposure to a wider diversity of enrichment. There is no need to treat persons of other faiths as proffering an inherently threatening cuisine: the notion of a host forcing the guest to eat that which is clearly unpalatable vitiates the principles of good
hospitality, as does the idea that when someone brings their contribution to a shared meal they would expect the table to be cleared of all other offerings. Such exclusivisms would be unacceptable in the culinary realm: they are no less so in the realm of interreligious engagement. (Pratt 2006, 5)

The next section will examine forms of interreligious prayer as categorized by Thomas Ryan and the similarities and differences of these forms to the ones outlined by Douglas Pratt.

*Just Being There*

Thomas Ryan (2008) begins his discussion of interreligious prayer positively, by affirming those who attend for “just being there.” He calls interreligious prayer “an expression of the coming together of all the ‘scattered children of God’ and hopefully leads to a more united and peaceful human family” (22). Ryan views attendance at an interreligious prayer service as a sign of respect especially important for those religious traditions that have had a history of being estranged from one another. He views simple presence as a form of participation, rather than viewing it passively as “religious voyeurism.” He provides the example within the Buddhist-Christian dialogue where Buddhist monks have attended the celebration of the praying of the Divine Office and the Eucharist, and Catholics have attended the rituals from the Buddhist tradition as observers.

*Multireligious Prayer*

Ryan’s discussion of *multireligious prayer* is similar to Pratt’s. According to Ryan, multireligious prayer involves the gathering together of various religious traditions to offer prayers in a serial fashion. Each religion is present at the service in the spirit of full fidelity to its own traditions while respecting the differences of the others present. He includes the Assisi gatherings and the model of religious traditions praying in separate
places citing the oft repeated motto, “We come together to pray rather than come to pray together” (Ryan 2008, 23). After the religious traditions pray separately, they gather together and, as a unified group, pray and offer statements for peace.

Ryan describes those gathered at such a service as “participant observers.” Each religious tradition participates in prayer in fidelity to its own traditions. Each religious tradition observes other religious traditions pray in fidelity to their own tradition. While they may not pray in the same way, they are joined in solidarity in the spirit of the prayer. Ryan states, “This does not imply acceptance of everything that is said or done, nor does it suggest indifference to the truth” (2008, 24). He makes a point of linking interreligious prayer and interreligious dialogue with the common tasks of respecting the different beliefs of religious traditions along with clearly articulating Christian beliefs.

Ryan names some issues that could pose potential problems at a multireligious prayer service, some of which are also mentioned by Pratt. He gives the example of Hindu chants, or kirtnas, which involve the singing of bhajans, or devotional chants. While these chants are very popular within the context of yoga classes, at a multireligious or interreligious prayer service they can be objectionable to other religious traditions. Sometimes, the purpose of the chant is to harmonize or balance one’s energies. Other chants are sung in the name of Hindu deities. These deities can be explained as different aspects or attributes of the one Supreme Being of all religions, the Saguna Brahman. However, they can also be understood as a veneration or worship of multiple deities which violates the monotheistic principles of Jews, Christians, and Muslims (Ryan 2008, 28).
Ryan notes that in India, when Christians pray with Hindus, they generally chant generic names for the Supreme Being such as God, Lord, or Creator. He proposes that the reciting of specific names of deities from other religious traditions can imbue the person reciting those names with “energy.” He counsels that one should not “enter into that energy field without being formally initiated to it” (28). Since Christians are initiated into the Body of Christ, they should chant names acceptable to Christianity. He values respect and attentiveness to the other traditions without trying to participate directly in them (28).

*Integrative Religious Prayer*

Integrative religious prayer is a form of prayer that would be considered “blended” or “unitive” by Pratt and can appear to be reductionist and syncretistic. It is not official or specific to the particular characteristics of prayer of a given religious tradition. For example, at the 9/11 Memorial Interreligious Prayer Service, Pope Francis began his prayer with various titles for God that included God of peace, understanding, compassion and healing. He did not begin or end with a traditional Trinitarian formula. It was a sudden conclusion of the prayer without an opportunity for saying amen. It is recommended that participants see blended prayers before the service in order to have the opportunity to evaluate the appropriateness of the prayer that Chupungco would call a “creative prayer.” Ryan cautions against the use of this form of prayer because it gives the impression that generic language can be substituted for particular Christian beliefs and language. This impression compromises Christian beliefs and language by making them seem to be “not of ultimate significance and thus replaceable” (Ryan 2008, 29). It can also be viewed by other non-Christian traditions as relativizing the Christian faith in Jesus Christ as Savior of the world. Despite these concerns, Ryan supports the use of
integrative religious prayer that can express common values within an interreligious setting relying heavily on Jacques Dupuis’s thoughts on common prayer in his book *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (2002).

Ryan’s final form of interreligious prayer involves an individual leading a prayer at a multireligious gathering. Examples include a university convocation ceremony, a Thanksgiving Day service, or an interfaith wedding. These are prayers of an inclusive nature that show sensitivity towards all participants (Ryan 2008, 38-39).

In summary, Douglas Pratt and Thomas Ryan present various modes of interreligious prayer. While both authors offer similarities in the forms of prayer, Ryan has a much more positive interpretation. He recognizes the value of merely being present at an interreligious prayer service and does not express the same concerns of syncretism as does Pratt. The biggest difference between the two is Ryan’s support of integrative or common prayer which Pratt views as a reductionist enterprise. The next section will examine how Jacques Dupuis supports and encourages the idea of integrative prayer or, his preferred term, “common prayer.”

*Integrative or Common Prayer*

In his chapter on interreligious prayer, Dupuis (2002) cites an article by Fr. Marcello Zago, the former Secretary of the Secretariat for Non-Christians before the first Assisi World Day of Prayer for Peace, published in *L’Osservatore Romano* (1986). In this article, Zago addresses the value of common prayer among various religious traditions when it is prudently carried out and avoids the pitfalls of syncretism. As Zago’s expertise is in Buddhist-Christian dialogue, he gave the example of sharing an experience of meditation. He also adds a justification for common prayer or integrative religious
prayer. “Being together to pray, and sometimes to pray together, is a recognition of this essential fact of the relationship of all human beings with God” (Zago 1986 in Dupuis 2002, 63-72).

Like Zago, Dupuis finds support for the concept of integrative or common prayer within an interreligious service in the “Guidelines for Interreligious Dialogue” (#82) of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI). This document suggests that it is not only possible, it is recommended and “even a duty” if done correctly (Dupuis 2002, 237).

A third form of dialogue goes to the deepest levels of religious life and consists in sharing in prayer and contemplation. The purpose of such common prayer is primarily the corporate worship of God of all who has created us to be one large family. We are called to worship God not only individually but also in community, and since in a very real and fundamental manner we are one with the whole of humanity, it is not only our right but our duty to worship him together with others. (CBCI 1989, 68 in Dupuis 2002, 237)

Later in the CBCI document, it mentions the importance of discernment (84), specific directives for prayer gatherings (85), and the preparation that is required for those participating in the prayer service. Dupuis provides helpful theological considerations to support common or integrative prayer.

Theological Considerations for Integrative/Common Prayer: Praying Together: Why?

Examining theological considerations for integrative/common prayer, Dupuis (2002) proposes that it is first important to make a distinction between the three traditional monotheistic religions, identified as the Abrahamic traditions or prophetic traditions, and the mystical religions of the East found in the traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism. It is important to note that Dupuis does not infer that the Abrahamic traditions cannot have mystical elements or that the Eastern religions cannot be prophetic. Dupuis
further breaks down the theological considerations into concerns about *Praying Together: Why?* and, *Praying Together: How?*

Dupuis offers two basic principles to support common prayer. 1) Prayer between Christians and other traditions is recommended and encouraged as a context for contemporary interreligious dialogue; and 2) careful consideration must be given to the distinct religious traditions involved in the service (2002, 238).

The first theological consideration is taken from *Nostra Aetate* (1), which speaks of the origin of the human family in God as well as a common destiny in God. In addition to *Nostra Aetate*, Dupuis (2002) refers to a speech by St. John Paul II to the Roman Curia before the first Assisi gathering in which he states:

> There is but a single divine design for every human being who comes into this world (cf. Jn 1, 9), a single beginning and end, regardless of his or her skin color, the historical and geographical horizon in which he or she lives, the culture in which he or she has grown and finds self-expression. The differences are something that is less important than the unity, which by contrast is radical, basic, and decisive. (239)

The fourth paragraph of the speech locates “the divine design, unique and definitive” in Jesus Christ. The eleventh paragraph places every authentic prayer under the influence of the Holy Spirit: “We believe in fact that every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in every human heart.” Dupuis mentions the Assisi gathering as an event in which this occurred.

There are two final theological considerations when discussing integrative/common prayer. The first, all religions are part of the universal Reign of God established by God in Jesus Christ and, second, the religions of the world are God’s gift to humanity (Dupuis 2002, 240-241). This final consideration supports the understanding of one revelation explored in chapter two. If all religions have their origin in a “divine
self-manifestation to human beings, the multiplicity of the religions is grounded in the superabundant riches and variety of God’s self-manifestations to humankind” (242).

In summary, common or integrative prayer at an interreligious prayer service is supported by a theological understanding that all human beings are created in God’s image and likeness, that they have a relationship with God and, together, each religious tradition can pray and worship God in a corporate manner. Discernment is needed to make sure the common prayer is acceptable to those who are participating in the interreligious prayer service. The next section will examine the works of Jacques Dupuis (2002) and Abhishiktananda, (2006) who explores prayer from a Hindu-Christian perspective, to explore how religious traditions pray together.

**Praying Together: How?**

After Dupuis (2002) provides theological considerations as a response to *Praying Together: Why*, he explores *Praying Together: How?* establishing the relationship between Jews and Christians that can result in a continuity of adoration and worship of the same God. He notes the important role the Psalms play in the Christian tradition and the appropriateness of the “Lord’s Prayer” which he feels is inspired by the spirituality of the Hebrew Bible (244). An immediate, practical problem within the Jewish tradition is the inability for Orthodox Jews to enter a house of worship outside of Judaism. While it may be possible to find a Rabbi from Reform Judaism, nonetheless, problems arise when attempting to find a representative from the Jewish tradition when the interreligious service is held in a Christian church.

For Muslim-Christian common prayer, Dupuis returns to the common bond of Abraham between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. In a speech to young Muslims at
Casablanca in 1985, St. John Paul II recognizes the one God of Christians and Muslims that supports the understanding of one revelation explored in chapter two.

I believe that we, Christians and Muslims, must recognize with joy the religious values we have in common, and give thanks to God. Both of us believe in one God, the one God, who is all Justice and all Mercy; we believe in the importance of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, of repentance and forgiveness (John Paul II, 1985, 7).

St. John Paul II concludes the speech with a common prayer.

In a speech to Turkey’s Religious Affairs Directories in 2006, Pope Benedict XVI echoes the words of St. John Paul II. He quotes Pope Gregory VII who, in 1076, addressed a Muslim prince in North Africa who had treated Christians with kindness. He stated, “We believe in one God, albeit in a different manner, and we praise him and worship him every day as the Creator and Ruler of the world” (Benedict XVI 2006, 2).

The basis for common prayer among Jews, Christians, and Muslims is belief in the same God, although the notion of God may be different within each religious tradition. While the Guidelines for a Dialogue between Muslims and Christians (1979) calls for respect of both traditions and warns against “any intention of annexation and any attempt at recuperation,” there is room to “create common forms of praise and supplication that will reunite them in an experience of jointly lived prayer” (Borrmans 1981, 152 in Dupuis 2002, 245).

Dupuis also addresses common prayer between Christians and “Others.” This includes common prayer with Hindus (a theistic tradition) and even Buddhists (a nontheistic tradition). “Whenever people open up in faith and entrust themselves to an Absolute on whom they depend absolutely, present there in self-manifestation and self-revelation is the one God, the God of all human beings” (Dupuis 2002, 249). Examples of common prayers include the “Canticle of the Creatures” of St. Francis of Assisi, a hymn
to the unknown God attributed to St. Gregory Nazianzen, and readings from the Bhagavad Gita. Prayers of silent meditation are also appropriate and are recommended in any interreligious paraliturgical service.

In his book, *Prayer* (2006), Abhishiktananda speaks of prayer from the perspective of a Christian living within a Hindu/Indian context. Abhishiktananda is the Hindu name taken by Benedictine monk Henri le Saux. Like Roberto di Nobili, he immersed himself in the Indian culture and spirituality which led him to a deeper and more enriched Christian faith. He speaks of constant prayer as living in the holy presence of God and that to live in the presence of God is “as natural for a Christian as to breathe the air which surrounds him” (2006, 2). It is impossible not to be in the presence of God. Given this dedication to and understanding of constant prayer, Abhishiktananda is the ideal model of an individual who has applied principles of dynamic equivalence between the Hindu and Christian traditions of prayer.

An example of dynamic equivalence is when Abhishiktananda speaks of the *nāmajapa*, or “the prayer of the name” as expressed in India. The name of the Lord is repeated in one or more of its traditional forms: “Rama,” “Hari” or “Krishna.” Some recite the name repeatedly in the manner similar to that of saying the rosary using a string of 108 beads. Others are not concerned with the exact number of recitations and simply continue to whisper it even during a conversation, stopping only when it is time to speak or answer a question. In the Hindu tradition, that word is given by a guru as a way of initiating a worthy disciple, or as a particular mantra for a worthy disciple (95-96).

Abhishiktananda gives an equivalent example within the Christian tradition that is found in “the Jesus prayer.” This prayer can be the simple repetition of the name of Jesus
or a longer version: “Lord Jesus, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

This form of prayer is found in the book, *The Way of a Pilgrim* (1881)—first published with the title *Intimate Conversations of a Pilgrim with his Spiritual Father*—but goes back much farther to the ancient traditions of the Egyptian desert fathers (Laude 2006, 41; Abhishiktananda 2006, 97).

In addition to the “prayer of the name,” Abhishiktananda speaks of *OM*, which is “the supreme mantra of the Hindu tradition” known as the *pranava* (2006, 110). He addresses the appropriateness of this sacred sound recited or chanted by Christians. He states it “should not be recommended indiscriminately to all Christians, or indeed people of any other tradition” (116). The reason for this is due to its richness of meaning and requires a deep inner experience to which OM corresponds. If this inner experience has not occurred, OM is simply a meaningless sound that profits no one who utters it. However, if a Christian does have this inner experience, has been initiated into the Indian tradition, and “has accepted the Gospel message in its fullness and has allowed the Spirit to lead him into the interior of his own heart, then he has as much right as his Hindu brother to murmur the OM” (116). In order to appropriately recite OM, Abhishiktananda suggests that a person should be initiated into the Indian tradition while still maintaining a Christian identity and belief in a triune God. Abhishiktananda’s approval for a Christian to recite the OM would be considered by some to be a form of the “syncretism” Pratt discusses, or a move outside of the Christian tradition according to Ryan. However, according to Amaladoss (1998), the incorporation of elements from another tradition into one’s own tradition, can be a way of enriching one’s own spiritual life and religious tradition. Two resources that can be utilized within an interreligious paraliturgical service
as common prayers or specific prayers are: *god has no religion* (Goulart 2005) and *Life Prayers from Around the World* (Roberts and Amidon 1996).

In summary, *Praying Together: How?* (Dupuis 2002, 242-252) recognized interreligious prayer that could take place between Jews, Christians, Muslims, and other religious traditions. The three monotheistic religions share a belief in the same God, though they have separate notions of that God. While the Psalms can be used as primary common prayers between Christians and Jews, other common prayers can be designed or chosen for the service. While the Lord’s Prayer might be appropriate in interreligious prayer involving Jews and Christians, it would not be appropriate for a Muslim participant due to its Trinitarian nature as well as terminology that may be deemed too familiar and informal to reference God. Still, for interreligious prayer involving Muslims and Christians various prayers can be chosen that maintain respect for both traditions. In light of the notion that all religions are gifts from God to the world, common prayer with Eastern traditions such as Buddhism and Hinduism is not only feasible, but also appropriate, in addition to prayer specific to each tradition. The presence of Eastern religious traditions presents an opportunity for a period of silent meditation so integral to these traditions. While Ryan discourages praying in the language of a specific religious tradition, Abhishiktananda permits it as long as the individual is thoroughly initiated and knowledgeable of that tradition and does so with respect for the words and prayer.

The *namajapa* or *prayer of the name* in the Hindu tradition, is the repetitive recitation of the name of God within each tradition. This particular prayer, along with other prayers at an interreligious paraliturgical prayer service, affirms the understanding
of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through various religious traditions explored in chapter two.

The next section will devote attention to syncretism as either a barrier or a bridge to interreligious prayer using the works of Michael Amaladoss (1998) Anscar Chupungco (1995), and Jeannine Hill Fletcher (2005).

**Syncretism or Hybridity: Bridge or Barrier to Interreligious Prayer**

In his 2006 article, Pratt expresses concern about the presence of syncretism in interreligious prayer services which are found in a *united act*, or when a common prayer is composed for the prayer service. “Although syncretism as such is not intended, there is a risk of it being assumed, nonetheless . . . all the fearful concerns of syncretism mounted against the cause of interreligious dialogue could come home to roost” (Pratt 2006, 2). Pratt’s reference for this statement is *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions* (2004), by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger.

Ratzinger tells us that shared prayer at an interreligious service would be tantamount to “fiction” given the different understandings of God and prayer (Ratzinger 2004, 106). He also states that multireligious prayer cannot be the normal form of religious life, but only, he argues, when there is a need to cry out to God for help as one voice. He adds, the explanation at the service should make it clear that there is “no such thing as ‘the religions,’ and no such thing as a ‘common concept of God or belief in God’” (107). [The concept of revelation presupposed here is contrary to the understanding of one revelation discussed in chapter two.] Ratzinger sets three conditions in order for true interreligious prayer to take place. First, there must be agreement about who God is as a personal God, and as a God of peace and justice. Second, after agreement about the basic
concept of God, there must be discussion and agreement between the various religious traditions. Ratzinger advocates for the use of the Lord’s Prayer in interreligious prayer, maintaining that petitions that are contrary to this prayer are unacceptable to Christians and should not be a part of an interreligious gathering in which Christians are present (109). Finally, no relativistic misinterpretation of faith and prayer, that is, understandings of faith and prayer that suggest that religions are interchangeable, must find a foothold. “To avoid misleading people in such ways demands that the Christian’s faith in the uniqueness of God and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ the Savior of all mankind be not obscured for the non-Christian” (109). In spite of his reservations, when Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI, he convened the fourth Assisi day of prayer in 2011, “A Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World: Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace.”

The word syncretism is derived from the Latin *syncretismus* and the Greek *synkrētismós* and was used to describe the united front of two opposing parties, against a common foe or third party. A positive definition is “the attempted reconciliation or union of different or opposing principles, practices, or parties, as in philosophy or religion” (Dictionary.com 2016). The more familiar, pejorative, meaning, as it relates to interreligious prayer is “the blending of two or more religious belief systems into a new system, or the incorporation into a religious tradition of beliefs from unrelated traditions” (Wikipedia contributors 2016e).

Michael Amaladoss addresses the issue of syncretism in his book *Beyond Inculturation: Can the Many Be One?* (1998) defining it as the mixing of elements and symbols from different religions in a deleterious way. This practice is frowned upon as it
illegitimatizes the religions involved and is considered disrespectful of tradition by religious leadership (124). The illegitimatizing of a religion is due to the incorporation of elements that are not part of the religious tradition, thus taking away from the religious traditions true identity. Leadership can view these elements as unacceptable and subject to misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

Amaladoss discusses who should make the decision regarding the illegitimacy of the elements incorporated into a given religious tradition. It is not the people themselves, he finds, who have a problem with the integration of elements from other traditions. Rather, it is leadership of the traditions who typically condemn this practice, labeling supporters as “syncretists.” (1998, 124-125).

Amaladoss states that in today’s religiously pluralistic and diverse world, syncretism cannot be avoided and is, in fact, normal. The positive appreciation people have for other religious traditions are dialogical and relational. This has the potential to change the connotation of syncretism from a pejorative one to something more positive and acceptable (1998, 124-125).

Yet, Amaladoss does recognize an illegitimate syncretism. He speaks of rituals that can be “instrumentalized and objectified by people.” They seek to satisfy an immediate need or avoid an immediate danger, and in doing so reduce religion to magic. He describes illegitimate syncretism as a “danger in secularized societies where religions become private and individualistic,” where people pick and choose what they want or think they need while losing a sense of the community (1998, 125).

Amaladoss calls for special attention to be given to popular religion and, this researcher would add, creative liturgies as found in interreligious paraliturgical services.
He offers a critique of contemporary Christianity: it is “a bourgeois religion that depends on rationality and verbalization; liturgy is no longer a celebration but an intellectual exercise; catechesis does not communicate an experience, but only offers an explanation” (Amaladoss 1998, 125).

On the other hand, an experience of popular religion or an interreligious paraliturgy, or an experience of worship in another religious tradition can help people rediscover the values basic to all religions. This type of experience was discussed in the beginning of chapter one, which described the researcher’s encounter with the Native American tradition. The positive and transformative effect from a Hindu service is described by Diane Eck and is attributed to her belief in a Trinitarian God that gave her “a sense of what divine presence is” (Eck 1993, in Johnson 2007, 1712). What Amaladoss proposes be rediscovered through popular religion and interreligious dialogue is, “an experience of God as imminent; the sacredness of all reality; a respect for nature; an experience of religions as relevant to life here and now; a rediscovery of the total human person with emotion and imagination as well as reason; a sense of the human person-in-community” (1998, 125). He also suggests that an experience of popular religion can help to counter the growing number of sects and new religious movements that seek total control of persons or groups while alienating them from the larger community using methods such as individualized self-help techniques (125). An experience of popular religion can keep someone grounded in the community, thus removing the need to seek another religious experience.

Chupungco (1995) recognizes the tension that exists with inculturation and the danger of eclectism and syncretism. He notes the importance of incorporating meaningful
elements from the culture of the people into the liturgy or, for purposes of this research, a paraliturgy. He states:

If the liturgy must communicate the church’s faith to people, it had to be experienced with words, rites, and symbols that were familiar to them. It had to become recognizably incarnate, that is, as having taken flesh in the cultural milieu of the worshipers.

What inculturation means is that worship assimilates the people’s language, ritual, and symbolic patterns. (Chupungco 1995, 2)

Chupungco uses the term “eclectism,” rather then syncretism. He defines eclectism as “a random, indiscriminate, and undigested borrowing of alien doctrines and practices regardless of whether or not they accord with the faith received by the Apostles;” and, describes it as “a kind of multiple choice whereby each one may select elements that one finds suitable or convenient.” He states that Christianity detests “every form of eclectism” (1995, 3).

Chupungco contrasts the concept of eclectism with the Christian tradition of assimilating cultural elements into liturgical worship that could be reinterpreted in the light of God’s revelation. Examples of this assimilation and reinterpretation can be found in chapter three. For Chupungco, inculturation is not just the juxtaposition of unrelated elements, but the incorporation of elements that enhance the meaning of the liturgical or paraliturgical celebration without danger to the original meaning (1995, 3).

Jeannine Hill Fletcher (2005) provides additional background information about the missionary efforts of Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili explored in chapter three. She discusses syncretism using concepts of affirmations—which refer to beliefs of a given religious tradition, counter-affirmations—which represent either opposing or similar beliefs in a different religious tradition, and hybridity—which relates to all of the factors that influence our identity as Christians, including the influence of other religious
traditions, throughout the history of Christianity (26-52, 82-101). Additionally, Hill Fletcher places her analysis within the context of an understanding of God as an incomprehensible mystery that no religious tradition can fully grasp and that can affirm the understanding of one revelation explored in chapter two.

Hill Fletcher recalls a story from a letter written by Roberto di Nobili in 1609 to his Jesuit companions. He recalls a heated public debate with an educated Brahmin who asked the question, “Has this man alone the monopoly on salvation” (2005, vii)? Despite di Nobili’s in-depth knowledge of the Indian culture and language and Hindu religious tradition his answer of “yes” to the question would suggest his inability to consider the possibility of salvation for the Indian/Hindu people outside of the Catholic Church. On the other hand, he was able to incorporate elements of the Indian and Hindu culture and rituals into the Christian tradition, as described in chapter three. Hill Fletcher (2005) adds that di Nobili ultimately sought to convince Hindus of the superiority of the affirmations found in Christianity (40-41). In his two books written in Tamil—the language of his Hindu audience—*Dialogue on Eternal Life* (2000) and *Inquiry into the Meaning of “God”* (2000), he concludes that the Hindu patterns of worship are “not authentic but idolatrous” and “the ways of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses cannot represent truly the incomprehensible God” (Hill Fletcher 2005, 41). Despite his knowledge of the Hindu/Indian culture, di Nobili is not able to really listen to the voice of the religious other.

An even stronger statement of condemnation of the Hindu gods is made by Francis Xavier (1506-1552) during his time in India. He states, “The invocations of the pagans are hateful to God, since all their gods are devils” (Neill 1984, 143 in Hill
Fletcher 2005, 38). This is an example of what Hill Fletcher calls “the strength of affirmation when it eclipses incomprehensibility” (Hill Fletcher 2005, 38). In other words, the incomprehensibility of God as the infinite mystery of the universe is replaced by a tribal ruler whose only concern is the Christian faith and how that faith is imposed on people outside of the tradition. For Hill Fletcher, the counter-affirmations of the religious other need to be heard in order for alternative religious forms to enhance interreligious dialogue. These counter-affirmations can also leave open the possibility of elements from other religious traditions entering into the Christian tradition and allowing the religious other to better understand Christianity.

An example of a Hindu counter-affirmation that resembles Amaladoss’s (1998) positive perspective of syncretism is the following taken from the writings of di Nobili (Di Nobili 2000, 262 in Hill-Fletcher 2005, 41).

Just as there are many roads leading to the same town and many rivers flowing into the same ocean, so too, they say, there are numerous viewpoints according to which one can know that transcendent-and-immanent Being and reach the ultimate bliss.

This passage captures the Hindu understanding of the multiplicity of the many incarnations and representations of Hindu Gods and Goddesses as well as the multiplicity of religious traditions that can lead to the ultimate mystery. While di Nobili rejects this notion, his recording of this and other experiences capture the counter-affirmations of the Hindu religion and culture for alternative faith perspectives. This includes the Brahmin who points out the foolishness of di Nobili for suggesting he has the monopoly on salvation.

Helpful to this positive understanding of syncretism is the concept of hybridity which Hill Fletcher presents in her chapter titled, “We Are All Hybrids” (2005, 82-101).
By hybridity she means we are all influenced by, and our identities are formed by religion, race, class, gender, nationality, ethnicity, profession, sexual orientation, and more (88). While this research is primarily concerned with the principles of inculturation that can guide interreligious prayer, the other influences upon one’s religious identity cannot be ignored.

An application of the concept of hybridity calls for an examination of how other religious traditions and elements have influenced and have already been incorporated into the Christian tradition. These examples were shown through the development of the rite of baptism which incorporated elements from the ancient mystery rites as discussed in chapter three. Hill Fletcher points out how the earliest Christians were informed by their Jewish or Greek identity. Similarly, there was an overlapping of cultures and religions which affected the identities of these individuals. Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili were influenced by their study of the language and culture of China and India, respectively, becoming so immersed in these cultures as to become essentially both a Confucian scholar and Hindu sannyasi while still maintaining their Roman Catholic, European identities. (89).

In the same way that Amaladoss (1998) speaks of syncretism as normal due to the religious diversity that surrounds us, Hill Fletcher sees hybridity positively. Who better to choose as a bridge to the Chinese/Confucian and Hindu cultures than individuals such as Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili (90). It is hoped that their example could inspire contemporary individuals who act as bridges to other cultures and religions (90). Hill Fletcher (2005) cites an important term from Rita Gross (2002) called the “comparative mirror.” This mirror is an epistemological tool that allows us to see practical and
religious “alternatives that we would be unlikely to imagine on our own” (Gross 2002, 68 in Hill Fletcher 2005, 93). For Hill Fletcher, one with a predetermined Christian identity will view hybridity as compromising that identity. However, individuals who incorporate a positive view of hybridity in their Christian life discover the “truth and life-giving possibilities of their native tradition” and what other elements from various religious traditions can enhance and enrich their lives (2005, 99).

In summary, religious syncretism is often used pejoratively to describe an interreligious paraliturgical service aimed at the mixing of various elements from different religious traditions. For Pratt (1997) this creates a “spiritual or liturgical ‘pot-luck’ . . . [a] smorgasbord-like spread of differently sourced religious items . . . a liturgical orphan, a spiritual hybrid . . . a reductionist enterprise,” especially as it relates to a multireligious service or united act of interreligious prayer. In contrast, Michael Amaladoss (1998) offers a view of syncretism that is normal based on the religious diversity of the world today. He does recognize an “illegitimate syncretism” in which the elements no longer are part of a religious tradition but are rather viewed as “magic.” He also recognizes an illegitimate syncretism that can occur in secularized societies where religion becomes privatized and individualistic as people pick and choose their own beliefs and symbols according to their needs.

Chupungco (1995) cautions against “eclectism” as the random, indiscriminate, borrowing of alien doctrines and practices, whether they are part of Christianity or not. At the same time, he highlights that incorporating elements from other religious traditions through the process of inculturation can enhance the meaning of the liturgical celebration as shown in the development of the rite of baptism, which was discussed in chapter three.
Just as Michael Amaladoss (1998) looks upon syncretism as normal, Jeannine Hill Fletcher (2005) looks upon hybridity as a normal part of one’s Christian or religious identity. The multiple influences that make up one’s religious identity can help that person be a bridge to other religions much like Matteo Ricci and Roberto di Nobili were.

This research will now explore the four Assisi Days of Prayer for World Peace that model Pratt’s (2006) contiguous multi-religious act and that have served, like World Interfaith Harmony Week, to inspire countless other interreligious prayer services.

**The Four Assisi Days of Prayer for World Peace**

Great significance can be given to the World Day of Prayer convened by St. John Paul II in Assisi, Italy on October 27, 1986 (John Paul II 1986a). This interreligious gathering was followed by three others—the first took place on January 9-10th, 1993 and was attended by the three major monotheistic religious traditions, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian; the next took place on January 24, 2002 and was attended by 200 representatives from various world religions (Origins 2002); and the last, convened by Pope Benedict XVI on the 25th anniversary of the first gathering, took place on October 27, 2011 and was attended by nearly 300 representatives from the world religions as well as non-religious/non-believers. The fourth Assisi gathering of religious traditions included “60 Catholics, 60 Orthodox and Protestant Christians, 65 Muslims, 65 Buddhists, 8 Jews, 7 Hindus, 6 Shintos, 5 Sikhs, 4 non-believers, 3 Confucists, 3 Taoists, 1 Jain, 1 Baha’i, and 1 Zoroastrian” (Butalia 2011, 2). At the time of this research, Pope Francis has proposed a 5th meeting with a date still to be announced (DICI 2015, 3).
The first Assisi gathering, convened by St. John Paul II, was announced in his 1986 “urbi et orbi” Easter address in St. Peter’s square in recognition of the international peace year:

In this international peace year, I have decided to invite people of all religious convictions, all people of good will, to a special meeting of prayer for peace in the town of Assisi. It will be an opportunity to reaffirm, before man terrified by the threats of death, our commitment to the victory of life. It is the victory of the risen Christ. (UPI 1986, 3)

After the Pope’s opening remarks, each religious tradition was to gather separately to pray according to their traditional rites (John Paul II 1986a, 3). After, they were to reassemble and offer prayers and statements of peace in a serial fashion. There was an acknowledgment and acceptance of the diversity present, and members of each religion reflected about their relationship with the “Absolute Being” and how it has progressed through the ages. The purpose of prayer was described as 1) expressing a relationship with “a supreme power” that human capacity alone could not comprehend, 2) a “conversion of heart” and, 3) an experience of “deepening our sense of the ultimate Reality” (John Paul II 1986a, 1-2).

There was a clarification detailing what the religious gathering was not. It was not an attempt to seek a religious consensus or to negotiate faith convictions. It was not meant to advocate or concede to relativism; everyone present was to follow his own conscience while seeking to locate and obey the truth (John Paul II 1986a, 1-2).

The consensus of those who participated was that the main purpose of the gathering was to promote peace while recognizing the fragility of such peace in the world. There was also a recognition that prayer was to be the foundation for world peace. “We are here because we are sure that, above and beyond all such measures, we need
prayer—intense, humble, and trusting prayer---if the world is finally to become a place of true and permanent peace” (John Paul II 1986a, 2).

Along with prayer, “silence, pilgrimage and fasting” were to be part of the day (John Paul II 1986a, 2). St. John Paul II explained that the planners for the gathering chose Assisi as the location for the event based on the inspiration of St. Francis of Assisi who is known and respected by many throughout the world as a symbol of peace, reconciliation, and brotherhood (3).

In his concluding remarks, St. John Paul II acknowledged the differences between the various religious traditions and prayers and noted that no attempt was made to reduce them to a “common denominator” (John Paul II 1986b, 2). He also pointed out there were many shared values and beliefs including respecting and obeying one’s conscience, seeking truth in order to love and serve humanity, and striving to make peace in the world. He highlighted one of the theological considerations discussed by Jacques Dupuis regarding interreligious prayer taken from Nostra Aetate (1) stating that all men and women in this world share a common origin, and a common destiny (Dupuis 2002, 239; John Paul II 1986b, 2). He recognized the universal dimension of prayer found among the world religions, and how the “real diversity of religions tries to express communication with a Power above all our human forces” (John Paul II 1986b, 2).

The Pope highlighted two convictions common to the world religions that have “supreme importance.” The first is the imperative of one’s moral conscience, which calls all of humanity to “respect, protect and promote human life, from the womb to the deathbed, for individuals and peoples, but especially for the weak, the destitute, the
derelict: the imperative to overcome selfishness, greed, and the spirit of vengeance” (John Paul II 1986b, 2-3).

The second conviction is the conviction to search for peace in the world, while also recognizing that the establishment of true and lasting peace is beyond human efforts. Ultimately, the “source and realization” of this peace is “that Reality beyond all of us” that all religions acknowledge exists (John Paul II 1986b, 3). St. John Paul II also described peace as being built on the pillars of truth, justice, love, and freedom.

This researcher highlights that St. John Paul II’s description of “that Reality beyond all of us” while also recognizing the differing ways of talking about God within the religious traditions of the world is an excellent way of expressing an understanding of “one revelation” that is revelatory of one God.

Either we learn to walk together in peace and harmony, or we drift apart and ruin ourselves and others. We hope that this pilgrimage to Assisi has taught us anew to be aware of the common origin and common destiny of humanity. (John Paul II 1986b, 3)

He also recognizes the importance of prayer and discusses how prayer prepares one to work for greater justice in the world (John Paul II 1986b, 4). He further elaborates on the work that is to follow the prayer for peace that includes prophets and young people:

There is no peace without a passionate love for peace. There is no peace without a relentless determination to achieve peace. Peace awaits its prophets. Peace awaits its builders. Peace is a workshop. Peace is a universal responsibility: it comes about through a thousand little acts in daily life. By their daily way of living with others, people choose for or against peace. We entrust the cause of peace especially to the young. May young people help to free history from the wrong paths along which humanity strays. Peace is in the hands not only of individuals but of nations. Peace, so frail in health, demands constant and intensive care. (John Paul II 1986b, 4)
He concludes his remarks by mentioning both St. Francis and St. Clare as examples of peace. He finishes with a prayer of St. Francis that is an excellent example of universal, common prayer appropriate for this type of gathering:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. (John Paul II 1986b, 6)

Jacques Dupuis (2002) gives several reasons why common prayer was avoided at the Assisi gatherings. “The very high level of the official gathering, the lack of a common preparation, the diversity of religions represented, and the fact that people did not know one another in advance and were not jointly involved in choosing prayers acceptable to all and significant for all” (238). Dupuis concludes that although in this particular service, the religious traditions prayed separately, it should not be looked upon as the only possible model and “deduce from it rigid and restrictive rules” (238). This point is echoed in Sacrosanctum Concilium (37) “even in the liturgy the church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters that do not affect the faith or the good of the whole community” (Chupungco 1989, 12; Flannery 1975, 13).

The 2nd Day of Prayer for Peace, Assisi, Italy — January 9, 1993

The second Day of Prayer for Peace was convened by St. John Paul II in response to the Balkan War in Europe, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina (John Paul II 1993). This event was different from the first in that the invitation was primarily extended to the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian religious traditions. The time of prayer was preceded by testimonies of five people affected by the interreligious war taking place in Bosnia-
Herzegovina and Croatia. Orthodox Serbs were fighting against Muslim Slavs and mostly Catholic Croatians. The Muslim spiritual leader from Sarajevo described Bosnia-Herzegovina as “a country bathed with the blood of innocent creatures of God” (Wooden 1993, 10).

The opening remarks at this event were a good example of a creative, blended prayer and modeled an inclusive way of addressing the Jewish and Muslim traditions. “Peace from the God of Abraham, from the great and merciful God,” while, at the same time, expressing the Christian belief in God as “Father” and Jesus as “Lord” and “Christ,” titles that convey the divinity of Jesus that would not be shared by the Jewish and Muslim traditions. “Peace to all of you, peace from the God of Abraham, the great and merciful God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ‘God of peace’ (cf. Rm. 15, 33, etc.), whose name is just ‘peace’ (cf. Eph. 2:14)” (John Paul II 1993, 1).

Some people might consider this prayer greeting as syncretistic or incompatible because it contains elements that would be considered offensive, scandalous, or idolatrous to Jews and Muslims who do not have a Trinitarian understanding of God as Father and Jesus as “Lord” and “Christ.” This researcher would argue, however, that this prayer is an example of a creative prayer with elements of creative assimilation and organic progression, such as are sometimes found today in paraliturgical prayer services. While outside of the official prayers of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions, this prayer also expresses the understanding of revelation explained in chapter two. An understanding of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through various religious traditions can help avoid problems that may arise if there is an understanding and acceptance of this meaning of revelation. Otherwise, an understanding of multiple
revelations can create competition and attitudes of religious superiority over other religious traditions.

The purpose of this day of prayer was to express a common concern for the fundamental good of humanity (John Paul II 1993, 1). As in the first Assisi gathering, each tradition was to pray “to the Lord of history” each according to its own religious traditions and in an assigned separate place of prayer. Fasting was to accompany the prayer. The common purpose of each religious tradition was affirmed as one that “fosters life and not death; it fosters respect for every human being with all his or her rights and not the oppression of one person by another; it fosters the peaceful coexistence of ethnic groups, peoples and religions, and not for violent opposition or war” (2). Prayer was described as “our strength; our weapon” and God would not leave unanswered the prayers of all the participants “especially when it comes to the fate and future of millions of people” (2).

The differences of each tradition were acknowledged, but the “essential point” of the meeting and prayer was to make everyone aware of the need for mutual acceptance and respect of the other, two tenets of any interreligious gathering (John Paul II 1993, 3).

This research now explores other interreligious prayer services that were inspired by this Assisi gathering.

Interfaith Peace Pilgrimage, Baltimore, Maryland — January 9, 1993

As with other Assisi days of Prayer for Peace, an Interfaith Peace Pilgrimage and fast was held in Baltimore, Maryland on January 9, 1993, to coincide with the Assisi gathering. It was sponsored by Archbishop William Keeler, President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and included stops at the following houses of worship:
the Greek Orthodox Annunciation Cathedral of Baltimore, the mosque of the Islamic Society of Baltimore, the synagogue of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, and the Roman Catholic Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Also in attendance were Metropolitan Silas of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of New Jersey and retired Bishop Herluf Jensen of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Originsonline.com 1993, 1). A special prayer service led by the religious leaders of each faith was held at each site. With the exception of the Jewish Havdallah service, which brings the Sabbath observance to a close, this researcher identifies these as paraliturgical services. Additionally, there was a host/guest model of fellowship as well as inclusive statements that invited all religious traditions to seek reconciliation and self-reflection in pursuit of peace and justice.

Archbishop Keeler referenced St. Pauls’ letter to the Romans and Corinthians.

Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord’…Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12:17-21). (Keeler 1993, 1-2)

Keeler proposed reconciliation and acknowledged the need for moral guidance from public officials and the public at large in this time of crisis. He called for the religious community to do everything is its power to bring about reconciliation between Muslims, Serbs, and Croats in Bosnia, Croatia and the regions of the former Yugoslavia (4). He explained that the purpose of public authority, making a reference to Pacem in Terris, is to “promote, safeguard and defend” the rights of human beings. “When governments are unable to protect the dignity of their own people, our teaching says, it falls on the other governments to assist or even to intervene for the sake of humanity to protect and
safeguard the offended people” (Keeler 1993, 4). The role of the religious community is to evaluate the use of force and the consequences of inaction. A Mass concluded the interfaith pilgrimage and fast and Archbishop Keeler called on major religious groups to promote reconciliation in Croatia, Bosnia, and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia (5).

At the mosque, Imam Bashar Arafat raised questions of critical self-reflection for each of the religious traditions present, asking whether: “we are seeking peace in vain because we are fighting in the name of religion; Does Mohammed agree with Iraq occupying the territory of brother Muslims? Does Jesus agree with the rape of Bosnian women? Does Moses agree with the expulsion of people from their homeland” (Keeler, 1993, 5)?

Rabbi Murray Saltzman pointed out a “taste of peace” takes place at each Sabbath observance, and the teaching within the Jewish tradition is that peace is not passively attained. “One must intervene in history” (Keeler 1993, 5).

*The 3rd Day of Prayer for Peace, Assisi, Italy — January 24, 2002*

The third Day of Prayer for Peace occurred five months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and other targets in the United States. In his introduction, St. John Paul II welcomed the two hundred representatives from various world religions. These included representatives from the Orthodox Churches of the World; Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomeos I and other Orthodox leaders; the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop George Carey; Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities; representatives from the world of Judaism; Islamic representatives from sixteen countries; Buddhism, Hinduism, and African Traditional Religions; Japanese Delegates, representing various religions and movements; Sikh
Cardinal Edward Egan, Archbishop of New York, was specifically recognized as being from the “city so terribly affected by the tragic events of September 11” (2).

St. John Paul II recognized the importance of Assisi as the location for the meeting, praising “a singular prophet of peace known as Francis” who is loved by many believers as he represents justice, reconciliation and peace (John Paul II 2002a, 2). In affirming the gift of life and especially human life, St. John Paul II uses the inclusive “we:"

We note the variety of manifestations of human life, from the complementarity of male and female, to a multiplicity of distinctive gifts belonging to the different cultures and traditions that form a multifaceted and versatile linguistic, cultural and artistic cosmos. This multiplicity is called to form a cohesive whole, in the contact and dialogue that will enrich and bring joy to all. (John Paul II 2002a, 2)

St. John Paul II also affirmed that this “celebration of particularity and otherness” takes place in all dimensions of human life:

God himself has placed in the human heart an instinctive tendency to live in peace and harmony. This desire is more deeply-rooted and determined than any impulse to violence; it is a desire that we have come together to reaffirm here, in Assisi. We do so in the awareness that we are representing the deepest sentiment of every human being. (John Paul II 2002b, 2)

St. John Paul II commended those believers who are witnesses to peace to serve humanity. He recalled his message on January 1, in which he stressed the two pillars upon which peace rests, “commitments to justice and readiness to forgive,” adding that the path to peace also requires humility and courage. “It is the duty of religions, and of their leaders above all, to foster in the people of our time a renewed sense of the urgency of building peace” (John Paul II 2002b, 3).
St. John Paul II recalled a meeting in which he addressed an Interreligious Gathering which took place in the Vatican, October 28, 1999.

They affirmed that religious traditions have the resources needed to overcome fragmentation and to promote mutual friendship and respect among peoples. On that occasion, it was also recognized that tragic conflicts often result from an unjustified association of religion with nationalistic, political and economic interests, or concerns of other kinds. Once again, gathered here together, we declare that whoever uses religion to foment violence contradicts religion’s deepest and truest inspiration. (John Paul II 2002b, 3)

Because of the terrorist attacks that occurred in the United States on 9/11, St. John Paul II made the strong call for religious people and communities to repudiate violence, especially “the violence that seeks to clothe itself in religion, appealing even to the most holy name of God in order to offend man. There is no religious goal which can possibly justify the use of violence by man against man” (John Paul II 2002b, 3).

After his strong condemnation of violence in the name of religion and God, St. John Paul II specifically addressed the Christians gathered for the Day of Prayer, stating, “Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ calls us to be apostles of peace.” He mentioned the Golden Rule, “Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them” (Mt. 7:12; cf. Lk 6:31) and God’s commandment to Moses “Love your neighbor as yourself” (cf. Lev. 19:18; Mt. 22:39 and parallels). He brought these laws to fulfillment in the new commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn. 13:34) (John Paul II 2002b, 3).

St. John Paul II’s final comments addressed everyone gathered before they moved to their assigned places.

We have a single goal and a shared intention, but we will pray in different ways, respecting one another’s religious traditions. In this too, deep down, there is a message: we wish to show the world that the genuine impulse to prayer does not lead to opposition and still less to disdain of others, but
rather to constructive dialogue, a dialogue in which each one, without relativism or syncretism of any kind, becomes more deeply aware of the duty to bear witness and to proclaim. (John Paul II 2002b, 4)

This statement affirms that this Assisi interreligious gathering does not constitute an example of “relativism or syncretism of any kind.” The absence of relativism or syncretism is quite possibly due to the fact that each religious tradition was given a separate place to pray. This researcher would offer the alternative, positive views of syncretism described earlier by Michael Amaladoss (1998) and Jeannine Hill Fletcher (2005), and the theological considerations supporting common prayer offered by Jacques Dupuis (2002) that would permit praying together for future Assisi gatherings. Principles of inculturation such as dynamic equivalence, and an understanding of revelation, as explained in chapter two, can make it possible for people from various religious traditions to pray together without promoting relativism or syncretism.

St. John Paul II’s final words before prayer challenged each religious tradition:

Now is the time to overcome decisively those temptations to hostility which have not been lacking in the religious history of humanity. True religious feeling leads rather to a perception in one way or another of the mystery of God, the source of goodness, and that is a wellspring of respect and harmony between peoples: indeed religion is the chief antidote of violence and conflict. (cf. Message for the World Day of Peace 2002, 14) (John Paul II 2002b, 4-5)

St. John Paul II recalled the first Assisi gathering that took place October 27, 1986, and how Assisi had become once more the “heart” of a vast multitude of people calling for peace. He reminded all those present of the many people gathered around the world in support of the Assisi day of prayer “united with us in places of worship, in homes, in communities, throughout the world, praying for peace. They are old people, children, adults and young people: a people tireless in their belief that prayer has the power to bring peace” (John Paul II 2002b, 5).
Before all dispersed to their designated places to pray, ten religious leaders recited ten commitments to peace in ten different languages. Besides a call for peace, the leaders promised to teach their people to respect others, to foster dialogue and defend each person’s right to live a decent life, to value differences, to be voices for the poor and defenseless, and to promote friendship among peoples (Origins 2002, 560).

After the ten commitments of peace, all of the Christian religious traditions gathered in the lower basilica for an ecumenical prayer service. Nine separate rooms were assigned to the other eleven non-Christian traditions. Some religious groups requested special accommodations. The Zoroastrians requested a room with a window since they start their prayers by lighting a fire that they consider to be divine. They were joined by one Jain and one Confucian representative without any concern about three different religious traditions praying together. Muslims prayed on prayer rugs facing Mecca; Buddhists engaged in meditation; followers of Tenrikyoism waved fans that symbolized sweeping away the “dust” of selfishness and arrogance; and African animists recited various chants to “ward off evil spirits and invoke the protection of good spirits” (Origins 2002, 562). Crucifixes and other religious symbols were removed from the various rooms except for a permanent wood sculpture of the Nativity from the room used by the Buddhists (562-563).

Vatican interreligious officials explained that because different beliefs would be reflected by the prayers of each religious tradition, Christians would not be praying with non-Christians. Cardinal Walter Kasper, the then-president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, spoke of a unity all religious traditions share despite the separate places assigned for prayer. Some of these values were “respect for God and the
divine and the desire for God, or the divine; respect for life; and the desire for peace with
God or the divine, for peace among peoples and peace in the cosmos” (Origins 2002,
563).

An observer of the event, Fr. Romeo Todo from the Sudan, a predominantly
Muslim country, stated, “This shows the possibility of bringing different religions
together, but it is a far cry from the reality on the ground [since] there is a lot of force that
pushes toward Islam . . . It may take time, and it won’t be perfection right away, but I am
optimistic” (Origins 2002, 563). This statement supports the efforts of interreligious
prayer and dialogue leading to the work of peace and justice beyond the prayer service.
Additional interreligious prayer services inspired by this third Assisi gathering are now
explored.

Interreligious Prayer Services inspired by the Assisi Day of Prayer

The third Assisi day of prayer inspired a number of smaller, interreligious
services. The Sisters of St. Francis of Millvale, PA held a service for local Christian,
Buddhist, Islamic, Jewish and Hindu leaders led by Bishop Donald Wuerl of Pittsburgh.
In San Francisco, an interfaith day of prayer for peace began with Mass at the National
Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi, which was followed by an afternoon of dialogue at the
University of San Francisco and an evening interfaith service at St. Mary’s Cathedral.
Archbishop Daniel Cronin of Hartford, Connecticut led an interreligious vigil attended by
representatives of many faiths including Unitarians, Muslims, Buddhists, Baha’is,
Hindus, and Sikhs. Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati, Ohio, joined Islamic,
Jewish, Buddhist, and other religious leaders at an interfaith service hosted by local
Franciscans. Cardinal Francis George of Chicago hosted an interfaith service at Holy
Name Cathedral. Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles asked every parish to hold vigils for peace and invited leaders of other religious traditions to gather for an interfaith vigil at St. Basil Church. Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport, Connecticut, invited Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders to join him for an interfaith service (Origins 2002, 564-565). These gatherings are evidence that many Roman Catholics, along with adherents of other religious traditions can model interreligious dialogue and prayer for their local churches and houses of worship. The hope would be that it not only would introduce people to religious traditions outside of their own, but that they would return from the experience with new insights that would foster peace and justice and ongoing dialogue.

*Fourth Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World “Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace”, Assisi, Italy — October 27, 2011*

In his opening remarks on the 25th anniversary of the first Assisi gathering, Pope Benedict XVI recalled what had taken place since the last World Day of Prayer for Peace, January 24, 2002, and the current state of peace. He talked about the fall of the Berlin Wall, which occurred without bloodshed in 1989, three years after the first Assisi gathering. While recognizing the complexity of the causes for this dramatic change, he mentioned the role of “spiritual convictions” as the primary and deepest reason for the event (Benedict XVI 2011a, 1).

Although there were no major wars at the time of the 2011 event, he stated that, “the world is unfortunately full of discord.” He condemned the tendency to misinterpret freedom to mean "freed for violence” (Pope Benedict XVI 2011a, 2).

Pope Benedict XVI distinguished between two types of the new forms of violence: terrorism with religious motivations and violence that is a result of God’s
absence. Focusing first on the former, he stated that today, religion is often used to justify violence and not to serve peace. He recognized how a post-Enlightenment critique has repeatedly blamed religion for the cause of violence and has fueled an ongoing hostility towards religion in general (Pope Benedict XVI 2011a, 2). He also readily admitted violence is often used in the name of Christianity.

In the course of history, force has also been used in the name of the Christian faith. We acknowledge it with great shame. But it is utterly clear that this was an abuse of the Christian faith, one that evidently contradicts its true nature. It is the task of all who bear responsibility for the Christian faith to purify the religion of Christians again and again from its very heart, so that it truly serves as an instrument of God’s peace in the world, despite the fallibility of humans. (Pope Benedict XVI 2011a, 3)

This is an important statement for an interreligious gathering as it acknowledges the past sins committed in the name of the Christian faith. Since each religious tradition has been guilty of past actions in the name of their religious tradition, a communal prayer of conversion or repentance is very appropriate and deserving of a collective “Amen!”

For examples of violence due to the absence of God, Pope Benedict XVI mentioned the concentration camps of World War II. Rather than discuss a state-imposed atheism, he spoke about a change in the spiritual climate that is more dangerous. Examples of this danger are the worship of mammon, possessions, and power. He addressed a desire for happiness that has turned into an inhuman craving that he likened to an addiction to drugs (Pope Benedict XVI 2011a, 3).

In addition to the “phenomena of religion and anti-religion,” Pope Benedict XVI addressed the growing world of agnosticism. He describes agnostics as those “to whom the gift of faith has not been given, but who are nevertheless on the lookout for truth, searching for God.” He differentiated between agnostics and atheists by describing agnostics as suffering from the absence of God, yet who are inwardly seeking God as
they quest for “truth and goodness.” They are called “pilgrims of truth, pilgrims of peace” (Benedict XVI 2011a, 4).

Pope Benedict XVI explained his reason for inviting agnostics to the event and the role organized religions play in the orientation of agnostics:

Their inability to find God is partly the responsibility of believers to purify their faith, so that God, the true God, becomes accessible. Therefore, I have consciously invited delegates of this third group to our meeting in Assisi, which does not simply bring together representatives of religious institutions. Rather it is a case of being together on a journey towards truth, a case of taking a decisive stand for human dignity and a case of common engagement for peace against every form of destructive force. (Benedict XVI 2011a, 4)

While members of the agnostic community, represented by those who would consider themselves Humanists, might understandably take exception to being described as “suffering from the absence of God,” or the assumption that “they are searching for God,” they accepted the invitation to be part of the Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World. This invitation is an affirmation that nonreligious groups can play an active role in an interreligious prayer service as they, too, are on a “journey towards truth” and can take a “decisive stand for human dignity and . . . peace against every form of destructive force.” This is, after all, the essential purpose and message of all organized religious traditions and people of good will.

Pope Benedict XVI made an important statement that supports the principle of one revelation of one God humanly expressed and understood through various religious traditions. While speaking about the “growing world of agnosticism,” he discussed how agnostics “challenge the followers of religions not to consider God as their own property, as if he belonged to them, in such a way that they feel vindicated in using force against others” (Benedict XVI 2011a, 4). It is this understanding of one revelation of one God
expressed through various religious traditions that contrasts an understanding of multiple revelations found in a Christian revelation, a Jewish revelation, a Muslim revelation, and other revelations. This idea of separate or multiple revelations could lead to a religious tradition believing they “own” God as “property” and that God belongs only to them. It is this type of understanding of revelation that creates barriers between religious traditions setting up notions of superiority and inferiority, right and wrong, correct and incorrect, believer and infidel or heretic. These thoughts were echoed by Gabriel Moran in chapter two of this dissertation.

In his closing remarks, Pope Benedict XVI thanked those who made the day possible and praised the day itself as “an image of how the spiritual dimension is a key element in the building of peace. Through this unique pilgrimage we have been able to engage in fraternal dialogue, to deepen our friendship, and to come together in silence and prayer” (Benedict XVI 2011b, 1). He spoke of “renewing our commitment to peace” and a “sign of peace” was exchanged among the participants (Benedict XVI 2011b, 1). He spoke positively of not being separated, but of a desire to “continue to meet, continue to be united in this journey, in dialogue, in the daily building of peace and in our commitment to a better world, a world in which every man and woman and every people can live in accordance with their own legitimate aspirations.” His final words were the greeting of St. Francis: “May the Lord grant you peace” (2).

On October 28, 2011, the day after the day of reflection, dialogue, and prayer for justice and peace, Pope Benedict XVI thanked all of the participants for the “willingness to take part in the day of reflection, dialogue, and prayer for justice and peace in the world” (Benedict XVI 2011c, 1). He thanked all those who travelled from afar and
recognized those “who follow no religious tradition but are committed to seeking the truth.” The Pope acknowledged that “they wanted to share this pilgrimage with us as a sign of their desire to cooperate in building a better world” (Benedict XVI 2011c, 1). He stated:

Meetings like this are necessarily exceptional and rare, but they are a vivid expression of the fact that every day, all over the world, people of different religious traditions live and work together in harmony. It is surely significant for the cause of peace that so many men and women, inspired by their deepest convictions, are committed to work for the good of the human family. (Benedict XVI 2011c, 1-2)

Given the problems in the world today, this researcher would not view an interreligious gathering for prayer and dialogue as “necessarily exceptional and rare.” This researcher supports the comments made by Pope Benedict XVI as he spoke of “not being separated” but continuing “to meet” and “continuing to be united in this journey, in dialogue, in the daily building of peace and in our commitment to a better world, a world in which every man and woman and every people can live in accordance with their own legitimate aspirations” (Benedict XVI 2011b, 1). Pope Benedict’s concluding remarks did speak of the Assisi gathering as “a vivid expression of the fact that every day, throughout our world, people of different religious traditions live and work together in harmony” (Benedict XVI 2011c, 1-2).

One of the participants at the gathering was Dr. Tarunjit Singh Butalia, representing the World Sikh Council-American Region (WSC-AR) and a board member of “Religions for Peace USA, Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions, North American Interfaith Network, National Religious Coalition Against Torture, Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue and locally the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio” (Butalia 2011). He commented on the different religious traditions dispersing to pray separately,
and how an evening gathering involved pledges of commitments to peace by various religious representatives following the same pattern as the 2002 Assisi gathering. The Sikh prayer was the following: “We commit ourselves to educating people to mutually respect and honor each other in order to help bring about peaceful and fraternal coexistence between people of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions.” Dr. Butalia reported that Pope Benedict ended the pledge by adding, “Violence never again! War never again! Terrorism never again! In the name of God, may every religion bring upon the earth justice and peace, forgiveness and life, love” (2)!

Dr. Butalia also spoke of his own desire to see future Assisi gatherings allow for the opportunity to pray publicly for those who wish to do so while still being respectful to those who choose not to (Butalia 2011, 3). He also appreciated “the Vatican for honoring the Sikh articles of faith during the entire gathering including meetings with Pope Benedict XVI” (3). One of the “kakars,” or articles of faith, includes a “Kirpan” which is a small knife. When Pope Benedict XVI visited Washington, DC, the United States Secret Service refused to allow Sikh members to wear the Kirpan. This showed a mistrust towards the Sikh representatives that was not present at the Assisi gathering. Dr. Butalia commented on the addition of Baha’i representatives who were invited to attend for the first time. When he was asked about the significance of the gathering, he spoke of “this historic occasion for world religions to come together to recommit our faiths as instruments of peace not conflict,” and “while this is our common goal, how and if we get there will depend on what we do when we get back home to our own communities of faith” (3).
Representatives had two opportunities to address the entire assembly, before and after lunch. During the morning gathering, before the dispersal of the religious representatives, prayers were recited by all in the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi (DIC 2011, 1). This was contrary to the wishes of the planning committee that there not be any communal prayers. Wande Abimbola, representing the African Yoruba religious tradition, expressed appreciation that indigenous religions were shown the same respect as other religions present. He voiced an inclusive theology of God that views the diversity and plurality of religious beliefs and ways of life as gifts from God (2). While singing a Yoruba prayer of worship, he played a small percussion instrument and invited participants to join him in praise to Olokun, a god in his religious tradition. He invited those present to “make (theirs) these verses to Olokun” and “to receive them into the depths of the oceans” (2). While the god invoked was the Nigerian god of the sea, the invitation was extended for others to join their own prayers to Olokun. This is an example discussed earlier in the chapter of common prayer and joining in the prayers of a particular tradition. In this instance, a participant could be a “participant observer” and learn from the event, or, if initiated or knowledgeable in the Yoruba religion, respectfully join in the prayer. Using the principles of inculturation or dynamic equivalence, an individual may recite a prayer from their own tradition during the Yoruba prayer as a form of solidarity.

Hindu representative Shri Acharya Shrivatsa Goswami sang a prayer: “infinite god who took shape in humanity I see you in each hand and each foot, in each eye and each head, in each name and each person, and I will revere you in each one.” He expressed what Jeannine Hill Fletcher (2005) would call a counter-affirmation to the
Christian call for peace. He recognized a Hindu prayer for peace, but said there is no way to peace, since peace itself is a way. He concluded with what could have been the Hindu greeting “Namaste” which means, “I bow and revere god in each one of you,” recalling that in the Veda, the truth is one but announced in different ways (DICI 2011, 2). This statement very much captures the understanding of a Hindu spirit of revelation in this research: One revelation and one God, that is Truth, that can be announced in different ways (2).

In summary, the various Assisi gatherings offer models of interreligious prayer that this researcher believes can support an understanding of one revelation that is revelatory of one God humanly expressed through the various religious traditions of the world. The Assisi gatherings become more problematic when an understanding of multiple revelations is applied (which is the reason that different religious traditions pray separately). While any interreligious gathering can be condemned for promoting relativism and syncretism, St. John Paul II was clear that the Assisi gatherings did no such thing. Examples at these gatherings and other interreligious prayer services that were inspired by and in support of the Assisi gatherings reflected what this researcher calls paraliturgical prayer.

The Assisi gatherings provide examples of the models of interreligious prayer outlined by Douglas Pratt (2006) and Thomas Ryan (2008). The objections and concerns about syncretism within interreligious prayer services need to be reevaluated in light of the work of Michael Amaladoss (1998) that views syncretism as normal given the religious diversity and pluralism found in the world today. Jeannine Hill Fletcher’s (2005) work on hybridity also affirms the multiple influences on the development of our
religious identity, including the many religious influences that surround us. The Assisi gatherings highlighted the important role of interreligious paraliturgical services, fostering peace and justice in the world.

Jacques Dupuis’ (2002) theological considerations for interreligious common prayer and Pratt’s (2006) models of the responsive and hospitality types offer greater insight into how and why interreligious prayer can and should take place. The role of host and guest establish standards of hospitality that can do more to foster interreligious dialogue than any words or speeches.

The last chapter will situate interreligious prayer within the framework of religious education of learning about religion, as an academic subject and learning to be religious. It will explore language, traditions and beliefs in the Islamic and Jewish religions in an educational classroom setting as a preparation for interreligious prayer. Building upon the transformational theories of Jack Mezirow and John S. Dunne, will show how interreligious prayer can be religiously educative and transformative.
CHAPTER 5: INCULTURATION AND INTERRELIGIOUS PRAYER AS RELIGIOUSLY EDUCATIVE: CURRICULUM PROPOSALS FOR THE CHURCH

This study has been an exploration of the religious and educational possibilities of interreligious paraliturgical prayer. Chapter two investigated the meaning of revelation and various manifestations. It explored the propositional form based on the revealing of past truths, as presented in the Vatican I document, *Dei Filius* (1870). It noted a major shift in the Vatican II document *Dei Verbum* (1965), which emphasized the role of Christ as a relational and dialogical experience. The Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate* (2) (1965), and other Vatican II documents promoted a more fruitful relationship between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religions. These documents suggest that salvation is possible within other religious traditions through the salvific actions of Christ. Additionally, *Nostra Aetate* claims that other religious traditions should be viewed positively as they reflect a ray of truth that enlightens all of humanity (Flannery 1975, 739). A feminist hermeneutic was used to explore how the idea that the experience of women can be revelatory has often been dismissed given past androcentric and sexist interpretation of both Scripture and Tradition. An investigation of the work of Gabriel Moran concluded the chapter, with a focus on his understanding of there being one revelation of one God uniquely and humanly expressed through various religious traditions. This understanding of revelation was also proposed as a common ground for interreligious prayer and a bridge to ongoing interreligious dialogue. The chapter also discussed how an understanding of multiple revelations serves as a barrier to interreligious prayer and dialogue because it can lead to unhelpful comparisons and foster attitudes of superiority. This view of revelation can also lead a person or religious group to view other religious traditions as being inferior or deficient (see *Dominus Iesus* (2001).
Chapter three explored the historical development of the rite of baptism as it was influenced by mystery rites and cultural elements in the early centuries of the Church. Examples of inculturation were also highlighted from the missionary experiences of Matteo Ricci (1552-1603) and Roberto di Nobili (1577-1656) as they immersed themselves in the cultures and language of China and India, respectively. Both used principles of inculturation by incorporating indigenous cultural and religious language and ritual into the Christian tradition. These efforts were met by resistance from Church authorities but were later deemed compatible with Church teaching. The chapter concluded with an exploration of principles of inculturation that support interreligious paraliturgical prayer services including dynamic equivalence, creative assimilation, and organic progression. *Comme le prévoit* (1969) supported a translation in liturgical texts “understood by the hearers” (Consilium #16b) that expresses a “genuine prayer of the congregation” so that each person might “find and express himself or herself” (#20c). It also called for the creation of new texts rather than the translation of texts from another language (43). However, *Liturgiam authenticum* (2001) made it clear that translation should not be “so much a work of creative inventiveness as one of fidelity and exactness in rendering Latin texts into a vernacular language (4). Given this document supersedes previous documents on translation of liturgical texts it places restrictions on translations and new texts that accurately reflect a “genuine prayer of the congregation” and the principles of dynamic equivalence.

Chapter four discussed different categories and models of interreligious prayer giving examples of prayer services from the World Days of Prayer at Assisi which were initiated by St. John Paul II and continued with Pope Benedict XVI. The chapter
supported the use of common prayer within an interreligious prayer service and discussed how principles of inculturation, namely dynamic equivalence and organic progression, can guide the development of common prayer. The chapter argued that a positive view of syncretism and hybridity can enhance the meaning and experience of prayer by creating a space for the incorporation of elements from different religious traditions.

Chapter five concludes this research by locating interreligious prayer within the framework of the field of religious education and the curriculum of the Church. This framework has two sides. The first teaches how to be religious within one’s own religious tradition; this is done primarily through liturgical and social justice practices. The second teaches religion as an academic subject. The work of Gabriel Moran (1997b, 1989, 1998) and Maria Harris (1998) serve as primary sources for the chapter.

This research situates interreligious paraliturgical prayer within the curriculum of liturgy, while recognizing other curricula in different ministries in the Church as forms of education. The life of the entire parish is viewed as curriculum, that is, as “the course to be run” (Eisner 2002, 25). This curriculum of the Church, Maria Harris (1989) proposes, is located within five ministerial forms (17, 75-163). These, she notes, are found in the early church and described in the Acts of the Apostles.

And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in prayers. . . . And all who believed were together and held all things in common and would sell their possessions and goods and distribute them among all according as anyone had need. And continuing with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread in their houses, they took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and being in favor with all people. (Acts 2:42-47 in Harris 1989, 17)

These five forms and practices are: *kerygma*, proclaiming the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus, *didache*, the activity of teaching, *leiturgia*, the coming together for
prayer, *koinonia*, or community, and *diakonia*, serving those in need (16). They preserve the teachings of the past while opening the door to a greater understanding of the beliefs and practices of the Church in relation to other religious traditions.

Following the framework of religious education and situating interreligious prayer within the curriculum of *leiturgia*, this chapter gives examples of how interreligious paraliturgical prayer can be religiously educative. Focusing on the educational form of schooling, primarily within a classroom, the chapter explores the language, traditions and religious beliefs of the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and other religious traditions. These, at their best, can prepare students for an experience of interreligious prayer.

After providing examples of religious education within the educational form of schooling, the chapter gives examples of interreligious prayer and social justice practices that form, inform, and transform the religious identity of each person. When education is focused on the goal of transformation, educational processes can become transformational experiences that result in a greater understanding not only of other religious traditions but of one’s own as well. Moreover, transformational learning experiences can cultivate a receptivity and openness to the practice of interreligious prayer. In this chapter the transformational educational theories of Jack Mezirow (1990) and John S. Dunne (1972) are discussed as providing helpful ways of understanding how transformation takes place through these two sides of religious education. This chapter also uses Elliot Eisner’s (2002) understanding of the implicit, explicit, and null curriculum as a guide in raising questions about what the Church teaches and what the Church does not teach. The content of the curriculum or the absence of content impacts the learner and can contribute to a greater or lesser understanding of one’s own religion
in relation to other religious traditions. The chapter concludes with practical recommendations, and applies the root metaphor “holy envy” to the entire research project. The work concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study.

The Two Sides of Religious Education

Gabriel Moran (1989, 1997b, 1998) and Maria Harris (1998) identify the integral relationship and important distinctions between the two sides of religious education. The first side is teaching people how to practice a religious way of life and how to be religious through ritual practices, sacramental preparation, and works of service, usually but not exclusively, within a church, synagogue, or mosque setting. The second side is teaching people to understand religion as an academic subject, usually in a school or classroom setting, in relation to other religions (Moran, Harris 1998, 30).

Confusion continues over the meaning of religious education and the relationship and distinctions between the two sides of religious education. In the United States, religious education is not a subject taught in public. It is assumed to be a faith-based activity usually within a parish/congregation, synagogue, or mosque setting. In the United Kingdom and Europe, religious education takes place in state schools sponsored by the government and religion is taught as an academic subject (Moran 1997b, 157). In the Catholic Church in the United States, religious education is used interchangeably with CCD, catechesis, and faith formation, which is primarily concerned with the first side of religious education (159). Given this geographic disparity in understanding religious education, the following distinctions are needed in order to clarify and affirm the intrinsic relationship between the two sides. School teachers teach within the context of a classroom and an academic curriculum, while catechists work within the context of the
sacramental life. School teachers teach religion in relationship to other religions, and catechists teach the Gospel and Christian doctrine with the confessional intention of forming people to lead a Christian life (160). A problem occurs when the catechetical dimension of teaching predominates or inhibits the academic study and understanding of one’s religion in relationship to other religions. Moran offers a solution to this problem by stating “the Catholic Church needs a kind of teaching that is not burdened by the assumptions of the classroom. Likewise, academic instruction should not be burdened with the role of catechizing” (Ibid.).

Both sides of religious education are needed in order to develop a comprehensive meaning of the term. The bridge and dialogue between the two sides is concerned with the relationship between the practice and the understanding of religion. One cannot adequately exist without the other. An individual must first understand his own religion in order to understand another’s. Learning about other religions can help students compare their beliefs with other’s in order to find common ground or develop a deeper understanding of one’s own tradition. In most instances, the study of Judaism does not lead a Catholic student to become Jewish. It usually leads to a better understanding of the student’s own Catholicism (Moran 1997b, 155).

For Moran, the educative process of the first side of religious education is formative and nurturing. Members of a particular religion are formed into the practice and mission of that religion. This takes place through participation in the life of the community, in its sacramental practices, and in practices of service, namely, its social justice activities—not catechesis. Liturgy draws people into the center of worship then “impels them outward to serve those in need within the Church community and beyond”
Liturgy, or worship, teaches in and of itself through verbal and nonverbal expressions, and those who participate are taught by the liturgy (Moran and Harris 1998, 36). The language of the first side of religious education is found primarily in the liturgy. It is that of storytelling and preaching that exhorts its members to live up to the teachings and commitments of the tradition. It also uses a language that calls for healing found in praise, thanks, confession, and mourning (Moran 1998, 34). The first teachers are parents, along with other family members, and the setting is the home. The time for faith formation is not, as is widely practiced, at the age of five or six. Faith formation begins at birth. This gives greater meaning to religious education being a “lifelong” endeavor (Moran 1997b, 154). Other recipients of the first side of religious education are adherents, already within a religious tradition, and inquirers interested in becoming members of a religious tradition.

The document, Welcoming the Other through Religious and Multi-Religious Education Commission Paper (2013), by the Peace Education Standing Commission/PESC of Religions for Peace affirms: “education is one of the most important factors for breaking down ignorance and prejudices, which are often dangerous preconditions for animosities and enmities between different cultures and religious groups” (PESC 2013, 1). This is learning from other religious traditions by experiencing the practices of prayer and justice that could find a way for personal orientation and “building up one’s identity” (2).

The second side of religious education regards it as an academic subject that promotes understanding one’s own religion in relationship to other religious traditions. Gabriel Moran (1989) understands religious education as having to do with the religious
life of the human race and bringing people into the influence of that way of life (217). The term “religion” within the context of religious education suggests plurality. It has a singular aim of understanding but the object is found in the many religious traditions of the world (Moran, Harris 1998, 30, 37). Thus, interreligious education is inherent to religious education. The inter in interreligious suggests understanding one’s own religious tradition in relation to other religious traditions. If education did not involve a conversation between religions it would not be deserving of the term “religious education” (Moran 1989 228).

Learning about other religious traditions can be threatening as, often, learning about different beliefs calls into question one’s own (31). Someone weak in his or her faith may stumble when challenged or criticized by others (34). Another challenge that calls for interreligious dialogue occurs when one religion borrows language and terminology from another. A good example of this is found in the language Christianity borrows from Judaism. The claim that universal salvation is found through Jesus as the Christ, or Messiah might not be well received by a Jewish person who may in fact regard it as insulting (40). A test of Christians understanding of Christ as universal savior is if they can appreciate the religious value of the Qur’an and beliefs in other religious traditions without automatically rejecting them or criticizing them (Ibid). Religious pluralism calls for “each religion to be affirmed as important but only in relation to the others” so that “the plural and the relative are understood positively” (Moran 1998, 229).

The academic side of religious education adds a critical component. The academic setting of the classroom, Gabriel Moran (1989, 239) writes, “it is a zone of intellectual freedom when all questions can be asked and where all loyalty oaths, except the quest for
truth, are suspended.” Moran calls for public schools to take on the responsibility of teaching religion as a subject and ideally that it be interdisciplinary being taught in conjunction with social studies, physical sciences, and literature (240-241).

The language of the second side of religious education is primarily the language of academic discourse, dialectical discussion, and academic criticism (Moran 1998, 34). The truth that is proposed is subject to improvement from other truths and other religious traditions (37). Ideally, children should begin learning the language of their religion as soon as they have the conceptual and linguistic ability to reason, to form abstractions, and the ability to compare the various religious traditions (41).

For Moran, (1989, 232) “education is with end and without end.” While one can teach about a particular way of life within one religious tradition, every religious tradition understands that there is a truth beyond its own tradition. This allows a religious tradition to believe in the way, the truth, and the life, while acknowledging that other traditions also have a particular way, truth, and life (Ibid.).

Moran (1989) offers criteria for evaluating the teaching of religion in a classroom. He writes:

A good test of whether religion is being taught to Catholic students is whether the class is appropriate for non-Catholic students. If the school has to exempt the non-Catholic students from religion class, that would be an admission that what is going on in those classes is something other than instruction proper to a classroom. (158)

In summary, the two sides of religious education allow for the broadest meaning. After exploring and making a distinction between the two sides, the next section gives examples of how the academic study of other religions can foster interreligious prayer and the possibility of its being religiously educative. The first part explores the academic study of religion, first examining Judith Berling’s principles for teaching religion. The
discussion of these principles will be followed by an exploration of language and ritual practices and beliefs from the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian traditions that can promote a greater understanding of interreligious prayer.

Educational Forms of Schooling as Preparation for Interreligious Prayer

Judith Berling (2004) points out that teaching religion as content and transmission of knowledge and facts can provide information but not “understanding of the other tradition or its internal complexities” (83). It can “oversimplify traditions, and ignore the many voices and lived experiences of the cumulative aspects of tradition” (Ibid.). Berling offers principles for teaching that promotes genuine religious understanding. These principles, along with insights for preparing students for interreligious prayer, can be presented as follows:

1. Engage a diversity of voices from the religious traditions by incorporating adherents, tests, practices, and various forms of media, literature, art, video, film. This could also include an interreligious team teaching approach as well as site visits that take place outside of the classroom but that are later processed within it. This would support the principle of holy envy as a guiding metaphor of this research that recommends learning about a religious tradition by speaking to the adherents of a religion.

2. Engage religions as living traditions that are expressed through the lives of people that participate in their own expressions of ritual. Oftentimes, the roots are explored that connect Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to Abraham without investigating the lived practice of these religions today.

3. Address the Christian starting point of Christian learners to facilitate the learning about the other religious tradition’s language, ritual practices, and symbols. If the
Christian perspective is left out it can perpetuate the notion that learning about religions is about “them” not “us” and places Christianity in a privileged role (Berling 2004, 84).

4. Develop a wider and deeper understanding of religious traditions through critical conversations about views and perspectives among the various traditions. This supports the two kinds of academic language found in dialectical discussion and academic criticism (Scott 2001, 154-155). Academic speech fosters critical understanding and uses language to critique the assumptions, biases, and meanings of language. One’s convictions are set aside in order to reflect critically on various assumptions. The academic teacher becomes an advocate for language that can lead to the greatest understanding possible (Ibid.). This should include issues of contention of a contemporary or historical nature to avoid giving the impression that within any religion there is a single voice or interpretation (Berling 2004, 84). In striving to develop a wider and deeper understanding of religious traditions we can also turn to the work of Kathleen Talvacchia (2003) who advocates for a process of education that “forms both a critical mind and a discerning heart” (93). A critical mind can explore the social realities of a given situation, and a discerning heart can guide us to respect individuals with empathy and compassion. Talvacchia envisions such a process of education as involving three movements: “listening and understanding, seeing clearly, and acting differently.” These three movements can create a foundation for “comprehension, conversion, and conviction” (Ibid.).

5. Engage Christian learners in theological reflection that explores the theology, study, and beliefs of other religious traditions and the implications they have for the
Christian life and practice. It should be kept in mind that there are many differing models for doing theology or engaging in theological reflection within and among the various religious traditions of the world. Theological statements in any religious tradition are open to critique. This critique is necessary given the language of theology, which strives to use language to speak about God even though God is beyond what can be described in words. It should be kept in mind that theological statements linked with biblical interpretations have been a source of conflict due largely to the language used by opposing theologies (Moran 1994, 41). The danger inherent with theological discourse was shown in chapter two in the discussion of the feminist critique of a male dominated or sexist hermeneutic which excludes the experience of women. Theology has a role to play in religious education as it establishes content but it is a limited role, since “there is more to education than a body of material called content” (Ibid., 42).

6. Give learners a sense of the process and direction so that they can continue learning in other contexts.

*The Language, Ritual Practices, and Beliefs of Islam*

In his article *Two languages of religious education* (1994) Moran addresses the impact of language upon institutions. “Change of language is at the centre of institutional change” (40). This section begins with a discussion of language that can promote a greater understanding of religious traditions and interreligious prayer by examining primarily the Islamic and Jewish religious traditions and, to a lesser comparative extent, other religious traditions.
Islam is a religion that is not named after a person or culture (Maududi 2011, 1; Mawdudi 2005, 1). The word *Islam* means self-surrender, submission, or obedience to God (2). It is the name of a religion that also reveals its meaning. The word *Muslim* defines adherents of the religion of Islam. Thus, a Muslim is one who submits to God and belongs to the Islamic religion. Muslims believe the entire universe, all the laws of nature, all human and non-human life, follow the way of Islam of complete obedience and submission to God. Thus, the sun, moon, stars, plants, trees, and air, can all be considered Muslim (3). Both *Islam* and *Muslim* contain the letters SLM, the word for “peace,” in Arabic *salam* (Mawdudi 2005, 3; Maududi 2011, 1). Islam is a religion of peace.

*Allah* is the Arabic name for God. It is a personal Arabic name for God without male or female gender, and cannot be made plural (Mawdudi 2005, 86). There is another Arabic word for a god, *elah*. This word is similar to the Hebrew word, *eloh*. It refers to “someone or something that is worshipped” (85). It is a word used to describe a god of other religious traditions, similar to God (Allah). It describes a being who is great and powerful; a being to be held in awe and approached in humility and submission; it possesses unlimited power. The word carries with it a sense of concealment and mystery (85-86). The distinction between the two names for God is made in the primary statement of faith for Muslims known as the *Kalima*. In Arabic the *Kalima* is *La elaha ill Allah*. “There is no god but the God” (84). Muslims believe this is the one God of every age and country uniquely and humanly expressed through the various religions of the world, which supports the understanding of revelation in chapter two which is the basis of this research.
Allah Akbar is referred to as the takbir, the magnifying of God. It generally means “God is greatest” (Ryan 2015, 16). Akbar and takbir contain the letters K.B.R., which signifies greatness. The words never appear in the Qur’an and takbir appears only once (Ibid.). Ryan draws parallels with this exclamation and the words of David, “You are great, O Lord God; for there is no one like you, and there is no God besides you” (2 Samuel 7:22) and the words of Mary at the Annunciation, “My soul magnifies the lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46-47) (Ryan 2015, 16). In the five daily services it occurs eleven times in the call to prayer and response, and seventeen and twenty-two times in other cycles of prayer. It is said when meat is slaughtered. Sadly, they are the words often stated by terrorists before an attack or suicide bombing. A classroom discussion could identify other short prayer exclamations from different religious traditions. Some of these expressions can be part of an interreligious prayer service.

One of the religious traditions in Islam, the study of which is excellent preparation for interreligious prayer, is the Al Asma ul-Husna, or “The Most Beautiful Names of Allah” (Al Asma ul Husna 2016). It consists of ninety-nine names for God, the greatest being Allah. Two of the names are repeatedly used at the beginning of each sura, or “chapter” of the Qur’an and frequently begin prayer, Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim, “In the name of God/Allah, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful” (Wahiduddin’s Web 2016). These ninety-nine names are customarily recited using Muslim prayer beads, called subha, which means to “Glorify God” (about religion.com 2016, 1). The subha consist of thirty-three beads that are recited three times to complete the ninety-nine names for Allah. Other methods of recitation can be used with the subha. In the
classroom, it invites discussion of prayer beads used in Catholicism, in the form of the *rosary*, and in Tibetan Buddhism called *malas*. *Malas* consist of one hundred and eight beads in which a mantra is repeated for each bead. Hinduism is said to have started the origin of *Japa malas*. *Japa* refers to the name of God that is repeated like a mantra, and *malas*, is from the Sanskrit word *mālā* meaning “garland” which consists of the circular beads used for the prayer (Prayer Beads World 2016, 1).

A *Masjid*, or *Mosque* is a house of worship for Muslims, or a “place of prostration” (Mawdudi 2005, 157). Muslims call “prayer” *salat*, which literally means “to make a connection to something,” so that prayer means to establish a “connection” to God (134). Muslims pray five times a day and pray as a congregation weekly on Fridays, which is called the *Salatul Jumu’ah* (138-139). Prayer is preceded by *Wudu*, the ritual washing of the hands, head, and feet (136). There are different kinds of postures that take place during the prayer—standing, bowing, and prostrating—along with symbolic hand gestures. One complete set of postures and prayers is called a *rakat*. The prayers are brief, lasting five to ten minutes, and certain prayers require a specific number of *rakats* (wikiHow 2016, 1-5).

Prayers can fall under the categories of supplications, praise, the most important or essential, which is the opening Sur’ah of the Qur’an, called *Al-Fatiha*, or “The Opening,” and benedictions (Mawdudi 2005). In Muslim countries, a call to prayer, called an *adhan/azan* is made over a loud speaker from the minaret of the mosque.

For a classroom discussion, this call to prayer from a minaret can be compared to the ringing of church bells within Christian churches that remind members of the time of the service or presence in the community. The sound of the meditation bowl in the
Buddhist tradition starts and stops the prayer, in addition to making a soothing sound that sets the tone for meditation. A visit to a mosque, or other house of worship would allow Christians to observe how Muslims pray. A discussion about the different names for houses of worship and days of worship and different kinds of prayer, postures, and hand gestures used within various religious traditions could prepare for a visit. Within the Catholic tradition, a popular acronym to describe different kinds of prayer is ACTS: adoration, contrition (or sorrow), thanksgiving, and supplication (Harris 1989, 95). While prayer is normally addressed to God using various metaphors, prayers can also be directed to Saints, through nature, in few words, in traditional formulas like the Lord’s Prayer, and through poetry, including the psalms of the Hebrew scriptures and the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (96).

This cultivation of understanding, or teaching about prayer in other religious traditions, and placing it in relation to one’s own, lays the receptive groundwork for interreligious prayer.

*The Scriptures of Islam*

The main scripture in Islam is the *Qur’an* that was recited to the Prophet Muhammad and written down by a scribe. The second important textual source is called the *Sunnah*, meaning path, which are the traditions and sayings of the Prophet written in the *Hadith* and help with understanding the *Qur’an*. The *Hadith* also describes the conduct, behavior, and manners of the Prophet (Mawdudi 2005, 149-150). In the classroom, a discussion can include other sacred scriptures from other religious traditions, and the concepts of tradition and revelation within various religious traditions. A critical analysis can raise the question of whether both tradition and revelation are
based on events of the past and propositional truths, or a living, dialogical and relational experience of God today that does not negate the past.

Muslims believe the Qur’an exists exactly as it was revealed to the Prophet without a word or syllable changed. It is available as an original text. No human words are believed to be mixed in with God’s word (Mawdudi 2005, 109). The language of the Qur’an is a living language that millions of people speak today (110). The scriptures recognized by Muslims include: the Scrolls of Abraham, The Torah of Moses, The Psalms of David, and The Gospel of Jesus, the Messiah (107). While Muhammad is considered to be equal to the other prophets, his teachings supersede the teachings of other prophets (116). In interreligious education, stories common to both the Bible and the Qur’an can be read and students can compare similarities and differences. This, in turn, cultivates interreligious openness.

*The Essential Beliefs of Islam and Comparisons to Judaism and Christianity*

Islam has six essential beliefs, in one God, angels, Prophets, the Books of God, the afterlife and day of judgment, and the Divine decree that all depends on God (Religion Facts 2015; Mawdudi 2005, 130-131). Islam has an eschatology similar to Christians. Muslims believe that after death there is a resting before a resurrection takes place in which souls either go to heaven, hell, or a temporary place of punishment (Mawdudi 2005, 20). This temporary place is similar to the Catholic concept of purgatory. When compared to Islam and Christianity, Judaism has very little about the afterlife. There is no mention of it in the Torah (Telushkin 1991, 547). The New Testament reveals a difference between the Pharisees who believe in resurrection and the Sadducees who do not. Many Jews hold a logical belief in a God who grants eternal life
beyond one’s human life. Instead, the Jewish faith emphasizes life in this world rather than the next (548). All six of these beliefs can be found in the Jewish and Christian tradition. In interreligious education one classroom activity could involve researching different eschatologies including the concept of reincarnation from eastern religions.

The five pillars of Islam are: a) there is one God and Muhammad is his final prophet, b) there are five prayer times each day, c) almsgiving, d) fasting during the month of Ramadan, and e) the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, in Arabia. In Mecca there is the Ka’bah or Cube, which is a shrine built by Abraham. Today, all Muslims pray facing Mecca. The month of Ramadan is a reminder of how each religious tradition has a calendar or way of celebrating special days. For Christians, the most important days of celebration are Christmas and Easter, and the Triduum. In the classroom, students can study the calendar and feast days of different religious traditions and compare them with their own. They might also conduct a question and answer with a Muslim guest speaker to learn more about the Muslim calendar.

Learning about the language, ritual practices, and beliefs in the Islamic tradition can contribute to preparation for, and a greater understanding of interreligious prayer. The next section explores justice education within the Islamic tradition in a classroom environment to prepare students for any social justice activities of an interreligious nature that may precede or follow an interreligious prayer experience.

*Justice Education in Islam and Comparisons with Catholic Social Teaching*

Christian views of justice are rooted in an understanding of the kingdom of God in which peace and justice reigns (Elias 2005, 167). In justice education, care should be taken to avoid indoctrinating or manipulating students to accept specific views on
controversial socio-moral issues (171). The insights of religious educator John Elias (2005) are a helpful guide here. He writes:

Important skills for educators to develop include critical thinking, cooperation, empathy, proper assertiveness, and conflict resolution. Attitudes to be fostered through this education are self-respect, respect for others, ecological concern, open-mindedness, vision, and commitment to peace. (168)

The task of justice education is twofold. First, students should be taught to approach issues of social justice critically and with caution. Second, students should have an understanding of belief systems, scriptures, social teaching of the Church and other religious traditions that motivate and inspire adherents of religious traditions to act towards or on behalf of peace and justice (Elias 2005, 172).

The major themes of Catholic social teaching are the following: a) the life and dignity of the human person, b) the call to family, community, and participation, c) the rights and responsibilities of each person in society, d) the option for the poor and vulnerable, e) the dignity of work and workers, f) solidarity and the universal common good, g) and care for God’s creation (USCCB 2000, 30). Another important principle is found in the acronym ART: Act, Reflect, and Transform. This acronym is important for making the distinction between charity and justice. “Act” refers to the Corporal Works of Mercy—being charitable and fulfilling the material needs of the underprivileged and marginalized (cf. Matthew 25). “Reflect” exhorts Catholics to analyze the root causes of social problems using Scripture and Catholic teaching as guides. “Transform” focuses on the deficiencies of existing social structures and to advocate for just laws and public policies that create new social structures (36). In interreligious education, as students prepare to study the justice teachings of another religion, it is important that they have a framework for justice teaching within the Catholic tradition and understand the principles
of ART so that they can have a basis for comparison that can foster a greater understanding of justice from an interreligious perspective.

The word *Jihadist* as used in the media has become interchangeable with terrorist. However, *jihad* means struggle and can refer to a number of differing types of struggles. It could refer to a physical, mental, or spiritual effort to achieve the goal of peace, safety, and security. The accomplishment of an education can be considered jihad. The three conditions of jihad as self-defense are: when the Muslim community is attacked and they must defend themselves, if an evil tyrant is oppressing their people, and if a foreign government restricts the free practice of Islam. Islamic rules of warfare forbid harm to women, children, the elderly, combatants, trees, and animals. Torture is also forbidden (Mawdudin 2005, 146-147). A discussion of the differences between the teachings of Islam and the activities of terrorists and how the media portrays Muslims in television and movies ought to be a vital classroom activity today.

Theater can be an educational form outside of the classroom that can teach about social justice. An example can be found in the one-woman production of “Unveiled” by Rohina Malik that portrays five Muslim women in a post-9/11 world who are dealing with issues of Islamophobia (Malik 2013). It provides an excellent educational opportunity for the discussion of Islamophobia. Additionally, resources abound on Internet sites such as You Tube that can stimulate the discussion of justice issues and Islam.

Muslims abide by a strict moral life. Dress should be modest. Individuals are to resist activities that include the use of alcohol and smoking, as well as indiscriminate social intermingling. Muslim women often wear a *hijab*, or head scarf as a symbol of
modesty and faithfulness to Allah. It is also customary that Muslim women refrain from shaking hands with men. Muslims are called to live a balanced life and they follow dietary laws that forbid eating pork. Suicide is also forbidden (Mawdudin 2005, 168).

*A Common Word Between Us and You*, issued in 2007, is a significant document from the Muslim community on peace and justice education. It was signed by 138 prominent Muslim leaders, both Sunni and Shia, from the major Islamic countries in the world. The document was addressed to leaders of various Christian communions, inviting Christians to join with Muslims in promoting peace in our post 9/11 world. It begins with the following words:

Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world’s population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. *(A Common Word 2007, 1)*

*Muslims are motivated to live a just life by a belief in the Last Day or Day of Judgment when everyone will be raised from the dead and judged on actions both good and bad.*

*O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. (Surah 5:8 in Ali 2003, 66)*

*In summary, the language, ritual practices, and beliefs of Islam are important topics to discuss and critique within an academic setting prior to an interreligious prayer experience. Such discussion should also explore the importance of justice in the Islamic tradition, noting that the Islamic tradition and other religious traditions of the world share a strong commitment to seeking greater justice throughout the spheres of human life. The academic study of the language, ritual practices, beliefs, and the centrality of justice in*
Islam, lays a firm basis for fostering mutual understanding and receptivity for interreligious prayer. Given the rise of terrorism and Islamophobia after 9/11, interreligious prayer, dialogue, and solidarity are needed more than ever to nurture greater interreligious understanding. The next section will focus on examples from the Jewish tradition, and possibilities within this tradition for interreligious education as a foundation for interreligious prayer.

Background to Jewish-Christian Understanding and Other Religious Traditions

Gabriel Moran (1989) highlights the important connection between Judaism and Christianity: “Every statement and practice of Christianity has to be thought through in its Jewish implications” (230). He also includes Islam in this context which he claims should “as soon as possible” become part of this conversation (Ibid.). Interreligious prayer and dialogue are ways of fostering a relationship and facilitating open dialogue between other religions and the Roman Catholic tradition.

Moran (1989) offers a helpful comparison of the legal, contemplative, and sacramental practices of Catholicism with other religions. He writes:

The legal structure allows Catholics to understand at least some aspects of Judaism and Islam. The contemplative side of Catholicism has surprising parallels with Buddhism despite the vast differences between the two groups in interpretive framework. The sacramental side of the Catholic church, including its devotion to Mary and the saints, gives it similarity in practice to some of Hinduism. (40)

These observations could be academic/classroom topics of conversation for interreligious dialogue, and avenues to interreligious prayer.

Mary Boys discusses the challenge facing each religion when encountering another. “Interreligious encounter reveals the incomprehensibility of God, who alone is infinite and absolute. God’s spaciousness exposes the limited perspectives of one’s own
Moran addresses the incompleteness of each religious tradition:

In every pronouncement, in every ritual, in every gesture toward the outsider, the religious group has to acknowledge its own incompleteness. The universal is embodied—but not completely—in the particular. (Moran 1989, 232)

The Christian understanding of Judaism cannot be separated from centuries of hostility and hate. “Antisemitism and Christianity are paired—and are seen by some as inseparable” (Boys, Lee 2006, 11). For Boys, “interreligious learning is study in the presence of the other and encounter with the tradition embodied in the other” (17). The holocaust is an obvious subject that Christians must learn from; yet, there are many other times in history when Jews have been persecuted. For instance, in 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council under Pope Innocent III stipulated that Jews must wear a solid yellow circle on their clothing. This would later become a yellow star that Jews were required to wear in Nazi Germany. Dialogue on such subjects is enhanced when participants are informed and committed Christians and Jews (Ibid.). This research proposes that interreligious prayer, like interreligious dialogue, can lead to a deeper conversation that is educative, revelatory, and transformative (63).

Christians and Jews together can and should read and explore a document like Nostra Aetate, “Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity,” and “To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians” (2015) which was signed by over 25 prominent Orthodox rabbis in Israel, the United States, and Europe and other Jewish representatives (CJCUC 2016, 1-2), and The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable (Commission for Religious Relations with Jews 2016). For Muslim and Christian dialogue, the Five Points of Consensus between
Catholics and Muslims, (Borelli and Fitzgerald 2006, 10) invite critical discourse on the issues of Inter-religious and Intra-religious dialogue.

*Dabru Emet* (2000) is the Jewish statement on Christians and Christianity (Origins 2000, 226-228). Like *A Common Word Between Us*, it is an important document that should be considered for interreligious dialogue. *The Twelve Points of Berlin, A Time for Recommitment, Building the New Relationship Between Christians and Jews* is another important document (International Council for Christians and Jews/ICCJ 2009). Two of the twelve points call for interreligious dialogue. Interreligious discourse cultivates understanding, sheds stereotypes and bias, and points the way to interreligious prayer.

*The Language, Ritual Practices and Beliefs of Judaism*

*The Hebrew Scriptures*

The TANAKH is the traditional name given to the Hebrew scriptures. The Old Testament is the traditional Christian terminology for the Hebrew scriptures that complement the New Testament, or Christian scriptures. The terminology Old Testament can be offensive to Jews as it seems to imply that the Jewish scriptures are somehow obsolete in and of themselves and have been superseded by the Christian scriptures.

*TANAKH* is an acronym for: *Torah, Nevi‘im/Prophets, and Ketuvim/Writings* (Telushkin 1991, 23). According to Jewish tradition, the *Torah*, or the first five books, were dictated to Moses by God around 1220 B.C.E. (Ibid.).

The following teachings are central to the TANAKH:

- there is one God over all of humanity
- there is one universal standard of morality
people are obligated to take care of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger

people are to refrain from work one day of the week and make that day holy

Jews have been chosen by God to spread this message to the world

the land of Israel, biblically known as the Promised Land, is viewed as part of the covenant promise made to Abraham, which begins Jewish history and culminates with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 (Telushkin 1991, 24, 260).

All five of these teachings can be found in other religions for purposes of comparison in a classroom discussion, including the place land and geography play in the identity of a religion and the sacred scriptures of that religious tradition. Oftentimes, the Golden Rule is used as an example of a teaching found in many religious traditions (Scarsboro Missions 2016).

In addition to the Torah, which is the Written Law of Judaism containing six hundred and thirteen commandments, there is an Oral Law which has given rise to a legal commentary on the Torah which explains how the commandments are to be lived out. This Oral Law, according to Jewish Orthodox tradition, is believed to have been received by Moses at Mt. Sinai and passed down to Joshua and future generations of teachers (Mishna Avot:1; Telushkin 1991, 149). The first such legal commentary is called the Mishna, compiled around 200 C.E. by Rabbi Judah the Prince. It consists of sixty-three tractates that cover specific categories of interpretation of the Torah. For example, the tractate called Shabbat, or Sabbath, includes all of the laws that pertain to the Sabbath in twenty-four chapters. There are also six larger orders that categorize the law. The order called Mo’ed, or Holiday includes not only the laws about the Sabbath, but also the laws

Around 400 C.E. two versions of rabbinic discussions on the Mishna were collected, one in Palestine and one in Babylonia. These discussions are called the Gemara. The combination of the Mishna and the Gemara is known as the Talmud, which exists in the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds. The Babylonian Talmud is given more authority because the Babylonian community was the dominant center of Jewish study in that period. This distinction is lost when Gemara is used interchangeably with the Talmud (Telushkin 1991, 152).

In interreligious education, comparisons can be made with the Qur’an and Hadith of Islam and the Bible, Biblical commentaries and Canon Law of the Catholic tradition, which consists of 1,752 canons or laws (Canon Law Society of America 1984). There are some biblical passages that can be found in the scriptures of all three religious traditions. These include the Exodus story and the sacrifice of Isaac, although the version in the Qur’an does not identify the son by name. Understanding these sacred texts can be revelatory and readings of them can be part of an interreligious prayer service.

Different Branches of Judaism

Judaism has different branches, and each of these branches were started at different times of history by different rabbinic movements. Each has its own way of interpreting the Torah. The four major groups are the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist. An emphasis on the antiquity and binding nature of the Oral Law is the major issue that separates the Orthodox from the others (Telushkin 1991, 150).
Gilbert Rosenthal (1986) adds different notions of revelation that further the separation of the Orthodox with the other branches. He states:

> The cornerstone of Orthodox is, naturally revelation. Without exception, Orthodox thinkers accept the dogma that God revealed the written and oral Torah at Sinai, and that the text of the Torah as we have it today is exactly the same as that given Moses thirty-one centuries ago.” (59)

This notion of revelation would be an example of the propositional model of revelation that is based on past truths or scriptures explored in chapter two.

In Orthodox synagogues women and men sit in separate sections with a divider between them, with the women out of sight. In Conservative and Reform synagogues men and women are permitted to sit together. In an Orthodox synagogue when the Torah is read, the congregation and the reader face the Ark, or location of the Torah. Musical accompaniment is not found in an Orthodox synagogue. In Conservative and Reform synagogues the reader faces the congregation and musical accompaniment with an organ or other instruments is permitted, with some variations in Conservative synagogues.

Each of the different branches of Judaism have made changes regarding the role of women in the Exodus story. In the Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform branches women enjoy equality with men. The Reform Haggadah (2002), the prayer book read at Passover, includes a Hebrew option for a blessing formula that refers to God in a feminine gender. The Reconstuctionist Haggadah (1999) includes the narratives that recognize the role of women in the Exodus story. The Conservative Haggadah (1982) brings women into the story. The Orthodox community has not embraced egalitarianism. The Orthodox do not consider women inferior but distinguish their roles in Judaism (Arnow 2013, 1). Most significantly, changes have occurred that allow women to get a
proper Jewish education, and this has led to a feminist movement and women’s ordination.

The different branches of Judaism can spark a discussion on the differences between Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox denominations, and the major Islamic branches of Shia, Sunni, and Sufi. Comparative study here fosters insight, understanding and openness.

Jewish Prayer: Sh’má and Blessing Prayers

*Ha – Shem*, meaning “the name,” and *Adonai*, or “Lord” are two popular ways of addressing or naming God in a liturgical (*Adonai*) and non-liturgical (*Ha-Shem*) context. The Tetragrammaton is the ancient Israelite name for God that Jews do not say out of respect for God. It is made up of the letters YHWH and appears 5,410 times in the TANAKH (Toy, Crawford Howell, Ludwig Blau 2016, 1).

The *Sh’má* prayer, “Sh’má Ysra’el, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Ekhad—Hear, O Israel, the Lord is Our God, the Lord is One” (Deuteronomy 6:4), can be considered the Jewish creed in six Hebrew words (Telushkin 1991, 667). This prayer and Torah verse is recited four times a day, two during the morning prayers and once during the evening prayers, and a final time before going to bed. Three other verses are added to the Sh’má prayer, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21; and Numbers 15:37-41 (667).

These verses contain seven significant concepts that are commandments within Judaism. 1) Monotheism, 2) Loving God with all your heart, soul, and strength, 3) Teaching and passing the tradition down to one’s children, 4) Tefillin, or the wearing of “phylacteries” a word rarely used by Jews who use the latter Hebrew word. The texts placed inside the two boxes of the tefillin are the four verses that refer to the tefillin,
Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:33-21. Putting on the tefillin is the first *mitzvah* or commandment practiced by a Jewish male at his Bar Mitzvah (Telushkin 1991, 661). Mezuzah is the Hebrew word for doorpost and follows the commandment of Deuteronomy 6:7, 9 of writing the laws of the Torah on your doorposts. The mezuzah is a small metal cylindrical object placed on the doorposts that contains the Sh’mah prayer. They remind everyone who enters and leaves the house how they are to behave. They are usually placed on every doorpost in the house except the bathroom. Respect is shown towards the mezuzah by touching them and kissing one’s fingers (633). A similar action can be seen when Catholics enter a church and bless themselves with holy water as a reminder of their baptism, and when Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians touch statues and icons with a similar respect and devotion. Reward and punishment is linked to Jewish belief in the afterlife or *Olam ha-Ba*. Little if anything is said in the Torah of an afterlife. Part of the reasoning is Judaism separating itself from the Egyptian emphasis on death and the afterlife at the time the Israelites left Egypt (547-548). Samuel 28:15-19 tells the story of King Saul summoning the spirit of the deceased Samuel for advice. The appearance of Samuel is certainly a story which references the afterlife (74). Tzitzit are the ritual fringes attached to the four corners of the large prayer shawl worn by men called a *tallit*. These fringes are reminders of the commandments and to observe them (Numbers 15:39) (659). The tallit is worn over the shoulders during prayer. Another garment called an *arba kanfot* is worn by men under their shirts with the fringes showing unless an individual chooses to keep them hidden (659).
Blessing prayers begin with the formula “Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe. . .” before the prayer becomes specific. Rabbis believed to eat without saying the blessing prayer was like stealing (Brakhot 35 a-b) since the blessing prayer was viewed as “payment” for the food that God provides (Telushkin 1991, 668). The blessing over food Ha-Motzi is “Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.” There are also blessing prayers recited after meals. Blessing prayers can be said regarding nature, on meeting a famous or wise person, and on hearing good news (669). Almost any and every occasion can be a reason for a blessing, brakha, prayer. Within the context of the three daily services at least a hundred blessing prayers are said. The word brakha comes from the word berekh which means “knee” and suggests a bended knee for a posture of prayer before God (670).

The most well-known blessing prayer said on many happy and festive occasions is the She-he-khi-yanu. This prayer is popular for interreligious prayer services. It is omitted for circumcision ceremonies because of the pain experienced by the infant (670).

Prayer Books

The Siddur is the word for “prayerbook,” or more literally “arranged order” that establishes the order for the prayer service. Various prayers are recited from the Psalms, the Talmud and books from other historical periods (Telushkin 1991, 649-650). There are three services per day. Jewish law stipulates that the entire Torah be read throughout the course of the year, although some synagogues observe an ancient tradition of reading the Torah according to a triennial cycle. The reading of the Torah is the centerpiece of the Saturday Sabbath service (653). The Haftorah is a reading from the prophetic books that follows the reading from the Torah. It is usually connected to the Torah reading and is
read at someone’s *Bar Mitzvah*, for boys, or *Bat Mitzvah* for girls. The cycle of Sunday and weekday Scripture readings, found in the lectionary, and the official liturgical books within the Catholic tradition are apt comparisons.

The *Haggada* is the prayer book that is read at Passover and recalls the Israelites liberation from slavery while they were in Egypt. The *Haggada* includes some passages from the Bible, the Mishna, other rabbinic sources, and material from later periods as well. The famous question asked by the youngest child is “Why is this night different from all other nights?” is found in the Mishna. The goal of the Passover celebration is to instill the feeling of being personally liberated from Egypt. The first *Haggada* was printed in Spain in 1482 (*Yerushalmi* 1975, 18; *Telushkin* 1991, 583-584).

The Catholic tradition has official books for the liturgy. They include the Liturgy of the Hours, the Roman Missal, and the Lectionary, which contains the scripture readings for all of the Sundays and weekdays of the liturgical calendar. Prayer books from other traditions can be part of a discussion to promote greater understanding regarding how different religious traditions pray.

A final discussion of prayer within the Jewish tradition addresses the various holidays in the Jewish calendar and life cycle.

*Jewish Calendar*

The Jewish New Year celebrated in the month of *Tishrei*, the seventh month of the Jewish calendar, places it in the fall season, usually September. It is a holiday which commemorates the creation of the world. The Jewish New Year and *Yom Kippur*, or the Day of Atonement, are known as the *Yamim Nora’im*, or “Days of Awe” (*Telushkin* 1991, 564). They are also known as the High Holy Days and are times of deep
introspection and ethical and religious assessment of a person’s life as well as how that life ends. It is a time of repentance or *teshuvah*. The High Holy Days are also known as The Ten Days of Repentance. The Talmud states: “The Day of Atonement atones for sins against God, not for sins against man, unless the injured party has been appeased” (Mishna Yoma 8:9 in Telushkin 1991, 541). The three stages of repentance include 1) the sinner recognizing his sin, 2) a feeling of sincere remorse and, 3) an attempt to undo the damage or seek restitution and resolve to never commit the sin again (542). This is similar to the examination of conscience in the Catholic tradition, although in Catholicism the sacrament of reconciliation is the norm for forgiveness. In Judaism, the victim of sin can grant forgiveness if sincerely asked. To refuse forgiveness is seen as cruel and is itself a sin (Ibid.).

The *Rosh ha-Shana* service includes a *shofar* service with the blowing of the *shofar*, or ram’s horn, which acts as a motivation to repent. A shofar service takes place during the month of Elul, the month before Tishrei, and the shofar is blown at the conclusion of the morning service. If *Rosh ha-shana* falls on a Sabbath the *shofar* is not blown. One way Jews celebrate the New Year is by dipping slices of apples in honey and reciting the prayer: “May it be Thy will, O Lord, Our God, to grant us a year that is good and is sweet” (The Artscroll Siddur 1984, 769). A fundamental theme of this holiday is: life and death. A famous prayer that is read on this day contains the following words:

On Rosh ha-Shana it is written, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed, how many shall leave this world, and how many shall be born into it, who shall live and who shall die, who shall live out the limit of his days and who shall not, who shall perish by fire and who by water... who shall be at peace and who shall be tormented... But penitence, prayer, and good deeds can annul the severity of the decree. (Telushkin 1991, 565)
The Talmud adds a third book: for those who are in the middle between life and death (Ibid.). While heaven and hell are not specified, this third book brings to mind the three destinations in the afterlife for Christians and Muslims: heaven, hell, and the middle or purgatory.

_Yom Kippur_ is the only fast day mandated in the Torah (Leviticus 23:27). The fast is twenty-five hours long as it begins an hour before the holiday begins (Telushkin 1991, 568). While age and health allow for exceptions, as with Ramadan, on this day Jews are forbidden to drink any liquid, engage in sexual relations, bathe, or wear leather shoes. The _Yom Kippur_ service is the longest synagogue service of the year lasting from morning to nightfall. During the service the _Kol Nidrei_, a prayer that asks for release from a vow made and not kept; and the _Al Kheit_, a prayer that calls for the confession of sins committed in the past year are said. A gesture of beating the chest, as a sign of repentance and sorrow, is made. (This is also done during the Penitential Rite of the Catholic Mass.) In the afternoon service, the book of Jonah is read which focuses on God’s willingness to forgive. The final service is called _Ne’ilah_, or “Shutting,” which conveys the image of the “shutting of gates” after God decides the fate of all. The sounding of the _shofar_ with one long note concludes the service and day (570).

In the spirit of _Yom Kippur_, a Catholic service of repentance, called “A Day of Pardon,” took place on March 12, 2000 (Origins 2000). It was led by St. John Paul II on the First Sunday of Lent, which is the season of repentance in the Catholic tradition. On this day seven Cardinals in the Roman Curia asked forgiveness of sins committed in the year that completed the second millennium. The seven sins were not the traditional seven
deadly sins of lust, pride, anger, greed, gluttony, envy, and sloth. Instead, the transgressions forgiven were:

- sins in general,
- sins committed in the service of the truth,
- sins that damaged church unity,
- sins against the people of Israel,
- sins against colonialism and ethnocentrism, peace, the rights of people, and respect for cultures and religions,
- sins against the dignity of women and the unity of the human race, and
- sins against the fundamental rights of human beings, which included the abuse of minors, the poor, the unborn and defenseless persons (Originsonline 2000, 645ff).

These themes can be very appropriate for an interreligious prayer service given the universal experience of similar sins committed in other traditions.

As part of interreligious education, a discussion of the Passover and Sabbath practices that take place in a home can invite conversation about other household rituals. The Catholic tradition refers to the home as a “domestic church” and regards it as being the first church a person experiences, with parents as the first teachers.

The next section explores justice education within Judaism in relation to interreligious dialogue, preparation for interreligious prayer, and shared social justice activities.
Justice Education in Judaism

The very nature of the Exodus story and Passover holiday, which are central to Jewish identity, raises justice issues that pertain to slavery, oppression, and liberation. Each year these stories bring to mind the remembrance of those still in bondage. The goal is to lead people to challenge oppression and to guide them to pray for and bring about liberation.

Hebrew scriptures can also inspire a community to action. For example Isaiah 58 echoes the corporal works of mercy and can inspire persons and communities to care for those in need:

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. (Isa 58:6-7)

Similarly, Micah 6 has motivated many of faith to become involved in social justice: “You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic 6:8).

Two examples in Judaism demonstrate the link between prayer and social justice. The Talmud states, “one’s table atones for one’s sins (Chagigah 27a in Sefaria.org) which implies feeding the hungry at one’s table. The Isaiah passage is the haftorah read during the morning service of Yom Kippur. It reminds everyone that fasting is not an end in itself, nor is it about those fasting, but points to acts of justice on behalf of the homeless and hungry. Service projects are also part of the preparation for a Bar Mitzvah, just as service projects are part of the preparation for Confirmation in the Catholic tradition.

Reflecting on the Jewish scriptures can lead people of other faiths to seek dialogue with Jewish believers concerning the common goal of seeking greater peace and
justice in our world. The meaning of tikkun olam, the repair of the world, or ethical bettering, perfecting of the world is a core concept and commitment of Judaism. It conveys the principle of “ethical monotheism.” Tikkun olam is recited three times a day in the Aleinu prayer which concludes the morning, afternoon, and evening prayer services (Telushkin 1991, 549). This would be another example of justice being a constitutive dimension of Jewish prayer. In the 1950’s, Jewish scholar Leonard Fein described tikkun olam as “fixing the concrete world of objects, animals, and persons through everyone’s efforts to prevent harm to, or to restore, the environment and social and familial ties” (Dorff 2008, 5-6). Traditional Hebrew terms related to tikkun olam include: Hesed, or acts of loving kindness, Tzedakah, or acts of justice, and Mispat, or right judgment based on the law (4-5). A summary of these teachings can be found in Deuteronomy 6:18, “Do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord” (10). This concept can be compared with other teachings among different religious traditions and issues of justice found in the Corporal Works of Mercy in Matthew 25 and the Golden Rule.

A passage from the Mishna that is also found in the Islamic tradition is used when addressing witnesses in capital punishment cases. The passage states that God started the world with one person Adam, “To teach you that whoever destroys one life is considered by the Torah as if he destroyed an entire world, and whoever saves one life is considered by the Torah as if he saved an entire world” (Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5 in Telushkin 1991, 529). This passage teaches about the sanctity of human life (Baratte 2005, 205-206). Here is a basis for interreligious cooperation, understanding, and interreligious prayer.

The next section explores the impact of the null curriculum on interreligious education. It then discusses how the transformational theories of Jack Mezirow and John
S. Dunne can be applied to teaching religion in an academic setting. These theories of transformation can take place within the context of what is learned in the classroom and through the experience of interreligious prayer itself.

**Null Curriculum and Interreligious Education**

Interreligious education could play a crucial role in fostering openness, acceptance, and understanding of religious plurality and interreligious prayer. The absence of interreligious education is an example of what is known as the “null curriculum” (Eisner 2002, 97-98). The null curriculum proposes that what is not taught in an academic curriculum or religious tradition implicitly teaches something. In this case, the absence of interreligious education and the failure to teach about other religious traditions teaches resistance, ignorance, and sometimes even fear of other religious traditions. This null curriculum or absence of interreligious education creates a void that is too often filled in by stereotypes about other religious traditions that are presented in the news and entertainment media, worldwide political events, and what is promoted from the pulpits, classrooms, and families.

John Elias (2005) calls attention to the implications of the absence of justice issues in the school curricula and parish ministries by using the theory of Eliot Eisner (1979) regarding the explicit, implicit, and null curricula in education. Eisner writes:

> What schools do not teach may be as important as what they do teach. I argue this position because ignorance is not simply a neutral void; it has important effects on the kinds of options one is able to consider, the alternative one can examine, and the perspectives from which one can view a situation or problem. (Eisner 1979, 50 in Elias 2005, 160)

In summary, the null curriculum and the absence of learning about other religious traditions can lead to continued misunderstandings about other religious traditions.
Interreligious education should involve learning to understand one’s own religion while gaining a better understanding of other religious traditions through comparison and actual dialogue with adherents of those traditions.

Learning about other religious traditions can lead persons or communities to reflect critically on their own religious outlooks resulting in a transformation of those opinions. This process is explored next through the transformational theory of Jack Mezirow and the “passing over” process of John S. Dunne.

For Mezirow (1990), “meaning perspectives,” are those uncritical presuppositions, and assumptions acquired throughout a person’s lifetime that one brings to a given learning situation (Mezirow 1990, 2-3). For example, many Christians believe that only those who believe in Jesus Christ are saved. “Critical reflection” involves analyzing the presuppositions on which personal or religious beliefs have been built (12-13). In engaging in critical reflection a Christian might ask, What about other religious traditions? Can they be saved? “Perspective transformation” is the outcome of becoming critically aware of how our presuppositions can limit the way we view the world (13-14). For instance, studying Nostra Aetate and engaging in interreligious dialogue and prayer can lead people to transform the way they view another religious tradition. Perspective transformation can also result from a disorientating event like a death, sickness, or other life-changing situation. Oftentimes, the reason for an interreligious service is a disorienting event like 9/11 or other tragedy. Learning takes place when such an event leads to a transformation in outlook that, in turn, enables persons or community to develop a more inclusive, discriminatory, permeable, and integrated perspective that fosters new relationships and new patterns of action and interaction (14).
Obstacles that can prevent a perspective transformation from taking place are referred to as “sociocultural distortions.” These distortions maintain “belief systems that pertain to power and social relationships, especially those currently prevailing and legitimized and enforced by institutions” (Mezirow 1990, 15). According to Mezirow, “experience strengthens, extends, and refines our structures of meaning by reinforcing our expectations about how things are supposed to be.” When life experiences lead a person or community to think that an idea or teaching is “immutable” an “epistemic distortion known as reification” occurs (Ibid.). Examples of such distortions can be found in the labeling of any or all interreligious events as examples of syncretism, usually by religious leadership. However, “critical discourse” is a key process that can lead to perspective transformation. This allows a suspension of prior judgments and biases, and a critical review of the evidence or arguments so that a new sense of meaning can emerge (10-11). In interreligious learning, this is best done through conversation and study with representatives from other religious traditions (Boys, Lee 2006, 17). In an earlier chapter, this researcher used a feminist hermeneutic to move beyond prior judgments and biases to raise critical discourses about the meaning of revelation, as well as the promotion of interreligious prayer as a paraliturgy that is part of the curriculum of leiturgia in the Church. For Mezirow, the ultimate goal of transformative learning is to reach a consensus, or “superior perspective,” that will better motivate adults to accept a more inclusive and integrated perspective (14). For this research project, the study of religions and interreligious prayer and dialogue can lead to the development of a superior perspective that can enable people to contribute to the creation of a more peaceful world.
Along with Mezirow’s theory of transformational education, this research also finds helpful the theory of John S. Dunne, in his book *The Way of All the Earth*, (1972). Dunne applies his own theory of transformation by describing a “passing over” experience as a three stage process. It begins with the primary religious experience of the individual, called the “homeland.” The second stage is when the person “passes over” into another religious tradition by means of dialogue, prayer, or another religious experience. The third stage is to return to one’s primary “homeland” but with a new insight or worldview. Dunne calls this process “the spiritual adventure of our time” (1972, ix).

Dunne’s theory and method of “passing over” and “coming back” is an educational technique when learning religion as an academic subject. He writes:

What one does in passing over is try to enter sympathetically into the feelings of another person, become receptive to those images, and then come back enriched by this insight to an understanding of one’s own life which can guide one into the future. (Dunne 1972, 53 in Scott 1984, 335)

This passing over allows individuals to experience their own traditions at the same time learning from the experiences and traditions of others. Doing this enables them to develop a more universal sense of the nature and dynamics of religious experience while remaining grounded in their own religious traditions. The process permits an authentic dialogue to take place that can result in transformation, and a shifting and enrichment of one’s own religious perspectives and traditions (Scott 1984, 335). A rootedness in one’s own religious tradition coupled with an openness to other traditions facilitates a critical reflection upon one’s own tradition and an empathetic understanding of another’s (335).
In summary, the theories of Jack Mezirow and John S. Dunne can be used to show how learning about religion can be a transformational experience and how interreligious prayer can be religiously educative, transformational and revelatory experience. Both authors describe a process of change that starts with an upheaval or an encounter with another religious tradition. The end result is an experience of “perspective transformation,” or new insights after passing over to another religious tradition and returning back to one’s own tradition or “homeland.”

The next section will explore multiple life forms of religious education beyond the classroom that can support interreligious dialogue and prayer. This turns our study to the second side of religious education, namely, teaching to be religious.

Religious Education: Lifelong in Multiple Forms

Educational language should not be linked solely to schools. Gabriel Moran (1994) understands education as “the systematic planning of experience for growth in human understanding “(43). He presents four forms of education that follow in chronological order: family, school, job, and retirement (Moran 1997c, 157-168). Each of these forms involves unavoidable encounters with the world of religious pluralism.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) places great emphasis on parents, who have the first responsibility for the education of their children. “They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule” (CCC, #2223). Education begins in the womb, by the health care the mother receives, and upon birth in the early stages of the child’s life through verbal and non-verbal communication and human touch. “The home
is the natural environment for initiating a human being into solidarity and communal responsibilities” (Ibid, #2224).

Many if not most schools today guarantee a student an experience of religious pluralism. Many schools have a United Nations representation of the religions, cultures, and languages of the world. Hundreds of languages and cultures are represented in the public and Catholic schools in the city of New York alone. The absence of teaching religion as a subject in public schools is a lost opportunity to promote interreligious education. However, some interreligious learning is fostered by culture days, or learning about holidays. The issue here is whether children will learn to be “better” educated towards those different from themselves, or “bitter” towards those who are different because of a null curriculum that teaches that other religions or cultures do not matter.

One also encounters religious pluralism in the workplace where observation and conversation allows for an interreligious education. Besides not working on the Jewish holy days, perhaps some can experience a Sabbath service or Seder meal. One can discuss the fasting practices with a Muslim during Ramadan, or join in a Chinese New Year celebration or birthday celebration of the Buddha. There are many opportunities for engaging in conversation and fostering friendships with coworkers who belong to different religious traditions.

Leisure time is commonly identified as vacation which often is the only time people travel. Travel opens ups a world of opportunity to learn about other religions and cultures. It can also be a good way of identifying how the media promotes stereotypes of different cultures and religions traditions. Leisure can also point to retirement which can be a good time to engage in interreligious education with other retirees.
Maria Harris, building upon the work of Gabriel Moran, discusses educational forms that can be found in a parish setting in her classic book, *Fashion Me A People* (1989). She names these forms as: leiturgia (worship), didache (teaching), diakonia (service), kerygma (proclamation), and koinonia (community). Harris places the curriculum of liturgy, for the most part, within the context of the official liturgy of the Roman Catholic tradition. However, there are points of her analysis that can apply to interreligious prayer as a paraliturgical service.

**The Curriculum of Liturgy/Leiturgia**

For Maria Harris (1989) prayer is one of the ways that communities establish “patterns and rhythms in its ways of being together” (Harris 1989, 94). The life of a church community includes a communal life of prayer and set forms for addressing the mystery of God. Harris also envisions prayer as being a component of the curriculum of educational ministry. “We are educated to prayer, and we are educated by prayer” (95). She notes that prayer takes place within many different contexts, including church and home, the classroom, on a bus, at work, while going for a walk or engaging in many other ordinary activities of life. Harris distinguishes liturgy/leiturgia from other forms of prayer because it is the official communal worship of the Church as a body of believers.

Liturgy is an educational form that involves “the community performing a public ritual that expresses all dimensions of human life” (Moran 2007, 82). It can teach Christians how to live out a Christian life. Parts of the liturgy can be instructional, such as the homily or sermon. Yet, a distinction should be made between teaching and rational discourse that takes place in a classroom and the verbal and non-verbal language found in the liturgy. Given that most teaching is done by a community, the liturgical experience
can be one of the best examples in which the community teaches non-verbally. It teaches people to be religious.

Prayer can be placed in two major categories: private and communal prayer. Examples of private prayer are verbal prayer, meditative prayer, and contemplative prayer. While meditative prayer uses images and reflection on a particular theme that may be related to scripture, contemplative prayer is found in a prayer of silence that is free of images or themes. Centering prayer and becoming one with the breath through the repetition of a word, sound, or mantra is characteristic of contemplative prayer. The example Harris uses is how the repetition “OM” from the Hindu tradition can be prayer. She tells the story of an Indian guru who was asked by a disciple how to pray. The wise guru responded, “Concentrate on your breathing. The air you breathe is God. Breathe in, breathe out, for it is God you are inhaling.” Doing this, the disciple discovered the secret of a profound prayer life that lasted a lifetime. “The secret: prayer is as simple and as natural as breathing” (de Mello 1978, 3 in Harris 1989, 97). This researcher argues that this silent prayer of breathing is the universal prayer for all religious and non-religious traditions and can be an important part of an interreligious prayer service.

Harris recommends the practice of private prayer to support the development of the contemplative center that should be part of each religious educator. In developing such a practice, Harris recommends a quiet environment, a relaxed attitude, a comfortable position that is not lying down; an object to focus on such as a candle, bowl of water or our breath (Harris 1989, 98). The result of developing such a practice is that we become able to bring a prayerful attitude to everything we do and “to some degree, we are not doing prayer so much as becoming prayer” (Ibid.).
Gabriel Moran (2007) connects private prayer to liturgy or public prayer in noting that private prayer is the interiority of every human activity and is at the core of all liturgy and worship (88). “Private prayer is the centering of all life in relation to God and creation” (Ibid.).

When describing communal prayer Harris (1989, 98) states “The curriculum is in the praying.” The agent of this praying is not the individual but the praying community. Communal prayer serves to create and re-create the identity of a people. Harris also notes that a Quaker meeting can be an example of interreligious communal prayer (99).

The ideal form of communal prayer is the official liturgy of the entire community. Harris recognizes the lack of attendance for this central element of prayer, with less than 50% of members attending church services in the United States (Harris 1989, 100).

In summary, liturgy as a curriculum of religious education is a way communities establish patterns and rhythms of being together. It can be a private and communal way of addressing the mystery of God and committing to lives of justice that work for the transformation of the world. Rather than understand the personal/private and communal/public in opposition one can envision them as connected human activities. Liturgy as public ritual expresses all dimensions of human life. Rather than being a didactic form of teaching found in a classroom, it is a teaching done by the community largely through example and nonverbally. Such prayer can take place within small prayer groups, on retreats, within interreligious paraliturgical prayer services, and the official liturgies of the Church. Good worship takes the priestly, prophetic, and political demands of the Gospel seriously and gives expression to the human longing to be in the presence of God (Harris 1989, 101). Like all education, *leiturgia* is both with end, regarding its
meaning and purpose, and without end, given “the awareness that the worship of God is never-ending” (102).

For two examples of interreligious prayer see the Appendix. One occurred during the visit of Pope Francis to the United States with his participation in an interreligious prayer service at the 9/11 Museum. The second is the interreligious prayer service that this researcher has planned each year.

**Practical Recommendations**

- Within an academic setting or other setting, study *Nostra Aetate*, and other important documents noted in this research to promote greater understanding with members of other religious traditions. Documents might include *A Common Word between Us and Them; Dabru Emet; A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People*, and *The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable (Romans 11:29)*, released on the fiftieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*.

- Visit other houses of worship and experience the prayer of the religious tradition. A Sacred Spaces program sponsored by the American Jewish Council (AJC) organizes visits to various houses of worship in order to learn about various religious traditions. Helpful to any visits is *How to Be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook* (Matlins 2003) which provides a brief history of the religious tradition, an explanation of the basic services, appropriate attire, holy days and festivals, life cycle events, and dogma and theology.

- Start or join a conversation group made up of people from various religious traditions. This researcher belongs to two such groups, “Courageous

- Plan an interreligious service with other congregations or people from other religious traditions, especially during World Interfaith Harmony Week, or attend one.
- During Ramadan, visit a mosque and join in the hospitality of an If-tar dinner that breaks the daily fast of the day. Everyone is welcome. Stay and observe salat.
- Attend public ceremonies such as the Shinnyo Lantern Floating for Peace ceremony that coincides with International World Peace Day in September. Many other public interreligious prayer services take place on or near Thanksgiving.
- If you have any questions, ask the members of that religious tradition.
- Advocate for the teaching of religion and biblical literacy in public schools.
- Take advantage of the many websites and YouTube resources on line for interreligious education.

The fruits of this research on interreligious prayer, guided by principles of inculturation, can provide an interreligious prayer experience for the increasing number of interreligious families and marriages that exist today. While the incorporation of elements from different religious traditions are already found in marriage and funeral rites within the Roman Catholic tradition, the celebration of the Eucharist still prohibits elements from other religious traditions and, in particular, the inclusion of scriptures from other traditions. This researcher recommends further exploration of how different parts of the Eucharist, especially the introductory or closing rites, could be re-envisioned using principles of inculturation so that they have an interreligious aspect. Additionally,
language from other religious traditions could be incorporated into the Eucharist using the principle of dynamic equivalence.

**Conclusion**

The guiding metaphor of this research was “holy envy” taken from Krister Stendahl’s “Three Rules of Religious Understanding” (Wikipedia contributors 2015d). He was reported to have mentioned these rules at a press conference in Stockholm, Sweden, while defending the building of a temple there by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Each rule supports religious education for greater interreligious understanding that can provide a foundation for interreligious paraliturgical prayer. 1). When trying to understand another religion, enter into dialogue with the adherents of that religion and not its enemies. This rule promotes interreligious dialogue. 2) Do not compare your best to their worst. This rule promotes a critical self-examination of one’s own religious tradition. 3) Leave room for “holy envy.”

In this chapter, the first rule of religious understanding was explored through the academic study of religion. This is enhanced when representative from other religious traditions can interact with students and answer any questions. Interactions with representatives who participate in interreligious prayer services, as explored in chapter four, can have positive results that nurture an ongoing relationship that can withstand future tension, conflict, and even a crisis.

The second rule of religious understanding was addressed in the chapter two discussion of the one revelation of one God that is uniquely and humanly expressed in various ways through the various religious traditions of the world. With this
understanding of revelation, one is less likely to speak ill of another religion or to have an attitude of superiority, or competition, or to claim to have a monopoly on the Truth.

Holy envy is the recognition of elements in another religious tradition that are admirable and desirable. The third rule of religious understanding, leaving room for Holy Envy, should guide one to experience the religious and spiritual treasures discovered at an interreligious prayer service and through the study of a religious tradition. When room is left for holy envy, an interreligious prayer service that incorporates and includes elements of other religious traditions in a common prayer experience can be revelatory, religiously educative, and transformational.

This research argued that an understanding of one revelation of one God humanly expressed through various religious traditions embodies the three rules of religious understanding. This understanding of revelation challenges any religious tradition that claims to have the only truth which fosters competition among religious traditions and notions of superiority. Without promoting relativism, and offering a positive view of syncretism, this research affirms the common values that are expressed through the ritual practices, traditions, language, symbols, and silence of other religious traditions. These common values are found in the principles of love of God and neighbor, justice, truth, and beauty. It is this common ground in meaning, shared values, ritual prayer, language, symbols and silence that can promote dialogue, understanding, and collaboration among the religious traditions of the world and lessen misunderstanding. Interreligious prayer is an embodiment and incarnation of holy envy that is guided by principles of inculturation and is revelatory and religiously educative.
Limitations of Study

Given the number of religious traditions, the limitations of this study cannot give adequate attention to each and every religious tradition, including the humanist tradition which has also offered statements of solidarity on behalf of the common good of humanity in the context of an interreligious paraliturgical service. While the Jewish and Muslim traditions are monotheistic and thus aligned with Christianity, exclusion is a sensitive issue in the realm of interreligious dialogue and prayer. If, for example, the cover of a program for the prayer service does not include the religious symbols of participating traditions, the excluded group will take objection. For this reason, this study very briefly mentions any other examples helpful for the purposes of this research from other traditions outside of the Jewish and Muslim traditions, when necessary. The primary audience for this study are religious educators and directors of liturgy interested in the curricula of liturgy and interreligious dialogue. The limitations of the study were the inability to incorporate more insights and examples from other religious traditions into the research. At times, one voice was used more than others, which limited the number of perspectives that could have been incorporated into this research. Helpful feedback was received from Jewish and Muslim representatives that enhanced the examples from the Jewish and Muslim traditions in chapter five. More examples of prayers and scripture passages could have been incorporated. More examples could have been given of shared social justice activities. In particular, other “models” of revelation could have been attended to in chapter two. However, this would have taken this research beyond the scope of this study.
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APPENDIX

Pope Francis and Interreligious Paraliturgical Services

On October 28, 2015, Pope Francis presided over an interreligious prayer service at the 9/11 museum. It included twelve participants from the Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Jewish, Islamic, and Christian religious traditions (YouTube 2015). After welcoming remarks by Cardinal Dolan, there were alternating prayers and statements from a Rabbi and an Imam. Both captured in their remarks the violence that took place in the name of God and the intolerance and ignorance of the perpetrators of the terroristic acts. They affirmed the peace found in the Psalms of the Jewish tradition. The Rabbi recited the prayer of St. Francis, normally found in the Christian tradition, but appropriate for an interreligious prayer service given its universal meaning. The Imam cited scripture passages in the Qur’an stating that to kill one person is as if all of humanity has been killed, and to save one person is as if all of humanity has been saved.

After both spoke, Pope Francis offered a prayer to a God of compassion, healing, peace and understanding. His prayer recalled the unspeakable violence and pain that occurred that day and the loss of life of first responders and innocent people. He prayed for healing among all the families involved and for comfort. His prayer did not have a traditional Trinitarian ending.

After Pope Francis, representatives of each religious tradition, wearing their native ceremonial clothing, offered prayers in their native languages. The first prayer from the Hindu tradition included the recitation of the words “OM, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.” “OM” is the sacred sound and symbol of Hinduism. It is the sound out of which
the whole universe was created. “Shanti” is the Hindu word for “peace.” The prayer was translated into English by another participant.

After the Hindu prayer, a meditation bell was sounded. This sound was repeated between each prayer accompanied by beautiful instrumental music that was part of the background of the prayers. After the Buddhist prayer was recited it was also translated into English by a Buddhist woman holding the Buddhist malas prayer beads.

The Sikh representative was next, followed by a translation of his prayer. A Greek Orthodox clergy member recited in Greek the Beatitudes from the Gospel of Matthew, and a Protestant minister recited the Beatitudes in English. The Muslim representative concluded the prayers with an English translation.

After the prayers, everyone was invited to stand as a Jewish cantor chanted the Jewish prayer for the dead. Then, Pope Francis was invited to speak. He mentioned the image of flowing water at the 9/11 site as a symbol of tears that flowed that day. He spoke of how destruction is specific and how it is seen in the faces of those who are hurt and those left behind. He affirmed the goodness of humanity concluding his talk with a moment of silence. After the silence, a children’s choir sang, “Let there be peace on earth.” The service concluded with a sign of peace exchanged among all present.

The sacred space of the service was arranged to remind the participants that this was a location where there had been mass destruction and loss of life. This fact was recognized by various participants including Pope Francis. Yet, words of hope, healing, consolation, reconciliation, and forgiveness were expressed in the prayers that were recited and in the songs that were sung or chanted. The service was formative and transformative. That is the aim of religious education. The potential for transformation is
based on the experience of each person attending the service and what critical assumptions are challenged by the service leading to a transformation of perspective.

**The Interreligious Prayer Service for Peace and Justice Celebrating World Interfaith Harmony Week**

On October 20, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution for World Interfaith Harmony starting the first week of February, 2011. The following message was stated by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, “Interfaith Harmony Week celebrates the principles of tolerance and respect for the other that are deeply rooted in the world’s religions. The observance is also a summons to solidarity in the face of those who spread misunderstanding and mistrust” (Ban Ki-moon 2015).

For the past eleven years, this researcher has planned an interreligious prayer service. It began as a service celebrating Christian Unity Week and the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It moved to the first week of February when the United Nations declared the week World Interfaith Harmony Week. At the 2015 service, the following religious and non-religious traditions participated: Unitarian, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Humanist, Sikh, Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Baha’i, Native American, and Quaker. Because the Quaker religion does not have formal or spontaneous prayer, the representative introduced the moment of silence that is a central tenet of Quaker worship. Like the 9/11 service, representatives each had an opportunity to recite a prayer from their tradition. Common prayers were also recited. Each year’s service is hosted by a different house of worship. Civic leaders and the general public from the different religious traditions are invited to attend, and a Proclamation recognizes World Interfaith Harmony Week in the city that hosts the service. Recently, the music of Pete Seeger has been added, given its universal message of peace and justice. An excellent video
portraying the religious diversity of New York City is shown at the beginning of the service depicting how many religious traditions worship and, of itself, is a fine educational tool (Stockdale 2004).

With proper religious education in an academic setting, an understanding of the various religious traditions can enhance the meaning of interreligious prayer allowing it to become a transformative and revelatory experience. Studies show that congregations that participate in interreligious prayer or other interreligious events are more likely to be involved in other shared social justice events during the year (Roozen, 2010).

Since 9/11, the number of American congregations participating in interreligious worship has doubled increasing from 6.8% to 13.9%. Additionally, the number of congregations taking part in interreligious community service has nearly tripled, from 7.7% to 20.4% (Roozen 2011, 1). The more diverse a congregation the more open it is to interreligious worship (3). The more involved a congregation’s leaders are in the community, the more likely it is to be involved in interreligious activities compared to congregations whose leaders are not as involved, for example interreligious worship (21% vs. 10%). The same is true for interreligious celebrations (21% vs. 11%), interreligious education and fellowship events (16% vs. 7%), and interreligious community service (27% vs. 17%) (5). This research calls for an increase in interreligious prayer services and activities so as to promote greater understanding across religious traditions and a more peaceful world.
ABSTRACT

This is a humanistic, interdisciplinary study that explores interreligious prayer as a paraliturgical experience and one of the curriculum forms of religious education. Its primary context is the United States, with potential applications in other international settings. The central thesis: principles of inculturation can guide interreligious prayer as a transformational, religiously educative and revelatory experience of the divine in our religiously diverse world. The root metaphor of “holy envy” serves the purposes of the research which is the appreciation of elements in the other religious tradition that I wish were part of my own tradition.

Central to this research is an understanding of one revelation, proposed by Gabriel Moran, of one God that is uniquely and humanly expressed through the various religious traditions of the world. This understanding of revelation allows each religious tradition to be faithful to its own ritual practices and beliefs, while learning about and respecting the ritual practices and beliefs of other religious traditions. This understanding of revelation also supports the two sides of religious education that involve learning to be religious within one’s own religious tradition and learning about other religious traditions in order to gain a better understanding of one’s own tradition. It is this encounter with the other religious tradition that can lead to a transformational experience of new insights gained from the encounter.
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