

INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN AUSTRALIA: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

John R. Dupuche (jeandupuche@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

With regard to cultures and faith traditions, Australia is one of the most diverse nations in the world. At the same time, it is remarkably if not perfectly harmonious. What lessons can be gleaned from its successes and failures? This article will consider aspects of interfaith dialogue in Australia within the three categories of exclusivism, pluralism and inclusivism, and with particular reference to the Catholic tradition which I know best. The Australian experience may be useful as basis for comparison and contrast with other contexts.

Keywords: Exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism, Australia, inter-religious dialogue, religious traditions

EXCLUSIVISM

The exclusivist position, in its most extreme version, sees only one tradition as true and views all others as fundamentally false. This exclusivist position was typical of Christianity throughout most of its history. The New Testament saw no validity apart from Judaism and Christianity. Saint Paul does allow a sort of ‘natural religion’ (Romans 1:20), but for the biblical authors it was simply inconceivable to express admiration for a non-biblical religion or cult. In the 3rd century CE, Cyprian of Carthage (c. 210 – 258) popularised the notorious sentence “Outside the [Christian] Church there is no salvation” (extra ecclesiam nulla salus).¹ Towards the end of the 4th century, when the Roman Empire became officially Christian, the phrase acquired added force, and was explicitly applied to Jews and pagans in addition to heretics.²

¹ Dupuis, J. (2011). *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*. Maryknoll, N.Y. Orbis Books. 88

² *ibid.* 89

In the 4th century, Fulgentius of Ruspe (c. 462 – c. 533) applied the phrase in its most rigid form. One thousand years later, in the 15th century, he is quoted almost word for word at the Council of Florence (1442) in the Decree for the Copts of Egypt.

[The Holy Roman Church]... firmly believes, professes and preaches that “no one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans,” but also Jews, heretics and schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life; but they will go to the “eternal fire prepared for the devil and its angels” [Mt 25:41], unless before the end of their life they are joined (*aggregati*) to it.³

It is only in 1951 with Pope Pius XII that the point of view officially changes.⁴ His encyclical letter *Evangelii Praecones* declares that “the Catholic Church has neither scorned nor rejected [*neque despexit neque respuit*] the pagan philosophies.”⁵ It is a complete about-turn. The rejections of the past are rejected. The teaching of Pope Pius XII is further developed in 1965 at the momentous Second Vatican Council, which states

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all [people].⁶

Later again, in a reversal of St. Cyprian’s notorious phrase, Pope St John Paul II (1920-2005) states that while members of other faiths are not formally members of the Church they have, through grace, a mysterious relationship to it in a way that is not fully understood.⁷ He also states, succinctly, that “*God is the Father of all humanity; Christ has joined every person to himself; the Spirit works in each*

³ *ibid.* 95

⁴ Laurentin, R. (1966). *Bilan du concile, Histoire – textes – commentaires avec une chronique de la quatrième session*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil. 297

⁵ Pius XII (1951). “Evangelii Praecones,” para. 58. https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_02061951_evangelii-praecones.html accessed 23rd October 2022

⁶ Vatican II (1965). “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions” (*Nostra Aetate*), para. 2. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html accessed 3rd October 2022

⁷ John Paul II, (1990). “On the permanent validity of the Church’s missionary mandate (*Redemptoris Missio*),” para. 20. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html accessed 13th October 2022

individual.”⁸ By contrast, in 2001, in Australia, an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God and president of Catch the Fire Ministries Inc., a Christian evangelical organization, argued that

God has brought Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists to Australia “so that we could reach them to Christ”. He concludes by insisting that if he and his followers fail to convert Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, then Satan will succeed in his plan of taking over Australia and Christians will “pay a heavy price”.

Thus, Australia, despite its harmony, is no stranger to completely unacceptable points of view.

We have dwelt at some length on this long-held exclusivist attitude of the Catholic tradition, but it is not unusual. Indeed, Yasir Qadhi, a well-known contemporary Muslim scholar, says:

It shall come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the Islamic tradition that all of the major theological movements in classical and medieval Islam viewed their religion as being the sole path to God. This was, after all, a time in which such a particularistic view was the norm in other religious traditions.⁹

Note that this exclusivist attitude is not reserved to faith traditions. Charles Taylor, a noted philosopher in Montreal, Canada, speaks of an ‘exclusive humanism’ which sees itself as the only acceptable voice in civil and ethical discourse, and excludes every other voice¹⁰ even though it is the religious traditions that engage “with difficult but fundamental issues of meaning, truth and ethics whose outcomes could affect human and ecological survival.”¹¹ For example, with regard to ‘exclusive humanism,’ even though many parents in Australia choose to send their children to Catholic schools for the sake of an education based on Christian values, some secularists aim

⁸. John Paul II (1997) “To the Plenary Session of the Secretariat for Non-Christians.” Rome, 3rd March 1984. *Interreligious Dialogue, the Official Teaching of the Catholic Church, (1963-1995)*. Francesco Gioia. ed. Boston: Pauline Books. 268

⁹. Akbar, A. & Saeed, A. (2022). “The Emerging Trend of Theological Inclusivism in Contemporary Muslim Thought: Some Key Examples.” *Melbourne Asia Review*. Edition 10.
DOI: 10.37839/MAR2652-550X10.3

¹⁰. D’Arcy May, J. (2020). “Inter-religious Relations in Multicultural Australia.” *The Laity Speaks! We too*, (ed. Berise Heasley and John D’Arcy May). Bayswater Vic.: Coventry Press. 283

¹¹. *ibid.* 275

at establishing laws that would force Catholic schools to abandon their principles in the selection of staff and topics in the curriculum.

The weakness of the exclusivist position is the tendency to place boundaries around the generosity of God.¹² The strength of the exclusivist position is the acknowledgment that God communicates his truth to each particular tradition in a unique way. According to John D'Arcy May, former director of the Irish School of Ecumenics, "religious faiths are distinct in their essential content and [...] each demands by its nature a total commitment on the part of the person."¹³

This inviolability establishes the dignity not only of the tradition but also of its members. They have personally experienced the tradition. They have, therefore, an individual and unique value that cannot be replaced or ignored.¹⁴ We can learn from other faith traditions but we can never make them obsolete. Each person has something which is exclusively theirs.¹⁵

The different traditions are, therefore, essentially different. They cannot be reduced one to the other; they cannot be dismissed or assimilated; they cannot be condensed into one common denominator. This is puzzling; it is paradoxical. The paradox may be troubling at first but in fact it leads into the 'cloud of unknowing' where the all-transcending God is most fully known and adored. "The irreducibility of one experience to another means that the infinite is experienced more effectively."¹⁶

PLURALISM

The terms 'pluralism' and 'inclusivism' are used with very different meanings. Some scholars use the term pluralism to mean inclusivism and others vice versa. In this presentation I use the term 'pluralism' to mean the extreme opposite of exclusivism. Some Christian pluralists, for example, feel that by setting aside "inherited views about the uniqueness of Jesus [...] they may more readily appreciate truth within other religions."¹⁷ They "deny the traditional Christological assertions, preferring to recognise Jesus as one among many human messengers of God's truth. ..."¹⁸ This kind

¹². Faith and Order Commission (2005). *One Faith – Multifaith. A theological basis for interfaith gatherings*. Melbourne: Victorian Council of Churches. 8

¹³. op. cit. Dupuis, J. (2001), 6

¹⁴. Dupuche, J. (2020). *Publications*. San Bernardino, CA: Kindle Direct Publishing. Volume 3. 28

¹⁵. ibid. 29

¹⁶. ibid. 28

¹⁷. Rowe, K. (2000). *Living with the Neighbour who is Different: Christian Faith in a Multi-Religious World*. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press. 19

¹⁸. loc. cit.

Dupuche: Dialogue in Australia

of pluralism can be found in all traditions. Its weakness is that it seems to require faith traditions to give up their central and defining tenets. It can lead to the quip, “All religions are the same” or to a syncretism where people gather and mix ideas uncritically according to their whim and fancy. The strength of the pluralist position is its humble search for truth wherever it may be found.

The term ‘pluralist’ can have an altogether different meaning which many theologians today see as a sign of the

superabundant generosity with which God has manifested himself to humankind in manifold ways and to the pluriform response which, in diverse cultures, human beings have given to the divine self-disclosure.¹⁹

This diversity is found among religions but also in the diversity of cultures and family customs, of political systems and values. Indeed, in 2019, Pope Francis and Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, jointly declared that diversity is actually willed by God. Their document on *Human Fraternity* states "The pluralism and the diversity of religions, colour, sex, race and language are willed by God in his wisdom, through which he created human beings."²⁰

Australia, with a population of 26 million, is a diverse society. According to the census of 2021, 44% per cent identify as Christian and those who profess no religious allegiance amount to 39%. Some 3.2% class themselves as Muslim, 2.7% as Hindu, 2.4% as Buddhist, and 1.7 % as belonging to other religions. Yet statistics can be misleading.

While participating in the life of a religious group is ‘old-school’ for most teens, belief in God (or something) isn’t dead. ... about a quarter of Gen Z teens have no belief in God or a higher being (24%); slightly more than a third (37%) believe in God; and just less than a third believe in a higher being or life force instead of God (30%). A small proportion are not sure (9%). We see further evidence of this openness when it comes to spiritual, paranormal and supernatural belief among teens.²¹

¹⁹. op. cit. Dupuis, J. (2001). 386

²⁰. Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb (2019). *Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-02/pope-francis-uae-declaration-with-al-azhar-grand-imam.html> accessed 13th September 2022

²¹. Singleton, A., Rasmussen, M. L., Halafoff, A. & Bouma, G. D. (2019). *The AGZ Study: Project Report*. ANU. Deakin and Monash Universities. 6
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b0fd5e6710699c630b269b1/t/5d9d834cde6cc772c2bb34cd/1570603878669/AGZ+Report+FINAL.pdf> accessed 20th September 2022

This refers to the rise of the ‘spiritual but not religious’. At the same time, data also show that people in Australia are “more religious and spiritual [even though] in many ways less traditionally religious. ... There are fewer nominals,”²² namely those whose allegiance is superficial. The diversity of the Australian scene is shown to be even more complex by the fact that an increasing proportion of people have “hybridity and multiple identities.”²³ For example, some Australians would see themselves as both Jewish and Buddhist or both Christian and Hindu. Some will move between the various Christian denominations, from being Catholic to being Anglican and vice versa, for example. The scene is very fluid.

The Australian Constitution allows for this complexity since does not favour any particular religion. Indeed, the Constitution states “The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion.” For this reason, among many others, Australia is remarkable for its social harmony. There are no religious or cultural ghettos or classes. In fact, legislation has been enacted to prevent racial and religious discrimination. Furthermore, the Government provides ample resources in order to promote harmony and avoid sectarian strife.

The situation is not perfect, however. The treatment of the aborigines, the First Peoples of Australia, has been shameful. After failing to eliminate the aborigines altogether, the Government tried to assimilate them racially and obliterate them culturally. They were not even counted as citizens of Australia till a referendum in 1967, almost 200 years after European settlement. This is slowly changing. Now, at the start any significant meeting, the original inhabitants’ essential connection with the land is acknowledged, and tribute is paid to their elders past, present and emerging. But there is still a very long way to go to undo the centuries of exclusion. The issue of inter-religious dialogue with the First Peoples is more frequently raised as a result of increased awareness of the injuries done in the past and the dawning realisation of the value of the Aboriginal mentality. However, the fact that the deepest teachings of their spiritual tradition are reserved to the initiated males sets limits to the value of the dialogue.

²². Bouma, G. D. & Halafoff, A. “Australia’s Changing Religious Profile - Rising Nones and Pentecostals, Declining British Protestants in Superdiversity: Views from the 2016 Census.” *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion* 30.2 (2017). 139

²³. *ibid.* 140

Dupuche: Dialogue in Australia

In the past, the discrimination between races and faiths was open; it is now subtle. Muslims, for example, speak of the ‘glass ceiling’, the invisible barrier that prevents them from rising up the corporate and social ladder. Due to the media in part, Muslims are viewed with fear and suspicion. There is also an increasing anti-Semitism, while every Christian scandal is publicly emphasised.

INCLUSIVISM

K. P. Aleaz uses the term ‘pluralistic inclusivism’ to mean a perspective in inter-religious relation in which “all the religious resources of the world are considered as the common property of the whole humanity.”²⁴ The comments which follow sit within his overall aim without using his terminology. Inclusivism does not mean

mutual assimilation through a reduction of faith-content but that of interpenetration and cross-fertilization of the various traditions in their diversities; not a levelling of religious identities but a dialogical openness and mutual enrichment through conversation.²⁵

Ali Akbar and Abdullah Saeed note that among Muslim scholars “a trend of theological inclusivism is emerging which challenges theological exclusivism.”²⁶

Theological inclusivism is understood as a positive attitude towards other religions with regard to theological matters such as salvation in the Hereafter, the validity of other religions, and whether followers of religions other than Islam should be considered as believers rather than *kafirun* (unbelievers) or *mushrikun* (polytheists).²⁷ |

Inclusiveness presupposes a “spirituality of communion” which Pope John Paul II describes as “the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly but also as a ‘gift for me’.”²⁵ This ‘spirituality of communion’ invites all traditions “including both Judaism and Islam and even Hinduism and Buddhism as well as traditions such as Shintoism and Confucianism ... to confront their own

²⁴. Aleaz, K. P. (2009). *Indian Biblical Reflections and Other Essays*. Kolkata: Punthi Pustak. 254

²⁵. op. cit. Dupuis, J. (2001). 7

²⁶. op. cit. Akbar, A. & Saeed, A. (2022). 3

²⁷. ibid.

complicity in violence and oppression,”²⁸ a complicity which “is perhaps the major objection of our contemporaries to religion in any form.”²⁹

This ‘spirituality of communion’ will help undo the scandal of wars and rivalry between religions and enable ancient religious enemies to become

a powerful witness in the face of an increasingly secularized world. By emphasizing common values such as love of God and love of neighbour, [interreligious dialogue] seeks to promote cooperation and solidarity among people of faith in acting for social justice, moral values, peace and liberty in our society.³⁰

The inclusivist approach, I would propose, is well served by the method called ‘comparative theology,’ a method developed by the Frank Clooney³¹ who has been a frequent visitor to the Australian Catholic University. He defines comparative theology as “*acts of faith seeking understanding which are rooted in a particular faith tradition but which, from that foundation, venture into learning from one or more other faith traditions.*”³² Learning from other faith traditions is not an optional extra; it is a need. We need to be enlightened about our own light. For example, other faith traditions will show Christians how Jesus is indeed Lord. They will learn this in ways they have not understood in the past.

In my own case, if you will permit a personal recollection, I developed a deep interest in a Hindu tradition that arose in Kashmir a thousand years ago. Whenever I read a text from that tradition, even a word or phrase, a powerful reaction occurred in me, as though something welled up from the depths, and seemed to fill the universe. This led me to learn Sanskrit and to translate and comment on an important text from that tradition. This interest did not eliminate my Christian faith. On the contrary, I

²⁸. op. cit. D’Arcy May, J. (2020). 285

²⁹. ibid. 284

³⁰. *Promoting Interfaith Relations. Guidelines for the parishes and agencies of the Archdiocese of Melbourne to assist in the promotion of interfaith relations in general and especially in the preparation of interfaith gatherings.*

<https://www.cam1.org.au/Portals/66/documents/Promoting%20Interfaith%20Relations%20Second%20Edition%20single%20pages.pdf> accessed 20th September 2022

The first edition of these Guidelines was officially launched by Archbishop D. J. Hart in 2007. This revised edition was approved in 2009.

³¹. Frank Clooney is Parkman Professor of Divinity and Director of The Center for the Study of World Religions. Harvard University.

³². Clooney, F. X. (2010). *Comparative Theology; Deep Learning across Religious Borders*. Chichester UK: Wiley-Blackwell. 10

discovered aspects to which I had been blind. I have since written several books and many articles showing how Hindu thought reveals the richness of Christianity.

INCLUSIVISM AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

The number and variety of the forms of inter-religious dialogue in Australia is impressive. For that reason, among others, the Parliament of the World's Religions was held in Melbourne in 2009 with the theme "Make a World of Difference: Hearing Each Other, Healing the Earth". Among the many notable events at the Parliament was the Assembly of Indigenous Elders from around the world in dialogue with Australian Aboriginal Elders. The innumerable instances of inter-religious dialogue in Australia can be summed up in the four major areas of inter-religious dialogue.

The first of these is the dialogue of life, where people simply meet members of other faiths in the everyday, at work, at school, in the shops and in the streets. Their friendliness towards each other is an example of inclusivism. A second area of dialogue is joint action where adherents of different traditions cooperate "for the promotion of human development and liberation in all its forms."³³ A notable example of such joint action occurred in the context of vilification by the Catch the Fire Ministries, when the Catholic Church in Melbourne joined with the Uniting Church, a Protestant Church, in support of the Islamic Council of Victoria in their appeal to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. We joined together to help protect the good name of Islam. The appeal was successful.

Our action in supporting the Islamic Council of Victoria cohered with the directive of the Second Vatican Council, which "... exhorts [its members to] recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among [followers of other religions]." The three verbs 'recognize', 'preserve' and 'support' are historic. They require the Catholic Church to promote, for example, the teaching on submission that is central to Islam, or the teaching on detachment that is central to Buddhism. How can Catholics preserve Muslim practices such as wearing the hijab or praying five times a day?

The third form of inter-religious dialogue is the 'dialogue of discourse' where "members of [various] religions meet ... to exchange information on their respective religious beliefs and heritages."³⁴ In Melbourne we have had many joint conferences and symposia on topics, such as 'marriage,' 'mercy,' 'death and dying,' 'grace,'

³³. loc. cit.

³⁴. Arinze, F. (1998). *Sunday Examiner* (Hong Kong). 29th November
http://www.columban.ph/dialogue_Arinze.html accessed 10th September 2022

‘forgiveness,’ where Muslims and Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, Jews and Aborigines and others have shared their views. There have also been the ‘Abraham Conferences’ where Jews, Christians and Muslims, have broached subjects such as ‘the healing of memories: history and reconciliation’ and ‘creation in crisis’. There have also been pilgrimages, such as the ‘Joint Journey to Jerusalem’ when four Jews, four Christians and four Muslims travelled together to the sacred city. On this occasion, we visited our respective sacred sites, we shared meals, and discussed many crucial topics. At one point in this unusual pilgrimage, we confronted the slanders that the three traditions had directed at each other over the centuries. This frank acknowledgement and the regret of past errors led to a great sense of peace and relaxation among us.

A major requirement in the successful practice of interfaith dialogue in Australia has been to avoid being drawn into the disputes, whether religious and political, that tear other countries apart. In our shared journey to Jerusalem we specifically undertook never to discuss politics. That was not always easy. However, the question arises as to what these activities in fact achieve. Yes, we understand each other better, but is there any change in outlook. Do we remain sealed off from each other like grain silos? Have the conferences been what might be called ‘tea-cup’ interactions where “... one socialises, but one makes no concessions. Keeping one’s identity intact takes priority over all else.”³⁵ Are these ‘silos’ due to the fear of being misled into error or to the sense that other traditions really have nothing substantial to offer? Is there a hidden exclusivism in the outwardly polite exchange of views?

Comparative theology, I propose, is the best path for inclusivism. It does not mean being syncretistic by adopting ideas that are foreign to one’s tradition. It is a process of discovering one’s own tradition better by understanding another faith tradition. It is a question of light shedding light upon light, of enhancing one’s personal commitment by admiring the deep commitment of others. Comparative theology forms the background of the document *welcoming Each Other: Guidelines for Interfaith Education in the Schools of the Archdiocese of Melbourne*,³⁶ a document that was promulgated in 2019 by the Most Reverend Peter Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne. It is directed to the students of Catholic Schools in order to show them the value of other traditions and especially how they can discover their own faith better by appreciating another faith. This same approach is being used in the education of teachers of religion and of clergy. Faith traditions do not exist in the abstract; they

³⁵ op. cit. D’Arcy May, J. (2020). 267

³⁶ *Welcoming Each Other: Guidelines for Interfaith Education in the Schools of the Archdiocese of Melbourne*. Accessed 10th September from 2022 <https://www.cam.org.au/eic/Guidelines>

Dupuche: Dialogue in Australia

exist in their followers. The work of inclusivism is not primarily an intellectual exercise; it involves above all a relationship between living beings. Meeting always means, in some sense, entering into another person's spirit and inviting them to enter into one's own spirit. Otherwise there is no meeting but only a superficial encounter.

Perhaps the most significant issue in inclusivism is the fourth form of inter-religious dialogue, the 'dialogue of religious experience,' which "... refers to persons deeply rooted in their own religious traditions sharing experiences of meditation, prayer, contemplation, faith and its expression, ways of searching for God as the Absolute."³⁷ In Melbourne, tours are arranged whereby we visit temples and mosques and churches of different faiths. By entering these sacred sites, we experience something of the faith which lies at their heart. But the dialogue of religious experience raises a crucial question: can we pray together? The document, *Promoting Interfaith Relations*, states

In [interfaith...] gatherings, the sacred texts of each other's faith are heard with deep respect, acknowledging that in them, somehow, God has spoken. Even if we disagree with what is said, we can still hear God speaking through what may seem uncertain and imprecise, for we are all novices and beginners.³⁸

In keeping with this approach, in Melbourne, in the year 2000, the Year of the Great Jubilee of Jesus' birth, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim and Christian leaders gathered in the Roman Catholic Cathedral to listen with deep respect to the texts of each other's faiths. A similar event took place several years later, in 2011, in the Chapter House of the Anglican Cathedral. On these occasions we did not pray together but we gathered together for prayer. Since we could not "say the same prayer formulas together ... at least [we gathered] together in the profound and evocative silence which is attentive to the One who transcends all."³⁹

In this way we became involved in contemplation, recognizing the divine illumination in the other. We were taken beyond our own limited experience to the origin of every spiritual experience. This was inclusivism at its highest level. Encountering the other in the context of evocative silence goes beyond

³⁷. loc. cit.

³⁸. op. cit. *Promoting Interfaith Relations*.

³⁹. loc. cit.

a purely verbal exchange centred on the religious experiences of each person involved. It is a religious experience in itself in which relationship to the other is what prompts renewed relationship to the divine.⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

Faith traditions are living realities. For that reason, change is part of their very nature. A tree changes as it grows. The giant tree in the forest looks very different from the sapling it once was. Even the fully-grown tree puts out new branches every year. The only tree that does not change is a dead tree. Like trees, each faith tradition has its own specific character which needs to remain consistent. In this sense it is exclusivist. But if it adopts an extremist outlook, and remains rigidly fixed, it is dead. On the other hand, an extreme pluralist viewpoint will so alter the essence of a tradition that the tradition is destroyed, like a tree that is killed by a disease. The inclusivist approach developed by Francis Clooney enables the tradition to retain its specificity as well as to discover itself more fully. Living faith traditions are best found not in books on a shelf but in living human beings. Each person is like a tree. The question is, are we static and dead, or are we growing and discovering who we really are? ■

⁴⁰ ibid. See. Blée, F. (2011). *The Third Desert - The Story of Monastic Inter-religious Dialogue*. (trans. William Skudlarek with Mary Grady). Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press. 4