

Minutes

Winnipeg Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue, Meeting No. 30

Meeting held on 27 May 2010
at the Jubilee Mennonite Church

Present: Adolf Ens, Doug Enns, Dora Dueck, Helmut Harder, Doug Heidebrecht, Janet Kozak, Joseph Langan, Richard Lebrun, Henry Loewen, John Long, Luis Melo, Ron Penner, and Lynda Trenholm. **Guest:** Dan Nighswander (present until 5:50 pm)

1. **Helmut** welcomed the group and the pastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church, **Dan Nighswander**, his successor at Mennonite Church Canada in 1999. Pastor Nighswander welcomed us to his church. He admitted to being a newcomer vs. Dora to this congregation. This congregation is a member of two conferences: Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church Canada. It supports a distinctive ecumenical community garden (with Br Tom, local Catholic church). **Luis** thanked Dan for early support for our C-M dialogue from 2000. The Jubilee congregation numbers about 90 and 100 for services – mostly adults. They are exploring possibilities for local connections (garden, children from neighbourhood come for activities on Thursday evenings, and then come to youth activities, and even worship). Helmut asked if MB and MC worshipping together worked out OK? Yes, but 15 years ago some left the congregation over the merger. So the congregation is made up of people who elected to make this work. The merger a practical matter. The MB congregation had been meeting in a school. Northdale MC had diminished in numbers. People were brought in from both conferences, and the merger was done in a very serious and careful manner. Today, one couldn't pick out the background of the original members and the newer ones. The form of Baptism can be a difficult topic. At Easter (a group 19 to 32 years of age), one from a Baptist tradition demanded immersion, the others said it doesn't matter – so OK, all to do it that way. Helmut asked, if a pastor has not been baptised by immersion, can he baptize by immersion? The answer: this no longer a problem in this congregation.
2. Opening prayer: led by **Dora**. Songs “Lord, Thou Ne'er Forsakest” and “In Sorrow and Pain.”
3. **Doug** described a recent trip to India with his wife Sherry and their daughter Amanda. He found India an overwhelming experience that forces one to step out of one's own insulated bubble. Struck by sheer number of people in the streets. Tension between seeing crowds and encountering individuals. Smile = individuality. Walking, means encounters – e.g., with a dirty homeless child, grabbing your hand. Then OK. Life filled with negotiation and cooperation. Streets reflect these values. What are two lanes on the road? All spaces immediately filled – trucks, buses, rickshaws, pedestrians, etc. Looks chaotic, but moves smoothly enough. Don't use the rear view mirrors – just look ahead. Graciousness in adjusting to traffic. So, felt safe enough. Negotiation and cooperation on their own terms. Market not soul-less, self-serve till etc., as in Canada. Every purchase a personal meeting and negotiation, with respect on both sides. Needs obvious as you passed by; on trains, begging,

etc. deformed beggars, etc., but always the personal encounters. Struck by ready smiles by almost everyone – joy in encounters. He was surprised by willingness of people to help – when lost etc. Experience of India fits with pope’s encyclical. Doug closed by offering three texts for us to meditate upon this week. John 1:14; Math 9:35–38; and 1 John 3:11–17. Together we said the Lord’s Prayer.

4. **Sharing of experiences in our lives:**

Janet: not much involved in ecumenical activities recently – busy carrying for her “sisters.”

Henry: choir he is involved in (with other choirs) sang in a weekend experience – met a lot of people, heard a lot of different songs from different cultures and faiths (including Ukrainians). The event was held at Gateway and Springfield Mennonite Church. University of Manitoba men’s chorus initiated the event. **John Long** was also involved in this event – some Africo-centric music, guest conductor from Toronto. Preached and conducted.

John: described his take on the above event. A Ukrainian piece was hit of the day. Event had 100 voices, learning two new pieces in three days. John also reported discussions with Anglican friends about Pope Benedict’s response to issue of abuse. These friends challenged John – have you spoken out as Catholics on this issue? John offered in evidence the *Perspectives* issue of 2005. (John serves on the editorial board of this St. Paul’s College publication.) The board asked, how can we remain silent as a Catholic college? – Couldn’t and didn’t. Question was – who will write? – what? So John ended up writing the piece. He thinks this was an important thing to do at the time.

Ron: about 5 or 6 years ago, he retired as pastor at Braeside Church, but he and his wife stayed on as a member of the congregation. Early this year, he and his wife responded to an invitation to be interim pastors of a struggling church in North End, trying to decide whether to close or not. This Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church is now meeting in Lutheran Trinity church, which has invited the Mennonite group (and others to work with them), plus aboriginals in the area. Ron references a recent meeting in Paraguay of Lutherans and Mennonites. Fulfilling ecumenical arrangements.

Richard said he had not been much involved in ecumenical activities since our last meeting, but he is very busy with “reform” activities within the Catholic Church: service on the Board of the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church (recent meeting in Washington, DC), and service on the planning committee (meeting by teleconference) for the American Catholic Council scheduled for Detroit in June 2011. Preparatory to this lay-organized council, “listening assemblies” are being held around the U.S.; Richard is organizing such an assembly for St. Paul’s College in October. He is also serving on the Optional Celibacy Advisory Committee for FutureChurch (again, meetings by teleconference), and has registered to attend a Synod of the Baptized in Minneapolis in September.

Joseph described the second round of a Ukrainian Catholic baptism in which he served as godfather. He said this felt very different from a Roman Catholic baptism. In October, he

attended a U2 concert in Vancouver, and recalled doing a paper as an undergraduate on the religiosity of rock and roll music, in which tried to show how music engaged youth in causes beyond their own lives, etc..

Lynda – reported going to Minneapolis for a U2 concert. Her mother died on 1 February, very quickly, with her children around her at home, a peaceful death. There was a trip to Mexico for two weeks. Like Janet, Lynda busy doing her work at St. Bernadette's. Involved in an interfaith Marriage prep activity (50 couples). Lynda had to leave our dialogue after our meal for a meeting this evening with new archbishop on this program; he is getting input, visiting different groups in the archdiocese.

Adolf recounted his experience in the testing an aboriginal worker (Youth for Christ) for an aboriginal fellowship. Examination on biblical and theological knowledge (CMU graduate). He found this an interesting experience. Secondly, he described a meeting at the tomb of Louis Riel, with a priest offering a send-off prayer for 30 cyclists (including his daughter) leaving for Ottawa, taking a Franco-Manitoba flag.

Luis described his teaching experience at the University of Manitoba, teaching at St Paul's College, and accompanying young men in their vocational discernment. Most are Catholics learning to be traditional Catholics. Discerners from Brandon joined them as well. One is an Anglican becoming Catholic. Luis also provided a handout about his recent ecumenical and interreligious activities and spoke to a limited number of items listed there, including his continuing involvement in the Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue, the planning of local Anglican-Catholic events in 2011 – at Assiniboine Christian Centre (Blessed John XXIII and St. Chad's, Winnipeg Archdiocese) and Holy Redeemer/St. Stephen's (St. Boniface archdiocese). Luis finds the pulse of this dialogue rather weak and underdeveloped in the city – forty years of talking that has not accomplished very much, leaving both sides disappointed in each other. Relations are good, but? Anglicans in Canada are trying to discern where they are in the world-wide Anglican communion. Luis also spoke about his work in an Interfaith Round Table (The Interfaith Dimension of the Human Rights Museum), and his assistance to folks in Edmonton, starting a M-C dialogue (twinning and regional) on a modest scale. Given the demographics of Mennonites in Edmonton, this will necessarily be on a smaller scale to what has been done in Winnipeg. Luis also spoke about his invitation to speak to a class at Providence College – a phenomenal experience, he stayed most of the day in discussions that involved faculty as well as students. Both groups expressed surprise at the evidence of diversity within Catholicism today. Luis noted as well (later in our meeting) that he will be Damascus, Syria, in the fall for a plenary meeting of the Joint Working Group of World Council of Churches/Vatican.

Dora – couldn't think of any particular ecumenical experience, save reading *The Christian Century*. She spoke about launching her new novel, *This Hidden Thing* at McNally-Robinson. It is about a woman who works as a domestic in the 1920s – an exploration of secrets. She also described her work as part of a reconciliation committee in a MB church (internal conflict); this involved assessment of minutes, interviewing 39 people, and producing a report with recommendations. Not mediating. Along this line, **John** reported

regular conversations with a Baptist minister who goes in to congregations in similar circumstances as a temporary pastor with a healing mandate. **Helmut** noted that the Mennonite Conference has a conference minister who works out these conflicts and issues.

Doug spoke about involvement in an interfaith dialogue – Christian –Muslim dialogue, conversation with an imam. In Prague this past Saturday, he was invited to the home of a professor at a Baptist seminary there (where Doug is working on a graduate degree), a former Jesuit married to a Hussite priest. Doug also told us that this would be his last meeting with our group since, with his wife, he is moving to BC, on the way to a long-term assignment in India.

Helmut spoke briefly about a trip he and his wife Irma made to Middle East as part of a tour for Mennonite leaders working in that area. He reported reading (with a group) John Dear's book, *A Persistent Peace*. He attended two evenings of the week of prayer for Christian unity; most folks attending those evenings appear to be people from the local congregations involved. Helmut and Irma are volunteering at Lindenwood Manor (where the residents are an ecumenical group). On June 17–19 he will be involved the St. Paul's Seminary in St. Paul, MN, as part of an event organized by John Radano celebrating 100 years of ecumenical activities, "A Century of Ecumenism: What has been achieved What are the next steps forward?" Helmut will be presenting reflections on the Catholic-Mennonite dialogue experience. He then presented a slide show on the Middle-East journey. The tour was designed for Mennonite church leaders to acquaint them with Mennonite work in the region, and to provide them with a balanced perspective on what is happening in Israel, with Israeli and Palestinian voices as well as Christian voices. He noted that local Mennonite leaders are also in contact with Jewish people here in Winnipeg.

5. Discussion of the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritas*.

Lynda, who had to leave immediately after our meal, was allowed to make her presentation on Chapter 5, paragraphs 53–58, first – but I will report her remarks and subsequent in these minutes in the proper order.

Dinner: Prepared by **Dora** and helpers at Jubilee Mennonite Church. The meeting was resumed at 7 pm, with **Helmut** urging speakers to keep their remarks within our time limits.

Luis (paragraphs 1–9). Luis distributed a comprehensive Introduction to the encyclical and spoke briefly to some of the points in the handout [which will not be reproduced in these minutes because all participants have the handout.]

Discussion: **John** said he found the overview quite helpful. **Luis** noted that Benedict doesn't quote John Paul II's social encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. [although it is referenced in endnote 10.] **Joseph** wondered about a possible connection between endnote 9, and G8 discussions, particularly with reference to the Catholic Church as a global community.

Henry (paragraphs 10–20). Henry acknowledged that he found the document frustrating. To make the point, he told an anecdote about his sister and her husband, who had a tendency to offer a lengthy before-meals grace. She finally said to him, “Say amen, the children want to eat.” Henry felt this way about this document – “say amen, the children want to eat.” Asked to take on another task for the Mennonite disaster service, Henry had to reply: “No, I have to read the pope’s letter.” The anecdote illustrates the tension between “work” with one’s hands and reading this kind of document.

Speaking to his reading of the paragraphs in question, Henry noted that the document contains references to a number of encyclicals and to apostolic letters and documents written in the late 60s and 70s. The main encyclical referred to is Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio*, written in 1967. Pope Benedict encourages us to undertake a “fresh reading” of this encyclical (for a good number of us this would be a first reading). One of the reasons for this exercise is that the terms used to describe “development” (of which charity is an essential part) has changed significantly in the last forty years. In particular, the reality of globalization is increasingly influencing and defining the thinking of both secular institutions and the church. He states that “as society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbours but does not make us brothers” (13). Benedict is quick to point out however that Paul VI “clearly understood that the social question had become worldwide” (13) and that he “addressed important ethical questions robustly, without yielding to the culture weakness of his time.” (13). Nevertheless, a “fresh reading” is encouraged. Benedict stresses the fact that Paul VI’s magisterium and Encyclical does not mark a “break with that of previous Pope” or loses “sight of the coherence of the overall doctrinal corpus” (12) and “For these reasons as listed in (12) *Populorum Progressio* situated within the current of Tradition, can still speak to us today.” The Second Vatican Council also occurring at this time probably encouraged other ‘fresh’ readings, thinkings, and actions. Pope Paul VI “In the notion of development understood in human and Christian terms, identified the heart of the Christian social message, and he proposed Christian charity as the principal force in the service of social development.” (13)

Two other important understandings “delineating the fully human meaning of the development that the Church proposes” are 1) “the strong links between life ethics and social ethics” (i.e., marriage) and 2) the strong link between evangelism and human advancement.” “Testimony to Christ’s charity through works of justice, peace and development is part and part parcel of evangelism.” (13) Progress, characterized by charity, “in its origin and essence, is first and foremost, a vocation” which “sheds the light of the Gospel on the social question of his time.” “To regard development as a vocation is to recognize, on the one hand, that it derives from a transcendent call, and that it is incapable on its own, of supplying ultimate meaning.” (16) “The Gospel is fundamental for development,” and “the Christian vision has the particular characteristic of asserting and justifying the unconditional value of the human person and the meaning of growth.”

Finally, (19) states that “the vision of development as a vocation brings with it the central place of charity within that development.” There are many causes of underdevelopment and these are “not primarily of the material order” and that among these is “the lack of

brotherhood among individuals and peoples.” “Reason by itself cannot establish fraternity.” “This originates in a transcendent vocation from God the Father, who loved us first, teaching us through the Son what fraternal charity is.” (20)

Pope Paul VI places “unity in the charity of Christ who calls us to share sons in the life of the living God, the Father of all.” (19) Christ’s charity drives us on and thus “urgency is also a consequence of charity in truth.” (20)

Discussion: Helmut finds in all this a point where Catholics and Mennonites (vs. evangelicals) can meet on basic ideas.

John, paragraphs 21–27: On paragraph 21. Continues Benedict’s resumé and reflection on Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio* (The Development of Peoples, 1967), underscoring his idea of the most appropriate development goals: the rescuing of peoples from hunger, deprivation, disease and illiteracy; their active participation, equally as partners, in international economic progress; their transition into educated societies marked by solidarity—a fellowship of responsibilities and interests; the consolidation of democratic regimes able to secure freedom and peace. He asks: to what extent the goals set out by Paul VI have been achieved?

Essentially, Benedict’s answer is that some progress has taken place but that the successful pursuit of these goals continues to be “weighed down by malfunctions and dramatic problems, highlighted even further by the current [world-wide financial and economic] crisis.” Indeed, he argues that a deeper, more profound “new humanistic synthesis” is required to address an increased gravity and complexity in development initiatives. This new model of development requires us to rediscover fundamental values, to re-plan the path to development, and to identify new forms of [national and international] development.

P 22 and P 23: The causes of underdevelopment and new forms of “wasteful and consumerist” ‘superdevelopment’ in this modern period are many and overlapping. The scandal of glaring inequalities continues, corruption characterizes the conduct of both rich and poor societies; cultural practices that frustrate development persist in both developed and underdeveloped countries. In all of this, the difficult issues of human advancement remain unresolved, and given the record of the last four decades, we ought to seriously examine, indeed, “liberate ourselves from ideologies,” since “progress of a merely economic and technical kind is insufficient,” and imbalance and other negative consequences of growth or still evident.

P. 24 and P. 25: The world of the 21st century is different from the world that Paul VI reflected on. There is a genuinely new international context in trade, finance, and economic relationships which has altered the role of the state in a direction that would seem to call for a more interventionist stance and enhanced regulatory powers. This new role may require more careful definition to protect the rights and interests of citizens in the ‘commonwealth,’ especially were social security systems and collective bargaining by unionized groups come under stress because of the tendency of particularly wealthy countries to achieve more competitiveness in global markets. The mobility of labour and associated marginalization and

incoherence in life plans, which sometimes affects marriage and the family negatively, causing psychological and spiritual suffering.

P. 26. The opportunities for cultural interactions are enlarged, presenting new openings for dialogue, but there are also new risks: a cultural eclecticism that yields a relativism such that an indiscriminate acceptance of any and all life-styles and conduct is encouraged, make it more difficult for individuals and families to define themselves in relation to “life’s fundamental questions.” Most troubling is the separation of cultures from a transcendent idea of human nature and fraternity [as originating in the fatherhood of God].”

P. 27: The problem of hunger and food insecurity needs to be tackled in a long-term perspective, eliminating the structural causes in the international system that cause these problems while providing adequately for the participation of local communities and a sensitivity to the utility of traditional as well as innovative farming techniques, and the necessity for stewardship of the environment. As a matter of solidarity with the poor and marginalized, it is essential to develop a civic conscience and ethic that considers “food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination.”

What strikes me as significant in these paragraphs:

- At a level of generality, the analysis is persuasive—who could disagree? But in some instances the claims and reproofs of Benedict are not sufficiently illustrated or contain some ambiguity. Consider, for example, his call that we be “liberated from ideologies” in rethinking development. This is precisely the critique of several groups in Canada of the current Government’s decision to give priority internationally to maternal and children’s health but to do so in a way which does not countenance aid to abortion, even where it is legal. The Conservative Government is being strongly criticized as failing to reflect the majoritarian Canadian view and Canada’s own legal circumstances (in reality a legal vacuum) and health policy. Undoubtedly, the Government’s ideology is one that Benedict would find comfortable.
- The theological framework of the encyclical recedes in these paragraphs, perhaps because Benedict wishes to be appealing to those who do not, initially at least, anchor their reflections of the proper goals of international development in an active Christian love animated by the spirit of truth, religiously conceived. Certainly, the elimination of world hunger is a fundamental, practical matter, even in an entirely secular perspective—it is a requirement to safeguard the peace and stability of the earth, which he acknowledges in just these words. But it is also, for the Christian, a matter of engaging our fellow man in a way which underscores the initiative of love and the divine promise of a life worth living that God has prepared for all of us. Does not our hope and inspiration for taking this initiative reside in this promise?
- The ingredients of the new humanistic synthesis that Benedict calls for are hinted at rather than spelled out in detail here. In pithy form, we must wait for Paragraph 79, in my view.

Discussion: Luis. Reflected on critiques that have been made with respect to Benedict's use of sources. The pope deals with economics without referring to specific economists. For example, in P 21, he speaks of profit as an exclusive good – and criticizes the “trickle-down theory” which holds that in the long run riches will equal out. For Benedict, a realist, selfishness must be taken into account. Therefore, intervention is needed. **Adolf** observed that some developing countries (e.g., Cuba) have better records in providing literacy, etc., than some developed countries.

Ron, paragraphs 28–33: Ron began by reviewing the whole chapter 2. In general, he was pleased to read such a detailed expose of a pope's mind and with the way the pope addresses practical everyday questions, and brings in Christian dimension in an impressive way. Bottom line, as he reads the pope, is that without Scripture, there will always be a missing element. He thought economic and social issues were covered well. But he thought that it was apparent that what was closest to the heart of pope, was respect for life: abortion certainly, but other elements as well that show a lack of respect: sterilization, euthanasia, high infant mortality, etc. violence in many forms. From the Church's point of view, we must highlight a positive view of life – for all ages, gender, economic groupings, remembering that humans are created in image of God. The pope sees this as a fundamental criterion for human development. This includes religious freedom. We are reminded that in our age of globalization, knowledge and science must collaborate with religion for development of humanity.

Discussion: Joseph asked about Mennonite views on abortion. **Ron** replied that Mennonites begin with a commitment to being pro-life, from unborn to natural death. This is consistent with the Mennonite peace position, and non-killing. Also emphasized that to be anti-abortion to be anti-war. **Adolf** added that the Mennonite theological premise opposes all forms of killing, including the unborn. Still, there will be Mennonite men who go to war, who are for capital punishment, and Mennonites who have abortions. **Henry** cited some of the pope's word in paragraph 30 that struck him especially. **Luis** observed that Catholics have long championed corporate works of charity (sometimes derided as band-aid approach). But the other side of charity, the necessity of structural change, is the focus of this encyclical. He noted the reference in paragraph of P 29 the reference to denial of the right of religious freedom (which was missing at the beginning of 16th century). Luis also noted reference to moral underdevelopment and the pope's instance that development not morally neutral.

Richard, Paragraphs 34–39: He offered the following summary and commentary on these paragraphs:

P 34. Speaks of how refusals to recognize that all is the gift of God, to recognize the reality of original sin, “has led man to abuse the economic process in a thoroughly destructive way.” The pope insists that “truth is not something that we produce, it is always found, or better, received.” He insists as well that development of any kind, “if it is to be authentically human, needs to make room for the *principle of gratuitousness* as an expression of fraternity.”

P 35. This paragraph discusses the market as an economic institution, its characteristics, possibilities, and limitations. The pope insists that its correct functioning is dependent upon moral imperatives that the market itself cannot create. He also, without naming it as such, condemns the Marxist dogma that “the market economy has an inbuilt need for a quota of poverty and underdevelopment in order to function at its best.” On the contrary, to promote emancipation, it “must draw its moral energies from other subjects that are capable of generating them.”

P 36. This paragraph argues that economic activity alone cannot solve all social problems by the simple application of *commercial logic*. Rather economic activity needs to be “*directed towards the pursuit of the common good*,” and “grave imbalances are produced when economic action ... is detached from political action, conceived as a means for pursuing justice through redistribution.” The pope argues that the economy and finance are instruments that can be used for good or harmful ends, and that “it is not the instruments that must be called into account, but individuals, their moral conscience and their personal and social responsibility.” The economic sphere, because it is human, “must be structured and governed in an ethical manner.” This demand for ethic behaviour is especially important at a time of economic crisis.

P 37. This paragraph develops the interesting idea that space needs “to be created within the market for economic activity carried out by subjects who freely choose to act according to principles other than those of pure profit, without sacrificing the production of economic value in the process.” Economic life requires contracts to regulate relations of exchange between goods of equivalent value,” but “it also needs *just laws and forms of redistribution governed by politics*.” He ends up speaking of three forms of economic logic: the logic of contractual exchange, political logic, and the logic of the unconditional gift.

P 38. In this understanding of economic life as a “multi-layered phenomenon,” there must be room for various kinds of economic activities. In this context, the pope states that “What is needed ... is a market that permits the free operation, in conditions of equally opportunity, of enterprises in pursuit of different institutional ends. Alongside profit-oriented enterprise and the various types of public enterprise, there must be room for commercial entities based on mutualist principles and pursuing social ends to take root and express themselves.” I take it this would include things like cooperatives and crown corporations. He sees such hybrid forms as ways of *civilizing the economy*.

P 39. In this paragraph Benedict reiterates ideas developed by Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* about the interaction of the market economy and the state, in particular the notion that “civil order,” for its self-regulation needed intervention from the State for purposes of redistribution. Benedict then goes on to argue that “in order to defeat underdevelopment, action is required not only on improving exchange based transactions and implanting public welfare structures, but above all gradually *increasing openness, in a world context, to forms of economic activity marked by quotas of gratuitousness and communion*.” I must admit that I’m left unsure what is meant by this statement. The pope immediately admits that “the

market of gratuitousness does not exist, and attitudes of gratuitousness cannot be established by law.” But he still insists that “both the market and politics needs individuals who are open to reciprocal gift.” I can only ask, “Yes, but what does this mean in practical terms?”

Discussion: **John** admitted that he didn’t know what gratuitousness means. **Dora** observed that World Conference of Mennonites, talks about gift exchange. The idea is that the West contributes money, but others contribute wisdom. **John** returned to the pope’s statement that “without gratuitousness, there can be no justice in the first place” (P 38) and asked what does this mean? **Luis** suggested that one way to enter this is to say that gratuitousness goes beyond justice, and involves a sense of forgiveness, (forgiveness of debt, years of jubilee, etc). **John** observed that Benedict uses terms that he does not define, such as justice, peace. **Joseph** also found this failure to define terms frustrating. He thought that gratuity implies gift, something with no exchange value. What happens in international trade? A *quid pro quo* cannot be possible, cannot be just, given discrepancies between the trading partners. **Helmut** asked what is fraternal reciprocity? It seemed to him that the pope was identifying subsidiarity and solidarity – that reciprocity was tied to solidarity. **Adolf** reference the Book of Job, which can be interpreted as about the gratuitousness of God. **John** was OK on being willing to give, but to say that without gratuitousness there can be no justice is curious. **Luis** thought the pope was pointing to essential inequalities in contractual relationships where an essential equality has to be recognized. We are all sinners before god, dependent on God to bring something new into the picture.

Dora, paragraphs 40–42: She said she was aware of large group evangelicals were excited about the document. They were astounded that the head of a Church would speak so broadly. Dora offered her own comments as follows:

I did not consider myself well-versed in development or economic theory, but I do like the focus of this paper: the notion of the common good, the insistence that authentic human development concerns the whole of every person in every dimension, the insistence of a transcendent vision, that is, the centrality not only of the human person but of God.

Paragraphs 40–42 speak of the business enterprise and the need for “a profoundly new way” of understanding it—and that new way means taking responsibility not just for the interests of the proprietors but for all the other stakeholders who contribute, people like workers, clients, and suppliers.

Investment, it goes on, has moral as well as economic significance. Paragraph 41 discusses “the wide range of values” that business involves. Again, the emphasis is on human significance. I especially appreciate the emphasis on each worker “working for himself” and the line “everyone who works is a creator.” This not only lifts up the value of the human person but the value of work.

This paper does not take a fatalistic or negative view of globalization, viewing it rather as neither good nor bad. But again, what values will come to the fore, and will increasing interconnection benefit people? There is a richly loaded sentence in P 42, on the need for

commitment to “a person-based and community-oriented cultural process of worldwide integration that is open to transcendence.”

As I said, I’m not a business person, but this resonates in me in its religious and humanist dimensions. It feels optimistic, but why should we not make our foundation this solid?

The only thing I would want to add, since this is a Mennonite-Catholic dialogue, is that I’ve always admired our Mennonite development and business organizations—and my sense is that they work at business in this wholistic way. Examples: Mennonite Economic Development Associates and the Mennonite Central Committee.

Discussion: Joseph said that 10,000 Villages is a wonderful example fair trade vs free trade. He suggested that while Catholics are good at being doctrinal – they can’t point to a 10,000 Villages as example of a “capitalist corporation.” He acknowledged that some Church groups have been involved in promoting “micro-loans.” **Adolf** noted that 10,000 Villages doesn’t have share-holders. **Helmut** mentioned a Mennonite enterprise in Bethlehem marketing crib scenes made of olive wood.

Joseph, paragraphs 43–47a: These paragraphs deal with the relationship between rights and responsibilities. When focusing on having rights, it is important to recognize the human person. But Joseph did think the terms were defined clearly enough. He pointed to the distinction to be made between “rights” and “privileges,” which can be taken away. Rights can’t be taken away. He suggested that at the end of 43, the notion of gratuity appears again, with the statement that the “sharing of reciprocal duties is a more powerful incentive to action than mere assertion of rights.” P 44, deals with sexual morality, and stresses the centrality of family as a union of man and a woman, but without explaining why the family must be seen as the “primary vital cell of society.” P 45 and P 46 speak of ethical investments and insists that all investments should be ethical. P 46 appears to speak to entities like 10,000 Villages. P 47 again picks up on the concept of subsidiarity and stresses the notion of incremental development which are relate to centrality of human purpose. Joseph noted that societies living in poverty want fast development.

Discussion: It was suggested that the idea that development need to be focused on human person sounds pretty Catholic. **Adolf** liked the argument against insistence on rights (without reference to duties or responsibilities). **Luis**, pointing to P 46, thought there was something new here, where the pope talks about an intermediate area emerging between two types of enterprise that work in the diversified world of the so-called “civil economy” and the “economy of communion, which he says is not merely a matter of a “third sector” but a new reality that does not exclude profit. But we are left wondering what an “economy of communion” might mean. The term “civil economy” is not defined either. **Helmut** saw a translation problem in this paragraph.

Adolf, paragraphs 47b–52: Adolf offered the following summary and comments on these paragraphs:

P 47b. Mennonites have noted with (sometimes smug) satisfaction that its international service agency (MCC) has very low administrative overhead costs in delivering its overseas programs, compared to other NGOs. The May 17 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* contains pie charts for the various MCC offices across Canada showing the carbon dioxide equivalent tonnes emitted by each. One striking feature of these graphs is the astounding proportion which comes from air travel for three of the five illustrations.

P 47b urges that international agencies “might question the actual effectiveness of their bureaucratic and administrative machinery.” CO2 emissions represent only one aspect in which by which to measure administrative effectiveness/efficiency but an important one. The tendency of organizations, even church-related ones, to shy away from “complete transparency” to donors and constituency deserves this clear call to self–investigation.

P 48. The relationship of development to the environment (also referred to as “nature” or “creation”) is firmly placed into a theological framework. Since “nature speaks to us of the Creator” (Rom. 1:20) and is destined to be “recapitulated in Christ at the end of time” (Col. 1:19–20) it is a “vocation.” That is, the Creator has given it an inbuilt order from which we can draw the principles needed “to till and keep it.” (Gen. 2:15) While the language used by the church for this vocation (these principles) is theological, the principles themselves are accessible to humans as part of natural revelation. That is, the Creator has embedded in the natural environment a “grammar” which sets forth the ends and criteria for its wise use. This guards against “reckless exploitation” and fosters “inter-generational justice” (i.e. takes into account coming generations).

P 49. One specific element of care and preservation of the environment involves the **energy problem**. The BP disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, so much in the news these weeks, highlights the reckless manner in which the more technically developed countries seek to fulfill their almost insatiable demand for non-renewable energy sources. So far the governments of these nations have done far less than this encyclical in calling for these societies to do what they can and must do: reduce their domestic energy consumption. But human solidarity (deriving from all of us being created in God’s image) also forbids the hoarding of (non-renewable) energy resources by the “developed” states, since that presents “grave obstacles to development in poor countries.” The problem of how to effect a worldwide redistribution of energy resources is identified but not further addressed.

P 50. The responsibility for the whole of creation via a “responsible stewardship” assumes that by cultivating the earth in new ways “with the assistance of advanced technologies” it can accommodate and feed the world’s population. “On this earth there is enough room for everyone.” That sounds very much like the optimism of the 1970s, which even then was challenged by many environmentalists. [The world’s oldest and largest global environmental network, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, reported in November 2009 that of the world’s 9998 bird species, 137 are extinct (or extinct in the wild), 192 critically endangered, 362 endangered, and 699 vulnerable – 12% of all known birds! Like the canaries in the coal mines of old, birds are a barometer of the environment in which humans can live.] Our document helpfully points to the covenant between human beings and the

environment and expresses at least some hope.

P 51. The church has a responsibility to assert its responsibility for creation in the public sphere. She must defend earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. The encyclical calls for improving the “overall moral tenor of society,” linking society’s lack of respect for life (abortion, research on human embryos, artificial gestation and birth) to the deterioration of morality in other areas.

P 52. Under the theme of truth and love, this vocation to care for creation is “a duty to be freely accepted.”

Lynda, paragraphs 53–58: Lynda said she found encyclical difficult to read. Even so, she offered the following summary and comments on her assigned paragraphs (beginning with the concluding part of the preceding chapter):

The previous chapter ends with a profound principle on Love and Truth.

“Truth, and the love which it reveals, cannot be produced: they can only be received as a gift. Their ultimate source is not and cannot be mankind, but only God, who is himself Truth and Love.” To truly develop as human beings created in the image and likeness of God, we have a duty to freely accept these gifts. “That which is prior to us and constitutes us – subsistent Love and Truth – shows us what goodness is, and in what our true happiness consists. *It shows us the road to true development.*”

In order to follow this road to true development, the cooperation of the human family (the title of Chapter Five) is paramount.

P 53. The first line of paragraph 53 caught my attention immediately. “One of the deepest forms of poverty a person can experience is isolation.” I had not really ever thought about poverty in this way before, but as I read further I understood and had to agree. Human beings were not meant to live in isolation. Yet when we reject God’s love and become self-centred and self-sufficient, we do become alienated. It is true that “all of humanity is alienated when too much trust is placed in merely human projects, ideologies and false utopias.” We have only to pick up a newspaper or watch the news on television to know that when such things happen in our world e.g. terrorists bombing the World Trade Centre in New York, suicide bombers killing themselves and others in Afghanistan, to name but a few.

I would agree that today humanity appears much more interactive than in the past. We have witnessed this in the natural disasters which have affected Sri Lanka, New Orleans and more recently, Haiti and Chile. Through the mass media, the peoples of the world become aware of such disasters and reach out to those in need. Is this sense of being close to one another being transformed into true communion? I think it’s a start but we obviously have a long way to go before all peoples of the world recognize that “the human race is a single family working in true communion.”

Pope Paul VI’s words still ring true as far as I’m concerned “the world is in trouble because

of the lack of thinking.” Indeed it would be wonderful if all peoples of the world could live in peace with one another as one family in solidarity rather than marginalization. I agree that this is a task of huge proportions which require the contributions of many disciplines if man’s transcendent dignity is to be properly understood.

We are not put on this earth to live in solitude. Certainly, we become more fully aware of whom we are by our relationship with others and with God. The same holds true for groups of people as well as nations. Individuals are not absorbed by a community. Each member is unique and should be affirmed and celebrated as such, not unlike the Body of Christ. Through the waters of baptism, each member becomes a new creation incorporated into the living Body of the Church. Diversity does not separate but unites the people of God.

P 54. This paragraph speaks about the mystery of the absolute unity of the Trinity. In the Trinity is true communion. This is the communion that all individuals and peoples of the human family are called to be a part of. The “Church is a sign and instrument of this unity.” Certainly this is the ideal that we as Church strive for, but the reality is we are not always a sign and instrument of this unity. “True openness does not mean the loss of individual identity but profound interpenetration.” If individuals are truly open with each other, love and truth do emerge from that relationship. After almost thirty-six years of marriage, I can attest to a “real and relational unity with my spouse.” I am able to share anything with my husband knowing already what he will feel about a certain situation because I know him so well. More often than not we do think in unison.

P 55. This section describes how the Christian revelation of the unity of the human race is based on relationality. It goes on to say that while some other cultures and religions teach brotherhood and peace which are also important to human development, they do not fully embrace the principle of love and truth which impedes authentic human development. Certainly, our world has witnessed religions that instead of bringing people together, they alienate them from one another and distance them from reality. I’m thinking here of Al-Qaeda and Jim Jones and The People of the Temple to name a couple of examples.

In the next section I would agree that development needs the religions and cultures of different peoples but adequate discernment is needed as well. Such discernment has to be based on the criterion of charity and truth in a spirit of respect for the common good of all peoples. This section ends by driving home the point that “Christianity, the religion of the ‘God who has a human face’ contains this very criterion within itself.”

P 56. Four sentences in this section stand out for me. I would have to agree that in order for authentic development to occur with the contributions of the Christian religion and other religions, God cannot be excluded in the public domain. And yet we know this is happening in our own public schools. Prayer and any mention of God are prohibited. “Denying the right to profess one’s religion in public and the right to bring the truths of faith to bear upon public life has negative consequences for true development.” How true is this! Negative consequences run rampant in our own city, children being gunned down, wounded and killed. Where is God in all of this? Moreover where is the progress of humanity in all of

this?

In the last two sentences of this section, the sections in italics are vital. “*Reason always stands in need of being purified by faith and religion needs to be purified by reason.*” They go hand in hand – a dialogue that must continue for authentic human development. Without it, chaos results.

P 57. Certainly, “fruitful dialogue cannot but render the work of charity more effective with society.” I agree that it is “the most appropriate framework for promoting fraternal collaboration between believers and non-believers.” Yes, for believers the world drives from God’s plan. God is in control! So I agree wholeheartedly with the next line “this is what gives rise to the duty of believers to unite their efforts with those of all men and women of good will, with the followers of other religions and with non-believers, so that this world of ours may effectively correspond to the divine plan: living as a family under the Creator’s watchful eye.” I have a feeling that God shakes his head a lot in disbelief at the goings on of the human race.

In the rest of this paragraph, I learned about the principle of subsidiarity. I was familiar with the term but must admit that I really didn’t know very much about it. I discovered three things about it: It is “an expression of inalienable human freedom.” It is “first and foremost a form of assistance to the human person via the autonomy of intermediate bodies.” “It respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others.” Taking these things into account I could see why this principle “is particularly well-suited to managing globalization and directing towards authentic human development.” Wonderful in theory, but hard to put into practise would be my thoughts.

P 58. In this paragraph I learned about the undisputable link between the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of solidarity. Of particular interest to me was the mention of these principles with respect to international development aid. Certainly we have witnessed in our world that such aid can sometimes make people dependent entirely on other people for their well-being. I agree that aid programmes must assist people to become self-sufficient by their participation in their own development. The adage “You can feed one man by giving him a fish, but you can feed an entire village if you teach the man to fish,” comes to mind. “Indeed the most valuable resources in countries receiving development aid are human resources.” Yes, these people are receiving aid but they should still be made to feel that they are worthwhile and productive. Certainly they may need help in coming up with products that are marketable. I agree that “the possibility of marketing their products is very often what guarantees their survival.” Everyone benefits from this kind of just and equitable development which leads to cooperation in the human family.

Discussion: Richard wondered why the pope does not see fit to apply the ideal of subsidiarity to the Church? He suggested Vatican reluctance in this matter was based on fear. **John** agreed. **Luis** recalled the print debate between Cardinals Cassidy and Ratzinger in which it became clear that Ratzinger remained focused on the primacy of the universal. **Lynda** agreed as well on this reading of the issue of subsidiarity.

Doug, paragraphs 59–67. Doug chose to engage these paragraphs with his experience in India. He voiced his frustration with the fact that the document leaves many ideas undefined. With respect to P 59, he wondered where motivation would come from. He liked the stress on cooperation for development, and on the opportunity for contact between peoples and cultures, as well as the point about not confusing technological superiority with presumed cultural superiority. Christian faith needs to be incarnate and transcendent. P 60. He liked seeing development as a valid means for creating wealth for all, and the suggestions as to how wealthy countries might improve their social services as means for garnering funding for international programs. P 61 Here the emphasis is on more education, but for the complete person. Doug also noted the points about a need to develop a certain type of tourism as opposed to forms that expose people to immorality, etc. A critical point – how do we spend our recreation time? Raised the issue of winter tours for Canadian tourists to warmer climates. P 62 This paragraph notes the magnitude of migration issue and problems of migrant worker. These workers must be considered merely as factors of production. They are easily misused, such as Mexicans in California. There is a similar problem in India. P 63. This paragraph develops links between poverty and unemployment. He noted the call for decent work and the emphasis on the dignity of the worker and work. Work should be freely chosen and the workers respected. They should be able to have a life outside of employment. P 64. Labor unions should be open to new perspectives. The document treats possible conflicts between workers and consumers. Worker concerns must be extended outside of their own country. P 65 Takes up questions of health and social services, and microfinancing. P 66. Points to the new political power of consumers and insists that purchasing is always a moral act. P 67 Stress the necessity of reforming the United Nations and of a world-wide political authority, etc. responsible to protect weaker nations, and a social order that conforms to the moral order. But Doug wondered how would U.N. define itself as a moral agent? He was surprised to see the pope advocate this direction. Looking for some authority to enact what is.

Discussion: John asked if Mennonites resist the idea of international intervention with force of arms in the context of responsibility to protect the weak and defenseless. **Helmut** indicated that he had done a paper on this issue (vs. just war types), with examples of alternatives to armed intervention: building cultures of peace; prevention vs. intervention. **Joseph** asked about the Mennonite position on trade sanctions. **Helmut** replied that it would be a question of effectiveness, without hurting those who are the most vulnerable.

Janet: paragraphs 68–73. Janet said she was fascinated by thought process involved in putting all this together. She then offered the following summary and comments on the paragraphs in question.

P 68. Even though we are all capable of making free and responsible choices, our development is not only our doing. We are in error if we think we can rely solely on ourselves or the wonders of technology for our development. The invitation is to look inward to see God's hand in our lives.

P 69. Technology is a profound human reality. “Technology enables us to exercise dominion over matter, to reduce risks, to save labor, to improve our conditions of life.” Technology impels us to gradually overcome limitations—this is a response to God’s command to be good stewards, which reinforces the covenant between human beings and the environment, mirroring God’s creative love.

P 70. The danger to say that with technology we can become self-sufficient. Technology could become such a power that it would hold us back from encountering being and truth. That would mean we would know all, evaluate and make decisions about our life situations in a techno-cultural perspective. We would lose sight of meaning that is not of our making. Our development is denied when truth is seen as only coincidental. “True development does not consist primarily of ‘doing.’” **“The key to development is a mind capable of thinking in technological terms and grasping the fully human meaning of activities, within the contest of the holistic meaning of the individual’s being.”** There is a pressing need for formation in an ethically responsible use of technology.

P 71 Often the development of peoples is seen as merely technical matter. Development is possible with “upright men and women.” Both professional competency and moral consistency are necessary. A balance is needed. “Often under the intricacies of economic, financial and political interconnections, there remain misunderstandings, hardships, (confusion) and injustice.” Technology helps the ones in-the-know, but continues to bind those who live in its shadow. There is a loss of freed or hope of being set free.

P 72. There is a risk that peace could be seen as a technical product. Peace must be based on values rooted in the truth of human life. “The voice of the people must be heard and their situation must be taken into consideration.” This is the task of the Christian faithful.

P 73. On social communications. We must take seriously how this influences our development. It is an integral part of our life, “communicating information geared towards a vision of the person and the common good that reflects universal values.” To achieve these goals, they must be inspired by charity and placed in the service of truth, of the good, of natural and supernatural fraternity. With that comes human freedom. “The media can make an important towards the growth in communion of the human family, and the ethos of society, when they are used to promote universal participation in the common search for what is just.”

Discussion: **John** again commented on the repetitive form of the document, which seems to be something like a spiral. **Janet**. Inspired by charity – linked to gratuity. **Joseph** wondered why evangelicals so happy about this document? Perhaps because of what is said about overdependence on welfare state and what is said about abortion. **Ron** noted that the document is focussed on improving lot of all people physically, while Evangelicals focus more on the soul. **John** that the mention of the soul unusual. **Henry** returned to the focus on development, which speaks more to development of people. He suggested that if we read this as applying to us here, we see lots of challenges. **John** thought that P 72 on peacebuilding

should attract Mennonites. **Luis** thought that this might not be strong enough for them. Both talk **about** cultures of peace. **Helmut's** comment was that there was something about peace in the document, but not much.

Helmut, paragraphs 74–79: In these paragraphs the pope takes up questions of biotechnology and bioethics. He is worried that the developments in this field may rob human persons of transcendent faith.

P 75 – Here the emphasis is on social problems that arise when man is deluded into thinking he is in control of life. Technology applied to life itself leads to attitudes that deny human dignity, not longer distinguishing what is human.

P 76 Psychology risks reducing the human soul to a humanly managed entity. Helmut agrees that this orientation does tend to have us mastermind our emotions. And it risks losing touch with soul's eschatological depth. Development must include growth of the human soul. "There cannot be holistic development and universal common good unless people's spiritual and moral welfare is taken into account, considered in their totality as body and soul."

P 77 The pope notes that technology wants to promise that truth can be known exhaustively. But knowing not simply a material act. All our knowledge is a minor miracle. Love demands an element of surprise. The gift which we receive has a spiritual dimension. Development requires new eyes and a new heart, "capable of rising above a materialistic vision of human events. Helmut found this statement profound in its simplicity.

P 78. Conclusion. Helmut thought the Roman Catholic has bitten off a huge chunk here and tried to swallow the whole world. There is a vast amount of work to be done here. Makes him feel overwhelmed, and glad to be part of a parish that tries to be responsible in its little place. In the paper that he is preparing to present at the conference at St. Paul Seminary Helmut finds himself struck by how much Catholic theological thinking begins from a global perspective, in contrast to being with individual human beings. Helmut thinks that theology starts with local communication and then builds to larger communities. He feels overwhelmed at idea of beginning with the universal – as this encyclical tends to do.

P 79. Helmut liked the concluding image of development needing Christians with their arms raised to God in prayer.

Discussion: **Luis** thanked Helmut for citing the penultimate paragraph, which demonstrates how Benedict is writing for the Church in its universality. The document is an exhortation to the world. **Joseph** liked the notion of the Church, caring not only about today's stuff, but caring about everlasting truth. Catholics distinguish between church in Rome and their local community. **Luis** emphasized that bishops must learn to be pastors in their own local scene, and apply all this locally. **Helmut** recalled how John Howard Yoder sought to locate catholicity in every congregation (vs. whole of it out there). **Ron** recalled the Mennonite understanding of the "priesthood of all individuals" (which allows all individuals to share).

John recalled the quotation from the prophet Micah: “This is what is asked of you: To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

6. **Next meeting.** **Helmut** reminded us that the three additional years that we had agreed to was almost up. He would check to see if the period ended in the fall of 2010. It was agreed that **Luis** and **Helmut** would plan the agenda for the next meeting. They indicated they would welcome suggestions for a topic or a document. Someone suggested the role of music in life and worship. It was agreed that the next meeting should be on Thursday, 14 October. Helmut closed with the Scripture citation: “And now abideth faith, hope, and love.”