

***Multi-religious Cooperation:
Transforming conflict from a source of violence to a
resource for peace***

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Abstract

From the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland to the ‘Rebel War’ of Sierra Leone, this paper explores how today’s ubiquitous conflict can be transformed from a source of violence into a resource of peace. The reawakening of Teilhard de Chardin’s slumbering ‘immense spiritual power’ inspires a new perspective, leading to multi-religious cooperation. Through the creativity of the diagenetic paradigm, that cooperation on practical action is already helping to stop war; end poverty; and protect the earth.

Sat reflecting in a Belfast Muslim Community Centre, as Irish religious leaders from North and South of the border gather for a multi-religious encounter, I ponder, “How can deep, durable peace be possible after so much violence, so much killing?” As Catholics and Protestants, together with their Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh neighbours, begin exploring how they can create an Irish Inter Religious Council that will work to help build that profound and sustainable peace for all Irish people, I wonder, “How can human beings, who have suffered and lost those they have loved, find forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace?”

Some 50 years ago, the Jesuit priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, reflecting upon human activity, envisioned that:

In the depths of the human multitude, there slumbers an immense spiritual power, which will manifest itself only when we have learnt how to *break through the dividing walls* of our egoism and raise ourselves up to an entirely new perspective, so that habitually and in a practical fashion we fix our gaze on the universal realities (de Chardin 1977: 120).

If his vision is valid today, what might awaken this immense spiritual power? How do we break through the barrier of our egoism? What new perspective might change our habits, in practical ways, so that we are enabled to fix our

gaze upon the universal realities of violent conflict? How can we use the immensity of this awakened spiritual power to transform such conflict to a resource for reconciliation and peace? I want to share with you a new perspective that does just that. This perspective is multi-religious understanding that leads to practical multi-religious cooperation in action.

Religions for Peace, the world's largest network of religious leaders, women of faith, and young people from all the great religions, has developed and honed this perspective over nearly four decades. Multi-religious cooperation is more than inter-faith dialogue, where people of different religions gather to talk and, perhaps, share a meal. That is important and certainly can lead to understanding and the desire to do more together. Multi-religious cooperation, however, is an encounter that creates multi-religious action, which really does transform conflict from potential, or actual, violence to a resource for peace. This new perspective enriches and empowers with the rich diversity of different faiths, their spirit, and their values. In an age of global inter-faith dialogue, such energy really can be released to power the effective transformation of conflict into multi-religious action for the common good. There are strong grounds for hoping that it will.

Certainly there is a need for action. Perhaps the three most disturbing threats of our time are violence, disease, and ecological degradation. Terrorism and war; HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; global warming and environmental destruction, all give great cause for concern; all need global action on a huge scale. If this immense spiritual power can be put to work, global action on the necessary scale is a real possibility. But, how will such cooperation become an effective reality? Significantly, of more than 6 billion human beings on planet earth today, the majority, more than 4.5 billion, are people of faith: Baha'i; Buddhist; Christian; Hindu; Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Shinto, Sikh, Traditional, Zoroastrian... (*The Tablet* 2002: 27). If faith really does inspire spiritual power in the faithful, the effect when they work together could be truly transforming.

Whilst there is little to indicate that today's faith communities generally are working together in a world that lives engulfed in fear, inequality and injustice, there may be seeds of hope germinating. Here in the UK, there is evidence of inter-faith encounter. However, much of this remains within Swidler and Mojzes' 'radical encountering of differences' and even occasional 'crossing over', but apparently little beyond (Swidler & Mojzes 2000: 163). Perhaps this is the *dialogue de sourds*. Perhaps, it is the well-known British reserve. Perhaps, it is complacency. After all we have been secure in our communities, even whilst war rages elsewhere in the world. Here, the only taste of war, for those outside of the armed services, during the last fifty years appears to be a consequence of that intra-faith religio-political conflict between Christian factions in Northern Ireland. Maybe attitudes are now changing due to the war against Iraq; the war on terror; and popular campaigns against injustice, such as Make Poverty History. There is, however, no clear evidence of real cooperative action amongst the mainstream religious communities. No real multi-religious action to eradicate the root causes of, for example, the mistrust and fear of different communities. Only with the senior most religious leaders of the great faiths actively encouraging and enabling their own communities to work together for the good of all will the necessary changes commence and the causes of fear be overcome. Only leading by example will these religious leaders enable that immense spiritual power to become manifest, releasing the energy to eliminate injustice and build durable peace.

Certainly, post 11 September 2001 and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, it is difficult to see how war, or coercion of any kind, will ever bring lasting peace. The indiscriminate killing of nearly three thousand people and the awesome destruction at the symbolic heart of global civilization, the World Trade Centre, testify to the fallacy of security by might, in this postmodern world. Fundamentalist Muslims are blamed for that spectacularly horrific attack on the world's remaining superpower, the United States of America, with its politics dominated by Jewish and Christian thought (Mostyn 2001: 328). Some will argue that Islamists are today's political aggressors, others that they are oppressed liberators. Certainly, with America and the UK

declaring war on Iraq and the subsequent ongoing killings that have already far exceeded those in the United States, it appears time to rethink the role of religion in the world. Maybe it really is now time for the world's great religions to engage in mainstream mutual concern, meaningful co-operation and peaceful action together. But, how and where do they start if not here in the wealthy, developed, democratic, multi-cultural western world?

Sierra Leone, a small West African state, seems an unpromising place to begin. There, over four and a half million people have suffered ten years of violent hostilities, with tens of thousands killed or orphaned and over one million people displaced, their homes destroyed. Driving through the severely crowded capital, Freetown, with its sprawling shantytowns, ubiquitous pollution and multitude of amputees, it is difficult to comprehend the human degradation that has been inflicted upon these delightful, charming and beautiful people.

Throughout the four provinces of Sierra Leone, amputations are widespread. These are not the result of artillery damage, such as the devastating effect of land mines in Angola. No, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) drug-crazed fighters, some only children themselves, who murdered, tortured and raped adults and children, hacked off people's hands, arms and, sometimes, legs in a senseless and sadistic form of punishment and suppression (Hirsch 2001: 43, 45; Ashby 2002: 94-95). They also plundered, wrecked and burned down homes whilst destroying the physical, economic, social and political infrastructure of the whole country.

Nevertheless, there amongst the people of the Islamic, Christian and Traditional African religions, there is a sense that, despite the daunting task of rebuilding a broken nation, transformation is possible, if people of different faiths work together. There, it is possible to understand, to believe, that the need is not just to talk; to discuss; to engage in dialogue. Across Sierra Leone, people of faiths have gone beyond words and there really exists effective multi-religious action that reaches down to the level of 'Deep-Dialogue', 'transforming life and behaviour'. This is surely the multi-religious

transformation needed particularly, but by no means exclusively, between the world's Christians, Jews and Muslims (Swidler & Mojzes 2000: 151). Such action is needed, not just in Sierra Leone, not solely on the African continent, not only in the Third World. Multi-religious action is also vital in the West, in the powerful United States of America, across affluent Europe and here, in the questionably United Kingdom.

In overcrowded Freetown, contact, at least, between Christians and Muslims is unavoidable. In this painfully impoverished country, the population of Christians and Muslims live cheek by jowl (Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone 2003: 6). The damage, inflicted by a decade of Rebel War, on the country's infrastructure is inescapable. There, I met people from all walks of life, including Ministers and leaders of their broken economy. I listened to Paramount Chiefs, headmen, schoolteachers, workers and petty traders. I engaged with beggars and the children of the street; the children in the amputee camp; the children in the interim care centres for war orphans. Everywhere, I found hope. Everywhere I went, despite the squalour; despite the poverty; despite the physical and psychological damage of the amputations and other afflictions, I found hope. Why? To me, it was inconceivable that the warmth, the friendliness, the helpfulness, which I experienced during my visits to Sierra Leone, would be matched in my own country, if we had suffered in such an appalling way. How can this be? Is hope an innate characteristic of the Sierra Leonean? Presumably not of those who had been the prime aggressors in war. It certainly is not founded on their economic strength, their longevity, or their education. According to the United Nations Human Development Index, on all of these criteria Sierra Leone is officially ranked one of the two least developed countries in the world (United Nations Development Programme 2008). Could it be their faith? How could a country so evidently Muslim, yet also strongly Christian, with continuing traditional West African religious beliefs and practices, develop such an abundance of hope? (Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone 2003: 6-7). Certainly, I have never experienced such hope in the relatively affluent United Kingdom, with its highly literate people, whose life expectancy at birth exceeds twice that of this impoverished people.

What role does or can faith assume in the face of hopelessness? Is it to seek an aesthetic theology, where the individual can be alone with their God, seeking meaning in their own particular life? Is it to find a pastoral theology within the local, parochial community, where problems, if not solvable, are at least comprehensible and where one can safely say a prayer for those in need elsewhere in the world? Or, is it to grasp a practical theology, where action can transform lives, transform society, transform culture and, not least, transform hope?

In Sierra Leone, I found myself participating in workshops to understand the economic consequences of their vicious and damaging war and to help secure funding to rebuild their infrastructure and their economy. Representatives of ministries, local authorities, large companies, petty traders and local communities attended and participated, sharing problems and possible solutions, with impressive enthusiasm. It was not, however, the enthusiasm that directly inspired me. It was rather that moment when, at the commencement of each workshop, we all simply stood together to share time in both Christian and Muslim prayer. Even at Assisi, the World Religions' leaders could not bring themselves to pray together (*The Tablet* 2002: 27). Here, was a significant difference. A people of different faiths who could meet together, pray together, and act together. Here was the basis of a possibility that effective inter-faith dialogue does exist, leading to multi-religious action for the good of all, and that this multi-religious cooperation requires faith and prayer to make a difference, to give hope, to transform lives.

It is the praxis, or rather, the action for change, the transformation, the 'poiesis-oriented approach' to such practical-theological dialogue that is explored below (van der Ven 1998: 35-36).

From inter-faith dialogue to multi-religious action

Any discussion about the dynamic dimensions of inter-faith dialogue, and multi-religious action necessarily assumes protagonists share an understanding of the concepts of 'dialogue' and 'action'. Dialectic, the art of truth seeking discussion, is where Gadamer claims the primacy of dialogue

over Hegelian dialectical monologue (Gadamer 2001: 368-369). This dialogue does not nestle between such self-opinionated monologue and the erroneously formed triologue, beloved of Abrahamic inter-faith proponents (Three Faiths Forum 2006). No, *διάλογος*, through word, is the key to hermeneutical dialectic. Through word, the dialectic of understanding, of meaning, is empowered to generate higher and deeper knowledge, higher and deeper truth, as relevant to a contemporary context. Through the word of the holy texts, those of faith are able to discuss contemporary interpretation, in search of contemporarily relevant truth. Through scriptural words, the UK faithful, including Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, can question the interpretation that has given birth to their contemporary doctrines. But, where is the action?

Here in the highly developed, affluent UK, most inter-faith dialogue remains just that. Through word, dialogue is evolving from radical encountering of difference, which can be disconcerting and is sometimes perceived as threatening, particularly when viewed through the perspective of atrocities such as the London bombings, to the dialogical awakening that creates awareness of other faith perspectives. The action, the doing, the performance, remains marginal. Nevertheless, Race, Rao and Kenny expect this encounter to ignite a radical paradigm shift and, sensing a 'sea change' in inter-religious dialogue and engagement, invited a dialogue on fresh models of 'living positively with religious difference' (Race, Seshagiri Rao & Kenney 2005: 8-19). To date, however, the fruits of their particular dialogue also appear limited.

Let us, therefore, step back and share a different perspective, the one seen in present day West Africa. There, in Sierra Leone, life expectancy at birth is just 41.8 years; only 35% of adults are literate, with many of those marginally so; and GDP per capita at £400 per annum, which means that the vast majority of people have to survive on much less than £1 per day (United Nations Development Programme 2008). There, with two million rendered homeless; their infrastructure decimated and their economy ruined, the people have been striving against the odds to rebuild their lives, since peace was declared

in 2002. Despite the chronic poverty, the immense refugee problem and the infrastructure destruction, it is clear that the people of Sierra Leone have secured peace and are determined to rebuild their country. Many individuals and groups are now involved in the reconstruction process. But, amongst those active, the Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) stands out as the most highly visible and effective team. There, in the capital Freetown and throughout the tropical rain-forested provinces, Christians, Muslims and people of indigenous African beliefs are working together and with communities, local, regional and national, to help build practical and durable peace and reconciliation. There, inter-faith dialogue has already been transformed into multi-religious action.

The IRCSL was formed in 1997, during the Rebel War, with the support of *Religions for Peace*, the world's largest international coalition of representatives from the world's great religions, dedicated to achieving peace. Today, Bishop Humper, who at the invitation of the Muslim led Government of Sierra Leone chaired their Truth and Reconciliation Commission, leads the IRCSL in active partnership with the Government, District Reconciliation Committees and local communities. Together, they are helping to rebuild trust and to reconcile, rehabilitate and re-integrate ex-combatants and victims with programmes that include action to rebuild schools; to train young people, who were child soldiers, in productive skills; to initiate micro-projects aimed at family independence.

In Sierra Leone, a significant amount of inter-faith dialogue has reached the level of 'personal and global transforming of life and behaviour', resulting in multi-religious action that is both effective locally and inspirational both nationally and internationally. So, what is the difference? Sierra Leone has suffered sustained ubiquitous violent conflict. The UK has also suffered violent conflict, limited principally to occasional IRA mainland bombings, the 7/7 London bombings and the loss of British soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq. Sierra Leonean inter-faith dialogue and multi-religious action is full of hope, where we might expect despair. Our inter-faith dialogue is still predominantly parallel words, over tea and biscuits, and any multi-religious action is notable

for being exceptional. Why has inter-faith dialogue not progressed furthest in Britain, which claims to have one of the greatest diversities of faiths in the world? (Weller 2001: 23).

Research suggests that effective inter-faith dialogue that leads to multi-religious action is created not through parallel words, but through paradigm change. This change can be seen most evidently through the transformative diagenetic paradigm as practiced from the capital Freetown in the west, to Kailahun on the eastern border with Liberia; from Kabala in the northern hills, to Bonthe on the southern island of Sherbro (Walker 2005: 154-156).

The diagenetic paradigm[©]

Evident throughout Sierra Leone are six simple and yet profound steps that can lead from inter-faith dialogue between the senior most religious leaders to multi-religious action by communities of different faiths working together. This multi-religious action can, for example, transform conflict from a source of violence into a resource for justice, peace and harmony. The dynamic is an ongoing cycle of understanding, sharing, reflection, transformation, discussion and action that creates hope and delivers social change, for the vulnerable, the oppressed, and those of faith involved in making it happen. Simplistically, any process towards poiesis is a staged process, which is cyclical in structure. However, any process involving change is not precisely cyclical, as the cycle always recommences at a different time and within a different context. Here the context is theological practice, with proponents, faced with a particular praxis, seeking to bring about change, poiesis, to another praxis. These praxes are notated, during conceptualization, as $praxis_n$ and $praxis_{n+1}$, where n signifies the n th praxis in a series of praxes. Each stage is considered separately, although, in theological-practice, stages may occur concurrently or non-sequentially. Over time, the combined effect of small elements of change is to change the state of our world for the better. This is the diagenetic paradigm.

First, theologians and philosophers, ranging from Augustine, though Nitzsch and Gadamer, to Heitink have all taken knowledge as a starting point in the

understanding of ‘explanation of the ultimate meaning of life, and how to live accordingly’ (Swidler 2002: 7). Through knowledge, *dia-gnosis*, humanity has secured the power to understand and explain, to interpret the contextual tension between contemporary life, on the one hand, and faith, as revealed in both scriptural texts and historical exegesis, on the other (OED 2002. diagnosis, *etymology*). Diagnosis, or issue identification, is also the first stage of the agogic regulative cycle, as employed in Sierra Leone to help prepare for necessary strategic actions during post-war recovery. The dialectic of diagnosis, there, is the introductory stage of dialogue between Christians and Muslims, involving people, across society, in identifying the problems, cause and effect, of most concern, whether cultural, social, environmental, economic, political or spiritual. This initial dialectic of diagnosis is between existing practice and normative standards of theological dogmatism.

Diagnosis does not, however, identify solutions, but initiates, in the second stage, the power of *dia-logue*, through word, through speech, through discourse, through reason, which sensitizes communities to an understanding of each other’s important issues of praxis. This sensitization is an important aspect of inter-community life in Sierra Leone. Such power, used in antithesis, divisively, is coercive and oppressive. Used in synthesis, cooperatively, the power of dialogue is supportive and emancipative. Cobb Junior reminds us that:

As dialogue proceeds, glimpses of aspects of reality heretofore unnoticed are vouchsafed the participants (Cobb 1999: 66).

These may be the new perspectives needed to awaken Teilhard de Chardin’s immense spiritual power from slumber.

In the third stage, the power to determine whether dialogue is operating divisively or cooperatively is found, primarily, away from the community, in the dialectic of *dia-noia*, through mind. This is Gadamer’s ‘silent dialogue of the soul with itself’ (Gadamer 2001: 407). Dianoia is the most profound dialectic of transforming power, where the traditional texts and the words of the also faithful act in tension with the dialectician’s own faith and own prejudices, seeking a synthesis of knowledge and truth for contemporary life. The

thought processes of cognition and emotion, in reflection and prayer, are dialectic between knowing and faith, between interpretation of the contemporary practice and interpretation of the advocate's faith. The importance of dianoia power to effective inter-faith dialogue was indicated both by the willingness of Christians and Muslims to attend during each others prayers and by the frequency of private prayer. Prayer is a vital aspect of all Abrahamic faith. From the Jewish scriptures, effective prayer is not just for the people of Israel.

Or if a foreigner who is not of Your people Israel comes from a distant land for the sake of Your great name, Your mighty hand, and Your outstretched arm, if he comes to pray towards this House, may You hear in your Heavenly abode and grant whatever the foreigner appeals to You for (2 Chronicles 6.32-33).

For Christians, 'The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective' (James 5.14). Muslims are also entreated to seek empowerment in their prayers,

My Lord! make me to enter a goodly entering, and cause me to go forth a goodly going forth, and grant me from near Thee power to assist (Surah 17.80).

Now, the power of dianoia is that dialectic, which forces the advocate to see anew the contemporary practice, against the scriptural authority of their own faith, and, in prayer, meditation and reflection, consider what it is that their own faith requires of them.

It is at the fourth stage that practical theology becomes clarified, as a theology of crisis. This is the critical stage for transformation. Postmodern Foucault reflects upon the Stoic approach to self-transformation in his deconstruction and reconstruction of *verum*, truth. For him, truth is a teleological force, 'developed in a discourse' of 'what is good', acting 'through the presence of memory and the efficiency of [that] discourse' (Foucault 1997: 194-196). Whilst this force of truth has been deduced from Greek and Roman philosophy, the elements are to be found also in Christian technologies of the self. Building upon the Christian practice of confession, Foucault argues for a 'perpetual work of hermeneutics' to discover the 'reality hidden' within our thoughts, validated by confession, or 'verbalization' (Foucault 1997: 196-198,

201, 220-223). ‘Verbalization contains in itself a power of diacrisis’, a ‘power of differences’ (Foucault 1997: 224). This verbalization is a ‘permanent activity’ that plumbs the depths of our thoughts, bringing about conversion, transforming us (Foucault 1997: 224-225). This is Foucault’s power of diacrisis, the ‘power of differences’, the separation, the tension of differences between one’s own pre-judgment of one’s own praxis and a new understanding of what that praxis should be (Foucault 1997: 224). This is metanoia, changing one’s mind, through the dialectic of diacrisis. This is reorientation, transformation of the advocate’s way of life, not their faith. Here the importance of personal faith and the frequency of scriptural reading appear particularly significant.

Whilst each stage of the process towards poiesis, so far, has been dialectical in itself, the fifth stage, that of returning to the community is, itself, the power of *dia-lectic*, through discussion, through choosing (OED 2002). dialectic, *n*¹; dia, *prefix-*; lection, *n*). This dialectic of differences is most powerful and, potentially, most efficacious when it is between the traditional texts of faiths, the inter-doctrinal proclamations of faiths and the pre-judices of the faithful engaged in deep dialogue. This necessity of difference for effective dialectic power may be why humanity has always sought difference, even where there is superficial unity. Jewish advocates are differentiated as Orthodox, Reform, Progressive... Christians are Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant... Muslims are Shi’a, Sunni, Sufi... As revealed in the *Qur’an*:

...if *Allāh* had pleased He would have made you a single people, but that he might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds (Surah 5.48).

Here, surely is confirmation of Sacks’ ‘dignity of difference’, that this ‘pluralism is a form of hope’ and that hope is ‘the faith that, together, we can make things better’ (Sacks 2002: 200, 203, 206). Far from Carey’s claim that inter-faith dialogists seek syncretism, universalism, isolationism, separatism, dogmatism or, even, pluralism, in Carey’s sense of ‘a common search for Reality’, this is the real reason and goal of inter-faith dialogic power (Carey 1997: 5-7). The dignity of difference really does make a difference in the

process towards hope transformation. Members of a community of differences, having been through the same process of individual transformation, can now, working together, discuss and choose the strategic action that helps each realize a praxis closer to that which, theologically and practically, will generate new and greater hope for humanity, including themselves.

The sixth, and final, stage is the dialectic power of *dia-genesis*, through creation (OED 2002 diagenesis; dia, *prefix-*; genesis). The power of a community of differences working together, each individual working through the power of their own faith, can be more efficacious in its 'creative transformation' of action towards change, towards poiesis, towards transformed hope, than communities of a single faith (Cobb 1999: 47, 111). Unchallenged by the lack of tension within the historical manifestation of a single faith, the faithful are more inclined to accept the dogma and doctrine of that faith as justification of the *status quo ante*. Challenged by millennia of differences, inter-faith dialogists are more inclined to return to the roots of their faith and to seek the enrichment that leads to transformed hope for all, each within their own faith. The process is not, however, complete. Once the change, brought about by communities of faiths, is underway a new cycle of poiesis commences.

The diagenetic inter-faith paradigm, which may be considered perichoretically as a praxical cycle of and for transforming hope, may be summarized as:

Dia-gnosis, through knowledge

Through knowledge of the *Tanakh*, the *Holy Bible* and *The Qur'an*, advocates of the three Abrahamic faiths have a theologically normative foundation by which the experience of contemporary life can be evaluated. Diagnostic power is a dialectic of knowledge and explanation, leading to interpretation of this knowledge, seeking cause and effect, not solution.

Dia-logue, through words

Through the words of the Holy Scriptures, the authoritative interpretations of each of the three Abrahamic faiths and the words of contemporary advocates, dialogue allows sensitization to different faith perspectives on current praxis. Dialogic power is a dialectic of existing practice and traditional text norms, pointing to the need for poiesis.

Dia-noia, through mind

Through mind, prayer, meditation and reflection upon these perspectives, open the individual advocate to new ideas. Dianoetic power is an inner dialectic. The pure thought of ideas, dianoia, is silent, for it is a dialogue of the soul with itself (Gadamer 2001: 407).

Dia-crisis, through separation

Through separation, the dialectic of crisis allows the dignity and truth of faith difference to enrich and empower own faith through ‘a power of diacrisis, of differences’ (Foucault 1997: 224).

Diacritic power leads to metanoia, ‘reorientation of one’s life’, through verbalization, that is a return from self to community dialogue.

Dia-lectic, through discussion, through choosing (OED 2002). dialectic, *n*¹; dia, *prefix-*; lection, *n*)

Through discussion, through the dialectic power of discursive choosing, the election process, new inter-faith perspectives aid communities of difference to select strategic actions together.

Dia-genesis, through birth, creation or creative action

Diagenesis is the recombination of constituent parts that creates anew. Through the dialectical tension between our faith and our new perceptions,

diagenetic power creates poiesis, 'an action that brings results', that brings transformation (Heitink 1999: 149).

This is the effective spiritual power revealed within the Holy Scriptures. The Lord endowed Bezalel:

with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft and has inspired him to make designs for work in gold, silver, and copper... (Exodus 35.31-32).

Commissioned by God, Paul strives to bring wisdom, understanding and 'knowledge of God's mystery' to all (Colossians 1.25-28, 2.2).

For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me (Colossians 1.29).

For those whom *Allāh* has impressed with faith and:

for whom He has strengthened with an inspiration from Him: and He will cause them to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein (Surah 58.22).

This action to inspire, *in-spirare*, to breathe into, is described most clearly in the very act of creating humanity (OED 2002 inspire, *v*).

From the Torah:

the Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being (Genesis 2.7).

Similarly, from the Old Testament:

the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being (Genesis 2.7).

From the Qur'anic *Al-Hijr*, the Rock:

And when your Lord said to the angels: Surely I am going to create a mortal of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape. So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit... (Surah 15.28-29).

This is the holy spirit of the *Tanakh*, which the Lord gives to his chosen servant (Isaiah 42.1; 63.10 & 11; Psalm 51.13).

I have put My spirit upon him,

He shall teach the true way to the nations (Isaiah 42.1).

This is the Holy Spirit of the *Holy Bible* (Matthew 1.8; Mark 1.8; Luke 1.15; John 1.33; Acts 2.4; Romans 5.5).

Paul writes to the Romans:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15.13).

This is the Holy Spirit that strengthened 'Isa son of *Mirum*' (Surah 2.87, 253, 5.110) and revealed *The Qur'an*:

from your Lord with the truth, that it may establish those who believe and as a guidance and good news for those who submit (Surah 16.102).

The thesis, postulated here, is that the spiritual power, within the 'human multitude', can be aroused, in its efficacy, through the dialogue of faiths together, to transform emancipatory and eschatological hope into multi-religious cooperation for the benefit of humanity.

This is the 'immense spiritual power' that Teilhard de Chardin envisioned in his *Pensées*, his own *dianoia*. Today, this diagenesis can be seen wherever *Religions for Peace* is at work, across four continents, in over 70 countries, including some in the most troubled regions on earth: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Israel, Kenya, Kosovo, Rwanda, Sudan ...Zimbabwe. During 2007 *Religions for Peace* brought Muslim and Christian religious leaders from Iraq together to seek ways to lasting peace. In Europe, newly-emerging multi-religious movements are encouraged in those countries which have recently joined the European Union, including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. Albanian senior most religious leaders of the Sunni, Bektashi, Catholic and Orthodox communities are supported, as one of Europe's least developed countries emerges from half a century of communism. *Religions for Peace* is also working with religious communities on the Millennium Development Goals, which are designed to combat global poverty that kills 30,000 children every day; limit the impact of disease; and help protect the earth. Following the London bombings, *Religions for Peace* (UK) is working with many religious communities to help develop greater multi-religious cooperation and is facilitating the creation of an Irish Inter Religious Council to support durable peace for all the people of Ireland.

This is the multi-religious cooperation that must grow through mainstream religious communities everywhere working together. This is the reality of the diagenetic paradigm.

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