

## MISSIONARY ECUMENISM AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AS A VITAL PART OF THE OBLATE CHARISM

by Harry E. Winter, OMI

St. Eugene de Mazenod probably never heard the term "Lay Apostolate." But as Frank Santucci has shown, he lived and developed the reality.<sup>1</sup> He probably never heard the term "Ecumenism," or "Inter-religious Dialogue." But in these matters too, he was way ahead of his time.

When St. Eugene was 59 years old, in 1842, he, as the Bishop of Marseilles, accompanied by Father Tempier and several other French bishops went to Tunisia for the transfer of the relics of St. Augustine. The group wanted to observe Muslim worship, and were delighted when their host pointed out, right next door, a mosque "strongly revered by these poor, blind Muslims as the tomb of one of their saints.. .I praise them for the respect for this place for their prayers." For several long paragraphs, St. Eugene alternates between regret that the Muslims do not know Christ, with great praise for their "profound religious convictions: silence, prostrations, humble invocations." Twice he wished that "unworthy Christians who do not know how to pray and who daily profane our holy temples by their irreverence," would imitate the Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

If he had such an open attitude to Muslims in 1842, it is not surprising that, in 1857, when he visited England, Scotland and Ireland, he sought out a Protestant denomination which was famous for its fervent public prayer. He carefully watched their Vesper service, talked with the sacristan, and angrily wrote those in charge of prayer at the Marseille cathedral: "It is shameful to hurry the recitation of the official prayers of the Church, as is done in our chapters. One must watch these poor heretics at prayer to see with what solemnity and with what tone of supplication God's creatures should address Him when they invoke His aid."<sup>3</sup>

Instinctively following the example of our Founder, Oblates have worked with Eastern Orthodox and Protestants for the sake of Mission. As Ron Rolheiser frequently states, we are one of the best kept secrets in the missionary world. I would add that we are one of the best kept secrets in the ecumenical world, and that of inter-faith dialogue as well. The sad fact is that most Oblates have little knowledge of what other Oblates are doing in the areas of ecumenism and dialogue. As our number of vowed religious decreases, and Oblate Associates increase, we seem to be more aware of the growth of the numbers of poor. Our Oblate charism has always centered on the needs of the poor. To more effectively serve the poor, we must be aware of the dynamism of ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue.

This silence is tragic for all of Christianity, since true ecumenism is linked to Mission and Evangelization. St. John wrote that Jesus did not simply pray that all Christians would be one, but that all would be one so that the world might believe (Jo. 17:21). The failure of Oblates to make known how their work in Christian Unity and Inter-faith Dialogue is part of Mission hurts not only our ability to serve the poor, but it hurts the entire Church.

First we will sketch how Oblates have followed St. Eugene's example regarding Ecumenism and Dialogue. Then we will propose a solution to our current inability to better link Mission, Unity and Dialogue.

## I. Oblates Creatively Work for Church Unity and Inter-faith Dialogue.

### A. Challenge with Eastern Christians

Two examples come to mind for Canada, and the USA: Albert Lacombe's concern for Eastern Christians, and the Hudson Bay Company's dealing with Anglicans and Oblates. Lacombe joined the Oblates after being a diocesan priest in Quebec and Minnesota, and returned to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area several times. While serving in western Canada, he noticed the large number of Eastern Christians, particularly Ukrainians, who missed the ministry of their own rite. Probably never having heard the statement "The Church breathes with two lungs," he nevertheless sensed the importance of Eastern rite priests for the Ukrainians, and he spent much time in Europe recruiting Eastern rite priests for western Canada.<sup>4</sup>

In the spring of 1972 and 1974, I taught a course in the Washington, DC, Theological Consortium, on Eastern Christianity, "The Orthodox Experience." One Oblate who signed up huffed: "I don't see why they don't all become Latin rite. It would make the church less complicated." In a way I sympathized with the complicated process which protects Eastern Rite Catholics from being overwhelmed by us Latins. During my first pastorate, in Holy Family Church, Pearisburg, Virginia, a Ruthenian rite family lived in the parish. To preside at the marriage of the daughter to a Latin Rite Catholic, I had to obtain two permissions from the Ruthenian jurisdiction to which they belonged: one, to preside in the place of a Ruthenian priest, and second for the marriage to a Latin rite man. Then a son in the family decided to marry a non-Christian, and the permissions were even more complicated.

But in the same small parish, a woman of Russian extraction approached me. Andrea Federoff had been raised a Missionary Baptist in the WV coal fields, but in doing her doctorate at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, she discovered her Russian heritage. She was received into the Catholic Church by Charles Beausoleil, OMI, the pastor of Holy Family Church, on Jan. 14, 1971. and became the coordinator for Fr. George Maloney, SJ, the founder of the John XXIII Center for Eastern Christian Studies, at Fordham University. She asked me if Fr. Maloney could celebrate the Divine Liturgy of the Russian Rite at Holy Family. With the help of the Ruthenian rite family, 50 people, both Orthodox and those in union with Rome, came on very short notice for the Sept. 29, 1979 Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, according to the Russian Catholic rite. I was encouraged to concelebrate, and it was a very moving experience to see the emotion of all involved, in the beauty of that Divine Liturgy.<sup>5</sup>

Our only Melkite Oblate, Dan Nassaney, has personally experienced the hurt which some Oblates inflict on Eastern Rite Christians. During our Belleville Convocation of April, 2013, he helped very much in the interest group which I conducted on Missionary Ecumenism. He directly asked Ron Rolheiser, who was also helping, whether there are liturgical books and vestments at Oblate School of Theology, so that Divine Liturgy can be celebrated there. Dan submits items regularly for the Eastern Christianity page of the Mission-Unity-Dialogue website, and I expect to hear a lot from him as the historic Pan-Orthodox Synod of 2016 approaches, the first for the Orthodox since the Ecumenical Second Council of Nicea (787 AD).<sup>6</sup> He just attended the Orientale Lumen Conference, held this year June 15-18, Washington, DC.

Tony Rigoli was approached, when he was pastor of Holy Angels Church, Buffalo, NY, by an Hispanic Catholic, Robert Moreno, who was convinced God was calling him to be a married priest. Tony

explained that the only way he could do this would be to join an Eastern rite, and marry before ordination. Robert went to the Ukraine, learned Ukrainian, married, and was ordained in the Ukrainian rite. He then returned to western NY and was never allowed to preside at a Latin rite Mass. He could concelebrate, though.

With the June 14, 2014 decision by Pope Francis to lift the ban on married Eastern rite priests functioning outside their traditional territories, Robert may be able to help in the growing number of Latin rite parishes which are desperately short of priests.<sup>7</sup>

The historic trip of Patriarch Kirill I from Moscow to Warsaw for the almost unbelievable Statement of Reconciliation of Aug. 15, 2012, between the Russian and Polish People, the May 25, 2014 meeting in Jerusalem of Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew, the Nov. 29-30, 2014 meeting of the two in Istanbul--all these are striking reminders for Oblates in North America that we must work better with Eastern Christians.<sup>8</sup>

#### B. No Sharing with Anglicans

Oblates wasted precious personnel by competing with Anglicans in northern Canada. It was probably too early for us to admit that we could have concentrated on one village, and let the Anglicans take the neighboring village, rather than have Oblates in both villages. Did the Hudson Bay Company attempt to persuade us to cooperate with the Anglicans, since it would have made the company's task easier in delivering goods?<sup>9</sup>

As we face fewer and fewer vowed members, we need to look at working other Christian Churches in the areas we serve or are asked to serve. (See below, E, our 1972 "Missionary Outlook" pledge).

#### C. Tragedy in Oregon, Some Positive Beginnings in the East and in Texas

When Native Americans massacred a group of Presbyterian missionaries in Oregon, on Nov. 29, 1847, two neighboring Oblates, Eugene Casimir Chirouse and Charles M. Pandosy attempted to help the survivors. Ron Young's doctoral thesis explores the sad result: the diocesan priest who helped the most, J.B.A. Brouillet, was sued by one of the distraught survivors. The tragic episode illustrates the two attitudes which predominated until the early 20th century: mistrust and persecution on the one hand between Catholic and non-Catholic Christians, with some personal friendship as antagonists endured the same hardship and disaster.<sup>10</sup>

The latter attitude is documented by Joseph Wild, OMI, in his history of Oblates in the eastern part of the USA. A careful reading of Bernard Doyon, OMI, and his history of the Oblates in Texas would probably reveal the same two attitudes.<sup>11</sup>

#### D. 20th Century Improvement

As early as 1910, our first missiologist, Robert Streit, OMI, included Protestant ecumenical work in his research. Our superior generals encouraged Streit and a long line of great Oblate missiologists to develop the priceless tool of Bibliographia Missionaria. When I was studying at the Ivy League

University of Pennsylvania, I was surprised to see the *Bibliographia Missionaria* on the shelves of the library of this rather secular university. However, many non-religious colleges and universities developed Departments of Religious Studies, beginning in the 1950's, at the request of their students. Hopefully, Oblates are as aware of the Ecumenical, Inter-faith and Justice and Peace dimensions of this tool, as are the students and universities which value this resource.<sup>11</sup>

Oblates such as Valerian Gaudet have followed St. Eugene in instinctively looking at other groups which were attracting believers. With the emergence of Moral Rearmament in England after World War II, Gaudet checked it out so much that he was called to the formidable "Holy Office " (now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani. Both Gaudet and the superior general at the time, Leo Deschatelets, were worried and concerned that this call meant a condemnation of Gaudet, or some form of punishment. When Gaudet returned to the General House after the appointment, he told a relieved Deschatelets that all Ottaviani asked him was why Moral Rearmament was attracting people and what could Catholics learn!<sup>12</sup>

The "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity," from Jan. 18-25, became a part of Oblate prayer life as the opening of Vatican II approached, on Sept. 11, 1962. But nothing prepared us for the shock of heretics becoming separated brethren and then brothers and sisters, as Eastern Orthodox and Protestants of all kinds were invited to be "observers" at the Council.

When I was told in 1964, as I approached ordination, that I would be teaching theology at our scholasticate in Washington, DC, I was given a choice in subject matter. I suggested Christian Unity and Missiology, since my studies at the Gregorian University has introduced me to this emerging field of theology. My superiors in the former Eastern Province readily agreed, and I was given courses in Church History and Ecclesiology, in addition to a course then required: Missionary Ecumenism. It is significant that the best text, after the Constitution on the Church and the Decrees on Ecumenism and Eastern Churches and Missionary Activity, was by Robert McAfee Brown, The Ecumenical Revolution.

It truly was revolutionary, as Brown presented the Justice and Peace component, and the Missiology component, of Ecumenism. I like to think that Seamus Finn, in taking this course in the early 1970's, was influenced in his work in Justice and Peace. But by the 1990's, I was using another text, Gideon Goosen's Bringing Churches Together, and in the 2000's, Jeff Gros , Introduction to Ecumenism. Note how the titles have changed and the revolution has lessend.<sup>13</sup>

#### D. Charismatic Explosion, 1967

The Holy Spirit inserted a startling development into Ecumenism on Feb. 17-18, 1967, at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, as the Catholic Charismatic Movement exploded there, and at about the same time, all over the world. For Oblates working with Hispanics, this truly changed everything. Thomas Rausch, SJ, puts it this way: "Research indicates that there are actually more Latino Catholic Charismatics than Protestant Pentecostals in Latin America and in the U.S."<sup>14</sup>

In the former Eastern American Province, Fran Bagan, Ed Hauf, Dick Kulwicz and Dick McAlear became prime movers in the Catholic Charismatic Movement. And most importantly for Ecumenism, Evangelical Protestants realized their similarity and convergence.

In late summer, 1967, I began doctoral studies in religion at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In order for Oblate College to keep the accreditation it has just received from both the secular Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and the religious Association of Theological Schools, the college was advised it needed some teachers whose degrees had not come from either Catholic University of America, or from the Gregorian and Angelicum Universities in Rome, Italy. I decided to major in the Presbyterian Church, since it is so important to American history and religion. My minor was in Buddhism. Both areas required one to be able to construct a grid of understanding, to appreciate religious phenomenon. And I would concentrate on public worship as an essential requirement of any religion.

When I returned to Oblate College, Washington, DC, for the autumn term in 1970, after completing all the subject matter, the course required for Oblates in Missionary Ecumenism included a strong section on World Religions. Students were also instructed in building a grid of understanding for any religious development.

#### E. Peak, 28th General Chapter, 1972, and Missionary Outlook

Missionary Ecumenism reached a peak, at least for Oblates, at our 1972 General Chapter. It sadly diminished after that. The delegates of the five provinces of the then USA Region presented a paper as the chapter began: "The XXVIII General Chapter and Missionary Concern for Christian Unity.":

The highest priority should be given by the Secretariate of the Mission, to the integrating of our missionary and ecumenical work. The Secretariate should blend more thoroughly into our missionary aim, the contribution of our Oblate ecumenists, searching also for non-Oblate specialists where necessary. To adequately discover the way the above developments in shared ministry and buildings, and Orthodox, Anglicans, and Pentecostals, and ecumenical instruction need to be structured into our congregation, the Secretariate should aid in the convening on both regional and international levels, of our ecumenists, missiologists and experienced missionary pastoral members.<sup>15</sup> (See below, IIA for the fulfillment of this, at least in the USA).

In 1972, the general administration consisted of 12 members, headed by the superior general, Leo Deschatelets. William Cagney from Australia was "Secretary for Mission," since the 1966 chapter. He had a full time assistant, Valerian Gaudet, who was an invited delegate with full voice but no vote and described as "Secretary of the General Conference for Mission."<sup>16</sup> With the development of regions during the chapter, the general administration remained at 12 members, and there was simply a portfolio for Mission assigned to one of the general counselors residing in Rome. Thus Mission, Unity and Dialogue was vastly reduced in manpower.

The USA regional paper found almost no mention of Missionary Ecumenism in the preparation documents for the chapter. But delegates at the chapter discovered that the ecumenical work of its

members was vast. It simply was not being communicated, and thus not coordinated. During the chapter, Max Thurian, co-founder of the Taize Community, was available for delegates to meet with him, on May 19, 1972. Andre Seumois, who had been so influential at Vatican II, helped in many ways, although he was not a chapter delegate. Note the title of his epochal book Oecumenisme Missionnaire. Although Missionary Ecumenism was never translated into English, it provided for many people a true view of the link between Ecumenism and Mission.<sup>17</sup>

The crowning achievement of the chapter as regards Missionary Ecumenism are the words of its statement "Missionary Outlook:"

We will habitually examine what other Christians are doing in our area before initiating new projects or programs; we will do everything with them which faith does not oblige us to do separately. To accomplish this more effectively we will make ourselves aware of the characteristics of these Churches, their particular problems and ways of thinking. In this way we will attempt to heal old divisions and present a unified witness to the non-Christian world (16e).<sup>18</sup>

Although "Missionary Outlook" promised much, the lack of any structure for Missionary Ecumenism and Dialogue has, in my view, greatly reduced its effect.<sup>19</sup>

## II. A Mixed Bag, 1974 Regional Conference on Mission and Unity to RPM and 2010 Book

### A. First and Last Regional Conference on Mission and Unity.

By 1974, the USA Region was able to have its first and last Conference on Mission and Unity. "On October 14-18, 34 Oblates in the field, the 5 American Provincials, the American Regional Councilor and the Assistant General for Mission, gathered in Natick, Mass., for the first American Regional Conference on Mission and Unity." Roberto Pena, John Joyce and I each presented a conference after which discussion in small groups promoted the conviction that we were ministering to each other. Following the meeting, the 5 provincials, Jack King and Bill Cagney left for Rome and the 29th General Chapter, to address the resignation of Richard Hanley.<sup>20</sup>

On July 5, 1977, Missionary Ecumenism received another setback with the sudden death of Charles Morrissey, at the Ecumenical Institute, Chicago, IL.<sup>21</sup>

### B. Texas Conference of Churches; Bishop Michael Pfeifer, 1976-2013

Former Oblate Manny Ballard had learned of my concern about Missionary Ecumenism when he was a delegate from the former Southern Province at the 1972 general chapter. In 1976, he asked if I would be interested in the position of Catholic staff member on the Texas Conference of Churches. At that time, the TCC was the largest ecumenical group in the world to have Catholic participation.<sup>22</sup>

My three years as Associate Director were certainly memorable and challenging. I continued to attend the annual meetings of the National Workshop on Christian Unity, and the American Society of Missiology. To these was joined the annual meeting of the National Association of Ecumenical Staff.

The staff at Oblate College of the Southwest (now Oblate School of Theology) encouraged me to teach an evening course on Missionary Ecumenism during the autumn semester of 1977.

I quickly discovered the wide gap, and yet overlapping needs, between Tex-Mex Catholicism and Anglo-Tex Protestantism. To my delight, I was able to present, with a Southern Baptist leader, a seminar "Evangelizing the Unchurched: Texas, as a Model?," at the 15th National Workshop on Christian Unity, Tulsa, OK, April 10-13, 1978.<sup>23</sup>

Oblate Bishop Michael Pfeiffer exercised creative leadership not only in the Texas Conference of Churches, but in every possible area of ecumenism and dialogue in the San Angelo, TX Diocese. His pastoral letters attracted national attention.<sup>24</sup>

#### C. Appalachia, and Mission/Unity Newsletter

However, I also discovered less happy realities: personalities can destroy or vastly lessen great ideals. So during the summer of 1979, I asked for a new assignment back in the Eastern Province and was sent to become pastor of a small membership but large geographical parish in western Virginia, Holy Family Catholic Church, Pearisburg, VA. There I discovered the Missionary Ecumenism reality of Appalachia with all its poverty. Organized religion was less than 50%; Catholics, about 5% of the population.

In 1980, under the leadership of George Croft, provincial of the former Eastern American Province, I began the newsletter Mission/Unity. The province sent it to each member, and several other of the US provinces sent it. I had a list of about 75 interested subscribers from other countries. In justifying another newsletter, I wrote in the first issue (Jan., 1980) "One of the great disasters of Christian Unity (ecumenism) has been the lack of contact with evangelization....We welcome contributions from the growing number of Oblates who are serving as officers of ministerial associations, councils of churches and other ministerial groups."<sup>25</sup>

As I re-read the 31 issues published between Jan., 1980 and April, 1995, I see that 9 Oblates from the former Eastern Province wrote articles (Seamus Finn, twice); Francis George, James FitzPatrick (Australian evangelizer at that time), and superior general Marcello Zago also wrote.<sup>26</sup> Another goal was to join academic ecumenism with pastoral ecumenism: how best to prepare for inter-church marriages, welcoming other Christians into the Church, presiding at funerals with many non-Catholic Christians present, etc. All this was to promote better mission to the poor and marginalized.

#### D. Oblates in 1981 SEDOS Seminar

From March 8-19, 1981, three Oblates were among the 44 participants who presented papers at the SEDOS (Service of Documentation and Study) Research Seminar at Villa Cavaletti, the Jesuit think tank built over Cicero's Villa, outside Rome, Italy. (Two more Oblates, Francis George and Leo- Paul Nobert attended, without presenting papers). Tissa Balasuriya's paper dealt with the Mission of the Local Church in Secular Society; Alexander Montanyane's with the Missionary Dimensions of the Local Church, and mine with Christian Mission and Ecumenical Relations. Even more importantly, it gave me a chance

to meet participants such as Wahlbert Buhlmann and interview him on the ecumenical dimension of his controversial book The Coming of the Third Church.<sup>27</sup>

#### E. Evangelicals and Catholics Together for Mission, Cardinal Francis George

American Presbyterians had been trying to evangelize in Mexico, and some undoubtedly were perceived as proselytizers, using coercion and trickery. Several were murdered in 1993. A group asked Catholics to intercede. Instead, the initial group, which included Jesuit Avery Dulles and Oblate Francis George, produced a remarkable statement in 1994: "Catholics and Evangelicals Together for Mission."<sup>28</sup> Many of the Protestant Evangelical signers referred to the Catholic Charismatic Movement as vastly improving their view of Catholics.

#### F. Triumph and Tragedy of the Oblate Center for Mission Studies, 1994-99

When more rooms became available at Oblate College, Washington, DC, Provincial William Sheehan asked me to research ways for them to be used. I proposed that the former Eastern Province establish a Mission Center, to do for the USA what the Institute of Mission Studies was doing for Canada at St. Paul's University, Ottawa, Canada. Sheehan quickly accepted, and with the general administration meeting at Oblate College in November, 1994, we had much advice and support from Superior General Marcello Zago and his administration. Soon Jim Sullivan came from Brazil and Henry Lemoncelli from the Oblate College staff, and we began.

Henri Goudreault, Director of the Institute of Mission Studies, immediately sent a doctoral thesis on ecumenism to increase our library holdings.<sup>29</sup> The Oblate Center for Mission Studies acquired all the issues of the Institute's journal Kerygma (1967-94) and Mission (1994-99). We soon became the only library in Washington, DC to have the entire set of Bibliographia Missionaria.

Sullivan specialized in organizing 11 workshops and retreat days, with those by David Power and Louis Lougen the most popular Oblates, and Loughlan Sofield, Monika Hellwig and Dean Hoge as the most popular non-Oblates. Lemoncelli helped with the workshops and specialized in Hispanic Ministry. I found editing a booklet on Oblate Missiologists to be very helpful. Zago sent us his foundational article on the link between Mission and Ecumenism. Avery Dulles' classic pamphlet "Why Catholics Don't Evangelize and Why They Must" became a staple as we worked with laity.<sup>30</sup> Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio became very interested in working with OCMS and the Washington Theological Union.

Jose Ante came from the Philippines during the autumn semester of 1997, to lecture on Islamic Studies. Ron Young came the spring semester of 1998, to provide us with his expertise. Sheehan asked us to work closely with Seamus Finn and JPIC, with then Oblate Paul Costello's Center for Narrative Studies, and with George McLean and his Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. In fact, the best opening publicity we had, on March 20, 1995, was even before we officially began. Through McLean's friendship with Waclaw Hryniewicz, about 45 Eastern Orthodox, Eastern Catholics and Latin Catholics filled our conference room to hear Hryniewicz on "Contemporary Issues in the Dialogue Between The Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church." Gode Iwele was studying at Catholic University, so he contributed an African perspective.

The newsletter Mission/Unity now became the official newsletter of OCMS, and 6 issues were published from Jan. 1996 to Sept., 1998. Just when it looked like OCMS would make a great contribution to both the Oblates and the Church, the reorganization of the 5 provinces into one, killed it. Begun with great publicity and interest, it died without any closure or grieving.<sup>31</sup>

#### G. Five Ways Fellowship Begins, 1998-2009, and RPM Mention

With Tony Rigoli as my associate when I was appointed pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church, Buffalo, NY, I had a great example of an Oblate author, and Oblate energy. So I was able to write up the small book Dividing or Strengthening? Five Ways of Christianity.<sup>32</sup> Even more importantly, Provincial Louis Lougen asked me to present to the provincial council on Sept. 18, 2007, my thesis that there are five ways (catholic, charismatic/evangelical, Vatican II, fundamentalist and liberal) in every Oblate community, in every parish, and in every Christian denomination. From surveying the council, he invited me to make this presentation to the then six areas of the USA Oblates. After examining the results of the survey done in each presentation (about 190 total), it was discovered that about 76 tend to be liberal. Many of those have worked with undocumented persons. They have experienced the rigidity of laws and legal systems.<sup>33</sup>

Also during this time, the Mission/Unity newsletter first became Mission-Unity-Dialogue, and then morphed into a website of the same name, supported by the USA Province. Updates every two to three weeks are offered "For Oblates of Mary Immaculate and All People of Faith."<sup>34</sup>

As the USA Province began to look very seriously at diminishing numbers and increasing needs, it began the program "Renewing the Province Mission" (RPM). Constant nagging and whining (at least it seemed to me) produced this paragraph, following the very last item, #23, Mission Forum on Youth Ministry:

We will continue to explore ways to support the ministries of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (Fr. George McLean) and the Mission-Unity-Dialogue ministry (Fr. Harry Winter). Seamus Finn has been working with George McLean in order to clarify financial and organization aspects of his ministry. A new brochure is being developed for the Mission-Unity-Dialogue ministry of Harry Winter with the help of the JPIC office.<sup>35</sup> (That brochure is attached to this article).

#### H. Jim Flavin Hispanic Book of 2005 and Cardinal Quevedo

Jim Flavin was stationed at St. Stephen's Church, Miramar, Florida, twice, from 1968-72, and from 1991-1999. To learn more about Hispanic culture, he took a seven week immersion course in the Dominican Republic. In 2005, he published a masterful book on Hispanic ministry, including insights and data from both Catholic and Evangelical Protestant sources. His analysis of the Protestant origins of Sunday School, CCD, and Catholic publishing in the USA, are priceless. I hope every novice reads this book in the novitiate.

How many Oblates are aware of his work? His book, St. Stephen's Gate, seems a prime example to me that each of us works in our own corner and most of the time are unaware of the accomplishments and tools that other Oblates have. We waste a lot of time and energy reinventing the wheel.<sup>36</sup>

Hispanic Catholicism was adapted by the Philippines. The 46 minute video of Cardinal Orlando Quevedo being interviewed by David Uribe during the national Flores de Mayo gathering of May 23/24, 2015 at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows has much in common with Flavin's book. Both are demonstrations that the Hispanic culture and Anglo culture can work together, as long as we respect the differences.<sup>37</sup>

#### I. Oblate Mission Committee Book, 2010

In 2010, Bill O'Donnell presented me with a book Trailblazing Evangelization in the 21st Century: Challenges to Oblate Mission Today, edited by Oswald Firth, who was the assistant general with the Mission Portfolio. Two publishers were listed: the Centre for Society and Religion, in Sri Lanka, and the Mission Committee of the OMI General Administration. Very surprised that we have a Mission Committee on the international level, I attempted to find out who is serving on it.

It seems to have disappeared, but we do have Mission Committees in the Regions of Latin America, Asia and Europe.<sup>38</sup> Among the 9 articles in the book are two by David Power and one by Seamus Finn, from the USA, and one by Marcel Dumais, from Canada. Dumais' article, "Our Oblate Mission Today," is the only one which is concrete about Ecumenism, when he presents the importance of evangelical and Pentecostal Christians. He observes they lack the social dimension of the Gospel, and is less hopeful than Francis George on working with them.<sup>39</sup>

#### III. Current Developments and a Proposal

##### A. Louis Lougen's Catholic Digest Article, and His Appointment

Our superior general, Louis Lougen, put it this way in the widely circulated magazine Catholic Digest, in 2011:

Our Oblate spirituality also brings us into dialogue with people of other religious traditions. Grounded in our Catholic faith we seek to understand how others believe in God. Oblate spirituality enables us to respect other religions and work with them so that our world will reflect the heart of God.

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With his appointment in early 2015 as a member of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Lougen now continues the strong place our Superior Generals have had in promoting Mission, Unity and Dialogue.

##### B. Appointment as Coordinator of Mission-Unity-Dialogue

In the Letter of Obedience of June 13, 2014, appointing me as Director of the 104 Residence in St. Paul, MN, was a second, totally unexpected appointment: "Coordinator of Mission-Unity-Dialogue for the U.S. Province, effective July 15, 2014 until July 15, 2017." Personally, this was great support. But as RPM implies above, no one is quite sure what "coordinating" means.

### C. Plea for a Structure/Network to Parallel and Intersect with JPIC, on the International, and Provincial Levels

Regarding a structure for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue for our entire congregation, perhaps following Pope Francis pushing the polyhedron might work: a troika of three Oblates residing in different regions and only visiting Rome annually. One would be a specialist in Mission, one in Ecumenism, and one in Dialogue.<sup>41</sup>

The flyer which is coming as an attachment has two sides. It is patterned after the Justice-Peace and Integrity of Creation flyer, and presumes a footprint in Washington, DC, and also in San Antonio, TX. The person serving in DC might be a semi-retired missionary such as Peter Curran. It is imperative to have someone at least part time in DC because of the many number of missionary groups headquartered there.

A footprint is necessary at Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, because of our professors of missiology and ecumenism there, and the doctorate offered in Spirituality. Both people would of course be under the direction of the provincial councilor assigned the Mission portfolio.

### IV. Conclusion

Oblates of Mary in North America have followed St. Eugene's example of bold and constant interest in new religious movements. Both within the Christian Community, and with people of other faiths, Oblates have been in the forefront.

However, as we look at the structure for JPIC, both on the international and national levels, is it not evident that there is not a corresponding structure or network for Mission, Unity and Dialogue? With so many developments regarding Evangelization, Spiritual Ecumenism, Doctrinal Ecumenism, and Dialogue, how can men in the field contribute what they are experiencing, and also learn from others?

Fr. Allan Figueroa Deck's words of 2009 are even truer today: "pastoral leaders in the church have simply refused to come to terms with the charismatic renewal."<sup>42</sup> I believe Francis George did come to terms with it, and promoted, as much as he could, our convergence with evangelicals and fundamentalists.

May every Oblate delight in what we have accomplished, and at the same time be very concerned that our lack of structure for MUD hurts us, and hurts the entire Church. We have two very concrete times and places to promote this: the Renewing the Province Mission program, and the 2016 General Chapter.

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>. Frank Santucci, OMI, [www.eugenedemazenod.net/The Service of Lay Mission Collaborators](http://www.eugenedemazenod.net/The%20Service%20of%20Lay%20Mission%20Collaborators), July 3, 2012. See also St. Eugene's relationship with the picturesque leader of the fishmongers, Elizabeth Picot, nicknamed Babeau: Jean Leflon, Eugene de Mazenod, translated by Francis D. Flanagan, OMI, 3 (NY: Fordham University Press, 1968): 103-04, 205.

<sup>2</sup>. St. Eugene de Mazenod, "Voyage en Afrique," Missions 12 (Dec. 1874):443-44. Translation mine; the entire journal: 417-57. Leflon mentions the trip: 4:220. See Yvon Beaudoin, OMI, "Mgr de Mazenod et les musulmans," Vie Oblate Life 57 (Dec. 1998): 467-499 for a much more extensive treatment. Note that all four Oblate reviews (Missions, Etudes Oblates, Vie Oblate Life and Oblatio) are available on the public section of the international website [www.omiworld.org](http://www.omiworld.org), the first three on the "Archives" page. Oblatio has its own page.

<sup>3</sup>. Leflon 4:288-89. The entire section, regarding the Oxford Movement and St. Eugene's meetings with the three future English cardinals, Henry Edward Manning, John Henry Newman and Nicholas Wiseman, is very moving: 278-90. For St. Eugene's attitude when Oblates joined local clergy in Canada in burning Protestant Bibles, see Leflon 3:139-40. For his teaching that the Church is much bigger than the institutional Church, see his "Pastoral Letter of Lent, 1860," part of which is used as the Second Reading in the Office of Readings on his feast day, May 21.

<sup>4</sup>. The Easterners are variously described as Ukrainians, Ruthenians, and Galatians, for example in the entry for him in the online Dictionary of Canadian Biography. The recruiting visits to Europe were in 1900 and 1904. St. Paul University's relationship with the Sheptytsky Institute continues Oblate work with Ukrainian Catholics.

<sup>5</sup>. George Croft, OMI, "Pearisburg," Oblate Fathers Newsletter, Eastern American Province 6 (Oct. 1979, #2): 5.

<sup>6</sup>. [www.harrywinter.org/EasternChristianity](http://www.harrywinter.org/EasternChristianity); Abouna Dimitry, "Orthodox Churches in Sympathy," Sophia 45 (Winter, 2014, 1): 17.

<sup>7</sup>. Laura Leraci, "Vatican Lifts Ban on Married Priests," Sophia 45 (Winter, 2014, 1): 4, 7.

<sup>8</sup>. Wacław Hryniewicz, OMI, who served for many years on the Catholic-Orthodox International Dialogue, has commented on the Polish Russian Statement: [www.harrywinter.org/EasternChristianity](http://www.harrywinter.org/EasternChristianity).

<sup>9</sup>. See for example Raymond Huel, "The Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Hudson's Bay Company: a Mutuality of interests in the Interior of the Canadian North-West," Vie Oblate Life 57 (Dec. 1998); 439-66, especially pp. 441, 443, 446-47, 449-53, 457, 459, 462-65. It would be interesting to know what Anglican sources reveal.

<sup>10</sup>. Ronald Wayne Young, OMI, The Mission of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate to the Oregon Territory (1847-1860), Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 2000. Clifford Drury, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman (Seattle, WA: Northwest Interpretive Association, 1986, 2005) is available on the internet.

<sup>11</sup>. I say a careful reading because Joseph Wild, Men of Hope (Boston, MA: Society of Oblate Fathers, 1967) has a very faulty index when it comes to the relationship with Protestants, listing only pp. 8 and 154. There is precious documentation on pp. 9-12, 83, and 123. Bernard Doyon, OMI, Cavalry of Christ on the Rio Grande, 1849-83 (Milwaukee: Catholic Life Publications, Bruce Press, 1956); see his article in

Harry Winter, OMI, ed., Oblate Missiologists (Washington, DC: Oblate Center for Mission Studies, 1997), pp. 47-55; internet [www.harrywinter.org/Oblate Missiologists](http://www.harrywinter.org/Oblate_Missiologists).

<sup>11</sup>. Andre Seumois, OMI, cites Streit's Die Missionsgeschichtliche Literatur der Protestanten, Theologie und Glaube, 1910, pp. 299-314 as just one example: Oecumenisme Missionnaire (Roma: Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1970), pp. 88-89. For Streit and his successors, see Harry Winter, OMI, Oblate Missiologists (Washington, DC: Oblate Center for Missions Studies, 1997), pp. 36-43; internet copy, 2011:[www.harrywinter.org/OblateMissiologists](http://www.harrywinter.org/OblateMissiologists). For Bibliographia Missionaria as the indication of the strength of ecumenism, JPIC, etc, see Harry Winter, OMI, "Bibliographia Missionaria: Thermometer of Missiology," Missiology 27 (Jan. 1999, 1): 35-39; [www.harrywinter.org/Oblate Missiologists](http://www.harrywinter.org/Oblate_Missiologists).

<sup>12</sup>. Valerian Gaudet, OMI, Memoirs (1997). There is a French version: Mes Memoirs.

<sup>13</sup>. Robert McAfee Brown, The Ecumenical Revolution (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1967, 1969). I examined Brown's work in revolutionizing Presbyterian worship, in my doctoral thesis: Catholic, Evangelical and Reformed: The Lord's Supper in the (United) Presbyterian Church, 1945-70, and enjoyed several very long visits with him. A true gentleman and scholar. Gideon Goosen, Bringing Churches Together (Newton, Australia: E.J. Dwyer, 1993). Jeffrey Gros, FSC, Eamon McManus and Ann Riggs, Introduction to Ecumenism (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1998). Gros and I worked together for many years, he on the doctrinal side of ecumenism and I on the missionary side. His untimely death from cancer on Aug. 12, 2013, deprived ecumenism of a great and holy person.

<sup>14</sup>. Thomas Rausch, SJ, "To Embrace the Other," America, April 16, 2007, p. 14. It is still very moving to read the account of the Duquesne experience by one of the participants, Patti Gallagher Mansfield, As by a New Pentecost (Steubenville, OH: Franciscan University Press, 1992).

<sup>15</sup>. USA Delegates, "The XXVIII General Chapter and Missionary Concern for Christian Unity," p. 18. See Harry Winter, OMI, "The 1972 General Chapter's Work in Missionary Concern for Christian Unity," Etudes Oblates 31 (Oct.-Dec. 1972, 4):259-82.

<sup>16</sup>. Commission Precapitulaire, Chapitre-1972-Chapter, Liste des Capitulants, pp. 4, 46.

<sup>17</sup>. Andre Seumois, OMI, Oecumenisme Missionnaire, Urbaniana Nova Series 4 (Roma: Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1970). For more on Seumois, see Harry Winter, OMI, "Oblates at Vatican II: An Initial Survey," Oblatio 1 (Nov. 2012,#3):338-40.

<sup>18</sup>. Delegates of the 1972 Chapter, "Missionary Outlook," #16e. Our Constitutions deal with Ecumenism in # 6 (not 8 as in the index, p. 187). and 66a. See Fernand Jette, OMI, O.M.I. The Apostolic Man (Rome: General House, 1992), pp. 72-74, where he call concern for Ecumenism and Dialogue "truly a new one."

<sup>19</sup>. Harry Winter, OMI, "Mission and Unity in the Spirit of DeMazenod," Vie Oblate Life 34 (Sept. 1975, #3): 213-232; for the 1974 and 1980 chapters, see "Missionary Ecumenism," VOL 39 (April, 1980, #1):21-44.

<sup>20</sup>. "First American Regional Conference on Mission and Unity," OMI Documentation 57/75 (April 15, 1975) 1 (pp. 1-4: a longer description is by Tom Wrzos, OMI, in the USA OMI Communications 21 (Dec. 25, 1974) 3-5. Currently, Documentation is only available on the omiworld website from issue 221, May 1998, except for the Zago description of Assisi, 147, Feb. 1987. There are copies of both reports in Documentation and USA Communications in my personal folder "USA Mission-Unity, 1974 Conference."

<sup>21</sup>. Charles Morrissey, OMI, spent at least a year on the staff of the Chicago Ecumenical Institute, focusing on fundraising.

<sup>22</sup>. Harry Winter, OMI, "Texas Conference of Churches--South of God," Ecumenical Trends 8 (July/Aug., 1979,7):101-06.

<sup>23</sup>. The seminar was described in The Oblate World, Summer, 1978, p. 6; in USA OMI Communications 39 (June 11, 1978)8 and in Catholic newspapers such as Austin's Texas Catholic Herald, May 12, 1978, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>. See Texas Conference of Churches newsletter Texas Ecumenical Action for Bishop Pfeifer's leadership in the 1980's and 1990's; he also began one of the first interfaith groups in central Texas.

<sup>25</sup>. Harry Winter, "Why Another Newsletter?," Mission/Unity 1 (Jan. 1980). Each issue was a single sheet, two sides.

<sup>26</sup>. Marcello Zago, OMI, "Towards a Wider Ecumenism," Mission/Unity 26 (Dec. 1987) Msgr. Pierre Duprey, M.Afr., complained that Zago's term "wider ecumenism" was misleading, Duprey to Winter, March 21, 1989. I suspect that his letter was more of a reflection that some Vatican officials considered Zago too liberal, as was shown by the way the 25th anniversary of the 1986 Assisi gathering was redirected.

<sup>27</sup>. The three papers by Oblates are published in Mary Motte, FMM and Joseph Lang, MM (eds.) Mission in Dialogue (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982). Walbert Buhlman, OFM Cap, The Coming of the Third Church (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1978). I described the seminar in Mission/Unity 9 (May, 1981) and 10 (July, 1981).

<sup>28</sup>. Francis George, OMI, "Oblate Interest," Mission/Unity 30 (Oct. 1994), also on [www.harrywinter.org/Manhattan Declaration](http://www.harrywinter.org/Manhattan%20Declaration). See Charles Colson and Richard Neuhaus, eds., Evangelicals & Catholics Together (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1995).

<sup>29</sup>. Henri Goudreault, OMI, to Harry Winter, OMI, Oct. 5, 1994, enclosing Malcolm Martin, SA, The Missionary Influence in the Origins of the Ecumenical Movement and its Development in Latin America (Ottawa, Canada, 1972). The Institute of Missions Studies seems to have been recently absorbed by the Faculty of Theology of St. Paul's University.

<sup>30</sup>. Harry Winter, OMI, ed., Oblate Missiologists (Washington, DC: Oblate Center for Mission Studies, 1997), internet edition [www.harrywinter.org/Oblate Missiologists](http://www.harrywinter.org/Oblate%20Missiologists), updated regularly; Marcello Zago, OMI, "The Missionary Importance of the Encyclical Ut Unum Sint," Omnis Terra 263 (Dec. 1995) 488-92;

Avery Dulles, SJ. "Why Catholics Don't Evangelize and Why They Must," (NY: Society for the Propagation of the Faith, nd, probably 1992).

<sup>31</sup>. Oblate initial publicity in Oblate World , Oct. 1995, p. 2; general publicity in US Catholic Mission Association Mission Update, March/ April, 1995, p. 4; International Bulletin of Missionary Research , Jan. 1996, p. 19.

<sup>32</sup>. Tony Rigoli, OMI, Funny Things that Happened to Me on the Way to Heaven (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2004); Harry Winter OMI, Dividing or Strengthening? Five Ways of Christianity (Buffalo, NY: Keller Brothers, 2003), internet copy: [www.harrywinter.org/Five Ways](http://www.harrywinter.org/Five Ways) (updated regularly). The most recent presentation was to the May 26, 2015 meeting of the North American Conference of Oblate Retreat and Renewal Centers (NCORCC), Christ the King Retreat Center, Buffalo, MN.

<sup>33</sup>. The statistics were published: "Area Meetings," Mission-Unity-Dialogue, 6 (Third series, Aug. 2009).

<sup>34</sup>. [www.harrywinter.org](http://www.harrywinter.org), originally developed during 2001, in Buffalo, NY, the website is linked with the national USA Oblate website [www.omiusa.org](http://www.omiusa.org), "Looking for Something?," third down on right. I'm indebted to Will Shaw and Charles Hurkes, OMI, for referring periodically to this website, as Shaw publicizes Oblate items every Wednesday on the national website, and Hurkes in "OMI/USA."

<sup>35</sup>. "Renewing the Province Mission, Report on Implementation #2, September 25, 2013, Addendum A," p. 11.

<sup>36</sup>. James Flavin, OMI, St. Stephen's Gate (Milton, Mass.: Unity Street Books, 2005).

<sup>37</sup>. [www.omiusa.org](http://www.omiusa.org), Cardinal Orlando Quevedo OMI interviewed by David Uribe, OMI, "Slideshow, May 23/24, 2015."

<sup>38</sup>. Harry Winter, OMI to Gilberto Pinon, OMI, June 6, 2015; Gilberto Pinon to Harry Winter, June 8, 2015.

<sup>39</sup>. Oswald Firth, OMI, ed., Trailblazing Evangelization in the 21st Century: Challenges to Oblate Mission Today (Colombo, Centre for Society & Religion; Rome: Mission Committee, 2010. Dumais, p. 49.

<sup>40</sup>. Louis Lougen, OMI, "Praying with the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate," Catholic Digest, July/Aug. 2011, pp. 28-29. For the entire article, and Lougen's comments on working with Muslims, see [www.harrywinter.org/Dialogue](http://www.harrywinter.org/Dialogue).

<sup>41</sup>. As Pope Francis explains in the Joy of the Gospel, #236, the polyhedron is an effort to get away from Rome or Washington, DC, or San Antonio, as the center with everything circling around it. See also Massimo Faggioli, "Pope Francis, Tradition in Transition," St. Thomas University, St. Paul, MN presentation of June 2, 2015 on his forthcoming book of the same title.

<sup>42</sup>. Alan Figueroa Deck, SJ, "Hispanic Ministry: New Realities and Choices," Origins 38 (Dec. 4, 2008, #26):405. Also in Mission-Unity-Dialogue 6 (third series, Aug. 2009).

