

Luther and the Reformation

The doctrine of Justification is central to the adherence of the Christian faith. According to Webster, justification is: “The act, process, or state of being justified by God.”¹ Essentially, the doctrine of Justification aims to explain how sinful humanity can be made right before a Holy and Just God. Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches have disagreed on the implications of this issue since the beginning of the Reformation. It was during the 16th century that both views were clearly established. In a society whose church was filled with a thousand years of tradition involving abusive power, greed and corruption, Martin Luther made a theological breakthrough that affected every one. His new insight encouraged many others to question the status of the Roman Catholic Church. Martin Luther was the drop that made everything overflow. In the midst of these dark times, a reformation of the church was screaming to happen. For some, his breakthrough inevitably caused a welcomed change and for others, it created friction and division. During the years of 1545 and 1563, the Council of Trent was summoned to establish the Catholic Church’s official stance on many doctrines, one being that of justification which had been challenged by Martin Luther, who had developed a theology of justification through faith alone (*Sola, Fida*). This two-word formula of justification has become the cornerstone of the evangelical movement. Nonetheless, it has also become the backbone of many theological disputes and debates between Catholics and Protestants. Nearly five centuries later, the interpretation of *Sola Fida* and the council’s view of justification are still under heavy dialogue. So many questions seem to remain

¹ *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 1994), 636.

unanswered. Some of them are; What is the actual teaching of the Council of Trent on the doctrine of Justification? Do Catholics really reject Luther's two-word notion of *Sola Fida*? What does today's Catholic Church believe concerning these issues? This brief and selective essay will attempt to discuss some of these important questions concerning the doctrine of Justification.

The concept of "Sola Fida", that is salvation by faith alone, is attributed to Martin Luther. However, Luther's early understanding of justification was very different from his traditionally attributed view of "justification by faith alone". His early concept of God's justice was that of "righteousness and utterly scrupulous and impartial judge, who (God) rewarded or punished man on the basis of an ultimately unknown quality."² This understanding of God's righteousness had been derived from Luther's late medieval Catholic surroundings; which believed that a person gradually received divine grace. Alister McGrath explains that this mindset was greatly due to the Catholic Church's emphasis on the pactum-theology, which was an "established order of salvation, by which God committed himself to bestow grace upon man, provided that he fulfils certain preconditions."³

Nevertheless Luther was not satisfied with the above theology concerning the doctrine of justification. He had tried to justify himself according to the Church's established sacramental system, which supposedly assisted a man in his quest of becoming righteous before God. Packer writes; "In spite of fasting, scourging, the minutest self-examination and every form of self-discipline known

² Alister E. McGrath, *Iustia Dei v.2, a history of the Christian doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 5.

³ Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Oxford, Great Britain: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 192.

to the strict order he had joined, he failed to find peace” (Packer, 20). Luther was tormented by the constant acknowledgement of his own sinful state. He continually wondered if he had done enough praying and confessing in order to be admitted into heaven. After a lengthy spiritual battle, while studying the contents of Romans 1:16-17 as a professor, Luther came to a new understanding of God’s righteousness.⁴ He writes;

Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that “the just shall live by faith. Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have new meaning, and whereas before the “justice of God” had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in great love. This passage became to me the gate to heaven.⁵

One can note that a clear change took place in his theology between the years of 1514 and 1516. Luther realised that the Justice of God is not to be understood as the “righteousness by which God is himself just, but the righteousness by which he justifies the ungodly.”⁶ He now viewed righteousness as being a gift from God and revealed in the cross of Christ. Alister McGrath explains that this fresh look on justification contradicted the traditions of the Church. Thus Luther’s breakthrough delineated a new perspective towards the concept of God’s Justice which thereafter inevitably changed the course of religious thought on the doctrine of justification.⁷

⁴ Tim Dowley, *Introduction to the History of Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 368.

⁵ Norman Geisler and Ralph Mackenzie, *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals, agreements and differences* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 223.

⁶ McGrath, *Iustia Dei*, 7.

⁷ *Ibid*, 7-10.

R.C. Sproul reminds us that Luther developed his teaching of justification over a period of many years. He eventually came to the realisation that the central issue of justification was *sola fide*, that is by faith alone.⁸ The primary thought of the reformation has been traditionally expressed through the phrase “justification by grace through faith alone.”⁹ Luther recognized that this new understanding of God’s justification is not to be attained by human merit or effort, it was the complete work of God. He highly stressed this view in most of his works and called it the “summary of all Christian doctrine” and “the article by which the Church stands or falls.”¹⁰

⁸ R.C. Sproul, *Faith Alone* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 67-68.

⁹ John Dillenberger, *Martin Luther* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961), XXV.

¹⁰ Timothy George, *Dr. Luther's Theology*. In Christian History, ed., Kevin A Miller, (issue 34, 1992), 19-20.

500 years later

It would now seem evident that the Council of Trent preached against “Sola Fida”, that is, against salvation by faith alone. Furthermore, since this council is the “official” council for the doctrine of Justification, it is believed by many that this attitude against “faith alone” is still to this day rampant among Catholic theology. This may however not be the case. Hans Kung, a Catholic Professor of Dogmatic and Ecumenical Theology, claims that the Sola fida “formula definitely belongs to Catholic tradition.”¹¹ Therefore, despite popular belief that “Rome affirms that justification is “by faith”, but not “by faith alone”¹², one can come to realise that there are at least some Catholics who reject this notion.

Dr. Kung writes that, “Justification occurs through *faith alone*, inasmuch as no kind of work, not even a work of love, justifies man, but simply faith, trust, abandoning oneself to God, giving oneself over to God’s grace in response to God’s act.”¹³ How is this therefore possible? What about the seemingly clear evidence against Sola Fida within Trent’s teaching? Dr. Kung explains this apparent contradiction by expanding on what he feels is the biblical understanding of faith alone. He writes; “The sinner is justified through faith alone, but not through a faith which stands opposed to works done in living community of the will with Christ or out of love grounded in faith and all other virtues.”¹⁴ The Christian faith is a “living faith”, that is “fides viva”. Explained in

¹¹ Hans Kung. *Justification* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 250.

¹² Sproul, 122.

¹³ Kung, 252.

¹⁴ Ibid, 256.

this matter, Kung's view of justification seems to strongly resemble the evangelical understanding of faith. While one is saved through faith alone, the biblical understanding of faith also demands works. As Kung puts it; "works are asked from the man already justified."¹⁵ He explains that everything comes from the grace of God, even man's good works. The statement that salvation is a free gift is very true. Nonetheless, the statement that salvation is the free gift that costs one entire life is even truer. Yes, there is a cost to God's free gift of eternal life; your entire life. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote; "The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Christ."¹⁶

On one hand evangelicals claim that they are saved by faith alone and yet on the other hand, they testify that this faith needs works. How are they then different from Catholics? R.C Sproul, in his book "Faith Alone" attempts to distinguish both views. He explains that the Roman Catholic view of justification fits the following formula; "Faith+works=Justification". While on the other hand, he puts the evangelical view of justification in the following manner; "Faith=Justification+works."¹⁷ Are these formulas simply a play on words? One can begin to see the close relationship between faith and works. According to Dr. Kung, it is "undeniable that there is a fundamental agreement between Karl Barth's position and that of the Catholic Church in regard to the theology of justification seen in its totality."¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid, 264

¹⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Touchstone Publishing, 1995), 55.

¹⁷ Sproul, 156.

¹⁸ Kung, 278.

It is noteworthy to clarify that in the midst of such a theological breakthrough, it is often forgotten by Protestants that Luther also believed and taught that justification was a gradual process. “For alien righteousness is not instilled all at once, but it begins, makes progress, and is finally perfected at the end through faith.”¹⁹ There seems to be a very close relationship between Justification and Sanctification. In their book, *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals, agreements and differences*, Geisler and Mackenzie write;

Justification by faith is both an event and a process. What later Protestants were to divide, Luther kept together. He is quite clear that there is a moment when a sinner is actually justified by faith. He then has the righteousness of another, the alien righteousness of Christ, imputed to him...This is the beginning of a journey toward a time (following the resurrection of the dead in the age to come) when he will in fact possess a perfect righteousness created in him by the Spirit of God²⁰

If Catholics really do believe in justification by faith alone and that good works stem from such a faith, then why did the council of Trent teach otherwise? Once again, Dr Kung explains this apparent dilemma. He reminds his readers of the close relationship between Justification and Sanctification. In speaking of Justification and Sanctification, Dr. Kung writes; “They are intimately involved with one another. Indeed, if sanctification and regeneration are not involved, there is no justification.”²¹ Sometimes they are so closely linked that the two appear to be the same. For this reason, Kung feels that many Protestants have misunderstood the council of Trent. “(They) have not sufficiently noted that the Council has various statements about “justification” which in a different

¹⁹ Luther, *Two Kinds of Righteousness*, 157.

²⁰ Geisler, 223.

²¹ Sproul, 110.

vocabulary would pertain to “sanctification.”²² This means, that when the Council spoke in favour of works, it did so in regards to Sanctification. Explained in this light, the council gains a whole new meaning.

Also, Kung explains that the council’s use of the word “merit” is significantly different then the way it is used in the Bible concerning the Pharisees. “Christ spoke out sharply against the Pharisaic morality of merit.”²³ Kung claims that the word “merit” used in the council is significantly different from its use in the New Testament. “So the teaching of the Council had nothing in common with pharisaic teaching on merit.”²⁴ He explains that in the New Testament, the Pharisees boasted their “merits” in front of man and God. Trent wrote; “a Christian should have no inclination either to rely on himself or to glory in himself instead of in the Lord, whose goodness towards all men is such that he wants his gifts to be their merits.”²⁵ All goodness from within us ultimately comes from the grace of God. This means that man cannot boast his works because they belong to God. The following statement summarises Kungs view of “works” and “merit”; “As in Scripture, the Council’s only concern is that man should not remain in a state of indolent passivity, burying his talents, but put them to use. It is a summons not to an idle basking in the sun but to earnest fear of God and active obedience.”²⁶

²² Kung, 270.

²³ Ibid, 271.

²⁴ Kung, 272

²⁵ Council of Trent.

²⁶ Kung, 272.

In the end, Karl Barth believes that “Catholics and Evangelicals should discuss what separates them with eye to what unites them.”²⁷ He believes that Catholics and Evangelicals need “to view one another in the best possible light.”²⁸

For now, I am satisfied with the words of Karl Barth. “While we are divided in faith, we are divided within the same faith.”²⁹

²⁷ Ibid, xlii.

²⁸ Ibid, xlii.

²⁹ Ibid, xli.

Decree on Ecumenism by Vatican Council II

January 25th 1959, three months after his election, Pope John 23rd announced « la convocation d'une concile general dont l'un des buts sera d'engager l'Eglise catholique dans le mouvement oecumenique. »³⁰ There were a series of commissions, one of which was on Ecumenism. Pope John XXIII appointed Cardinal Bea to create the « Secretariat pour la promotion de l'unite entre les catholiques romains et les chretiens des autres confessions. »³¹ An official organization promoting Christian unity with the separated brethren was a first for the Vatican. Cardinal Bea, the secretary of church unity, looked all over the world for Catholic/Protestant relations/dialogue. As a result, he appointed Gregory Baum to help write the decree on ecumenism. Dr. Baum explains that there were twenty people on the committee. Papers on Christian Unity were written and submitted to the council. The council would then decide if they would be accepted or not. There were three main changes that took place as a result of the decree on Ecumenism. Firstly, the Catholic Church committed itself to recognized the “separated brethren” as real Christians. Secondly, the decree on ecumenism recognized that church's are used by the Spirit to save and to sanctify. Lastly, Vatican II recognized that the ecumenical movement is affirmed by the Holy Spirit. Prior to Vatican II, the ecumenical movement was condemned by the Catholic.³² “Le decret sur l'Oecumenisme, vote le 21 novembre 1964, reconnait d'authentiques valeurs ecclesiales dans les autres confessions chretiennes et il invite tous les catholiques a chercher la reconciliation avec tous

³⁰ Oecumenisme au Quebec, 3

³¹ Jesuite Canadiens, p. 3, author unsure

³² Interview with Gregory Baum

les autres chretiens par la priere, l'etude et l'action, dans un climat de verte, de liberte et d'amour »³³The Decree on Ecumenism is the first official statement by the authority of the Catholic church on the movement towards Christian unity³⁴

³³ Jesuite Canadiens, p. 2.

³⁴ Michael Adams, 9

Ecumenism in Quebec

I. Catholic Inquiry

One of the key figures for ecumenism in the province of Quebec is Father Irenee Beaubien. From a young age, Father Beaubien explains that he had a heart felt desire to better understand the protestant faith.³⁵ In January of 1952, soon after having fulfilled all necessary requirements for his program, the young priest felt led to open the Catholic Inquiry centre located in the old College of Saint-Marie on Bleury street in downtown Montreal, “Its purpose was to provide information about faith and religious beliefs of Catholics, who were mainly francophone, to our non-Catholic fellow citizens who were mainly Anglophone.”³⁶ One must not forget that until the 1960’s, religion and language were separated into two categories: The French population was predominantly Catholic while the sizably smaller English population was predominantly protestant. These two different groups widely avoided association with one another.

It was in the midst of this religious and cultural division that Father Beaubien opened the Catholic Inquiry Centre. Classes or inquiry forums were given twice a week for a period of 6 weeks at a time. Father Beaubien, along with the cooperation of other Catholic leaders faithfully lectured to the people that attended regularly. As a result of the Inquiry Forum, Beaubien explains that networks of friendships with non-Catholics were formed for the first time in the province of Quebec. Additionally, these information sessions helped “break the

³⁵ Interview with Father Beaubien

³⁶ Beaubien, *From Talks to Cooperation*, 1

barriers between Anglophones and Francophones”³⁷ that existed at this time. These educational efforts were officially blessed by Archbishop Paul-Emile Leger in September of 1952: “This experience convinced me of one thing, there was an urgent need for regular dialogue with our Christian brethren who were also in the service of Christ in their own churches.”³⁸

II. Early Dialogue

In the fall of 1958, having just returned from a one year sabbatical in Europe dialoging with many different leaders who were also interested in ecumenism, Father Beaubien organized and led monthly meetings with 14 Catholic and Protestant leaders. The apparent success of the Catholic Inquiry center only reinforced Father Beaubien’s deep desire to see the Catholic church enter into ecumenical dialogue. He was not satisfied with merely informing others about Catholicism. The goal of these new meetings was to listen and learn from each other. In his own words, it was also to “try and understand what divided them and what united them since both groups adhered to the same Christ and one of his foundational teachings was on Christian unity.”³⁹ Everyone participating in these meetings recognized that their unifying values were more important than what divided them. As a result, friendship and trust was developed between the two diverse groups. Beaubien notes that since these meetings were birthed before the Vatican II council, they had to be done with utmost discretion and secrecy from the Catholic church: “Jusqu’au concile Vatican II, l’Eglise catholique s’etait manifestee reticente et mefiante a l’egard du

³⁷ Beaubien, From Talks to Cooperation, 3

³⁸ Beaubien, ?

³⁹ Interview with Father Beaubien

movement oecumenique lance au debut du siecle par des eglises issues de la Reforme et de l'Orthodoxie (Until the Vatican II Council, the Catholic Church was reticent and distrusting of the ecumenical movement begun at the turn of the century by churches emerging from the Reform and Orthodox movements).”⁴⁰ Beaubien also observes that “Cette discrete experience avant-gardiste, vecue en esprit de foi, a servi en quelque sorte de tremplin aux diverses initiatives oecumeniques qui, par la suite, se prendront a Montreal (This discrete forward-thinking experiment, done in a spirit of faith, acted as a type of trampoline for the diverse ecumenical initiatives which would happen in Montreal.)”⁴¹ Beaubien believes that in many ways these meetings were the birth place of ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Protestants, not only for Montreal but for the world.⁴²

In 1959, a few key English speaking protestant ministers realized that there were monthly ecumenical meetings between French speaking Catholics and Protestants. Soon thereafter, an ecumenically focused English speaking group of Catholics and Protestants were also formed. “L’annee suivante, avec l’accord de l’archeveque de Montreal et du doyen de la Faculte de theologie a l’Universite McGill, s’inaugurait discrettement un nouveau dialogue mensuel en anglais entre theologiens de diverses confesions chretiennes (The following year, with the consent of the Archbishop of Montreal and the Dean of McGill University’s Faculty of Theology, a new monthly discussion group was discretely begun in Montreal, in English, involving theologians of various Christian denominations.

⁴⁰ Christian Pavilion handout ,1

⁴¹ Christian Pavilion handout, 1

⁴² Unless otherwise indicated, the information gathered for this paragraph was taken from two interviews with Father Beaubien (Sept 22nd and Oct)

⁴³ You have a lot of floating quotes that you may want to introduce or discuss retroactively. These two groups, one in French and the other in English continued to faithfully gather monthly all the way through the 1960's. Occasionally, both groups would meet together attempting to also bridge the cultural barriers that existed between the two. These initiatives may seem straightforward today, but during the late 1950's it was nothing short of revolutionary. During a time when the Quebec Catholic church was being attacked the most, a small group of passionate followers introduced her to the world of ecumenism for the first time. As a result, the Catholic church gained a new appreciation of protestants. She went from an attitude of hostility and contempt to an attitude of cooperation and dialogue.

III. Cardinal Leger

In January of 1962, a letter was issued by Cardinal Leger encouraging Catholic and Protestant dialogue. Within this letter he writes: “the Church cannot remain indifferent. Conscious of the expressed will of Christ, aware of the scandal which the disunity of Christians gives to the non-Christian world and the evil which it brings to those who are separated from it and those who have remained within it, the Church feels the urgent need to do everything within its power to help heal this wound. For disunity is an evil.”⁴⁴ This was a monumental teaching because it “permet au dialogue de se faire au grand jour (allows for free and open discussion)”⁴⁵ for the first time in Quebec history.

⁴³ Beaubien, Oecumenisme, 3.

⁴⁴ Cardinal Leger, 23

⁴⁵ Lalonde, 291

Soon after this letter was released to the church, Dr. Baum wrote the following statement in a short article on ecumenism in Canada: “The most outstanding ecumenical event in the Catholic Church in Canada is the pastoral “Disunited Christians” of Cardinal Leger, Archbishop of Montreal, issued in January 1962.”⁴⁶ It is important to emphasize that this ecumenical language was being reiterated in the Quebec Catholic Church prior to the new openness towards ecumenism that would eventually come from the Vatican II council. Dr. Baum points out that the Cardinal underlines three important principles. Firstly, the Cardinal affirms that “by baptism separated Christians are inserted into Christ and become one body with him.”⁴⁷ Secondly, Dr. Baum points out that the Cardinal encourages “dialogue among theologians” with the goal of better understanding and appreciating the other. The last principle highlighted is the emphasis put towards praying with utmost humility for Christian unity. According to Dr. Baum, these three principles “belong to the most courageous and stimulating remarks ever made by a member of the Catholic hierarchy on these matters.”⁴⁸ In many regards, Cardinal Leger’s pastoral letter on disunited Christians, validated the ecumenical efforts already begun by Father Beaubien in the late 1950’s. Beaubien’s monthly gatherings between Catholic and Protestant believers were now officially encouraged by the catholic church of Montreal. One must not forget that the ecumenical language spoken in Cardinal Leger’s pastoral letter was a new teaching for the two thousand year old Roman Church. Never before were Catholics enthusiastically encouraged to dialogue with Christians of

⁴⁶ Gregory Baum, *Catholic Ecumenism in Canada*, In the Canadian Register, 1962, p. 1

⁴⁷ Gregory Baum, *Catholic Ecumenism in Canada*, In the Canadian Register, 1962, p.1.

⁴⁸ Gregory Baum, *Catholic Ecumenism in Canada*, In the Canadian Register, 1962, p. 2

other denominations. In fact, prior to Vatican II, and to this letter, Catholics were taught that salvation could only be attained through the catholic church. Now, for the first time in history, not only were Catholics being told that protestants were Christians, they were being encouraged “to seek in every way to love his separated brethren as brothers in Christ.”⁴⁹ Catholic leaders like Father Beaubien and Cardinal Leger were becoming increasingly convinced that the disunited church was having detrimental implications towards Christian apologetics: “It is because Christians present to the world the sad spectacle of their division, that the pagan world has not believed in Him whom the Father has sent, his Son Jesus Christ.”⁵⁰

IV. World Council of Church’s

In the summer of 1963, the 4th World Council of Churches (WCC) “Faith and Order Conference” was held on the McGill campus in downtown Montreal. The WCC was officially founded by representatives of 147 churches in the city of Amsterdam in August of 1948. The goal of the WCC was to “deepen the fellowship of Christian churches and communities so they may see in one another authentic expressions of the ‘one holy, catholic and apostolic church’.”⁵¹ At the time of the 1963 conference, the Roman Catholic Church was not a member church of the WCC. The WCC had chosen Montreal for their international conference since they had heard of the new ecumenical climate that existed there:

“Nous sommes venus ici pour nous connaitre, nous faire connaitre et etablir des bases d’amitie, ces bases indispensable a la reunion des Eglises. Vivre sous le meme toit que les Eveques orthodoxes de

⁴⁹ Cardinal Leger, 27

⁵⁰ Cardinal Leger, 24

Russie, du Moyen Orient ou des Indes, des Eveques anglicans ou methodistes, des pasteurs de toutes les parties du monde, les ecouter, les interroger, cela constitue une experience unique et nous fait toucher du doigt l'ere nouvelle dans laquelle le monde chretien est entre et dans laquelle l'Eglise catholique a entrepris de tenir son role (We have come here to get acquainted, to become known, and to establish friendships which are an indispensable basis for the unification of churches. To live under the same roof with Orthodox bishops from Russia, from the Middle East or India, Anglican or Methodist bishops, and pastors from all over the world, to listen to them, ask them questions—it all makes for a unique experience and provides us with a sense of the new era into which the Christian world has come, and in which the Catholic Church has committed to play its role.”⁵²

As Father Beaubien was at the center of all the recent ecumenical initiatives taking place in Montreal, he was asked to take part in the conference's organization committee.⁵³ Delegates from the member churches of the WCC came from all over the world to take part in the conference. Five catholic observers appointed by Rome were invited to participate at the conference. An invitation of this kind had never before been extended towards Catholics. Furthermore, Father Beaubien explains that he was given permission to invite fifteen local Catholic theologians to also participate in the conference.⁵⁴

One of the highlights of the conference was the “soiree de fraternite chretienne” held on July 21st at the Universite de Montreal. The evening was organized by both the French and the English ecumenical groups that had been started by Father Beaubien in the late 1950's. The idea was to create a comfortable and enjoyable climate for the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox churches to interact with one another. Father Beaubien points out that this

⁵² Bernard Lambert, o.p., LA PRESSE, 20 Juillet 1963.

⁵³ Jesuites Canadiens, author unknown, p.4.

⁵⁴ Beaubien in Pretre et Pasteur, 262

successful evening received large amounts of publicity and “constitua pour plusieurs Quebecois une premiere sensibilisation a l’oecumenisme (constituted for many Quebecers, their first exposure to ecumenism.”⁵⁵ Miedema adds; “The Church in Canada was making its own steps to develop dialogue with its ‘separated brethren’, steps made particularly visible by Cardinal Leger’s appearance at the Protestant and Orthodox World Council of Church’s Faith and Order Conference in Montreal in 1963.”⁵⁶ Father Valiquette points out that this was “une premiere mondiale pour un cardinal (a world-first for a cardinal).”⁵⁷

V. Canadian Ecumenical Centre

In the fall of 1963, under the direction of Father Beaubien, the Diocesan Ecumenical Centre opened on Drummond Street in downtown Montreal. Having just recently released his pastoral letter “Disunited Christians”, the timing was fitting for Cardinal Leger to officially bless the opening of this ecumenical centre: “Le mandat du Centre etait double : faire l’education des catholiques sur le mouvement oecumenique; intensifier les relations deja amorces avec les autres confessions chretiennes (The centre’s mandate was two-fold: to educate Catholics regarding the ecumenical movement and to strengthen the relations already begun with other Christian denominations).”⁵⁸ Father Beaubien further explains that the Center’s mission was now to “faire parcourir a d’autre le chemin parcouru par quelques initiees a l’oecumenisme. C’est ainsi que debuta un long et patient travail d’education oecumenique (cause others to follow the path already

⁵⁵ Beaubien in his long essay, 6.

⁵⁶ Miedema, 140.

⁵⁷ Valiquette, p.2

⁵⁸ Elise Bonnette, Le Centre canadien d’oecumenisme, 40 ans au service de l’unite, in Revue Sainte Anne, June 2003, p261

taken by a few ecumenical pioneers. Thus began the long and patient work of ecumenical education).”⁵⁹ The staff of the centre had a challenging task ahead of them. Despite the challenges, there was a certain enthusiasm and synergy in the air due to the recent ecumenical openness that was being experienced in Montreal. The center’s central location in downtown Montreal drew a lot of curiosity. The Center offered bilingual classes on the development of the ecumenical movement in Montreal and around the rest of the world. The ecumenical movement in Montreal got a lot of publicity during the WCC’s “faith and order” conference. As a result, the ecumenical center soon began appearing in local news papers, radio stations and different television networks. Forming ecumenical relationships with Christians outside the Roman Catholic Church was a foreign concept for the vast majority of French Catholic Quebecers.

In 1966, as a result of the impact of Vatican II, the Catholic Bishops of Canada established a National Office for Ecumenism with an English secretariat in Toronto and a French secretariat in Montreal.⁶⁰ The French secretariat of the National Office for Ecumenism assimilated itself quite naturally to the existing Diocesan Ecumenical Centre “in order to benefit from its library and the experience it had acquired.”⁶¹

VI. Christian Pavilion

In 1962, after the USSR cancelled its plans to host the next world fair and after “mayor Jean Drapeau made a fresh presentation to the BIE”, it was decided

⁵⁹ Beaubien, essay, 7.

⁶⁰ Irene Beaubien, Ecumenism, 4.

⁶¹ Irene Beaubien, Ecumenism, 4.

that Montreal would become the host city for the 1967 world fair.⁶² The theme for the Montreal world fair, commonly referred to as Expo 67, was “Man and His World.” Expo 67, became the highlight of Canada's centennial celebrations. There were one hundred and twenty countries represented within sixty pavilions at this world exhibition. Additionally, there were fifty three pavilions which were made up of thousands of private exhibitors and sponsors.⁶³

Soon after the Ecumenical Centre was inaugurated in 1963, the founder Father Beaubien explains how he “felt directly involved by the choice of Montreal as the site of the Universal and International World Exhibition for 1967.”⁶⁴ Due to ongoing ecumenical dialogue with Protestants that had begun in the late 1950's, Father Beaubien was able to discuss the Christian involvement at “Man and His World” with relative ease. As a result, he began meeting with a group of passionate Catholics and Protestants on a weekly basis for many months wondering “aloud whether the ecumenical movement should bear witness” at the world fair or not. Father Beubien challenged them by saying; “Si nous, chretiens, inspires sur l'Evangile, ne sommes pas capables de donner sur les terrains de l'Expo '67 un temoignage commun de fraternite, de collaboration et d'unite, qui donc le donnera (If we Christians, inspired by the Gospel, are not able, on the Expo 67 grounds, to show brotherly love, cooperation and unity, then who will)?”⁶⁵ Once everyone accepted to take on this opportunity, each member went back to his respective denomination to discuss its involvement and contribution.

⁶² Canadian Encyclopedia, Historica online

⁶³ Canadian Encyclopedia, Historica online

⁶⁴ Beaubien, *From Talks to Cooperation*, 6.

⁶⁵ In *Jesuites Canadiens*, p. 5 (author of article unknown)

The hope was to create one Christian pavilion, comprising of many Christian denominations, demonstrating a testimony of Christian unity to the rest of the world: « Jamais projet de cette nature n'avait été entrepris dans les expositions universelles antécédents (No other project of this nature was ever undertaken in any previous world fair).”⁶⁶ This entrepreneurial vision of creating one Christian pavilion meant that each respective Christian group would have to agree not to be represented within any other pavilion. Initially this posed a problem for the Roman Catholic Church since they had always had their own pavilion representing the Vatican. However, Father Beaubien strongly believed that if this new ecumenical venture was to have any success, the Vatican would have to officially forgo having its own separate pavilion. This was not an easy concept for the Catholic church to accept. As a result, Father Beaubien explains how he traveled to Rome to discuss this new idea with Cardinal Bea. The cardinal was receptive and agreed to bring Father Beaubien’s proposal to Pope Paul VI. It was argued that giving up its own pavilion would be an enormous ecumenical gesture in of itself on behalf of the Catholic Church. Also, it was argued that participating in one Christian pavilion would keep with the spirit of the recent Vatican II council.⁶⁷

Father Beaubien explains that “a board of directors, a management committee and some sub committees were formed.” As a result of these efforts, a joint Christian Pavilion was formed between Catholics and Protestants at the 1967 world fair in Montreal. Collaborative efforts like these were not a reality

⁶⁶ Christian Pavilion article, 1

⁶⁷ Interview with Father Beaubien

prior to the Quiet Revolution. Seven different Christian denominations, including Roman Catholics, agreed to work together towards establishing one unified Christian pavilion: Floater “The response of the CCWE was swift and positive. The official report of the meeting argued that the “magnificent” Pavilion of Unity would include Roman Catholic and Protestants under one roof for the first time at a world exposition. It would “become one of the achievements of Expo 67.”⁶⁸ One can therefore appreciate the efforts made by this small group of traditionally « separated » brethren. Along with the support of their denominations these seven men were able to see something join together that had never been joined before. Miedema further confirms that, “Never before had a pavilion been built cooperatively by Protestants and Roman Catholics, and that fact put the exposition on the cutting edge of its time.”⁶⁹ As a result, Beaubien reported that; « le Pavillon Chretien de l’Expo 67 represente l’evenement oecumenique le plus important vecu a Montreal, au Quebec et au Canada. »⁷⁰

Eight of Canada's major Christian denominations joined together to promote this pavilion, hoping to present at Expo 67 a common message hope and unity in Christ. The Canadian Churches participating were (in order of their size): Roman Catholic, United, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Greek-Orthodox and Ukrainian Greek-Orthodox. The pavilion represents a historic step in the forward march of ecumenism. The pavilion was strategically positioned in the heart of the action on Ile Notre-Dame, close to the Expo-Express station and to the pavilions of Canada, Britain, and France. The pavilion’s theme is that in a

⁶⁸ Miedema, 141. (notice quote within).

⁶⁹ Miedema, 145.

⁷⁰ Oecumenisme au Quebec, 10.

world often without hope and love, Christ is an internal hope and source of joy.

To project its message, the pavilion used photographs from every part of the world. Film, sound, space and lighting are other techniques used.