

1995 – 2020

25 Years



Seminar 1995

EXPLORING NEW HORIZONS

Intercultural and interreligious Care and Counselling
over more than 25 Years

Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling
Interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung

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EXPLORING NEW HORIZONS

Intercultural and interreligious Care and
Counselling over more than 25 Years

Short Introduction

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GOING INTO THE FUTURE

Daniel J. Louw, South-Africa

A short introduction

When the "Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling - SIPCC" was founded on 17 October 1995, nobody could have guessed how this association would develop. The vision, however, was to create opportunities for encounters and training and further education in pastoral care and counselling. People from all countries, cultures, religions worldviews were to be invited to work together how they themselves and their fellow human beings could keep hope in life-threatening and violent times and how they could help each other in times of need.

Now, after 25 years, it is clear that SIPCC with its members and its activities has gone far beyond what was then a timid vision. For "intercultural pastoral care" was a complete novelty in the German-speaking world and it was often unclear what could be meant by it. However, when the first theoretical approaches were described in the International Seminars and then also in the "Handbook of Intercultural Pastoral Care", published in German by SIPCC in 2002, it became clear that pastoral care is usually intercultural, i.e. that in every pastoral contact, different "sign systems" come together which require special sensitivity. And then it also became clear that cultural and religious attitudes are so closely connected with each other that one cannot separate them - certainly not in care and counselling - even if they are always to be distinguished. In SIPCC we are indeed in the process of discovering "new horizons" again and again.

If one reads the following contributions of very different kinds, which have also been deliberately left in their diversity, something stands out: SIPCC has the quality of forming community, and this on several levels. The people who come to our events from many different parts of the world feel that they are being received as human beings; SIPCC sees itself as a learning community for care, counselling and working for human well-being; in all religious and ideological diversity, there are connections among us as a spiritual community.

SIPCC has been involved in pastoral education in several countries, some of which have been running for many years.

SIPCC has created its own forms of work: time and again the differences between the Seminars and conferences are mentioned.

But read for yourself, take part in the diversity and enjoy the colourfulness.

The contributions are divided into the following different chapters: Beginnings / Developments / Learning communities and Cooperation. They are followed by an article by Daniel J. Louw with the title: "Towards a Spirituality of Acknowledgement (*Anagnorisis*) and *Orthopathy* in Pastoral Encounters and Intercultural Dialogues" which is giving us some directions how to find "Ways into the future" for SIPCC.

Helmut Weiß

Beginnings

RASPuS and SIPCC - common beginnings

Harald Bredt¹



A Jubilee in times of Corona will not allow for person-to-person encounters at a large celebration. At the same time, encounter is one of the concepts that is of the utmost importance for our two associations - the "Rheinische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Seelsorge, Pastoral Psychologie und Supervision - RASPuS" (Association for Pastoral Care, Pastoral Psychology and Supervision in the Rhineland) and SIPCC - and so it is a real pity that we cannot come together for this anniversary meeting.

Our two associations, which were both founded in Düsseldorf in 1995, have a common forerunner, RAKSA, the Rhenish Association for Clinical Pastoral Care Training, which had already existed for 25 years until our associations went their separate ways.

After the demand arose in the USA in the first quarter of the last century that pastors should be trained in pastoral care, this idea was taken up in Germany after the Second World War, from the USA and via the Netherlands. And then it took a while until people came together in the Rhineland who made the importance of pastoral training their concern and demanded that their church provide training and further education in pastoral care. Among the church officials, there was first of all more reservation and scepticism than insight and breakup. That is why an association was needed, which worked constantly to ensure that pastoral education received its important place in the training of pastors in education and pastors in congregations. This was the birth of an association for Clinical Pastoral Education in the Rhineland (RAKSA). From then on, the motto was: drill thick planks. In retrospect, much of what is taken for granted today in pastoral care in our churches was difficult to achieve. It was a rocky road that nevertheless led to success. For many years, RAKSA and then following

¹ Harald Bredt, RASPuS board-member and chairman from 2012-18, (teaching) supervisor, retired pastor

RASPuS took over the organization of further training for pastors in pastoral care through courses. Already with the foundation of RASPuS it was clear that there were also other pastoral trainings which were equal to the CPE and that the field of supervision should be established as an independent form of counselling, since the reflection of work in the church and its professional actors could be helpful for pastoral activities. Here again more work of conviction, support and encouragement was needed with regard to church-leading action. From today's point of view the reluctance of the church authorities is almost incomprehensible, since supervision has become a matter of course in the church now. Even though the CPE courses have not been organized by RASPuS for some years, it was necessary as an association to push again and again in this direction, to emphasize pastoral care as an important part of pastoral work and to promote training. Even if the slogan "Pastoral care is the mother tongue of the church" came from the Rhineland Regional Church, it must still be reminded again and again to this day to take pastoral care and the pastoral fields seriously, to promote and maintain training with clear and high standards and to establish places that stand for professionally qualified pastoral care in society. The fact that volunteers are also trained and working in this personnel-intensive pastoral work today is only due to the high value of professional pastoral care.



The board of RASPuS 2020

Helmut Weiß, who was also the chairman of RASPuS for many years, and Klaus Temme were the ones who ensured close contact and constant information from SIPCC at RASPuS. This is the reason why the international pastoral work of the SIPCC has been supported financially for many years up to this day. Helmut Weiß was the pioneer, who often took the leading role and who, in addition to the pastoral topics, also pushed the form of organisation, so that our two associations can now look back on 25 years of existence. For this we thank him especially!

The connection between RASPuS and SIPCC should be further strengthened due to the common history and the common task to promote pastoral care. In the Rhineland - i.e. on a local level - we can only learn from pastoral experiences in other areas of the world and reflect

on our own work again and again. We are primarily connected by the joy of and concern for good pastoral work. Pastoral care as the "mother tongue of the Church" - and perhaps even of the religions - also connects us across language barriers. In addition, there is also a purely legal connection through our statutes, which, in the event of dissolution of one association, allows the existing assets to benefit the other association. That is the way it is in families - also in our pastoral care association family! Even if we wish that neither RASPuS nor SIPCC will be dissolved in the next 25 years, the common interest in strengthening pastoral care remains of great value for the society we live in.

Therefore: All the best - SIPCC!

25 years SIPCC - a success story of intercultural resonance experiences

Ursula Riedel-Pfäfflin²



Complexity: how do we understand and process what we encounter?

All over the world, we experience crises that manifest themselves alongside and in the midst of terrible dramas of war, movements of flight and dictatorial demonstrations of power, in illnesses which are experienced and their consequences. Many of our private and organizational plans cannot be realized in the months of 2020. They will be cancelled. So the celebration for 25 years of SIPCC will also take place online.

² Ursula Riedel-Pfäfflin, Professor at the Protestant University for Social Work Dresden and former member of the SIPCC Executive Committee

An epidemic that reaches into the own circle of friends and acquaintances; a lockdown of all public institutions, most people have never experienced this before. Accordingly, echoes and ways of dealing with it are very different.

How do we as pastoral workers deal with it?

Obviously, we humans find it difficult to work through far-reaching and profound events and experiences; to understand and deal with larger and deeper connections. Complexity is difficult for our limited perceptive faculty to understand and cope with. For, unlike modern Western ways of life would have made us believe, we are by no means independent subjects whose happiness and success depend only on our willingness to seize our manifold opportunities in a globalized world with infinite possibilities and to optimize ourselves. We are beings who come from generations of social, economic and cultural imprints; we are born into networks of relationships and are connected with and dependent on others for life. We live in, from and with relationships in our subjectively, objectively and socially experienced world. And: we search for answers.

What always stimulates me anew in the vocational field of pastoral psychology is that here exactly these three dimensions are experienced and shaped: what we and others subjectively experience, suffer and cope with; how we perceive and shape the objective world in different environments in very different ways; and what possibilities of the social world we have developed and continue to develop as pastoral workers to help individuals, families and larger systems in their situations and contexts. Perceiving and understanding relationships and stimulating processes of change, this is a professional field that requires great sensitivity, alertness and readiness to live and deal with complexity.

The pastoral-psychological developments in Germany, Europe and worldwide were and still are an important part of my experience. I learned a lot from other pastoral trainers and teachers and experienced with them the wealth of possibilities when complex situations and developments are looked at, discussed and dealt with together. Many of my long-time colleagues were or are still active in SIPCC.

Therefore, I am happy to contribute to the celebration of the founding of SIPCC 25 years ago and would like to share some memories and reflections on my perception of the emergence of international and intercultural pastoral work worldwide.

Highlights from the History of International Pastoral Psychological Movements

After the devastating experiences of the two world wars in Germany and Europe, communities and political systems emerged at all levels of public life that wanted to overcome old demarcation lines and develop new forms of cooperation. One example: Franco-German friendship after centuries of war and economic conflict.

First in Europe and then worldwide, groupings were formed which were committed to recognising differences and at the same time to finding ways of strengthening cooperation. Instead of insisting on demarcation, devaluation and their own rights, possibilities of cooperation across the borders of differences were opened up and tested.

One example of this is the founding of the European Council on Pastoral Care and Counseling (ECPC), in which practitioners from European pastoral psychological associations from England, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Iceland, Greece and other countries met to get to know each other and exchange ideas. The aim was to learn from each other in theory and practice and also to develop and disseminate new approaches in joint publications.

Parallel to this, further contacts were made to other continents - in the USA, Africa, South America, Australia, India, East Asia and in some socialist countries. The International Society for Pastoral Psychology was founded and, alternating with the European Council every four years, representatives of national societies met with each other in the International Council on Pastoral Care and Counselling (ICPCC) on controversial issues of pastoral care work in their own context.

I still remember very much the World Congress in San Francisco, where all delegations were invited to present the particular challenges their contexts pose to pastoral care and counselling and to illustrate their responses in theory and practice. For these different presentations there were observers who accompanied the processes and then shared their perceptions with everyone, which was very interesting.

For me, the most impressive perception was that it was very clear to us German delegates: Pastoral care in various other contexts around the world is not primarily about conversations for individuals with individual and family issues, but is challenged by conflicts that affect whole masses of people. For example, an Indian colleague reported on the arrest of masses of young people who were then in prison and did not know what and how it happened to them.

What does pastoral training in politically explosive contexts mean for whole groups of people? What does pastoral care mean in the face of poverty, exploitation and oppression of entire population groups, of children, women, dependent foreign workers, refugees and victims of disasters?

In San Francisco, the course was set for completely new perceptions, questions and perspectives, which in the following decades led, for example, to a conscious effort in Melbourne, Ghana, India and Poland - which in turn also gave rise to conflicts.

It became clear in the expansion of ICPCC and ECPC that the instruments of worldwide work were not sufficient to work effectively. The four-year cycle proved to be too cumbersome to enable effective communication, training and publication work across continents with changing governing bodies. This gave rise to ideas for smaller, more effective possibilities for intercultural pastoral-psychological work. New groupings were founded, for example, in the USA, South America, Africa and Germany, also with the aim of offering education and training for pastoral care more contextually specific and denser locally.

The founding of the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling e. V. in 1995 and its significance

Within the German Society for Pastoral Psychology there have always been committed colleagues who have also established and maintained intensive contact with other countries and their approaches. Joachim Scharfenberg worked with universities in the USA and Liselotte

Herkenrath-Püschel with African pastoral teachers like Emmanuel Larthey. In this way important publications were also produced.

However, the interest in international work in the German Association of Pastoral Psychology (DGfP) was very limited and unsatisfactory for some of us.

It is therefore thanks to the committed vision and work of Helmut and Christa Weiss, Klaus Temme, Karl Federschmidt and many others that the SIPCC was founded in 1995. With élan and links to the contacts made in ICPC so far, the opportunities for exchange were intensified and specifically extended to Poland, Hungary and other countries. Not every four years, but every year since then, a Seminar has taken place in which experts and interested people from the most diverse church groups, religions and countries come together for a whole week to experience joint research and learning. Of course, this required much more intensive work and also the overcoming of great hurdles in order to provide enough money and conditions for participants from abroad.

What is special for me about these Seminars is the fact that very continuously and regularly, experimental spaces and times are made possible here to find out together

- what meanings the terms "culture" and "inter" can have for us in smaller and larger systems;
- how it might be possible to celebrate diversity rather than be irritated by it;
- what significance listening closely in small groups, plenary sessions and excursions can have, especially when encountering unfamiliar traditions;
- what new processes of understanding are initiated when the diversity of "help", "faith", "peace orientation" and "cooperation" becomes clear.

Since the leadership teams came from different contexts, I experienced exciting but also stressful conflicts during preparation and implementation. Things often got heated behind the scenes and also in the meetings. But that is precisely the opportunity of smaller systems within large ones: in an exemplary way, conflicts can be dealt with more intensively and with greater results. And in every grouping, disputes over influence, power and recognition are part of it.

SIPCC has achieved something special right from the start. Christa and Helmut Weiß, Klaus Temme and others have not only prepared and carried out very informative study trips, but also issued publications that have innovatively enriched and expanded the field. SIPCC has also - in contrast to other groups - taken a big step towards inter-religious awareness and cooperation, especially towards Jewish traditions and Islam.

However, the most important thing for me is the empowerment to competence, the training for pastoral care and pastoral teaching in Hungary, Poland, Indonesia and Africa, which initiates and further develops the own work and self-development - also a complex enterprise with a lasting effect.

Resonance experiences in a postmodern world

As persons in a network of relationships, we are always looking for orientation, for belonging, for possibilities to find echoes for our feelings, thoughts and actions. In his book "Resonance.

A Sociology of World Relations" the sociologist Hartmut Rosa shows how important successful world relationships are for us. They succeed when we experience resonance, when we are able to resonate intersubjectively, to be touched and to touch others - in every dimension: through feelings, through physical experiences, through spiritual exchange, through community experiences, through religious experiences. Under the present conditions and as a result of the foreseeable mechanization of the world, this will become increasingly difficult.

I think SIPCC has successfully created meeting spaces and times in which the most diverse resonance events and relationships have been and will be experienced. This has brought to life what the term "inter" originally and consciously expresses: complex world relationships can succeed if people and systems are not driven into a "faster, better, more efficient", and thus increasingly lifeless.

World relationships succeed when movements are created that make resonances experienceable in all aspects: in relationships between people, all living beings, things and the incomprehensible dimensions of the whole.

It is an important occasion to celebrate and honour the movement of SIPCC and the special cooperation and continuity of the founders, especially the initiatory work of Helmut Weiss. In view of the growing complexity of world relations, I wish good strength for the continuation and development of this important pastoral-psychological commitment in a complex world.



SIPCC study-trip to Jerusalem 2009

The discovery of intercultural pastoral care

Developments of intercultural competence in pastoral care and counselling through international encounters

Helmut Weiß¹



The most intensive impulses to deal with intercultural issues I have received through encounters with people from other cultures. These encounters have challenged me and made me look for answers as to how I can deal with strangers and foreigners in a sensitive, understanding and open way personally and in my work as a pastor and supervisor. They have encouraged me to see people in a more differentiated way, to enjoy their diversity and to show more respect for them. They have strengthened my belief that God has many faces and works in many ways. The encounters with people from other cultures are often joyful, sometimes painful and hurtful for me. I always reach my limits. In my encounters with strangers I have learned humility and modesty like nowhere else.

Intercultural encounters - and thus intercultural care and counselling- live from telling stories. Intercultural pastoral care is narrative pastoral care. In stories of encounters, events and

¹ Helmut Weiß is founder of the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling and since 1995 its president.

This article was published in German in the book “Handbuch Interkulturelle Seelsorge” in 2002 with the title: “Die Entdeckung Interkultureller Seelsorge – Entwicklung interkultureller Kompetenz in Seelsorge und Beratung durch internationale Begegnungen.”

Translation: Helmut Weiss with support of Deepl Translator.

persons, cultural characteristics appear. Through exchange with people from foreign cultures, one becomes aware that oneself and the other is speaking, seeing, hearing and interpreting in a way that is not self-evident. One is asked to pause, reflect and ask with which assumptions and presuppositions we speak, see, hear and interpret. And then the questioning of the other and of oneself begins.

Intercultural encounters - and thus intercultural pastoral care - live from questioning. How does the other person live? Why does he live like this? How does he cope with his everyday life? What gives him pleasure? What drives him? Which questions may I ask without embarrassing him or her? What can he or she understand when I tell about myself? Through questions I show my interest, through questions I expose myself to the other person and show my limitations.

Therefore, I think it is right to describe my approach towards intercultural pastoral care in such a way that I tell about encounters and ask questions. Where I have found preliminary answers, I give them to initiate a conversation. In my narrative and with my questions, I walk along the international Seminars that have taken place since 1986 and which have always posed great challenges for me. These Seminars have finally led to the founding of the "Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling" (SIPCC), which sees itself as a forum for intercultural questions regarding care and counselling.

1 The first "International Seminar" 1986

In 1985, as director of the Pastoral Care (CPE) Center in the Diaconical Institution (Diakoniewerk) Kaiserswerth, I planned the first international Seminar for care and counselling. It was to be a meeting that gave practicing and teaching pastoral workers the opportunity to exchange ideas with each other on an international level. This exchange was already carried out by in several meetings and with a small group, but it seemed useful to broaden the basis for it.

At the same time, political motives were partly responsible for planning such a Seminar. The 1980s were marked by the West-East conflict. Through my annual visits to the Germany Democratic Republic (East-Germany), doing courses with colleagues there, the desire had arisen to overcome divisions and to ask how we could encourage each other to become more competent in exchange and dialogue. It was clear that the respective social and political conditions also shaped the pastoral work. Would it not therefore be necessary to take a closer look at the conditions of different political and economical in order to make them fruitful for the respective pastoral work?

The 1980s were marked by the question of peace, justice and the integrity of creation. Not only the East-West conflict, but also the separation of North and South and the threat to the environment came clearly to the fore. How did pastoral care deal with these problems, could it contribute to them?

The divisions in East and West, i.e. in socialism and capitalism, in North and South, i.e. in wealth and poverty, were essential motives for inviting pastors from different parts of the world to meet, talk and exchange. How can we help people in such a world through care and counselling? How can pastors and believers take on public responsibility in such a world? How can pastoral care and counselling become concerns for political and social responsibility?

The first international Seminar took place from 16 to 20 June 1986 in Kaiserswerth, Düsseldorf. The topic was chosen: *Hope and Wholeness in a Threatened World*. The speaker was Prof. *Howard Clinebell*, who was especially well known for his book *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling* all over the world and in Germany.

On the second day the first conflict arose: Two participants from the Netherlands left the Seminar angry because they expected something different than what was offered now. The speaker found more and more an ambivalent echo: Some were impressed, even enthusiastic, others were disappointed by his explanations. A very important aspect was the bilingual nature of the Seminar, English and German. I had agreed with the speaker beforehand that he should submit his papers in advance so that they could be translated into German. He should then speak in English, others could read the presentations in German. Unfortunately, he did not stick to it, so that translations had to be done all the time, which made some people very impatient.

It soon became clear that the various participants had come with different assumptions and expectations, and these led to tensions. About six weeks before the Seminar began, the Chernobyl reactor accident had happened. Naturally, the Europeans expected the speaker to respond to this. But he reported on a visit to Hiroshima and on his concern as an American about the dropping of the nuclear bomb. In a lecture he explained which steps could be taken by church communities to participate in peace work. In the discussion, however, it became clear that congregations in East and West Germany and the Netherlands have long since been engaged in a variety of peace activities. He stressed that his views were hardly accepted in the USA, but many participants found him 'typically American'.

It was precisely these differences, tensions and disputes that became challenges and thus fruitful moments. His own assumptions had to be checked. What was self-evident for some was foreign or even unknown to others.

2 Language in intercultural dialogue

From the very first moment, language has proved to be an essential element in intercultural encounters. Encounters between people of different cultures are translation work, but this is only partially successful. What are we talking about when we use certain words, and does the equivalent in the other language really mean the same or something else? Women and men who were influenced by the pastoral care movement had different associations with the word "pastoral care" than 'conservative pastors' from Western Germany the FRG or as colleagues from communist countries. And can pastoral care really be translated by "pastoral care"?

To this outside of language, which is already quite complicated and can lead to many irritations and misunderstandings, there is also an inside: Pastoral care does not only take place in conversation, it is conversation. This is an essential characteristic of pastoral care. People come into contact with each other and exchange personal experiences. Language is therefore the main means of communication in pastoral care. In what language does a person communicate when he wants to express his inner self? Which images does he choose for this? Which emotions arise in which contexts, and what words can be found for them? How can pastoral care become language assistance? These questions also arise with people from the same language and experience area. However, they become particularly problematic with

people with different mother tongues and cultural backgrounds. Here it becomes unmistakably clear that pastoral care is translation work, not only of the spoken words, but of the inner and outer life. For this, however, hermeneutics are needed. Which hermeneutics are meaningful and useful for intercultural pastoral care? Could new hermeneutics perhaps even be found to make translation and communication work across cultures possible?

The question of how to deal with language has remained a central point in intercultural encounters, even after years of multiple experience. An example from the year 1999: We sit together with English colleagues to formulate the topic for the Seminar in the year 2000. They propose: Human Dignity, Culture and Health. By health they mean health, well-being, welfare and at the same time the entire health system in their country. They find health a central problem of their work, of daily, social and political life. We as German representatives have great difficulty in getting involved in health, as we cannot find a word in German that covers all these aspects. Our English friends see our hesitation - and interpret it as resistance to get involved with them. It takes time until it becomes clear from what different

Let us listen and talk together.

3 Expansions to the south

Despite the great tensions in the first Seminar in 1986, it had become clear that it was important and good to exchange ideas. However, Prof. Clinebell suggested that in the future, participants from the southern hemisphere should be attracted as intensively as possible. So I decided to place the second Seminar in 1988 under the theme Pastoral Care and Liberation and invite speakers from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Masamba ma Mpolo came from Zaire, Salim Sharif from India and Lothar Hoch from Brazil. Their contributions opened up completely new perspectives for most of those present.

3.1 Pastoral care with the poor

How can pastoral care look like with people who are poor? Therapeutic approaches, as they have been preferred in the pastoral care movement, do not work when people are hungry and threatened by daily violence. The remarks of the colleague from Brazil warned to look for "pastoral care for the lower classes" - especially in the European and German context.

3.2 Pastoral Care and Rituals - Sickness and Health –

Religion in all Expressions of Life

The colleague from Zaire brought healing and liberation together and introduced the listeners to the imaginary worlds of Africa, the fundamental meaning of family and community, to completely different disease patterns such as obsession and to traditional African healing methods, which are mainly based on ritual acts. Again, these remarks were a questioning of own assumptions: that pastoral care is not individualistically oriented and in rare cases takes place in a relationship of two, but in family and clan; that pastoral care becomes therapeutic when it is spiritual; that Africa has a successful tradition of physical and psychological healing and has a ramified network of healers; that pastoral care does not only live from conversation, but especially from ritual acts.

It was also astonishing that the African understanding of health and illness has its very own character. Illness is always connected with disturbances in the social environment or caused by such disturbances. Health can therefore only be created by eliminating the social disturbances. Not only the living are in view, but also the deceased ancestors - they belong to the family and clan. In order to eliminate the disturbances, however, it is necessary to establish peace through ritual acts. We learned further that religion and spirituality permeate all areas of human life. The understanding of the world, man from birth to death and beyond, family and ancestors, everyday life and celebration must be understood and interpreted in a religious way.

3.3 Political methods as a stimulus for pastoral care

The speaker from India took up the political liberation methods of Mahatma Gandhi in India's struggle for independence and showed how these can also be made fruitful for pastoral work. Again an approach that was unusual: political methods for helping also individual people. I was impressed that he spoke of the healing and liberating aura that people must have in order to help. His training, he said, was designed to enable pastors and advisors - male and female - to discover their aura. There were echoes of familiar keywords such as "authenticity" and "genuineness", and yet something resonated here that was difficult for me and others to comprehend.

4 The upheavals in the Eastern Bloc and the Seminar in Groß-Dölln

In the next two Seminars, which took place in the Evangelical Academy in Mülheim/Ruhr, the East-West events again pushed themselves into the foreground. In September 1989, participants from the GDR and countries of Eastern Europe came to the West with the feeling that "something was happening", but nobody had any idea where it would lead. They talked about the living conditions under communism and the difficulties of church and pastoral work, and were eager to learn from the West, as they felt cut off from recent developments in pastoral care. However, it took some time for them to understand roughly what was meant by pastoral psychology and the connection between pastoral care and human sciences. Pastoral care in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania had above all the character of admonition and advice. I had the impression that many in the West found it difficult to take this seriously and appreciate it. Above all, it was almost impossible for the "Ostler" to express themselves in public, i.e. in plenary sessions - except for a few who stood out. How could we help them to give space to their experiences and questions, and to do so as partners?

Intercultural dialogue can only happen if the participants are on the same level. Julian Müller from South Africa expressed this in a later Seminar as follows: In pastoral care I meet the other in the position of "not knowing". I am not an expert to teach and I do not have a 'higher position', but I adjust to my counterpart, I am as open as possible and consider him or her as the person who has many resources. He explained this as a white South African with a history of apartheid and its racist dominance.

How could this be put into practice when meeting colleagues from the East, when it was clear that the Western system, including the Western-influenced pastoral practice, was "more progressive"?

Because the colleagues from the East were relatively reserved and did not dare to speak in public and to bring in their experiences, already in spring 1989 considerations arose to go to the East with the Seminars in order to expose the participants to the situation there and to experience the conditions there. But how should this happen in view of the existing walls? How should about 80 people from all over the world and the FRG get entry visas for the GDR?

And then suddenly the situation was completely different. At the opening of the Seminar in September 1990, a large group from the GDR (Eastern Germany) had arrived, among them the Rostock priest Joachim Gauck, and these colleagues reported on the experiences and lessons learned in the previous months. They told how church activities had contributed to the protest, how the concern for people and for peace and freedom had become political, and how new conditions let the souls of the people breathe a sigh of relief and at the same time let them fear. Joy and disappointment, relief and anxiety mixed, and people from other former communist states complemented and varied. The listeners from Western Europe and from overseas listened spellbound, and long and intensive conversations ensued. However, the friends from the East emphasized again and again: "What it means to live under a communist dictatorship, others can only understand and comprehend in fragments. This system had penetrated all areas and had damaged them in many ways.

At the end of the 1990 Seminar, Klaus-Dieter Cyranka, the director of the pastoral care Seminar in Halle/Saale, who had already helped to prepare the last Seminars, invited the participants to Groß-Dölln, to a conference centre of the Diakonie in the Schorfheide north of Berlin. It was to be a difficult Seminar, full of tension and contrasts.

While in the year before joy about the developments in the GDR still prevailed, now right at the beginning the conflicts between the united Germans broke out. The disappointment of the participants from the East made itself felt in accusations and complaints that the others could hardly deal with. In Hoyerswerda a home for asylum seekers had been set on fire during the Seminar, and there had been deaths. One group wanted us to prepare a resolution to the German Foreign Minister, the content of which the leadership could not support. So there were fierce conflicts between the leadership and the participants. We had always argued as leaders for political relevance of pastoral care, but when it became serious, we could not bring ourselves to take a unilateral position. The leadership felt instrumentalized, the participants concerned misunderstood and dominated.

Also, during the Seminar, a civil war broke out in Zaire. Troops rebelled against the ruler Mobutu, France sent troops to support him. A participant from Zaire followed these activities with particular interest. He was worried about his family and the young people he was looking after in Kinshasa. Very directly and openly, he pointed out that many of Africa's difficulties were due to the division of the continent by the European colonial powers at a congress held in Berlin in 1875 - so very close by - and that we therefore bore responsibility. But how? How could we live up to this responsibility? By helping democratisation, not by supporting corrupt dictators, was his answer. But how could we contribute to this?

At the same time, this Christian colleague brought a problem of his own into a small group: he was soon to take over the chieftain's dignity for his tribe from his father. But for this he would have to take a wife, it was a tribal rule that chiefs had at least two wives. What would we advise him as Christians? That the group was confused is easy to understand. The usual KSA

self-experience methods, where everyone has to find his or her own way, did not catch on. He wanted a clear instruction, and he wanted it to come from the Scriptures. He wanted a solution to the conflict between his own culture and the Word of God. The group could not help him.

5 Marriage, family and gender relations

In 1992 an experiment was to take place. Until then, a small group of leaders, consisting of Pastor Engel-Hiddemann from the Protestant Academy Mülheim/Ruhr, Pastor Klaus-Dieter Cyranka from the Halle/Saale Pastoral Care Seminar and myself, had been looking for topics and working out the structure of the Seminars. The visitors from abroad had to face these topics, which seemed important to us. Now came the suggestion that interested foreigners should suggest a topic. So at the International Congress in Nordwijkerhout in the Netherlands in August 1991, I sat together with a small group from overseas to think about a theme for the following year. Unexpectedly for me, the topic "marriage and family" was actually proposed without much discussion. Marriage and family - that had not been in my horizon at all. What should be important and explosive about it? Of course, the topic was mentioned in pastoral care and counselling; but should we do a whole conference on it?

I returned to the planning group with this proposal - and it caused confusion. We did not get a proper title; we did not know how to organise the Seminar. We told others about this - and there was little response. We experienced what colleagues from overseas had often experienced when they had come to us, namely that these questions and topics were only of marginal interest.

On closer examination, we noticed that the African speakers had always dealt with the topic of marriage and family, no matter what topic they were talking about. We remembered what Daisy Nwachucku had presented the year before about the tensions between the traditional understanding of marriage and family in Africa and the Western influence that massively disturbed this understanding.

Only in the Seminar itself did it become clear that marriage and family are the central issues in traditional cultures and everything else is determined by them. Traditional cultures do not think in terms of "society", they think in terms of extended family, clan and tribe. Sophisticated relationship structures hold the communities together, the different role distributions allow differentiation and division of labour. All this collapses as a result of industrialization and urbanization. The emergence of the nuclear family disrupts the entire social structures or even abolishes them. But this permeates the whole of life: Personal and social relationships, the understanding of oneself as a woman and a man, economic conditions and religious and spiritual understanding are affected. So when family and marriage are at stake, everything is at stake.

It took a long time for us to realize the paramount importance of family and gender roles for the vast majority of people in many cultures. Family is an economic and emotional bond spanning several generations, of a complexity and sometimes an aesthetic that we can hardly comprehend. However, helpful pastoral and counselling work with people from such cultures can only take place if the respective family structures are understood and appreciated. Of course, this also involves seeing how traditional structures can no longer function in certain

contexts. But still, old cultural family rules cannot be thrown overboard, because then a network of reference systems is abandoned - and what remains?

In many societies and cultures, the role of the sexes and gendered life is seen differently than we do. Gender roles are differently distributed and often fixed. This often makes discussion difficult for us because we are confronted with questions about whether our interaction between the sexes is productive or destructive.

Another question arises here: How can pastors who are socially involved communicate with pastors who are not used to thinking "socially"? What does "society" actually mean in intercultural encounters? How can counsellors who propagate emancipation and individuation as the goal of their work communicate with women from cultures whose self-image is threatened by emancipation and individuation?

6 Intercultural pastoral care - first questions and attempts

After several years we had many experiences with people from other cultures. We had experienced that they saw pastoral care and counselling differently and that they were challenges for our understanding and work. But how should we process their contributions practically and theoretically?

Around 1992/1993, in our preparatory circle for the Seminars, we spoke for the first time about "intercultural pastoral care" - without being able to name exactly what we meant by this. It was clear to us that pastoral care had to be "contextual" and thus address the social and political dimensions of the people concerned. We understood: The culture is fundamental to understanding people. We had experienced: the process of mutual understanding between strangers can be painful and rewarding. But we had no theory and no hermeneutics to order our questions and thoughts.

In other disciplines, such as education, we began to develop models for intercultural learning. We studied some of them, but had the impression that the material was of limited use for pastoral care. Many things seemed too "technical" and "methodical" to us. We had the impression that pastoral care had not yet discovered intercultural issues, and we decided to get to work with the modest means at our disposal.

In the 1992 and 1993 Seminars, Professor Liesel-Lotte Herkenrath-Püschel, who had been participating in the Seminars for quite some time, accompanied the leadership team as a consultant. She was responsible for international relations and conferences in the German Society for Pastoral Psychology and was very much involved in pastoral theology in Africa through the publication of books by African authors. Mrs. Herkenrath-Püschel went through the sessions with us and asked again and again how we saw the processes that had taken place, which were the personal and which were the cultural factors that played a role. It was not easy for us to keep these levels apart. When in the plenary the German and Western European participants argued and Eastern European and Asian women and men were silent, did this not have to do with their reticence, which they would give up in the course of time? But when this did not happen "of its own accord", the idea arose of giving these "minorities" priority in discussions. When the leadership brought this in, the - justified - accusation came up that this would reinforce cultural superiority and inferiority.

We had recognized how much the personal and cultural levels were intermingled and interdependent, but at first we found no means of distinguishing them helpfully. In informal encounters, in one-on-one conversations and in small groups, this was usually not so dramatic, since one could tell each other and it was clearer who was in the position of the speaker and the listener at that moment. Conflicts broke out in the plenary because less was told, but instead statements and statements were made again and again - just as it happens in public.

When conflicts broke out, we asked colleagues from other cultures - from Africa, for example - how they resolved conflicts in their culture. They told us, but it hardly led anywhere, because the conditions for this were not given in the Seminar. The resolution of a conflict in Africa is done according to orders and guidelines: Certain persons have the authority to call the participants together; who is allowed to speak and when is clearly regulated; the persons involved in the conflict accept the instructions of the authorities. It would be illusory to install such procedures for a plenary event. But how should we create the conditions in the Seminar for different cultures to have a fruitful exchange in the plenary - in public, that is?

We designed plenary sessions to highlight cultural differences. In culturally heterogeneous small groups, experiences on specific issues were to be exchanged, which were then to be reflected upon again in the plenary session as a whole. But this was only rarely successful - as it is usually not very stimulating when group experiences are reported again in the plenary. We thought about what image we could find for these sessions in the plenary without lectures. We invented the "market" and called the plenum "Intercultural Forum". But when in the first session of a Seminar the leadership of spoke of the forum as a kind of "market", an Indian stood up and expressed his displeasure: "marked" reminded him of "free market", and it was a disaster for India; he could not get involved in such a picture here in the Seminar. Nobody had expected such a reaction during the preparation. Roman, medieval and African markets with their colourfulness and diversity had been thought of there, and public speech, not imperialist world economy.

From year to year we continued to work on the Intercultural Forum. It has become a trademark of the Seminars. At present we have formulated for the 2000 Seminar in London:

The Intercultural Forum serves the reflection of cultural self-perception and perception by others. In doing so, it is also primarily about own images and prejudices. The experiences of cultural differences, similarities and similarities should not only be experienced but also addressed, made public as far as possible and brought into an intercultural dialogue. The expansion of mutual perception has the following learning goals:

- to open oneself to questions concerning one's own and other cultures;
- to strengthen mutual cultural respect and appreciation;
- to encounter foreign cultures more fearlessly and to live tolerance;
- to form community with different and opposing imprints;
- to work more consciously with different cultural patterns in their own pastoral and counselling work.

The following attitudes are important for these learning goals: willingness to listen actively and speak openly / mutual appreciation / patience with each other and courage to endure tensions / willingness to get involved with strangers / to bring in one's own personal, cultural

and spiritual imprint and take responsibility for it / to appreciate successful steps towards understanding.

In intercultural dialogue it is important to tell each other stories about yourself and also how you perceive others. These stories will be about good and painful experiences, about the joy of meeting and the fear of meeting strangers. It is also important in intercultural dialogue to ask questions and to listen in order to gain new insights. In the Intercultural Forum the working method will be to tell each other about intercultural experiences and to explore the following questions:

- What did I learn?
- What are the cultural backgrounds for my experiences and learning?
- Could the insights gained be fruitful for your own pastoral work?

The question of cultural self-perception and the perception of others continues in the reflection groups. For this reason, they are to be filled with members from different cultures. Questions and impulses from the reflection groups can be brought to the next forum.

7 Questions of economy

Questions of economics occupied us increasingly in the Seminars, the more colleagues from overseas countries participated. They described how they provided pastoral care and counselling in the face of poverty and oppression. I will never forget a lecture by Professor Ronaldo Sathler Rosa from Sao Paulo in Brazil, who spoke about his work with domestic servants and cleaners at a university. Since there was no other time, men and women from this shift met at night between 11 p.m. and midnight in a group of 8 to 10 p.m. to share what was on their minds: how difficult it was to get the children through; that the man had disappeared; that public transport did not go to where they lived. Mr. Sathler Rosa explained how helpful and strengthening this round was for the participants. He hardly intervened at all - it was a great help to these women and men that a Doctor took them seriously. Mr. Sathler Rosa is a professor of practical theology. He sees his task in improving the living conditions for people. On his initiative, various social projects have been set up in his home town, including an aid project for street children. He wants to move away from "pastoral care" to "pastoral action".

But the colleagues from the south of the world did not only talk about their pastoral activities. They showed very clearly how much a counselling and therapeutic pastoral care in Western Europe and North America remains tied to a relatively rich middle class. But they have to deal with masses of poor and underprivileged people, even if they themselves belong to the middle class in their country. They urged that the conditions of the economy be put on the agenda of pastoral care and counselling - and of our Seminars. So we gave the 1993 Seminar the title: Economy and Violence - Challenges for Pastoral Care.

A priest from Malaysia reported about the big Japanese companies exploiting the jungle in the tropics. He had fought against deforestation in a village in Malaysia with the inhabitants, but was then threatened by his own government. That is why he went to the Netherlands to write a doctoral thesis on environmental destruction in his home country. Is that pastoral care what

this priest did? Is it political action? In any case, he had tried to strengthen and empower people to stand up for themselves, their rights and their livelihood. But was it not nostalgic to leave the villagers in their traditional way of life? How long would they be able to live like this? Would it not be more important to prepare them for the new realities of a global economy? In the discussions, it became clear what conflicts pastoral care enters into when it is engaged in public concerns.

George Euling came to the Seminar from the central highlands of Papua New Guinea. He was pastor in a gold mine, working as a "work pastor" so to speak. About ten years before, the people there were still very much shielded from hunting in the traditional way. Then Australian companies had discovered gold and started to mine gold in open-cast mines with heavy equipment. Within a few years everything had changed. Now the inhabitants lived in huts with corrugated iron, now the hunters bought tins in the shops, now some children went to school, others hung around at home. The previous order was destroyed at a stroke, new ways of life were imported. The land, which had belonged to the whole tribe and was sacred to them, had been handed over to the mining company. He had received compensation for this, but it was small, while the profits of the company increased enormously. The whole land was contaminated, the fish in the river died. Father Euling had been hired and paid by the mining company to look after the local workers and villagers. But how should he act? He could not support the behaviour of the mining company because he saw the consequences for the people. Didn't he then have to leave this service? Or should he work towards improvements in society?

After this Seminar we heard from him: He had gone home and worked with Australian lawyers to obtain a much higher compensation sum in a lawsuit. He had also worked to improve living conditions by drilling wells. And he had introduced regular consultation hours where people could come to him to tell him their grievances. He called this his counselling centre. He had learned in the Seminar how important it is to take people with their individual concerns and needs seriously and to listen to them. He had reported that in his culture the person in authority (elders of the tribe or in the church, pastors, teachers etc.) give advice and instructions because they know the problems of the people. But this would not apply to him in the new situation. Often, he would not know what the locals were doing, especially since he came from another part of the country. The advice in a small group of the Seminar, to listen to the people with their worries and needs, he had implemented in his own way. I was happy when I heard about these developments and learned what our intercultural exchange could achieve. And something else became clear to me: Intercultural pastoral care lives from giving and taking, from mutual encouragement.

These examples show that in some circumstances it is not helpful to draw boundaries between care and action and between pastoral care and public action. These examples show that a "therapeutic" understanding of pastoral care can even be harmful in some circumstances. The aim here is truly not to heal people's shaken souls, but to create living conditions in which they can bear the shocks. Pastoral care has to face up to certain interests which are very powerful: economic interests of corporations whose shareholders all over the world ask for profit; political and economic interests of the government which obtains foreign exchange through the export of gold; interests of machine companies which want to sell heavy

equipment; interests of workers from all over the world who want to earn well. How to deal with them?

Intercultural pastoral care always raises the question of values. For in intercultural exchange different values become visible. Intercultural pastoral care therefore includes ethical issues. However, it cannot be a matter of imposing one's own values on others, but rather of looking for ways in which those affected can make decisions and resolve conflicts. Often our colleagues from overseas have answered the question of what we can do here in Europe by saying, "Make sure that economic imperialism is limited in your country. European and German companies and banks operate worldwide, not always to promote the interests of the people there. They have reminded us to become pastors with a critical conscience when it comes to economic power.

8 "Everything is breaking down"

A lasting highlight in the history of the International Seminars is for me the first Seminar outside Germany in 1994 in Prague (Pastoral care and counselling as a response to social and cultural changes in values). It had been difficult to find cooperation partners in Prague. But it was possible to win over the OED in the Czech Republic with its director Dr Karel Schwarz. It was not easy to secure funding and find a suitable meeting venue. It was not easy to prepare the content of the Seminar with the Czech group. And also, the beginning was a shock: on the first day of the Seminar my car was stolen from the parking lot of the conference venue.

But still, there were days filled with energy and many impulses for the future. The whole group learned how much had collapsed for the people from the former communist countries and what fears and energies this released. Dr. Karel Schwarz used interviews to introduce us to the change in values in Czech society before and after the "gentle revolution". But he also reported on the disappointments of people who had hoped to become rich faster, that the political system would change faster. And the other colleagues from the "new federal states" of the FRG, from Poland, Romania and Hungary contributed their experiences, hopes and frustrations. But how should pastoral care work under these circumstances? How could it give hope? Which change of values should it support?

But another question came up: How can pastoral care and counselling be built up in churches which, due to communist regimes, had previously been limited to church services and where public activities were tolerated only to a very limited extent? Counselling and therapeutic activities were started in Prague, especially in the Diaconia. It was clear, however, that the Church had to become much wider and more pastoral if it wanted to play a role in society and be involved in the questions and needs of the people. So our Seminar became an impulse to ask how pastoral care in post-communist states could be organized and how it could be brought into the consciousness of church and society. Little by little such organisations were being worked on in the Czech Republic and in other Eastern European countries, and here and there the International Seminars were able to provide inspiration for this. They have thus helped to promote a network of pastoral care in Europe.

Jan Urban, a dissident of the seventies and eighties and a television journalist, told of his support for the victims in former Yugoslavia. His lecture was a highlight for many participants. He told stories of war and

torture victims and made it clear that those who could work most helpfully with these victims were those who had been victims themselves and who had gained hope despite their traumatic experiences. It was not "professional" helpers who were the most important contact persons for the victims, but people with experiences of suffering. His deep humanity, formed by a biography of his own persecutions, was a great stimulus for us pastors and counsellors to ask about our humanity and to cultivate it.

The last lecture was given by Dick Thielemann from the Netherlands: a plea for us to perceive the secular situation in Europe and to design new forms of pastoral care in this situation - pastoral care that is above all oriented towards humanity. His remarks then prompted us to plan a Seminar on pastoral care and counselling in the post-modern world for next year.

The Seminar in Prague was a great success. It was important that it was successful despite all adversities and that we were encouraged to continue with the international work and to give it a new organisational foundation.

9 The founding of SIPCC and the expansion of intercultural activities

On October 17, 1995, the founding meeting for the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling - SIPCC took place in Düsseldorf. Thus, the basis was created for a new formation and expansion of the work. From now on, in addition to the annual Seminars, one- or two-day consultations on theory formation were held every year, publications were issued (a series of publications) and study trips were organized. In addition to the board, the planning group for the preparation of the Seminars was expanded and a

Editorial group for the publications formed. The circle of employees grew and became international.

SIPCC was founded during the 9th International Seminar on "Pastoral Care and Counselling in Postmodern Times - Images of Man and Life Stories in Different Cultures and Religions". For the first time we addressed the question of how to evaluate the fact that we live in a world that is becoming more and more differentiated in all fields. There is simply no longer the one "grand narrative", the one binding view of things, but manifold viewpoints from different perspectives. The participants felt differently: for some, a world with so many options was uncanny, for others it had a liberating effect. And we noticed that these feelings are by no means only individual, but strongly cultural. There are cultures in which cultural and religious differentiation has a long tradition and is taken for granted; there are others that view difference anxiously. In some countries - such as the USA, Great Britain or Singapore - access to an intercultural approach to pastoral care and counselling is much more natural than in Germany or Eastern European countries.

9.1 Beginning of an interreligious dialogue

In 1995 Buddhists came to the Seminar for the first time, from Thailand. This had an intensive and long-lasting effect. A Buddhist monk held a workshop on spiritual healing and offered meditations. It was interesting to see how this holy man created an aura around him and impressed with it. He was not allowed to be touched, women were not allowed to sit next to him, he was only allowed to eat at certain times and had to follow purification rites. It became especially difficult when he caught a cold and had to be cared for - and because women had

to let themselves be touched. In any case, I was astonished to see how clear and determined attitudes and beliefs were lived out here without restricting others.

Two years later a small group went on the first study trip of SIPCC to Thailand to learn and experience original and traditional healing methods and also to visit the friends who had come to Germany. This trip opened up new perspectives for me on how healing can happen and how people with completely different ideas about people and the world can work. I experienced how mediation, massage and healthy food helped a paraplegic man to become more mobile, or how a Buddhist monk with meditation and guidance healed drug addicts and frightened people and solved marriage problems.

9.2 The meaning of the world of spirits

In the 1995 Seminar, Dr. Robert Solomon from Singapore gave an important lecture on pastoral care in the Asian context. He spoke about the understanding of spirits, which is very pronounced in Asia and other cultures and is becoming increasingly important, especially in Christian communities. More and more pastors and church members are resorting to exorcism, even in modern Singapore. But is this pastoral care? What are we supposed to do with it? In any case, the "spirits and powers" ask the question of what people are captured by and how they can be set free. What significance such questions have for us in pastoral care and counselling, or whether we can dismiss them without further ado, requires a great deal of debate and discussion.

I do not need to outline the content of this Seminar and the following Seminars, they are available in the booklets of the series Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling, which was started in 1996. I would like to mention, however, that the discussion about the self-conception of intercultural pastoral care has now gained momentum, especially through the consultations. A highlight in this respect was certainly the 1998 consultation in Lakitelek, Hungary, where Emmanuel Lartey presented his book *"In Living Colour"*, which deals very intensively with pastoral care and interculturality. It was the first time that a pastoral theologian from Africa directly intervened in the discussion on this topic, after it had been conducted by the North American colleagues in a literary way until then. Emmanuel Lartey takes a detailed look at the groundbreaking book by David Augsburger *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures* and develops a pastoral hermeneutic from liberation theology.

10 Disputes on the subject of violence

The next three Seminars dealt particularly intensively with the topic of violence. During the Seminar in Ustrón (Poland) in 1996 we visited the former concentration camp Auschwitz. These were very moving moments to walk through this place of horror and murder with people from very different countries and to feel their closeness. Of course, there were questions about perpetrators and victims, about guilt and forgiveness, shame and remorse, and we were all able to speak and share with great seriousness and openness. Stories of injustice, oppression, expulsion and death from many countries of the world were partly told in a very personal way, at the place of the crime without example the omnipresence of sin and death became present. In a service at the end of the day full of upheavals, we joined hands - a sign that people from different parts of the world had done and could do pastoral care for one another in the face of past and present violence.

The next consultation in 1997 with Prof. Dr. James Poling from Chicago was entitled Traumatization and Healing. Jim Poling has worked and published extensively in the field of rape and pastoral work with the perpetrators, and has taught us how important it is not to release the perpetrators from their responsibility for their deeds under any circumstances, especially for pastoral reasons. However, this means a very intensive emotional confrontation, because it is also about working on one's own contempt towards the perpetrators, in order to be able to endure their self-loathing with the perpetrators and, in the best case, to overcome it to some extent. The Seminar that followed this consultation dealt with the theory of the cultural anthropologist René Girard on the emergence and overcoming of violence. We tried to make his thoughts fruitful in order to understand, also for pastoral care, how violence arises, how it comes about that very specific persons or groups are made victims, and how it becomes possible to overcome violence.

In the 1998 Seminar in Hungary, the hosts introduced us to their history of oppression and fragmentation - and set stories of hope against it. How can pastoral care deal more clearly with violence and work against violence? This is one of the most important questions of intercultural pastoral care.

11 A first definition of intercultural pastoral care and counselling

The questions of how to understand interculturality and how to describe intercultural pastoral care have been frequently discussed in Seminars and other meetings. The planning group has now formulated the following:

Interculturality

- refers to encounters and exchanges between cultures - while preserving their own cultural identity;
- perceives and appreciates the cultural diversity of people, peoples and groups - which is particularly important in times of globalisation and cultural levelling;
- recognises that people are equal in many respects - and therefore works to overcome racist, sexist and other inhuman attitudes;
- understands human behaviour, attitudes, convictions and religious beliefs from the respective historical and spatial contexts of life (contextuality);
- challenges to acknowledge strangeness and to conduct a dialogue with strangers;
- reveals the extent to which people, cultures and peoples influence each other - and forces us to critically question our own lifestyle;
- encourages people from other cultures to meet people from other cultures in their own neighbourhood with less fear, less prejudice and more help;
- sees every single person as an unmistakable person with his or her own dignity.

Intercultural pastoral care and counselling

- combines interculturality with religious truths, Christian faith and psychosocial insights;

- helps people working in pastoral care, counselling, therapy and other helping professions to combine their professionalism with their cultural identity;
- develops attitudes and methods to offer life support to people from different cultures in a competent and professional way.

However, intercultural pastoral care and counselling is probably to be taken even further:

- It is about competent pastoral care with people from other cultures - and for this we need a lot of private tutoring in Germany.
- It is about discovering the diversity of "cultures" and milieus in our own environment - for example the life worlds of young people, of members of the social "underclass", of people who are strongly challenged in their jobs and many others. Pastoral care and counselling need differentiation and diversity in terms of content and methods in order to be able to be helpful for people of different backgrounds in different situations.
- It is a matter of perceiving and accepting how pastoral care, counselling and help for people is practised in other cultures and religions - and much of it questions our practices and methods and encourages us to consider new things in our context.

In any case, in pastoral care and counselling with people from other cultures and milieus, we need new perspectives on a whole range of issues such as language, family, the role of the sexes, authority, the world of work and economic conditions, violence, values, religion, health and illness, as these are very diverse.

12 Intercultural pastoral care and counselling - a "psychocultural" view

Intercultural pastoral care needs "new eyes and ears" for the traditions and values from which people live and how they relate to each other.

to deal with it. Christoph Morgenthaler writes in his book *Systemic Pastoral Care* under the heading *Individual People and their Systems*: "Systemic pastoral care is not about letting the individual person merge into the system, nor is it about seeing and thinking of the individual as unrestrictedly autonomous in his systems. I would like to adopt this view for an intercultural pastoral care: It will be a matter of developing a psycho-cultural perspective for pastoral care and counselling and of becoming sensitive to the cultural contexts in which people live and by which they are shaped. Only then will they be appreciated, and only then can they be supported accordingly. But this view is connected with theological insights, namely

- that the image of the incarnate God shows itself in the women and men, the children and old people, the laughing and crying people of all cultures, and that we can and should become neighbours to them,
- that God can only be recognized and believed in and through culture and that it is therefore necessary to ask the question about God and culture again and again, and
- that God has a cultural effect on a kingdom where the fullness of life is given space and time.

A mixture of the layers and interrelationships that became apparent:

An exchange of gifts in conjoint experiences

Klaus Temme¹



We have escaped like a bird from the fowler's trap. The trap broke, and so we escaped.

Ps 124 7.

In the following I would like to collect some of my memories and present my knowledge and also my interpretation of processes.

With these remarks I think it is good to distinguish two phases of these developments.

The initial phase I would like to call the *piggybacking* period.

A development of ideas happened and - to stay in the picture - it was transported in a backpack from place to place/conference to conference and was thus further developed and unfolded, while the person carrying the backpack was different in each case, i.e. concretely, at different institutions with different persons and decision-makers than the circle of people who carried the development of ideas and brought it forward.

The other phase is then the *phase since the founding of the association*, where the people who carried the ideas and developed them further were the same people who made the decisions and set up the structures, so to speak as 'free entrepreneurs' in matters of pastoral care.

1.) Piggyback time

Before the first Seminar started, there was the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)-Center 'House Rainbow', which the then director Dr. Ferdinand Schlingensiepen had set up in the Kaiserswerth Diakoniewerk (diaconical institutions' group). As he thought at the beginning of the eighties, as an appropriately associated institution to promote pastoral care training

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within a diaconal work. He had brought in Pastor Weiß to Kaiserswerth years ago as a supervisor in order to establish and lead this CPE centre and to conduct CPE courses there.

Then in 1986 there was the moment when the Kaiserswerth diaconal institutions celebrated their 150th anniversary. Each department of the Diakoniewerk was given the opportunity to hold representative events as an anniversary contribution.

This CPE-Center 'House Rainbow' was then the host for such a representative event, which at the same time had something of an experiment in itself, namely to hold an international Seminar comparing CPE training-practice and pastoral care practice. The first intention was to specifically include a comparison between Western European countries and Eastern European countries, but also with the aim of making such a comparison worldwide.

It was about international sharing of ideas and practices and experiences. The structural, logistical background of the Seminar was that there was an office and an associated administrative staff and that because of the anniversary there were also funds available. Looking back, I consider this setting for the Seminar a great gift!

Helmut Weiß was able to invite Howard Clinebell as keynote speaker. There were also many other guests who came by other means and made up a colourful mixture of this conference. There were not only Dutch and West Germans, but also many participants from other countries, especially from the northern hemisphere.

At this Seminar something happened which I see as the starting point for the development of ideas up to the foundation of the association. I would like to call this the *Clinebell critical incident*.

Howard Clinebell had come to the Seminar to talk about healing and wholeness in a very fragile and vulnerable world. He felt predestined, not only because of his outstanding knowledge and skills and his long experience in training, as he then had summarized it all in his wonderful book „Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling“, but also because he had already emphasized the connection between pastoral care and social responsibility within the USA and had founded the international pastoral care givers' network for social responsibility (= IPCNSR).

He then talked a lot about the dangers of nuclear power in both the civil and military sense. He himself, however, had probably not really grasped the historical moment for us Europeans in East and West, or at least not understood in the dimension that the Chernobyl catastrophe had hit us very deeply, both existentially and physically, in the weeks before the Seminar, as a transnational event, namely the suffering from the radioactive fall-out rain after the nuclear catastrophe. We West Germans, experienced in anti-nuclear demonstrations, felt that we were the better experts and thus could hardly bear some of his comments.

The Seminar almost came to crash and at a critical point a plenary session was moderated by Heije Faber from the Netherlands, one of the European CPE 'father-figures'. This session managed to bridge these critical moments on the middle day of the Seminar.

However, the Seminar as a whole was very much welcomed by the participants and the whole event and the dynamics of the Seminar made a deep impression and aroused a great deal of curiosity, so that the desire to repeat or continue such events was very clear.

In the follow-up work, some of those involved in the planning and some of the participants were very much interested in understanding why this crash occurred between the revered author and teacher and practitioner of pastoral care from California and our Western

European or Federal Republican experiences with the nuclear disaster, and what it was all about.

It took some time before it became clear that we had to learn to pay attention to cultural differences.

In developing the follow-up to this incident, there were also suggestions from other quarters.

I would like to mention here two persons, each of whom contributed in their own way to this strand of reflection.

From the very beginning of the Seminar planning there had been a contact with Liselotte Herkenrath-Püschel, professor of practical theology in Bayreuth, who had herself made a great effort to co-develop pastoral training models in Central Africa (Congo-Kinshasa) and who had obviously found ways and means through her faculty to bring from the very beginning also persons from there to Germany and then also to bring them into the Seminars.

Through this work she had already begun to take cultural differences into account and to include the aspect of interculturality in the consideration of pastoral situations or training situations.

Excursus: Money and gifts

I wrote above that the structure of the Diakoniewerk made it possible to finance the first international Seminar like a gift. When I mention Prof. Herkenrath-Püschel and her possibilities through the faculty, it becomes clear that there were also other ways in which the Seminars in the early days could be financed, so to speak, indirectly.

One of these ways of financing was through the so-called conference fees. They were meant as solidarity contributions in order to be able to finance persons and to enable them to participate, who would not have been able to finance their participation by relying on their own means or their churches or further possibilities of their educational institutions.

The idea of building bridges between the western and eastern parts of Central Europe was, for many reasons, initially very clearly at the centre of attention.

It was underpinned by another idea: a bridge should be built in any case, no matter what the financing possibilities of the partners were!

Or in other words, it should not be the thought "Whoever wants to come to the Seminar should see how he/she gets the payment/financing cleared!" The line of thought should be the other way round: we want to have specific persons at the Seminar who can make important contributions to the proceedings and who can bring in their horizon of experience as their 'treasures'/'gifts' and make them available for the others.

The other person who influenced the transition from the interesting and curious *international* exchange, which perhaps also sometimes was endowed with an exotic attraction, to the realization of the extraordinary importance of the perception of *intercultural* aspects and the perception of cultural differences, was the priest of the Church of England, The Reverend Peter M. Hawkins.

He had lived and worked in India for a long time, had learned several of the national languages of India, had acquired much historical and cultural knowledge and practical experience from his parish work there. After his return to England he worked as a parish priest in a city with a

very high percentage of inhabitants from those Commonwealth States. In addition, the local in- and out-patient psychiatric hospital soon invited him because of his experience.

He then brought a report and case studies from his work to the second international Seminar: it was new to me that he described his work in this clinic as intercultural pastoral care. His descriptions made clear the importance of the perception of cultural difference, as well as the healing help that was provided to the patients through his use of native languages and bicultural knowledge.

This second Seminar was, in my view, further on carried by a wave of curiosity about international exchange and also by the desire to see how such understanding could be further developed even when perceiving differences.

I don't know how it was that time with the financing and the support in the structures of the Diakoniewerk Kaiserswerth. In any case, when the second Seminar was planned, there was still the 'House Rainbow' with its logistical structure, and it was clear that part of the participation fees would consist of a Seminar fee, which was to be used only for logistical and solidarity purposes. The other part related to the costs for board and lodging. In the case of the self-paying participants who were accommodated mainly in the so called "Motherhouse" within the premises of the institution these were acceptable amounts, because both the accommodation costs and the costs for food were kept low by other subsidies.

For another group of participants, mainly foreign participants, a network of friendly families had already been established here, who provided private bed & breakfast accommodation free of charge.

There had been a change in the management of the Diakoniewerk between the first and second Seminar. A young dynamic theological economist or economic theologian had become the director of the institution.

In the new orientation of the ministry he was concerned with "lean production" and "outsourcing" of things that in his opinion did not belong to the program of the Diakoniewerk. One of the measures taken was the closure of the CPE centre House Rainbow at the end of the year.

This information leaked out during the course of the Seminar, seemed like a shock and brought about a somewhat helpless attempt to avert this closure by sending a protest letter to the management committee of the Diakoniewerk. (The list of signatories of this letter read like a who-is-who of the international CPE scene).

The letter was never answered, the centre was closed.

In these disputes the verse came up, which I quoted at the beginning.

But in spite of this, also this Seminar ended with very deep emotions and with even more desire to repeat/continue and to experience similar encounters and possibilities of experience. It, however, then was very clear that something like this would no longer be possible within the framework of the Diakoniewerk.

This first piggyback phase was over.

In the meantime, there had not only been a private network for overnight accommodation facilities and overnight stays, but also a network of private donors had been built up through private initiative, who, however, always had to be recruited anew with specific requests. This

continued to be successful, but there was a correspondingly high proportion of preparatory work for a particular Seminar - each time both hopeful and daring at the same time!

During this time around the second Seminar, contacts were established with the Evangelische Akademie of the Protestant Church of the Rhineland (EKiR), which was then still located in Mülheim/Ruhr. There was a department for international affairs and feminism. The colleague Brigitte Engel-Hiddemann was a good bridge-builder to dock the Seminar structure and the Seminar's basic ideas to the work of the Evangelical Academy in this next step. (By the way: the Seminar planning and leading committee that year 1989 consisted aside from Helmut already of Brigitte and, a very exceptional move by that time, our colleague Klaus-Dieter Cyranka, Supervisor and director of the CPE-Center in Halle/Saale in the old GDR!!)

Structures, as I have mentioned so far, were continued there: this institution of the Protestant Church in the Rhineland for ongoing adult education was able to provide accommodation and meals at low, subsidized prices. There were state subsidies through various ways of promoting adult education. There were also ways and means to provide certain contributions for plane tickets.

But apart from that there were no limits to the creativity of the fundraising for us. For example, for years there have been so-called American auctions on the last evening, the 'social evening', in order to 'raise' more money from the participants.

In this transitional phase of a new docking with an institution, it had become clearer that the idea of *combining internationality and interculturality was formative* and clear for these Seminars.

It had also become apparent that the intention of sharing between the participants and their living and working situations would have to be clearly and consciously expanded in some respects:

Firstly, not only to work on the exchange between central Western and central Eastern Europe, but to consciously add North-South exchange to the East-West exchange.

On the other hand: the exchange between the different fields of work around pastoral care should be promoted more clearly among the groups of participants. Persons who worked as trainers in the field of pastoral care should meet teachers of practical theology in the field of pastoral care. Ordained pastoral workers in full-time or part-time pastoral care positions, with or without additional qualifications, should exchange ideas with colleagues from general church work, and all those who are not ordained should exchange ideas with volunteers who work in pastoral care, again with or without additional qualifications.

Last but not least, there should also be an exchange with colleagues from related fields, such as follow-up social work, psychological counselling or psychotherapy and corresponding research.

This intention was initially implemented in Mülheim and has been pursued ever since.

In the early 1990s, this *bundle of de facto lean production and outsourcing* also came to bear at the Academy in Mülheim, although the reasons for the restructuring were theoretically justified differently. The profile of the Evangelische Akademie now was to focus on the civil engagement of the churches in the field of laborers' worlds and social laws and on co-operation in social-ethical questions - and the fields of international affairs and feminism were affected by it.

There came a new head of department, a colleague from South Korea. With her there was then also still a shorter cooperation, but the basic structure, namely that the Seminars ran as Academy conferences, then broke up bit by bit.

A new way was then found to hold meetings there as guest conferences, but it was clear that the discounts for in-house meetings no longer applied and that financing would have to be arranged differently.

It became clear for the second time how a piggyback packing system, as it were, could not be continued.

A small group of people around Helmut Weiß then began to look creatively and, in a certain sense, relatively freely for other ways to provide support for a Seminar or to structure such support.

In these transitional phases, there was cooperation with the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für entwicklungspolitische Bildungsarbeit und Publizistik (ABP = Working Group for Developmental Education and Publicizing), which was at that time located under the umbrella of the Church Development Service (Kirchlicher Entwicklungs-Dienst - KED) of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD). Through this cooperation and with the colleague there, Wolfram Walbrach, new possibilities arose to bring participants, especially from Southeast Asia and India, to the Seminars.

The ABP's guidelines were very clear: participants who were invited as eligible persons within the framework of the ABP's programs should stay in Germany for three weeks. This time should have three functions. On the one hand, the guests were to gain general experience in Germany as general impressions of our country and our church work, on the other hand, they were to have the opportunity to participate in further training of a specific kind for their own work at home. And thirdly, they should also be available for educational work on development policy in church committees, church communities or schools.

These conditions led to the fact that the group of interested persons, which had formed around the international Seminars up to then, had to consider how the requirements could be fulfilled in each case.

I had already written about bed & breakfast networks and networks of donors. At that time there was also a network of people who were able to provide a space of experience for participants of the ABP program in their own church district or community environment, or to create the organizational structures where the ABP people themselves could report about their home country and their churches and experiences.

Once there was a program to get to know Germany, which is deeply remembered by the participants and myself.

With a VW bus full of ABP people and myself as driver, we visited Lutheran cities in the area of the then already former GDR (German Democratic Republic). Klaus Dieter Cyranka with his connections had prepared this trip (places, accommodations, meals, local guides and colleagues for discussions) in the best possible way. On this bus trip there were so many informal moments of sharing life stories and practical stories that one can hardly imagine.

The whole event of this trip became very important to me symbolically, because similar dynamics were also encountered again and again in the other actions in the context of the pre- and post-work of the ABP people around the Seminars. A lot of community feeling, life-sharing, practice-sharing and faith-sharing simply happened there. In this "construction", the

money of the ABP and the life experience of the participants formed a happy interplay in exchange.

After all, in the early years and around the mid-nineties there was already a large group of people who knew each other relatively well through repeated participation in Seminars and through such experiential actions, who built trust and continued to support the development of these ideas.

At that time, it was not yet conscious for me (for all of us?) that this circle was and would remain a living, learning community. But the beginnings were already clearly set in this respect.

During this transitional phase, the first attempts were made to leave the 'comfort zone' of West Germany with the Seminar itself. Thus, there was the first and very adventurous Seminar on the territory of the former GDR in the huge forests of the Schorfheide north of Berlin.

In the preliminary planning, a Seminar in East Germany had already been planned before German unification took place, even more so before the thought that the Soviet bloc would collapse seemed to be a humanly possible idea.

We have continued this line in the two-year rotation between Seminars in Germany and Seminars in one of the former Soviet bloc countries.

Such border crossings had an indirect/direct consequence, not to say an advantage, when it came to planning the Seminars, especially the financing of the Seminars! The price difference between West German (West European) meeting facilities and facilities in the area of the former Soviet bloc countries was so great that when there were offers from the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary to go there with the Seminar, these offers were happily accepted!

At preparatory meetings and at the Seminars themselves, enormous distances had to be covered, at that time mostly with vehicles.

But also, here there was again and again this strange mixture of experience levels, as I have described above during the visit of the "Luther-cities" and how they were actually to the advantage of the development of the concept and finally also led to the foundation of SIPCC.

For reasons of the ABP requirements and for cost reasons, we had foreign participants come to Düsseldorf. Here their stay already started with small conferences and events and with the help of the networks described above. To the Seminar locations near Prague or in the south of Poland or in the south of Hungary, there were then hours of driving in private cars or even in convoys to get there within a single day or even in trips with overnight stays to keep the travel costs as low as possible.

But what I mentioned above again played a big role, that the experience of this trip and the talking, telling and exchanging in the cars and buses promoted the community experience among the participants.

We have already noticed this somehow, in any case we experienced it joyfully, because very often there were cheerful moods.

In the conception and interpretation of our intercultural work, we then had not yet included it as much as it seems necessary and important to me today when it comes to the *unique selling point* of our association.

It had become very clear, however, that this penetration, combination and mixing of the 3 different levels of our work, the level of the participants' community experience, the level of the most diverse forms of financing and their requirements, and the level of sharing individual life contexts, social/political/social contexts in the home countries and the sharing of wisdom of experience and research in the various areas of pastoral care, have always contributed anew to creative developments.

In a retreat before the Seminar in Strasbourg 2010, members of different committees of SIPCC met in the small monastery of Reinacker in the border area between Germany and France on the French side. Among other things there was a long discussion about the financing of flight tickets and also about the basic question (see above), how it is with the self-participation/self-financing of participants. The position came up again, why these efforts of fundraising etc. would be necessary again and again, if it could be done differently, i.e. if only those persons could participate who could take over and take responsibility for their own financing. In this way, the danger of feelings of dependence among the scholarship holders could be avoided most clearly.

In the end, however, there was great unanimity that the old idea should continue to run its course, namely that people who are important with their experience, their wisdom, their work practice and their theory work should be able to come to the Seminars in any case, should be invited and that the financing should not be on their shoulders.

Klaus Dieter Cyranka, who had always helped from the very beginning with his former CPE centre in Halle/Saale and with possibilities there, brought these discussions to the point that was relevant for all of us: it is about sharing treasures, and we all have to learn to regard the one treasure and the other treasures as equally important ("Sharing of Assets").

On the material side, these treasures are the money matters and financial arrangements etc. and on the non-material side, these treasures are the wisdom of experience, wisdom of faith, practical expertise in pastoral care, the theological-theoretical wisdom with regard to pastoral care, the provision of one's own life story, as well as the communication of one's own life context to the other Seminar participants, to whom this would have remained alien and distant without such communication and to whom these realities would perhaps never have come to mind.

From the very first beginnings, the idea of extreme thriftiness was behind any financial action.

I have already described this with the examples of the long bus transports or the networks for overnight stays above.

On the part of the lecturers, however, this also had the consequence that the principle was valid from the very beginning and, with small exceptions, was also upheld, namely not to pay any fees to lecturers and other Seminar cooperators, but to provide accommodation and food free of charge and, if possible, also to cover flight costs or a share of the flight costs.

At the same time, however, speakers and other staff members were always asked to what extent they could contribute, either to the cost of airfare or to board and lodging. In any case, attempts were always made to make decisions specific to each person. This had the advantage of being able to respond to individual situations. However, it had the disadvantage compared to the other participants that the agreements made were usually not transparent to the outside.

I would also like to highlight the thriftiness aspect in another respect. There were almost no office costs for the whole work before the foundation of the association and also in the whole time of the association. The offices were the workplaces of Helmut and me in our respective homes. Technical equipment was partly reimbursed or directly purchased by the association. Very often there was also a mixed calculation with other agencies or institutions, especially in the area of publications.

In this respect regarding thrift, we have always seen our work as voluntary work alongside our official duties and have in principle made this work available without any expense allowance (except travel expenses).

With the 1994 Seminar near Prague (in cooperation with the Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in the Czech Republic) the situation of development in terms of structures changed significantly.

The Seminar had a very high number of participants and was so deeply moving for all – in the midst of the upheavals in the former Soviet bloc countries- that the desire to continue - at any rate to continue - became unmistakable.

This kind of Seminar with its many possibilities to experience meeting and exchange, was seen as necessary in the feedback from all participants.

Thus, the idea of building up an own supporting structure for these our endeavors became firmly established: A structure that would also ensure freedom of decision and constancy, and that would not be controlled or threatened by other hosting institutions and their institutional philosophy.

II) 1995 - Start of the phase as association

For the group of people who had prepared this Seminar in 1994, and who had already partly supported the Seminars before that, there was only a short time of searching before Helmut Weiß suggested the way to found an association.

The path via the legal form of a registered, non-profit association in Germany seemed to be the most appropriate structure.

In the following remarks I will concentrate only on the one aspect of money and finances.

The legal setup of such associations in Germany, included that a registered, non-profit organization, also was recognized as contributing to the common good of the civil society, and thus was permitted to issue donation receipts in the future.

This applied for and soon granted particular status of the association was based on and constituted by the fact, that it had to be an educational institution with recognizable value for the civil society.

This included the legal requirement that donations then be used exclusively for this purpose of general adult education.

This legal construction was very important for the networks of private donors already existing in Germany and also for church institutions that provided support.

Private individuals were thus able to reduce their own other tax burdens through these donation-receipts, which over the years has been an incentive and a reason for donations in Germany.

The advantage for institutions that gave donations was that they had a permanent partner in the association, whose trustworthiness was firmly underpinned by the fiscal, state examination of its particular status as just described, every three years.

All of this proved its worth over the years to the extent that sources of income were available in two aspects:

On the one hand, this association was now able to collect association fees, which mainly served to finance the general work of the association, but which could also be used in part as solid contributions for the educational goals in general.

On the other hand, the association could receive and certify tax-deductible donations.

Private donations could be estimated with some certainty by the network of donors known to us. Through this channel, but also from the network of institutional donors (such as parishes, cantonal churches, national churches and church districts or other ecclesiastical or diaconal institutions), an average amount of between €8,000 and €12,000 was raised over the last 20 years and could be used as an approximate planning mass for the respective Seminars.

However, there was never any security for these amounts, so that detailed work and fine tracking of donor contacts was always necessary, or, in other words, a relatively large amount of effort was required for this purpose. There have often been thoughts and attempts to change this system. But apart from the creativity in searching for and finding cooperation and financing partners, no idea has come up over the years that would have brought a patent solution, so to speak.

However, there was something on another level which I would like to call a *background security*: Already when the association was registered in the official register of associations at the district court of Düsseldorf, a kind of starting capital was available to secure the first expenses, or rather the first Seminar after the foundation of the association (1996). It fulfilled its function well since then, and helped in crisis situations.

However, this money had its origin in the CPE course work and supervision work of Christa and Helmut Weiß in the 80s. It was initially administered within the framework of the Rhineland Working Group for Clinical Pastoral Care Training (= RAKSA), a local twin organization, so to speak, to SIPCC.

In 1995, after the establishment of SIPCC and its own accounts, a transfer by RAKSA to SIPCC was made possible. We are deeply indebted to our partner RAKSA and Helmut and Christa for this widely unknown event, which I wanted to mention in this context.

With regard to the institutional donors or organizations that have made donations, it has been conspicuous over the years that there have hardly ever been any sources of money available for our purposes that belonged to the decision-making area of pastoral care departments of church institutions.

Pastoral care organizations with a legal structure under association law have supported us - to a great extent, such as RAKSA (see above) or its successor organization RASPUS, as well as the French partner organization AFFSP (Association Française de Formation et de Supervision Pastorale) and the German Society for Pastoral Psychology in the case of a publication.

But with regard to the church and diaconal institutions it is just clear that their (partly very large!) support always came either from diaconal finances, which had the idea of world-wide

diaconal mutual support in the background, or from ecumenical institutions of the mainline churches or ecumenical and missionary institutions in their own sponsorship.

We have become glad and grateful that we have often found open ears in these institutions for our aspect of pastoral care within the respective main fields of work of these other institutions. We think that this has also brought about *mutual fertilization*:

At a conference in cooperation with the United Evangelical Mission in Wuppertal a motto came up in the course of the Seminar discussions and reflections: "pastoral care needs pastoral action and pastoral action needs pastoral care!" – brought forward by Ronaldo Sathler-Rosa and Jutta Beldermann. In my opinion, this motto-sentence is still valid today and must and can be tested again and again and also financially substantiated!

These subjective, very personal impressions that I have described are my view on the way of developing the ideas around "sharing of assets": sharing the treasures with each other and also exchanging such treasures among each other; the treasures on the symbolic level of life experiences, faith experiences and pastoral work experiences and the treasures on the non-symbolic level of providing financial means or other logistical support such as meeting houses and e.g. publication costs.

I have also tried to describe clearly how this detailed work of searching and finding the respective treasures and constructing exchanges took a lot of time.

In the past, this process has been favored by various circumstances, such as – for Helmut and me- the personal professional and financial backings by our respective church employers of, which offered us free leeway in many respects, but mainly the possibility to do a lot of voluntary work in our private time (always with a lot of family help), in addition to our officially assigned obligations.

I cannot imagine such a setting in times of intensified workloads (even within all church and pastoral job spaces), and with the general insecurity of these job spaces.

In this respect I do not know what consequences for the future of structural development in SIPCC can be deduced from my descriptions.

With regard to association-finances, I think that the possibilities under association law with the acquisition of donations and the legal figure of the donation certificate in Germany are still a good basis for support.

The reputation of SIPCC and the contacts to institutions that are willing to make donations are also proven and will perhaps be passed on to the next generation.

The core question for me, however, is the orientation of the association as a whole: if this "sharing of assets" (with reference to pastoral care) is the central level of experience and therefore shapes other specific association goals, then in my opinion the last 30 years have proven to be successful, in so far as the Seminar week itself has been the place and the core of it all, as a lively "learning by experiencing".

How this could be carried on and financed under today's changing workplace and financial conditions is something I dare not imagine.

My dream is still that the Seminars could run over five or six days, so that a group dynamic develops, which makes it possible to learn by experience during this time, and that personal enrichment, professional qualification and also the further development of theoretical approaches emerges from this.

But this is a story that seems to compete with today's need and striving for efficiency in a short time.

I can understand to a certain extent that in the search for job security in the specialized fields of (in Germany so called) 'functional' pastoral care settings, finding external funding plays a major role, and that for this, the efficiency/effectiveness of pastoral care actions must be undergirded as objectively as possible by control data.

For me this seems to be a difficult process - and for me it is in any case a field in which I have no life experience.

The old 'freedom to design' in SIPCC has done me good and I am very grateful to Helmut and many others contributing to setup such freedom!

For all future constellations, I would like to see them open up space for living creativity - supported by well-founded hope, even if all contexts and all normative power of the factual would oppose it!

I always read the old Psalm verse as a promise!



2012 in Krzyżowa /Kreisau, Poland

Human Existence: Priority of Pastoral Care

Notes on the occasion of the 25th SIPCC anniversary

Ronaldo Sathler-Rosa¹



The heaven preaching, the preaching of the goods that wait for us in the other life, apparently did not give many fruits. (Arturo Paoli, 1978, p.71)

The beginning

The year was 1991, August. We were in Noordwijkerhout, Netherlands. The occasion was the 4th Congress of the International Council on Pastoral Care and Counseling. The lectures and other activities were focused on the chosen theme, *Pastoral Care and Context*. During a long walk going from the venue of one of the activities of the Congress to another place I had the privilege of having Rev. Helmut Weiss as my walking and talking companion.

From our conversation, Helmut invited me to join the 6th International Seminar to be held from September 2 to October 1992, at the *Evangelische Akademie Mülheim/Ruhr, Germany*. The theme of the Seminar was *An Intercultural Dialogue on Marriage, Gender Issues, and Sexuality*. Also, I was invited to offer a lecture. My paper was based on my own work with poor people in São Paulo, Brazil, and from the theoretical approach of structural family therapy as presented by the Argentinian psychotherapist Salvador Minuchin (1921-2017). Some

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colleagues who were in that presentation will remember my difficulty with the pronunciation of certain words in English.

However, some colleagues surely remember that my initial statement caused some discomfort. I said “we have been talking too much about God. Let’s talk less about God and do more for the benefit of our neighbors and of our lands.” Of course, I do not remember the exact words. However, that was what I had in mind.

Nevertheless, I should add that as a matter of fact my indirect connections with the Seminar started in 1986. I was living together with my family in Claremont, California, USA finishing up my PhD dissertation. Dr. Howard Clinebell (1922-2005) was my advisor, and we became friends. Howard asked me if we would be willing to stay at his house for a couple of weeks. Howard was invited to be the “Key Note Speaker” of a Seminar at the *Diakoniewerk Kaiserswerth*, Düsseldorf, from June 16 through June 20, 1986. Howard wrote me a post card from Düsseldorf: “Dear Ronaldo and Regina, greetings from Düsseldorf where my Key Note has just concluded. It went well ... The flowers and birds are beautiful here...”. So, we were sort of housekeeping to allow Dr. Clinebell to participate in the 1st Seminar which was the germinal of the SIPCC.

Finally, in October 1995, at the *Diakoniewerk Kaiserswerth*, Düsseldorf, on the occasion of the 9th Seminar, we celebrated the Founding Assembly of SIPCC. Sixty people attended the Founding Assembly. The first elected Executive Committee (1995-1999) was composed of seven members: Rev. Helmut Weiss, Germany, chair; Rev. Wies Blomjous, Netherlands, vice-chair; Rev. Klaus-Dieter Cyranka, Germany, treasurer; Rev. Hilary Johnson, United Kingdom, secretary; Professor Dr. Ronaldo Sathler-Rosa, Brasil; Professor Dr. Ursula Pfäfflin, Germany; and Dr. Jindra Schwarzova, Czech Republic.

Following this short description of the way I first became involved with the Seminars, then with SIPCC I want to reflect on my perception and experiences with the work of SIPCC.

First of all, I could not put aside the growing number of friends that turns out to be an invaluable gift for myself, and I believe for many of the Seminar participants as well as of other activities. Besides our relationships as colleagues in the field of pastoral action, pastoral care, and counseling I have enjoyed the new friendships born from the context of SIPCC, despite the physical distance among the different countries of our “SIPCC friends”.

How do I see SIPCC from a pastoral-theological perspective?

How do I perceive the pastoral-theological contributions of SIPCC as far as the main themes of, especially, the Seminars in the last 25 years? SIPCC has been working mainly on themes which are related to human existence and its main challenges. Even though this is not an academic paper, I would like to select some pastoral-theological elements that shed light on the SIPCC approach to human existence as the focus of intercultural pastoral care.

In contrast to the tendency of protestant pastoral studies, Seminars and congresses which emphasize Christian doctrines, moralism, SIPCC puts great emphasis on the other side of established Christian theologies: human existence “on this side of heaven”, or in a “nut shell”, human life in the midst of socio-historical context, and its circumstances.

In my perception, the classical heritage of “care of the soul” has been taken on by the SIPCC. It has been enlarged, as we can see from the themes of the annual Seminars as stated in a paragraph of the SIPCC Mission Statement: “We commit ourselves to honor, understand and critically develop traditions of doing pastoral care and pastoral action in the midst of interfaith and ecumenical dialogue”.

I would like to share some pastoral-theological reflections that, in my opinion, justifies the choice of the SIPCC to pick up themes that emerge from current socio and cultural context, that is, problems, situations which have affected existence and human relationships.²

Issues of existence are examined in the context of pastoral care of individuals, families, society, political and economic systems. This approach avoids naivete and shallowness in the caring process with people and their problems. The path to real humanization, to human maturity searching for wholeness of being opposes the easy way of “band aid” solutions.

What would be some pastoral-theological elements that justify more attention and priority to issues of existence?

First of all, the theme of human existence is not peripheral in the two testaments. Its relevance comes from Creation and God’s Revelation. According to traditional teaching God’s Revelation is completed through human response. This response happens in the midst of human historical conditions. Creation and Salvation make human existence a field of continuing God’s action aiming at the radical transformation of people and the world. Somehow one can say that human existence has become sacred as a result of Creation, in the first testament, as well as an outcoming of Jesus Incarnation.

Second, it is noteworthy that in the First Testament the Ten Commandments are followed by the social legislations (Exodus 20-23). The hagiographist stresses that God is the Creator of life. Therefore, it is necessary to set up ways of living that contribute to a blessed, peaceful, and just way of living. Furthermore, the messages of the Hebrew prophets addressed political and social issues as elements that could make existence better or worse. Also, Jesus’ message of the coming kingdom of God is all inclusive: the kingdom message is for all, and it demands peace with justice on earth, in order to bring abundant life to human existence.

Third, another factor that justifies concerns with human existence is to motivate people to develop a life that reflect our vocation to become fully humans. We are called to be just, and not small gods or dominated by oppressing powers. It means that the goal is that we become humble and courageous protagonists of our lives without transferring to others, even to God, the task of taking on the world and history as our task. As Jose Miguez Bonino (1924-2012), an Argentinian theologian, once said, to take on history is the hardest task on our shoulders. SIPCC’s contribution to empower people has been through, among other things, teaching pastoral counseling.

² Adapted and summarized from my book *Cuidado Pastoral em Perspectiva Histórica e Existencial*. Uma revisão crítica [Pastoral Care in Historical and Existencial Perspective. A critical review]. São Paulo, 2013.

The message of the reign of God includes the liberation of women and men from any type of bondage. Therefore, to study the meaning of our existence, to explore ways to make human life more meaningful matches the commitment of communities of faith, pastors, and pastoral agents to bring about “abundant life”.

Fourth, in his book *The humanity of God*, Karl Barth (1886-1968) says that the criterion to distinguish what it means to be human is God’s humanity revealed in Jesus Christ. Accordingly, it is not primarily the abstract freedom of human nature. The Good News of the Gospel is that God wants to belong to human gender, and wants to establish an eternal relationship with humankind. The Calcedonian Creed (451) states that Jesus was truly man, coming from a historical and geographical reference, Nazareth.

Fifth, I will rely on the work of Bernard Quelquejeu (1982) to explain a particular element in the theology of Thomas Aquinas: Grace presupposes nature (*gratia praesupponit naturam*). It means that God’s Grace does not suppress, nor destroy. God enhances nature (*gratia non tollit, non destruit, sed perficit naturam*).

The theology of Thomas Aquinas has as a focal point the theology of the Image of God in human beings. There we find distinction, not separation, and the unity of human nature with Grace. Thomas Aquinas thought, according to Quelquejeu analysis, emphasizes that Christianity should have human existence as its central focus. Human beings’ liberty and their own consistence are truly the “subjects of the adventure of grace”. Human vocation does not develop in the abstract but in the midst of the ways of searching for human growth.

Human existence, even though grounded on earth does not exclude a longing for something else. In traditional theology we call it the transcendental, or spiritual dimension. The presupposition here is that human beings inherit a sort of longing for something else. Being a body, humans realize that they are immersed in the field of sensibility, as a “spirit in the world”. As our colleague Daniel Louw says the “experience of God [the transcendent] enables humans to discover the transcending meaning of everyday life, including our work, relationships, and life in the church and world” (LOW, 2008, p. 50). Quelquejeu (1982, p. 95) stresses that every concrete experience becomes something like a “transcendental experience” of God even though God is not explicitly recognized. The longing for the transcendent is hidden in our immanent, existential struggles.

A renewed pastoral agenda: responding to cultural contexts

I want submit to the readers a suggestion of some of the challenges faced by SIPCC in the present as well as in the future. These challenges are aligned with historical ways of doing pastoral care. At the same time, they make evident that they have evolved through the years as new trends in the field.

First, a paradigm shift: from individual care giving to the contextual or church care giving. All of us belong to some sort of web of relationships. These relationships are an essential part of our lives. Life is not full without bonds to others. As has been said, “there is no I without a You”.

Second, to stress theological anthropology as an important resource to aid pastoral care givers to see humans from another academic discipline, together with social and human sciences.

Theological anthropology allows humans to think about their essential vocation in history. Also, theological anthropology allows us to go deeper in the search for the ultimate roots of our existence. Situations such as loneliness, inter relationships, illness, finances and many others are examined from a more in-depth perspective.

Third, to explore ways of doing pastoral care of social systems (Larry Graham). It means to address political, economic, and ecological issues that keep a large portion of people away from such common benefits as food, health, education, housing, and employment. The lack of these generates poverty, violence and forced migration. Particularly, in times of pandemic, it is important to denounce the economic forces that are destroying the natural balance of the earth. This mode of pastoral care is grounded in the messages of the prophets of the First Testament that were taken on by Jesus in the Second Testament. I see this mode of pastoral care as justice-based. It seems to me that a method to do this would be conducted by an institution or a collective of people.

Fourth, to give priority to actions of care. From concrete actions theory building gains “flesh and bone” through reflection and peer discussions. Theory building helps to clarify the goals of particular actions, and their respective motivation. Therefore, theories, even theological theories, which underlie pastoral care are born of situations that pastoral care attempts to respond. After all, “correct ideas do not fall down from heaven” (George Casalis).



Study trip to Brazil, meeting with Archbishop Arns in Sao Paulo



Ronaldo with Miklos (Hungary) and Santa (Indonesia) 2002 in Basel

Green Memories with SIPCC Life

Solomon Victus¹



First Experience in Europe

My Experience with SIPCC friends was an educative and enthusiastic one for the last twenty-seven years. Through Rev. Wolfram Walbrach at the initiatives of Rev. Helmut Weiss in 1993, the first invitation came to me by accident. Because someone they approached first did not turn out. However, my first trip materialized after overcoming many hurdles in India and then Rev. Wolfram Walbrach who received me at Düsseldorf airport who appeared to me as a Jewish Rabbi with his long beard. My stay in his house with the company of Wolfram, Edda and Onindo gave me an idea how European partners live together and manage their family life. Dr. Bastiaan Wielenga, my Dutch mentor lived in India told me 'if you are going to Europe just for one conference, it is a waste' and so he encouraged me to visit some of the institutions and personalities and organisations along with the conference work. Rev. Wolfram was a person gifted with gentle and polite manners deserves many appreciations. Beyond the scope of Inter Cultural Pastoral Care and Counselling (ICPCC) meetings, he took me to several people and places to have discussion and exposures at my special request. My first association with Hans de Boer (Germany), Rev. Peter M. Hawkins (UK), Dr. Michael Chai (Malaysia), Rev. George Euling (Papua New Guinea), Be Rues (Berlin) became unforgettable and inerasable personalities from my mind.

¹ Rev.Dr. Solomon Victus, an ordained minister of Church of South India. Senior Faculty in the Department of Social Analysis of Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai. He had been a regular resource person in SIPCC since 1993 contributing to the discussion in several dimensions.

When I came to the Hall of the venue of the Rhenisch Academy in Mülheim/ Ruhr for the Seminar Inter Cultural Pastoral Care and Counselling in 1993 I felt that I was in a very strange company because I was not trained and qualified to be a pastoral counselor but purely a social analyst with some theological education. The theme of my first Seminar was, "Economy and Violence: A Challenge for Pastoral Care". My first presentation was on "Theology of the Poor: Village work in India." I still remember the first workshop of mine did not impress me well probably because the concept and philosophy of Seminar was still strange to me and my understanding of the theme was not very much in tune with the background of the organisers. I was happy that the workshop of mine was attended by many people along with a Polish couple and Helmut. One afternoon a team of new friends Rev. Peter M. Hawkins, Rev. George Euling, Dr. Ronado Sathler Rosa, and I along with Rev. Klaus Temme went to a mount area as part of the new cultural interaction with the international team. Thus, my contact with Rev. Helmut Weiss and Rev. Claus Cyranka, Rev. Klaus Temme team was started already before to it became a registered organisation as SIPCC in 1995.



The photo includes Rev. Peter M. Hawkins, Dr. Solomon Victus, Rev. George Euling, Dr. Ronado Sathler Rosa, Rev. Klaus Temme

Many of my exposures in Europe, especially in the early periods, were arranged by the friends of SIPCC as well as others greatly widened my horizon. My first visit to Berlin witnessed the broken Wall, Topography of Terror Exhibition, Concentration Camps, Jewish Cemeteries, Anti-Mammon Circle and came back to India with so much burdens, impressions and inspirations. I made use of the trips to visit and interact with many institutions like Dutch Ecumenical Community & Hendrik Kraemer House, Berlin; Gandhi Information Center, Berlin; Giordano Bruno Community, Utrecht which were and are still closer to my heart. Opportunity to stay with the European families gave splendid exposures about the life and culture of different

ethnic tradition of hospitality, reception etc. Many of the experiences and exposures I had with the help of Rev. Wolfram Walbrach and other friends broadened and well as deepened my social analysis perspectives, histories and theories and here are few to mention,

- -Large farming sectors.
- -Information Center for Low External Inputs (ILEIA).
- -Alternative Ways of Farming and Organic Pollution Control Methods.
- -Discussions on European Agrarian Politics
- -Floriculture and its stock market exchange
- -German schooling system
- Historical places connected with Martin Luther's life etc.

When I was invited for the next year conference in 1994, I was bit more confident in my presentations. While I was invited for the third time to the ICPC meeting to lead a workshop, I showed hesitation but I was again encouraged by saying that we need people who understood the ICPC could maintain the continuity of the ICPC spirit. So, I yielded and continued. It happens till today.

Developments in SIPCC

As far as my personal experience SIPCC started with the dimension of essentially interculturality, and then slowly moved into international and today it has come in terms with interreligious. In many senses the transition of emphasis in SIPCC was spontaneous, natural and genuine in finding true meaning of human struggles. Perhaps many may say SIPCC is fully of Eurocentric since it was born and brought up in European context but for me personally it is more than European since it is accommodating more and more Asian, African and North and South American cultural experiences from the time of its inception. The discussions on globalization, migration, climate change and breaking down of family structures enabled us to find the thread like inter-connections of economics, politics, religion, culture etc. It is an ongoing search to find meaning of life. In the process the SIPCC has not lost its saltiness and been proving that it is still intercultural, international and interreligious. Therefore, my interest in holistic understanding and interdisciplinary nature gains more importance with SIPCC.

It is interesting to remember at one point of my interaction at the conference on the question of market created a hot debate. Since I was critical about the process of marketization and its connection with neo-liberal market economy my point of discussion was misunderstood from community aspect of market experiences in Europe. Many confronted me including Mrs. Christa Weiss and they misunderstood me as one who represents state socialism of European Countries. It was the period of fall of Berlin wall and many Europeans were angry with the state socialism and lack of freedom in such situations. The West Germans were highly critical about state socialism of the East German past. Later at one point a small team in SIPCC decided to understand Indian culture and eventually came to interact with me and my institution. They visited my working environment and our Center for Social Analysis of Tamilnadu Theological Seminary too and finally said to me, "Now we understand you why you are talking like this in our conferences." It proved that one has to understand ones word only with his or her life context and cultural situation which is possible through ongoing interactions and openness.

Novelties in SIPCC

One of the fascinating meetings of SIPCC to me was held at Wuppertal in 2001 on the theme, 'Global Economy and Everyday Life.' The reminiscences are still green and very much closer to my heart because of its many personal and collective touching experiences I had during the conference and outside. Surprisingly SIPCC Executive Members organised a few pre and post conference exposures to five Asian and African delegates to get to know more about Germany and her everyday life in order to promote international understanding between First and Third World Nations. The Rev. Klaus Temme led the team and the delegates selected for that were as follows from 26th to 31st August and 7th to 15th September 2001.

Name	Organization	Country
Rt. Rev. Dr. Edison Munthe	Bishop, North Sumatra (GKPS)	Indonesia
Rev. Dr. Solomon Victus	Tamilnadu Theological Seminary	India
Rev. Derrick Lwekika	ELCT/NWD in Bukoba	Tanzania
Rev. Charles K. Konadu	Methodist Church	Ghana
Rev. Marudut Manalu	Batak Christian Protestant Church	Indonesia

In the first part of our pre-Seminar visit we were able to go to Wartburg and Halle in East Germany. Wartburg is a historical place where Martin Luther did many of his historical works including the translation of the Bible into German. In Halle we visited August Hermann Francke Foundation Center and its works among poor young people. We visited Wittenberg where M. Luther started the Reformation, nailing down his 95 theses and there we moved to Center for Global Ethics. Then we went to Eisleben where Luther born and buried. It was told that Luther came back to East Germany after completing his theological studies for he loved his place so much. Throughout the first trip in former East Germany, we were able to get the pulse and feel about the life situation in state socialist socio-political and cultural context and especially to religious people who had freedom as long as they don't speak about politics of the state.

During the Conference we visited Engel's home town, Wuppertal I was so fascinated with the connection and history of Karl Marx and Frederic Engels. After the Seminar the team of five members were taken to some exposures at Herchen near Mrs. Hannelore's house and stayed with four families. It started with few meetings with school children, youngsters, local pastoral care members. It was on September 10th, 2001 afternoon we met 8 participants of a CPE Training in Waldbröl led by Rev. Horst Ostermann. Discussion slowly snowballed into powerlessness of economically weak countries and empire mentality of few nations. Naturally the discussions went on with the help of the Bible how biblical history deals with such empires. I shared a few interesting notes on the hopes left behind in the Bible in such situations. For instance, many biblical stories connected with many empires like Assyrians, Babylonian, Egyptians, Romans, Greeks etc. and we find finally all empires in the Bible fell down one by one. Empires are never lasting ones and are temporary power centers. I explained how modern empires like Britain rose and fell and the United States may fall tomorrow as an empire. Finally, I ended my remarks with the notes that as explained in the book of Revelation we need not live without hope. Unfortunately, the very same evening the infamous September eleventh event of disaster happened and many suspected German people with the event were hunted one after other. I was really engulfed with mixed feeling of fear and

surprise with a call from one of the leaders of the pastoral care members urged me to continue the discussion after a couple of days later. I was perplexed totally and was freed from the fear only after I heard news that the proposed discussion was cancelled due to death of one of the members of Rev. Ostermann's congregation. The last part of our exposures was mainly centered on church related educational system in Germany. We were very much impressed about the opportunities in developing skill, freedom of expression of German students, gentile approach of the teachers etc. which were systematically organized for us by Mr. Jurgen Deichmann.



Walking into the Past and Future

I contemplate once again the past experiences I had with SIPCC. I am able to recognise that SIPCC friends for the last 22 years find some meaning in my approaches also although I belong to a different school of thinking and discipline and vice versa. Rather all of us in SIPCC find a resonance in each other's approaches. Many of SIPCC friends slowly started discovering my urge to transcend all human made barriers and to create a world with freedom and responsibility. The President, Helmut Weiss and Executive members keep on inviting me to participate at SIPCC meetings in terms of inputs and studies and recognizing my interactive scholarship in my field. This all happened because plurality of approaches have found a safe place in SIPCC life. While pluralism is unacceptable to many of the schools of thinking, but in SIPCC it has created a space and culture to accept the person as it is and try to find meaning in his /her individual action if it is contributing to the cohesiveness of the society. In a context of growing exclusivism, intolerance and suspicion, SIPCC has been walking in the light of confidence and vision.

I am happy since my long association with the SIPCC, I have earned good enduring family friendship with Helmut – Christa Weiss, Klaus - Sabine Temme, Karl - Ilka Federschmidt, Hannelore Deichmann, Antje - Claus Marcus, Ursula Hecker, Brenda Ruiz and many others

unforgettable. It gives me a family feeling of that with all my identities I inherited from India; I feel proud of that I am part of one international family member and win their heart in the process of social transformation. Unforgettable experiences include interaction of a friend, Bernard Kähler who wrote me an extensive review of my presentation in Tanzania as well as and his consultations with me about the local Socialist Party crisis. His personal sharing about Socialist Party gradually made me more comfortable that I was able to touch his crisis area through my practical inputs.

Finally, I feel that a change in the theological education with a focus on pastoral care and counseling is an issue needs to be readdressed. I feel that all contextual theologies need to discover care and counseling as part of the practical theology. I started with an idea that pastoral care and counseling has been temporal solution to many individuals and therefore the lasting solutions to the society could come only through structural changes. Now I come to the realisation that one cannot reduce the issue into just one aspect. It is neither individualistic approach like pastoral care and counseling nor just making changes in the structures but both together can help the society better. It is already taking place in the SIPCC searching model for a new meaning in the context of growing individualism, suspicion, hatred, competition and commercialization. All the experiences I gained from the SIPCC for the last 27 years made me to rethink my social analytical approach from the pastoral counselling. It always urged me to know the mind of the clinical pastoralist's approaches to the social issues and structural issues. So, I wanted to get some grassroots level experience of Clinical Pastoral Care (CPE) and to link with the structural issues. I had to study CPE Christian Medical College in Vellore in 2019. I was able to meet the patients in different wards and interact with them. It had opened my eyes further.

Comments on me especially in my institution by few colleagues that 'I am no more a pure social analyst and therefore asked me to come out of Social Analysis Dept.' As days passed by, myself as a social analyst personally discovered that the psychological issues behind every socio-economic and political reality. Every visit to Europe helped and impacted me with deeper dimensions of such perception. In the meantime, inter-relation, inter-disciplinary approaches become more reality in my research fields too. My writings quite often reflect the connections with psychology and social reality and help many to understand the reality with clarity and wisdom. I invite the friends of SIPCC openly to have peep into the social structures as I ventured to come out of pure social analysis framework to pastoral care and counselling. I do strongly believe the SIPCC as an organisation will continue to beacon many of the future generations through its holistic approaches.

Developments

SIPCC Memories: Developments

Kathleen Greider¹



My SIPCC Context

I first attended an SIPCC International Seminar in 2000, when I was invited as a guest lecturer for the Seminar “Human Dignity, Culture, and Health,” held near London. It was truly an international conference: multilingual, with participants from many countries around the world. SIPCC’s focus on interculturality was forward-looking, even prescient. I remember being amazed at the intensity and intentionality of the experience—we lived together and followed a demanding schedule of activities for six days, all day! The format of the Seminar was impressively well-rounded: the various activities required intellectual and interpersonal exploration of our differences as well as our similarities.

Such a combination of qualities are a rarity in professional conferences! Therefore, SIPCC became a high priority for me, and I have participated in thirteen more International Seminars and become involved in leadership:

- Basel, Switzerland (2002)
- Kecskemet, Hungary (2004)
- Krzywowa, Poland (2007)
- Mennorode, Elspeet, Netherlands (2014)
- Wroclaw, Poland (2015)

¹ Kathleen J. Greider, Ph.D. Research Professor, Claremont School of Theology, USA; many years member in the Executive Committee of SIPCC

- Haifa, Israel (2009)
- Strasbourg, France (2010)
- Moshi, Tanzania (2012)
- Mainz, Germany (2013)
- Gent, Belgium (2016)
- Wittenberg, Germany (2017)
- Vienna, Austria (2018)
- Düsseldorf, Germany (2019)

I list the specific Seminars I attended because the diversity of their locations and my involvement over many years form the foundation for my observations about developments. Through my participation in the Seminars and as a member of the Executive Committee, I have seen the organization develop and participants grow in crucial ways over many years and through the challenges and gifts of diverse contexts. I will highlight two *interconnected* developments: innovation and economic capacity. These developments, already present, point to my final point—a critical development for SIPCC’s thriving in the future. In my photo collages I am able to capture only a few of these developments!

Development in Innovation

We have developed as a learning community, pushing ourselves to give our attention and labor to just-emerging issues in the field of intercultural pastoral care and counseling. The capacity to see and respond to new needs is innovation. SIPCC leaders have not sought innovation as an end in itself, thankfully, but because we have been moved by fluctuations in the forms of human suffering and our commitment to care has moved us to respond. We are innovative only because our diversity allows us to perceive and ground our commitment to care in our efforts to learn about new aspects of human need, around the globe, and examine how the organization and members might respond in our diverse contexts.

Where are we?
Pastoral Environments and Care for Migrants

Edited by Daniel Schipani, Marika Walton, Theodorick Loebner

Intercultural and Interreligious Perspectives

Erasmus+

2010 Strasbourg (FRA)
Theme: Dynamics of Migration today

28th International Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling

Care and Counselling as Social Action
Interreligious Cooperation in Urban Migration Contexts

ue: Centrum voor Spiritualiteit, Drongensplein 26-27 | 9031 Drongen, BE

11 - 16 September 2016



It took me a few years to realize that SIPCC has been forward-looking, even prescient, since its founding, and not only in its focus on interculturality. SIPCC took up other themes long before they became popular: care for persons and social institutions affected by migration; care and counseling as social action; care for the creation as a form of caring for people. Our work on these themes has not been a passing fad. We have focused on migration at numerous Seminars and in a book-length publication. At almost all international Seminars we dedicate a day outside the conference venue to learn about social service programs being offered by religious communities and other agencies dedicated to community care and empowerment. We have begun purchasing and planting trees wherever in the world we meet.

Arguably the single most substantial innovation has been our determination to further interreligious dialogue and service. We commonly speak now of intercultural *and interreligious Seelsorge*. Of course, theological diversity among the Christians in SIPCC was always present, if not directly cultivated and explored. Now, we have made important initial steps toward increasing religious multiplicity among our Seminar leaders, membership, and organizational work. Rabbi Daniel Amnon Smith has been our most faithful teacher in this regard. Over the years we have had a few Buddhist teacher/participants. More recently, Muslim colleagues have become more numerous among our lecturers, workshop leaders, committee members, and regular participants. This development is slow, precisely because it is arguably the most demanding form of interculturality for an organization whose identity was founded and remains grounded in the tradition of a northern hemisphere form of Protestant Christianity. Nonetheless, SIPCC has begun to develop consciousness and action required to build religious pluralism at our core.



Development in Economic Capacity

In many of our cultures, talking about money is crass, even taboo. But this silence and avoidance leaves power structures unchallenged, economic inequities disguised, and economic justice relegated to empty words. I feel compelled to address this topic because money has made SIPCC developments possible. Only the continuing development of economic capacity will ensure that the contributions of SIPCC and SIPCC members continue as robustly as in the past years.

More than any other professional organization with which I have been affiliated, SIPCC has built the economic capacity required to carry out its commitments. Only later did I realize that the genuinely international participation that astounded me at my first SIPCC international Seminar was possible only because SIPCC leadership engaged in fundraising to pay for it. Stipends were made available to persons from economies—especially but not only the southern hemisphere—where international travel otherwise would have been prohibitively expensive and unaffordable. This is a form of economic justice, and I have long been moved by SIPCC's moral and financial commitment to it. This funding means that at every Seminar there are first-time participants to meet and also previous participants with whom to renew and deepen relationships—this relationship-building and collaboration across borders is possible because of continuity and growth in stipends.

As an example of the unexpected and practical kind of learning that SIPCC makes possible, here I will share a detail of my learning as an SIPCC member. Given the power of money, the learning is small and yet highly significant. Especially in the earliest years, the majority of SIPCC's financial support has come from partnering denominational structures within the Protestant churches in Europe, especially in Germany. Later, through the initiative and sustained hard work of President Helmut Weiß, SIPCC was eligible to apply for and receive project funding from social and governmental agencies. Arguably most notable in this regard is the program for Culturally and Religiously Sensitive Care of Refugees, funded by the European Union (EU). Thanks to hours of work and enormous commitment by President Helmut Weiß, SIPCC received a grant for strategic practices in the Erasmus program for "Innovation and Good Practices," carried out between 2016-2017.

Such largesse of religious and non-religious bodies toward small, start-up organizations and projects was startling for me. In my country, the USA, separation of church and state is espoused and legislated. Among a multitude of effects, this leaves a plethora of churches and denominational structures, none of which have financial support from the government. The majority of religious institutions in the US are preoccupied with funding their own ministries and are unsure about their own economic survival. Many are impoverished. Legally and culturally, government and religious bodies do not share money.

Here we can see the interrelated nature of this development and the first one I discussed: SIPCC's commitment to developing economic capacity has made innovation possible, and commitment to innovative responses to need has made development of economic capacity essential.

Think, for example, of how the costs of translation have increased for our Seminars but enabled us to care more for creation and for our relationships together! We have saved many trees by no longer making paper copies of lecture translations, and we have invested in professional translators who help us speak with one another not only in the lecture hall but in every aspect of our programs. But professionals and their equipment cost a lot more than paper!

Growth in economic capacity has made it possible for SIPCC to serve the communities to which we are committed in imaginative ways beyond our Seminars, and to have partnerships beyond our most traditional religious ones. We see this in the care for refugees to which SIPCC could contribute through EU funding.

Another example: when SIPCC wanted to offer scholarships to enable student scholars to become aware of and contribute to our international Seminars, SIPCC leaders asked the students' schools to share expenses. Collaboration with Claremont School of Theology was our first partnership in this area, and other schools have joined. Participation of students brings a variety of riches and challenges: more information about emerging issues in the field, greater religious diversity, and calls for more radical inclusivity as the diversity of students reveals exclusivism among SIPCC members and their practices.



Growing Edge of Development: Radical Inclusivity

These developments, already present, point to critical developments if SIPCC is to thrive in the future. I will address what I see as the most critical development if SIPCC is to have a future worthy of its past: radical inclusivity. Authentic interculturality is much more than welcoming differences in ways that are comfortable. Inclusivity actualized is radical because it shifts the

ground under our feet—new people, different ways of doing things, dominant religions de-centered, etc. Inclusivity actualized is radical because it requires those who have long held the most power to yield to and empower others.

Integrity demands that we who have called ourselves intercultural move more radically into the power dynamics within our own organization. SIPCC is not immune from the deep divides that can be seen globally—I am thinking here especially of white privilege and racism, domination by one religious tradition over others, domination of one age group over another, heterosexism and religiously-rooted destruction of GLBTQ lives and, as always, economic injustice.

I think this kind of integrity is beginning to emerge among us. In recent years it seems to me we are having more of these necessary, difficult conversations, publicly and privately, in search of more honesty and integrity: for example, about antisemitism and other forms of violence between our religious traditions, misuse of power by men toward women; characterizations of each other's ideas made hurtful by careless words.

I long have felt that the intensive and embedded quality of the international Seminars sponsored by SIPCC are a laboratory in which we are conducting experiments in interculturality. For 5-6 days, participants are expected to immerse themselves in several forms of exchange—workshops, small groups, lectures, sharing meals, and “in-between” conversations. Thus for several days we are affected body/mind/soul by the cultural-contextual diversity inherent in our gatherings—which is rich, and also challenging. This close and sustained proximity makes it more likely that when the clashes inevitable in human relations occur, we are more likely to try to work through them rather than avoid them. Thus, we are more likely to be deeply educated and changed in ways that allow more space for persons different from us.

In short, SIPCC will thrive in the future the more it dedicates itself to addressing with more intentionality and skill the conflicts that happen in the midst of our highly diverse gatherings. These conflicts will emerge if we are practicing authentic interculturality and radical inclusivity, for example: How will we those of us who used our power to shape the first 25 years of SIPCC share power with new leaders from new locations with new ideas? How can we continue to make space more radically in the center of SIPCC for the student scholars we have met? Can SIPCC become, by sharing power in new ways internally, an organization less dominated by the northern hemisphere and more akin to the southern hemisphere? Will SIPCC hold on to its identity as a Christian organization that welcomes others or intentionally seek to grow into an interreligious organization?

There is no one principle or practice in conflict resolution that will make this possible. Indeed, integrity requires that before we set our sights on resolution we instead devote ourselves heart, mind, and soul to identifying, understanding, and tolerating the conflicts between us in a spirit of humble self-examination and compassion for others.

My memories of SIPCC over the 20 years of my involvement are rich in peoples, colors, places, sounds, feeling-thoughts, challenges and delights. For all that, I am very grateful.



The SIPCC Executive Committee 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland, visiting the World Council of Churches



SIPCC Seminar 2010 in Strasbourg

“How many cows should I pay to marry you?”

SIPCC Seminars as opportunities for *othering*¹ oneself

*Mary Rute Gomes Esperandio*²



It was a beautiful day on that Wednesday, July 18th 2012, when we caught the bus to go together with the participants of the International Seminar of SIPCC in Moshi, Tanzania to the Maasai Tribe. We knew the program: a special celebration to consecrate a water tank and a well that the German Lutheran Church donated. It was a long way on the dusty road in a small bus. Although the cultural diversity is one of the features of SIPCC members, maybe most of us felt that we were going to meet an unfamiliar world. The Maasai people welcomed us with typical music and dance. I did not expect such a warm and moving welcome. We were impressed by their generosity and openness to our group. The evident lack of material resources did not affect their generous heart. They shared with us joy, gratitude, a special dish, and the women gave us some beautiful rings.

Even from the perspective of a Brazilian woman, the culture of the Maasai people may seem "exotic" or "strange". This was the standpoint behind 'my lenses' with which I registered many

¹ "*Othering* oneself" refers to the process of differentiation of oneself, of becoming another through encounters with alterity.

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special moments, situations, spaces, facial expressions, the beauties of their culture, their creativity, aesthetic sense, and their cultural values expressed in several details.

The SIPCC members come from several different cultures; therefore, the common language is the English. However, English was not useful for us to communicate with the Maasai people. We had to use our body language.

Back to my country, the memory of that visit could be remembered through lots of pictures I got there. Meaningful moments of interplay: the Maasai women giving us some handicraft earrings; a group of children playing and enjoying looking at their own faces on the camera display; and a group of young men who were proudly posing for pictures. I felt a heavy constraint for possessing those pictures while they had only seen their faces on the camera display. Thus, I decided to print the pictures to send to them. I got help from the German Lutheran missionary who works there, and also from our friend Rev. Lyimo, member of the SIPCC Executive Committee.

It was big surprise one year later when Rev. Lyimo brought a message from one of the young Maasai man: “how many cows should I pay to marry you?” My first reaction was laughing. It sounded to me like a joke. However, Rev. Lyimo told me that it was a typical Maasai marriage proposal, and, in fact, this was representative of six group of 6 Maasai, since all of these young men were in the same age. They supposed that 100 cows would be the price I would ask for, because I was “extremely white like an angel and beautiful like a queen”³.

Although such a situation seemed to be a joke from my cultural perspective, the fact was that the Maasai men expressed their marriage proposal and Rev. Lyimo wanted me to give a formal answer to bring to them.

What I would like to highlight through this narrative is the essence of the SIPCC Seminars. Each year we have been presented and challenged by a Seminar that is a real setting of unexpected encounters with alterity. Such Seminars work as an “installation-art”.

In this kind of art, elements made specifically for a chosen site or environment, are presented in a way that creates an interaction between itself and the audience. The art of installation is intending to provoke feelings, to wake up the senses, to interact with the spectators, to force them to abandon their passive receptivity in order to becoming part of the presented piece of

³ A short video was recorded with the following text und Rev. Lyimo mitgegeben: “Hi, friends, I prepared this short video to answer your question about ‘how many cows you should pay to marry me’. First of all, I would like to say that I was very surprised to hear such an unexpected proposal, especially because it is something totally different from the culture where I was born and I live in. But I would like you to know that I felt very touched about the meaning of your proposal. I received that as an expression of deep love to me and I felt very moved and honored. As you know, I am Brazilian and I have a life there that I enjoy very much. I have a husband and children, meaningful professional work, and friends. So, I must say no to your proposal. But I will always consider us as friends. Be blessed!”

art. In other words, by the contact with the installation, a process of creation and subjective differentiation is activated.⁴

The Seminars have the potential to trigger a process of differentiation that could be experienced by both the theoretical reflection through the lectures, and the practical experiences through visits to different religious groups and institutions devoted to the practice of care. For instance, over the years, SIPCC has provided lecturers from Muslim and Jewish tradition, as well as visits to Mosques and Synagogues.

The visit to the Maasai tribe was, for me, a powerful experience that made me to think about the encounter as a potential of self-differentiation, encounter as an opportunity for *othering oneself*. *Othering* is a vital human process and it is only possible through the encounter with alterity. The other in whom I see (or I do not see) myself triggers both attraction and repulsion. Therefore, it will always imply a change in the subjectivity in the one engaged in such an experience. Thus, the bigger the difference to the other the more intense the experience of othering. Therefore, a new existential territory could be rising as an effect of the encounter. Such a new territory could express the creation of new concepts, new perspectives, the assumption of new values, attitudes, behavior and beliefs.

My personal encounter with the Maasai people faced me with my cultural values and demanded me to understand the situation reported above not from my own cultural perspective but from the Maasais' perspective.

What does all this have to do with the practice of spiritual care? I conclude that the one who works in care is supposed to be able to deal with the estrangement that difference creates (in oneself and in the other).

Thus, to enable processes of differentiation of the self as well as the differentiation of the practice of care is what the SIPCC aims to fulfill in its 20 years of activities devoted to the intercultural and interreligious training of caregivers.

To summarize, I make my words with what Helmut Weiss, the founder and current president of SIPCC, has already stated: "the differences make differentiation possible in the first place and show us the possibilities and the richness of human experience and existence. These abundances and the diverse possibilities can be discovered and made productive through intercultural and interreligious work⁵".

⁴ ESPERANDIO, M. R. G. A capacidade de outrar-se – diferenças como desafio para a prática do cuidado e aconselhamento pastoral. *Rev. Pistis Prax., Teol. Pastor.*, Curitiba, v. 3, n. 2, p. 425-447, jul./dez. 2011.

⁵ WEISS, H. Rev. "I saw souls": remarks on the theory and practice of intercultural and interfaith spiritual care. *Pistis Prax., Teol. Pastor.*, Curitiba, v. 3, n. 2, p. 467-494, jul./dez. 2011.



SIPCC developing into a more International and Interreligious Organization

Brenda Ruiz¹



Introduction

Hello, I am Brenda Ruiz, a Pastoral Counselor from Managua, Nicaragua. I first came in contact with SIPCC 14 years ago, in time for the Seminar in Hamburg in September 2006. I had the privilege to be invited by Dr. James Poling to lead a workshop with him on the subject of Pastoral Counselling in Nicaragua.

Please be warned that this is not a scientific paper, but rather my personal perceptions of how SIPCC has evolved from a totally Christian, Europe centered organization, into a more inclusive, ecumenical and international organization. I will try to achieve this through a superficial analysis of the composition of the Executive Committee, participants and presenters at three Seminars; the first in 2006 (my first attendance to a SIPCC Seminar), then in 2013 (mid-term observation) and in 2019 (last Seminar before Covid 19).

These perceptions are based on Seminars I attended, although SIPCC did many other activities, like Pre-Seminar, consultations, training courses, study trips, etc.; in which I did not participate, so they will not be taken into account for this analysis.

¹ Prof. Brenda Consuelo Ruiz – retired Director of the Institute for Gender Studies, Politechnical University, Managua, Nicaragua; she is Secretary in the SIPCC Executive Committee.

A comparison between the participation of people from the “North” and from the “South” will be made, using the category North and South in a rather loose way, not as established by the World Bank or the IMF. I will use “North” to refer to all of Europe (knowing full well that there are wide differences between countries in Europe), United States and Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Japan and South Korea. “South” will include Africa, Latin America, most of Asia and the Middle East.

In the beginning...

I remember my first SIPCC Seminar back in 2006. I very much liked the people participating and felt like a warmly welcomed guest from the start. It felt like a place where I could learn and grow a lot. SIPCC seemed to me like a nice European Christian organization with a few Christian guests from the South. It impressed me the great participation of women. Just to illustrate my point, I would like for you to look at the next picture of the participants of our 19th Seminar at the Missionakademie in Hamburg that year:



What do you observe?

The composition of the Executive Committee in 2006 was:

- President: Rev. Helmut Weiss (Germany)
- Vice President: Rev. Marianne Reifers (Switzerland))
- Treasurer: Rev. Ulrike Mummenhoff (Germany)
- Secretary: Rev. Dr. Adrian Korczago (Poland)
- Member: Prof. Dr. Kathleen Greider, (USA)
- Member: Prof. Dr. Nalini Arles, (India)
- Member: Prof. Dr. Ronaldo Sathler Rosa, (Brazil)

As you can see, they are all Christians and mainly from the North, all belonging to the clergy. The people from the South are in the category of members. There are three men and four women, not bad for gender equality, don't you think?

The title of the Seminar was *“Truth will make you free. Spaces of exchange in missionary work and pastoral care and counselling”*. The main speakers’ nationalities at that Seminar were: two from Germany, one from Norway, one from USA with a pastor from Ghana/ Germany and one from India. Of the eight workshop leaders, four were Germans, one from Hungary, two from Brazil and one from India. Nevertheless, out of the four people who did presentations and case work studies: One was from South Africa, one from Nicaragua, one from the USA and one from Papua New Guinea. So, the North was still predominant over the South and to the best of my knowledge, all of the participants were Christians.

Mid-term... things are changing...

Seven years passed and year 2013 arrived. At the end of September, we had our 25th Seminar in Mainz, Germany. The title of it was *“Islamic Spiritual Care in conversation. A Trialogue between Muslims, Jews and Christians”*. Just by the title you can tell SIPCC had moved from a merely Christian organization into a more interreligious one. Our partners for the Seminar were not only Christian organization, but Islamic and Jewish as well. This Seminar was partly founded by Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union, which definitely contributed to the move. Out of the five partners of the Mainz Seminar, two were Protestant, one was Islamic, one Jewish and one was an institute for integration and interreligious dialogue.

By this time SIPCC had begun to feel like a family to me, strong connections had been developed and all year around I very much looked forward not only to participating in the Seminar itself, but to see old friends.



The Executive Committee at the time (2013) was composed by:

- President: Rev. Helmut Weiß (Germany)
- Vice-president: Rev. Dr. Adrian Korczago (Poland)
- Treasurer: Rev. Klaus Temme (Germany)
- Secretary: Prof. Brenda Ruiz (Nicaragua)
- Member: Prof. Dr. Mary Rute Gomes Esperandio (Brazil)
- Member: Rev. Itumeleng Julius Pudule (South Africa)
- Member: Rev. Archiboldy Lyimo (Tanzania)
- Member: Prof. Dr. Kathleen Greider (USA)
- Member: Prof. Dr. Isabelle Noth (Switzerland)
- Member: Rev. Dr. Karl Federschmidt (Germany)

I am sure you can notice there are six members from the North and four from the South, four women and six men, and we are all Christians. Something different in this Executive Committee is that there were six members of clergy and four university professors.

Out of the nine main speakers during the Seminar, only two were Christians, the other seven were Islamic and Jews. There were eight from the North and one from the South. There were seven men and only two women.

There were 12 Workshop presenters. Out of them, six were Christians and six Islamic and Jews. Eight were from the North and four from the South. Ten were men and only two were women. The gender difference in both main speakers and presenters may be due to the fact that there were several Islamic speakers and workshop leaders, and almost all of them were men.

As you can see in the picture below of one discussion group, the participation of people from the South was wide. Out of the 96 participants, 22 were from the South.



And the last Seminar (for the time being), 2019

Our 31st Seminar was held in Dusseldorf from 1st to 6th of September, with the theme “Conflict–transformation and Interfaith Peacebuilding. Impulses for intercultural and interreligious Care and Counselling”.

I can definitely affirm by this time that I am very happy to belong to the SIPCC family. The pain and concern I felt by the violent repression that took place in my country in 2018 and 2019 was eased greatly by the prayers and heartfelt messages from my friends from SIPCC. It was a life sustaining blessing. I was very touched that some even took the time to write to their representatives before the European Union to put pressure on our government to put a halt to the repression and also to TV stations asking them to report more news about what was happening in Nicaragua. So, from now on, coming to a SIPCC Seminar is like a family reunion

for me, not only an exciting academic activity. It has been like Helmut once wrote “Meeting in an open and safe space makes it possible to experience rich diversity and at the same time to enter into relationship and become a community” (Schipani, 2018, p. vii).

I am also very thankful for having had the privilege to be a speaker and to facilitate many workshops at different SIPCC Seminars. This has allowed me to share about pastoral counselling in a context of poverty and political repression from a feminist perspective, and to gain a deeper understanding of the situation of women in other parts of the world. It has also been an excellent opportunity to be in support of other women participating in the Seminars as well as being supported by others. Almost needless to say, it has made it easier to advocate for gender equality at all levels, although not always successfully.

I must also add that being part of the Executive Committee has been a very empowering experience for me, with tons of intercultural and interreligious learnings. There have been times when our cultural and gender differences have made decision making a difficult task, but we have learned to respect and continue to care for each other,

And last, but not least, it has been great and very rewarding to teach participants coming to the Seminars about the importance of giving and receiving many hugs every day.

Talking about being part of the Executive Committee, the EC for 2019 was composed by:

- President: Rev. Helmut Weiss (Germany)
- Vice President: Dr. Dominiek Lootens (Belgium)
- Treasurer: Rev. Dr. Alexander Letz (Germany)
- Secretary: Prof. Brenda Ruiz (Nicaragua)
- Member: Prof. Dr. Kathleen Greider (USA)
- Member: Prof. Dr. Mary Rute Gomes Esperandio (Brazil)
- Member: Rev. Itumeleng Julius Pudule (South Africa)
- Member: Rabbi Daniel Smith (England)
- Member: Prof. Dr. Cemal Tosun, Professor (Turkey)
- Member: Rev. Dr. Miriam Szökeova (Czech Republic)

And here is a picture so you can see for yourselves. Unfortunately, Prof. Dr. Mary Rute Gomes Esperandio from Brazil and Prof. Dr. Cemal Tosun from Turkey are missing on the picture.



Even though we have six members from the North and only four from the South, six men and only four women, we finally have an Executive Committee which is not all Christian. Rabbi Daniel Smith and Professor Cemal Tosun have enriched the work and the decision making of SIPCC with the Jewish and Islamic perspectives.

Out of the main speakers at the Seminar three were Christians and two Muslims, three from the North and two from the South, three were men and two were women. Out of the workshop leaders, all 10 were Christians, two from the North and eight from the South, five women and five men. We could accurately say that this has been the Seminar where there has been more equal participation than ever concerning the main speakers. Not so much with the workshop presenters, however, it is the first time there are so many presenters from the South.

Even though I did not have access to the list of participants for this Seminar, I did a headcount of about 20 people from the South which is not bad for a total of 63 participants. This is a larger participation percentage wise than the Seminar in 2013; but you can see for yourselves in the following picture taken during the memorable Seminar in Dusseldorf:



About the future of SIPCC....

Before talking about the future, I would like to express a word of appreciation to Helmut, Christa, Klaus and Sabine, and many others as well; for all the work done for SIPCC. It has been not only the enormous numbers of hours they have put in through these 25 years, but the human quality they have impregnated to each and every task done. Without this, I would not have been able to write about the SIPCC Family.

What I would like to see in the future of SIPCC:

1. A strong democratic leadership with a vision of continuation and widening of the work done by SIPCC and a commitment to examining within themselves any traces of racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, and other “isms” which diminish human dignity. I would hope this leadership is at least somewhat balanced in terms of gender, nationality and religion.
2. A continuation of discussion of situations such as counselling in the contexts of migration, poverty and environment deterioration, gender issues, as well as counselling with patients of Covid and their families, and also with families who have lost members to Covid; all crucial issues for the survival of humanity.
3. The development of strategic plans, including the development of long-term financial resources to ensure the participation of participants from other parts of Europe and from the South. This would require a lot of creative thinking, especially in these post-Covid times.

MAY GOD CONTINUE BLESSING THE WORK OF SIPCC!!!!

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Crossing new Frontiers of Encounter and Engagement in Care and Counselling

*Itumeleng Julius Pudule*¹



Introduction

This year is special to the SIPCC as it celebrates 25 years anniversary. This is indeed a great milestone in the life of this organisation that is slowly becoming a giant in the care and counselling encounter. It is in time like this that one need to look at the trajectory of the organisation and also commend those who initiated this organisation and its present membership for the sterling achievements in enhancing and strengthening the interreligious and intercultural encounter and engagement in the world. Reflecting on SIPCC past and the present, it really epitomised a rich tapestry of religions and cultures symbolising a rainbow of blessings to the care-givers.

My first encounter with the SIPCC

In 2006 I was invited to do a presentation on South African perspective in dealing with the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic when I was still a part time student at the University of Free State. I can still recall the euphoria that accompanied that moment when I received a formal invitation from Helmut Weiss and the ticket for my flight. I never thought this was ushering a new chapter in my life, as a permanent member of the SIPCC.

Nine days before my departure, something terrible happened in my life. I lost my sister who was by then sick. What a difficult moment of my life, as I felt like that euphoria is waning away,

¹ Reverend Itumeleng Julius Pudule, is a Chaplain in the South Police Service and also a priest in the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. He is a member of the SIPCC Executive Committee.

and sadness took toll on my life at that time. I remembered the words of my sister a day before her death when she said to me; “My brother you will go to Germany, Hamburg for your presentation, I am going to be healed”. When she passed on the 1st of September 2006, I only came to realize what she meant by getting healed. My sister was buried on Saturday and I left for Germany the Tuesday just after the funeral. On my way in the plane, I started realizing that I had not dealt with my loss, I felt the gravity of my grief. During that moment of intense grieving, I asked myself if I will cope in participating optimally in presenting my paper at the Seminar.

I never thought that I will be meeting with such an intercultural and interreligious family, who welcomed and journeyed with me through my grief. I grew up in a context in our culture in which we believe that “*Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*”², translated simply means that a person is a person because of other people. The philosophy of “Ubuntu” in my African Tswana language “*Botho*” constitute the spiritual aspect of African culture. This is a way of life, a life characterised by values such as compassion, caring, sharing and tolerance. The term “ubuntu” variously called *bumutu*, *umutu*, *obuntu* in Africa relate to the word *muntu* or *mutu* which means person or human being.³

During the planning session of the Seminar in Hamburg I narrated my story to the planning group of the SIPCC by then, and they really journeyed with me through my grief. They listened to my story as unique. The image of the African concept of “ubuntu” was embodied in this accompaniment. The virtue of African hospitality is captured in the term “Ubuntu”, particularly the welcoming of a stranger to feel to be part of a community. I had really felt that my identity was tied up to the identity of the SIPCC which had invited me, as I saw myself being there –with-others or belonging to that community which brought to me a sense of care and healing. In Africa, a person does not exist alone but rather belongs to a community of similarly constituted self.

The African concept of caring involves all members of the village, community, family, relatives and tribes. This is because in African community life is lived with others in a group, tribe or clan. Therefore, it’s the responsibility of the whole village to care for life. This is because life is sacred and must be preserved, defended, supported and enhanced. Thus, sharing life in the community brings harmony of interdependence reminds us of our common dependence on God, as our creator. It can be summed up in this concept, “It takes the whole village to raise up a child”. I really felt really comforted during that period by the members of the SIPCC at that Seminar. That sharing of love and support has kept me as the family of the SIPCC till today.

I also need to mention by name two people I met on my first encounter with the SIPCC, Helmut Weiss and Klaus Temme. They made me to be more in love with the organisation through their

² “*Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*” is Zulu phrase which originated in the 19th century from the Zulu community, which literally means that a person is person through other people. Ubuntu has its roots in humanist African philosophy, where the idea of community is one of the building block of society.

³ Nyengele, MF. African Spirituality and the Wesleyan spirit: Implications for spiritual formation in multicultural church and culturally pluralistic world. Methodist Theological School, Ohio. 2013.

commitment and dedication to the work of SIPCC. They were an umbilical cord that connected us to the SIPCC in the different continents as members of the Executive as they continued to regularly update us with all the developments in the SIPCC.

Personal encounter and development in the SIPCC

SIPCC had been a platform in which I had received new impetus and impulses for spiritual, intercultural and interreligious growth and new spiritual lifestyle. It has created a new space for me to interact and reflect on the cultural, social, political, economic and religious context of other people and also challenged my own religious and cultural assumptions and presuppositions.

We are living in a modern and global world which is characterized by rapid changes and cross-pollination of cultures and ideas which challenges one who is insulated in his or her culture or religion. Participating in the SIPCC activities have thus broken the biases of my own culture and religion, broken down the barriers, the fears, prejudices I had about other cultures and religions. The growing presence of plurality of faith expressions (religious as well as non-religious) in our culture is indeed a major dimension of the social reality.⁴ Through personal encounter with others in the SIPCC I have developed new ways in dealing professionally with people from different cultures, religion in a more sensitive, understanding and open way.

Through sharing of stories as we meet in the Seminars has made me share life with others in a special way. The sharing of stories actually epitomised my African way of life, because in Africa we live through stories. Kudakwashe Tuwe, an African member of the African Studies Association of Australasia and Pacific shared this during their congress proceeding about Africans and stories; "In many parts of Africa, after dinner, upon the sound of tantalizing drum, villagers would congregate around a central fire, and settle down to hear and listen to stories. Therefore, storytelling has been a ritual for the people of Africa in the evening after a hard day`s work".⁵

Therefore, the sharing of stories during Seminars resonate with African way of life. In Africa storytelling is a method of actually expressing feelings, attitudes and responses of one`s lived experiences and environment. It a way of mediating and transmitting knowledge and information from generation to generations.

My participation in the Seminars of SIPCC with different topics of engagement has widened and enriched my knowledge and outlook into care and counselling. The experiences of the presentations from different context, cultures and religions have not only enriched my horizons but also challenged my understanding of care and counselling. This repertoire of knowledge also exposed my fragility and vulnerability as human being.

⁴ Daniel Schipani and Leah Dawn Bueckert: *Interfaith Spiritual Care: Understanding and Practices*. Pandora Press: 2009.

⁵ Kudakwashe Tuwe: *The African tradition paradigm of storytelling as a methodological framework: Employment experiences for African communities in New Zealand*. February 2016.

SIPCC: Crossing new frontiers

In the many years as part of the SIPCC, in what I may refer to as a journey from Hamburg (Germany) to Vienna (Austria), I had participated in several Seminars that took place in different countries, cultures, religions, and had an encounters with different cultures and religions such as Muslims, Jews, Christians and other social groupings. Many of the participants from these religious, cultural and social grouping are now part of the SIPCC.

The milestone for me, as a member of the SIPCC coming from Africa was the Seminar in Tanzania in 2012, in which the SIPCC crossed new frontiers and broadened its horizons. This also include engaging and encountering the challenges of the conflict between Palestine and Israel, engaging with Muslims and Jews in European countries. Indeed, it's like Abraham, leaving "his country, his people, and his father`s household and going to a land" that is unfamiliar (Genesis: 12:1). In order word the SIPCC through crossing new frontiers makes one at times to feel uncomfortable, but that how we meet God in unexpected ways and new beginning are unleashed that becomes a blessing to us, our ministry of care and counselling and the world we seek to serve.

New frontiers were established through welcoming Muslims, Jews, social movement as part of the SIPCC. Presently the SIPCC has established a branch in Tanzania with representatives participating in the Seminars and SIPCC Assembly annually. Therefore, SIPCC represent a rich tapestry of encounter and engagement between different cultures and religions in the field of care and counselling.

The SIPCC has indeed held to its principle of promoting encounter and exchange through education conducted in Hungary, Slovakia, Tanzania, Poland. Myanmar, Pakistan and many other countries. Through education and courses many people who are care-givers in these countries and who could not afford to participate in the Seminars because of lack of funds feel being part of SIPCC. This encounter through education is an expression of caring for the global community. It also means "I am because you are, and you are because we are".

SIPCC as an open space for encounter

In our present world it is becoming more and more important to get to know each other and to learn a respectful and dignified attitude towards other people from different culture and religions, particularly the cultural and religious minorities. The SIPCC has indeed become an access point from which an exchange between the cultural and religious affiliations from different countries could engage, and has constituted an added value in the European context. This open space for encounter encourages integration and coexistence of people from different culture and religious backgrounds.

Indeed, the SIPCC has been an association which create "open spaces" in which interactions amongst people from different countries, cultures and religions takes place to promote learning of intercultural and interreligious care and counselling. The space creates an awareness of assimilation, acceptance, appreciation, which add value to the process of accommodation and it can be called the sacred space of encounter and soulfulness of

embracement.⁶The SIPCC today is an embodiment of the sacred space in which other cultures, religions are embraced.



Embodiment of the diversity in the SIPCC at the Seminar in Wittenberg, Germany 2017

Through this encounter we were involved in true dialogue which was premised by honesty. The exchanges we had in the executive committee meeting and through the Seminars had moved on a trajectory of honesty. We had exchanges in which there were disagreements and it never degenerated into name-calling or anyone pulling out in way respecting each other's way of being and affirming the otherness. Acknowledging the unity in diversity. And this indeed deepened our encounter in our journey of care and counselling. One is thankful to the wisdom of the one above who kept us in love.

Structural developments of the SIPCC

When I started participating in the Executive Committee of the SIPCC around 2007, the structure included the Executive Committee and the local organising committee (Planning Group). Both the committees reflected the internationality of the SIPCC, though it was constituted by mostly Christians. However, this structure has evolved over the years till today to include representatives from other religions and cultures from different continents of the world. During its restructuring in 2016 the structure of SIPCC was broadened to include study group and networking, research and publication to compliment the Executive committee and planning group. The interesting part of the restructuring is the way in which the committees reflect interculturality and its internationality in which almost all the continents are well represented.

⁶ Daniel Louw, Mechanics of the human soul: The networking of soulfulness. Stellenbisch. 2005, 27.

The broadening of the structure, looking at research, networking and publications was to enhance personal encounter through publications of articles presented at Seminars, listening to a diversity of voices. Articles written from different context, cultures and religions enables us to move into others world. We are able to listen to voices of care-givers who are attending to the voices of the marginalised and those silenced. It makes us to learn how others live, how they survive catastrophe's and challenges of life, what makes them behave in certain ways, and to appreciate them. Learning about the experience of others peoples exposes our own assumptions and limitations.

Conclusion

The vision of the founders of the SIPCC was to enable the care-givers, theologians and practitioners in different care fields to come together and share their stories and their struggles. It was to create a space for engagement and encounter in order to enrich and widens each other's horizons in the field of care and counselling. I really want to confess that the learning engagement and dialogues through all the Seminars I have attended have broken down my own prejudices, my fears, and biases I had about other cultures and religions. Our engagement in the different Seminars have made us to acknowledge the richness of cultures, experiences, rituals, symbols, stories and practices of care.

The experiences and stories shared on presentations and workshops have made us to realize how vulnerable we are as human beings, whether to natural disaster or human abuse of power. But the encounter in the SIPCC has also taught us that we are "Treasures in Earthen Vessels". We have a prophetic call as care givers to support the economically vulnerable, those on the margins of the society, those who suffered the injustices. In order to achieve this goal we need to move out of our comfort zones, and to venture into other horizons to rejuvenate, restore and bring healing to the many atrocities humankind is facing.

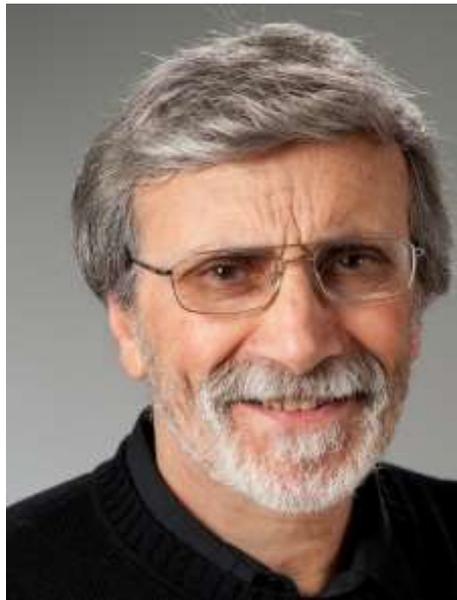


Seminar 2012 in Moshi: tree-planting by the participants

Anny and Jean-Charles Kaiser from France

SIPCC: A Journey Towards Intercultural and Interreligious *Proficiency*

*Daniel S. Schipani*¹



This short essay is divided into two parts. In the first part I highlight some key developments in the life of the SIPCC from the perspective of my participation as an active member during the last fifteen years. In the second part I briefly discuss what, in my judgement, is a key transition in the unfolding story of the Society, namely, from competence to proficiency.

Highlights of a fruitful journey

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I joined the SIPCC during my participation in its 2005 International Seminar. That event was held in Düsseldorf, Germany, with the overarching theme, “Intercultural and Interfaith Communication”. The program included a workshop—“Intercultural Reading of the Bible”—that I was invited to present. The content of the workshop stemmed from the results of an empirical research project in which I participated primarily from a practical theological perspective.²



Daniel Schipani with Professor Julius Filo, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2008

I decided to become an active member of the SIPCC because the Society is a welcoming space for collegial encounter, dialogue and collaboration. Among associations with similar interests, two features stand out: first, the SIPCC has a continuous, uninterrupted yearly agenda that includes education programs in several national contexts; and, second, it has attracted participants with diverse training and specializations without imposing hierarchical categories. Regarding the latter, it is fitting to say that the Society is itself a multicultural laboratory that fosters both intercultural and interreligious communication on different levels.

Over the years I have benefitted immensely, both personally and vocationally, from active participation as a SIPCC member. For example, a number of fruitful interactions in workshops and lectureships, especially connected to the Hamburg (Germany, 2006) and Bratislava

² See, Hans de Wit, Louis Jonker, Marleen Kool, & Daniel Schipani, eds. *Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible* (Amsterdam/Elkhart: Frije Universiteit/Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2004).

(Slovakia, 2008) Seminars, led to the publication of the first major text in English on interfaith spiritual care. The book was published in collaboration with the SIPCC and was dedicated to Helmut Weiss as “ecumenically-minded and collaborative pioneer in the field of intercultural and interfaith spiritual care”.³The following year, the first major manual on the subject in German was published.⁴ The research agenda thus became more systematic regarding the *interreligious*, or *interfaith*⁵ focus on intercultural communication and caregiving processes.

By 2013 the efforts to foster interreligious communication had become a priority, as reflected in the Mainz (Germany) international Seminar. That conference was convened under the umbrella title, “Islamic Spiritual Care. A ‘Triologue’ Between Muslims, Jews, and Christians”. The same year the SIPCC sponsored the publication of a book with contributions from representatives of seven different traditions.⁶ In the meantime, the SIPCC logo and mission statements had started to include the term “interreligious”. The same can be observed regarding the very titles and themes of following international Seminars.⁷ So, by the 20th year celebration, a new publication was fittingly entitled, *Intercultural and Interreligious Pastoral Caregiving. The SIPCC 1995-2015: 20 Years of International Practice and Reflection*.⁸

Other significant developments during the last several years can also be documented. This has been the case, for example, with our concern with the complex realities and challenges of migration. The theme was explored as the main focus of consideration in the Strasbourg (France, 2010) and Gent (Belgium, 2016) Seminars. During the latter, another major publication project was conceived. In addition to ten SIPCC members, guest contributors

³ Daniel S. Schipani & Leah Dawn Bueckert, eds. *Interfaith Spiritual Care: Understandings and Practices* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2009).

⁴ Helmut Weiß, Karl H. Federschmidt, Klaus Temme, eds. *Handbuch Interreligiöse Seelsorge* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2010). The SIPCC had published a major book on *intercultural* pastoral care a few years earlier: Karl Federschmidt, Eberhard Hauschildt, Christoph Schneider-Harpprecht, Klaus Temme, Helmut Weiß, eds. *Handbuch Interkulturelle Seelsorge* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002).

⁵ A note on semantics: whereas in Europe and Latin America the term “interreligious” is used, in the United States and Canada the tendency is to use “interfaith” instead. A commonly stated rationale for the latter is that “faith” may include the category of non-religious “faith”, broadly speaking.

⁶ Daniel S. Schipani, ed. *Multifaith Views in Spiritual Care* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2013).

⁷ 2014, Mennorode (The Netherlands), “The other Religion and Tradition as Blessing – Exploring spiritual potentials for care and counselling”.

2015, Wrocław/Breslau (Poland), “Religious Sources for Building Community and Peace”.

2016, Gent (Belgium), “Care and Counselling as Social Action. Interreligious Cooperation in Urban Migration Contexts”.

2017, Wittenberg (Germany), “Human Dignity. Challenges for Pastoral Care in Interreligious and Intercultural Contexts”.

2018, Vienna (Austria), “Religions in Dialogue: Cooperation in Intercultural and Interreligious Care and Counselling”.

2019, Düsseldorf (Germany), “Conflict, Nonviolence and Interfaith Peacebuilding: Impulses for intercultural and interreligious Care and Counselling”.

⁸ Karl H. Federschmidt & Daniel Louw, eds. *Intercultural and Interreligious Pastoral Caregiving. The SIPCC 1995-2015: 20 Years of International Practice and Reflection* (Norderstedt/ Düsseldorf Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung/Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling, 2015).

included both practitioners and scholars.⁹ Issues related to conflict, violence, peace with justice and reconciliation, among others, await consideration and engagement in the days ahead.

From competence to proficiency

In this section I suggest that one way to characterize the forward movement of the SIPCC story is by applying some categories stemming from social science research on intercultural competence. The following observations are offered more in the manner of hypotheses than as an assessment strictly speaking. Authors such as Darla Deardorff are helpful to define intercultural competence as the ability to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that facilitate appropriate and effective communication in intercultural interactions.¹⁰ From the beginning, the work of the SIPCC has sought to include adequate levels of intercultural competence within those three areas: knowledge (cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, socio-linguistic awareness, grasp of global issues and trends, etc.); attitudes (respect and valuing other cultures and religions, openness, curiosity, tolerance of ambiguity, etc.); and skills (listening, observing, careful evaluation, viewing the world from others' perspectives, etc.). And we have expanded those categories in terms of competences of knowing, being, and doing, respectively.¹¹

Another helpful resource is the model of “Intercultural Development Continuum” which supplies the overarching framework for assessment with the “Intercultural Development Inventory”.¹² I propose that research on intercultural competency and the resulting theory can offer a helpful framework to appreciate and celebrate major developments in the fruitful trajectory of the SIPCC.

According to this model and, we might add, the current SIPCC’s stated and public “self-understanding”,¹³ it is clear that the Society seeks to foster the highest level of intercultural (and interreligious) “mindset”. At the same time, it can be argued that in both, actual practice as well as in terms of self-understanding, the SIPCC has experienced considerable progress in moving from “acceptance” to “adaptation” and integration.

⁹ Daniel Schipani, Martin Walton, & Dominiek Lootens, eds. *Where are We? – Pastoral Environments and Care for Migrants: Intercultural and Interreligious Perspectives* (Düsseldorf: Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung/Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling, 2018).

¹⁰ See Darla K. Deardorff, *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009).

¹¹ Schipani, *Multifaith views in Spiritual Care*, pp. 167-177.

¹² <https://idiinventory.com/about-us/>. Accessed on 20/06/20.

¹³ <https://sipcc.org/downloads/SIPCC-Self-Understanding.pdf>. Accessed on 20/06/20.

Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC™)



During the earlier years the Society's contributions significantly unveiled the distinct realities and dynamics of European and other social-cultural contexts of care and counseling. Recognition, understanding, and appreciation of the plurality of contexts were paramount. Intentional and systematic dialogue and analytic comparisons were (and continue to be) indispensable. Its "acceptance" orientation included (and continues to include), a significant and self-reflective and critical look at one's own culture and religious tradition.

Moving forward, however, has involved going beyond acceptance to what is called Cognitive Frame-shifting (changing one's cultural/religious perspective) and Behavior Code-shifting (changing behavior in authentic and culturally appropriate ways). "Adaptation" thus viewed has enabled "deep cultural bridging across diverse communities using an increased repertoire of cultural frameworks and practices in navigating cultural commonalities and differences."¹⁴.

Another specialized term proposed by social scientists to characterize the higher levels of intercultural competency is "proficiency" beyond competence. Cultural proficiency is thus described as making possible collaborative research and practical cooperation in mutually transformative ways. In order to become reality, such possibility requires a major effort at becoming more and more inclusive coupled with a considerable measure of self-disempowerment. In our case, for example active participation of several Muslim colleagues during recent years, and being hosted by the Islamic Cultural Centre in Vienna in 2018, have been important factors in moving forward. This movement is analogous to the change from predominantly Christian chaplaincy as the reigning paradigm of spiritual care in medical centers and other health care institutions, to multifaith teams able to offer care with intercultural and interfaith competence and proficiency.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Finally, it is worth noting that the unfolding SIPCC story amounts to a commitment to continue making progress in the direction suggested by the Society's own declaration of self-understanding as an open space ...

- for personal and institutional encounters and relationships;
- ... for the development of hermeneutics of intercultural and inter-religious care and counselling;
- ... with areas for learning in difference (language and communication, culture, religion);
- ... a learning experience in intercultural and inter-religious competence;
- ... a learning community in spirituality, and in pastoral care and counseling as a socially relevant practice for our times.

We therefore look forward to the days ahead with love, joy, and hope!



Daniel Schipani and Daniel J. Louw from South-Africa, Seminar Vienna, 2018

Interfaith Dialogue: A Jewish Experience

Amnon Daniel Smith¹



My teacher Rabbi Lionel Blue inspired me to become a rabbi. In my teenage years he led me on an inner journey of rabbinic study and Jewish prayer. He also took me on an outer interfaith journey as we visited Churches, Mosques and Temples. This was an unusual activity for a rabbi to do in the early 1960s.

He used to say: “Make your Judaism into your home but not into your prison.”.

What is the difference between a home and a prison? You can go out of your home whenever you wish and visit the home of another. You can also welcome others into your home whenever you choose. You cannot do these things in a prison.

At the time, I think many Jewish authorities in Israel, Europe and America were suspicious of interfaith dialogue. They preferred to stay in their own homes and communities, and most would not have wished to visit a church, mosque or temple.

Two American Orthodox authorities represented the hardline approach against interfaith contact. Firstly, Rabbi Moses Feinstein, President of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, wrote a legal response to a young Orthodox rabbi:

Regarding your question viz. that you have promised to attend an ecumenical gathering at which there will be Catholics and Protestants as well as Jews, and at which only matters of general import will be discussed – You should be aware that to attend such a gathering is without doubt a most serious sin comparable with idol worship itself.

¹ Rabbi Amnon Daniel Smith, retired Senior Rabbi of Edgware and District Reform Synagogue in London, UK

Ecumenism is a plague [...] whose whole intent is to wean away Jews from their pure and holy faith so that they should accept Christianity [...] You should not even send a letter of apology.²

A second hard line approach was voiced by Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits who described interfaith dialogue as emotionally impossible and intellectually dishonest. The Christian world had caused too much harm to Jews for too long and paved the way for the worst horrors in Jewish history.

We are not as yet ready to enter a fraternal dialogue with a church, a religion, that has been responsible for so much suffering. As for dialogue in the purely theoretical sense, nothing could be more fruitless and pointless.³

A more nuanced attitude was that of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, head of a rabbinic college in New York, who was the intellectual leader of a relatively more moderate wing of Orthodox Judaism. He was revered by a generation of orthodox rabbis who saw themselves as his students and disciples. He was also against interfaith dialogue on matters of faith or theology, but allowed for meetings with other faith traditions for social or civic purposes.

His views were expressed in his article entitled "Confrontation" published in 1964.⁴ His argument was that an individual's inner faith is, at heart, totally private and incommunicable to any other individual, although people can meet and relate to others on more superficial levels. Similarly, he held that a faith community has unique beliefs that cannot be comprehended by outsiders. He concluded that an interfaith theological dialogue is impossible, though there is value in cultural and moral exchange.

Soloveitchik believed that one cannot share one's faith, not even with a brother of the same faith community. Just as an individual can never be fully understood by another, so a faith community can never be understood by another. He wrote:

The word of faith reflects the intimate, the private, the paradoxically inexpressive cravings of the individual for and his linking up with his maker. It reflects the numinous character and the strangeness of the act of faith of a particular community which is totally incomprehensible to the man of a different faith community." Soloveitchik's conclusion was: "The confrontation should occur not at a theological, but at a mundane human level."⁵

His view was accepted by the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America. It ruled that Jewish-Christian interaction should deal only with "universal problems" that are "economic, social,

² Moshe Feinstein, Responsa written Adar 1, 5727 (March 1, 1967), *Iggerot Moshe*, Yoreh Deah, 3, Number 43. Quoted from David Ellenson, "A Jewish Legal Authority Addresses Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Two Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein," translated and annotated by David Ellenson, published in *The American Jewish Archives Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 1&2, pp. 122-3.

³ Eliezer Berkovits, "Judaism in the post-Christian era" in *Judaism*, vol. 15/ number 1/ Winter, 1966, pp. 79-80.

⁴ Joseph Soloveitchik "Confrontation", in *Tradition*, vol. 6, no 2, Spring, Summer 1964.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 23-24).

scientific and ethical." It valued joint humanitarian and cultural endeavours on topics such as "War and Peace, Poverty, Freedom" and in matters of moral values and civil rights. But it stressed that faith is a unique, private, and intimate experience for each community, and so it opposed interfaith dialogue in matters of "faith, religious law, doctrine and ritual."⁶

This view was also accepted by Immanuel Jakobovits, then Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth, who wrote:

We regard our relationship with God and the manner in which we define and collectively express it, as being so intimate and personal that we would no more convey it to outsiders than we would share with others our husband-wife relationship. We feel it is improper to expose one's most innermost beliefs and mode of worship to the judgment and comparative scrutiny of those who do not share the same religious commitment.⁷

The same position was taken and re-affirmed by Orthodox leaders across Europe.

In 1988 the Orthodox Conference of European Rabbis stated "The Conference reconfirms the value of dialogue and co-operation between different religions on moral and social issues but not on theological subjects."

Soloveitchik's writings are full of brilliance, depth and elegance, but over the years his views on interfaith dialogue have been challenged. As decades passed, many rabbis continue to follow the positions of Soloveitchik and even of Berkovits and Feinstein. Nevertheless, interfaith dialogue has become increasingly respectable in mainstream Orthodoxy. I think there are a number of reasons for this development:

1) The Christian world has changed over these years. After Vatican II, *Nostrae Aetate* was published in 1965. This ground breaking declaration espoused a positive relationship between the Church and Non-Christian religions. In the following decades there were further developments particularly addressing the unique relationship with Judaism, and advocating a mutually respectful dialogue. It was very important for Jews to hear declarations such as "Accepting the Burden of History" where Christian leaders expressed sorrow and regret, and sought forgiveness for the centuries of anti-Semitism that Jews had suffered.⁸

2) The theoretical and religious underpinnings of Soloveitchik's position have been challenged even in orthodox circles. Some orthodox rabbis directly challenged Soloveitchik's philosophic and psychological statements. They challenged his assumptions, method and conclusions. It was unacceptable to invent imaginary theoretical types that Soloveitchik had presented in his writings, even though he himself recognised they did not appear in reality, and then use these images to create legal rules that have practical consequences affecting real people. They also

⁶ Rabbinical Council of America, "Statement on Interfaith Relationships," Rabbinical Council of America Record, February 1966.

⁷ Immanuel Jakobovits writing in *The Times*, 1971.

⁸ "Accepting the Burden of History Common Declaration of the Bishops' Conferences of the German Federal Republic, of Austria and of Berlin, on the Fiftieth anniversary of the pogroms against the Jewish Community on the night of 9/10 November 1938", *SIDIC*, 22, no. 1 / 2 (1989), pp. 36-41...

claimed that Jewish tradition did not allow for the dichotomy between “faith, religious law, doctrine and ritual” on the one hand, and “moral values and civil rights” on the other hand.⁹.

For example, Norman Solomon questions what is in or out under the heading ‘Theological’. He recounts an amusing and telling episode when he was forced to abandon his original agenda for a Jewish-Christian meeting on the grounds that his programme was too ‘theological’. Yet the final agenda had two themes – ‘Faith in the City’ and ‘AIDS’, both of which led to a highly theological discussion between the Chief Rabbi and the Archbishop of York on whether AIDS should be regarded as a Divine punishment. They agreed it should not.¹⁰

3) In recent decades some Orthodox rabbis have suggested various re-interpretations of “Confrontation” saying that Soloveitchik did not actually mean what he was usually thought to have meant. They point out that he wrote "Confrontation" not as a *Psak Halacha* (a Jewish legal document) but as a philosophic reflection. It belonged to the moment of 1964, a time which was too soon after holocaust, and before the Catholic Church had undergone profound change. Some of Soloveitchik’s later statements do seem to be more open to inter-religious encounter.¹¹

4) Another reason that Soloveitchik’s position was undermined was that interfaith dialogue was a fact of life. It was taking place and bearing fruits. People who participated had been genuinely excited by interfaith dialogue and found it stimulating and exciting. Though Soloveitchik had said it was neither possible nor desirable, interfaith dialogue clearly was happening, and participants found the experience meaningful.

I feel that Soloveitchik was right in his concerns that modern dialogue should not be like medieval disputations which were unequal contests forced upon the Jews by Christian authorities who attacked Judaism. He described this relation as that between “the few and the weak vis-à-vis the many and the strong.”. Soloveitchik appealed to the community of the many to respect the right of the community of the few to live, create and worship in its own way, in freedom and with dignity.

Any intimation, overt or covert, on the part of the community of the many that it is expected of the community of the few to shed its uniqueness and cease existing, because it has fulfilled its mission by paving the way for the community of the many, must be rejected.¹²

When I began interfaith dialogue, I assumed that any interfaith encounter would be based on mutual respect where participants would have to renounce any attempt at missionary activity. Rabbi Norman Solomon taught me this need not be the case. He wrote:

⁹ See David Hartman, “A Living Covenant”, New York and London, New York Free Press, 1985, pp.77-84, 101-7.

¹⁰ See Norman Solomon, “The ‘Soloveitchik line’ on Dialogue”, in Dan Cohn-Sherbok (Ed.).*Problems in Contemporary Theology*, Lampeter, 1991, pp. 225-40.

¹¹ For example, see Eugene Korn “The Man of Faith and Religious Dialogue: Revisiting ‘Confrontation’, *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Oct., 2005), Oxford University Press, pp. 290-315.

¹² Soloveitchik, “Confrontation”, p. 23.

So is dialogue at all possible with the triumphalist, the narrow evangelist, the fundamentalist? Yes! It is people who talk, not abstractions. Often enough, we can learn to see them as guardians of values and traditions that the more liberal easily cast aside; the dialogue of the reactionary is harder of access but may yield richer content than that of the liberal.¹³

Interfaith dialogue is itself of intrinsic value, but it is never perfect – it is always work in progress. A journey with another may be valuable even if we do not have a common goal or arrive at the same destination. We do not have to reach a common understanding. It is enough that we each grow in self-awareness, in awareness of the other, and in our efforts to create more peace in our troubled world.



Danny Smith at the Seminar 2012 in Moshi, Tanzania

My own journey of interfaith dialogue became coupled with the dialogue between religion and psychotherapy. The lecturer in Pastoral Care in my rabbinic college was Irene Bloomfield, a highly respected psychotherapist and a pioneer in the field of interfaith pastoral work. She was President of the Association of Pastoral Care and Counselling. Despite her own experiences in pre-war Germany, Irene had faith in life and in humanity. She had faith in the process of psychotherapy, and believed that psychotherapy and counselling could help people become better.

¹³ Norman Solomon, "Jewish/Christian Dialogue – The State of the Art", Lecture delivered June 1984, published in *Studies in Jewish/Christian Relations*, Selly Oaks 1984, p. 11.

She encouraged me to train at the Dympna Centre, a Catholic counselling centre run by Father Louis Marteau. My first clients were Catholic clergy, monks and nuns who had the courage to face various mental and emotional challenges.

In those days some religious leaders were suspicious of the work of psychotherapy and counselling. They used arguments against psychotherapy that were similar to Soloveitchik's arguments against interfaith dialogue. He had claimed that in our innermost selves, especially in matters of faith, none of us can be truly understood by others. Logically I suppose it would follow that in our innermost beliefs and faith, none of us can be truly understood by a psychotherapist, especially if that person was of another faith.

I remember a challenge raised during a visit of church leaders to the Dympna Counselling Centre. A prominent bishop told Father Marteau that while counselling could help patients with their emotional and psychological problems, it should steer clear of their religious faith and practice since these were matters beyond psychotherapy's domain. Louis disagreed.

I think that if this separation of domains had been part of a counselling contract, then patients would find that some of their most fundamental beliefs and practices would remain unavailable for reflection, and religion could easily be misused as a defense rather than as a path of growth.

In a similar way it can be argued that if religious institutions insist that matters of faith, religious law, doctrine and ritual are not up for discussion or reflection by outsiders, then it brings the danger of allowing irrational extreme ideology to remain unchallenged, and for dangerous abusive practices to be inflicted on members of that religious community as well as on outsiders.

It is the case that none of us can completely and perfectly understand another. In fact, none of us can ever completely understand ourselves. This is not a tragic situation and need not be a cause for despair. The point of therapy and of interfaith work is not about reaching a complete understanding of another person or of ourselves - that is impossible. The point of therapy and dialogue is to meet in respect and grow in self-awareness and in understanding others and the relationships between us.

I trained to be a psychotherapist while working as a communal rabbi. I had known several tensions in my life – interfaith tensions between Jew and non-Jew, tensions between different nationalities, cultures, ethnic groups and genders. I was then struggling in a very personal way with the tension between religion and psychotherapy. I became involved in the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling because in SIPCC all of these tensions can be faced and explored honestly and openly with congenial dialogue partners from a variety of perspectives.

Together in humility we share with each other, and listen and learn, in order to gain a better understanding of our own tradition as well as of other traditions. As pastoral carers we all try to support members of our own community and of other communities, and alleviate the sufferings of humanity.

Interfaith work became a form of therapy. The encounter was helping me to heal myself, helping others to find their own healing, and together helping to heal the world. I saw

interfaith work as a modern *mitzvah*, a Jewish commandment. It was part of *Tikkun Olam*, repairing a world that had been broken.

My religious home is and always will be Judaism. My family and synagogue celebrate the Jewish Sabbaths and Festivals, and are happy to welcome guests. At the same time, I have enjoyed visiting other faiths and traditions. Through Lionel, Irene and Louis I entered the world of SIPCC– and found another home and a second family composed of compassionate members of different traditions. Interfaith dialogue became a meeting between faithful people rather than a debate about faith beliefs. It has been delightful to be in the company of pioneers committed to their own traditions while treating others with respect, and committed to caring for people of all faiths and cultures. In interfaith dialogue I have experienced SIPCC members fulfilling the words of the prophet Malachi 3:16:

“Then those who feared the Eternal talked with each other, and the Eternal listened and heard.”



SIPCC Seminar 2009 in Haifa, Israel: the group is meeting for a Sabbath service in a synagogue

Encounter

Getting to know each other - being understood - finding recognition -
learning together - learning from each other

Cemal Tosun¹



There are many encounters in the life of every person that add new meaning and lead in new directions. Continuous intercultural encounters are such experiences. I know this from my own experience.

"Intercultural encounters" made no sense to a person who was born in a small village in western Turkey, who went to primary school in the same village, who attended secondary school and Imam Hatip School in two medium-sized towns, and who studied theology in the 1980s. He found it difficult to understand what sense the encounter with members of other religions could have. Although he had studied the history of religions, he was also familiar with what his religion, Islam, said about other religions. But for him it was impossible to think about who a person of another faith was and what meaning it had when it came to situations such as meeting, getting to know each other, working together, etc. Yes, I am talking about myself; it may be something different for someone else.

I can say that an international symposium on religious education, which our faculty organised in 1980 in Ankara in cooperation with Diyanet (a state-institution in Turkey for religious affairs) and the Diyanet Foundation, and then my trip to Germany in the same year became a turning point for me. A number of Germans also took part in this symposium and gave lectures on the subject of religious instruction of Turkish Muslim children in German schools. As a young research assistant at the theological faculty of the University of Ankara, who had some

¹ Cemal Tosun, Professor of Religious Education Studies at the Ankara University Faculty of Divinity, Turkey.

knowledge of the German language, I was responsible, among other things, for accompanying these German colleagues. One of them was Dr. K. G. and when we went for a walk with him at the Anıtkabir/Atatürk Mausoleum, one of my friends from my hometown came to meet us. We greeted each other with joy and I introduced him to my German colleagues. I can never forget his reaction. He said: *Hocam!* I am sure you will have this non-Muslim converted to Islam. He had said this in Turkish, and I thought and hoped that the German colleague would not understand. But it is still in my memory how I was embarrassed and my face blushed.

I travelled to Germany for two years at the end of June 1988 to improve my German language skills and to do research for my dissertation. I enrolled as a student at the Institute for Islamic Studies at the University of Cologne and started a German course there.

The first academic and intercultural event I attended was "World Religions and Peace Education, Paths to Tolerance: Focus, Christianity-Islam; Nuremberg Forum 1988". During my two years in Germany I also participated in the meetings for the development of a curriculum and textbooks in Islamic instruction for Turkish Muslim children at an Institute-in the state of North-Rhine-Westfalia in Germany. And from then on, the religious education of Muslims living in Germany and its cultural and religious significance became part of my academic activities in research and teaching. My guest professorship at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg in postgraduate studies of Islamic Studies between 2002-2004 is the highlight of my intercultural and interreligious encounters. During my guest professorship we worked together with non-Muslim colleagues, especially with Prof. Dr. Johannes Lähnemann, on the development and implementation of the modules of the curriculum for Islamic Studies. I also had the opportunity to participate and contribute to meetings on the training of teachers of Islam at the University of Osnabrück and the University of Pedagogy in-Karlsruhe. All my activities on an intercultural level up to that point consisted of my meetings and contributions in the field of Islamic religious education and didactics. And in all this I learned from others to understand the meaning and value of my own contributions and learning. "Learning together" and "learning from each other" now made sense to me and gained value.

The meeting with SIPCC in 2013 has added a significant new dimension to the dimensions of intercultural encounters in my life: Pastoral care and counselling. Moreover, the scope of my intercultural encounters has broadened to include many countries, religions and cultures from four continents. Although I had participated in numerous international encounters up to that point and had the chance to enjoy meeting and getting to know people from different cultures and religions, I have never had the chance to experience a new dimension in my life. Especially the Nuremberg Forums, in which I was able to participate several times, were platforms where I found the opportunity to meet other people interculturally. But these encounters were mostly on an academic level and with academics. The SIPCC meetings, on the other hand, were and are somewhat different, because they offer the possibility of encounters on a human level in addition to encounters on an academic level.

It was a coincidence that I was informed about SIPCC for the first time: My professor emeritus, Dr. Beyza Bilgin, forwarded an email to me which was an appeal to participate in the SIPCC Seminar in Mainz 2013. Apparently, she had received it from a German colleague. I also forwarded this mail to a colleague who might be interested. She agreed, but only if we would

travel there together. I also visited SIPCC on the Internet and contacted Mr. Helmut Weiß by e-mail. Then the whole thing developed in such a way that in the end I attended the Mainz Seminar alone. In these developments, the replies to Mr. Weiß's e-mails played an important role, which invited or encouraged my colleague and me to participate in the Seminar. First of all, I wanted to withdraw my request to attend because of the lack of financial support. However, Mr. Weiß kindly wrote that SIPCC could only financially support one participation. My colleague refused to travel alone. I now had the responsibility of giving my own lecture and also taking over the workshop planned for my colleague.

With the Mainz Seminar, the process of getting to know the SIPCC family began for me. And I think at the same time the process was set in motion for her to get to know me. Probably it started there in Mainz that I feel that I belong to the SIPCC family.

First of all, I have to admit that the Mainz Seminar was very different for me, a Seminar outside my previous experiences. To be more precise: it seemed to me to be so completely different, because as an academic I was more used to international symposia. Until then, I had participated in many extra-occupational Seminars for employees in religious fields and for teachers of religion. I had come to Mainz with the intention to participate in such a symposium. The Seminar was different from what I had expected and was very strenuous for me: A week long, starting early in the morning with morning prayer, sessions and lectures until noon, then workshops until late afternoon, and afterwards work in reflection groups and sometimes several other meetings.

Furthermore, almost all participants took part in all events. In particular, the list of those who were to participate in workshops and reflection groups was clear and made public. If they had not participated, everyone would have noticed. Moreover, it was necessary to speak in these workshops and reflection groups. Everyone should speak. To be able to speak in reflection groups, one had to experience the whole day carefully and collect notes and thoughts. Because in reflection groups you are asked about the results of the day for yourself: what was learned, what was new, interesting, what are your thoughts etc? At the beginning all this was much too much for me.

At international symposia, it was a habit for me to choose, in addition to my own lecture, some other lectures that seemed important to me and to follow them, but to spend the rest of the time in the city and the surrounding area, to go shopping, etc. In Mainz I tried to keep up with this program of SIPCC.

In my presentation I described the developments in the field of pastoral care in Turkey. At the workshop I gave a presentation on pastoral care activities in old people's and youth homes based on protocols from students. They studied at our faculty and should gain some practice. Shortly: I had explained that according to these protocols pastoral care in these institutions is a kind of religious education and lacks the dimension of counselling. I had also expressed that it can be seen that the religious workers in the institutions and also the students in nursing homes recited the Koran and sang religious songs. This was used as a method to facilitate a communicative relationship with the clients. More attention was given to the subject than I had expected. Everyone took the floor, shared their thoughts or asked questions. There was a fierce debate about whether reciting the Koran and singing ilahi could be considered a method for pastoral care. My opinion on this was critical in my presentation. I said that this would not

work in pastoral care. But when the topic was discussed so fiercely, some positive thoughts came to my mind and I offered them for discussion. For example, I had asked the question: If the goal is to get the client to speak and recite the Koran and/or sing ilahi, why not consider this as a method of pastoral care. Thus, I came into conflict with my own thesis in my presentation. But offering my own thesis for discussion was quite normal for me as an academic. Or perhaps the honest climate prevailing in the workshop led me to do so? I will tell you about this in a little more detail, because I experienced something related to it in the evening.



2013 in Mainz

When we left the rooms of the reflection groups on the same day and people from different groups greeted each other and asked the question How did it go? What did you do? etc., someone addressed me - unfortunately I forgot the name - and asked me the questions mentioned. I gave a short answer and replied: And you? He said: "We had to deal with the question that you had presented in your workshop all the time, whether Koran recitation and ilahi- singing could be considered a pastoral method". There was no time left for anything else. I was quite curious and asked: "And, your decision?" He said: "We said we could, and then we sang an ilahi."

What this meant to me: The group members had taken me, my contribution, my question seriously. They had learned something from me. And they had appreciated me and my thoughts so much that they shared their thoughts with me. I deeply enjoyed my self-esteem there. Throughout the whole week of the Seminar I had observed how everyone met everyone with respect without any distinction of religion, nationality, colour etc. However, it sometimes happened that some questions and/or answers led me to consider whether these were prejudices or stereotypes, but respect and sincerity seemed even more obvious to me.

I had felt so well accepted and appreciated that I signed up and applied for SIPCC membership. At the SIPCC general meeting it was declared that anyone who wanted to could fill out the

membership form. My quick decision led to a slight smile in the hall. Anyway, I was now a SIPCC member and the chance occasions that had led me to attend the SIPCC Seminar had disappeared. Because the admission of new students to the Chair of Extra-curricular Religious Education at the University of Ankara, of which I was in charge, had already been stopped. In addition, the teaching subjects and internships in pastoral training practice were to be gradually abolished. But I was in the Seminary and studied there for this training and for the practice. So why did I decide to become a SIPCC member? I was doing well here.

I liked the fact that the contributions from different religions and cultures were highly appreciated. It was said again and again how important the contributions from Judaism and Islam were, for example from the leadership of SIPCC. But a general acceptance in this respect was also palpable. The theme of the Mainz SIPCC Seminar was on pastoral care in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and this indicated that mutual appreciation was the intention.

If my memory does not mislead me, I have already been invited in Mainz to participate in the Menorode Seminar 2014 in the Netherlands. I took part in it with a workshop presentation. The fact that one should be active in all sessions of the Seminar led to the fact that I learned again and again in cooperation with the different participants. I was very happy about this, even though it was not easy for me from the language point of view. I made two experiences during my workshop presentation: One was related to the prejudices or stereotypes that one noticed in some of the questions and answers, as I have already pointed out. The other and the strongest was that I was generally accepted and appreciated in SIPCC. What triggered these two feelings in me simultaneously was the following: In my talk I had emphasized the importance of peace in the concept of "Islam". At that moment, a voice in a whisper could be heard saying, "What is wrong with IS? Afterwards, I noticed some gestures against this voice asking, "What's up with IS?" The moderator's reaction was also in the same direction. For a moment I had two conflicting feelings: a question based on prejudice and at the same time humanitarian acceptance. I can actually say that I experienced these two feelings several times.

What I had felt in this respect was of course not always in connection with my own person as a Muslim, but rather was about being a stranger to people of a different faith. I can even say that I felt in an exceptional situation in this respect. We experienced the most obvious example of exclusion when our member of the board, Dr. Miriam Szökeova, was unable to attend the Vienna SIPCC Seminar because her church did not allow her to attend a Seminar with other religions, especially with Muslims. The reactions to the Seminar report by Mr. Weiß, which he had written about his SIPCC course in Ankara and which he reported on in Vienna, are also within the same framework. However, in both cases and in all related issues, the attitudes and statements of all SIPCC bodies and active participants, especially Mr. Weiß, did not dominate such negative approaches. Therefore, the process always supported a sense of acceptance.

What interested me very much in the Menorode 2014 Seminar was the article on Humanistic Pastoral Care. The morning prayer held by a humanistic pastor inspired me very much and was an important experience. Some of the remarks of the humanistic pastor are still in my memory. For example, she said: "We must not be confused with some humanist movements

in matters of religion and belief in God. We humanists do not believe in God, but we are not against people who believe in God.

What impressed me in Mennorode and supported my feelings and thoughts of being accepted in SIPCC was a proposal from Mr. Weiß. He wanted to talk to me briefly and we went for a short walk, explaining that SIPCC very much appreciates the participation of other religions and that he thinks my contributions as a Muslim are important and he thanks me for that. And that the contributions of participants from different religions, especially Jewish and Muslim, are very valuable. And then he explained the idea of the board: He would propose to the general meeting to elect a Jewish and a Muslim member to the board. Then he asked whether I would be willing to run for the board if his proposal was accepted. This was an unexpected development for me and he said that it was a thought and that I had enough time for an answer.

It took three years to elect one Jewish and one Muslim member to the board. However, I was already elected as a member of the Academic Network at the Ghent Seminar (2016) and took part in their meetings. In addition, other Muslims from Germany and several other European countries had also participated in the SIPCC Seminars in Mennorode and Ghent. As the time for the SIPCC Seminar in Wittenberg was approaching, Mr. Weiß sent a general appeal by mail, Muslim and Jewish persons who were willing to do so should run for the board. I wanted to hold back and not run. Because from my point of view there were already possible candidates from Germany and Austria from academic and Muslim organisations, who had no language problems and were geographically closer. But when Mr Weiß personally asked me to submit the candidature, I did.



Seminar Gent 2016

It was not possible for me to take part in the SIPCC-Seminar-Wittenberg because the Muslim Kurban Festival took place in the same period. Nevertheless, I received the message that I had been elected to the board. I still do not know whether there were other Muslim candidates. But I was very happy about the election. However, I sometimes still think about whether I, as a member of the board, can make the contributions expected from the Muslim side and whether a Muslim member from Germany and/or Austria could not help better. But it is a great honour for me to be on the board of such an important society.

There is no doubt that SIPCC is a multicultural society, although the majority of its members are Christians. In SIPCC it is always emphasized that besides multiculturalism, multi-religiousness is also very important. Working together with people from different continents and countries, learning together and learning from each other is beautiful, brings joy and is very enriching. The dimensions reach to feelings, community, cognitive learning and understanding of culture and religion.

The fact that people from different cultures miss each other, which is probably not only the case with me but with almost everyone who attends Seminars, says a lot. At every meeting I experience how members and participants hug, exchange and continue this for a week.

Over time, I have found, among other things, the opportunity to reflect on intercultural pastoral care, which is part of the vision of SIPCC. It seems to me that even the religious and cultural differences in the same religion call for intercultural pastoral care. The situation of refugees from different countries in Turkey, from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and African countries challenges us to work a lot on intercultural pastoral care in Turkey as well. Dr. Sinem Uğurlu has done research on these issues under my guidance and some of them have been presented at SIPCC Seminars. These and similar researches show that in case of different languages and in other cultural areas, intercultural rapprochement is very important in pastoral care, even if, for example, the refugees belong to the same religion. It can be shown that one of the most important services of refugee work is to provide a living space in which refugees feel free and secure. I would also like to stress here that pastoral care should serve to open up safe living space for refugees.

A safe living space is probably a matter of feeling and feeling. In other words: safe living space is where one feels safe. The basic principle here is that a person's basic spiritual and material needs are met. The material needs are, among other things, what people need for food and their stay. The spiritual needs, however, are not easy to list. What is of primary importance for people in this respect must be respected and accepted according to their own identity. In short: being offered a living space in which one can continue to live with human dignity.

Intercultural competence is very important for those who offer pastoral care in different religions and denominations. When a pastor accompanies people, who belong to different denominations of the same religion, but in which the denominations do not form an institutional body, as is the case in Islam, an intercultural approach is important - because it is unavoidable. In such cases, the counsellor must have knowledge of the client's "denomination" and take it into account in pastoral care. This also applies to the pastoral care of clients of other religions.

However, it does not seem compatible with the nature of pastoral care to serve people of different religions with a single spiritual advisor. In my opinion, most people prefer a spiritual person of their own religion. Ultimately, however, pastoral care is a service based on voluntariness and willingness. Therefore, only within the framework of the principle of voluntariness is it possible to provide pastoral care with a person of another religion. In such situations it is important to have information about the religion and culture of the client and to be aware of the religious sensitivities in pastoral care. Nevertheless, I think that in an institution such as a hospital or a prison, a single spiritual person will not be possible for members of all religions and cultures, no matter how much knowledge and approach they have. Such a person can only be a psychologist or psychiatrist, but not a religious pastor.

I experience that SIPCC creates a good environment for thinking and sharing for intercultural spiritual care. Furthermore, I think that this exchange of SIPCC members and participants* is slowly spreading around the world. Every interested person and every institution will find their way.



Social Science University, Ankara and SIPCC Training Programme, January 2018

Learning Communities and Co-operations

Seeing Context, World, Other, and Oneself

Making Pastoral Care wider and connected to down to Earth Mission

Ronaldo Sathler-Rosa¹



*Pastoral mission is to help people see. When one sees the soul is illuminated
(assigned to Rubem Alves, adapted).*

The following annotations are personal reflections based on the experience of the author. While they are general experiences, they are focused around the annual Seminars and other activities of the Society of Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling (SIPCC). I will limit my text to short remarks about SIPCC Seminar methods. Also, I want highlight specific SIPCC contributions towards expanding, or in some cases strengthening the instances of pastoral care, pastoral action, and counseling in solidarity. The fundamental intention of this presentation is to demonstrate that SIPCC has accomplished its major founding goals.

First of all, a few words about method. Method has to do with *how* to make ideas, products, tangible and available to others, to oneself, and society. At a pedagogical level the discipline methodology helps educators and all those involved in this ongoing educational process to find the best methods that can be helpful to facilitate *lifelong learning*, or continuing

¹ Co-Founding member and for many years member of the Executive Committee / Honorary member of SIPCC

education. The choice of a particular method is done in light of the issues at stake or according to the nature of the respective object. Usually in the field of Social and Human Sciences the particular object of study are human beings and their living environments. The aim of a specific working method is, at the end, to aid human beings to find a healthy life amid the circumstances of their diverse cultural milieus, and to increase knowledge.

I want argue that the most appropriate methods to fulfill its goal as far as human beings are concerned are those that provide a safe environment that allows people to find themselves, i.e., to know the deeper side of their minds, their souls, their bodies, and the cultural influences that have shaped their ways of thinking, as well as their attitudes. This continuing internal journey ensures oneself an encounter with the polarized truth embodied in ones lives: fragility and force, fear and courage, hope and despair, love and hate, humbleness and arrogance, faith and doubt, in addition to many others. Even though the context of the well-known verse of the Second Testament -“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8.32) –.does not fit into the following statement, “the truth will set you free” applies, to my understanding, to human condition. The level of realism regarding life itself in addition to our life predicament is a determining factor toward maintaining a satisfying level of awareness about ourselves. Then we may be able to find better ways of living, that is, a *full life*.

By choosing specific methods SIPCC reaches one of its primary goals: *lifelong learning*, or continuing pastoral-theological education.

It is my contention that SIPCC`s basic working methods are effective, especially in the context of the Seminars. These are derived from two well tested methodologies: the basic methods of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and the See, Judge, Act method linked to the thought of the Belgian Cardinal Joseph Cardijn (1882-1967). In my view SIPCC expanded and adapted these two methods in order to fulfill its learning goals.

I will offer a short review of the two mentioned methods. CPE, originated in the United States, has been described as “A method of developing personal and professional growth in ministry, a distinctive feature of which is practical experience of ministry under supervision, normally but not always in hospital setting” (LYALL, 1987). As many of us who have been exposed to CPE programs know, the participants undertake, under supervision, specific pastoral work, such as leading devotions, visiting the sick in hospitals, or people in prisons. The work of the supervisor is central here. The supervisor assists the students to pay attention to either professional or personal aspects that need to be developed. Furthermore, the peer group experiences open the opportunity for the students to be aware of their own emotions, capabilities, and how to react *vis-à-vis* painful situations, and stressing experiences.

On the other hand, the See, Judge, and Act method may be described as three steps “which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice”. I will support my comments based on a publication by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (2011).

In the first phase, See, the specific situation is identified as it is perceived by the participant. The living conditions of individuals and communities are examined. To name the reality of the situation, and what is going on that causes concerns is a considerable part of this first process. Also, a careful and intentional examination of the available information of the situation is

followed. What individual and communities do, feel, and say about their living contexts? How do they react and behave in light of this particular situation?

To judge does not have a negative connotation. It means to analyze the concrete situation observed. By analyzing it is possible to make a judgment about the situation. Judgment implies in (1) social analysis and (2) pastoral-theological reflection and theory building.

To act involves thoughtful and planned actions in order to transform the given conditions, particularly the social structures that have been factors of unfair suffering.

I see some similarities between SIPCC Seminar methods, CPE and See, Judge, Act methodologies. Both CPE and the threefold method underscore the importance of the data coming from below, that is, from concrete life conditions. CPE attempts to help the participants to learn not from above, but from the living experiences of people in hospitals or somewhere else. The See, Judge, and Act method places individuals in direct experiencing with concrete life situations. As we can learn from SIPCC Seminars, a considerable part of the programs consists of visits, interviews, excursions that expose participants to concrete life situations.

The emphasis on field research meets one of the major goals of SIPCC, i.e., theory-building work from below, or based in grass-roots communities.

I want to pinpoint some aspects that were either reinforced through my experiences with the Seminars, or learned anew from the various themes of the Seminars.

First, pastoral actions of care become more helpful if we are attentive to the social environment of those whom we care. Context, that is, the milieu where people live and work shape the attitudes, and minds of persons. We are ourselves plus our circumstances (Ortega y Gasset). One's ambience is a determining factor in the way people perceive themselves, their pains and joys. Furthermore, it might happen that some people living under the same cultural umbrella have different reactions before life events. Also, the issue of context brings to pastoral agent the awareness that contexts in the same culture may be different.

Second, economics plays a crucial role in our life journey. In the so-called emergent countries, usually, economic issues mean lack of financial resources to achieve a decent standard of living, low salaries, high living costs, lack of education and health insurance, among others. Besides, financial privation of things necessary for a comfortable life contaminates relationships between family members.

Third, issues of existence precede religious affiliations. Existential issues, such as relationships, working problems, finances, sexuality, social concerns, healthy, hopes and hopelessness, among others become common grounds for dialogue and mutual collaboration among religions. Questions emerging from existence are both the context and the situations to be identified by pastoral communities, and pastoral agents. These problems open the door for deeper dialogue about their roots aiming at helping people to find meaning in the midst of lived circumstances and fragilities.²

²Adapted and expanded from Sathler-Rosa, 2013.

Existential issues are approached from the perspective of the *care of the soul*. It means that to care of the soul is carried on amidst concrete human search for the meaning of life and happiness within history. Also, this perspective prevents the adoption of a superficial treatment of human drama. In contrast to *band aid* solutions pastoral care attempts to trace the difficult path towards true humanization, that is, to facilitate the encounter with real being and circumstances.

Fourth, more and more pastoral caregivers are becoming aware that considerable ranges of human problems have their roots not within the individual. Individual problems may have their origin in external factors, such as cultural, social, and political factors. It is not enough to cure the individuals if society at large is sick. To address these elements requires different tools than, for example, the traditional resources of psychology and theology. Pastoral agents need the help of other sciences, such as political sciences, economics, and sociology in order to gain a better understanding of the established rules of these levels of social life.

The external factors to be addressed by pastoral care gives brings into our care of individuals, families, and communities the public dimension of pastoral actions of care. A *new* trend in pastoral care appears: “from exclusive focus upon the ‘living human document’ to attend also to the ‘living human web’” (MILLER-MCLEMORE, *apud* GRAHAM, 2000, p. 10).

Fifth, we have been challenged by SIPCC to search for pastoral means aimed at ecologically anthropocentric-oriented actions of caring. This way of pastoral care conveys appreciation and respect for diversity, and learning from the other. The ecological and anthropocentric emphasis takes for granted that Jesus did not enter history for the sake of the Divine but to bring about abundant life for the sake of humanity, Creation, and the cosmos.

Just as an example of concrete action, pastoral care givers consider human questions and human aspirations, then pastoral agents enter a dialogue on the matters raised, and correlate these issues with possible pastoral responses. So, a hermeneutical approach is used. The pastoral way of doing care looks like a “shared pilgrimage in which pastoral care givers attempted to facilitate the process of self-knowledge, the search for meaning” in light of appropriate theological images (SATHLER-ROSA, 2002, p. 234).

Finally, attention to individuals without stressing individualism has been a hallmark of SIPCC Seminars. Individualism in many societies is killing the individual. As we have learned from many theologians there is no I without You. There is no doubt that we continue being partners with individuals in our daily work as pastoral care givers. However, individual concerns are born not only in their primary relationships. Besides these concerns there are cultural elements that create suffering.

SIPCC has fulfilled its goal of expanding prevalent theories in the area of pastoral care and counseling by including other aspects of current history that demand additional social and human sciences to attain an appropriated knowledge of the human soul in contemporary context. The themes of SIPCC activities show an appreciation for continuing pastoral-theological dialogue with current historical trends.

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SIPCC-Study-trip to Brazil 1998; visit in a home for children

Learning together - learning from each other - supporting each other

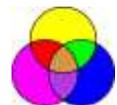
Insights into the cooperation between AFfsp and SIPCC

Jean-Charles Kaiser¹ und Martin Wehrung²



**ASSOCIATION FRANCAISE
DE FORMATION ET DE SUPERVISION
PASTORALES**

AFfsp



In the beginning

At the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties of the last century the first contacts were made. Helmut Weiß came to Strasbourg to see how the DGfP (the German association for Pastoral Psychology) and the CPE section could support the first steps of the initial training in clinical pastoral education, Ariane Muller and Jean-Charles Kaiser travelled to Debrecen in 1991 to the European Council on Pastoral Care and Counselling (ECPC) to look around and introduce themselves to the European scene.

¹ Jean-Charles Kaiser, retired pastor and teaching supervisor, has been a member of SIPCC since its foundation. As president of AFfsp, he has represented the French supervisors and helped to organize several seminars, conferences and meetings..

² Martin Wehrung, pastor and teaching supervisor, is the current president of AFfsp and also a member of SIPCC. Since 2008 he regularly participates in the Seminars of SIPCC.

The discussions held there and other shared experiences quickly led to mutual trust, discovery of common analyses and ideas on the importance of the social, economic and political dimensions of pastoral care and the creative dynamics of interculturality in this field.

This led to regular contacts and exchanges and, when SIPCC was founded in 1995, to the participation of various French supervisors and pastors in the annual Seminars of SIPCC. Some of these supervisors presented workshops or facilitated reflection groups.

In 2003, the Association Française de formation et de supervision pastorales (AFFsp) was founded as a registered association, which allowed new developments. For example, thanks to the support of SIPCC, AFFsp was accepted as a member of ICPC (International Council on Pastoral Care and Counselling) in Poland in 2007.

Some co-operations

These relationships have grown and have led to the preparation and organization of the annual Seminar of SIPCC in September 2010 in Strasbourg (F), on "Dynamiques de migrations, aujourd'hui - Pratique pastorale dans un contexte socio-politique et culturel" (Dynamics of Migration Today - Pastoral Care and Counselling in a Socio-political and Cultural Context). This was the first SIPCC Seminar which was conducted in French and in English – without German.

. The international Executive Committee, which arrived a few days earlier, not only discovered cultural sites in Alsace (including the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar, Albert Schweitzer Museum in Gunsbach, Oberlin Museum in Waldersbach) but also took the opportunity to visit the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Geneva and hold important discussions with it. The more than one hundred participants from all over the world were particularly interested in the contributions of French sociologists and theologians, in the visit and meeting in Strasbourg of various activities and institutions concerned with migrants and refugees, in the reception and exchange with the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe and in a festive evening around shared "tarte flambée".

A different kind of cooperation developed in various specialist conferences, together with colleagues from the Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland and France, where various aspects of pastoral care and pastoral supervision were dealt with.

Also, thanks to the personal relationships established through SIPCC, Jean-Charles Kaiser had the honour of being appointed as a member of the scientific advisory board of the Gyökössy Institute in Hungary, and thus contributing to the development of further training in pastoral care and counselling, especially in the talks for admission to further training for supervision and recognition as a pastoral supervisors.

One aspect of this networking of relationships is still to be mentioned: the close relations of our association especially with the supervisors of the Association suisse romande de supervision pastorale, i.e. the French-speaking part of Switzerland, has always allowed them to receive regular information about the work of and with SIPCC. And they were again able to pass this information on to their colleagues from Canada (Quebec) with whom they are in close contact.

The partnership

After all these experiences, it became natural that in 2013, an official partnership between SIPCC and Afsp was decided upon. This new form of cooperation has taken on other dimensions.

On the one hand, the financial support of some training courses in pastoral care of the SIPCC Branch Tanzania, which became particularly important to us after we had participated in the annual Seminar 2012 in Moshi (Tanzania).

On the other hand, the close cooperation in the Grundtvig Learning Partnership between 2013 and 2015 with the title "Social integration of people from different religions through intercultural and interreligious cooperation in the field of pastoral care - INTERRELIGIÖSE SEELSORGE". A learning partnership supported by the EU and coordinated by SIPCC.

In this context, our association organised a conference in Strasbourg in October 2014 on the theme "Contributions of religions to a Europe of hospitality". The contributions of the president of the national board of the Cimade (an ecumenical association in France working with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, especially in the field of human rights), the representatives of the Buddhists in France and a theologian on the concept of hospitality aroused much interest.³



Members of the Conference October 2014 in Strasbourg

³ The contribution of this conference are published in the SIPCC Magazine Nr. 24 (2015) Jean-Charles Kaiser :Apports des religions à une Europe de l'hospitalité – Beiträge der Religionen zu einem Europa der Gastfreundlichkeit

Affsp also organised, in special cooperation with the Faculty of Theology in Bratislava (Slovakia), another conference on "Sinti and Roma among us in Europe", in Svätý Jur in April 2015, with an important contribution from the Commissioner for Roma to the European Commissioner for Human Rights. The presence of and exchanges with Roma from various European countries was also particularly impressive.

Common learning experiences

What has impressed and continues to impress the two of us in a very special way, and still impresses others on our common way, is the capacity of SIPCC to bring together people from all over the world and from different cultures and backgrounds and to encourage them in the process of mutual learning.

In the first years of the annual Seminars, the themes of the Second World War and its traces in the lives of the participants, their "patients" and their societies came up again and again and that very strongly. In this way, important steps in understanding of the life of many humans could be worked out and processed, prejudices could be broken down and moments of reconciliation could be experienced. Not only among Europeans, but also with participants from other continents. It is only simple processing of the past, an outsider may think, but those who took part in these meetings have had deep experiences. Closely connected with this theme was also the sometimes delicate realization of the division of Europe between East and West and its consequences, and between the South and North of our planet with the consequences of colonialism. Thus, it became more and more clear to us that pastoral care can not only refer to the spiritual concerns of the people but also finds its expression in the promotion of conditions of social justice, "respect for life" (Albert Schweitzer) and peace (Shalom).

Afterwards, the attention of many meetings turned for us to the topics of social, economic, ecological and political responsibility of pastoral care givers and counsellors, each in their own context. For example: in dealing with the great question of the reception of migrants, the exchange on the understanding of "integration" and "assimilation" became very instructive moments.

And it was also important for us that in the intercultural forums and in the reflection groups our own person as well as our personal attitudes were questioned, that the people concerned were present so that we did not talk about them but with them, that we looked for concrete steps and that the discovery of ideas and solutions of the participants from other cultures and continents, supplemented in the workshops, were very encouraging.

This to and for between information, reflection and exchange about practice, in respect of the person and the opinion of the other, sometimes complete strangers, is and remains for us the well-dosed mixture to learn with and from each other.

Although sought and experienced since the beginnings, in recent years the dimension of the interreligious has developed greatly, the intercultural unfolding into the "interconvictional"⁴. The fact that over the years more and more participants from different religions, such as Christians, Catholic or Protestant, Jews, Muslims or Buddhists, and from different philosophical or free-thinking directions were present and were each time ready to talk about the core of their faith, to talk also mutually about the understanding of "theological" concepts as well as about the transfer into practice is a characteristic of SIPCC that one does not very often find elsewhere, where there is sometimes only about ineffective chitchat. And that this colourfulness and this truthfulness endures, even if now and then with tensions and conflicting moments, shows us the pertinence of this path and testifies in us the desire to continue to participate.

Our association, the Affsp, is probably a small association, which does not have a lot of resources, but for us it is and remains important to maintain this relationship with SIPCC.

On the one hand, we experience a worldwide opening, which enriches and stimulates us in our daily training and supervision work, on the other hand, we experience a great solidarity with people from many countries, as it was the case during the time of the terrorist attacks in France, where many messages of support reached us, or during the natural disasters and political unrests in Asia, Japan, Brazil or Nicaragua, where we wrote our concern.

Finally, we want to express a concern by mentioning the future of democracy on our European continent. We are increasingly noticing how in our country and in other European countries, extreme right-wing views or "illiberal" policies are succeeding. And that these can spread in this way because they also have a certain audience in the opinions of many fellow citizens. A statement that can also be made in other continents at the moment.

Thus, at this point, in our eyes, a "new" challenge to intercultural pastoral care and counselling is emerging. And we are aware that we cannot evade this responsibility.

⁴ "The inter-convictional approach leads each of the actors to allow themselves to be enriched, in mutual recognition, by the views of one or the other, expressed in complete freedom and without the will to hegemony". At www.g3i.eu-lingen (18.08.2020)

A blessed collaboration

SIPCC and Education in Pastoral Care in the Reformed Church of Hungary

János Tóth¹



I am János Tóth, Pastor of the Reformed Church in Hungary, one of the founders of SIPCC (1995) and a member of this association who has been involved in its life from the beginning.

I have participated in several plannings of SIPCC-Seminars (in Lakitelek 1998 and Kecskemét 2004, both in Hungary) and I was active as the director of the Gyökössy Institute for Pastoral Care and Supervision (2005-2017). The institute was a cooperation partner of SIPCC at many events, e.g. in Krzyżowa/Kreisau, Poland and in the Seminar in Vienna, Austria in 2018.

It is a great honour for me to write about the contacts between Hungary and SIPCC on the occasion of the 25th anniversary. At the beginning of the 1990s, I and two colleagues registered for the Prague SIPCC Seminar (1994), inspired by a friend of mine. In the following years not only we but many others received invitations, and not only colleagues from Hungary but also from Transylvania, Romania. The first Seminar I visited, was a very impressive experience for me, at the beginning of the changes in Eastern Europe in the early 90ies after the breakdown of the Soviet Empire. The lectures and workshops had the topic "*Everything is breaking down - Can you help me? - Pastoral care and counselling as response to value-changes of society and culture.*" And that was the reality: At that time everything really did

¹ János Tóth is the director of the Gyökössy Institute of the Reformed Church in Hungary; supervisor in clinical pastoral education; he has led and conducted pastoral training in Hungary for many years.

collapse. We ourselves did not know what political changes the breakdown would bring. The church too was looking for its tasks in the changing situation. After many years of silence, we suddenly had many questions: What can we do with the new freedom? Are we actually allowed to ask questions? Are there answers to our questions? For my part, I can say that for the first time in my life I was able to participate in a SIPCC Seminar in Prague, where I could experience the importance of the person in the political and economic context under the changing social conditions. The most important question for me was what we as a Christian church could do concretely for pastoral care. It became clear to me what a great responsibility we have as pastoral workers in accompanying families with their spiritual and psychological problems. They cannot be ignored. I can still remember well the great impact on me of the lectures that dealt with economic, sociological and other topics and focused on how to approach these issues from a theological point of view. The diversity of the many nations also moved me deeply. We all spoke a different language, but I felt that even with the words that were not understood, the faces found each other in the "unspoken", in the soul.

Later we regularly participated in Seminars in Mühlheim, Germany, and in various places outside Germany. One result of our constant presence was that in 1998 we were able to hold a Seminar with a record number of participants in *Lakitelek*, in the south of Hungary, with the theme "*Stories of Hope*".



Lakitelek 1998

This was the beginning of a long-term work and a close, friendly relationship developed between us in Hungary and SIPCC, which was decisive for the future. During the Seminars we met well qualified colleagues from abroad who practiced pastoral psychology in their ministry. At that time, we were looking for new ways to educate ourselves in the field of pastoral care

and counselling to acquire new knowledge. We were especially interested how and in what way we could approach people in our congregations, because at that time there was no training in this field in Hungary. Most of the pastoral workers were trained only mentally and hygienically and lacked the theological and spiritual foundations. In Lakitelek there was an opportunity to reflect together on how to get to know the field of pastoral care more deeply and how pastoral care could be taught. At that time, we did not know what results we would achieve in the future by working together. In 1999 we met again in Berlin in the Seminar. Professor Dávid Németh, head of the Religious Education and Pastoral Psychology Department of the *Gáspár Károli University* of the Reformed Church in Hungary, also took part in the planning. And then we discussed in the house of the Weißens how we could establish Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) courses in Hungary. We agreed with Helmut Weiß that we would create the framework and the conditions for that so that pastoral education in Hungary could start with the support of SIPCC. According to the standards of the German Society for Pastoral Psychology (DGfP) and with the funding of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), SIPCC helped us to start the first clinical pastoral training in Hungary.



Dr Gusztáv Bölcskei, Leading Bishop of the Reformed Church of Hungary, Helmut Weiß and Prof. Dr. Dávid Németh (Karoly University, Budapest); 2001 at the start of the first advanced course in CPE.

In 2000 the first training course according to the standards of the DGfP (German association for Pastoral Psychology) took place. Pastors who had previously attended other training courses could also participate in the programme. This was followed by the advanced course in 2001, which was followed by the training for supervision (2002-2004) with the same group-members. On the final evening of the SIPCC Seminar held in 2004 in Kecskemét, Hungary, entitled *"How young people experience violence - What does it mean for pastoral care and counselling?"* the graduates of the supervision course were recognized as pastoral supervisors and presented to the audience, which was a great event. In the courses questions always arose like: How will things continue in the church/outside the church? What can we do for the church in the future? I must also mention that the Church and especially the bishops and church leaders have always been aware of our contact with SIPCC and gave a modest sum of money available for education. The Seminar held in Kecskemét was present in the media, and there were also people in the Church who supported our groundbreaking work. Already during the training, the question arose how to put the acquired knowledge into practice, especially in the Church. We took the German Association of Pastoral Psychology as a model and founded the Association for Pastoral Psychology, Pastoral Care and Supervision of the Reformed Church in Hungary. When planning Conferences to educate pastors and church workers in our church, we initially repeatedly experienced "hard walls". We had great help because we were in constant contact with Helmut Weiß during the supervisors' courses. This enabled us to work on the obstacles to supervision and the training of pastoral care with him and to look at possibilities for progress in an even larger, expanded context. We wanted to find a new way, so in 2005 we founded the Gyökössy - Institute for Pastoral Care and Supervision, which was until the last year primarily responsible for the pastoral training and supervision of parish pastors and workers in congregations. After many basic and advanced courses in CPE we were also able to offer supervision courses. Helmut Weiß worked with us again and again. In May 2015, six pastors received the official recognition in pastoral supervision, followed by six more in autumn 2019. Besides pastors of the Reformed Church, Lutheran pastors, pastors of the Pentecostal Churches, Baptists and pastors of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania also took part in the courses - so we were very ecumenical. In addition, we were very international: women and men who have Hungarian as their mother tongue from the Carpathian Basin, i.e. from Romania, and from Serbia took part. During the time of the trainings we kept regular contact with SIPCC. The experience and encouragement of foreign colleagues helped us exceptionally during the introductory phase. Many of the supervisors who completed the course took part in the SIPCC conferences in Krzyżowa/ Kreisau, Poland for many years. In some of them the Gyökössy Institute was involved as a cooperation partner. Helmut Weiß himself held also twice times courses for the candidates of the supervision courses, he has helped to think together and has been involved in planning the future and in the completion of the training. The Institute organised annual professional conferences on various topics, the speakers were mostly well-known colleagues, friends who had participated in the SIPCC Seminars. For many years our work was supported by an international advisory board, whose members were loosely or more closely connected to SIPCC. During these times our institute has worked well, from year to year we have reached 300-500 people through training, supervision and various organizational work at courses and conferences. The contact with SIPCC was an important asset for us because the Institute was

able to get involved in the life of international pastoral psychology and care. We participated as a cooperative partner in the planning of several Seminars. For years our pastoral-psychological supervising workshop functioned with SIPCC members, at our annual meetings we reflected together on pastoral-psychological, theoretical and practical principles (in Budapest, Graz, Austria; Venlo), Netherlands.

We have to talk about all this in the past, because in recent years the tasks of the Gyökössy Institute were changed by decisions of the church. The institute is now no longer responsible for training in pastoral care. Now it offers counselling for couples and families in the Reformed Church. The main areas are pastoral care for singles, couples and families and supervision of individuals, teams and groups. The pastoral care courses have been integrated as advanced education of the Church in Universities. The training is still based on the CPE model with practice and the reflection of the practice and are supervised by the trained supervisors of the former Gyökössy Institute.

In summary, I can say that 25 years ago we did not know that our friendship, in one of the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe and in the Reformed Church, would give rise to such processes. Our institute was the only one in East Europe on Pastoral Psychology. We had already suspected, but did not foresee, which ecclesiastical obstacles would be there, nor did we think that one must constantly adapt and change. I can say without exaggeration that it was a very extraordinary and great help for me and us to be a part of SIPCC, because through the annual Seminars I and other Hungarian participants always got new impulses and insight to continue the work of pastoral care. I am very thankful for the past years especially to Helmut Weiß, who was a friend and also professionally engaged, and always supported our ideas, the learning of pastoral care, the professional education of pastoral workers and the development of the professional life in relation to the Hungarian church conditions.

The relationship between SIPCC and Hungary goes far beyond: Everything we have received with the help of SIPCC serves the Reformed Church, appears in the lives of people and families, and creates new paths for them.



Janos Toth and friends from Hungary and Romania at the SIPCC Conference in Transylvania 2003

SIPCC as a Journey with God and His people in diversity

Personal observations from Indonesia

Mercy Anna Saragih¹



On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling (SIPCC) I would like to start by congratulating Pastor Helmut Weiss and the members of the Executive Committee. I thank them for their wonderful service to the SIPCC community over so many years. Twenty-five years of devotion to God is certainly not an easy ministry. Nevertheless, SIPCC's commitment to serve the community of counselors, pastors, supervisors, teachers, scientists, and other pastoral workers has never been shaken or diminished. We should all be happy to celebrate this anniversary with a heart full of gratitude to God. This celebration should not only highlight many developments of the 25 years, but also deepen our commitment to find new ways to bring the "Good News" to every culture and as many people as possible around the world. In this way, the members of the Society will continue to contribute to the spreading of the Good News, not only with words, but above all by working for the healing of life in the world.

The first connections to SIPCC

February 2002, I met Pak Helmut Weiß the first time, who came to Northern Sumatra to the Simalungun Protestant Christian Church (GKPS) to conduct a course in pastoral counselling for

¹ Pastor Mercy Anna Saragih - CPE Full Supervisor; Pastor of the GKPS (Protestant Christian Church of Simalungun)-Indonesia

24 pastors and "Bible women". He was invited by Bishop Dr. Edison Munthe. That was an extraordinary experience for both sides. To establish deeper relationships leaders of the different Protestant churches and pastors and myself were invited to the SIPCC Seminar in the same year in Basel, Switzerland. A large delegation from Indonesia came to Basel in September – and it was a great Experience for them.



Members of the delegation from Indonesia

Since this first course 2002 was successful, the mentioned Bishop invited Helmut and Christa Weiß to continue with the education in pastoral Care in 2004. Both should come and to make a new experiment: Christa was to devote special attention to women, Helmut to men. The idea was that then it would be easier to open up to each other for difficult issues in a male dominated society. I am very sorry that I was not able to participate in this course because at that time, I was doing my first CPE course in Cebu in the Philippines.

Since that time in 2002 and 2004 the connection and networking between SIPCC, the Simalungun Church and the Batak Church in North-Sumatra has been established and goes until today.

The methods of the first courses in Indonesia, sponsored by SIPCC, were completely different than the education before and a new approach for pastors and Bible women who participated. The courses had the goal to transfer the learning processes into personal experiences and professional practice. The feedback from the participants opened the spirit and attention of the church to become more aware of the importance of empowering and equipping pastors and Bible women to be able to provide better ministry and serve people better. It was such a great blessing when the training for pastoral ministry was thus started. Therefore, more and more pastors were going to the Philippines to do training in CPE.

I have attended quite a few of the Seminars of SIPCC, the last one in Düsseldorf 2019, and I have experienced, that they have challenged me to work again and again on the relations between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia. Being a Christian in Indonesia is a blessing with all its multidimensional complexity. The complexity of life in Indonesia means to be willing to accept differences. Diversity is a reality. It is part of creation. God brought the idea of diversity into his creations. (Genesis 1-2). Diversity is the richness and beauty of life in this world: religion, ethnicity, nation, language, skin colour, gender and many more. We acknowledge the omnipotence of our God as the creator of the universe. As a Christian and Indonesian, I am

open to diversity. Diversity in itself is the way we can show God's love to other people and value them as God's beloved people.



The group of 2002

The experience of living in the midst of a diverse community encourages me to respect each other. I had a beautiful childhood, which I always remember fondly. I had many moments that I shared with my Muslim friends. My father was a pastor. But all my friends, mostly Muslims, always came to my house and played with me. When led - Idul Fitri (the celebration after the month of fasting) comes, I remember that my house was full of ketupat, a dish of rice and the many other delicious dishes and all kinds of cakes that my Muslim friends sent to me. The same happened when it was Christmas time. I was the one who was ordered by my mother to bring cakes and cookies to my Muslim friends. It was really beautiful how we lived together in harmony and peace. I have always kept that in my heart, even until today. I can also say that this childhood memory that I carry within me has shaped me and helped me to accept the diversity in my life. Muslim, Hindu, Buddhism, I respect all people of these faiths. I have friends from all different religious and ethnic groups. And that is basically what makes a global community. I am different. You are different. Yet we can live together in peace and harmony and enjoy our friendship.

But as I got older, that changed. I experience daily life as a Christian minority in my country. Here the terms majority and minority have an important meaning. The issue of majority-minority can be experienced every day. In some areas this also applies to religion. It actually causes a lot of frictions and has become a never-ending problem in our country where religious minorities are abused. In my experience as a pastor serving in the parish, I have seen that Muslims rejected to construct a church-building in their neighbourhood even though all legal documents had been completed and were available to the people. When we could finally

build the church, Muslims did not give us permission to put the cross on top of the church. They also did not allow us to sing songs and pray on Sunday in public in front of the church as we did before. When we gather, we have to sing spiritual songs in a low voice or even just recite the texts of the songs. Some Muslims throw stones at the church building when they hear us singing Christian songs. The same applies when we hold family devotions at home and when the church is surrounded by a Muslim community. When we sing our songs, they throw stones at the house where we are gathered.

We live under pressure and terror and are persecuted by some people, which makes us afraid. We live like in a prison that is under surveillance. All these incidents that I have experienced are hurtful. It is even more painful to watch the news and to read again and again how injustice against Christians continues, despite the fact that there is a human right to the exercise freely our religion, which also has to be protected by the state and by the law written under Pancasila, the five principles of Indonesian identity and state, and the Indonesian Constitution of 1945.

My Journey with SIPCC

Being together in SIPCC with people from many different countries with different cultures and sharing different cultural experiences has influenced my identity. Identity is defined as something that sticks to a person and distinguishes them from others. My identity refers to all the forms of power I possess, to the cultural heritage that is formed and to the people who are involved in the path of life and experiences. The process of building up knowledge that influences identity in such a way is promoting to behave in a positive way.

In SIPCC Seminars there are many types of encounters: intercultural formal encounters such as the Interreligious Forum, reflection groups, morning devotions with different religious and secular views and meetings in worship; informal conversations before and after a session in the tea break, at lunch and dinner. I have also had the opportunity of travelling around the city of the Seminars and to visit particular religious communities, entering the house of worship, and a conversation with people and learning from them. In my opinion all the contents of the SIPCC Seminars have had a significant influence on me and have enabled me to come out of a cultural capsule and to understand and become open-minded, to develop empathy and sensitivity to the different values of life.



Girls in a Christian school 2004

I have learned that people become open to my differences when I am open to theirs. To my surprise, this has led to people feeling secure, feeling free, to be themselves, despite the differences that exist and are obvious. But these encounters show that no longer differences separate us. I do not have to impose my identity, my faith, my principle, my experiences on others, even in my country. I am with people to listen to them and learn more about their context and their different cultural, social, political, economic and religious experiences. As you go deeper, you will hear again and again how helpless, broken, devastated and angry people are - and you feel with them.

The SIPCC journey has brought many positive challenges for me as a representative of the most populous Muslim country in the world. It has challenged me not only in my cultural background, but also in my theology, personality and spiritual maturity. I am open to learn and to encourage dialogue with people of different faiths, different backgrounds, from a different country and with a different philosophy. I value each of these opportunities because they open up a space in which I can grow and understand people even better. This journey has opened a door for me to practice my faith and to really commit myself to my fellow humans. All this is also important for my work as a CPE Supervisor.

I appreciate every opportunity to be with SIPCC because it opens a space for me to grow and to perceive and understand people better. The journey with SIPCC has opened a door for me to practice my faith and truly serve people. Serving people has enriched my life, strengthened my vocation and nourished my spiritual growth. I feel blessed and honored to be able to drop my anchor on this journey in the SIPCC community.



In the break of the course the participants are singing and dancing

Once upon a time: Establishing an SIPCC Branch in Tanzania

What a Fortune by the Grace of God

Rhoda Emmanuel Chamshama¹



I feel so much honored and privileged to have an opportunity to share something about SIPCC Branch Tanzania.

SIPCC Branch Tanzania is one and the only branch of the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling (SIPCC). What a fortune for Tanzanians! It was all started during the SIPCC International Seminar of 2012 in Moshi, where it was decided to continue the SIPCC contacts to Tanzania. The purpose of the SIPCC Branch Tanzania is to strengthen and deepen the networking between the members of SIPCC in Tanzania and other SIPCC members worldwide. It should clearly be understood that this branch is NOT a new organization, rather a part of SIPCC.

After the International Seminar in 2012 the first workshop of Supervision was held in 2014, and here are the first eight participants: Archiboldy Lyimo, Prince Hiiti, Eliabu Mbasha, Nahana Mjema, Sr. Kokushaba, Daniel Meiyani, Mbilinyi, and myself. Our Professor and lecturer, Rev. Helmut Weiss has been a great blessing to us, and a very good bridge between SIPCC Branch Tanzania and SIPCC Internationally! His gentle heart and patience have helped him to work with people of different culture and environment peacefully. He has also been a “practical interpretation” of the really meaning of / in SIPCC: Inter-cultural, Inter-religion, and Inter-faith,

¹ Rev. Rhoda Emmanuel Chamshama, Assistant to the District Pastor (Church District Superintendent), Diocesan Youth Director, Pastor in charge of the Mlimakola Parish, PhD student at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota (USA).

and in this case, Inter-cultural! What a fortune to have this person! What a blessing! Bravo Rev Helmut Weiss! Live Longer Rev. Helmut Weiss!

In the first supervision workshop and the first “Week of Care” in May 2014 all participants applied to the SIPCC General Assembly in Mennoerde, Netherlands to establish a “SIPCC Branch Tanzania”. That was done and in the minutes of the GA 2014 is written:

SIPCC Branch Tanzania

Archiboldy Lyimo shares about the training work being done in Tanzania and asks the General Assembly’s authorization for the formal establishment of a SIPCC branch there. *The Assembly members vote in favor of it unanimously.*



During the time when the branch was established, the chair-person was a member of the SIPCC Executive Committee (EC), and was required to contact and to report about the activities and developments in Tanzania. The luckiest man who made a history of becoming the first chair-person of the SIPCC Branch Tanzania was none but Rev. Archiboldy Lyimo, who was then a member of the SIPCC EC and director of the CPE Centre of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Tanzania (ELCT) in Moshi. I was also one of the lucky people who were in the steering committee, serving as the secretary of the branch, while Eliabu Mbasha was the first treasurer.

Establishment of the SIPCC Branch Tanzania made the continuation possible of two weeks workshops of pastoral-psychological supervision from which was going from 2014 to 2018. Supervision is a professional form of “counselling to the counsellors”. Education in supervision was unknown to the participating members. After finishing the workshops as an introduction to supervision the group decided to start with a regular course of supervision conducted according to international Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Standards, taking the context of Tanzania into consideration. Completion of the whole course of Supervision requires a

continuation of the two-week workshops for four years, with a lot of field and paper assignments. It was planned to start at 2019 and to go until 2022. But it might be that it will take longer since in 2020 a course could not take place because of Corona.

In the group of Education in Supervision there are altogether 13 participants, five women and eight men from all over Tanzania and belonging to different dioceses of the Lutheran Church and the Moravian Church.

To do this education in supervision was acknowledged by the Presiding Bishop of the (ELCT), Dr. Frederick Shoo.

This course is highly necessary in Tanzania in order to promote and enhance care and counselling for those who are working with people in church and society in a variety of settings and fields (congregations, communities, hospitals, schools and universities, prison, police, counselling centres and so on). Workers in these and other fields can use the reflections and competencies of supervisors who complete this course in order to improve their work with people and institutions. This was emphasised in the speech given by the Presiding Bishop Dr. Frederick Shoo of the ELCT during the week of care 2017 in Arusha, when he said that the course is needed more today in church and society of Tanzania than at any other time before.

Some of the goals of this course is to establish supervision in church and society in Tanzania as a new way of giving people the opportunity to enhance their practical work, especially in care and counselling. It is also aiming to prepare supervisors to work in the future for the ELCT - CPE Centre Moshi. The main goal however is education in supervision as a professional form of accompanying and counselling people in their work situation and to set up counselling centers in the region the participants live.

Each year the supervision workshops have been followed by a “Week of Care and Counselling” (WCC), which comprises about 30 – 40 participants each time. Again, the Week of Care and Counselling is of high need in Tanzania. It is meant as a form of continuous education for those who have attended CPE-courses in the past or are interested to learn more about CPE and counselling. This is another blessing because apart from the various programs that have been run, we have also had the opportunity to meet people from different regions and share different work experiences, challenges and the way we have been solving our challenges. For me, WCC is always a week of blessing and great joy.

The themes of the “Week of Care and Counselling”:

- 2014: Listening to the Poor - Dealing with poverty in care and counseling
- 2015: Care and Counselling with Families today - Introduction into systemic family-counselling
- 2016: Care and Counselling with couples in the context of Tanzania
- 2017: Counselling with old people in post-traditional times
- 2018: Counselling to the Counsellors
- 2019: Intercultural and Interreligious Care and Counselling

Thank Heavens

Everything good is costly. These supervision workshops and Weeks of Care and Counseling are costly. But beside contribution from the participants and the CPE Centre in Moshi there were some organisations in Germany and Europe who were donating through all the years. I would like to mention especially:

- *Mission One World, Center for Partnership, Development and Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Neuendettelsau, Germany*
- *Center for Mission and Ecumenism - Northern Church worldwide of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany, Hamburg Germany*
- *and the Rhenish Association for Pastoral Care, Pastoral Psychology and Supervision Düsseldorf, Germany.*

Thank Heavens to these donors and the SIPCC in general that they have been helping, otherwise we would have been stuck and collapsed already.



Week of Care and Counselling 2018

Some people have all the luck

As I have mentioned above, I was fortunate enough to be among the first bunch to be in the first supervision workshop. There is a Swahili saying which says “*Awali ni awali, hakuna awali mbovu,*” which can be interpreted as “Always the first is the best!” Although first people can be counted as the people who “clearing the way,” and thus having a lot of extra work, for me it is all the best to be among the first group in this supervision course; the group which clears the way and makes it easier for the coming groups. It’s all the blessings!

Being in the supervision course has given me a lot of benefits. First, this course has helped me develop further personality and skills in communication and interpersonal relationships. I also

can see that I have so much improved in my work in a sense of reflecting on tasks and my position and role in work; solving my own work-problems; improving time-management; learning about conflict solving; how to keep time for family and personal hobbies, and so on. Furthermore, I find myself that I now have better understanding of the dynamics in my work place and I have better skills of dealing with people, and I have also enhanced my sensibility for gender-issues as well as ecumenical, intercultural and inter-religious relations.

Sharing experiences: Luck is on my side

Again, I have mentioned above that the SIPCC Branch Tanzania is just a branch in SIPCC. This, apart from cooperating with the CPE Centre in Moshi Tanzania in conducting supervision workshops, supervision course and Weeks of Care and Counselling, there has been a Tanzania representation in the International Seminars of the SIPCC. I also had the opportunity to attend several International Seminars together with other members of the Branch. The first Seminar I have attended was the one which held in 2012, Moshi, Tanzania, in my very own country, and my very own context. Then I had attended other Seminars, such as Seminars which were held in Ghent, Belgium (2016), Wittenberg, Germany (2017), and Dusseldorf, Germany (2019).

It's very hard to describe exactly how I have benefited from the Seminars I have attended, because the benefits are many. The Seminars, not only gave me great joy, but also, they have strengthened me and broadened my understanding of various things, include increasing and broadening of my understanding of pastoral care and counseling, realization of interconnected of all humanity-different cultures and religions, different contexts, etc.

To be brief, the SIPCC Seminars have added value in my daily work in terms of interrelation with people of other cultures and other faith. I live and work in the context where it is imperative to relate with people of other faith, including Muslims, Hindus, African Tradition Religious people, etc. It is true that our government has established a policy which requires people of all religions and background to live in harmony. But I did not have much breadth to interact with them. I was interacting with people – especially of other religions because it was a government policy. The SIPCC Seminars have given me a new and positive understanding of relating to others. This has made my work easier. Thus, I can boldly say that the SIPCC Seminars have not only helped me and gave me the techniques to do counseling in various contexts, but also took me out of the shell I was in, and brought me to a better understanding of others and bring better relationships and interactions with people of other faiths and contexts!

This has made me feel that my whole life is now so meaningful, and I now can see clearly how connected I am with not only other people of other contexts and other religions, but also with environment. This is very important development.

Swept the way!

Charles Dickens says, "A very little key opens a very heavy door." Supervision workshops, though seemed as a small thing, but has swept the way and opened the door for my further studies in Pastoral Care and Counselling. As now I am a PhD student in Luther Seminary, St. Paul in the US.

A learning community: YMCA Counselling Centre Yangon in Myanmar and SIPCC

*May Myo Han, Hla Hla Win, Moe Moe Pan,
Nyein Nyein Myat, Su Myat Htet*



It was in early 2016, the momentous year, when Myanmar YMCA, an organization that works hard to provide social services, was first confronted with questions about counseling. Ms. Ursula Hecker from Germany, an active member of SIPCC, visited a town called Myitkyina, located in the northern part of Myanmar, and found that psychosocial support for women in general and women in the Kachin tribe was almost non-existent. They suffer from domestic and gender-based violence, especially the women in Myanmar, who always show their beautiful smiles and greet each other smiling, but do not show their inner feelings and suffering outwardly. This was the reason for Ursula Hecker to bring the topic of counselling to Myanmar together with the organization "Brot für die Welt", which is based in Berlin, Germany, and to implement it in Myanmar in an appropriate way with the YMCA.



Soon after the YMCA-Counselling Centre Myanmar was founded, it also got in contact with the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling (SIPCC) and made an agreement with Helmut and Christa Weiss to impart basic knowledge in counselling and to work out how the counselling center could be developed structurally.



First, preparatory courses were held to find out which women and men might be suitable to participate in a longer-term course. For this purpose, two ten-day basic training courses were held in Yangon each with 20 interested participants from partner organizations of YMCA. The trainings were led and moderated by Helmut, Christa and Ursula. After these two trainings, participants in these courses were selected to take part in the TOT "Training of Trainers" and the long learning journey over two years began.

The participants who were chosen in the course of four sections A / B / C / D of two weeks came from different organizations with different backgrounds and experiences in social activities in the Yangon region. It is hard to express in words how the issues of communication and understanding, compassion and trust were built up despite the challenges and difficulties that arose due to the differences between the participants in the first days of the training. There were valuable and memorable moments for us, how profoundly the conversations between the participating women and men from Myanmar and the trainers from Germany were often conducted in order to understand the psychological and social needs of the Myanmar people, who are suffering from the effects of the terrible era they have been living through for decades.



During the counseling training we discovered for ourselves that our feelings are important, we realized what kind of people we are and we were able to alleviate old ailments and sufferings.

We even found out that we personally developed ourselves through the counselling training and felt reborn a second time. We learned to better understand what it means to be human,

namely sympathy, compassion, understanding and sharing, and we learned how personal development happens in a psychological sense. We also became more mature in our professional lives and were able to work with more humanity. The participants in the

counseling work learned to talk to people in need of help, e.g. victims of human trafficking, people whose labor is exploited, migrant workers, women and children who are victims of domestic violence, friends in their environment who have problems, etc. It can be said that the practice was an opportunity for them to apply what they had learned. The more people they had to help, the more they could practically combine the theories, lectures and exercises which were presented in the group. They were also able to help people in terms of psychological support and gradually improved their services in terms of psychosocial needs.

We could further learn in practice that counselling is the method which has to be approached from many perspectives (body, social aspects, family, psyche), to address a person's psychological basic needs and to open a door to the people. Counseling became – some were inspired by these courses over two years - more and more popular in Myanmar, and many organizations started to implement it now, in which the center with the collected skills helped again and again. It must be said, however, that organizations that provide counseling in a systematic way are still very rare. Therefore, the YMCA-Counseling Center Myanmar would like to express its gratitude for being in this learning community with SIPCC.

Representatives of the Centre were honored to be invited to the International Seminar and General Assembly of SIPCC to Wittenberg, Germany, 2017 and to be included in the discussions, e.g. through a workshop which they could present there. In addition, the two



people who participated became members of SIPCC. Then they also had the opportunity to visit and get to know different counselling centers in several cities in Germany, such as Berlin, Düsseldorf, Cologne and Duisburg. There they could get an insight into how counselling work is organized in Germany, in order to work out and adopt some basic principles for the YMCA counselling center in Myanmar.

The two women got even more self-confidence when they had the honour to participate in the international seminar and the general meeting 2018 in Vienna, Austria, to exchange with international counsellors and experts in psychology. And they were proud to present the learning program and a case in a workshop. These opportunities to take part in the international programs have made the YMCA Myanmar Counseling Center more involved in the international counseling work and they have learned to work better.



Not only the participants in the counselling training were given more knowledge and skills, but also the YMCA-Counselling Center Myanmar as an organization has learned to improve its own counselling concept and guidelines, which finally led to the development of a curriculum for the training of volunteers in different regional areas. It was thanks to the trainers and Helmut Weiss of SIPCC that the Myanmar YMCA Counselling Centre was now able to gain prestige to this learning programme for volunteers and was recognized by the public as a well-known expert in counselling.



In conclusion, however, it must be said that we as counsellors ourselves need more knowledge and personal training in order to be able to provide psychosocial help and counselling to the people. We must always be aware of what is going on in culture and society and what the very concrete needs of people are, and do justice to them.

For example, during the Corona crisis we had to switch all our work to telephone counselling, which was a great challenge and where we still have a lot to learn. It is a great honor for us that we had the opportunity to learn and develop with SIPCC. Furthermore, we would like to continue to expand the learning community between the YMCA Counselling Centre Yangon and SIPCC so that we have the opportunity to continue learning from and with each other in the future.



Training in Care and Counselling in Pakistan

A SIPCC course in 2020

John Joseph Masih¹



About the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling (SIPCC) I found out in 2017 when I was working as an Administrator of the Universal Theological Seminary of the YMCA in Karachi. One of my colleagues told me about SIPCC and that there would be an International Seminar in Germany. I sent an email to Helmut Weiß and he invited me to attend the Seminar in Wittenberg in September 2017. The topic of the Seminar was „Human Dignity“, which was very attractive for me as the issue (or the neglect) of human dignity is something I experience regularly in Pakistan and in my own life.

So, I travelled by plane to Germany and after an adventurous train ride at night time from the Frankfurt Airport I reached the town of Wittenberg in the early morning of September 2nd. In the so-called Leucorea, the venue of the Seminar, I was warmly welcomed by Helmut Weiß.

The Seminar in Wittenberg was very interesting and connected me to a world I have not known before. Pastors and other experts on pastoral care and counselling from many countries and different religions were present. During the five days of the Seminar we had lectures, panel discussions, workshops and reflection groups. There were interreligious devotions and a service in the Schlosskirche on Sunday. For me it was also interesting to see the historical sights of Wittenberg and learn something of the history of the European Reformation. I especially enjoyed to talk to the other participants and to spend time with them. They were very interested in the situation of my churches in Pakistan and they received my own story with great empathy.

¹ Dr. John Joseph Masih is Pastor of the All Nations Churches in Karachi, Pakistan.

In the following year I decided to attend again the SIPCC Seminar because of the positive experiences I made in Wittenberg. 2018 it took place in Vienna, Austria and 2019 we met in Germany again, this time in Duesseldorf. For both Seminars I was asked to lead a workshop. 2018 I did a workshop about the possibilities of peace building between Christians and Muslims in Pakistan and 2019 my topic was „Conflicts between Islam and Christianity in Pakistan“. Both Seminars again were a great benefit for me, theologically and personally. With deep regret I heard that the Seminar of 2020 was cancelled. I hope the get-togethers will continue in 2021.

I am a member of SIPCC since 2017.

One of the aims of SIPCC is to bring pastoral care and counselling into other countries especially to places where this kind of work is not established yet. Helmut Weiß asked me in preparation of the SIPCC Seminar of 2019 whether I thought it would be possible for me to lead a Counselling Centre in Karachi. He would be ready to give me some training on pastoral care and counselling and he would also come to Karachi to teach the pastors and eldest of my churches. After the 2019 Seminar I stayed a few days in his house of the Weiß-Family and had some training with him and also his wife Christa Weiß. In February 2020 both came to Karachi for ten days and they did some intensive schooling in my White House Church.



A warm welcome at the Karachi airport February 2020

Six pastors and eight churches eldest attended the training.

As far as I know this training in pastoral care and counselling had been done the first time in Pakistan and it was a great honor and privilege for All Nations Churches to host it. I want to thank all executive members of SIPCC who made this important event possible and sent Helmut Weiß and Christa Weiß for the training which they performed in a kind, enthusiastic and motivating manner. Both worked hard with the participants and they taught us the rules and practice of counselling. Their methodology of teaching has been excellent and especially considering the non-European cultural background they had to deal with.

Nonetheless ten days can just be a start. To deepen what we have learned and to get more practical instruction we need more training by experienced and qualified instructors like Helmut and Christa Weiß.

We kindly request the responsible authorities of SIPCC to arrange another training of counselling in Karachi, Pakistan. The training in February 2020 has made us a different community already. We are eager to go on with it to build up a competent Counselling Center which will be a benefit not only for the community of All Nations Churches but for all Christians in Karachi and everybody who will be seeking counselling and comfort.

Participants names:

1. Pastor Dr John Joseph Masih
2. Pastor Mushtaq Masih
3. Pastor Razeek Inyat
4. Pastor Raja Herrison
5. Pastor Benamin
6. Pastor Javeed Frooz
7. Rozina Joseph
8. Azekia Mushtaq
9. Asif Saleem
10. Erim Naeem
11. Razia Emmuhel
12. Shamim Arshid
13. Gazala Javeed
14. Sohil Masih



The participants are happy about their certificate



Connections and collaboration: International Council on Pastoral Care and Counselling (ICPCC) and SIPCC

Helmut Weiß



Christa Weiß, Helmut Weiß, Ursula Pfäfflin 2007 Congress in Krzyzowa

There have been and still are many connections between the ICPCC and SIPCC, because both organizations, which are structured very differently, are concerned with the effort to study and practice pastoral care in an international, intercultural and interreligious context.

Since about the mid-1960s of the 20th century, strong impulses for pastoral work have emanated from the USA to many countries. A type of pastoral care had developed which brought new approaches into the discussion: to establish connections between theology and human sciences and to see pastoral care in the context of the whole pastoral work.

These impulses had effects in many countries and churches of the world, even in other religions, partly through students who "pilgrimaged" to the USA to get to know this pastoral movement, partly because protagonists of this movement travelled to different continents and reported there about the new approaches. Around 1970, for example, there were already many international contacts which grew more and more, and which eventually led to the planning and holding of international congresses. They were intended to form a forum for exchange and discussion. After all, the world was much less globalized then than it is today. Divisions were obvious, for example between West and East, separated by the so-called Iron

Curtain, which was going through the middle of Europe and separated irreconcilable political and economic systems. But not only Europe was divided, but capitalist and communist ideology faced each other worldwide in a "Cold War". Former colonies in Africa and Asia had become independent and wanted to participate in world affairs as independent partners. In these divergent circumstances, were there common prerequisites and connections for pastoral care? Could an exchange between pastoral workers from different countries, churches and religions be meaningful and successful? But: Was there an alternative to international exchange in a world that, despite all the differences, was moving ever closer together? It was a special event that finally in 1979 the first international congress with 420 participants from all over the world could take place in Edinburgh, Scotland, to deal with such questions. As director of the pastoral care center at the Diakoniewerk Kaiserswerth in Düsseldorf, Germany, I had the opportunity to participate and was fascinated by the diversity of pastoral care and counselling.

The congress in Noordwijkerhout in the Netherlands in August 1991 (topic: contextual pastoral care) is of great importance for the later cooperation between ICPC and SIPCC. There I met Ronaldo Sathler Rosa - still a wonderful friend and an important member of SIPCC until today. But also, many other contacts were made there. From then on, I visited the other congresses:

Toronto/Canada	August 1995	Babylon and Jerusalem, stories from transition to a foreign country
Accra/Ghana	August 1999	Spirituality and culture in pastoral care and counselling
Bangalore/India	August 2004	Global economy, a challenge for pastoral care, counselling and religious Traditions

When I came to Kaiserswerth in 1978 as director of the Center of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), the impulses of the international work of pastoral care was decisive for me: it should also be given space in Kaiserswerth. Contacts between the CPE Center in Kaiserswerth to the Netherlands, France, the GDR, Hungary and other European countries should promote a common learning exchange in their respective contexts.

When the Kaiserswerth CPE Center was given the opportunity in 1986 to hold an international seminar with the participation of people from different countries from West and East, the exchange and cooperation was strengthened and encouraged. This led to the development of a moving cooperation between SIPCC and ICPC. Only very short examples: In Toronto I was able to win Nalini Arles from India to work with SIPCC. She was on the SIPCC board for many years. In 1999 Adrian Korczago from Poland travelled together with me to Ghana to attend the ICPC Congress - an unforgettable experience for both of us. At these congresses many friendships were made and people were found who were involved in both organisations, such as Emmanuel Lartey.

During a study trip of SIPCC to India, the small SIPCC group helped Nalini Arles to prepare the ICPCCC Congress 2004 in Bangalore. And at this congress in Bangalore, SIPCC with Klaus Temme, Adrian Korczago and me submitted a proposal to hold the congress 2007 in Krzyżowa (Kreisau), a historical place in Poland close to the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Germany. This proposal was accepted by the Council in 2004. Professor Dr. Ursula Riedel-Pfäfflin was elected as President and Pastor Klaus Temme as Treasurer of the ICPCCC, Pastor Dr. Adrian Korczago and I as organizers - all were and still are members of SIPCC. The preparation and realization of these congresses in 2007 were certainly the highlight of the cooperation between the two institutions.¹



Soon after SIPCC was founded, the association became a member of ICPCCC. And even after 2007, the contacts have never been broken off. Klaus Temme acted as treasurer for ICPCCC for many years. He and Adrian Korczago and other members of SIPCC visited the 2011 congresses in Roturua (New Zealand). In 2015 SIPCC celebrated its 20th birthday during the ICPCCC Congress in San Francisco. In 2019 a member of the board, Brenda Ruiz, gave a keynote speech at the congress in Malaysia. In 2016, the ICPCCC Board of Directors was at the SIPCC International Seminar in Ghent with reflections on the cooperation between the two organizations.

The cooperation between SIPCC and ICPCCC will continue. We in SIPCC wish to be even more involved by ICPCCC in future developments of intercultural and interreligious pastoral care. Hopefully this will be possible in 2023 in South Africa at the next congress.

¹ Background, preparations and the contributions of the Congress in Krzyżowa are documented in: Helmut Weiß, Klaus Temme (Editors), *Treasure in Earthen Vessels - Intercultural Perspectives on Pastoral Care facing Fragility and Destruction*; LIT Verlag, 2008 (German Version: *Schatz in irdenen Gefäßen - Interkulturelle Perspektiven von Seelsorge angesichts von Zerbrechlichkeit und Zerstörung*)



Happy birthday-SIPCC!

Heike Komma¹



It is an extraordinary pleasure for me to express my warmest congratulations to the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling on its 25th anniversary. I congratulate Helmut Weiß, Klaus Temme and all participants on their successful pioneering work for intercultural and interreligious pastoral care and counselling. This success is reflected not only in the high number of conferences that have taken place in Europe, Tanzania, Israel and many more countries, but also in the colorful mix of participants.

I myself was present for the first time at the conference in Ghent September 2016, long after the beginnings of SIPCC. It was the theme that attracted me:

Pastoral care and counseling as social action: Interreligious cooperation in the urban context of migration.

This also reflects my idea of pastoral care: it is more than just a one-to-one conversation in a protected counseling room. Pastoral care also takes place - and perhaps especially there - where I go out to the people and I bring what is good for them through my acting. When I go out, I also encounter the diversity of people from many countries, with different languages, different attitudes and different religions. In 2016, people in Germany spoke of hardly anything else than refugees, mostly in connection with the word crisis. Many refugees have also arrived in Belgium. In this Seminar I should get many inspiring examples of how people in Gent's faith communities have acted.

But first of all I met a nationally and religiously diverse Seminar group in a former monastery that had been converted into a conference center. Beautiful gardens surrounded it and further

¹ Heike Komma is President of the European Council for Pastoral Care and Counselling, Germany

outside there were meadows, moats, a small forest. This was ideal to experience, also in a figurative sense, the open meeting spaces that SIPCC wants to create and design.

Each day began with a morning prayer, always prepared by people of different religions and denominations. One could get to know different traditions, symbols, songs, rituals. Sometimes it was strange, sometimes less strange - but in any case, you could get in touch with your own spiritual needs and in the willingness to be irritated there was the chance to have a new experience. The work on the topic took place in various forms, such as lectures, plenary discussions, marble groups after the lectures, poster presentations and workshops. A new way of working was the Intercultural Forum. It was a marketplace of the participants, so to speak, where you meet others who tell you their experiences, opinions and ideas. It was this narrative-biographical approach that often touched me, I got into the topic of the conference very well prepared and one had a first opportunity to get in touch with the topic and the other participants.

Towards the evening there was also a daily reflection group. This is a form of work that we at ECPC are familiar with and consider indispensable. The reflection group remains constant during the Seminar week, so that one has the opportunity to get to know some participants even more personally. We reflected on the events of the day by asking questions such as "What was new, meaningful and important for me today? Were the contributions today helpful for my own work? Were the working methods of the seminar helpful for my own learning?"



This photo shows Dr. Ronaldo Sathler Rosa from Brazil and me. We had met before at an ICPC conference in Poland in 2007 and it was very nice to meet him again in Belgium and to talk with him about social action in Brazil, its dimensions and limits. But this photo was taken because Ronaldo told me that I would look like his mother. He said we had the same smile - or is it my white hair that had awakened this association in him? Whatever it was, we had fun taking this photo and he immediately emailed it to his family.

Encounters are the salt in the soup of international conferences. This is no different with SIPCC and with ECPC. You get to know people, think together, discuss, talk, eat and pray with each other - and along the way, spaces for intercultural and interreligious issues open up. Because people no longer remain strangers to me, their culture and religion become a little better known, may be even more familiar. For me these are always very satisfying experiences.

I also have fond memories of the so-called excursion day. So-called because although it had a touristic part with guided tours in Ghent, it also offered the opportunity to meet people from Ghent who are involved in refugee work. We were divided into different groups. In my group we visited a housing project with refugees in the rectory, a Catholic church that had temporarily set up bunk beds for refugees in the side aisle and a mosque community that offered various language and integration projects for refugees. This was really enriching and encouraged their own wealth of ideas on how to care for the soul through social action as a religious community.

Far too fast, the days passed by and the last day was approaching and with it a ritual of SIPCC, which was new for me.



Here you can still see the preparation phase. Dominiek Lootens, accompanied by Helmut Weiß, carries a pear tree from the conference house into the garden.

We stood there and watched the tree being planted. There, something was allowed to take root, grow and become big, which had its beginning in Ghent in the Seminar. What a symbol for us as a group!

Now I have talked in detail about this, my first SIPCC Seminar, also to make clear what ECPC have in common and what makes SIPCC special.

I would like to emphasize the expertise of the SIPCC Executive Committee, the interreligiosity. Over the past 25 years, a lot of expertise has been gathered, fed by the meetings at the conferences, but also, for example, by courses in hospital pastoral care with mixed religious

participants. From these experiences and the learning processes that followed, a manual on interreligious pastoral care has been developed.²



ECPCC is inclusive, international, intercultural, ecumenical - just as the respective national associations of pastoral care and counselling are. I had started a survey about interreligious pastoral care. There are experiences with it in Belgium, in the Netherlands, in Germany. The Scandinavian countries, however, indicate that they are in the process of practicing ecumenical contacts as former Protestant state churches. Interreligious pastoral care, however, is not yet so much in view. The Eastern European countries and their churches are in the process of locating pastoral care and practical theology in their respective social reality.

That is also an essential difference between ECPCC and SIPCC. ECPCC has no personal members. The member is a national pastoral care organization. In the case of Germany this is the German Society for Pastoral Psychology, which commissions people to speak for the it in the Council. We meet every four years and then again and again in new constellations, depending on which national team is preparing this. At the moment this is a Hungarian team of people from different churches and the Anthroposophical Society: here too different world-views and cultures meet and turn it into cooperation.

The main themes also vary and it is a pleasure to learn at the conference to look at a theme from the perspective of the national team and to deepen it.

² Interreligiöse Seelsorge; Helmut Weiß, Karl Federschmid, Klaus Temme (Hg).2010

But I think that interreligiosity is a topic of growing importance. In Central Europe, pastoral workers meet Jews and Muslims (to mention only the Abrahamic religions) in day-care centers and school classes, in hospitals, in prisons. This multi-religious coexistence results in challenges and tasks, first of all for educators, teachers and pastoral workers, but also for the institutions, for those responsible for training and further education, and last but not least for social and educational researchers at universities. For almost all these areas - practice, politics and science - it applies quite similarly that these far-reaching tasks of spiritual care of people, as well as education in this field, which still have to be developed more. But nevertheless: there are training courses, there are training courses for further education and congresses on the subject, there are tendencies to bring interreligious projects together and to create nationwide formats of education and further training. I believe that we are on the right path and have already taken the first steps, through the work of the committed people in SIPCC, too - for which we cannot thank them enough. But the way is still long and probably also stony in some sections.

Therefore, I am pleased that ECPC and SIPCC are cooperating with each other. In the sense that we invite each other to our conferences and then also participate in them. There we have the chance to learn from each other. SIPCC lets us share its expertise in interreligious pastoral care. Conversely, we hope that the multinational, inclusive and intercultural issues of ECPC will be interesting and relevant to SIPCC members.

As President of ECPC I have always been committed to strengthening our pastoral care network - and that is why I am also pleased about the cooperation with SIPCC.

ECPC offers a forum for those who are actively involved in pastoral care and counseling, or who teach or do supervision in the field of pastoral care, to exchange ideas. I like this colorful mixture of people from different professions, because it enriches the exchange very much. ECPC also offers colleagues from the wide field of pastoral care and counselling the opportunity to take advantage of learning in different places in Europe. This is of particular importance. Because only through more international exchange and continuous further education can we meet the current demands and develop a unifying European identity.

I wish SIPCC many more participants in the future, fun in teaching and learning, commitment to a religiously diverse world, and many successful events.

Going into the Future

Towards a Spirituality of Acknowledgement (Anagnorisis) and Orthopathy in Pastoral Encounters and Intercultural Dialogues

Directives for a Base Anthropology in Future SIPCC Meetings

Daniel J. Louw¹



Abstract

At stake is the question: What kind of guarantee is implied when SIPCC still envisions to embark on expanding intercultural and interfaith dialogue by means of encounters such as conferences, meetings and connections with representatives of other cultural groups, religious institutions and faith communities? The past twenty-five years can be described as the dynamic development from a more dominant Christian-Jewish paradigm and anthropological self-understanding to a more inclusive understanding of the other; a movement from sceptic prejudice towards constructive other-acknowledgement and multi-religious perspectivism. Thus, the reason why the otherness of the other became much more prominent in meetings and conferences. Looking into the future regarding the sustainability of forthcoming encounters, what should be the basic theoretical and anthropological framework defining undergirding assumptions and presuppositions reflecting cultural diversity and religious differences? With these questions in mind, the article proposes a spirituality of anagnorisis as

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anthropological common ground in order to always reconnect people representing different cultural and religious perspectives without falling back into the danger of a stereotyping and stigmatising hermeneutics of suspicion. In this regard, the notion of anagnorisis, as exemplified in the encounter between Joseph and his Brothers (Thomas Mann), could be used to formulate a base anthropology for intercultural encounters and authentic, sustainable dialogue. Instead of a hermeneutics of suspicion, a hermeneutics of blessing (doksa) is proposed in order to invite the other (as stranger) into the space of SIPCC meetings.

Keywords

Intercultural encounter; intercultural dialogue; anagnorisis, acknowledgment, base anthropology; spirituality of hospitable embracement.

Introduction

In her book *Conversations with My Sons and Daughters*, Mamphela Ramphele (South African politician, an activist against apartheid, a medical doctor, an academic and businesswoman) wrote: “Dialogues start with acknowledgement of the presence of others. The isiZulu greeting captures it best: ‘*Sawubona*’, Literally, ‘we are seeing you’. Being seen and acknowledged is an affirmation of being connected with those around one and thereby be affirmed as part of the human family. Ubuntu is captured at that moment of recognition and being seen – that you are affirmed as a human being through recognition of your humanity by other human beings” (Ramphele 2012:183).

What is the undergirding anthropology behind this very challenging remark on the relational dynamics implied in intercultural dialogue and fruitful, effective encounters despite subjacent cultural and political differences? Furthermore, how could intercultural encounters promote sustainable directives for the ongoing promotion of human dignity and personal affirmation?

Background and basic assumption: The SIPCC and the future of the organisation

The past twenty-five years, the SIPCC embarked on the very challenging route of bridging cultural gaps, defusing schismatic forms of cultural prejudice and establish links for promoting intercultural healing and care, specifically in local communities.

This urgent need has been emphasised in several SIPCC meetings in the past. For example, Vienna 2018 and Düsseldorf 2019 where we dealt with the notion of conflict management as researched by M Klußmann (De Carvalho M., J. Klußmann, B. Rahman). When dealing with conflict in different social settings regarding the need for conflict management, Marco de Carvalho, Jörgen Klußmann and Bahram Rahman (2018) pointed out from their experience in Afghanistan that the core challenge in all forms of conflict intervention and encounters, trying to promote authentic dialogue, is the following: The safeguarding of ‘human rights’ is seen as paramount in attempts to heal the wounds of the war, schismatic quarrels and to establish a sense of national reconciliation (healing), change and transformation. “The challenge is to re-establish respect, trust and the maintenance of justice and human dignity (establish a culture of human rights); cooperation between military agents and representatives of civil society,

between help from outside and the corruption in government; dialogue with heterogeneous groups in the Taliban; reconstruction of civil societal structures like medical clinics, electricity and clean environment (De Carvalho, Klussman and Rahman 2018:3).

The basic assumption of this article is that for developing a praxis of future, effective engagements, promoting intercultural dialogue, a kind of common anthropological basis becomes paramount for the establishment of trustworthy intercultural encounters (base anthropology). In focussing on the sustainability of intercultural dialogue and reliable structures for future intercultural encounters at conferences, it is quite realistic to always reckon with (a) what one can call a hermeneutics of culturally based suspicion. A *hermeneutics of suspicion* operates on the level of critical questioning and rational reasoning, probing into cultural based life views, analysing schematic paradigms (patterns of thinking), reckoning with philosophical differences and assessing religious differences. But simultaneously, what is most needed for future developments, is (b) a supplementing *hermeneutics of acknowledgement*; i.e., meeting the other in his/her otherness in such a way that both the I and the Thou (Buber)² discover a sense of dignity and belongingness; are reconnected within a dynamic space of trustworthy co-humanity, and exposed to a mode of acceptance, recognition and trust (being with the other in coexistence). Intercultural encounters should enhance acknowledgement in such a way that differences and diversity become building blocks for a dignified sense of humanness, enriching coexistence, and hopeful restructuring of life connections.

What then is meant by a base anthropology in intercultural encounters and dialoguing?

To my mind, the first step is to acknowledge that fairness and trustworthiness cannot be built on merely an epistemology of observation and empirical based data. Our being human is more comprehensive than merely reasoning, rational analyses and experiences determined by emotions and the senses. Our being human can be captured by the notion of 'spirit'. For the rediscovery of 'spirit' in an anthropology of trans-culturality, it is, according to Emmanuel Levinas, important to always frame anthropological theories within the 'spiritual realm' of a *meta*-physical sensitivity, determined by the 'mystical presence' of the Other/other. Mysticism surrounds the space of the other preventing intercultural encounters manipulating the 'stranger' into an artificial space of mutuality and befriending.

1. The metaphysical desire in intercultural encounters: Beyond my otherness towards the enriching space of the Other/other (l'autre)

When one probes into the deeper levels of intercultural prejudice and suspicion (anguish for the otherness of the other – xenophobia) the challenge in intercultural meetings, dialogues, encounters is to provide a forum wherein anguish and xenophobia finds words and language to articulate the hermeneutics of suspicion in such a way that the dreadful prejudice is

² According to Buber (1937), the primary word I-Thou establishes a world of relationality and interconnectivity that forms the basis for all forms of human encounters and mutual acknowledgement. Therefore, all real life is about meeting. Human life finds its meaningfulness in relationships and the mutuality of encounters.

transferred into an invitation towards mutual trust. The challenge is to create space for the expression of suspicion and schismatic prejudice without feeling guilty or being judged or rejected. Otherwise dialogue and encounter run the danger of distancing, contributing to further forms of social and cultural estrangement (*Entfremdung*).

Emmanuel Levinas calls this desire for 'space and place' in authentic dialogue and trustworthy encounters, a metaphysical desire (*désir métaphysique*); the significant and relational quest for the real presence and truth of the 'humane other' (Levinas 1963:31). Thus, the movement from the otherness of the other (as framed by paradigmatic issues like national customs, social norms and values, narrowing life views, the limitations of presuppositions and fixed, orthodox and fanatic religious convictions) to companionship with the other; the trans-position of the other as guiding factor and inviting host (Van Rhijn and Meulink-Korf 2019: 100-130); the mystical presence of the other in terms framed by transcendence, creating a humane condition (*condition humaine*) par excellence for the legitimacy of intercultural encounters and the authenticity of intercultural dialogues.

In this way, the otherness of the Other/other sets the paradigmatic framework for a spiritual approach to anthropology that entails more than 'seeing' and 'sensing'. Such encounters should be directed by the wisdom of the heart (*sapientia*) and based on an anthropology of *respondeo ergo sum*.

2. Back to the basics in an anthropological approach to interculturality: *Respondeo ergo sum*

With back to the basics is meant what Cicero called the basic features of wisdom that is not steered by rigoristic religious prescriptions about fate and divine interventions, but about virtue as expressed in ethics and moral awareness – the wisdom of the heart. Therefore, the emphasis in Greek and Latin thinking on the understanding of words like *qualitas*, *essentia* and *moralis*. (Cicero in Rawson 1975:232). Even St Augustine was impressed by these basic components for an understanding of the core element in our being human, namely the human soul. His argument was that if the 'soul' is 'divine' and 'immortal', "then the greater its purity and intellectuality in this life' (Rawson 1975:237). Soulfulness is about a way of life and fundamental habitus enfolded in daily interrelational encounters.

The emphasis on an anthropology for everyday life points in the direction of what can be called an existential awareness of responsibility and a disposition of accountability³ (*respondeo ergo sum*, Heinemann 1929); insightful responsiveness (Deetz 1992:3). An everyday ontology of life is about Gadamer's ontology of understanding and Foucault's discursive structures (in Deetz 1992:9). Thus, the need for probing into all the paradigmatic issues and ideologies lurking in all kinds of suspicion and prejudice.

³ Accountability is not about punishment. "Accountability describes a wide variety of mechanisms for identifying individual and group responsibility. To hold someone to account is to identify an individual's responsibility for an act, and to impose some cost or benefit upon that individual as a sign of approval or disapproval" (Slye 2000:178).

This need emphasises two important allies in the establishment of an anthropology of acknowledgment in intercultural dialoguing and encountering, namely the spirituality of interpathy (Augsburger 1986) and the skill of '*philosophical counselling*'.

Transcendent inquiry: Towards a responsible mode of acknowledgement

Philosophical counselling can be described as the method of transcendent inquiry (transpection and pro-spection) into the realm of meaning and significance. It investigates a person's network of beliefs, it facilitates progressive clarification of life-ordering values, commitments, conceptual orientations, and meaningful connections. It describes a process of philosophical and transcendent inquiry (Raabe 2001:206) into a person's theory, paradigm or worldview, very specifically how this worldview is related to human suffering and the problem of theodicy. In this regard philosophical counselling is a method for helping people to live and to look at the world in a more thoughtful way (Raabe 2001:217). It probes into the realm of "conceptual vicissitudes" (Scheffczyk in Raabe 2001:164) and helps to identify a gap between a person's actual way of life and any potential ways of life that could foster hope and encourage a person to take responsible decisions (*respondeo ergo sum*).

With reference to a base anthropology and the identification of a kind of common ground, the notion of *respondeo ergo sum* is fundamental for the establishment of trustworthy and reliable forms of intercultural encounters that take the otherness of the other serious and as starting point for authentic dialoguing. "As Paul Ricoeur has argued, in the (Levinasian) system of a 'summons to responsibility', the initiative comes from the other, whereas in a system of 'sympathy for the suffering of the other', the initiative comes from the self" (Davies 2001: 45); the dispossessive and decentred model of the self.

3. Features of a base anthropology: From failure (hamartia) to destiny (doksa)

Within a more reformed framework, the starting point for a base anthropology is in most of the confessions the factuality of human failure and sinfulness. Thus, the reason why the other in engagements and encounters are most of times met within the framework of a hermeneutics of sceptics and suspicion. The statement in Psalm 51:5 ("Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me") contributed to a very *pessimistic anthropology of sinfulness (hamartia)*, starting with the narrative of the fall in Genesis 1 and 2. The failure of Adam became the dominated paradigm for a Christian approach to the essence of our being human. But, in doing this, most of ecclesial confessions completely underscore the anthropological notion of vocation, destiny and calling as outlined by a hermeneutics of validation and acknowledgement, promoting the worth of our being human.

According to Genesis 1:26 humans are created and summoned to 'rule'⁴ over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over livestock and the whole of the earth. The notion of rule refers to solicitous care as shepherds care for the flock (compassionate stewardship); it annihilates

⁴ From the Hebrew verb *שָׁמַר* that means to safeguard and to take care; to protect against any form of destruction and exploitation (stewardship of the earth).

all forms of violent exploitation. This emphasis on nurturing humanity and all forms of life, coincides with what I want to call a *hermeneutics of blessing and 'glorification'* (*doksa*) in a base anthropology.

According to Psalm 8:6 the reference to the fact that God is mindful to our being human (our creatureliness) implies a reframing of the value and destiny of human life. In fact, literally, human beings are, according to the psalmist, 'mini-gods'; almost divine – *godly gods*⁵. In fact, human beings are crowned with glory (*doksa*) and honour (Ps, 8:6). The Hebrew for *doksa* (glory) is related to וְהָדָר which does not refer to a moral form of perfection over against the imperfection (bad) of sinfulness, but to an object of unique value and precious worth. *Hadar* indicates something valuable like an ornament which should be handled with care and respect and dignity.

Within the framework of Hebrew wisdom, our being human is challenged to promote this kind of doxological dignity in human encounters. Human life should therefore be re-assessed in terms of this *doksa*, promoting a more aesthetic approach in the validation and affirmation of our being human⁶.

To become affirmed and to be recognised and acknowledged as human being could indeed be called the basic function of intercultural dialogue and encounters. To my mind, in order to become sustainable, these kind of intercultural encounters and dialogues should be guided and directed by a spiritual framework of becoming '*whole*' – the healing perspective in a base anthropology. I, therefore, now turn to the connection spirit, spirituality and acknowledgement in a base anthropology for intercultural encounters.

4. '*Wholeness*' in a spirituality of re-connectivity and intercultural care

To my mind, the notion of 'spirit' is the most essential characteristics of our being human, common to all human beings in all cultures. Spirit encompasses more than the realm of the

⁵ מְאֱלֹהִים (me·'e-lo-him). The Hebrew uses a combination: God – god. The worth of a human being is in this sense, determined by a divine calling and vocation and therefore valued as a 'very small god' besides the majesty of *Elohim* (die great God).

⁶ In a very recent publication, *Humankind: A Hopeful History* (2020), Rutger Bretman researched more than 700 case studies in order to substantiate his basic assumption that human beings are not merely 'bad' and 'vulgar' (Andrew 2020). His very challenging hypothesis is that in worst time of severe human suffering, the best in human beings surface. He refers to the current Covid-19 pandemic and the surfacing of a global interconnectedness of care and compassion for the need of the suffering other. According to Bretman, there is currently an explosion of a 'power of kindness' that is revealing the other side of our being human (Scott 2020). It rediscovers in terms of Paul Tillich 'a courage to be'. "Courage is the self-affirmation of being in spite of non-being" (Tillich1965:152). This courage is about the spirit of hope and the spirituality of resilience - always bouncing back.

physic in psychology and psychiatry; it is more comprehensive than the very inner dynamics of psychoanalyses⁷.

Spiritus is an indication for human wholeness and a sense of destiny and vocation in life. The whole is always more than its parts. Even the reference to 'soul' implies more than reason (*nous*) and the 'body' (*sarx*), more than *psuchē*. Human beings are an embodied soul and an ensouled body. As a created whole, a human being is designed for the cause of *doksa*: to reflect divine destiny (*telos*), a humane mode of living (Calvin: *la principale fin de la vie humaine*) (in Louw 2016).

Spiritus or *nēfēsh* as the core of human existence and a spiritual approach to anthropology, should be interpreted stereometrically. A *stereometric approach to anthropology* means that every aspect of our being human represents the whole of life as determined by the transcendental realm of the human spirit. The whole is represented in every aspect. Wherever any specific aspect of human existence is considered, whether it is *nēphēsh* (soul), *ruach* (spirit), *lev* (heart), or *basar* (flesh), it is always intrinsically linked with the whole of man: "Man does not have a soul; in a very specific way man is soul, desire, finitude, etc." (Dabrock 2010). Thus, the choice for a stereometric approach to a base anthropology⁸.

⁷ 'Spirit' in an African spirituality means spiritus, a force concerned with day-to-day human activity. The following proposition formulated by Mtetwa (1996:24) sums up our position very aptly: "One of the most remarkable and tangible dimensions of African Spirituality relates to the unique notion of communality and collective solidarity that the African society exhibits in all spheres of life. There is a profound sense of interdependence, from the extended family to the entire community. In a very real sense, everybody is interrelated; including relations between the living and those who have departed". Life must be healed in order to establish a sense of 'wholeness'. African spirituality is structured, not along the lines of a pyramid, but of a circle – community and communality as the centre of religious life (Bosch 1974:40).

⁸ 'Stereometry' is the overlay of images and motives that not only enhance the concreteness of special statements but also subject them to a multiplicity of perspectives (thus, as it were, "exploding" their meaning). Words and texts are thus rendered semiotically transparent to one another, thus disclosing one another's meaning (by opening up semantic spaces). Applied to a base anthropology, stereometric thinking defines our being human and quest for 'soulfulness' in life in terms of existence embodied 'spiritus' by referring to characteristic organs, thus describing man as a whole by means of figurative and metaphorical speech. Figurative language brings boundary situations of human experience into view, situations inaccessible to conceptual thinking (Janowsky 2013 34). On a conceptual level, this wholeness also envisages talk about the complex and differentiated unity of persons. Spiritus is thus connected to the mystery of the human body anchors being in the world as well as the sphere of social and cultural relationships.

One can therefore conclude and say that the realm of spirituality⁹ gives access to the core of our being human¹⁰. Therefore, the plight for spirituality in a base anthropology to human well-being and healing within an interdisciplinary approach to the quest for human wholeness. “Research in palliative care has demonstrated the impact of religious and spiritual beliefs on people’s moral decision making, way of life, interaction with others, life choices and ability to transcend suffering and to deal with life’s challenges” (Puchalski & Ferrell 2010:4;14). Besides the dimension of significance and purpose, “spirituality can be understood as one’s relationship to a transcendence that for some people might be God and for others might be different concepts of how they see themselves” (Puchalski & Ferrell 2010:1-21).

Despite major disagreements over the concept ‘soul’ in many psychological and religious theories for a base anthropology, the soulfulness and meaningfulness of life within the human quest for recognition and acknowledgment, remain arguably a focal point of interest as it relates to the whole gamut of spirituality (Fernandez 2006:18).

The quest for wholeness in a base anthropology as well as the basic point of departure for trustworthy forms of dialogue and humane encounters, namely the notion of *respondeo ergo sum*, poses the question: But what is meant by acknowledgement in a base anthropology?

5. Towards the spiritual praxis of anagnosis in intercultural encounters: From estrangement and prejudice to acknowledgement and embracement

It is the conviction of Henry Yazir (2000:168-169) that healing starts where space is created; where it is able to face each other as human beings. “Only in this way can progress be made towards peaceful coexistence – as a basis for the promotion of a human rights culture” (Yazir 2000:172).

Hospitality and how one deals with the stranger or outsider, could be viewed as one of the cornerstones of a praxis of humane encounters and authentic dialoguing. The basis for hospitality is the conviction in Israel that the encounter between God and his people is based on the principle of God’s hospitality (Vosloo 2006:64). It is closely connected to what Fitchett and Grosseohme (2012:388) call the tenet of *tikkun olam* (to repair the world) in Judaism. “Efforts to repair the world are mitzvot (acts of human kindness rooted in commandments)” (Fitchett and Grosseohme 2012:388).

⁹ Often the term “spirituality” is used synonymously with “religion” and has a binding and stabilising impact on people’s attitude towards illness and suffering. “The word “religion” comes from the Latin term *religare* from *re* – again and *ligare* – to bind. Thus, religions talk of spiritual experiences as the rebinding to God” (Puchalski & Ferrell 2010:22).

¹⁰ At a conference of clinicians, medical educators, and chaplains for medical school courses on spirituality and health in 1999, the following clinical definition of spirituality had been agreed upon: “Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose, and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to nature and to the significant or sacred” (Puchalski & Ferrell 2010:25).

In his book, *Reaching Out* (1998) Henry Nouwen identified the shift from hostility to hospitality as one of the most important shifts or movements of the human soul in order to foster spiritual growth and to reach out to the otherness of the other. Hospitality exceeds the threat of xenophobia (the fear of strangers) and racial or cultural discrimination; it points to xenophilia.

One of the most profound illustrations of xenophilia as exemplification of a habitus of becoming a wounded healer and creating a metaphysical space of reconciliatory healing, is captured by the narrative of *Joseph and his Brothers* (Thomas Mann 1970) in the Old Testament: Genesis 37 – 50, culminating in the very moving scene where Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and embraced them as a token of true forgiveness and profound reconciliation. Genesis 45:3: “Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am Joseph!’”. The acknowledgement (I am Joseph - the supposed victim); the distressed brothers (the so called perpetrators); the weeping and embracement (exemplification of reconciliatory forgiveness and a *meta*-physical space for true encountering), as well as the talking of the brothers (the articulation of all the happenstances by means of dialogue) describe to my mind what forgiveness and reconciliation as process categories entail within a concrete praxis of compassionate reaching out.

Ernst Bloch (1959) calls this moment of reaching out, and the embracement between Joseph and his brothers, an exemplification of the principle of hope (*docta spes*) (Louw 2016:403). The act is twofold: (a) to create a wisdom that will imply a praxis-engagement (even a revolutionary engagement of radical transformation) in all forms of human estrangement in order to create a horizon of meaning (*Heimat*) – the ‘where to’ of purposeful hoping; (b) an ethics and aesthetics of human liberation which implies “*Glück*” (fulfilment as existential happiness) (Bloch 1969:401). This event of discovering a human space for living and mutual acknowledgement, Bloch calls *anagnorisis*¹¹ (Louw 2016:403).

Conclusion

Fostering and promoting the dignity¹² of the other as stranger (acknowledging the otherness of the other as basic presupposition for fruitful intercultural encounters in SIPCC) should be based on *anagnorisis*: affirming the otherness of the other; meeting one another within the

¹¹ Anagnorisis stems from the Greek verb *anaginōskō* = to know exactly, or to know again, acknowledge (Blunk 1975:245). *Anagnōsis* occasionally meant recognizing, but also referred to reading aloud, especially in meetings of the court. It was used in for example cultic readings. The cultic reading aloud of the divine commandments and legal requirements was an early practice at the great Israelite festivals (Exod. 34:7 cf. Jos. 24:25) (Blunk 1975:245). What Joseph did was to demonstrate a lectionary of the Torah. The palace of Pharaoh was transformed into a temple of Yahweh; the secular space became a holy place; acknowledgement a sacrament of human dignity.

¹² For Rombach (1978:379) dignity describes the true, humane human being (*Der menschliche Mensch*): The human being shaped by the social processes of identity and meaningful space of encounter (*Idemität* = a spiritual networking of meaning as the whole which gives significance to every particular part).

most basic existential common ground of our being human - human brokenness, vulnerability, frailty and imperfection.

- *Anagnorisis* could, thus be called the most powerful image of becoming whole in a praxis of hope care. *Anagnorisis* is about a soulful habitus, and a profound illustration of what is meant by a praxis of pastoral caregiving in theory formation for sustainable intercultural encounters.
- *Anagnorisis* is fundamentally an exponent of *orthopathy*. *Orthopathos* points in the direction of the question how we go about with human brokenness within the existential and ontic polarizations: Life and death; light and darkness; healing and weakness; love (grace) and hatred (evil). Also, how we go about with the social stratifications and categorizations: male and female; friend and opponent. As an organisation, SIPCC should be aware of how orthodoxy categorises human beings into ecclesial schisms and religious prejudice (for example Christians versus Moslems). Thus, the paradigmatic shift from clerical and institutional *orthodoxy* into *compassionate orthopraxy*: compassionate being-with the other - *orthopathy*. *Orthopathy* reckons with the anthropological presuppositions that we all share in the imperfection and brokenness of our being human – the most basic and common factor in human existence (the common ground for meeting the other beyond cultural limitations and social forms of prejudice). As Christensen (2006:xi) summarizes Henri Nouwen’s spirituality of imperfection: “Brokenness and woundedness are part of what is means to be human. Weakness and vulnerability are part of the strength of our spirituality.” Thus, the quest for indiscriminated compassion.
- A base anthropology for fruitful SIPCC-meetings should always shift from the existential danger of *xenophobia* (the fear for the stranger) to *xenophilia* (becoming the guest for the foreign other) by means of hospitable reaching out (*diakonia*). The terse slogan that man is wolf to man (*homo homini lupus*) is from a sociological point of view indeed relevant. However, the challenge in humane encounters is; “man should become man to man” (*homo homini homo*); the term “human” then stands for the capability to have empathy, solidarity, and cooperation (in Huber 1996:118).

Applied to a base anthropology for the founding of trustworthy and reliable and fair modes of human encounters within the dynamics of intercultural dialoguing, the following movements of the human soul could be viewed as basic spiritual requirements for promoting future intercultural encounters in SIPCC-meetings. They can be called a type of ‘spiritual generosity’ (Hernandez 2006:xv) in an anthropology of intercultural exchange, enrichment and meaningful coexistence, namely what Henri Nouwen (1998) called the movement from loneliness to solitude (self-understanding and self-acknowledgement); hostility to hospitality and the illusion of all-powerful control to the humility of grace, sharing and giving (Christenson 2006:viii-ix). These spiritual movements could be called the ABC in a spiritual based anthropology for authentic dialoguing and legitimate human encounters during future meetings of SIPCC.

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