

Religious Peacebuilding: The Life and Work of Archbishop Raya as a Model for Religious Peacebuilding

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my father Eugene Sabada, a man a head of his time, who desired women to be educated. And to my mother Katherine Sabada, whose model has demonstrated to be the strength and courage of a woman forged on the anvil of persecution and injustice. Both my parents suffered greatly under the former totalitarian Soviet regime and through World War II. My mother, a former Nazi slave who came to Canada, and my father, were left with permanent scars. My prayer is that I have honoured them both. I also dedicate this work to Thomas, to our beloved children Oriana, Omelian, and Julian, their spouses, Padraic and Melanie, and our grandchildren, Rowan, Alastair, Niall, Poppy and joyfully anticipated Ms. Watt. Finally, I dedicate this book to all those who have suffered conflict around the world, especially children, to the peacemakers of this world, and to the flourishing of life on this wondrous planet. May the effort of this thesis be of benefit to the emergence of a genuine understanding of religious peacebuilding, between the world's nations and great religions, and may it foster in us a deep reverence toward one another.

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Abstract

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that the same religion that incites people to hideous acts of violence and destruction can also influence people to act in love, to work toward healing in all stages of conflict, and to offer hope in difficult situations. As Katrien Hertog argues in her major work, *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding*, religion has much to contribute to the work of peacebuilding. Unfortunately, as John Paul Lederach and Cynthia Sampson, leading scholars in religious peacebuilding, have pointed out, there are few case studies regarding the peacebuilding activities of religious actors, particularly those who demonstrate a “legitimate connection between spirituality and pragmatic international peacebuilding” (qtd. in Hertog 2010, 40).

This dissertation addresses that lack through an examination of the life and work of Joseph Raya, who demonstrated, throughout his life, the importance and effectiveness of a pastoral and prophetic approach (rooted in his Byzantine tradition) in building peace, even in deeply troubled areas of the world. Archbishop Raya can be a model for peacebuilding that is “simultaneously authentic to a religious tradition [Byzantine Christianity] and simultaneously accepting of other traditions” (Gopin 2000, 23). This might be an opportunity for scholarly reflection on one man’s spiritually inspired thought processes that appear to have led to practical pastoral peacebuilding.

Thus the research question that shapes this dissertation is “How can the life and teachings of Archbishop Joseph Raya serve as a model for a pastoral and prophetic love-based approach to religious peacebuilding?” My hypothesis is *that a practical theology*

for a pastoral and prophetic approach can be synthesized from Archbishop Raya's life, actions, and spirituality.

The most suitable method of research for this dissertation, with its ultimately practical goal of personal ministry, is qualitative research, specifically a narrative approach appropriate to exploring the life of an individual (Creswell 2004, 78). My organizing principle for this dissertation has been the narrative methodology of Thomas H. Groome which is expressed in five movements. In the first movement, "Naming/Expressing 'Present Praxis,'" participants name or express their own and/or society's present action typically around a generative theme (Groome 1998, 146). In this case, the present action is that of Joseph Marie Raya, presented in Chapter 2 as a condensed biography. Although I function here as secondary story-teller, shaping Raya's action into a chronological coherent whole, that narrative is partially based on Raya's own writings and oral story-telling, supplemented by primary sources and interviews with those who knew him.

The second movement of Groome's pedagogical method is a "Critical Reflection on Present Action" (Groome 1998, 147) or "The Participants' Stories and Visions" (Groome 1980, 211). In Chapter 3 of this dissertation, the reflection occurs through my own story of peacebuilding activity, before, during, and after interactions with Archbishop Raya. His continued role as my mentor had a lasting impact on my understanding of Eastern spirituality and religious peacebuilding. It is important for me, in my exploration of what peacebuilding entails in the context of Eastern Catholic Christianity, to examine the effect that Raya's example has had on me, even before I began to put both stories, Raya's and mine, into their larger context.

The task of the third movement, “The Christian Community Story and Vision” (Groome 1980, 214), is “Making accessible expressions of Christian Story and Vision as appropriate to the generative theme” (Groome 1998, 147). Chapter 4 of the dissertation discusses two contexts of importance for the story of Archbishop Raya: first, the larger context of the emergence of religious peacebuilding as documented by Hertog, and second, the more specific context of the historical development of peace theologies in Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Melkite Greek Catholic Church traditions.

Groome’s fourth movement, the “Dialectical Hermeneutic between the Story and the Participants’ Stories” (Groome 1980, 217), which invites “participants [to] place their critical understanding of present praxis around a generative theme . . . and in dialectical hermeneutics with Christian Story” (Groome 1998, 147), somewhat adapted, is the theoretical base for Chapter 5. Here I revisit the narrative developed in Chapter 2 and critically examine Archbishop Raya as an Eastern Catholic religious peacebuilder through the lens of Hertog’s theory of religious peacebuilding and in the specific situation of the previously identified Churches. That allows me to distill the characteristic elements of Raya’s unique pastoral and prophetic approach to the peacebuilding process and synthesize them into a model for religious peacebuilding. His core principles, based solidly in his Byzantine Catholic Christian tradition and theology, are all undergirded with an overarching love and respect for all people as God’s own beloved children. Out of that love arises 1) a keen awareness of the need for a strong identity and a strong community that are authentic; 2) a consistent emphasis on the need for justice, fueled by compassion for the vulnerable; 3) a strong call for forgiveness and reconciliation; 4) a vigorous effort to educate all people with the purpose of seeking

their fullest potential; and 5) a principled commitment to nonviolence. Archbishop Raya is a particularly effective model of these principles because he combined a joyous celebration of life and beauty with unstinting sacrifice; sources show that he did not seek to save his own life or his own dignity or his material possessions or even his hierarchical power. Chapter 5 also looks at inconsistencies and weaknesses in Raya's life, noting how those weaknesses impacted the effectiveness and the legacy of his peacebuilding ministry.

In Groome's pedagogical context, the fifth movement is a step toward response and change, first through reflecting on personal narratives and their larger contexts and then appropriating what has been learned through suitable actions. Thus Chapter 6 begins with a re-evaluation of my experience of religious peacebuilding, particularly in light of the effect that Archbishop Raya has had on me as a mentor and as an exemplar of principles of peacebuilding. Then I look ahead to the ways in which what I have learned from Archbishop Raya and from the study of the larger stories (the theory of religious peacebuilding and the peace theology of various relevant Churches) can be appropriated in my future peacebuilding endeavours. The final section of Chapter 6 returns to the hypothesis and concludes that the principles of peacebuilding that Archbishop Raya developed through his work and throughout his life can be followed as a guide to pastoral and prophetic religious peacebuilding. Raya can also be an authentic model of such peacebuilding, with two caveats: one is that Raya functioned as an ecclesiastical leader and thus had a degree of authority and influence not available to many lay peacebuilders; the second is that Raya's approach inherently includes flaws, but can still demonstrate a contribution to the field of religious peacebuilding. The story of

Archbishop Raya can be inspirational to religious leaders as well as those with more diverse callings, drawn to serve humanity as peacebuilders based on the foundation of their own particular religious teachings and traditions.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Methodology

Religion has been hailed in public discourse as a source of morality and stability and equally criticized as a cause of prejudice and conflict. As R. Scott Appleby, former Director of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame writes, it has left “a paradoxical legacy . . . in the ambivalent character of human responses to it” (2000, 19). In fact, “rather than a direct translation of the ‘mind of God’ into human action, religion is a far more ambiguous enterprise, containing within itself the authority to kill and to heal, to unleash savagery, or to bless humankind with healing and wholeness” (ibid., 29). From petty discriminations against those who are slightly different in their forms of religious worship or in interpretations of their sacred texts to acts of barbaric terrorism such as mass killings, “religious differences have often been a cause or pretext for war” (Jimmy Carter, qtd. in Johnston and Sampson 1994, vi). As a consequence of this reality, religion has lost credibility, and religious peacebuilding¹ models are conspicuously underdeveloped or absent.

Nevertheless, since 2000, the field of “religious peacebuilding” has emerged and grown. As Katrien Hertog, a peacebuilding researcher and author has observed,

¹ For the purposes of the thesis, peacebuilding will be used generically to include both peacemaking and peacebuilding terms. Politically speaking, peacemaking refers to the cessation of war. Theologically, peacemaking refers to bringing about good relationship, which according to Raya was based on the Christian understanding of love. Peacebuilding refers to bringing about institutional and structural change. The terms overlap.

awareness has risen in the field of peace research and conflict studies of the need to acknowledge the religious factor with an eye to better understand the role of religion in the dynamics of conflict and peace, as well as to integrate religious resources in the process of conflict prevention and transformation. (2010, 14)

As Appleby emphatically stated, “Modern religions have within their power the capacity to resist deadly violence and to do so in the name of the Holy” (2000, 79). If indeed modern religions have that “capacity” to resist violence, then what is needed is action done “in the name of the Holy,” action that may well challenge not just those who act violently, but also whatever systems encourage or fail to discourage continued conflict. It is not enough to talk about what religion has to offer. That offering must be embodied concretely and tangibly in “religious actors” who, as Appleby has observed, “offer irreplaceable and effective remedies to the ills that beset societies mired in social inequalities and vulnerable to systemic and random violence” (2000, 8). Unfortunately, as John Paul Lederach and Cynthia Sampson, leading scholars in religious peacebuilding have argued, there are few case studies regarding the peacebuilding activities of such religious actors, particularly those who demonstrate a “legitimate connection between spirituality and pragmatic international peacebuilding” (qtd. in Hertog 2010, 40). This dissertation will begin to address that void through a critical examination of the life and work of Raya. Rooted in his Byzantine Catholic tradition, Raya demonstrated, in several deeply troubled areas of the world, the importance and effectiveness of a pastoral and prophetic approach to building peace. Properly documented, Archbishop Raya’s work could make a significant contribution to the field of religious peacebuilding, particularly since, as Marc Gopin, former Director of the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, has pointed out, “there are very few models that have been

generated by the world's religions that are simultaneously authentic to a religious tradition and simultaneously accepting of other traditions" (Gopin 2000, 23). I believe Archbishop Joseph Raya is uniquely suitable as such a model, precisely because he was authentic to a Byzantine Catholic religious tradition while remaining very accepting of other faiths. He did much to enhance and share the beauty of his Melkite Greek Catholic Church, but encouraged others to affirm and grow confidently in their Judaic, Islamic, and other Christian faiths. Furthermore, Archbishop Raya's pastoral peace theology evolved in the midst of active work in ethnically diverse, multicultural, and sometimes secular societies in the United States, Israel, and Lebanon. In the context of various historically rooted conflicts, he functioned as a "religious actor."

To examine and understand the effectiveness of Raya's ministry, some aspects of the Byzantine Church² in which his ministry was rooted require explanation. From the beginning of his work as a priest, Raya faced conflict within his Church and a certain resistance within that Church to dealing with societal disputes outside the Church. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, "A Case Study in Religious Peacebuilding: Joseph Marie Raya," there were also tensions between Eastern and Western branches of Christianity. The roots of mistrust and division are almost as old as Christianity itself, and the discord continues in many places where Eastern and Western Church jurisdictions overlap. Eastern Christian Churches are often divided along national or ethnic lines (e.g.

² Archbishop Joseph Raya was an Eastern Catholic, a member of the Melkite Church. His spiritual tradition was Orthodox but he belonged to a segment of the Byzantine Church in union with Rome. The Melkite Greek Catholic Church developed its liturgical tradition within the Byzantine Rite. In full communion with the Holy See, it is one of the 23 particular churches numbered among the Eastern Catholic Churches. In Raya's view, "Orthodoxy means true teaching, true Faith, the Faith proclaimed by this Fourth Ecumenical Council, the Faith of Leo the Great, the Faith of the Catholic Church" (Raya 1969, 14).

Ukrainian and Russian) and have thus nursed historical hatreds and lived with intractable differences. These national Churches are often challenged with internal conflicts and associated societal discords. Many Eastern Churches have struggled under Islamic or communist rule. Consequently, inter-ecclesiastical and inter-religious conflicts within societies not only deepen divisions within the Christian communities,³ but also leave the disciples of Christ impotent and ineffective in addressing the challenges besetting them.⁴

Another aspect of Eastern Christianity that needs some clarification in regard to Raya's lifetime commitment to religious peacebuilding is the lack of a fully developed peace theology. Eastern Christianity is the mystical branch of Christianity (Smith 1991, 356), in which "[t]he aim of every life should be union with God—actual deification, by Grace, to the point of sharing the Divine Life; *theosis* is the Greek word for the doctrine that this sharing is possible" (ibid.). Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches focus on developing a deep personal relationship with God (ibid.), and therefore tend to foster a strong monastic tradition. At times, this apparent "withdrawal from society" results in the inadvertent lack of social engagement and uncritical support for the status quo,⁵ even

³ There are times when conflicts tear communities apart, but there are also the rarer instances when communities are brought together. The Melkites and Antiochene Orthodox, for example, actually concelebrate the Eucharist as a result of Islamic discrimination.

⁴ Under Stalin and Khrushchev, both Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches within the Soviet Union suffered horrendously. Tens of thousands of churches were closed, along with monasteries, theological seminaries, and religious academies. Members of the hierarchy, along with priests, nuns, and monks, were imprisoned on false charges, and often sent to Siberia. Millions of faithful were harassed and the Church went underground, yet as Kallistos Ware observes in *The Orthodox Church*, "The dimensions of the persecution passed largely unnoticed in the west, in particular because the Church authorities in Russia made no open protests. When speaking in the west in such forums as the World Council of Churches or the Prague Peace Conference, they pretended that all was 'normal' in Church-State relations" (1993, 157).

⁵ Kallistos Ware in *The Orthodox Church* writes that there is a "close identification of Orthodoxy with the life of the people, and in particular the system of national Churches, [which] has had unfortunate

a social passivity that encourages social disengagement, an absence of theology, praxis, and doctrine relating to the application of the Eastern Christian virtue of peace and love in justice. Orthodox theologian Fr. Stanley Harakas observes that “[t]here are few Orthodox writers who have dealt deeply and thoughtfully with these issues [peace and peace studies]. Still fewer, if any, have provided the theoretical underpinnings for a consistent and authentic Orthodox Christian Social Ethic” (qtd. in Bos and Forest 1999, 182). The Eastern Catholic Churches have not fared much better in the development or delivery of formal treatises on peace.

This lack of serious scholarly reflection on the role of Eastern Christian peacebuilding processes, followed by an absence of specific pastoral and prophetic peacebuilding models with Eastern Christian sensibilities, raises many questions that this study, with its focus on practical ministry, seeks to begin to answer. What theological sources can respond to the challenges? How did Raya use his pastoral and prophetic impulses and combine them with nonviolence? What can we propose as solutions? How does a religious peacemaker exposed to Byzantine traditions work nonviolently?⁶ What is the social meaning of the Christian virtue of love in justice related areas? How can a practical and effective peace theology, which can guide leaders of the clergy or laity, be developed? There is clearly a need for a pastoral, prophetic, and practical peace theology that can guide the leadership and faithful born into these Eastern Christian Churches. A

consequences. Because Church and nation were so closely associated, the Orthodox Slavs have often confused the two and have made the Church serve the ends of national politics” (Ware 1993, 77).

⁶ “Starting with Poland in the late 1980s, communist regimes in eastern Europe fell more as a result of nonviolent civilian mass uprisings than anything else” (Nojeim 2004, 294).

theological model needs to be constructed so religious leaders and the faithful can make a contribution to the area of love-based peacebuilding.⁷

Since the concept of “love-based peacebuilding” is crucial for this study—Archbishop Raya spoke consistently of divine love as motivation for and source of human love, insisting that love was the foundation of his actions, the theme of his entire priestly ministry, and the core of his peacebuilding work—it is important to clarify its meaning at the outset. Because “love” in the English language is used in so many contexts with so many shades of meaning, it can be difficult to use the word with precision. The Ancient Greeks defined no less than six different types of love: *eros*, or sexual passion; *philia*, or deep friendship (a variant of *philia*, sometimes called *storge*, specifically referred to the love between parents and their children); *ludus*, or playful love; *agape*, or love for everyone; *pragma*, or longstanding love; and *philautia*, or love of the self. *Agape* love is selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love, and it shows itself through actions born out of a deep concern for the well-being of others. *Agape* is ethics-based love. It is the love that Christ had for humanity. Anyone seriously committed to following Christ, who Himself commanded us to love others because God has loved us, will necessarily speak of *agape* love and live out *agape* love.

Various scholars and academics have made the concept of love an essential component in their discussions of peace. Fr. Stanley Harakas, for example, explains that “The Sermon on the Mount commandments of non-resistance to evil, the return of good for evil, the spirit of reconciliation and brotherhood underpin for the Fathers the

⁷ Vern Neufeld Redekop, Professor of Conflict Studies from St. Paul University, may have been among the first to present and develop the concepts of “blessing-based reconciliation” (2013) and “blessing-based love (agape)” (2014).

reference to, and the understanding of, peace” (Harakas in Bos and Forrest 1999, 185). For the patristic fathers, it seemed obvious that “inner peace should express itself in outward behaviours and external relationships, as a function of the proper relationship with God, and the control of the passions, as well as love and forgiveness” (Harakas in Bos and Forrest 1999, 186). Although Harakas acknowledges that the “striving for peace among men, of course, is not unconnected with the other virtues, such as justice and righteousness,” he emphasizes that “in particular, . . . it is intimately related with the chief of the Christian virtues, love” (ibid).

Marc Gopin likewise connects love with peace traditions, pointing out that the majority of religious peacebuilders speak consistently of love and associated virtues:

There is a tremendous embrace of the heart among these spiritual peacemakers, an embrace of very positive emotions, and of emotional honesty, as the key links to strangers. Friendship, love, empathy with pain, suffering with those who suffer – these are the key emotional bonds that seem to be the engine of the peacemakers’ journey into the world of others. (Gopin, 2012, p. 185)

Gopin could have been describing Raya’s own habitual stance in relation to his parishioners and to both sides of whatever conflict he became involved in.

This, then, is the work of this dissertation under its guiding research question: How can the life and teachings of Archbishop Joseph Raya serve as a model for a pastoral and prophetic approach to religious peacebuilding? The research rests on the hypothesis *that a practical theology for a pastoral and prophetic approach can be synthesized from Archbishop Raya’s life, actions, and spirituality*. To identify knowledge that can be broadly applied and particularly useful to others who wish to live and work as peacebuilders, Raya’s life and work is critically examined from the perspective of Hertog’s synthesis of religious peacebuilding scholarship and situated within the

theology and practice of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. The impact of his ministry and his role as religious peacebuilder is studied in the contexts of Birmingham, Israel, and Lebanon.

Qualitative Research and Narrative Methodology

This section provides an overview of and rationale for the use of qualitative research, most specifically a narrative methodology, in the realm of practical theology. The use of Thomas H. Groome's shared Christian praxis has been recognized as suitable for the hermeneutical analysis of Raya and his work. Katrien Hertog's observations and insights provide structure and a framework for a more detailed analysis of the actions of this religious peacebuilder.

The final portions of this chapter will discuss the issues of sources, quality and reliability of the data, and the steps taken to recognize and avoid potential bias.

Rationale

Swinton and Mowat have observed that it is the interface of practical theology and qualitative research methods that can facilitate a better understanding of complex realities. This combination lends itself to a study of peacebuilding in conflict-ridden societies, as it has provided the tools for scholarly research (2008, 28). Moreover, narrative methodology, as one dimension of practical theology, utilizes qualitative methods. As Ganzevoort (2011) points out, narratives "have always been part of theological reflection on religious practice" (218), and it is thus not surprising that

“many practical theologians show a preference for qualitative, biographical research” (219).

Since the goal of my research is ultimately practical—to shape my personal ministry and to inspire others in their own peacebuilding ministries—I have chosen a qualitative research method for my dissertation. Qualitative research is defined as “multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln, qtd. in Swinton and Mowat 2006, 29).

This definition of qualitative research might be explained through an analogy of a detective story without a specific ending (Swinton and Mowat 2006, 30). Researchers can engage any one of several different approaches,⁸ including the narrative method: to carefully and painstakingly explore the details of a situation; to compile, interpret and present the evidence fairly; to eventually facilitate a fair judgement of what is truthful and what is not. But there should be no attempt to “solve the case,” or resolve a specific problem. The researcher must be careful to search out, recognize, appreciate, and share the many stories inherent in an often complex issue. Caution must be exercised to recognize the unexpected in order to see things in plausible but sometimes challenging new ways. The researcher’s goal is to document and present the incidents and stories that individually and collectively contain enough truth for readers to gain an accurate interpretation and insights into at least one of many perspectives inherent in the

⁸ According to Swinton and Mowat, empirical, political, sociological, pastoral, and gender-oriented perspectives are other possible perspectives within the field of qualitative research.

situation. The knowledge gained in this process can then be practically applied to other similar real world challenges through an adjustment in behaviour.

Within the qualitative research tradition, much is being written about emerging phenomena of narrative inquiry (Moen 2006, 56-57). In her analysis of narrative methodologies, Moen contends that documented literature on narrative inquiry procedures is less specific than the research methods and procedures associated with “case studies, biographies, phenomenological studies, grounded theory studies, and ethnographic studies” (ibid., 61). Creswell confirms that authors of narrative research tend to resist formal structure and specific writing strategies (Creswell 2007, 183). Flexibility and experimentation in structure is often required to emphasize the core elements presented in the narrative study (ibid.). Based on this argument, there can be as much legitimacy in the dissertation that presents a chronological narrative as in the classical approach of thesis writing (ibid.).⁹ Moreover, the narrative approach is appropriate to exploring the life of an individual (Creswell 2007, 78).

Narrative research is a hermeneutic process. The interpretation process starts immediately with the selection of a single story out of perhaps a number of possible episodes. Interpretation continues throughout the entire research process during which the researcher collaborates with the research subject. And the interpretation process does not necessarily end with the finished narrative research report, as the final document is often just the first step in a wide range of interpretative possibilities taken on by others who gain access to the report (Moen 2006, 62).

⁹ Classic approaches to thesis presentations include an introduction, literature review, and methodology.

For my particular narrative research project, Groome's methodology has demonstrated itself to be compatible with Christian issues. There also appear to be a significant number of similarities between Groome's background and beliefs and those of my research subject and myself. Groome, Raya, and I share a Catholic upbringing and practice of faith. We all believe(d) that people need to be raised and grounded in their own faith traditions, but in a manner that embraces interreligious understanding and respect for others (Groome 2011, 11). Faith must be integrated into all levels of life—head, heart, and hands (ibid., 13).

Groome's awareness of and openness to the Eastern Catholic tradition of *theosis*—"God became human so that humans could become more like God" (ibid., 129)¹⁰—was perceived as relevant and as an encouraging sign of potentially compatible thinking. Acceptance of St. Athanasius' thought, which places more emphasis on discovering the beauty and joy of our human potential and less on original sin and human sinfulness (ibid., 131), is crucial for this study of Archbishop Raya.

Groome observed that there is a responsibility to implement good works (ibid., 135) and act upon our social responsibility for justice in society (ibid., 136):

. . . there has been a profound deepening of awareness that calls Christians beyond the works of charity, without leaving them behind, to the works of justice as well. It is not enough simply to feed hungry people. Christians must both question and change the structures that cause people to be hungry in the first place as well as empower them to feed themselves. (ibid.)

Furthermore, Groome perceived his "life to Faith to life" approach as contemporary, natural, holistic, and flexible (ibid., 5) and applied it in various classroom settings, from

¹⁰ Groome's summary of St. Athanasius of Alexandria could be argued as imprecise and perhaps even offensive. Athanasius himself said, theosis is "becoming by grace what God is by nature." In other words, we become gods by grace and not like God.

kindergarten to the doctoral level (ibid., 6). As Neville Clement observed, “His praxis construct is designed to occasion the intersection of narrative and action to empower renewed action consciously and deliberately chosen” (Clement 2007, 2).

Thomas H. Groome’s narrative methodology is well known and time tested. Because his methodology facilitates critical reflection on one’s own ministry, his work is used in the context of pastoral theology.¹¹ With common convictions and apparent compatibility, I felt a particular resonance with Groome and thus chose his hermeneutical approach as the overarching meta-theology for my work.

Groome’s Methodology

Groome offered the following description of his methodology:

Shared Christian Praxis is a participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their sociocultural reality, have access together to Christian Story/Vision, and personally appropriate it in community with the creative intent of renewed praxis in Christian faith toward God’s reign for all creation. (1998, 135)

Groome’s methodology proceeds through the following five movements:

1. Expressing the theme in present praxis,
2. Reflecting critically on the life or faith theme,
3. Re-presenting the Christian Story and Vision with meaning and persuasion,
4. Appropriating the truths and wisdom of Christian faith into life, and
5. Making decisions in light of Christian faith (Groome 2011, 303).

Groome’s model of “shared Christian Praxis” was developed in the context of Christian education and presumes one or more participants engaged in reflective and

¹¹ Thomas H. Groome is a leading contemporary religious educator and professor of Theology and Religious Education at Boston College. His methodology and work have been reviewed by many scholars in several disciplines, and have been adapted and applied in numerous contexts, both academic and ecclesiastical. Groome’s work has been acknowledged in 71 dissertations, and the ATLA Religion Database lists 41 citations.

interpretive story-telling for the pedagogical purpose of renewing Christian praxis (Groome 1998, 135). Through critical reflection on present engagement in the world, or present praxis, and on the Christian Story/Vision, participants in the guided “dialectical hermeneutic” (Groome 1998, 145) are encouraged to respond in a new and more life-giving way, which is more authentic to the Gospel story. In Groome’s terms, the Christian Story is “more than a narrative of the faith tradition”; it “symbolizes the living tradition of the Christian community before us and around us as it takes historical expression,” and includes all the various ways that the Story is told and enacted (1998, 139). The Vision is “ultimately the reign of God—the ongoing coming to fulfillment of God’s intentions for humankind, history, and all creation” (1998, 139). The result of reflection and ongoing dialectical interpretation of one’s own story with the Christian Story/Vision will, hopefully, move the participants to deeper understanding and to a strengthened commitment to the Christian faith. Because such a process, which Groome divides into five distinct movements, is essentially pedagogical and interactive, these five movements can also serve, with some adaptation, as an organizing framework for a scholarly examination of the life and work of Archbishop Raya as a case study of prophetic and pastoral peacebuilding.

The first movement, “Naming/Expressing ‘Present Praxis’,” encourages participants to name or express their own and/or society’s present action typically around a generative theme (Groome 1998, 146). In my study, the present action is Raya’s life and work, expressed in writing and focused on the theme of peacebuilding. At this point, the expression of the present action is not yet in dialogue with any theory, but the personal story-telling itself is the beginning of understanding and making meaning (Groome

1980, 210). Although I function here as the story-teller, shaping Raya's story into a chronological coherent whole, that story integrates Raya's own writings, his oral storytelling, and information gleaned from numerous other sources. It begins with his formative years and continues through his years of service as priest in Cairo, Egypt, and Birmingham, Alabama, then as Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, and all Galilee, and as religious leader in Lebanon. His retirement years include considerable influence in peacebuilding and deserve inclusion as well. Raya's condensed biography will be presented as Chapter 2 of the dissertation. This is ultimately a critical narrative in that it is shaped by the theme of peacebuilding, highlighting the significant dynamics in the development of his peacebuilding approach and the manner in which this was applied to the different contexts in which he lived and worked.

The next movement of Groome's pedagogical method is a "Critical Reflection on Present Action" (Groome 1998, 147) or "The Participants' Stories and Visions" (Groome 1980, 211). In Groome's words, this action "enables participants to come to a critical appropriation of present praxis in their 'place' and 'time' and, metaphorically, to share in dialogue their own 'stories' and 'visions'" (Groome 1998, 147). By engaging reason, memory, and imagination as they look more carefully at their own biography (Groome 2011, 313), participants are invited "to go below the obvious, to become aware of its sources, the genesis of present action" (Groome 1980, 211). Remembering those "sources" will include an awareness of how their "'memberships'—in different groups and situations—" have influenced their own praxis (Groome 2011, 313), and will provoke questions about "personal/social sources of and reasons for present praxis" and even invite imaginative speculation about what could be or should be done to achieve

other possible consequences (Groome 1998, 188; 2011, 314). Such an engagement of the imagination “encourages participants to recognize their best hopes in connection with the considered theme [in this case, religious peacebuilding] and what they might do to achieve them” (Groome 2011, 314). As participants reflect on their “individual knowing,” what is often released are repressed feelings and emotions (Groome 1980, 211). According to Groome, this movement “seems to be the most difficult and painful movement of the whole process” (Groome 1980, 213) because it “involves reconstruction which may be painful” (Dewey, qtd. in Groome 1980, 213). In this dissertation, the reflection occurs through my own story of peacebuilding activity because my interactions with Archbishop Raya had an impact on my understanding of the Byzantine tradition and religious peacebuilding. I have, although to a lesser extent than Raya, been involved in inter-religious or intra-religious conflicts through my work in the Eastern and Western Churches, at the University of Saskatchewan, and in various international endeavours. It was important for me, in my exploration of what peacebuilding entails in the context of Byzantine Christianity, to examine both the effect that Raya as a personal exemplar had on me and to use the emerging categories of analysis from his narrative to reflect critically on my own peacebuilding ministry.

The primary task of Groome’s third movement, “The Christian Community Story and Vision” (Groome 1980, 214), is to make “accessible expressions of Christian Story and Vision as appropriate to the generative theme” (Groome 1998, 147). Once participants have shared and begun to interpret the “text” and context of their lives, those stories are brought into the larger context of the “Story/Vision of their faith community as it pertains to . . . the focused theme” (Groome 1998, 215). They are invited to

examine the tradition of the Christian communities, including its scriptures, liturgies, and other texts, throughout history and in the present moment (Groome 1998, 147). In other words, it is the catechetical movement in which the Christian Tradition is made manifest so that the story is “made present in the context of their lived experience and, second, [participants are] enabled to take it to themselves and accept responsibility for their response to it” (Groome 1980, 217). Chapter 4 of the dissertation therefore discusses two contexts of importance for the story of Archbishop Raya: first, the larger context of the emergence of religious peacebuilding, and secondly, the more specific context of the historical tradition of peace in Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Melkite Greek Catholic Churches and the continuing lack of development of an incipient peace theology. This chapter is not yet the full reflective interaction between the personal stories and the relevant aspects of Christian Story/Vision; that can occur only after the larger stories have been made accessible.

In Groome’s fourth movement, the “Dialectical Hermeneutic between the Story and the Participants’ Stories” (Groome 1980, 217), the “participants place their critical understanding of present praxis around a generative theme . . . and in dialectical hermeneutics with Christian Story” (Groome 1998, 147). In other words, reflection now can “enable participants to appropriate the community Story/Vision to their own lives and contexts, to know it for themselves through judgment, and thus to make it their own as agent-subjects in the larger Christian community and in the world” (Groome 1998, 249). Because Groome’s methodology has been adapted here for the specific format and purpose of a dissertation, it revisits the narrative developed in the first movement and critically examines Archbishop Raya as an Eastern Catholic Christian religious

peacebuilder generally, and in the specific context of his Melkite Greek Catholic Church. I discuss the theological resources of Raya's pastoral and prophetic approach to the peacebuilding process.

In Groome's pedagogical model, the fifth movement is the final step toward response and change. Having examined their stories reflectively and having been critically informed of relevant aspects of the larger Christian Story and Vision, participants are now offered "an explicit opportunity for making decisions about how to live Christian faith in the world" (Groome 1998, 266). This movement therefore "gives participants explicit opportunity to make particular praxis like decisions but aims also to form them in the habit of making decisions conceptually and morally appropriate to Christian faith" (Groome 1998, 267). Thus, in Chapter 6, I return to my own narrative, informed now by the Christian Story and Vision examined in Chapter 4 and by the critical evaluation, in Chapter 5, of Raya's work as a religious peacebuilder. Having the principles of peacebuilding in mind that Raya lived out, and remembering the impact of his mentorship and exemplar on my own calling to religious peacebuilding, I will conclude with a focus on "future action that will be an appropriate response to the Vision" (Groome 1980, 220).

Theory of Religious Peacebuilding

At the inception of this dissertation, it was necessary to become familiar with the work of contributors in the field of religious peacebuilding, specifically the following: Scott Appleby, Marc Gopin, John Paul Lederach, Mohammed Abu-Miner, and Katrien Hertog. Of these, Katrien Hertog offered the most useful analysis, for my purposes, of

religious peacebuilding. However, before developing the rationale for that choice, I need to acknowledge the foundational work of the above listed individuals.

Summary of Work of Major Contributors

Scott Appleby

His book *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*, published in 2000, is a pioneering work in the field of religious peacebuilding. In it, he explored the ambiguity and diversity of responses to conflicts rationalized by religion and those searching for the sacred. Appleby noted that religion, in its struggle against injustice, could become a cause for violence and terrorism as readily as a force for peace. A practicing Christian, Appleby has been a professor of history and faculty member at Notre Dame since 1994, and a scholar of global religion. He served as the Director of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies from 2000-2014, and is currently involved in a multi-year project focussed on examining the interaction among Catholic, Muslim, and secular forces as co-director of *Contending Modernities*.

Marc Gopin

Another foundational document in the emerging field of religious peacebuilding, also published in 2000, is Marc Gopin's *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence and Peacemaking*. Gopin was particularly interested in the role that religion and culture play in igniting conflicts and serving as catalysts in reaching lasting resolution between peoples and nations. With the insights of his Jewish heritage, he has actively engaged in diplomatic discussions with religious, political, and

military officials on both sides of the Arab/Israeli conflict. Marc Gopin is a member of the faculty at George Mason University and Director of the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution.

John Paul Lederach

A practicing Christian, John Paul Lederach worked together with Cynthia Sampson to edit *From the Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding*, also published in 2000. Influenced by practical experience as a mediator and negotiator, Lederach's theories of conflict resolution have long been influential in the fields of peace studies, international relations and conflict transformation. He is currently Professor of International Peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame and the Distinguished Scholar at Eastern Mennonite University. He became the founding director for the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in 1994.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer

Abu-Nimer's seminal work, *Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam*, was published in 2003, later than the above mentioned works. It includes examples of peacebuilding and nonviolence and examines them through the lens of the Islamic tradition and study of the Quran. Dr. Abu-Nimer is based at American University where he serves as Director of the Peacebuilding and Development Institute and the Director of the Conflict Resolution Skills Institute. Abu-Nimer is also the Founder and Director of the Salam: Peacebuilding and Justice Institute in Washington, DC, a nonprofit

organization for research, education, and practice on issues related to conflict resolution, nonviolence, human rights and development with a focus on bridging differences between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The Salam Institute has extensive experience directing projects focused on interfaith and intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, sustainable development, and conflict resolution.

Katrien Hertog

Katrien Hertog published a paper, “The Russian Orthodox Church in Russia and Europe” in 2008, followed by her better known book, *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding: Conceptual Contributions and Critical Analysis* in 2010. This book analyses the evolution of religious peacebuilding, identifies some of the contributors to the field,¹² expands the concept of sustainable religious peacebuilding, and demonstrates her ideas with a case study of the Russian Orthodox Church. Hertog currently serves as the Director of Peacebuilding Programs for the International Association for Human Values in London, England.

Although Hertog’s work is the most recent of the identified contributors, and still lesser known in the field, I chose *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding* as my

¹² Included in her list of described contributors were (with my notes on religious affiliation) Scott Appleby (Christianity), Marc Gopin (Judaism), John Paul Lederach (Mennonite), Mohammed Abu-Nimer (Islam), Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (Mennonite). Other identified contributors included Harold Coward, Gordon S. Smith, Eva Neumaier (Buddhism), Rajmohan Gandhi (Hinduism), Swami Agnivesh (Arya Samaj – orthodox Hinduism), George Baum, Harold Wells, Yehezkel Landau, David Little, Joseph Montville, Didier Pollefeyt, Johan Galtung, Robert J. Schreiter, Adam Curle (Quaker), Dalai Lama (Tibetan Buddhism), Thich Nhat Hanh (Buddhism), Hohn McConnell (Buddhism), Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Mahatma Gandhi.

primary theoretical base through which to examine Archbishop Raya as a religious peacebuilder. The following section will offer a more detailed rationale for that decision.

Rationale for Hertog as Primary Theorist

Hertog's *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding* is significant in that she names and defines Religious Peacebuilding as a separate field of study. She documents the history, identifies the key players, and synthesizes the key features of this field. Thus, her work is ideally suited to be a benchmark document to serve as a heuristic basis to identify characteristics of religious peacebuilders in order to engage in a dialogical interaction with the narrative case study of Raya.

Hertog suggests that the publication of Appleby's *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* and Gopin's *Between Eden and Armageddon* in 2000 marked the beginning of religious peacebuilding as an academic field (Hertog 2010, 1). International recognition for religious peacebuilding at a practical level was also enhanced through the creation of the World Council of Religious Leaders following the Millennium World Peace Summit at the United Nations in August 2000 (ibid., 3). In contrast to many studies, which concluded that religion was a factor contributing to conflict, several scholars deliberately began to evaluate its potential for peace and demonstrated contributions of religion to peacebuilding and conflict resolution (ibid., 11). "Nonviolent struggles for justice, negotiations with state authorities about societal problems, or dialogue with representatives of other religions and cultures" (ibid.) all serve as positive examples of religious involvement.

Hertog contends that the field of religious peacebuilding is still heterogeneous in its framework, character, and tradition because of its recent emergence as an academic discipline and because of the variation in background and disciplines of its authors (ibid., 18). For this reason, she began her own work with an extensive review of the contributions of many of the more prominent religious peacebuilders. She noted that, while various authors provided compelling examples of individuals and institutions that successfully applied the resources of their faiths to challenges of conflict, violence and terrorism, their connections between religion and peace were little more than rhetoric (ibid., 127). Her concern was that “rarely is the contribution of religion to peace thoroughly studied in its complexity or analyzed in terms of the concrete religious resources for peace, the factors enhancing or hindering the realization of this potential, and the ways of strengthening the resources” (ibid.). In response to this perceived shortcoming, Hertog dedicated Chapter 3 of *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding* to the introduction of a new tool, a “screening model” to analyze the peacebuilding potential and weaknesses of her subject. In Chapter 4 of this dissertation, I will provide a synopsis of her framework for religious peacebuilding.

She published *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding* a mere three years after completing her doctoral studies. In spite of her “newness,” Marc Gopin lauded her work with the following description, “I can think of few young scholars who can match Dr. Katrien Hertog in managing to not only master the emerging field of religious peacebuilding, but also advance the field by mapping a new method of systematic case-study analysis. This is what our field needs today, on a global scale” (qtd. in Hertog 2010, ix).

In summary, Hertog's work is significant¹³ in that she presents a critical analysis of the emergence of the field of religious peacebuilding, and its current trends. As David Montgomery observes, "The most notable strength of the book is its overview of existing literature on religious peacebuilding from the perspective of someone engaged in such activities, of someone working within the system of peacebuilding programs" (2012, 3). Montgomery also points out, however, that despite the careful literature review and the detailed theoretical framework that Hertog contributes to the discussion of religious peacebuilding, "there remains the belief that what makes for a lasting impact is not so much the institutionalization of religious peacebuilding as the need to change individuals, a change seen to be influenced by individual actors rather than institutions" (ibid., 2). While Montgomery may see that as a weakness in Hertog's work, his observation that "the sustainability of such an approach [Hertog's framework] rests on individuals in conflict environments with the moral courage to risk what most others are unwilling to risk" (ibid.) seems particularly apropos for a discussion of the life of Archbishop Raya. Another review of *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding* similarly lauds Hertog's thorough literature review and her "conceptual framework for religious peacebuilding" but points out that Hertog's application of her framework in a case study of the Russian Orthodox Church actually "highlights all the obstacles to

¹³ Hertog's work has recently been referenced in two Master's theses by Erica Bowler and Peni Connolly, and seven articles on peacebuilding. And David W Montgomery has published a particularly insightful review of *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding* in 2012. *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding* has also been identified as a source of information by the Harvard Divinity School – Religions and the Practice of Peace. See <http://rpp.hds.harvard.edu/resources/bibliography>

making substantial contributions to peacebuilding inherent in religious organizations” (Steen-Johnson 2011). That observation likewise will be relevant in my subsequent analysis of Raya’s relationship with his Church.

Although I would also point out that Hertog fails to provide a focussed definition of religion¹⁴—it could include everything from primitive faiths to witchcraft to Buddhism to the Abrahamic faiths to Scientology—or to clarify which forms of belief are relevant to her analysis, her work nevertheless presents a focused and manageable set of criteria around religious peacebuilding to serve heuristically in a critical reflection on Raya’s life. Her framework is useful in establishing the significance of Raya’s work—both in ways that corroborate her framework and in the identification of principles and possibilities beyond her stated observations.

It is a significant confluence of religious backgrounds that Groome, Hertog, Raya, and I shared varying degrees of exposure to both Catholic and Orthodox traditions.¹⁵ At the very least, we shared a similar religious vocabulary. I perceived this as a potentially huge asset in this dissertation and looked forward to exploring the implications. I also anticipated that Hertog’s screening model and her case-study of the Russian Orthodox Church might have merit in the context and evaluation of Groom’s third movement, “The Christian Community Story and Vision.” Her work provided an opportunity for

¹⁴ It is beyond the parameters of this thesis to define religion; likewise, this focus is not generalizing about how religious peacebuilding might work in all religious contexts. Rather it explores how Raya is an exemplar within a particular religious tradition. As such, this analysis could be applied *mutatis mutandis* within other traditions.

¹⁵ Hertog received an MA in East European Languages and Cultures and her PhD in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution from the Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium. KULervén is the oldest extant Catholic University in the world and “fulfills its mission by providing high-quality interdisciplinary research and education with a Catholic signature.” (<http://www.kuleuven.be/about/history-of-ku-leuven> and <http://www.kuleuven.be/about/>)

examining the theoretical and practical peacebuilding views of an Orthodox Church. Moreover, it offered the potential for a practical comparison of a personal approach to peacebuilding to that of an institution, and perhaps also the resources of a small Byzantine Catholic Church to those of a large Orthodox Church, as well as the obstacles faced by each.

Research Sources

One of the primary challenges of narrative research was the need to gather substantial and balanced material about an individual's life (Creswell 2007, 57). There was a dearth of academic writing about Raya; few published resources existed and none formally explored the issue of peacebuilding. Hence, a structured classical study was out of the question. I needed to embrace a flexible narrative approach. Although dialogue between the research subject and researcher is a common form of collaboration, contemporary researchers stated that data collection methods could expand beyond simple dialogics. Data could be collected in the form of field notes, journal records, interviews, observations, storytelling, letter writing, autobiographical writing, newsletters, photographs, and video recordings (Moen 2006, 61). Consistent with this approach was the collection of other private and public documents including diaries, newspaper and magazine articles, audio recordings (Creswell 2007, 121 & 129), and emails.

Specifics

Since no extensive biography has yet been compiled about Raya, my research was expanded to include the following: formal interviews with Raya; field notes based on my personal experiences with him; interviews with people who knew him (including some

in situations of personal and ecclesiastical conflicts); Raya's books; Raya's personal and official writings; a considerable volume of media reports and articles; various letters and photographs provided by his friends and acquaintances; and recorded interviews. My work was made easier by the Archbishop's direct and willing cooperation. When, in 2002, I asked Archbishop Raya for permission to base my dissertation on his work in nonviolence, he responded, "Absolutely, absolutely! You have my okay and my contribution."¹⁶ To facilitate my interviews and research, Archbishop Raya provided written authorization for access to his letters, files, photographs, writings, tapes, newspaper articles, and publications. At the same time, he granted permission for me to reproduce his writings in any work I chose to publish.¹⁷ With Raya's full permission for access to all relevant materials and his endorsement of my proposed project, I started to compile existing documents and to advance a program of interviews with Raya, key witnesses regarding his nonviolent actions in Israel, friends, relations, and a circle of his peers and contemporaries.

Most of my research materials were compiled between 2001 and 2007, but data was collected from 1991 to 2016. My collection of primary source material was initiated in March 1991, when I first met him. I subsequently documented our meetings at various conferences in Western Canada, visits with members of his immediate family in California, a visit to his former eparchy¹⁸ in Israel, and numerous visits to Madonna

¹⁶ Archbishop Joseph Raya, telephone conversation with author, February 18, 2002.

¹⁷ Archbishop Joseph Raya, two letters of authorization, August 15, 2004,

¹⁸ The term "eparchy" is derived from the Greek word *ἐπαρχία*, which Eastern Christian Churches typically use to denote a province, prefecture, or territory. The term "diocese," on the other hand, is derived from the Greek term *διοίκησις* meaning "administration," in reference to a territorial unit of administration. When used in an ecclesiastical sense, the Eastern Churches typically favour the use of the term "eparchy" while Western Church typically favours the use of the term "diocese."

House in Combermere, Ontario. Over the course of fifteen years, 1991 to 2005 inclusive, I spent approximately 110 days with him. I recorded his activities and stories, along with my observations and impressions in personal field notes.

When my husband and I travelled to Israel with him and various members of the Madonna House community, I observed firsthand the impact Archbishop Raya had and still has on the people of his former eparchy. During this research period, I also travelled to Combermere, Ontario; Birmingham and Mobile, Alabama; and Boston, Massachusetts, to meet with his acquaintances, friends, former parishioners, clergy, and members of the Melkite hierarchy. These visits yielded copies of forty relevant letters written by Raya, hundreds of photographs, VHS tapes, CDs, homilies, Raya's own reflections, narratives documenting his role in the March on Washington with Martin Luther King, Jr. and several Bishopric reports written to the Melkite Synod. Raya and I exchanged letters, emails and phone calls. He was formally interviewed by Father Ron Cafeo and myself on multiple occasions between 2002 and 2004. These discussions encompassed all aspects of his life from his birth to his last stages of life, his successes and failures, and his work in peacebuilding. I have also consulted every book he authored.

Based on his published works Raya was familiar with both terms. In spite of Byzantine Christian roots, and many conscious efforts to eliminate Latin influences within his own parishes and the Melkite Church, Raya seemed to favour the use of the term "diocese" rather than "eparchy" when referring to Melkite Sees. Conceding the use of the term "diocese," Raya might more accurately have used the variant "archdiocese" in reference to the See of Acre, Haifa, and all Galilee, as an archdiocese is more significant than a diocese by virtue of its size or historical significance, and is presided over by an archbishop.

Reflecting the approach adopted by Raya, this dissertation uses the terms "eparchy" and "diocese" equally and interchangeably for Melkite territories. The term "diocese" is used for references to Roman Catholic jurisdictions.

The secondary sources used in my account of Raya's life have been obtained from Madonna House archives in Combermere, Ontario, and from archival material housed in the centers in which Raya spent a substantial amount of time. These sources are outlined in more detail below and listed in Appendix 7.

The Madonna House Archives in Combermere provided copies of newspapers and magazine articles from the *Ha'aretz* newspaper in Israel, *The Gazette* newspaper from Montreal, *The Christian Century*, *Boston Pilot*, *Ave Maria National Catholic* weekly, the *Canadian Churchman*, the *Heritage Newspaper*, the *Jerusalem Post*, the *National Catholic Reporter*, *Time Magazine*, *Post-Herald Religion*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Herald Tribune*, *Byzantine Catholic World*, *Christian News from Israel*, *The Catholic Herald Citizen*, *The Jewish Press*, *Yediot Ahronot* (an Israeli newspaper), *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Restoration* (Madonna House newspaper), and the *Northeast Ohio Committee on Middle East Understanding, Inc.* Other documents included the *Message of Galilee*, a regularly published spiritual letter written by Archbishop Raya to the faithful of his diocese; Madonna House internal records in Israel and *Our Lady of Galilee Newsletter*, a newsletter from the Madonna House community serving in Israel to the rest of the Madonna House community; and newsletters from Raya to Madonna House (written by Mary Kay Roland, Raya's secretary and member of the Madonna House community).

Other relevant and important documents kept at Madonna House were duplicated for my use: (a) Raya's personal letters to Father John Callahan, his spiritual director; Catherine Doherty, foundress of Madonna House; and Father Edward (Eddie) Doherty, Father Emile Brière, Father Bob Pelton, and other members of the Madonna House

family; (b) Raya's letters to various Jewish newspapers, the Israeli government, and the Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Church; (c) communications with the Prime Minister of Israel, Mayor of Haifa, Israeli Interfaith Committee; (d) Raya's theological reflections on Jerusalem and the Yom Kippur War; (e) letters of resignation to the Pope and to the Melkite Synod, and personal letters after his resignation; (f) copies of CNCP telecommunications, video and audio copies of his various liturgical celebrations at Madonna House; (g) his homilies and spiritual readings; and (h) slide presentations of his peacebuilding activities in Israel and Lebanon. In summary, the archival material that I consulted totalled about eight legal-sized boxes containing hundreds of items. Of those, I have selected information that pertained specifically to Raya's religious peacebuilding work, including both laudatory and critical material.

Audiotaped interviews with members of Madonna House provided extensive and important information about Raya as well. The following people lived with Raya in Israel and formed a support group for him: Theresa Davis, head of the Madonna House Community in Israel; Mary Kay Roland, Archbishop Raya's private secretary; Mary Davis, close friend and later caregiver; Elsie Witty, nurse; Susan Adams; and Mamie Legris. Other interviewees from Madonna House were the Director Generals: Suzanne Stubbs, Father David May, Mark Schlingerman, and long-time members of the Madonna House community—Miriam Stulberg; Kathy Rodman; Patti Birdson; Joanne Digido; Douglas Guss; Bonnie Staib, Madonna House archivist; and Father Ron Cafeo, Raya's personal assistant in his old age. Their intimate picture of Archbishop Raya offered glimpses of the personal struggles and disappointments that Raya faced in his many years of priestly service, making clear that the work of peacebuilding, with its inevitable

missteps and failures, required considerable personal sacrifice. Interviews were transcribed.

Information about Raya's years of service as pastor of St. George Melkite Greek Catholic Parish in Birmingham, Alabama, was gathered primarily during one research trip in November 2004. With the assistance of Shirley Larussa, secretary of St. George's Church, forty interviews¹⁹ with former members of Archbishop Raya's parish were set up in the church hall; each was videotaped and transcribed. The list of the interviewees is as follows: Ed Abrasley; Joanne Kemp Smith and her daughter Patricia Smith Tucker; Jamely A. Hall; Mary Ann George and daughters Kathy George Mezrano, Anita George Pilato; Ferris Ritchey, an established lawyer from Birmingham and Raya's closest friend during his time in Birmingham; Mary Grace Ritchey and Albert Ritchey; Bob and Bill Zazaur; Louis Zaden; Anne Owens; Richard and Donna Smaha; Rosalie and Mike Ritchie; Alex and Jackie Shahid; Rickie Shahid; Joseph T. Ritchey; Francis David and daughter Mary David; Father Frank Milienewicz, parish priest; Elizabeth Ritchey; T. J. and Mary Jo Kassouf; Charles and Pat Abrasley; Sam Ritchey; Francis Finney; William Ritchey; Joseph Pharo; Marie Salem; Joey Shaw; Deacon Seraphim Ritchey and Annette Ritchey; and Dianne Morris, a Greek orthodox friend. Many of the interviewees supplied me with personal pictures and copies of letters from Raya.

¹⁹ During the interviewing process in Birmingham Alabama, all but two interviewees signed an interview agreement. All people in Birmingham were shown the letter from Archbishop Raya, which stated that he supported my research. In Israel, no interview agreement was signed by the interviewees, but all people were shown or given a copy of the letter from Archbishop Joseph Raya making it clear that he supported the research about him and that they had permission from Archbishop Raya to say what they wanted to say about him. It was on this basis that full consent from all interviewees for research and for future publishing was assumed.

In addition to the interviews, Shirley Larussa provided access to the parish archives, which yielded personal letters written to and by Archbishop Raya, correspondence with other Church officials, an archival history of St. George's Parish, documentation regarding the building of the new St. George's Melkite Catholic Church under Raya's direction, samples of the music he composed, newspaper articles, photographs, audio visual material including VHS tapes, CDs and other formats of video cassettes. Shirley Larussa, and other members of the parish continued to send me information about Father Raya for the next three years.

Materials from Birmingham were augmented by material from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Mobile Archives in Mobile, Alabama. A series of 100 letters and communiqués were collected, documenting some of the discussions and controversies surrounding several of Raya's works and activities. This material widened the developing narrative to include the perspectives of those who vehemently opposed some of Raya's initiatives.

On other occasions, I interviewed Karl Friedman, a prominent Jewish lawyer who worked with Father Raya and Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, Alabama; Father Bob Pelton who had worked with Raya in Birmingham and had, at the time of the interview in 2002, known Raya for forty-two years; Christopher DeVinck, Raya's godson; Catherine DeVinck, one of Raya's early friends when he immigrated to the United States and wife of Baron José DeVinck, with whom Raya collaborated in his translations of the Byzantine liturgy; and Father David Kirk from Emmaus House in Harlem who had lived with Archbishop Raya during the Civil Rights Movement. All interviews were audiotaped, except for Father David Kirk who

had a telephone interview. Karl Friedman's interview was not taped. The DeVinck and Pelton interviews were transcribed.

Extensive research into Archbishop Raya's life and work in Israel occurred as the focus of a specific journey to Israel from April 28 to May 10, 2007.²⁰ The focus here was Raya's activities as a peacebuilder in a region that is known for its intense, long-standing conflicts. Agnes Shehade,²¹ well known in Haifa and parts of Israel, acted as my primary translator. Her son Bernard Shehade, also from the House of Grace, was the main chauffeur, and Mr. Elias Jabour, founder of the House of Hope,²² assisted me with translations when Agnes Shehade was unable to do so.

Interviews were conducted in the following cities and villages: Nazareth, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Julis, Yarka, Shefa-'Amr, Tarshiha, and the historic villages of Ikrit and Kfar Berem. In the cities of Nazareth, Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem, I met and interviewed:

- i) Various politicians including Mr. Uri Avnery, a member of the Knesset during Raya's tenure in Israel, an Alternate Nobel Peace Prize winner, and a prominent social activist,²³ and Sheikh Jaber Mu'adi, who, at the time was an active member of the Knesset, and Israel's first Arab Deputy Minister;

²⁰ Patriarch Lutfi Laham tried to encourage the residing Archbishop Elias Chacour of Haifa to let me into the archives, but I was not allowed into the archives of the Haifa rectory where Archbishop Raya was living during his service in Israel.

²¹ Agnes Shehade, an immigrant to Haifa from Belgium, was highly respected for her life of service to the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. She was co-founder of the House of Grace, a half-way house where ex-convicts lived for rehabilitation before they re-entered society in Israel.

²² The House of Hope is an international peace center in Shefa-'Amr, an Arab town in Galilee in Israel.

²³ Mr. Uri Avnery, one of the foremost critics of Israeli policies towards the Israeli Arabs, is a former member of the Knesset and founder of the Gush Shalom peace movement. The meeting between Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Uri Avnery was historic. At the age of 91, Mr. Avnery still writes weekly for newspapers and has authored several books.

ii) Religious leaders including Sheikh Mowafak Jareef and Sheikh Yosef Amar;

iii) Peacemakers in Israel including Ibrahim Sima'an, an Israeli representative to the World Council of Churches; Elias Jabour, founder of the House of Hope; Professor Werbowsky from the Hebrew University; Daniel Rossing, Director of the Jerusalem Council for Jewish Christian Relations; and Bob Tolin from the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theological Center in Jerusalem;

iv) Members of Raya's former eparchy: Edward Sa'ad, a singer and choir director who frequently traveled with Raya; Soad Haddad, one of Raya's spiritual children; Ibrahim Atallah, a teacher from Mazra'a; Youssef Atallah, an 82-year-old refugee from the village of Ikrit; Dr. Daoud Bshouty, professor of mathematics; Ibrahim Sima'an, a Baptist minister who was very close to Raya and acted as his confidant; Naser Shakkour, spiritual child of Raya; Bolos Niefert Khoury, a 73-year-old refugee from Ikrit; Dr. Deed Daoud; Alice N-Jean; Mr. Buotros; Kamilia Samara-Shehade;²⁴ and Theresa Mansour.²⁵

v) Various individuals professing other faith traditions: Father Francis Bouwen, a Roman Catholic priest and one of Raya's friends from the White Fathers in Jerusalem; Rushi Almadym, a Muslim poet from Haifa; and Mr. Alex Massis, a secular Jew who collaborated with Archbishop Raya.

²⁴ Kamilia Samara-Shehade was actually interviewed at Madonna House in July 2002, while visiting Archbishop Raya from Israel.

²⁵ Theresa Mansour at the time of the interview lived in Toronto, Canada.

Twenty-four interviews were videotaped in Israel of which twenty-three have handwritten transcriptions.

Various documents were also given to me during this research trip: twelve pictures that documented Archbishop Raya's marches and his early life in Jerusalem; 180 pages of newspaper articles; three Arabic books and booklets about Archbishop Raya's work and activities in Israel; and a copy of Archbishop Raya's Synodal Report on the state of the eparchy.²⁶ In the Library of the Ecumenical Institute in Tantur, Jerusalem, I discovered and photocopied approximately 100 pages of articles about Archbishop Raya found mostly in the *Christian News from Israel* periodical.

Following my visit to Israel, Agnes Shehade continued collecting and translating various testimonies about Archbishop Raya's peacebuilding efforts in Israel. Sources included Im George Nujaim, Haifa; Shafiqua Sa'ad, Haifa; Sima'an Sbeit, Kfar Berem; and Yousef Ne'emallah, Ikrit. There was a good sampling and cross-section of a variety of people from Israel who had known Archbishop Raya personally and had worked closely with him. While most of the interviews were conducted with people who had been positively impacted by Archbishop Raya (a necessary step for evaluating the overall ongoing impact of his peacebuilding work), limited access to Church documents (synodal reports, letters, etc.), extensive reading in relevant newspapers, and interviews with key political figures provided differing perspectives on complex, often tense situations. It became clear that Raya's work as religious peacebuilder was affected by conflicts within the Church as well as the discriminatory practices and violence in the wider sphere of society.

²⁶ The person who gave me the report wished to remain anonymous.

A desk-top publication of testimonials compiled for the 60th Anniversary of Archbishop Raya's priesthood²⁷ contributed to my research. To support this anniversary publication, Laura and Norman Dikdan collected testimonies from Paterson, New Jersey, Raya's first parish when he immigrated to the United States. Other compilers and key contributors were Ferris Ritchey, Shirley LaRussa, and Kathy Rodman. Bishop Nicholas Samra, a member of the Melkite Synod, collected statements from the Melkite bishops and hierarchy; Agnes Shehade, Soad Haddad, and Daoud Bshouty compiled the testimonies from Acre, Haifa, and all Galilee. Additional statements were gathered from Lebanon, and his family and friends throughout North America and Europe. In total, 170 people contributed to the gathering of testimonies in English, French, and Arabic.²⁸ Lay people and ordained people from the various branches of the Christian and Jewish communities offered their good wishes and testimonials about the impact Raya had had on their lives. Approximately 150 photographs were also collected for this publication. Agnes Shehade continued to collect stories and eyewitness accounts from refugees, and these were forwarded to me that same year. These accounts offered considerable information for my current research.

A second major document formed part of this research: the nomination of Archbishop Raya for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. This project was inspired by the suggestion of my Department Head, James Mullens,²⁹ to whom I reported periodically about my research. As Mullens became familiar with Raya's work, he commented that

²⁷ Archbishop Joseph's Raya's anniversary was celebrated on July 20, 2001

²⁸ Approximately fifty additional testimonies were collected by me or later given to me, but were not part of the original testimonial volume.

²⁹ In 2005, Dr. James Mullens served as Head of the Department of Religious Studies and Anthropology at the University of Saskatchewan.

Raya should be nominated for the Nobel Peace prize.³⁰ With his many contacts in conflict studies, Mullens wrote letters to Ven. Thay Thich Nhat Hanh, in Plum Village, France, and to the Office of Tibet in New York to get in touch with the Dalai Lama to support Raya's Nobel Peace Prize nomination.

The work of preparing Raya's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize was accomplished very quickly, between December 13, 2004, and January 24, 2005. Kathe Harder and Karen Ruston, secretaries in University of Saskatchewan's Department of Religious Studies and Anthropology, provided technical support. With their assistance, hundreds of faxes, emails and letters were dispatched to contacts located in Israel, Belgium, Switzerland, Egypt, Lebanon, France, Jordan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States requesting letters of nomination and support. Madonna House archives in Combermere, Ontario, led by Bonnie Staib and her team including Mary Kay Roland, Trudy Moessner, Marian Moody, Ruth Siebenaler, Father Ron Cafeo, and Mary Davis sent supplemental information documenting Archbishop Raya's peace activities, with particular emphasis on Israel. Mr. Uri Avnery, an alternative Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, former member of the Knesset and Chairman of the Gush Shalom Israeli Peace Bloc led the nomination process. Other government officials nominated Archbishop Raya: the Honourable Pierre De Bane, former minister and member of the Canadian Senate, and the Honourable Wilfred Lippens, Hr. Consul of Sweden. Further nominations came from a range of hierarchs from the Eastern Orthodox, Eastern Catholic, and Roman Catholic Churches, plus representatives of several universities.

³⁰ Dr. Mullens was involved with nominating the 14th Dalai Lama for the Nobel Peace prize in 1989.

As a result of these efforts, the Nobel Institute Committee was presented with eighteen formal nominations submitted by government officials, Church hierarchy, and academics, in addition to more than 100 letters of support. Supplementary documentation included newspaper and magazine articles, and photographs from various sources. Each of these documents substantiated Raya's role as a peacemaker throughout his service in the United States of America, Canada, Israel, Lebanon, and Europe.

In the fall of 2005, as part of my research, I traveled to Boston, Massachusetts, to meet Patriarch Lutfi Laham, Gregorios III. I showed him the Nobel Peace Prize nomination for Archbishop Raya who had passed away in June of 2005. While there, I interviewed the Patriarch and three other Melkite Archbishops (Cyril Bustros, Nicholas Samra, John Elya) regarding Raya's life and work as a peacemaker. These interviews were not taped, but notes were taken. As a result of the meeting, Archbishop Cyril Bustros, the Eparch of Newton and Archbishop of all of the United States of America, commissioned the eparchial publication of a condensed version of the Nobel document entitled *Go to the Deep* in 2006. Endorsed but selectively edited,³¹ the abbreviated version of the 360-page Nobel Peace Nomination was prepared for publication, and published by the Melkite Diocese of Newton for distribution to the general public.

Quality of Data

Working with the collected data posed a few pragmatic opportunities and challenges. On the positive side, there were no ethical problems associated with the use of the data collected for this study. Louis Perron, Chair of the Ethics Board, at Saint Paul

³¹ The editorial process was undertaken by His Grace Archbishop Cyril Salim Bustros, Melkite Archbishop of all of the United States of America.

University, provided written consent to use interviews conducted prior to the formal beginning of my doctoral studies at Saint Paul University.

To assess the reliability and accuracy of the interviews and their application, Professor Anna Sheftel was asked to perform an independent research audit on the interviews, interview methods, hand written transcripts, and their use throughout the dissertation. Her report is included as Appendix 8.

One of my more difficult challenges was the need to re-familiarize myself with materials that had been gathered over the course of two decades. Language issues and technological advancements also posed challenges. Some of the documents, particularly the Synodal Reports provided by Archbishop Raya, were written in Arabic and other material was written in Hebrew. Qualified translators had to be found. Many of the videos had been recorded on now obsolete equipment, and had to be sent elsewhere to be transcribed onto archival CDs.

Another problem arose when I gained access to hard copies of the translations. The Synod Reports provided all manner of unexpected information including charges made by Raya of financial corruption within the Melkite Church. In spite of the potential fallout, I concluded that this information also should be part of the narrative of Archbishop Raya. Anything less would constitute a bias and compromise my responsibility as a researcher.

Another difficulty was imposed by political and practical realities that have probably resulted in an incomplete picture of Archbishop Raya's peacebuilding work. It was relatively easy to begin the research on Raya's life in Birmingham through access to public and published materials. Access to official Church documents in the St. George's

Melkite Church archives and Roman Catholic archives in Mobile, Alabama proved more difficult but achievable. A number of other centers could have potentially provided a wider range of perspectives: church and government archives in Haifa, Beirut; Washington, D.C.; Ottawa; Jerusalem; and the Vatican. I attempted to gain access to these repositories, but with very limited success. Access was denied to the Haifa archives by Archbishop Chakour for an unspecified reason. The Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch, Gregorious III, indicated that Raya's files and the official archives in Beirut had been destroyed in the civil war. The Apostolic Nuncio's records in Washington, the archives in Ottawa, Jerusalem,³² and the Vatican were closed on the basis that personal files are sealed for fifty years following the death of the individual. An official letter from St Paul's University to gain access to the Ottawa Archives was of little value. I asked for personal intervention by bishops in Saskatoon and Ottawa, but to no avail. My one-day search for relevant data and photographs in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute was not successful.

A significant amount of material was made available to me regarding Raya's work in Israel through the Madonna House Archives. Madonna House personnel supported Raya in Israel and had been meticulous about gathering material from newspapers. In many instances they were eyewitnesses to many of Raya's peacebuilding initiatives and actions. As a community they were required to record their thoughts and observations about Raya.

³² A local contact was able to obtain a copy of one important document from Apostolic Nuncio in Jerusalem.

Similar documentation for his work in Lebanon is simply not available. This is truly unfortunate, as the complex civil war in Lebanon called for some of Raya's boldest and riskiest initiatives. Eyewitness accounts are also scarce since many witnesses to Raya's life in Lebanon were already dead, and many others had fled the country in search of safer shores. Although plans were made for me to conduct a research trip to Lebanon, I received notice at the last minute to cancel. The situation was simply too dangerous politically. I had no choice but to rely on Raya's personal letters and the limited material available from Madonna House.

Gathering information about his later years in North America was challenging for other reasons. Archbishop Raya taught at various retreats and churches all across North America and encountered hundreds and probably thousands of individuals. I found it nearly impossible to identify, or cost-effectively to contact the many people who read his books, heard him teach, or met him personally. Given the geographic areas involved, my research ambitions were restricted by associated costs and time required for calls or travel.

For these reasons, much of the current research focuses on Raya's work in Birmingham and the modern State of Israel.

Potential Bias

Given considerable latitude in the selection and presentation of narrative data and materials in qualitative research, a researcher must take into account potential issues of quality (Moen 2006, 64), possible bias, and lack of objectivity. This is complicated in my case because of the general recognition among sources of the mentor-mentee nature of my relationship with Raya, Raya's role as an exemplar for this narrative, and the lack

of readily available or published information regarding his life and work. For these reasons, it is reasonable to question the validity of my data and its interpretation. A responsible scholar and observer must ask whether or not this dissertation is objective and impartial—has it avoided a bias? I have asked myself this question many times and offer various comments and observations. Bias can be defined as follows: “an inclination of temperament or outlook, especially a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment, or prejudice”; or a “systematic error introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others.”³³

From an academic perspective, the inclination to present or hold a partial perspective, sometimes accompanied by a refusal to consider alternative points of view, can compromise the validity and reliability of qualitative and more specifically narrative research. Bias can come in many forms, but it generally reflects a prejudice or intuition, and invariably represents the lack of a neutral viewpoint and the inability to analyse with an open mind. It can be argued that some bias in qualitative research is almost inevitable, but it is imperative to recognize it, reduce it, or at the very least, to be aware of it. Experience and judgement are crucial in minimizing bias in qualitative research.

It is recognized that age, race, religious affiliation, and gender could inherently produce a bias in this or any other research project. These are parameters which I cannot readily control and for which I do not apologize, but I must be sensitive to the potential and adverse impact of these parameters on my research. Realistically, my task in this

³³ *Merriam-Webster OnLine*, s.v. “bias,” accessed July 13, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bias>

qualitative research project is to recognize the most significant controllable biases and minimize their effects.

There are several categories of bias that were considered during the interview process: moderator bias, biased questions, potentially biased responses, selection of sources, biased reporting, and biased interpretation. Each of these topics warrants a brief discussion.

Moderator bias during interviews might have included a variety of controllable factors: presence, facial expressions, body language, dress, approach in dialogue, format of discussion and so forth. I made a number of conscious decisions regarding interviews at the outset of this project, recognizing my limits of time and resources. Whenever possible, I tried to visit interviewees personally, rather than contacting them by telephone, mail, email or other electronic medium.³⁴ This strategy probably restricted the number of individuals able to participate in the interview process, but I felt the quality of the responses would be enhanced and better understood through face-to-face contact. This approach also involved a significant amount of travel and scheduling of sessions with interviewees.³⁵ In Israel I received pre-interview briefings on cultural etiquette from my interpreters and translators.³⁶ There were fewer complications in my North American interviews. I made a conscious effort to gain the respondents' trust. I wanted to be perceived as confident, interested, and professional, but slightly conservative and non-aggressive. I tried to give my subjects the opportunity to share and develop their

³⁴ I avoided the use of written survey or questionnaires.

³⁵ Selection of interviewees was an important consideration and is discussed under the topic of bias—selection of sources.

³⁶ Briefings were given in Israel for interviews with Druze Sheiks.

observations and opinions concerning Raya. Interviews usually involved a single individual, or in some cases a couple; I avoided group interviews where outspoken individuals could dominate or influence the responses of an entire group. Interviews lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours.

In retrospect, I believe that most of the taped interviews were executed impartially with open-ended questions.³⁷ Simple, neutral questions were usually posed, and clarifications were asked for if there appeared to be confusion or misunderstanding. General questions were asked before I tried to extract more specific details. I tried to avoid pressing for an answer when the respondent demonstrated discomfort or an inability to answer.

I was constantly watching for biased or inaccurate responses. It served no purpose to accept what “the respondent might have thought I wanted to hear.” I politely requested clarification and confirmation if there appeared to be a contradiction or inconsistency in a response. I accepted questionable responses after a request for clarification, leaving the issue to post-interview resolution.³⁸ Interviews and conversations invariably led to religious and politically sensitive issues. I tried to be sensitive to individuals who demonstrated signs of anxiousness or agitation. When I sensed discomfort in response to a line of questioning, I offered the interviewee time or

³⁷ With no formal training in interview processes and protocols, I called upon and received informal assistance from Dr. Andriy Nahachewsky, Director of the Kule Foundation at the University of Alberta, and Dr. James Mullens, Professor with the Department of Religious Studies and Anthropology at the University of Saskatchewan. In spite of their tutoring, I acknowledge that some mistakes may have been made.

³⁸ Memories could certainly fade after thirty or forty years. Respondents sometimes create plausible responses to avoid embarrassing themselves with no response.

an opportunity to recompose themselves. Care had to be taken to let the respondent express his or her feelings without fear of judgement or reprisal.

For this particular project, one of the most significant challenges was associated with the selection of sources. I have always thought of Raya as a friend, and readily admit to it. This fact naturally raises concern about potential allegations of bias. To counteract this possibility, I felt I had to be doubly vigilant to demonstrate critical distance and maintain an objective line of thinking.

Some could argue that my sources were dominated by interviews and tributes from individuals sympathetic to Raya's philosophies. When I asked for a list of sources that might be able to shed light on his activities in Birmingham, Israel and Lebanon, Raya identified one man, Ferris Richie Jr. from Birmingham. Other sources were identified by Bonnie Staib and Fr. Ron Cafeo from Madonna House, Shirley Larrusa from Birmingham and Agnes Shehade from Haifa. I was also able to add more names from previous work with the 60th Anniversary Book, the Nobel Peace Prize Nomination, and Melkite Church Directories. The individuals identified in this manner were familiar with Raya's work.

I was also able to identify a number of sources and individuals who were not so enamoured with Raya at various times in his career. Dissatisfaction was noted in personal letters from Archbishop Toolen, Apostolic Delegate Egidio Vagnozzi, Cardinal de Furstenburg from the Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Church, and various newspaper journalists from Israel.

I did investigate and compile reports from individuals and organizations that were critical of Raya's actions and works. All critical and independent sources were pursued

with equal (arguably more) rigour. Every visit to Madonna House yielded a list of complaints from various individuals. I personally did not agree with Raya on all issues, and I felt he could have done better with various issues had he addressed them in a more timely fashion.³⁹ I feel Raya enjoyed the limelight, and it frustrated me to hear him exaggerate some statements to gain attention. Although he preached forgiveness, he had problems forgiving a number of individuals. Raya was not perfect, and I am aware of this.

The bulk of Raya's personal archival materials are available in the Madonna House archives in Combermere, Ontario. Copies of all of the recorded interviews can already be accessed at Madonna House. Duplicate copies of the interviews will be presented to a Melkite Greek Catholic ecclesiastical institution in the U.S.A. when this study is completed. The bulk of my research documents are open to the public.

Overall, I used only thirty-three of eighty-seven interview statements. The interviews used in the dissertation were useful for raising or clarifying an issue, and in many instances were supported by confirming sources. The rejected data was typically too general, unspecific or failed to shed light on the issue of peacebuilding.

For an effective qualitative study, Creswell contends that researchers should employ rigorous data collection procedures in conjunction with appropriate validation strategies (2007, 45). This vigilance might involve "one or more of the procedures for validation, such as member checking, triangulating sources of data, or using peer or external auditors of the accounts" (ibid., 46). Other validation strategies identified by Creswell include prolonged engagement and persistent observation, negative case analysis,

³⁹ I observed he was reticent on hierarchical issues.

clarification of researcher bias, and finally rich and thick descriptions (2007, 207-209). Although it seems logical that the use of multiple validation checks would improve the likelihood of accuracy for each piece of collected data, there might be times when a single validation procedure, triangulation for example, may have been the primary tool at my disposal.

In my research, I was able to integrate member checking on the majority of data collected from Raya and the Madonna House Archives. Raya and I openly discussed stories and data, and I often sought and recorded confirmations and clarifications. In some instances, follow-up conversations were possible for North American-based respondents, but there were practical limits for Israel-based interviewees.

Triangulation served as a major component in my validation strategy. I tried to secure second, third, and even multiple sources for most of the significant and controversial issues. There were admittedly times when it was difficult to obtain confirming sources. This fact did not necessarily invalidate data collected from a single source, but did bring the reliability of the data into my “yet unsubstantiated” or “to be confirmed” notes.

A practical example might demonstrate a specific application of triangulation in my dissertation. Raya made a variety of claims, orally and in writing. Among them was the following statement:⁴⁰

I am the one who won the battle of the vernacular in the prayers of our Church, and convinced the Pope of Rome to rescind an order of the Holy Office in Rome [Congregation of Faith today]⁴¹ forbidding the use of the

⁴⁰ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Lesya Nahachewsky (Sabada) dated January 27, 1991.

⁴¹ The Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition was the ecclesiastical court of the Roman Catholic Church originally established as the final court of appeal in trials of heresy.

vernacular in all churches of East and West. It was the first time ever an order of the Holy Office was revoked [sic].⁴²

This information was included in one of Raya's earliest letters. Intuitively, I assumed that his claim had an element of exaggeration. For this reason, I sought clarification from various supplementary sources. Over the course of several years of research, and benefitting from the integration of several different sources, I believe a reasonable interpretation of Raya's statement has been realized.

This sequence of events was pieced together through triangulation. To investigate Raya's initial statement of January 27, 1991, I correlated: one interview involving Donna and Richard Smaha from Birmingham, one testimony from Ferris Ritchey Jr. of Birmingham, a series of nine official church letters drawn from the Mobile-Birmingham Diocesan Archives and St. George's Melkite Catholic Church Archives, one personal letter from Raya to his spiritual advisor, and a published article entitled "The Byzantine Liturgy in the Vernacular" written by Patriarch Maximos IV. In total, no less than thirteen sources were used to analyze Raya's specific statement.

Raya was aware of the declarations of Pope Leo XIII in his Apostolic letter, *Orientalium dignita*,⁴³ and Pope Benedict XV in the encyclical, *Dei providentis*⁴⁴: Rome was aware of the challenges faced by the Eastern Catholic Churches and on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, there was a change in attitude, an openness, arguably even

The oldest among the nine congregations of the Roman Curia, and formed in 1542 as part of the Inquisition, it was renamed the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office in 1904 and the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1965. It is commonly and informally known as the Holy Office.

⁴² I was unable to confirm whether or not any other order of the Holy Office had been previously or subsequently revoked.

⁴³ Published November 30, 1894.

⁴⁴ Published May 11, 1917.

an optimism about potential changes in the Roman Church. Eastern Catholics were to be beneficiaries of these transitions.

The conclusion was that Raya was undoubtedly involved in the debate for the vernacular, and probably provided arguments and material for his Patriarch's dialogue with the Pope, but it would be an overstatement to credit Raya as "the one who won the battle for the vernacular."

When there was doubt about the credibility of a source, I tended to exclude the data from my analysis. I rejected more than half of the interviews collected, to focus on the data that offered the most detail and opportunity for independent verification.

The use of peer reviews and external auditors proved to be a challenge for me. Although my data was available in a "sharable format," my work was not advanced in the context of a team study. I experienced difficulties in getting qualified scholars to review the raw collected data and the evolving thesis. I did not have the resources to pay for external auditors. It should be noted however, that I did review collected information with selected individuals at Madonna House, including Ron Cafeo (Raya's personal secretary), Mary Davis (Member of Madonna House in Haifa), and Bonnie Staib (Madonna House archivist).

Negative case study was not really used in my work. As discussed on several occasions, this study also benefitted from prolonged engagement and persistent observation. I believe rich and thick descriptions were provided, so that the narrative includes transferable information.

In a dissertation in Practical Theology, there is a definitive need for personal reflection and the opportunity to clarify personal bias and prejudice. At the risk of

repeating myself, I want to make it perfectly clear that in conjunction with others, I participated in the compilation of the unpublished book given to Raya on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of his Priesthood.⁴⁵ In 2005, I also served as a coordinator leading the preparation of Raya's Nobel Peace Prize Nomination.⁴⁶ An edited version of this document was subsequently published and distributed as "Go to the Deep."⁴⁷

With the use of multiple forms of validation and Lonergan's concept of scotosis (blind spots), my potential inability to see certain aspects of reality is significantly diminished.

Raya and I interacted primarily in the role of mentor-mentee, in his later years when his primary work as peacebuilder in places of intense religious and political conflicts were, at least for him, effectively over. He had had considerable time to reflect on his actions and choices, and I had no direct impact from the results of his actions. By the time we met, he had developed his understanding of the function of a religious actor both within his religious community and in society. The evidence of his work and teaching (in both sympathetic and antagonistic sources) was available to me. In the same way as I can see positives and negatives inherent in the work of Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., and other religious leaders, I have endeavoured to keep my observations and conclusions objective.

⁴⁵ Four copies of this desktop publication were printed. Copies were distributed to Raya, Madonna House, his family and my own file.

⁴⁶ Two copies of the Nobel Peace Prize Nomination were printed. One copy was forwarded to the Nobel Peace Prize Committee and the second remains in my files.

⁴⁷ Copies of this publication were published and first sold at the 2006 Melkite Convention in Birmingham, Alabama.

Summary

The narrative of Raya's life has been developed by selecting practical activities and examples that contribute to a critical assessment of Archbishop Raya as a model of religious peacebuilding within Byzantine Christianity. I have used the account of Raya's life to exemplify those aspects of religious peacebuilding that have been identified by Katrien Hertog, thus providing a practical dimension to the theoretical concepts and have noted particularly the aspects of Raya's ministry that go beyond the categories of Hertog. Likewise, I have evaluated Archbishop Raya's work in the context of relevant Christian traditions. I first outlined the limited peace teachings of these specific traditions and then pointed out how Raya responded to those teachings in various practical initiatives.

In keeping with the practical focus of this doctorate of ministry, my research has included a critical evaluation of my own life, with a focus on my developing peacebuilding practices. Looking at Raya's life and work through the lens of Hertog's seminal work and relevant peace traditions has enabled me to achieve greater clarity in regard to my own calling to work for peace and to integrate the principles of peacebuilding into my ongoing ministry.

In summary, Chapter 1 has presented, first, religion's contributions to the work of making peace – both positive and negative. Many faiths lack specific pastoral and prophetic peacebuilding models, and scholarly reflection generally on peacebuilding processes. Guided by the insights of the growing new field of religious peacebuilding, I asked: "How can the life and teachings of Archbishop Joseph Raya, serve as a model for a pastoral and prophetic love-based approach to religious peacebuilding?" Thereafter,

this introductory chapter outlined the methodology and the challenges in this research project. My dissertation was constantly guided by the hypothesis *that a practical theology for a pastoral and prophetic approach can be synthesized from Archbishop Raya's life, actions, and spirituality*. The results of my research are presented in the following chapters, which have been organized, as noted above, according to Thomas H. Groome's "*shared Christian praxis*" model.

Chapter 2

A Case Study in Religious Peacebuilding: Joseph Marie Raya

*"What the mother sings to the cradle goes all the way down to the coffin."
Henry Ward Beecher*

Archbishop Raya's life deserves careful study in the context of inter-religious peacebuilding initiatives. He worked in ethnically diverse, multicultural, and secular societies, in the context of a variety of religions, offering examples of pastoral and prophetic approaches to peacebuilding. Raya respected men, women, and children of different races, creeds, and cultures, working to enhance the dignity of people in a variety of ways, in different nations, throughout a lifetime rich in diversity and opportunities. Familiar with challenges, frustrations, and disappointments, he remained hopeful in his quest for dignity, justice, and equality.

The story of Joseph Marie Raya⁴⁸ will be divided into sections, using time periods and major locations as the organizing principle. The first section, "Early Formation," briefly covers his religious education and his first years of priesthood. The second section, "Peacebuilding Ministry in Birmingham," describes Father Raya's work as parish priest and as liturgist and musician, before examining some of his conflicts with ecclesiastical authority,⁴⁹ his apprenticeship in peacebuilding under Martin Luther King, Jr., and his various services to the larger community. The third section, "Peacebuilding

⁴⁸ See Appendix 1 for a brief chronology of his life.

⁴⁹ Raya and the local Roman Catholic Archbishop Thomas Toolen had a rather tumultuous relationship. Misunderstandings between Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics were evident and tainted their perspectives. As a priest in the Archdiocese of Mobile-Birmingham, Raya was expected to conform to Toolen's directives and obey. Toolen, a product of his time in his adherence to hierarchical order and respect for Church rules, frequently saw Raya as insubordinate.

Ministry in Israel,” is the longest section in this chapter. It includes a brief historical context, then a detailed description of Archbishop Raya’s extensive pastoral work, before providing an outline of his main peacebuilding activities; those activities are described in greater detail through the account of his major effort on behalf of the villages of Ikrit and Kfar Berem. The section concludes with a summary of the events that led to Raya’s resignation. The fourth section, “Peacebuilding Ministry in Lebanon,” provides a brief historical and political context, and discusses Raya’s pastoral services in Beirut and then in Marje-Eyoun. The fifth and final section, “Teaching and Writing in North America,” summarizes the range and depth of Archbishop Raya’s instruction in theology and peacebuilding.

Early Formation

Some of the main characteristics of Joseph Raya’s life of service to the Church and to humanity have their roots in his childhood and education and in the first years of his priesthood. His Eastern Christian⁵⁰ spirituality was cultivated in the tensions between his Byzantine roots and his Latin Rite education for the priesthood, while his enduring ecumenical spirit toward all people was developed very early.

Childhood and Education

The foundation for Raya’s lifelong love of the Church and service to Christ was established in his early childhood in Lebanon. Even before his birth on August 15th,

⁵⁰ Archbishop Raya saw his Christian faith rooted in the Byzantine tradition. He was without a doubt a Melkite, an Eastern Catholic, but acknowledged a common history with the orthodox tradition. For him, references to Eastern Christians would have often included the faithful of both Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches. References to Byzantine Christians represents a subset of Eastern Christians and would have included: Albanian, Belarusian, Bulgarian, Croatian and Serbian, Greek, Hungarian, Italo-Albanian, Macedonian, Melkite, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenium, Slovak and Ukrainian Catholics, plus the Orthodox Churches with historical roots in Constantinople (Byzantium).

1917, Joseph Marie Raya, son of Almaz and Mikhail Raya, was immersed in the liturgical prayers of the Byzantine Christian world. His mother, like other Lebanese Melkite mothers, believed “that the water of the womb bubbles with the flame of the Holy Spirit” and began “singing and praying every day the office of [the] Byzantine Church” (Raya 1990, 3). As a boy, he worked in the vineyards side by side with his family’s Muslim servants, addressing them all by their first names. He would not be their overlord.⁵¹ The ideal of equality and freedom was imprinted on his heart as a child. He saw how Shiite Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Orthodox Christians, and Catholics could all live together peacefully. Consciously pledging himself to Christ as he first received communion,⁵² he found his passion: to bring people together, “to live, dance, and sing all at unison in one heart.”⁵³

Raya’s religious education did not initially offer him a coherent Melkite Catholic worldview.⁵⁴ That would come later as the young priest learned to reclaim and incorporate his early (childhood) training. He began school in the Oriental Primary School of Lebanon, continued secondary education at St. Anne’s Minor Seminary in Jerusalem in 1931,⁵⁵ followed by seminary training at the St. Louis College in Paris, France, from 1932 to 1937, and St. Anne’s Seminary in Jerusalem, under the French

⁵¹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, interview by author, Combermere, Ontario, July 9, 2002.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Melkites are Byzantine-Rite Catholics of Middle Eastern origin. Their theology, worship, and spirituality are Eastern Christian, but the Melkite Greek Catholic Church is in union with Rome. Maronites, mentioned elsewhere in this study, are likewise Eastern Catholics of Middle Eastern origin. Melkites are descendants of the early Church of Antioch (Syria), while Maronites trace their origin to Marun, a 4th-century Syriac monk. Both ethno-religious groups are found in Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus, Jordan, and Israel.

⁵⁵ “Archbishop Raya’s Consecration,” *The Catholic Week*, October 18, 1968, 10.

White Fathers from 1937 to 1941.⁵⁶ Exposed to Roman Catholic theological training, Raya thought his prayer books childish and laughed at the prayers of the Melkite Church.⁵⁷ It was also in these formative years that Raya first encountered books about Gandhi and was deeply inspired: “I said, my God, you had to be Christ to [smile back when slapped or kicked].”⁵⁸

Early Years of Priesthood

After ordination as priest from St. Anne’s Seminary on July 20, 1941,⁵⁹ his first assignment was to serve the lepers in Lebanon. At the same time, he taught religion to deaf and mute children and adults, and anatomy and biology at the Oriental College in Zahle, Lebanon.⁶⁰ It was in this first year at St. Joseph’s Parish in Zahle, Lebanon, that Raya was sharply reminded by his mother, his first spiritual mentor, of his earliest spiritual teachings. He had invited his mother to hear him preach a Lenten sermon. At the end of the service, when Raya asked what she had thought of his sermon, she tore up his printed version in his face and said, “We do not need Thomas Aquinas, we do not need Augustine theology. Give the people Jesus Christ! That’s all we need!”⁶¹ Then she told him to forget all that he learned in the seminary and to go through all the divine services with her. She would teach him correctly.⁶² In this way, Raya’s mother asked him to concentrate less on the writings and philosophies of Western theologians and focus more on the perspectives and treasures inherent in his own Melkite traditions and

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Mary Davis, interview by author, Combermere, Ontario, July, 2002.

⁵⁸ Archbishop Joseph Raya, interview by author, July 9, 2002.

⁵⁹ “Archbishop Raya’s Consecration,” *The Catholic Week*, October 18, 1968, 10.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, conversation with author, September 30, 1999.

⁶² Ibid.

liturgies. It would be years before Raya would fully appreciate and understand his mother's guidance.

Father Raya's belief in the dignity of all people was both his strong suit and a source of trouble for him. He was frequently impulsive in his advocacy for the disadvantaged, and not always sufficiently aware of the cultural consequences of his actions and words. Early in his vocation, when he was Head of the Greek Catholic Patriarchal College in Cairo, Egypt from 1946 to 1949 (Stern 1972a) Raya strongly advocated for the rights of women and believed that they should have the right to receive an education (McCarty 2005). He encouraged women to protect themselves and stand up for their rights, if threatened sexually or dominated by men. Although still a young priest, Raya gave women permission to slap the face of any aggressor who made sexual advances, and if necessary, the women could identify Raya in their defense. That Raya should have imagined his authority as priest would outweigh cultural mores and political status is a testament to the strength of his convictions and his courage. Nevertheless, the consequences of his unwarranted self-assurance were inevitable. When a well-deserved, but insulting, slap was delivered to King Farouk, Father Raya was quickly expelled from Egypt (ibid). Within a year, he was assigned to the United States to begin a new phase of his service and education. Although Raya would, with typical energy and pastoral care for his people, become a well-loved and trusted priest, it is worth noting this assignment began as more of a punishment than a calling. It was certainly not his choice.

Arriving in the United States in 1949, as Assistant Pastor at Saint Ann's Melkite Catholic Church in Paterson, New Jersey,⁶³ Raya's first task was to learn English. He accepted his place in a Grade One class and was soon, despite his struggles with the language, introducing some English into the liturgy and the choir's responses.⁶⁴ Active in the parish from the onset of his arrival, he initiated the CYO (Catholic Youth Organization), became the spiritual advisor of first generation American Melkites, taught them their Eastern Catholic identity, and in this way tried to lead the Melkites out of their "second class" status.⁶⁵ He founded the Knights and Ladies of Galilee,⁶⁶ and consciously made the effort to visit many of his parish families. Cooperative initiatives and work with other parishes made him a favourite priest among many Latin Rite clergy.⁶⁷ In the words of Norman and Laura Dikdan, Raya became a "loving friend, a brother, a father, a priest, and (later) bishop, one who has helped us form our lives, and the lives of our children, and hopefully their children."⁶⁸

In summary, Father Raya's early life was a time of discovering some of his many gifts, strengthening his identity as a Melkite Eastern Catholic, and gaining experience in balancing his convictions with the necessities of his cultural context. His primary

⁶³ Immigrant Syrian Lebanese established small Melkite churches in the United States and Canada. Outside the Patriarchal territories in the Middle East, these parishes were subject to the rulings of the Roman Curia's Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

⁶⁴ Julie Blum, "I Shall Always Remember you and Pray for you," in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary of Archbishop Raya's Priesthood*, unpublished collection of tributes compiled in October, 2001.

⁶⁵ Frances Colie explains that the second class status was a result of the Eastern Catholic Melkites being in union with Rome but disdained by Western Catholics. Some Roman Catholics did not appreciate the significance of different worship services as a major issue. They further assumed that in time the Eastern Catholics would be assimilated.

⁶⁶ Charles Ged, "Nostalgia Grips my Heart," in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

⁶⁷ Francis Colie, "Where would we be without you," in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

⁶⁸ Norman and Laura Dikdan, "How Sweet It is When You Come," in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

weaknesses—frustration with unbending authority and impulsivity in the face of human need—had endeared him to parishioners even as they created problems for his superiors. Yet his personal charm and creativity were in evidence. His compassionate spirit had led him to work with the vulnerable in Lebanese society, take risks in Egypt for the sake of the equality and dignity of women, and accept and adjust to American society. His next sixteen years (1952-68) in Birmingham, Alabama, were difficult years in which Raya was challenged by tensions between the Melkite Greek Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church, and by societal unrest in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement (1954-68).

Peacebuilding Ministry in Birmingham

As a priest, Father Raya was motivated by what was seen as a deep concern for his parishioners, according to Father Frank Milienewicz, Father Raya's successor at St. George Melkite Catholic Church, who had grown up in St. George and thus knew Raya well.⁶⁹ He faced racial tensions and chose to become an active player in the Civil Rights Movement. Because he was a priest in an Eastern Catholic parish in America and most of his parishioners were of Melkite origin, he sometimes faced conflicts between Eastern Catholic traditions and the guidance of his Patriarch, on the one hand, and the administrative mandates of his Roman Catholic ordinary, on the other.⁷⁰ If he was to maintain his integrity without compromising his commitment to peace or to egalitarianism, he felt that he had to question and even confront ecclesiastical and

⁶⁹ Father Frank Milienewicz, interview by author, Birmingham Alabama, November 15, 2004.

⁷⁰ Archbishop Thomas Joseph Toolen, Archbishop of Mobile-Birmingham, was administratively responsible for the Roman Catholic and Eastern Catholic churches in Birmingham from 1927 to 1969.

political authority. He would soon become known as someone prepared to challenge legalism and what for him were inappropriate secular moral standards.

The story of his years in Birmingham will be presented under the following headings: Raya's work as parish priest; Raya as musician, liturgist, and church-builder; Raya in conflict with ecclesiastical authorities; Raya at the Second Vatican Council; Raya as mentee of Martin Luther King, Jr., learning methods of nonviolent peace activism; and Raya's work for the larger city community. Birmingham, Alabama, was the first main arena for his peacebuilding work, and he had a significant impact on the people he worked with, as he himself evolved into what we would now call a "peacebuilder."

Father Raya, the Parish Priest

Father Raya was known and recognized as a dedicated parish priest, committed to connecting with all people at their level and at the point of their need. According to former parishioners of his, T.J. Kassouf and Mary Jo Kassouf, he was "openly emotional" and "unconventional."⁷¹ Ed Abrasley, who, as close friend and contemporary of Albert Raya (nephew of Father Raya raised in Raya's household), had abundant opportunity to observe him in private settings, noted that "he taught by example."⁷² He could be firm if he had to be⁷³ without losing his gentleness. His self-imposed priestly rule to visit each family once a year,⁷⁴ above the "expected" visits with the sick and

⁷¹ T. J. and Mary Jo Kassouf, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 15, 2004.

⁷² Ed Abrasley, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 13, 2004.

⁷³ Abrasley, interview.

⁷⁴ Ferris Ritchey, Jr., "Mafia Priest," in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

dying, conveyed a practical message of Christianity.⁷⁵ Children loved Father Raya.⁷⁶ He drove them to Saturday religious education classes taught by sisters recruited from the Roman Catholic churches.⁷⁷ He played with the children, spoiled them with his love, took an interest in all their activities, and permitted boys to dress up as priests and swing the censor.⁷⁸ Even his weekly church bulletin, with its news about seemingly everyone, was used as “the tie of love” to build “the unity of the family.”⁷⁹

He also functioned as priest to at least a dozen nuns and priests,⁸⁰ who were escaping the convent or fleeing priestly life. Father Raya’s rectory was referred to by many in the Ministerial Association in Birmingham⁸¹ as “refugium peccatorum,” a refuge for sinners. His willingness to help deeply troubled souls is evident in a letter Father Raya wrote to his spiritual director, Father Callahan, at Madonna House:

How profound and sincere was St. Paul when he cried, “Woe to me, if I preached to others and damned myself”. . . Poor priest [a drunken priest]. He really edified me and preached to me all the while he was here. He made me understand so many wonderful things of God and His love. I got attached to him because I felt him to be so much superior and holier and so close to God than I’ll be in my life. . . . Pray for him.⁸²

This attitude is all the more remarkable since the priest mentioned here disappeared with a portion of Father Raya’s personal funds shortly thereafter.

⁷⁵ Frances David and Mary David, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 14, 2004. Mary David was Raya’s parishioner.

⁷⁶ David, interview.

⁷⁷ Ferris Ritchey, Jr., “Mafia Priest. ”

⁷⁸ Bill Ritchey, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 14, 2004.

⁷⁹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, speech at the consecration banquet in his honour.

⁸⁰ Archbishop Joseph Raya, interview by Father Ron Cafeo, Combermere, Ontario, November 3, 2002.

⁸¹ The Ministerial Association was made up of the Evangelical, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Lutheran and Presbyterian clergy in Birmingham. Father Joseph Raya was the only Catholic member of this group.

⁸² Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, November 17, 1961.

The services of “refugium peccatorum” were also extended to children and youth in trouble, who felt safe with Father Raya, knowing that he would love and protect them, to the best of his ability. Two stories here are illustrative. One girl, Joni, who had been kicked out of her home, ran to Father Raya for protection. When her parents came, he said simply, “She is mine, don’t touch her.” She stayed with him and, in Raya’s own words, “was made to feel beautiful.”⁸³ Another girl, twelve years old, came running in panic to his rectory, tears running down her face, “Father Joe, I am dying!” When he understood what the problem was, he called her parents to tell them that their daughter had just become a beautiful woman, and they should make a huge banquet in her honour. He escorted her back to her home after having taken her to the drugstore to buy her necessary menstrual supplies.⁸⁴ It seems that even young girls sensed that for Father Raya, there would be “neither male nor female” (Gal. 3.28). All deserved equal respect.

In the midst of serving others, Father Raya was also self-aware enough to seek to maintain and deepen his own spiritual life. Shortly after he had become a priest, he had joined a Roman Catholic Trappist Monastery in Israel, but the monastic lifestyle was not his vocation. Then in June 1959⁸⁵ he hesitantly visited Madonna House⁸⁶ with his

⁸³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, to Madonna House on the occasion of his priestly anniversary, July 20th, 2002.

⁸⁴ Archbishop Joseph Raya, conversation with author, March 18th, 1992, during the Study Days conference.

⁸⁵ Newsletter from Father John Callahan to Madonna House Priest dated July 29, 1959. Callahan identifies a date that contradicts the Madonna House website: <http://www.madonnahouse.org/about/> accessed on July 20, 2016: “In 1958 a Lebanese Byzantine priest, Fr. Joseph Raya, visited Madonna House and became its first Associate cleric.” Given that Callahan was spiritual director for Raya and the associate priests of Madonna House, I trust the accuracy of his report more than the website.

⁸⁶ The Madonna House apostolate was founded in 1947 by Catherine (Kolyschkin then de Hueck) Doherty, a Russian emigrant. Headquartered in Combermere, Ontario, this community of lay men, women and priests has operated “mission houses in Canada, U.S.A., France, England, Belgium, Brazil, Africa, Russia, and the West Indies.” With a membership of more than 200, and united by a common belief in Jesus Christ and in “Gospel love,”

longtime friend and collaborator, Baron José de Vinck and his family. Struck by the silver cross of the Madonna House Apostolate (inscribed with “Pax” and “Caritas”), so close to his own long-held vision of a cross,⁸⁷ Father Raya took his private vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience the following day. His vows were made in front of Catherine De Hueck Doherty, foundress of the Madonna House community, and Father John Callahan, who became Raya’s spiritual director. Raya had already given away all that he owned and had committed himself to a celibate life. The vow of obedience was reshaped to focus on his spiritual life, as his vow of obedience to the Patriarch had to remain canonical and complete.⁸⁸ With this commitment, Father Raya became the first auxiliary priest of Madonna House Apostolate. Subsequently, a strong bond was established between Madonna House and Father Raya. The correspondence between Raya and his apostolate family revealed his desire to “[b]e, be a witness, be Christ, be love, radiate love, radiate joy. . . . Let me be what Christ wants me to be. . . . Being in love and for love is the best and most effective way of showing the world what love is. Be!!”⁸⁹

The Madonna House community was established by Catherine and Eddy Doherty as a “Public Association of the Christian Faithful” within the Roman Catholic Church, under the bishop of the Diocese of Pembroke. It is interesting to note that Catherine was baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church, but when she moved to England as a young

community members serve by “providing food, clothing and other basic necessities for those in need; friendship and intercessory prayer; creating beauty through music, drama, arts and crafts; evangelizing through the media; promoting Christian family life; providing year-round spiritual formation to working guests; and farming as apostles, witnessing to the sanctity of creation.” (Doherty 2008, 9-10.)

⁸⁷ Father John Callahan, newsletter to Madonna House, July 29, 1959.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, March 27, 1966.

married woman, she “embraced the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, without rejecting the spiritual wealth of her Orthodox heritage.”⁹⁰ Eddy, on the other hand, was born Roman Catholic (an Irish American) but at the age of 79 was ordained a priest of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church.⁹¹ These two founding members of Madonna House seemed open to the Catholic Church breathing from “two lungs,” East and West. It is easily argued that Raya likely related to Madonna House in multiple ways.

His emphasis on love and his capacity for joy made a strong impression on his parishioners; he was affectionately known as “Father Joe,” an appellation that he happily owned. Blessed with a vivacious and a charismatic personality, and an instinct for drama, he made people laugh⁹² and was a gifted preacher. Since, in the words of his former parishioners, “love was his battle cry,”⁹³ Raya used his homilies to address themes such as love and respect for God and all people, the encouragement of all people, the need to “learn to be happy even when things weren’t so great.”⁹⁴ In later years, he recalled that he had loved being a priest from the very beginning of his ministry, and perceived himself as a very good one.⁹⁵ While such a statement can seem arrogant, Raya recognized the gifts he had been given. As an extrovert, he drew strength from being with people, especially through his role as priest. His ability to establish trusting relationships would become a dominant part of his later peacebuilding ministry. What

⁹⁰ “Catherine Doherty,” Collections, Madonna House Publications, accessed July 20, 2016 <http://publications.madonnahouse.org/collections/catherine-doherty>.

⁹¹ “Who We Are,” About Us, Madonna House, accessed July 20, 2016, <http://www.madonnahouse.org/about/>

⁹² Father Frank Milienewicz, interview

⁹³ Mary Ann George, Anita Pilato, and Kathy Mezrano, interview by author, November 15, 2004.

⁹⁴ Abrasley, interview. This foreshadows his later struggles to maintain a positive attitude when things were not so great and he was to struggle with depression.

⁹⁵ Archbishop Joseph Raya, address to Madonna House on the occasion of his priestly anniversary, July 20, 2002

seemed clear from the beginning of his ministry was that his respect for people and his emphasis on a loving God became the foundation of his developing passion for social justice.

Father Raya, the Liturgist, Musician, and Church-BUILDER

Father Raya enjoyed Byzantine music and made it an important element of his pastoral service. The parish's accomplished ecumenical choir toured widely throughout Alabama and as far away as Florida. The choir sang in hospitals, bars, and at military bases. Wherever they sang, their rendition of Byzantine hymns inspired reverence. Father Raya shared his religious traditions with many who had never experienced the Melkite faith. He also composed his own melodies,⁹⁶ adapted music from Greek and Russian tunes, changing melodies to suit English or Arabic words,⁹⁷ shared his compositions with other churches, and produced Byzantine liturgical music records.⁹⁸ Congregational involvement was important to him, and, in the words of Ferris Ritchey, Jr., former parishioner, he encouraged his "congregation to sing with him, thus creating . . . the best congregational response in the whole Diocese, even to this day."⁹⁹

As a liturgist, Father Raya cared about having great and dynamic liturgies. He was less concerned about decorum than "enthusiasm and the strength of the voices singing," including the children. If during a midnight procession the "gusto and fervor and love" sounded like "a holy and pious menagerie," he was unfazed. If others didn't like it, they

⁹⁶ Joseph Pharo, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 13, 2004. Former parishioner and member of St. George's Melkite Catholic Church choir.

⁹⁷ Albert and Mary Grace Ritchey, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 12, 2004. Former parishioners.

⁹⁸ Milienewicz, interview.

⁹⁹ Ferris Ritchey, Jr. "Mafia Priest."

could “go to the Latin Church where there is silence, order and civilization!”¹⁰⁰ Father Raya celebrated the liturgy with enthusiasm, drawing everybody into it (the occasionally shocking prayer such as “St. Marilyn Monroe, pray for us”¹⁰¹ also helped keep things interesting). He understood that everyone was saved by grace through faith, and made sure that his sheep likewise understood the message of salvation. Those who served at the altar with Father Raya often had an “other worldly” experience: “Celebrating liturgy with Father Raya was ‘Like celebrating liturgy with the Holy Spirit’.”¹⁰² In 1955, at age 39, Father Raya became Father Chor-Bishop,¹⁰³ and an official spokesperson for the Melkite Church at liturgical conferences and conventions in the United States.¹⁰⁴

One of the greatest challenges that Father Raya faced in Birmingham was the building of the new St. George Church. Expansion is difficult in most organizations but more so within an ecclesiastical context. The first Melkite Greek Catholic church had been built in Birmingham in 1921. It was already small for the forty-five to forty-seven families who worshiped there when Father Raya arrived in 1952. The rapid growth that followed his arrival meant that within a few years a larger edifice was desperately needed.¹⁰⁵ Accordingly, he took on the challenge to design and oversee the construction of the new Melkite church.

¹⁰⁰ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, April 18, 1965.

¹⁰¹ Father Bob Pelton, interview by author, Combermere, Ontario, December 7, 2002.

¹⁰² Milienewicz, interview.

¹⁰³ A chor-bishop is a rank of clergy below a bishop. It is similar to monsignor in the Roman Catholic Church.

¹⁰⁴ The corepiscopa vests almost identically to the bishop and often serves as his representative to various liturgical events to add solemnity

¹⁰⁵ In 1958, the parish consisted of 110 families, 25 % were converts from the Protestant branch of Christianity as noted in Father Joseph Raya’s letter to Bishop Elko on Dec. 31, 1958. Archbishop Toolen also noted that there were 500 people in the parish in a letter to Fr. Raya on February 26, 1957.

The first obstacle was the acquisition of land. The story of Raya's negotiation through that problem was related to me by Ferris Ritchey, Jr., a former parishioner and well-known lawyer who frequently assisted Raya in legal matters and became his very close friend. Raya's initial efforts to secure what he wanted were unsuccessful because the land owner, Birmingham Realty Company, was represented by a Southern "bigot"¹⁰⁶ who refused to sell the property to a "foreign Catholic Church."¹⁰⁷ At the time, in the early 1950s, there were still "many prejudices against the Catholic Church, whose members were Near Eastern 'Foreign'."¹⁰⁸ That difficulty was solved by a combination of Father Raya's prophecy of "something horrible" and a coincidental stroke suffered by the President of the Birmingham Realty Company. The land was subsequently sold at a "very reasonable price."¹⁰⁹ A second obstacle was the sale of the old church. Since the only prospective buyers were Baptists of African American descent, Raya had to overcome both the canon law's edict against the sale of Catholic property to non-Catholic denominations and Southern prejudice.¹¹⁰ His solution was to sell the church to the Smith and Gastion Funeral Home, after instructing them to resell it to the poorly financed black congregation.¹¹¹ Thus the church was sold and the poor were served. One could question the integrity of Raya's methods here, if one chose to interpret a prophecy of "something horrible" as a threat and the strategy of reselling of the church as devious. However, Raya's determination to accomplish what he saw as necessity, combined with self-confidence, often led him to find whatever means were available to achieve his

¹⁰⁶ Ferris Ritchey, Jr. "Mafia Priest."

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ *75 Anniversary Video: A New Church for a Noble People*, circa 1996.

¹¹¹ Milienewicz, interview.

ends. The expedience of enlisting an intermediary buyer and seller was a simple way of avoiding direct disobedience of canon law. Creativity was to become a hallmark of Raya's peacebuilding initiatives.

Yet another obstacle, that often stresses those in charge of building new churches, is the raising of necessary funds. Here, Father Raya's diplomacy was definitely required, first through clever design of the church. His desire for a dome, in accordance with the norms of classical Byzantine Christian church architecture, met resistance from the Roman Catholic Archbishop.¹¹² Toolen said there was no more money for the church if a dome was to be included as part of the structure.¹¹³ Father Raya created and concealed a dome internally by elevating the roof area above the ambon (in Melkite tradition the extension of the solea in front of the Royal Doors of the iconostasis).¹¹⁴ Unaware of the "internal dome," Archbishop Toolen guaranteed a \$50,000.00 mortgage loan at 4% interest to build the new church.¹¹⁵ Other funds were raised from the congregation whom Father Raya had taught about giving and taking responsibility for others.¹¹⁶ For nine years, Tuesday night suppers with kibbee and shishkabob dishes and bingo nights, as well as increased donations at every liturgy, helped pay off the church mortgage. Father

¹¹² As stated by Joseph McCarty, in *Remembering Archbishop Joseph Raya: Nonviolent Christian Prophet and Apostle of Peace and Love*, Eastern Catholic priests had to answer to the local Roman Catholic ordinaries. "These prelates usually lacked any understanding or sympathy for the Eastern traditions and pastoral needs of these parishes."

¹¹³ Milienewicz, interview.

¹¹⁴ Milienewicz, interview.

¹¹⁵ Ferris Ritchey, Jr., "Mafia Priest."

¹¹⁶ Ferris Ritchey Jr, interview.

Raya himself set the example of sacrifice, refusing to take his salary.¹¹⁷ The mortgage was quickly repaid.¹¹⁸

The dedication service for the new St. George Melkite Catholic Church was held on April 5, 1959, the Sunday of St. Thomas, the first Sunday after Easter. The church won an award for architectural excellence and was later designated as a historical landmark for the City of Birmingham. In 1979, the local church was designated a national shrine.¹¹⁹ In the minds of many of his parishioners, Father Raya had functioned as “glue that held things together,”¹²⁰ that made this undertaking possible.

Under his leadership, the parish at St. George had become a center of Byzantine liturgical life, attracting visitors from all over the United States. In 1959, when the church was consecrated, it consisted of 110 families.¹²¹ By the time Raya was consecrated Archbishop in 1968, the parish had grown to 700 families.¹²² The church had the distinction of being one of the first Catholic churches in the world where the liturgy was prayed entirely in English.¹²³

Raya’s initiatives and creative responses to the needs of the parishioners and community demonstrated his abilities as an effective pastoral leader. He earned the trust of his people, a skill that would enhance the credibility and effectiveness of future

¹¹⁷ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, December 11, 1959.

¹¹⁸ Ferris Ritchey, Jr., “Mafia Priest.”

¹¹⁹ Leonard Chambrie, “Local Church is Designated National Shrine,” *Post-Herald Religion*, April 21, 1979.

¹²⁰ Abrasley, interview.

¹²¹ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Bishop Elko, December, 1958.

¹²² *75 Anniversary Video: A New Church for a Noble People*, circa 1996.

¹²³ Leonard Chambrie, “Local Church is Designated National Shrine,” *Post-Herald Religion*, April 21, 1979, 20.

peacebuilding efforts. Unfortunately, he was less successful in earning the trust of his superiors.

Conflict with Ecclesiastical Authority

A deep commitment to Byzantine religious expression contributed to conflicts between Raya and his Roman Catholic superior, Archbishop Thomas J. Toolen. The issues were often a reflection of misunderstandings between Eastern Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches, so that Raya's efforts to revive Eastern Catholic traditions, his support for ecumenical cooperation and joint worship, and his desire to conduct services in English proved too much for the local archbishop.

Reviving Eastern Christian traditions in Birmingham and beyond

To begin with, the relationship in Birmingham between the Melkite Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church as perceived by Archbishop Toolen was often strained. The differences, lack of familiarity with religious and cultural traditions, and possibly a personality clash caused friction and prejudice against the "easterners."¹²⁴ As a young priest in Egypt, Raya had been exposed to the Cairo Circle, a Melkite movement active in the Patriarchal College in Cairo during the 30's and 40's that promoted the revival of the orthodox elements of Byzantine heritage and independence from Roman Catholic domination (McCarty 2005). He was very aware of the Latinization that Eastern Catholic Churches had endured. He himself had been taught

¹²⁴ Archbishop Thomas Joseph Toolen, letter to Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, Apostolic Delegate, June 1, 1959: "I surely cannot take the word of one of these Eastern Fathers when they lie so easily about so many things. They refuse to conform with the regulations of the Diocese and feel that they are a Church apart." Archbishop T. J. Toolen, letter to Abbot Bede Luibel, June 16, 1959: "He [Raya] is a slick Easterner and is bound to give trouble to anybody. That has been my dealings with him. You never know what is in his mind. He says one thing and means another. So, beware!"

Western theology while in the seminary and had had to relearn his own Eastern faith and heritage, mentored by many of the priests who had founded the Cairo Circle (*ibid.*). Because Eastern Catholic Churches were in union with Rome, a Church so much more powerful, richer, and more expansive, the identity of these small Churches had been attenuated and confused. In churches such as St. George, the congregation was thoroughly Latinized. Stations of the Cross, a devotion of Roman Catholic origin, were common in Eastern Catholic Churches.¹²⁵ In Raya's mind, Western religious expression was not totally compatible with Eastern theology. To de-Latinize his church, Father Raya removed the statues. As early as 1953, the Byzantine tradition of using crowns in marriage ceremonies was restored, and the bride and groom performed the dance of Isaiah, a walk around the tetrapod. By 1954, baptisms were conducted according to the Melkite Greek Catholic Church tradition, which integrated all three sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. In 1959, the communion rail in the newly built St. George Melkite Greek Catholic Church was disassembled.

Father Raya also sought to repatriate the individuals lost from his parish, reminding "the old timers who [had broken] away" to join Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches that the Melkite Church was their "heritage!"¹²⁶ He visited the high schools his young parishioners attended to teach them about their Byzantine roots.¹²⁷ To ensure that Catholic schools had a working knowledge of Eastern Christianity, he often taught the staff about the Byzantine traditions. During church services, he explained not only

¹²⁵ It is also interesting to note that the letterhead for St. George's Church identified the community as St. George's R.C Melkite Church or St. George's R.C. Byzantine Church from early 1955 to late 1959.

¹²⁶ Hall, interview.

¹²⁷ Albert and Mary Grace Ritchey, interview. Former parishioners and friends of Raya. Note that the Ritchey family was a large family, and most of them were heavily involved in the St. George Church. Ferris Ritchey, Jr., the lawyer, was part of the family.

the Gospel but also the meaning of their faith as seen through the eyes of an Eastern Christian.¹²⁸ He personally undertook the responsibility of Holy Communion preparation.¹²⁹

Then Father Raya's support of the Eastern Catholic Churches moved onto a larger stage. When the *Byzantine Catholic World* newspaper was established in Pittsburg in 1956, with a circulation of about 35,000, Father Raya became a regular contributor. It was not uncommon for him to receive dozens of letters weekly regarding Byzantine Catholic practices and traditions: "The articles I am writing in the *Byzantine Catholic World* sometimes provoke the most unbelievable controversy. I have to clarify or explain or answer questions of all kinds."¹³⁰ He became a staff member of and regular contributor to the *Eastern Catholic Life* newspaper in 1964. In the ensuing years, he began to travel, giving lectures to major universities and seminaries, as well as to Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox churches all over North America and Europe.¹³¹ He appeared on television talk shows such as *The Phil Donahue Show* and was a commentator for a television show regarding liturgical services.¹³² He became an advocate for the establishment of a Melkite Diocese in the United States.

Raya felt a sense of responsibility to share the treasures of Byzantine Christianity with everyone who might be interested. He demonstrated a confidence in his own

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, November 13, 1959. At the same time, he respected the Western tradition of Solemn Holy Communion at age seven, even though the children were receiving Holy Communion since their baptism.

¹³⁰ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, August 23, 1962.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, June 4, 1966.

identity as a child of God in his own religious tradition, a spirit that opened the door to sharing and dialogue with others.

Supporting ecumenism

Essentially, Father Raya was an ecumenical man with an open heart and open mind. Although Raya was rooted in a very ancient tradition, Frances Finney, member of the Ritchey family and nationally recognized school principal in Birmingham, perceived him, in retrospect, as someone who was “ahead of everyone else.”¹³³ He went out of his way to invite Palestinians to be part of St. George Church.¹³⁴ His progressive ideas and “open door approach” also attracted the leaders and faithful of different denominations to his church. These visits provided his parishioners the opportunity to listen and to learn about other branches of Christianity and even other faiths.¹³⁵ They were taken to the local synagogue,¹³⁶ and Jews came to St. George Church. This development undoubtedly angered Archbishop Toolen.¹³⁷ While there was a substantial number of Muslims living in Birmingham, few had participated in community activities or taken leadership roles until Father Raya appeared.¹³⁸ Because of his desire for Christian unity, Father Raya spoke frequently in other churches and joined the ecumenical Ministerial Association of Birmingham.

¹³³ Frances Finney, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 14, 2014.

¹³⁴ Milienewicz, interview.

¹³⁵ T.J. and Mary Jo Kassouf, interview. Former parishioners in Birmingham.

¹³⁶ George, Pilato, and Mezrano, interview

¹³⁷ Archbishop Toolen admonished anyone wanting to meet with Jews in the diocese. The Roman Catholic Archbishop did not support such gatherings as written in a letter to the Abbot of the Benedictine Monastery, March 25, 1961.

¹³⁸ Karl B. Friedman, supporting letter for the nomination of Archbishop Raya for the Nobel Peace prize, January 11, 2005.

With a demanding lecture and retreat schedule, and a growing parish of more than 600 people, Raya recognized a need for help.¹³⁹ In January 1959, Raya asked Father Bede Luibel, Abbot of a Roman Catholic Benedictine Monastery in Cullman, Alabama, and a good friend, to petition the Holy See to grant some priests the privilege to learn the Byzantine Rite and become bi-ritual.¹⁴⁰ The Abbot agreed. In a courtesy letter to Archbishop Toolen, Luibel explained that assistance would greatly benefit Raya's parish, ensuring the Melkite faithful access to Sunday Liturgies and the availability of the Sacraments in their own familiar Eastern Rite. This initiative would also strengthen relations with the Greek Orthodox Church.¹⁴¹ The Holy See granted dispensation in early 1959,¹⁴² to the displeasure of Archbishop Toolen.

From Toolen's perspective, the dispensation had been granted under false pretenses. He wrote to Father Abbott: "there is not any chance of the Benedictines reaching out after the Orthodox dissidents in Birmingham and Raya never had any thought of that. After you have been dealing with these Easterners for the past thirty-two years you will find that they will try to get their way no matter how they do it."¹⁴³ Not surprisingly, Archbishop Toolen severely restricted the privilege of bi-ritual service. The bi-ritual priests were allowed to serve the Melkite faithful, but only inside the Monastery.¹⁴⁴ In May 1959, the Apostolic Delegate requested an explanation from Archbishop Toolen

¹³⁹ Archbishop Toolen, letter to Father Joseph Raya. February 26, 1957 estimated membership at St. George's at 500 people. By January 1959, the number of souls at St. George's had reportedly increased to 600 souls – Father Joseph Raya, letter to Abbot Bede Luibel, January 14, 1959.

¹⁴⁰ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Abbot Bede Luibel, January 14, 1959.

¹⁴¹ Abbot Bede Luibel, letter to Archbishop Toolen, April 30, 1959.

¹⁴² Abbot Bede Luibel, letter to Father Joseph Raya, February 19, 1959.

¹⁴³ Archbishop Toolen, letter to Abbot Bede Luibel, May 1, 1959.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

regarding his harsh interpretation of the dispensation.¹⁴⁵ Toolen responded that this action was done for the good of the Church and that the use of the permission had created “great wonder and talk.”¹⁴⁶ He also declared that the two Eastern Catholic parishes (Melkite and Maronite) created “more trouble and difficulty” than the rest of the Diocese because they did not conform to the rules and regulations of the Church.¹⁴⁷ In spite of the controversy, Father Raya instructed five priests from the Abbey to become bi-ritual. At least one of these priests was recognized as an Assistant Pastor at St. George and celebrated the Divine Liturgy with Raya each Sunday for four or five years.¹⁴⁸

The results of Father Raya’s ecumenical efforts were clearly in evidence in 1964 when the Melkite Archbishop of Galilee came to visit Birmingham. Father Raya was responsible for organizing the liturgical celebrations. In a strong display of ecumenical support, thirty-five Roman Catholic priests agreed to attend, along with local Greek Orthodox and Russian priests with their community representatives. Two pews were set up for representatives of the Ministerial Association and the Rabbis of the two Jewish synagogues. An ecumenical choir from the various churches trained in the Byzantine services sang the liturgy. Clergy of every denomination were invited to come to the altar and share the kiss of peace. Raya wrote:

Besides the five concelebrants at the altar, all the priests lined up, went to the altar and kissed the altar, the paten, the chalice, the hand and the right shoulder of the Bishop answering to his greeting: “Christ is in our midst! He is and always will be.” They kissed each other’s left shoulder, right shoulder

¹⁴⁵ Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, letter to Archbishop Toolen, May 25, 1959.

¹⁴⁶ Archbishop Toolen, letter to Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, June 1, 1959.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ferris Ritchey Jr., interview.

saying to each other, “Christ is in our midst” and the other to answer the same way. “He is and He always will be.” To my amazement the two Orthodox came up also with the other Catholic priests. This in normal life is unthinkable and against their canon law as it is against ours. The kiss of peace is a sign of unity in faith and in love. After the ceremony the two priests came up to the Bishop and told him that they were sorry to have broken the laws of the church by taking and giving the kiss of peace at the altar. “We felt so united in Christ that we could not help but participate and embrace in the presence of Christ.”¹⁴⁹

Raya was able to deal with a variety of different ecumenical opportunities and challenges in his pastoral ministry. He tried to listen and be empathetic to the positions of others, even those of different denominations, a useful tool in the pursuit of peaceful goals. This approach also had its advantages in more tense circumstances when conflict was difficult to avoid. Familiarity with the liturgical and canonical norms of other faiths provided the opportunity to avoid conflict and even accidental misunderstandings. These character traits and skills were useful in future religious based peacebuilding efforts.

Facing conflict over language

Father Raya’s strong desire to foster a barrier-breaking unity in Christ led to a conflict with ecclesiastical authorities over the language of the liturgy. His yearning for unity was a major factor in the development of Father Raya’s theology of peace.

Services at the Melkite Church in Birmingham were originally conducted in Greek and Arabic. On occasions when a Roman Catholic substitute priest presided, services were even offered in Latin.¹⁵⁰ Encouraged by the Patriarch, Raya’s predecessor at St.

¹⁴⁹ Father Joseph Raya, *Pax/Caritas Newsletter*, August 1, 1964. Madonna House Archives.

¹⁵⁰ William and Bob Zazaur, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 14, 2004.

George Church¹⁵¹ made an effort to incorporate some English into the parish's liturgies.¹⁵² When Raya arrived in 1952, the local ordinary, Thomas J. Toolen, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Mobile-Birmingham, expressed concern about the use of English in the Liturgy and asked Raya to discontinue this practice.¹⁵³ Raya was confronted with a dilemma. On one hand he was aware of Patriarch Maximos IV's "orders and encouragement . . . to use the vernacular or English language in the Liturgy."¹⁵⁴ Moreover, based on personal experience in New Jersey, Raya knew that young people no longer understood the Arabic language;¹⁵⁵ as Donna and Richard Smaha, youth at St. George during this language dispute, observed, it was unlikely that immigrant churches would survive if they did not change.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, Toolen was his local Archbishop and an order had been given. Raya was undoubtedly torn by these divergent mandates, but managed to develop and implement a compromise solution. Ordinarily "[a] lukewarm advocate of the English liturgy,"¹⁵⁷ Raya personally complied with Toolen's request by celebrating in Arabic, but he allowed his parishioners to continue to "read the translations of the prayers" in English to respect the Patriarch's request.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵¹ Fr. Bardeouil was Raya's immediate predecessor at St. George Melkite Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

¹⁵² Father Joseph Raya, letter to Apostolic Delegate Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, December 22, 1959, suggests that at least some services at St. George Melkite Greek Catholic Church were being offered in English language since 1945.

¹⁵³ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Archbishop Toolen, March 21, 1955.

¹⁵⁴ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Apostolic Delegate Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, December 22, 1959.

¹⁵⁵ Zazaur, interview.

¹⁵⁶ Donna and Richard Smaha, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 14, 2004.

¹⁵⁷ Ferris Ritchey, Jr. "Mafia Priest."

¹⁵⁸ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Archbishop Toolen, March 21, 1955.

In about 1955, when Father Raya invited the Knights of Columbus to celebrate the Liturgy at St. George, the parish choir responded to the entire Liturgy in English, very much impressing their guests. The inspired Knights returned to their respective parish communities and asked their own priests to offer the Mass in English.¹⁵⁹ The priests immediately notified Archbishop Thomas J. Toolen, igniting a major controversy. Upset, Toolen wrote a strongly worded and insulting letter to Raya demanding cessation of English language liturgies: “I understand nobody’s orders mean very much to you. . . . If you do not like the ways we do things in the Diocese of Mobile why don’t you leave and if you will not leave willingly then I will ask that you be taken out because any man that is in this diocese has to abide by the rules and the regulations of the diocese.”¹⁶⁰ Dismissing Father Raya’s earlier defense that he had his Patriarch’s permission, Toolen demanded that Raya prove his position by “showing . . . this permission in writing” or he would “ask the Delegate to remove [Raya] from the Diocese.”¹⁶¹

As Ferris Ritchey, Jr., Raya’s close friend and attorney, recalled, Raya “politely informed [Archbishop Toolen] that while he would obey him in all things to which he owed obedience, he could not permit the extinction of the Byzantine Churches’ right to the use of the vernacular of the people in celebrating the Divine Liturgy.”¹⁶² Quoting his Patriarch, Raya explained that “it is right for us [Byzantine Catholics], according to the spirit of our rite to celebrate the Divine Sacrifice in the language the people of the

¹⁵⁹ Ferris Ritchey, Jr., “Mafia Priest.”

¹⁶⁰ Archbishop Toolen, letter to Father Joseph Raya, March 19, 1955.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ferris Ritchey, Jr., “Mafia Priest.”

country understand.”¹⁶³ In 1958 Raya published the *Byzantine Missal* and allowed his parishioners to use it in their liturgical celebrations.¹⁶⁴

Even though Toolen provided the “Imprimi Potest”¹⁶⁵ for the *Byzantine Missal* he may not have expected English to be adopted in the Divine Liturgy. In any case, he escalated the issue to higher ecclesiastical levels. He sought and received the support of the Apostolic Delegate, Egidio Vagnozzi. On December 5, 1959, the Apostolic Delegate wrote to Toolen, Archbishop of Mobile-Birmingham, Alabama (Stern 172a):¹⁶⁶

I have been instructed by the Holy See to prevent the celebration of the Holy Mass either partially or totally in English wherever it is being done. Priests of the Oriental Rite have the right to celebrate the divine offices in the oriental language of their respective rites even in Western countries, but they must avoid causing confusion by introducing the vernacular language into the Mass, for, in so doing, they offer an opportunity to the promoters of the abandonment of the Latin language in the Sacred Liturgy to cite as an example and a precedent that which the Oriental priests are doing in their midst.¹⁶⁷

Toolen’s response to the Apostolic Delegate was a grateful promise that “the abuse will be corrected with pleasure in this Diocese.”¹⁶⁸ Soon after, the Apostolate Delegate was

¹⁶³ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Archbishop Toolen, March 21, 1955.

¹⁶⁴ Raya was aware of the fact that the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and the observance of Corpus Christi were Roman Catholic in origin and brings this fact to the reader’s attention in *Byzantine Daily Worship* (Raya, 1969, pages 402 and 908 respectively). In both instances he confirms that the texts for these two celebrations were made popular by Patriarch Maximos II Hakim between the years 1760 and 1761. However, Raya was also very respectful of the Melkite Church hierarchs – his brother bishops, and he knew that the Church was not prepared to eliminate the celebration of these feasts. He dutifully included a translation of these services in his book to keep the fullness of translations intact. It is unclear as to whether or not Raya personally celebrated these services.

¹⁶⁵ “Imprimi Potest” is Latin for “it may be printed.”

¹⁶⁶ Years later Raya indicated that the Apostolic Delegate acted under direct pressure from Cardinal Spellman, the conservative Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York.

¹⁶⁷ Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, letter to Archbishop Toolen, December 5, 1959.

¹⁶⁸ Archbishop Toolen, letter to Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, December 9, 1959.

informed that Toolen had personally gone to Birmingham to read his letter and that Fr. Raya was “crushed.”¹⁶⁹

Raya wrote to the Apostolic Delegate expressing his concerns and rationale for disagreement with the order, including harm to his parish and the Melkite Church, contradiction of the Canon Law of the Church, an undermining of the authority of the Patriarch, and a reinforced argument for the Orthodox not to trust Rome.¹⁷⁰ That the resistance to the use of the vernacular had become, for Raya, an embodiment of oppression from the Roman Catholic Church seems clear in his protest to the Apostolic Delegate: “The use of the vernacular, especially in our Byzantine Rite, is the only means by which we can reach the people, teach them, and make them understand and appreciate their Rite and their beautiful traditions. It is the only way we can improve their spiritual life and their devotion and piety.”¹⁷¹ In spite of these objections, Raya pledged to “submit to the decision of my religious superiors, even if in my own heart I feel it is unfair and harmful to my people.”¹⁷² In the same letter, Raya requested time to help his parishioners relearn their ancestral languages so that they might revert from English back to Arabic and Greek.

Toolen was upset about the fact that Raya wrote to the Apostolic Delegate. He visited Raya’s rectory demanding an apology to Vagnozzi, retracting everything. Raya

¹⁶⁹ Archbishop Toolen, letter to Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, December 19, 1959.

¹⁷⁰ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Apostolic Delegate Egidio Vagnozzi, December 22, 1959. Apparently, Father Joseph Raya was the first Eastern Catholic to explain the Melkite Church’s position to the Apostolic Delegate in Washington (Sayegh 1963, 198).

¹⁷¹ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, December 22, 1959.

¹⁷² Ibid.

responded, “How can I tell such a big lie when I really meant everything and I still mean it?” Archbishop Toolen responded, “Order. You write as I told you.”¹⁷³

Toolen recommended a one-month transition period to Vagnozzi in spite of the fact that Raya apparently requested two months.¹⁷⁴ This recommendation was made because Toolen believed “his aim is to get in touch with the Patriarch and with Rome to endeavor to try to change the order. I am sure that is in his mind and he wants two months to put this over.”¹⁷⁵ Vagnozzi agreed with Toolen and granted a one-month transition period.¹⁷⁶

Toolen also distributed Vagnozzi’s letter to a number of priests,¹⁷⁷ demanding that, in accordance with the instructions of the Holy See, they stop “the celebration of Holy Mass either partially or totally in English wherever it is being done.”¹⁷⁸ In response Abbot Bede Luibel appealed to Archbishop Toolen expressing his concerns about the state of affairs on this issue.¹⁷⁹

For twenty years the English has been used by the Oriental Rite people in celebrating the Holy sacrifice of the Mass in this country; for thirteen or fourteen years it has been used in your own diocese. Bishop Sheen a few years ago and Bishop Elko on many occasions have celebrated Pontifical Masses in English according to the Eastern Rite, and it has been no secret either here or in the Vatican . . . In my reply to the Apostolic Delegate, I expressed my profound sorrow at the hardships this new instruction will cause to our Brother-Catholics of the Eastern Rites in the U.S. . . . I am reminded of the fact that when Cardinal Cicognani was Apostolic Delegate to this country, he repeatedly stressed in public addresses the important role to be played by Eastern Rite Catholics as the bridge of reunion by which the

¹⁷³ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, January 2, 1960.

¹⁷⁴ As a special favour, a three-month transition period was reportedly granted to Father Raya for the gradual return from English to the exclusive use of Arabic and Greek (Edelby 1963, 198).

¹⁷⁵ Archbishop Toolen, letter to Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, December 19, 1959.

¹⁷⁶ Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, letter to Archbishop Toolen, December 22, 1959.

¹⁷⁷ Archbishop Toolen, letter to Abbot Luibel, December 9, 1959.

¹⁷⁸ Cardinal Egidio Vagnozzi, notarized letter to Archbishop Toolen, December 5, 1959.

¹⁷⁹ Abbot Bede Luibel, letter to Archbishop Toolen, December 26, 1959.

separated brethren of the East might return to Catholic unity and find there, already existing and protected by the Holy See, the same beautiful liturgies they witnessed in the Orthodox churches.¹⁸⁰

Toolen responded curtly, “It seems that when Rome has spoken that is the end of the question.”¹⁸¹ Father Raya was truly overwhelmed. In a letter to Catherine Doherty,¹⁸² he described all the work he had to do to revamp all the services and music from English back to Arabic and Greek as “a killing.”

Patriarch Maximos IV, asked Raya to write three long reports to him and the Holy Office.¹⁸³ In these reports, Father Raya wrote that the Oriental Congregation did not know about the order, but that the order not to use English had been given by the conservative Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Spellman.¹⁸⁴ Then Raya was asked by the Patriarch to cease his own interventions so that patriarchal authorities could pursue this matter with the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church, the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office and the Pope (Edelby 1963, 199).

Once the Patriarch gathered the necessary historical and legal information, he sent it to the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Church. The reply came back: “certain restrictive norms had been given on this question by the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office to the Apostolic Delegate in the United States” (Sayegh 1963, 199). Yet in

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Archbishop Toolen, letter to Abbot Bede Luibel, December 28, 1959.

¹⁸² Father Joseph Raya, letter to Catherine Doherty, February 24, 1960.

¹⁸³ Attorney Ferris Ritchie Jr. in his interview stated that the Patriarch, with Father Joseph Raya’s assistance, petitioned John XXIII, with an accompanying brief, to reverse the decision of the Cardinals. This information has been omitted in *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*.

¹⁸⁴ Lawyer Ferris Ritchey Jr. helped Raya write these documents, but was unable to locate his own copies of the text. Many years later, while serving in Israel, Raya spoke with journalists about his challenges with Spellman. “[Raya] recalled that in that year Cardinal Spellman campaigned against him, to the extent of extracting a rescript from what was then known as the Holy Office of the Inquisition: ‘Pope John XXIII meted out justice to me, and that was the first case in which a rescript of the Inquisition was rescinded.’” Spellman was known for his staunch position to keep Latin in all Catholic services.

spite of many attempts to procure such evidence from the Holy Office, nothing could be found. On April 1, 1960, Pope John XXIII approved the use of vernacular languages in the celebration of the Byzantine Mass, excepting the major part of anaphora, reversing the provisional decision made by the Holy Office only a few months earlier (Edelby 1963, 195). Raya could now celebrate liturgies in English with the Pope's blessing.

Raya was an active participant in the conflict over language with his Roman Catholic superiors—his parishioners were eventually allowed to celebrate the liturgies in English without further opposition—just as he had succeeded in getting a dome into St. George Church and bi-ritual support from the local Benedictine Monastery. Once again, Raya found creative solutions to address and resolve a controversial issue. Raya sought intervention from higher authorities (even as he reluctantly submitted to those in immediate authority over him). He did not hesitate to make his views known and provide reasonable justification for his positions. Whenever possible, he sought to continue conversations and to help people learn to understand other ways of worship and other religious traditions. As numerous testimonials indicate, his parishioners were deeply grateful for their courageous advocate.

On the other hand, he failed to achieve reconciliation and good will from his chief opponent in Birmingham—Archbishop Toolen. Some of Raya's methods of keeping the law but defying the spirit of the law (e.g. the concealed dome), in fact, might well have aggravated tensions (it seems unlikely that Toolen would not have, at some point, learned of the existence of the inner dome). Given Toolen's evident rigidity in regard to Roman Catholic Canon Law, it is possible that nothing except complete, silent

submission from Raya would have brought about good relations between the two men, something that the spirited Raya was unlikely to accept.

All of these areas of conflict within the Church—the revival of Eastern Christian traditions, support for ecumenism, and choice of language for the liturgy—were concerned with building a strong self-identity in his people and an equally strong community, both of which were necessary to reach out to others and develop ecumenical cooperation. He seemed to have known instinctively what later theorists on peacebuilding would emphasize: a strong identity is a necessary foundation for building bridges with other communities.

Unfortunately, while these conflicts gave Raya valuable experience that prepared him for the larger racial conflicts that engulfed Birmingham and the southern states of the USA, they also established a tense backdrop against which Raya's efforts on behalf his black brothers and sisters would provoke further opposition from Archbishop Toolen, rather than the support which should have been offered. Not even Raya's work with the Second Vatican Council, approved by Archbishop Toolen, was sufficient to develop mutual respect, although it did offer Raya additional preparation for the challenge of the Civil Rights Movement.

Raya at the Second Vatican Council

By the summer of 1962, it was clear that Patriarch Maximos IV sought Raya's presence and assistance at the Second Vatican Council in Rome. Raya was to serve as deacon in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy for the hierarchy of the Universal

Church.¹⁸⁵ Bishop Toolen provided permission for Raya to leave the Mobile-Birmingham Diocese for one month (October 1962) to serve as *aid-referendaire et courier* in support of the Curia of the Patriarch.¹⁸⁶

Raya was sworn to secrecy and was therefore unable to share details of his work at the Vatican Council,¹⁸⁷ but he was moved and inspired by the initiatives and actions taken by the Patriarch¹⁸⁸: “This certainly was the most wonderful experience of my life and a lesson in religion, the best I ever had and witness in my whole life.”¹⁸⁹ For Raya, this experience put into perspective the role of an Eastern Catholic Church within the Universal Church. During his brief session in Rome for the first session of the Council, Raya met many great men, but

[t]he one who impressed me more than any one yet was Pere Gautier, the Melkite priest worker who built and is still building the city for the poor in Nazareth. Oh! What poverty and what grandeur in poverty and in love!!!! . . . This document wants us priests, and our bishops to come down from our thrones and little world of grands seigneurs to be poor and live and frequent the poor and give them, for them and to make panties (culottes) and underwear out of the red and purple and hermine outwear of cardinals and bishops, etc. . .¹⁹⁰

Raya was also asked to serve as a *referendaire* in support of the Patriarchal Curia in the second session of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁹¹ He went to Rome again in September and October of 1963, at the invitation of the Patriarch and with the

¹⁸⁵ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, August 23, 1962.

¹⁸⁶ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Catherine Doherty, September 10, 1962.

¹⁸⁷ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Catherine Doherty, October 12, 1962 and letter to Father Callahan, October 17, 1962. Many of the initiatives of the Melkite Church were documented in Patriarch Maximos IV's book *The Melkite Church at the Council*. Some of the objectives included de-Latinizing the Eastern Catholic Churches.

¹⁸⁸ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, October 17 1962.

¹⁸⁹ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, November 14, 1962.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, August 10, 1963.

permission of Archbishop Toolen.¹⁹² Raya took advantage of the opportunity to reconnect with Pere Gautier,¹⁹³ and was inspired by his book, *The Church, Jesus and the Poor*.¹⁹⁴ There were numerous opportunities to hear and meet with celebrated theologians and even the Pope.¹⁹⁵

Participation in the Second Vatican Council provided Raya with an opportunity to familiarize himself with various theologians and the inner workings of the higher ranks of the Church. He saw various initiatives presented. Some were effectively dismissed—lost in formal delays—while others were embraced and put into action. The skills Raya acquired in Rome would be useful in future stages of his life.

Apprentice to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Father Raya's diplomatic skills and commitment to peace would be required in his engagement in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Birmingham was one of the most segregated cities in the United States in this era of secret lynchings, deeply rooted hatred, and open discrimination. As confirmed by Karl Friedman, a prominent Jewish lawyer from Birmingham, Father Raya chose to stand against racism and for equal rights for everyone:

[He] accepted the responsibility of the supreme leader of those of his Church and of his faith . . . and met with Dr. Martin Luther King and his chief assistants to talk about racial problems in Birmingham and the discrimination which prevailed

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Catherine Doherty, October 21, 1963.

¹⁹⁴ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, October 3, 1963.

¹⁹⁵ Father Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Orłowsky, October 11, 1963. Fr. Orłowsky was the priest who temporarily ministered at St. George Church while Raya attended the Vatican Council in the fall of 1963.

in this community. . . . Few major decisions were made in the Civil Rights struggle without his participation and blessing.¹⁹⁶

Yet his willingness to stand with African Americans in their struggle to achieve the basic rights that others took for granted brought him into conflict with ecclesiastical authority.

Participating in nonviolent marches

Father Raya's first and most visible participation occurred during the public marches against segregation initiated by Martin Luther King, Jr. The first nonviolent march in April 1963 resulted in the jailing of one thousand people. In May of that year, when Eugene "Bull" Connor, Director of Public Safety for Birmingham, ordered the use of police dogs and fire hoses on the marching protestors, including children, Father Raya pleaded with Connor to refrain from the use of dogs and hoses:

This is not human! I would like to ask you, please do not turn your hose on the people. He [Connor] said, "You nigger lover, you go with them and I'll turn them on you." I said, "Listen here, kiss this chair you are sitting in. Kiss it, kiss it goodbye. You will never come back here. We are not going to vote for you. None of my parishioners. I tell them, anyone who votes for you is not of my church."¹⁹⁷

The use of the hose and the police continued and Connor lost the election (Sabada 2005, 70).

Father Raya likewise supported the Selma campaign for the right to register and vote, and in August 1963, he supported the massive March on Washington to

¹⁹⁶ Karl B. Friedman, supporting letter for the nomination of Archbishop Raya for the Nobel Peace prize, January 11, 2005. Confirmation of his activities in the Civil Rights Movement was also reported in nominations from Archbishop Roman Bernard, Auxiliary Bishop Nicholas Samra, and Archbishop Vsevolod of Scopelosa, for the Nobel Peace Prize.

¹⁹⁷ Archbishop Joseph Raya, interview by Father Ron Cafeo, November 3, 2004.

protest racism in the south.¹⁹⁸ His involvement had been directly forbidden by Archbishop Toolen, an order that applied to all priests. None were to participate in the race-based peace movement. Raya's response was a categorical "If you don't like it, take my priesthood away!"¹⁹⁹ With the threat of excommunication hanging over him, Raya sought the guidance and direction of the Patriarch who stated, "I am your bishop! Do what your conscience dictates you to do." Father Raya replied, "My conscience is to follow the march." The Patriarch responded, "You go and march." And he did (Sabada 2005, 70). Raya's decision and action indicated his willingness to sacrifice his own position, his own security, even his connection with his parishioners. While he had been prepared to submit to edicts concerning the language of the liturgy, he was not prepared to cooperate with assaults on people's dignity and security of life.

Demonstrating love despite opposition

Father Raya's involvement went far beyond joining marches. Over the objections of many people, including some of his own scandalized parishioners,²⁰⁰ Father Raya allowed members of the black community to attend his church services. In his own house, he insisted that his black housekeeper, Maria, enter the front door, a flagrant violation of Southern mores. For those actions, he paid a high price. When the warning of "visitors" ("Listen here you foreigner. This nigger . . . uses the back door or we will punish you") had no effect on Father Raya, the vigilantes came again, this time at

¹⁹⁸ Milienewicz, interview.

¹⁹⁹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, interview by author, July 9, 2002.

²⁰⁰ Pharo, interview.

midnight and dragged him to a nearby forest for a severe beating (Sabada 2005, 69). The subsequent warning was simply, “Next time you won’t escape or the church will burn” (Sabada 2005, 69). The new church of St. George, the physical base for so many of Raya’s activities, was now seriously threatened. Members of the KKK visited Father Raya and repeated the threats: “You nigger lover! You don’t listen; the church will burn soon . . . No niggers in your church, only whites” (Sabada 2005, 69). Although Father Raya was prepared to tell his parishioners they could leave the church if “they didn’t love their brothers” (Sabada 2005, 60), he could not bear the thought of losing the newly constructed church for which his parishioners had worked so hard. As Father Raya furthered explained, “I begged them to leave the church alone, and I would do what they wanted me to do. . . On Sunday, I had to tell the people. I begged the black people not to come . . . I told my people that blacks should not come because the church was just built. I was so proud of my church. I didn’t want to see it burned down” (Sabada 2005, 69).

Despite his seeming capitulation to the demands of the Klan, Father Raya’s commitments to civil rights and human dignity were too deep to permit him to stand by and do nothing. He found other ways to help his black brothers and sisters. Since 1957, Raya had dreamt of having a mission for the poor in Birmingham. Now, in the context of the racial challenges and unrest, Raya established a mission for African Americans in a poor black section of downtown Birmingham. It was named St. Moses the Abyssinian/Ethiopian Mission after a black saint.²⁰¹ The beginnings of this Eastern Catholic mission, with a congregation of fifteen black women, two small boys, and five nuns, were characterized by fun and humor: Father David Kirk’s “knowledge of black

²⁰¹ Seraphim Ritchey, interview by author, Birmingham, Alabama, November 12, 2004.

music” and Father Raya’s “Byzantine music” came together in new rhythms and chants, and Raya’s preaching style was apparently “just like a Baptist preachah.”²⁰²

The southern white Christian community frowned upon such personal involvement during this campaign of nonviolence. The communities and even their pastors were full of prejudice against the black community (Sabada 2005, 71). In contrast, Father Raya opted for full involvement and dared to make his views public. Raya openly criticized the Ministerial Association (Evangelical, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Lutheran and Presbyterian) in newspapers such as *The Catholic Week* for its lack of support for the Civil Rights Movement. He insisted that the Christian response to racial injustice was definitive action:

They [Ministerial Association of Birmingham] would have proved their point and their position in the face of God by coming down to the poor and the destitute, to the ones in fetters and in wounds and kneel beside them and wash their feet and their wounds, use their special fountains of water, go into their special utility rooms where a civilized and respectable white skin does not penetrate. (Sabada 2005, 67)

Raya’s open criticism of the Ministerial Association was a challenge to other religious leaders, asking them to take a more proactive and courageous stance. This is a strong example of religious peacebuilding.

As might have been expected, Raya’s actions angered Archbishop Toolen yet again, and the threat of excommunication loomed over his head. Raya chose an approach that preserved his integrity: “[Archbishop Toolen] really threatened me with excommunication if I do not follow his rule. I say you are the bishop, I follow your rule but I do not like it. I stopped going public but I continued my relationship with the

²⁰² Father Joseph Raya and Father Francis Bouwen, letter to Madonna House, November 21, 1967.

Negro, by helping them in their home[s].”²⁰³ For example, amidst other work, Father Bill Higgins from the Roman Catholic Church and Father Raya set up a special project to support black weddings. Understanding that the bride wanted to feel beautiful, both priests went from store to store to collect bras, beautiful underwear, the bridal dress and anything else that would make the bride feel loved, respected, and beautiful (Sabada 2005, 69). Characteristically, Father Raya found time and means to meet the special needs of women; that they were black women made no difference to him.

Pastoral Services for the Whole Community

Father Raya’s ongoing passion to cultivate equality and mutual respect was evident in other ways during his years in Birmingham. He sought to support community development and the realization of individual potential through various forms of education and mentoring.

Establishing a Montessori School

Raya became very interested in the Montessori Method of pedagogy since it stressed independence and freedom, and respect for the psychological, physical and social development of children. The liberty to choose²⁰⁴ and to act freely was what most attracted him about this method because he believed that a child would develop optimally when there was self-directed freedom and respect. Hence Father Raya elected to establish a Montessori school. His motivation, in part, was to prevent his parishioners

²⁰³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, interview by Father Ron Cafeo, Combermere, Ontario, November 4, 2002.

²⁰⁴ Archbishop Joseph Raya, conversation with author, Combermere, Ontario, October 3, 1999.

from being Latinized in the Roman Catholic schools. Raya claimed the establishment of the Montessori school was the first missionary contribution of an Eastern Church in the West.²⁰⁵ The school was unusual in other ways. It was opened, not only to St. George parishioners, but also to the entire community of Birmingham. Its founding document clearly identified a vision and purpose: the school would try to develop a social conscience for children of different religions, races, and ethnic origins.²⁰⁶ Through real collaborative and ecumenical effort, this school would contribute to the alleviation of suffering, injustice, and poverty. Explicit religious instruction would not be included in the curriculum, but Raya and the teachers would be available to the children or their parents, should they have questions. The particular contribution that the Byzantine tradition offered through this school was the restoration of the image of God in each person, a respect of the inherent dignity of every human person and “his right to the full flowering of his being.” Unfortunately, the dream of the school was short-lived. Begun in 1964,²⁰⁷ it closed its doors in 1967, because of the lack of support from the parish community.²⁰⁸

The attempted establishment of an educational institution focused on justice, peace and enhanced personal dignity with inter-racial and inter-religious overtones represents a bold peacebuilding initiative. It is an example of how systemic change can happen through the creation of an institution.

²⁰⁵ See Appendix 3 – Montessori School. Raya’s statement includes inaccuracies. It is highly unlikely that this was the first contribution of an Eastern Church in the West, and it is difficult to perceive the establishment of a school as a missionary effort.

²⁰⁶ See Appendix 3.

²⁰⁷ Albert and Mary Grace Ritchey, interview.

²⁰⁸ Ferris Ritchey, Jr., “Mafia Priest. ”

Mentoring potential priests

Father Raya took seriously the need to encourage and mentor those who were considering a possible vocation to the priesthood.²⁰⁹ Because of him, many men became priests and deacons, including Father David Kirk from Emmaus House in Harlem.

I was like St. Timothy sitting at the feet of St. Paul, enthusiastically taking in every word of truth and wisdom from him. . . . he gave me . . . a whole new, different understanding of God, the universe, the world, society, salvation, the human person, which we call orthodoxy or Eastern Christianity. . . . By sharing this faith, he gave me “the equipment of the saints” as St. Paul says.²¹⁰

Father Raya attracted many priests from across the United States for Christian formation and education about the Eastern Church. A mentoring function is a recognized role in religious peacebuilding.

Encouraging ordinary lay parishioners

It was important for Father Raya to build up and strengthen the Christian commitment of all who came under his influence. His teaching and example influenced attitudes²¹¹ and consciences.²¹² He took care of the spiritual and material needs of his parishioners, often using personal funds and gifts for seemingly quixotic expenditures that other priests might have disdained. Just as he and Father Bill Higgins purchased clothing to make brides feel beautiful, Father Raya called on poorer parishioners just before Easter instructing them to buy new Easter outfits for their children. Raya covered the costs. Even money supplied to him for his own clothes or travel found its way to the

²⁰⁹ Abrasley, interview.

²¹⁰ David Kirk, “The Man Who Stood the World on its Head,” in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

²¹¹ Abrasley, interview

²¹² Smaha, interview.

less fortunate, as testified by close friends Charles and Pat Abrasley.²¹³ Beautiful presents given to him were passed on to the poor. Before he left Birmingham, he invited people to the rectory to help themselves not only to the 145 icons he had received as gifts and had used in instruction but also to other personal possessions that people might want as keepsakes.²¹⁴

Departure from Birmingham

In the fall of 1968, Father Joseph M. Raya was consecrated as Archbishop by the Patriarch Maximos V Hakim and Archbishop Toolen, and appointed to the See of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth, and all Galilee. For this major event in his life, many visitors arrived from elsewhere in North America. Twenty-six states were represented.²¹⁵ The Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Walworth Barbour, stressed the importance of Father Raya's coming to Israel at this juncture in history because the Christian Church needed help politically and socially.²¹⁶ He had heard, through letters written by various Jews in Birmingham to their relatives in Israel, that Raya was a man who could be trusted, who was coming to help them.

The newly consecrated Archbishop Raya thanked his Patriarch and the Roman Catholic Archbishop (Toolen) who had helped him "become a better priest." He thanked his parishioners for making him the human being and priest that he had become.²¹⁷ The Maltese cross he wore was engraved with both Hebrew and Arabic words for Peace and

²¹³ Charles and Pat Abrasley, interview by author, Birmingham Alabama, November 14, 2004.

²¹⁴ Zazaur, interview.

²¹⁵ Ferris Ritchey, Master of Ceremonies Speech, Audio Tape, October 20, 1968.

²¹⁶ Marguerite LasKares, letter to Madonna House, October 26, 1968.

²¹⁷ Archbishop Joseph Raya's consecration speech, Audiotape, October 20, 1968. (Copy provided by Ferris Ritchey, Jr.)

Love. He saw his vocation as being a shepherd, not only for the Christian Arabs, but also for the Muslims and the Jews as well; he was “open to all people and all religions.”²¹⁸ The parishioners of St. George were deeply saddened when they heard that their “Father Joe” was going to be leaving them.²¹⁹ Their mourning was expressed most directly by three-year-old Annie Ferris who kicked the Patriarch for taking away Father Joe, leaving the Patriarch limping for three days.²²⁰ Yet Patriarch Maximos V explained that Archbishop Raya now had more important duties to perform in the Church, the universal Church.

Father Raya’s service in Birmingham had been characterized by a joyful spirit and openness to all people, regardless of religion or race. Despite having been less than enthusiastic about the assignment to Birmingham when it was first given to him, Raya quickly adapted. Humorous and fun-loving, he was yet seriously committed to the Gospel. For him the essence of the Christian faith was that humanity is loved and saved by God. Even though he himself was very materially detached, he cared for the material and spiritual well-being of the people he encountered.

Through his translations, Father Raya provided his parishioners and the community of Birmingham with an introduction to the riches of Byzantine spirituality. Through his *Byzantine Missal* and *Byzantine Daily Worship*, he promoted the Byzantine Church to North America. His efforts to incorporate English into the parishes’ services brought him into confrontation with the local Archbishop.

²¹⁸ Lesya Sabada, journal entry, March, 1994.

²¹⁹ Ferris Ritchey, Master of Ceremonies Speech, Audio Tape, October 20, 1968. ew.

²²⁰ Ann Ritchey Owens, “Kicking the Patriarch,” in *Celebration of 60th Anniversary*.

Although Raya was usually obedient to ecclesiastical authority, he did not hesitate to express his concerns and challenge those same authorities. Where he felt that his integrity was at stake or, even more importantly, that his parishioners were being unfairly treated or that marginalized groups in the larger community were being oppressed, Raya was willing to risk his own position in the Church. In these major conflicts over language and ritual in the Church and particularly during the Civil Rights Movement, Raya learned important nonviolent strategies that would serve him well in Israel.²²¹

Peacebuilding Ministry in Israel

Archbishop Raya's task in conflict-ridden Israel was to provide both political and spiritual leadership. He challenged injustice by speaking the truth. He understood what Martin Luther King, Jr. meant when he said, "Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love" (King 1986, 247). In Israel, Raya's vision for peace through building relationships would have to be worked out in both religious and secular contexts, yet he believed firmly that justice and peacebuilding were compatible. Authentic in his expression of Byzantine theology and spirituality, Raya accepted both believers and nonbelievers. His gospel vision was universal. He believed that love was to be lived in all places, with all people, and in all circumstances of life. That included a voluntary rejection of outward status or security. Raya was free to speak when others, afraid of the

²²¹ As written in *Blood Brothers* by Elias Chacour and David Hazard, "Raya became one of King's fast friends, praying and marching at his side from Birmingham to Selma to Washington, D.C." (Chacour 1984, 185).

consequences, chose to keep silent rather than to tell the truth. In his new sphere of service, such honesty and courage would prove to be very dangerous.

The account of Raya's work in Israel is organized under the following sections: a brief historical context, Raya's continued work as a pastor, his methods of working toward peace, the special case of Ikrit and Kfar Berem, and the final conflicts leading to Raya's resignation.

The historical context for Raya's work in Israel

Politically and religiously, Israel was an unsettled place. It was 1968, one year after the Six-Day War in which Israel held off Egypt, Jordan, and Syria (all of whom wanted the State of Israel eradicated), and occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and even Jerusalem. The 1947 UN partition of Palestine had changed the lives of one million Muslims, over half a million Jews, and about 150,000 Christians, thus creating an on-going conflict between Israelis and displaced Palestinians.

The religious context was similarly in disarray. Because of the Islamic conviction that religious and political spheres could not be separated, many religious minorities functioned under the millet system. That meant that many groups governed themselves according to the laws appropriate to their confessional communities, and their hierarchical leaders exercised considerable political power. Archbishop Raya's predecessor, Archbishop Hakim, now Maximos V (George) Hakim, Patriarch of the Melkite Church, pursued his interests in both political and religious spheres with great energy and savvy. There is evidence of corruption, and accusations of negligence in

regards to the efforts afforded by him for the protection of Arab refugees under his care.²²² When Hakim left the Diocese of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee to become Patriarch, this See was saddled with debt and his parishioners were filled with distrust. This was the context into which Archbishop Raya arrived, having left his parish family in Alabama.

Archbishop Raya: The Pastor

Archbishop Raya began his new life in Israel as Archbishop by incorporating into his episcopal crest a phrase from Luke 5:4: “Go to the deep.” For Raya, this meant that everyone was called to go deep into life, “deep into ourselves, into the other, into the Gospel,” deep into joy and deep into suffering,²²³ without fearing the consequences, for these “are the words of our Lord.” He needed this vision of going deep, because Archbishop Raya faced a reality that included “land confiscation, no social aid, people without a spiritual leader, the Church in decline.”²²⁴ He was shocked to discover the financial and spiritual state of his diocese and the needs of the people. When Raya arrived in Haifa and assumed control of his diocese, there was no money left in the coffers.²²⁵ In the Bishop’s words, “the financial state of the Church was a complete fraud. It was bankrupt.” Before he could begin work on “the spiritual side, which was

²²² In a telephone conversation with Lesya Sabada on July 13, 2016, Father Ron Cafeo from Madonna House, Archbishop Raya’s former personal assistant, retold the story of how Raya told the synod that Maximos Hakim was stealing money. The Patriarch wanted Raya to resign, so Hakim reported that the Pope wanted Archbishop Raya to resign. Shortly after Archbishop Raya’s return to Madonna House after his resignation, the foundress of Madonna House, Catherine Doherty, Father John Callahan (Archbishop Raya’s spiritual director) and Archbishop Joseph Raya, visited the Nuncio in Ottawa. The Nuncio, after researching the files, stated that “The pope was pleased with your work in Israel. We also have a dossier labelled ‘Inveterate Liar’.” This dossier contains files about Patriarch Hakim. See Appendices 5 and 6.

²²³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, conversation with author, Haifa, Israel, August 16, 1996.

²²⁴ Elias Jabour, interview by author, Shefa-‘Amr, Israel, May 1, 2007.

²²⁵ Alice Noujaim, interview by author, Haifa, Israel, May 4, 2007. Translator Agnes Shehade.

also in jeopardy,”²²⁶ he had to pay off debts and restore financial accountability.

According to Alice Joujaim, whose husband had worked closely with Raya, Archbishop Raya was, fortunately, also a good businessman with personal connections²²⁷ and an ability to raise funds for the needs of his flock. Raya successfully restored financial and administrative order in his diocese.²²⁸

Even as the Archbishop worked to restore financial integrity to the diocese, he was also giving much of his energy to the important goal of restoring the dignity of his people. Raya placed the spiritual well-being of his people ahead of his own prestige and power. Initially some members of his diocese rejected him as a “foreigner,”²²⁹ and others detested his simplicity.²³⁰ Archbishop Raya drove his own car,²³¹ invited ordinary people to the bishop’s palace,²³² and dressed simply in ordinary clothes.²³³ He walked in the Arab slums and visited the poor. He walked everywhere, even at night.²³⁴ He even walked to the barbershop to stand in line²³⁵ “instead of having the barber come to the Palace.”²³⁶ For many people, this was “extraordinary,”²³⁷ not at all like an honorable

²²⁶ Archbishop Raya, email to author, August 31, 2004.

²²⁷ Noujaim, interview.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Daoud Bshouty, interview by author, Haifa, Israel, May 1, 2007. Bshouty, it should be noted, was part of the group of disillusioned Arab youths with whom Raya worked. Bshouty, now a professor of mathematics in Israel, credits Raya for his successful professional life and readily acknowledges himself as Raya’s spiritual child.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Petites Soeurs, “Je suis à vous et vous êtes à moi!” in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

²³³ Bshouty, interview.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Naser Shakkour, interview by author, Haifa, Israel, April 30, 2007. Shakkour is another one of Raya’s spiritual children; like Bshouty, he was part of the youth group that Raya ministered to.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

bishop.²³⁸ Raya's style of life and ministry was a stark contrast to his predecessor, Hakim,²³⁹ as difficult a transition for the people to understand as it was for Raya to negotiate.

Yet Raya began to win the hearts of his people through simple and humble deeds. He liked poor people²⁴⁰ and routinely visited them in their homes, asking them what their problems were; he "did not make a difference between the rich and the poor."²⁴¹ Everyone was equal.²⁴² People who knew him during his years in Israel as bishop repeatedly emphasized Raya's love for the people, his continual demonstration of the "love of the Gospel,"²⁴³ regardless of the cost.²⁴⁴

Practical assistance

Archbishop Raya's service was practical. As he came to understand the chief problems, he did his best to solve those challenges, whether through personal interventions in individual cases or through public advocacy. One of these problems was housing for refugees. In one case, related by Ibrahim Sima'an, a Baptist minister and close confidant of Raya, a very poor family had been taken to court by the Haifa municipality for adding two meters to their apartment building without a license. Raya accompanied the family and argued successfully that such action was unjust since their

²³⁸ Bshouty, interview.

²³⁹ Noujaim, interview.

²⁴⁰ Mr. Buostros, interview by author, Tarshiha, Israel, April 30, 2007. Translator Susan Boustros.

²⁴¹ Noujaim, interview.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Soad Haddad, interview by author, Haifa, Israel, May 1, 2007. Haddad was also part of the youth group, one of Raya's spiritual children.

²⁴⁴ Edward Sa'ad, interview by author, Haifa, Israel, May 4, 2007. Sa'ad was a singer and traveled frequently with Raya to assist in worship services.

current residence was clearly inadequate.²⁴⁵ When the municipality wanted to relocate five or six poor neighborhoods of Haifa to the outskirts of the village of Isfia, Archbishop Raya established a committee to help address the housing issue for the poor and wrote to the Haifa municipality with his usual directness: “We plant and then uproot. . . . You demolish their houses and build high-rises. Arabs need housing. The Arab citizens are not there to be swept out of the cities. . . . They have their community, their schools, and churches. They are taken away from everything.” After Archbishop Raya’s intervention, the relocation project was stopped.²⁴⁶ He was equally forthright in television interviews: “If you do not build the apartment house for these people whose property and home you have taken away, my God, I will now go take the cross on my shoulder and go to New York on the streets. They will see how you crucify us, the Arabs.”²⁴⁷ Raya’s dramatic flair and demands for immediate remedial action must have been as frustrating to his opponents in Israel as they had been to Archbishop Toolen in Birmingham. Raya’s intent was to alleviate suffering, get cheaper rent and repairs.²⁴⁸ By 1972, various housing projects for Arab refugees had been approved and authorized for construction.²⁴⁹ Just as Raya was not afraid to speak directly to Golda Meir about refugee housing,²⁵⁰ so he sought government funds for a Church-sponsored hospital in Shefa-’Amr.²⁵¹

²⁴⁵ Ibrahim Sima’an, interview by author, Nazareth, Israel, May 2, 2007.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Archbishop Joseph Raya, interview by Father Ron Cafeo, Combermere, Ontario, November 4, 2002.

²⁴⁸ Noujaim, interview.

²⁴⁹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, March 29, 1972.

²⁵⁰ “Catholic Life in Israel,” in *Christian News from Israel* 21, no. 3 (Autumn, 1970):11

²⁵¹ Ibid.

Spiritual care

Archbishop Raya's concern for his people's spiritual well-being was notable. He wanted his people to have beautiful churches and inspiring Byzantine services. He reopened closed churches²⁵² including St. Gabriel Church in Mahattat-Alkarmenl and St. George Church in Wadi-l-Jmal.²⁵³ The latter church had fallen into disuse because of "the lack of priests and a dwindling congregation." The building and its rectory had become makeshift residences. When Raya visited the community, he decided the church should be reopened, a decision the people supported. It turned out "there [were] over 100 families there" and they had been without "a parish priest for twenty years." The first service in the newly cleaned church was very emotional for everyone. Raya himself offered to be their parish priest and to celebrate a liturgy on Saturday mornings.²⁵⁴ Archbishop Raya also commissioned and installed iconostases in some of the churches that did not have them and paid for them with financial gifts from his own family.²⁵⁵ He restored the Washing of the Feet service performed on Holy Thursday, a service discontinued in Galilee during the previous twenty-five years under Hakim. Throughout the celebrations, Raya stopped intermittently to explain the significant elements of the liturgy. To reach the faithful and maximize exposure to the liturgy, services were "broadcast throughout the Middle East."²⁵⁶

²⁵² Edward Sa'ad, interview.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House, February 4, 1969.

²⁵⁵ Noujaim, interview.

²⁵⁶ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House, July 23, 1971.

Focus on forgiveness, reconciliation, and dignity

Because Christians and Muslims listened to him as he prayed, Raya's influence took on the ecumenical dimension it had throughout his ministry in the United States. In a letter to Madonna House, he shared the following story:

I heard recently that there was a big fight in one of the Muslim villages among a crowd of children, big and little. Along came a boy, whose name I don't know, and shouted, "Stop that fighting . . . haven't you heard Archbishop Raya say no more fighting, the only way to live is with peace and love." Someone told me that story, someone who had been involved in the fight . . . I told him that he is my son, and his family is my family, and his village is my village.²⁵⁷

Countering ancient antagonisms was crucial to Raya's ministry. He began by encouraging his faithful to see the dignity of their humanity, but also to act responsibly and begin to resolve [their] differences. "Come and pray once you have reconciled with your brother or sister," he admonished them.²⁵⁸ It was "time to forget the past, stop harboring hate and resentment." They needed to "build for the future of their children . . . [and] to be creative, constructive, far seeing."²⁵⁹

Archbishop Raya himself exercised creativity in restoring joy to the celebrations of feast days, sometimes in unfashionable ways.²⁶⁰ Raya spoke with simplicity and in layman's language.²⁶¹ He stressed the resurrection and taught of its great joy and happiness. Church music was restored and church choirs were strengthened.²⁶² Musical instruments were brought into the churches even though instruments were not the local

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Daoud Bshouty, interview.

²⁵⁹ Theresa Davis, in *Our Lady of Galilee Newsletter*, no.2, May 24, 1970.

²⁶⁰ Shafiqua Sa'ad was the Archbishop's house keeper. Testimony was collected by Agnes Shehade and sent to the author, circa June, 2007.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

custom for the churches at the time.²⁶³ Raya's initiatives with musical instruments, including bringing in his guitar, were not always understood, because the human voice was traditionally the only instrument used in Byzantine churches.²⁶⁴ In the words of Theresa Davis, head of Madonna House in Haifa during Raya's tenure, Raya's sermons were powerful and passionate, "all about [the people's] dignity, their beauty, and how much God loves them."²⁶⁵ Enthusiasm increased steadily. As Mary Davis, also a member of Madonna House, observed after an Easter service, "He brought Christianity to life! This is our religion. An explosion!"²⁶⁶

Then he began to persuade his priests to take proper care of their parishioners. He was appalled that they did not visit the people.²⁶⁷ Some of them did not even speak with each other. As a Lenten initiative, Raya decided to speak to his priests about forgiveness:

He knelt before them and asked for their forgiveness and told them not to go into Lent without reconciling themselves to their parishioners. And one priest who had the most enemies did that. He went from house to house and asked them to forgive him; he said you can do anything to me, kill or whatever, but let us forgive one another.²⁶⁸

The following Sunday, all the people to whom the priest had gone to ask for forgiveness were present in church.

Archbishop Raya cared for his priests and had monthly meetings with all of them.

As they sought reconciliation with each other, one priest confessed that for the first time

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Theresa Davis, interview by Father Ron Cafeo, Combermere, Ontario, August 17, 2002.

²⁶⁶ Mary Davis, interview by author, Combermere, Ontario, July 21, 2002. Mary Davis remained a close friend of Raya until his death. She served as his secretary for years and became one of his caregivers in his last years.

²⁶⁷ Mary Davis, interview.

²⁶⁸ Madonna House Internal Records, May 9, 1970.

he felt he belonged to the Church and that he was glad to be a priest. Because Archbishop Raya treated the priests with dignity and expressed concern about their well-being,²⁶⁹ they responded with obedience and greater dedication to their calling.

Two stories are especially illustrative of Archbishop Raya's consistent efforts to treat people with dignity, irrespective of their station in life or their religion. As a matter of principle, Raya left his doors open,²⁷⁰ and refused to add "locks or extra protection"²⁷¹ although thefts and robberies were frequent at his residence in Haifa. On one occasion, a leader from a Palestinian village, Abu George, was released from prison in the middle of the night, cold, wet, and disoriented in the unfamiliar and sometimes hostile environment of Haifa. He wandered through the back alleys until he found himself near the Archbishop's residence. One light was still on. Abu George knocked and asked the pajama clad "caretaker" if he could spend the rest of the night sleeping on the floor at the entrance. His host invited him to shower and directed Abu George to his own room. When Abu George woke in the morning and went down to the dining room in the hope of securing breakfast, he was shocked to see the "caretaker"—Archbishop Raya—dressed in full episcopal regalia.²⁷²

In 1970, at Raya's request, Elsie Witty from Madonna House was called to serve homeless people in the city of Acre in northern Israel. During the Six Day War, people's homes had been destroyed and many seniors were left destitute. Raya offered a "tumbledown house" (Adams, Fall 1971, 161) in Acre to serve as a temporary shelter. It

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Catherine Doherty, letter to Madonna House, October 26, 1970.

²⁷¹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Father Callahan, January 4, 1972.

²⁷² Abu George, conversation with the author, Haifa, Israel, August 17, 1996.

had room for only twenty elderly Muslims, Druze, and Christian Arabs. Raya then found the funds for a brand new dwelling for these older people, and established a home in the village of Isfia, using volunteers from various countries to construct the seniors' complex (Adams, Fall 1972, 112). Once this project was completed, residents from the run-down seniors' home in Acre were offered accommodations in the new "Friendship House" in Isfia. This facility, with forty-five beds and equipped with modern furnishings and heating (ibid., 113), welcomed everyone without distinction of religious belief or affiliation. The diocese also found enough money to purchase a residence for the directress of the Old Age Home, and a group of Belgian nuns who came to help serve the poor. The house had been intentionally located in a Druze neighbourhood to initiate understanding and collaboration between people of different religions (Adams, Fall 1971, 161). The Archbishop also insisted that the Belgian sisters learn Hebrew and Arabic, so they could better serve the poor (ibid.).

Ecumenical and interfaith inclusiveness

Archbishop Raya's ecumenical vision, an integral part of his peacebuilding theology, was as evident in Haifa as it had been in Birmingham. In the first place, Raya sought to develop understanding among all Christians. Having cared for youth, Raya became the honorary president of the Christian Youth Club in Haifa, most of whose members were Greek Catholic. Yet Raya designated a Baptist as leader and priests from six Christian denominations to serve as the executive-advisory team.²⁷³ Not surprisingly, on the 60th anniversary of Archbishop Raya's priesthood, Ibrahim Sima'an wrote: "You

²⁷³ Ibrahim Sima'an, "Three Great Events," in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

brought much understanding and respect to the oriental Byzantine Christianity especially to the western brothers and sisters in faith.”²⁷⁴

During the Christian feasts of Christmas and Easter, Archbishop Raya invited not only the Christian community, but also people of other faiths. Druze sheikhs came to pay their respects. Different sects of Muslims attended. Many high-ranking Jews also came to visit him.²⁷⁵ Raya instructed his people to pray during Jewish and Muslim feasts in an effort to celebrate together.²⁷⁶ His vision of peace in Israel encompassed all three Abrahamic faiths. In an interview with Gabriel Stern, a correspondent for the *Religious News Service* of New York and part of the editorial staff of the Hebrew daily, *Al Hamish Mar*, Raya described his plans for a new church in Nazareth: “I am now planning to build a new church in Nazareth in unison with the Youth Center of ‘Our Lady of Peace and Love.’ The cornerstone was laid on Easter Sunday – and do you know? The church tower will be a minaret, and I shall invite the mu’ezzin to call his *Allahu Akbar*, and then the bells will ring out” (Stern, 1972a, 20). Although he doubted that a rabbi would want to blow the shofar from the belfry, Raya would have welcomed him warmly (ibid.).²⁷⁷ He had always regarded Judaism with great respect, even reverence (ibid.).²⁷⁸

Raya was diligent in trying to eliminate Latin influences in the Melkite Greek Catholic Church perhaps because he understood through personal experience what happened when Churches sought to colonize other believers. Raya took a vigorous stance against missionary activity amongst the faithful of various Christian

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Theresa Davis, interview.

²⁷⁶ Archbishop Joseph Raya, conversation with the author, Israel, August 15, 1996.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Raya clarifies his position regarding Judaism in his book *The Eyes of the Gospel*, Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

denominations and other religions. Raya supported the Orthodox Rabbinate in their staunch stance against instant conversions: “Judaism should be strict in this regard, because it is not only a religion, but a soul as well, which lives throughout the generations, and cannot be so simply acquired” (Stern 1972a, 20). He opposed an Oriental Congregation policy that encouraged conversion of Jews and the people of other faiths. This policy decreed that any converts must be directed into the Latin Church (ibid., 22). He declared firmly, “If a Jew would ask me to baptize him out of real religious conviction, I decidedly would disregard it, for there is much in common with Jewish and Eastern Christian liturgy, and I am always thrilled to hear synagogal music, especially Oriental. But to such a convert I would say that he should remain proud of his Jewish origins” (ibid.).²⁷⁹ To counter attitudes of anti-Semitism, the Archbishop directed all anti-Jewish references in the Good Friday services be eliminated. Despite the protests of some fellow Arabs and liturgical traditionalists, there would be no more mention of “perfidious Jews” (Carroll 1973, 12)

Archbishop Raya extended the same attitude of reverence to other world religions at the synods of the Greek Catholic Bishops in Lebanon. While discussing the implementation of Vatican II Ecumenical Council’s decisions regarding the relationship between Christianity and other world religions, Raya claimed that Jews and Muslims were an extension of the same love, trust, and consideration that Christians should have

²⁷⁹ It is important to note that Archbishop Raya’s attitude towards conversion was noted in his letter to his diocese dated September 1974. We read the following: “As a Bishop, a preacher of the Gospel, I never tried to ‘convert’ a Jew or an Arab Muslim to Christianity. Rather ‘convert’ them to be a better Jew, better Muslim, better Druze. My vision of a Catholic Bishop is to identify with his people, with all people. Cultures, all cultures, Jewish and Christian and Muslim are all of God. Men, all men, are holy, sacred and good. But men, all men, of all cultures and religions, always need ‘conversion.’ Conversion is openness, understanding, respect, even awe in the presence of each other, and forgiveness! This is the ‘conversion’ preached by the Gospel. The Gospel should be a light at man’s feet and his guide.”

for one another: “There should be no intention or semblance of proselytizing, but rather a strengthening of one’s own faith and contact with one’s God, and so we grow together, each in his own way” (Adams, Fall 1972, 113). That perspective was very typical of Archbishop Raya’s ministry.

Purposeful Peacebuilding

A commitment to the care of people of many creeds was a major step toward peace. Those who worship together or share the same attraction to a genuine leader can find themselves learning peace “by osmosis.” However, it is easier to work toward interfaith cooperation through generosity and advocacy in a positive environment and much more challenging to reach these same goals starting from a long-standing hatred. Raya faced these challenges through deliberate work with youth, efforts to improve education both in the primary and secondary schools and in seminaries, and direct advocacy for justice.

Working with youth

Raya found the hatred among disillusioned youth, “would-be terrorists,” and young Palestinian Israelis, especially heart-breaking. Many had suffered injustices at the hands of the Israeli government²⁸⁰ and were convinced that only violence and power could bring about changes in favour of the Palestinians. Their hatred was greater than their natural desire for self-preservation. During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, some of these youth deliberately ignored air raid warning sirens, choosing instead to remain on balconies to watch the Syrian planes bomb the Jews.²⁸¹ When told, “They are going to

²⁸⁰ Agnes Shehade, “Coat of Love,” in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

²⁸¹ Mary Davis, interview.

bomb your house as well as the Jews. They are going to kill your father, mother, brothers, and sisters,” they replied, “We don’t care, as long as they kill the Jews, we don’t care.”²⁸² Raya chose to enlist the help of Madonna House personnel to try building peace in the midst of hostility. He invited staff from the Combermere community to set up a house in Haifa where they could participate in his efforts. In 1971, after a year in Nazareth to learn Arabic and some cultural orientation, a small Madonna House community was established just a few blocks away from the bishop’s palace.²⁸³ Many young adults used this opportunity to advance their English speaking skills. Christian Arabs gathered, in contravention of Israeli laws prohibiting gatherings of more than ten Arabs. There were books and crafts, but the youth often just chatted with the newly transplanted apostolate.

Most of the young adults “were really hostile to the Church . . . they were so full of hatred, really to the Israelis, and they were an oppressed people.”²⁸⁴ When Archbishop Raya first came to visit the youth at the Haifa Madonna House some of them promptly exited.²⁸⁵ Archbishop Raya persisted, coming night after night.²⁸⁶ Undeterred, Raya decided to celebrate liturgy every Wednesday and invited the youth for communion. It took days and weeks before the resistance waned, but “by the end of that year, we’d have a whole community of young people on fire, alive, going to communion, singing vespers with us in Arabic, going to church. You could see the change in this group of

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

young people.”²⁸⁷ Raya was “an untraditional Bishop” who, through his recognition of their needs, gave young people “empowerment” and “dignity.” He constantly reminded them, “remember where you come from and where you are going . . . know who you are and do what you want to do even if you are an Arab.”²⁸⁸ Soon the young people saw that the Archbishop meant what he said. This was a man prepared to step into the middle of a fight to take his share of flying stones,²⁸⁹ or forgo the deferent kiss to the hand with a sharp “No! Keep your dignity like your father and do not bow to anyone but to God!”²⁹⁰

Providing education

Archbishop Raya tackled the problems of education in the schools, just as he had in Birmingham. He firmly believed that students deserved creative education that fostered “more thinking . . . in the classroom.”²⁹¹ He wanted all students to realize their potential as they grew from rote learners to critical thinking, creative beings. For him, education was the primary tool in the spiritual struggle to find the face of Christ.²⁹² However, in his diocese, the problem was severe.²⁹³ Several schools begun by Catholic religious had closed due to the difficulties of living and working in Israel.²⁹⁴ Other schools were severely overcrowded and housed in buildings unsafe for the children. The problems

²⁸⁷ Theresa Davis, interview.

²⁸⁸ Kamilia Samara-Shehade and Theresa Mansour, interview by author, Combermere, Ontario, July 2, 2002. Both women were once part of the youth group described here.

²⁸⁹ Sima'an, interview.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Theresa Davis, *Our Lady of Galilee Newsletter* no. 22, May 24, 1970.

²⁹² Archbishop Joseph Raya, fund-raising letter, November, 1971.

²⁹³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House, March 16, 1969.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

were even worse in the villages.²⁹⁵ Yet the Archbishop did not despair. Wherever and whenever he could, he encouraged teachers and head masters to do their best to offer education that allowed students to think critically and creatively.²⁹⁶ His other response was to raise funds. Not only did he write letters, but he traveled personally to the United States and Europe, asking for financial assistance and talking about his work in Israel in lectures and sermons. As he explained, “If Jews can demonstrate their brotherhood for their brother Jews in Israel in such a beautiful and unselfish way, . . . so Christians should be concerned for their brothers in the Holy Land . . . helping them help themselves, as together Christians and Jews forge a new country where all men are respected . . .” (Adams, Fall 1971, 161).

Raya was equally concerned about the education of his seminarians. He wanted them to gain practical training, with less focus on logic, theology, and philosophy and greater acceptance of “intuition and self-expression” (Raya 1990, 5). He had little patience with training based on the university model where credits and accreditation “killed the feast and whatever was left in our soul of lightheartedness” (Raya 1990, 6). After consulting with Father Callahan, his spiritual father from Madonna House, the superiors of the White Fathers in Jerusalem, Patriarch Maximos V Hakim, and Cardinal De Furstenburg from the Oriental Congregation in Rome, Raya proposed seminarian training in the spirit and method of Madonna House. The Archbishop believed that the Church needed well-rounded men useful with their hands and hearts who made the poor their priority: “The world today and especially my diocese do not need a man who

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Theresa Davis, *Our Lady of Galilee Newsletter* no. 22, May 24, 1970

knows books. They need and cry for a man who can relate with his heart and not with syllogism.”²⁹⁷

Advocating publicly and prophetically for justice

Archbishop Raya promoted and advocated the perspectives of nonviolence, ecumenism, and inter-religious unity to the modern State of Israel. In one of his first public interviews, with *The Jerusalem Post*, Raya spoke about his ideas and aspirations, including his decision to change the observation of Easter of the Melkite community to sympathetically coincide with the Julian calendar celebrations of other local Orthodox Churches. He hoped other Christian denominations in Israel would eventually follow this example, so that all Christian communities might celebrate “this most joyous festival together” (Sabada 2005, 77). Raya, the article noted, believed in mutual tolerance, and ascribed great importance to the Vatican Council’s so-called “Jewish Document,” in which the Catholic Church officially absolved the Jews of Deicide. In this spirit he gave the order to expurgate from his community’s liturgy every text linking Jews and Jesus Christ’s suffering, or liable to offend the Jews. He offered the following Christmas message, “we must open our hearts to understanding, not only to our coreligionists, but to all human beings. . . . The blood that has been shed can be an instrument to bring people together Above all, let us forget the sufferings of the past and address ourselves to the future” (Sabada 2005, 78). The article ended with a warning to Israel against segregation: “Do not let Israel make the same mistake that the U.S. made, having two grades of citizenship, the first class, and the second class citizen.

²⁹⁷ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Father John Callahan, July 5, 1969.

. . . Segregation is the greatest sin of our modern time, and history will record those responsible” (Sabada 2005, 78).

From the very beginning, Archbishop Raya called upon his experiences in Birmingham to guide his actions in Israel. He knew that standing up to the powerful and to injustice would carry a heavy price, yet claimed as his own the challenge to face down “hatred,” which he said, “covers all like a shadow. I have seen and touched it during my daily visits to the villages and towns in the diocese. This situation is disheartening because this hatred is more to be noticed among Christians themselves than between Christians and other religions.”²⁹⁸ Raya’s prayer was also “for peace, an unconditional peace that stems from within, from a mutual respect and co-operation, brother with brother, Arab with Jew. We cannot deceive ourselves into thinking that peace will come to this country as long as the seeds of bitterness, resentment, and opposition remain in the hearts of the people of this land.” (Raya, “Cry for Peace,” 1969). He made it clear that he would not perpetuate the language of division or opposition: “I am not against anybody or anything. I’m for. I’m Israeli; my people are Israeli. We are proud to be Israelis in Israel. My role as it is today in Israel is to create peace, love, [and] understanding, between my people Christian or Muslim and the Jews in Israel” (Sabada 2005, 52). In practical terms, this decision was manifested in resisting an anti-Israel resolution during the 1972 Synod of Greek Catholic Bishops at Ain Taraz in Lebanon.²⁹⁹ He also sought, with continual efforts, through meetings with government officials and using various media, “to awaken a sense of justice for the poor, the destitute, and the

²⁹⁸ Archbishop Joseph Raya, “Difficulties Old and New,” in *Message of Galilee*, December, 1969.

²⁹⁹ Meir Shamgar, “The Issue of Ikrit and Berem,” in *The Christian News from Israel* 23, no. 2 (Fall 1972):120-121.

dispossessed people of this land.”³⁰⁰ He did not hesitate to point out that Byzantine Christians had not been treated well, and that the Roman Catholic Church and Christians of the West are “embroiled in a fantastic struggle for power, for control of the holy places, for converts even from among those Christians who gave Christianity to the world, in order to gain in prestige, and eventually to gain in power and finally to dominate in the Holy Land” (Raya, “Reconciliation, 5).

The case of Roman Catholic discrimination

Archbishop Raya believed the Roman Catholic Church was an offender when it came to harming his people, and its effect was more significant because other Western Christians followed the example of the Roman Catholic Church. In an interview with *Ave Maria National Catholic Weekly*, Raya concluded:

The Roman Catholic Church is the biggest hindrance. It is a big element of hatred— of division— just as much as anything else . . . They buy people. . . . They buy them from Orthodoxy with bread, with schools, with influence, to leave their Church, their mentality, their culture—their soul. They empty them to make them Roman Catholic and to be able to say that we made so many converts . . . and now the Baptists are doing the same thing, and the Methodists, and the Anglicans and the Church of God. Everyone wants to pour money to buy the people to their own sign. That’s why there is a division in the same family sometimes. . . . Rome is aware of it. They don’t want to see the point that’s all. (Garreau, 21-22)

In a newsletter to his diocese, Raya expressed the humiliation he felt regarding his own subjugation to Roman Catholic authorities. He was deeply anguished that he could not celebrate the Divine Liturgy for Greek Catholic girls living within a Carmelite convent “without asking *permission* of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem or his auxiliary or his

³⁰⁰ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House, August 1, 1969.

secretary.”³⁰¹ He stated that he was not writing this out of a spirit of vengeance or of contempt, “but from love of Christian truth.”³⁰² He developed this as follows:

We have a great love and the greatest respect for our Latin Missionaries of the Holy Land . . . But we beg them to try and reject the spirit of domination which they have inherited from a disastrous past Paternalism, triumphalism and colonialism are dead or dying even in the most backward and pagan countries. Not in the Holy Land!³⁰³

Just weeks into his role as Archbishop, Raya saw the construction of the new Franciscan Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth. The largest Christian church in the Middle East, this new basilica was completed in 1969. In his letter to his Madonna House family, Raya wrote:

We went to the poorest families, people who barely have the necessities for human existence. What a juxtaposition to be sitting in the homes of the poor, in the shadow of a \$25 million dollar basilica constructed by the Franciscans in the poor section of Nazareth, and hear blaring from the same basilica the words of Christmas carols: Joy to the World, the Lord has come Such a pain in my heart for those people, and for the Church which seems to have lost the spirit of Christianity Such a scandal that the poor here, as in America, can be so invisible.³⁰⁴

Since the construction of the Church of the Annunciation was irreversibly underway, Archbishop Raya approached the Franciscans to ask them to include something of the Oriental faith within the structure, just “one Arabic corner” that could “[belong] to the Oriental Church.”³⁰⁵ The Franciscans replied, “This cathedral is Latin . . . Nothing Byzantine or Oriental can come in.”³⁰⁶ This inflexible response was not forgotten when Archbishop Raya, the spiritual leader of the Byzantine and Oriental faithful, received his

³⁰¹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, “Criticism or Love,” in *Message of Galilee*, December, 1969.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House, January 6, 1969.

³⁰⁵ Archbishop Joseph Raya, interview by author, Combermere, Ontario, July 9, 2002.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

invitation to participate in the blessing and formal opening of the basilica. He chose not to attend³⁰⁷ “the solemn consecration of the new church in Nazareth. He believed that the Church should project its image as the ‘church of the poor’ and not with an expensive showpiece,”³⁰⁸ and made his objections public:

It is neither normal nor Christian that the Franciscans of the Holy Land should build a luxurious basilica in the middle of a poor section in Nazareth. Millions of dollars spent for stones and other decorations whose only merit is to exhort the ‘Ah’s!’ and the ‘Oh’s!’ of pilgrims from abroad. Pilgrims have enough beautiful cathedrals in their own lands, and in the face of the misery and abysmal poverty of the people here, they are left humiliated and ashamed.³⁰⁹

Raya had some rather strong ideas about the ownership and control of religious sites in the Holy Land. Christians, Jews, and Muslims made concurrent claims to historical religious sites. In some cases, these claims were complicated by different factions of the same faith, and in spite of various measures to forestall conflict, tensions and violence were immanent. The Holy Sepulchre Church, for example, was divided by an Ottoman Turkish edict in 1792. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the custodians of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre have been Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, and the Syrian Orthodox. Even so, violence is common and occurred once again under Archbishop Raya’s watch. The clash between Franciscans and Greek Orthodox Christians was so intense that police had to intervene. When the Archbishop was contacted for his response, he said simply, “When the Jews come together at the Wailing Wall, they come in solidarity and brotherhood and peace and you pray. When the Muslims come together at Al-Aqsa Mosque, they

³⁰⁷ Raya was protesting. He did not want his presence at the consecration to be interpreted as supportive of the building of this church and the attitudes of the Franciscans.

³⁰⁸ Harani Yisca, email to author on behalf of Professor Werblowsky, May 2, 2007.

³⁰⁹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, “Difficulties Old and New,” in *Message of Galilee*, February 2, 1969, 7.

come in solidarity and peace and pray. If we Christians come together, and it's a place of division and hatred, let us get rid of the place. We don't need it. This is not important to us."³¹⁰ To consider dismissing a site of such great importance as unnecessary was a daring proposition, poorly received by many. For Raya, attachment to a holy site that led to dispute or undermined the core value of love was a needless distraction and liability. Raya did not think Christians needed to stand in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to know that Christ is risen (Raya, "Jerusalem and Christianity").

Resistance to discrimination in all forms

The Archbishop's commitment to peace, however, did not mean that he was willing to accept injustice, particularly the systemic denigration of Arabs. He spoke out directly whenever he had the opportunity. On major feast days, when Archbishop Raya typically accepted invitations to speak on radio programs "broadcast all over the Arab world,"³¹¹ he mentioned that the Roman Catholic Church treated the Arabs as second-class citizens, often noting that the Divine Liturgy could not be celebrated in the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem without the permission of the Roman Catholic bishop. This form of submission to the Roman control infuriated him.³¹² To counter the colonial mentality

³¹⁰ Mary Davis, interview.

³¹¹ Theresa Davis, interview.

³¹² Ibid. Archbishop Raya also wrote in the 1970 Christmas newsletter of *The Message of Galilee* (13) the following: "In Nazareth, for example, there are fourteen different kinds of Catholic convents for fourteen different kinds of foreign missionaries, each attracting the population to his side. The local Greek-Catholic Bishop, a native Arab, in whose diocese these operate, cannot celebrate the Catholic Mass in any of them, without first asking permission of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. There are some Arab, Greek-Catholic girls in these very convents who long and wish to participate sometimes in their own native rite. They wonder why their own Catholic Bishop has to ask permission from a Latin Bishop to pray with them their Holy Liturgy. The people also talk about such a "Church canon" and smile. They become skeptical or ironic. Who would not choke?"

dominant in most missionary activity in Israel, he gave the Madonna House community the mandate to learn the Arabic language and culture and to understand the relationship between Arabs and Jews before they began their service.³¹³ The community learned Arabic from youthful “teachers” who could finally express the frustration at being made to feel like “second class citizens” in their native tongue. In the other missionary schools, young Arabs had to learn English, or German, or Italian, whatever the language of the missionaries.³¹⁴ When studies were completed, the discrimination did not stop – they often “did the menial jobs.”³¹⁵ With the advantage of better language training, the Madonna House community was able to function at a different level. Their example brought about a shift in thinking.³¹⁶

Sharing an element of his commitment to peacebuilding, Archbishop Raya thought that injustice and discrimination could come to an end only through genuine relationships. He travelled throughout his diocese visiting every village and town, to listen and to discern his next steps. In televised speaking engagements and on radio broadcasts, Raya called upon Arabs to stop hating the Jews, and to acknowledge that they were citizens of Israel and should “work to build up the country.”³¹⁷ In the same breath, he challenged the Israeli government to return land to the refugees in Israel, to care for the homeless by giving food and shelter to the poor; the “Arab population [belonged] to this country” and “needed to be treated as first class citizens.”³¹⁸ Raya spoke at the closing session of the Israeli Parliament “to the Jewish representatives,

³¹³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Catherine Doherty, January 26, 1970.

³¹⁴ Theresa Davis, interview.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Mary Davis, interview.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

alternating between French, Arabic, and English for all to understand, that they have done to the Arabs some of the very things they themselves lament so bitterly in their own history of persecution” (Catoir 1969) As a result, non-Christian Arabs began to turn to Raya to speak on their behalf and the Muslims and Druze officially bestowed upon him the title “Prophet,”³¹⁹ which he brushed aside, asking instead for “Father Joe” (Catoil 1969) Not everyone appreciated his call for mutual respect and justice, though. By 1970, after about a year and half of service, his life was repeatedly in danger.³²⁰ Mail was censored, he presumed the phone was tapped, and men watched constantly who came and went from his residence.³²¹

Raya responded with a newsletter, his diocesan *Message of Galilee*, in which he outlined the key issues facing his flock, without avoiding “errors or flagrant injustices on the part of the government, or on the part of my Catholic Church.”³²² The first issue was the emigration of Christians from the Holy Land as a result of “social and political upheavals” and “conflicts between Jews and Arabs.”³²³ The second issue was the refugee problem. Those Arabs, who had the resources to leave, did so, leaving the poor and uneducated. When people sought shelter during bombings, their homes were taken. Vast tracts of “abandoned” land were expropriated for Jewish settlements. The social implications were devastating. Haifa, which previously had a population of 40,000 Christians, was now reduced

³¹⁹ This is an extraordinary action, since Islam strictly forbids attaching this title to anyone living after Prophet Mohammed.

³²⁰ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Fr. Briere, November 5, 1970.

³²¹ Mary Kay Roland, interview by author, Combermere, Ontario, December 8, 2002. Roland, a member of Madonna House, served as Raya’s secretary and lived in the bishop’s residence.

³²² Archbishop Joseph Raya, “Exodus of Christians from the Holy Land,” in *Message of Galilee*, Christmas, 1970. 2.

³²³ Ibid., 2.

to a mere 8,000.³²⁴ The poor and dispossessed refugees moved from villages to towns, living in shacks.³²⁵ Youth rebelled and became embittered against society. Arabs faced discrimination, were considered killers by many, and were legally obligated to carry identity cards stamped “Arab.”³²⁶ Known for his defense of the rights of people, Raya lobbied hard, in visits with Golda Meir, for the elimination of segregated identification cards: “I protested, I begged, I insisted with the government to let us [be] free and change the identity card like the one given the Jews. . . . So [the] Muslims, Druze, and Christians were given an identity card like the one of the rest of the country.”³²⁷

Raya was able to appreciate the challenges of discrimination at a personal level. He understood that “White versus negro relations in the history of America are not different from Arab versus Jew relations in Israel, nor are they different from the powerful Latin Church versus the poor and weak local church.”³²⁸ Just as he had built relationships in Birmingham by listening to all the people and daring to resist systemic injustice and self-interested authorities, so in Israel, Archbishop Raya listened carefully to hear the perspectives of Jews, Arab Christians, Muslims, and other groups. He became known as the Bishop of the Arabs. For him, this meant being “a religious leader who gave his service to every human being” because “religion is to bring people to love each other, to be with each other and not solve problems with violence.” His “message of love, of tolerance, of

³²⁴ Ibid., 5.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid., 7.

³²⁷ Archbishop Joseph Raya, email to author, August 31, 2004.

³²⁸ Archbishop Joseph Raya, “Exodus of Christians from the Holy Land,” in *Message of Galilee*, ” Christmas, 1970. 9

nonviolence” was “an integral part of his character,” so he visited “mosques, Muslim families, Druze families, imams.”³²⁹ He understood the Jewish dream for a homeland, a reconnection with history (Luecking) and respected the Jewish point of view. He could pray publicly, at the Rosh Hashanah feast day, for the safety of Israeli soldiers (Adams, 1971). But he could also shelter a Muslim girl seeking sanctuary, and then work with her parents until Sulha was performed.³³⁰

Raya challenged the law that would not allow more than ten Arabs to congregate in the same place at the same time. Weddings and funerals required police permission.³³¹ The gatherings at Madonna House routinely broke that law and when police came to Raya’s residence to insist on compliance, the Archbishop became furious: “Oh my God! Let twenty congregate. I am not going to ask anyone! I am not in the Soviet Union. I want them to be free!”³³² He was prepared to go to jail rather than comply.³³³ Eventually Raya won and in his diocese, the law was removed.³³⁴

Archbishop Raya refused to let others dictate his politics or the politics of his people. For example, he was ready to reach out to political pariahs, including communists, even in the midst of the Cold War era. A few weeks into his tenure as Archbishop, he made his Christmas visitations. He had been counseled not to visit the Communists, for fear of “repercussions.” But Raya “wanted to try to let these

³²⁹ Rushdi Almady, interview by author, Haifa, Israel, May 4, 2007.

³³⁰ Sulha is the Arabic cultural peacemaking method found in Israel. The root of the word means forgiveness in both Hebrew and Arabic languages.

³³¹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*. Slide Commentary, November 12, 1995. Law applied to unofficial gatherings.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid.

men and women know that they were human beings.”³³⁵ He insisted on going and Greek Orthodox Bishop Isodoros agreed to accompany him “if no one else would.” The visit was great success with many in attendance: “Coffee, sweets, fruit, discussion! No insult,” Raya reported. Instead the leaders observed, “This is the first time a religious leader paid us hospitality! We finally feel like men.”³³⁶ According to the Archbishop, the Communists were the only people concerned about the poor and about the injustices they endured (Garreau, 24). Contrary to admonitions from the Israeli government, Raya refused to instruct his people not to vote Communist: “I myself, a bishop—a Catholic Bishop—I will vote Communist. . . at least they are talking . . . about helping the poor” (ibid.).

Such language was dangerous for him, since the Israeli government had had an agreement with Archbishop Hakim, Raya’s predecessor, to “to purify (or cleanse) the atmosphere that is absorbed with communist poison, and to spread the truth and correct principles among Arabic groups” (Cohen 2006, 65). On occasion Hakim excommunicated communists (Stern, 1972a, 22). Raya, on the other hand, was prepared to share a public platform with the communist mayor of Nazareth. He simply respected “the honest opinion of everybody, though it [differed] from [his] own belief” (ibid.).

The Special Case of Ikrit and Kfar Berem

In no other sequence of events was Archbishop Raya’s prophetic ministry and peacebuilding mission more evident than the justice campaign for the villagers of Ikrit and Kfar Berem. All of his experience in the Civil Rights Movement in the USA was

³³⁵ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House Community, January 6, 1969.

³³⁶ Ibid.

brought to bear in his efforts to restore the rights of the evicted Arab villagers and facilitate their return to Ikrit and Kfar Berem.

Historical context

The Christian villages of Ikrit and Kfar Berem were located in Upper Galilee near the Israeli/Lebanese border. The Ikritans were Melkite Greek Catholics while the population of Kfar Berem was predominantly Maronite Christian.³³⁷ On October 31, 1948, shortly after the establishment of Israel as a Jewish nation, Israeli Defence Forces entered Ikrit and Kfar Berem. The villagers received the soldiers, and true to Arabic tradition offered their guests food and shelter (Sabada 2006, 107). On November 8, 1948, the military asked the villagers to evacuate for security reasons. They were promised that they could return to their homes in fifteen days. However, when the villagers returned after the allotted time, the military denied access. They were not to return “until the state of security would permit their return” (Shamgar, 120).

The dispossessed villagers had made various efforts to reclaim their homes, businesses, lands, and livelihoods. The first step, in 1951, had been to apply to the High Court of Justice, claiming a right to return to their land. Although the State Attorney claimed the land could not be returned for security reasons, the Supreme Court ruled in the refugees’ favor (Raya, “Letter to People”). Within months, both villages were destroyed by the military.³³⁸ In spite of the injustice, the villagers continued to press for their right to return to their land. Although they were offered compensation or exchange

³³⁷ See footnote #54 for explanation of Melkite and Maronite.

³³⁸ Ikreth and Kfar Berem – Background Information. Circa August 30, 1972. Madonna House Archives. Pax/Caritas scrapbook.

for their original properties, most refused; “the few who did accept compensation did so under pressure and fear.”³³⁹ Archbishop Raya came to Israel in 1968, but the villagers of Ikrit and Kfar Berem were still unable to return to their former homes.

The issue came to prominence again in 1972 after General Moshe Dayan, Israeli Minister of Defence, announced that “he would not ask for a further prolongation of the Emergency Regulation which provided for a ten-kilometer-wide security zone [between Lebanon and Israel]. . . The villagers construed that announcement as permission to return, and began to squat on their lands with the declared purpose of repairing their churches, the only buildings left standing after security demolitions” (Stern, 1972b, 121). But no one was allowed to return. So began the sit-in strike at the Archbishop’s residence in Haifa on June 28, 1972 (ibid., 123), a strike that drew Raya into the struggle for justice in Ikrit and Kfar Berem.

The sit-in strike

About 200 men, women, and children with ancestral ties to Ikrit took a bus to Haifa and marched into the Bishop’s residence, declaring they would remain until justice was done or they would die waiting.³⁴⁰ According to an eyewitness report, the Bishop was surprised by the emotional demonstration, which quickly turned into a major media event, but “welcomed [the refugees] with open arms.”³⁴¹ He sent telegrams “to the Pope, Golda Meir, and Moshe Dayan.”³⁴² The telegram to the

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Theresa Davis, *Our Lady of Galilee Newsletter* #24, June 30, 1972.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

Pope, roughly paraphrased said, “You must back these Christians, as justice had not been given to them though they have waited peacefully and patiently for 23 years.”³⁴³ Support for the Arab refugees was overwhelming; bedding and food were quickly supplied. Raya himself had already been aware of the situation and had repeatedly pleaded with the government to implement the 1951 decision of the Supreme Court, but to no avail. Moved by the people’s pleas, he threw his energies even more into addressing the injustice.

Archbishop Raya’s words are of great importance in assessing his contribution to nonviolent strategies for building peace. As was typical of him, he appealed both to reason and faith, choosing his words to indicate deep understanding of his audience. In *The Jerusalem Post*, he declared to the people and the Israeli government that Israel now had the opportunity to show the world how to treat minorities (in this case, the Arabs) in a real democracy. He warned the government that the call of Israel was from the God of Israel, a call that should not “be trodden upon by some narrow politics or politicians or hate-mongers” (Raya, “Letter to People”). He concluded by restating his hope that the courts of Israel, the people of Israel, and the government would dispense justice in Israel (ibid.). When the Israeli Cabinet, on July 23, 1972, still refused to permit the return of the villagers because of “security,” “precedence,” and “other considerations,”³⁴⁴ Raya’s response was firm and explicit. In a public letter to Golda Meir, published in *The Jerusalem Post*, he declared:

If you base security on the denial of justice, there is no accumulation of money which will guarantee that security; not even an army as strong as the Romans

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Ikreth and Kfar Berem – Background Information Document.

will ensure it. . . . There is no doubt that you, the people of Israel, are a chosen people whose vocation is very special, very unique among all nations; “To break unjust fetters and undo the things of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke; and shelter the homeless” (Isaiah 58:6-7). (Raya, “Letter to Meir”)

He drew a comparison between the way that Western world had once insisted that Jews become “full citizens” only by becoming Christians, “sometimes under force,” and the way that Arabs must now, apparently, “become Jews to enjoy the fullness of citizenship in the very land of their birth, the land of their forefathers for centuries” (ibid.). If Israel continued to ignore the decision of the Supreme Court, it would set “a tragic precedent for the future of justice in this country” (ibid.). It was Raya’s deeply held conviction that motivated him to action.

The “Death of Justice” campaign

Throughout 1972 and until the beginning of the Yom Kippur War on October 6, 1973, Archbishop Raya participated actively in various demonstrations and symbolic actions that called for justice. In early August, protesters (including not only the refugees from the villages, but over a hundred independent supporters, many of them Jews) occupied the villages and began to clean up Kfar Berem.³⁴⁵ Raya went to the villages to encourage the protesters and prevent violence when police threatened to disperse the “illegal occupation.”³⁴⁶ To the supporting Jews, Raya said, “I am your brother Joseph. Thank you for coming to find me.”³⁴⁷ When Raya’s direct appeal to Golda Meir failed,

³⁴⁵ Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*.

³⁴⁶ Ya’acov Friedler, “20 arrested after resisting police evict Bir’im squatters,” in *The Jerusalem Post*, August 8, 1972.

³⁴⁷ Madonna House Internal Records, 1972, 484

Archbishop Raya ordered the closing of all thirty-three churches of his Melkite diocese, in what was called the “Death of Justice” campaign. There were to be no Sunday services on that day, August 13, 1972.³⁴⁸ Bells rang instead in protest of the government’s decision. Archbishop Raya’s proclamation of mourning was posted on every church door of the diocese. That same day, Raya visited the squatters in Ikrit and then in Kfar Berem where over 1000 people had gathered. Despite growing criticism over a “highly theatrical campaign” and accusations of having “wide political ambitions and a strong appetite for power” (Segal 1972). Raya continued his advocacy, even traveling to Um el Fahem, the center of the Muslim sector in Israel, and to Rama to explain the position of the evacuees from the two Christian villages. He won the support of the Muslims who gave generously to assist with expenses. Raya had become “Sir Bishop of the Arabs.”³⁴⁹

The March to the Knesset

A particularly dramatic protest was the March to the Knesset, planned for August 23, 1972. Initially supporters asked Archbishop Raya to carry a cross, made by the evacuated villagers, along Old Jerusalem’s Via Dolorosa. Out of consideration for his Jewish friends, to whom such an action would be offensive, Raya refused to carry the cross.³⁵⁰ Despite this courtesy, the planned march was still considered “a threat to . . . the

³⁴⁸ Ya’acov Friedler, “In Ikrit-Bir’im protest Greek Catholics skip Sunday services,” in *The Jerusalem Post*, August 14, 1972.

³⁴⁹ Sima’an, interview.

³⁵⁰ Archbishop Joseph Raya, *The Jerusalem Post*, August 22, 1972.

citizens of Jerusalem and the State of Israel.”³⁵¹ In response, hundreds of Israeli flags were purchased for the protesters to carry. It was important to signal that this march was a cry for justice for people of Israel, not a threat to Israel. Raya himself led the march, carrying the Israeli flag as a sign of the solidarity, common purpose, and unity he envisioned.³⁵² An eyewitness noted that “the demonstration was magnificent . . . superbly organized, well attended.”³⁵³ One of the chants was “Arab-Jewish Brotherhood,”³⁵⁴ surely a surprise to those who assumed continued hatred between the groups, and a testament to the peacebuilding work of Archbishop Raya and his supporting committees. What’s more, the police who monitored the march were “there to protect them [Arabs included] . . . it was the first time that the police had been their friends instead of their enemies, and it happened when they were demanding something as Arabs.”³⁵⁵ When the marchers reached the Knesset, they gathered in front of the Prime Minister’s office, where Archbishop Raya climbed on top of a jeep to address Golda Meir. Speaking in Arabic, with translations in Hebrew and English, he chose words from the Hebrew Bible, which Meir and all Jewish listeners would have recognized: “Jezebel, Jezebel, you took the vineyard from the poor. What is God going to do to you?”³⁵⁶ Marchers eventually “dispersed with a sense of wonder and awe that after all these years they had really been able to do this. They had a whole new sense of their own value and combined unity and force. They also had a leader.”³⁵⁷

³⁵¹ “High Court throws out application against Raya,” in *The Jerusalem Post*, August 23, 1972.

³⁵² Archbishop Joseph Raya, “A Call to My Brothers,” *The Jerusalem Post*, August 22, 1972.

³⁵³ Madonna House Internal Records, August 28, 1972, 494.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*.

³⁵⁷ Mary Kay Roland, newsletter, Haifa, August 24, 1972, Madonna House Archives.

Growing opposition and continued nonviolence

Opposition, for Raya, often became an opportunity to demonstrate the power of nonviolence and love for the enemy. Whenever possible, Raya sought to understand all the positions of all factions and to bring those factions together so that they could hear each other's opinions. At a symposium at Shamir Kibbutz, representatives from the Public Council for the Return of the People to Ikrit and Kfar Berem, the audience consisted of Jews and Arabs. Based on his experiences during the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, Archbishop Raya spoke of a gospel message of peace, love, and forgiveness. Rabbi Kahane, an ultra-nationalist writer and political figure whose work inspired a militant extremist right-wing Jewish political group, was also an invited speaker. When he began speaking disrespectfully against Raya and the people of Ikrit and Kfar Berem, the Jews from the Kibbutz wanted to beat him.³⁵⁸ Raya put himself between the crowd and Kahane to protect him from being lynched³⁵⁹: "We don't agree, but he is still my brother."³⁶⁰ Raya encouraged Rabbi Kahane to finish speaking, after which the Archbishop closed the symposium with these words: "We are of opposite views, but God is between us. If I kiss you, will you kiss me?"³⁶¹ The Rabbi agreed, and they embraced.³⁶² After the symposium, Rabbi Kahane became very frightened and

³⁵⁸ Ibrahim Sima'an, interview.

³⁵⁹ Madonna House Internal Records, May 1, 1973, 610.

³⁶⁰ Rabbi Kahane was later assassinated by Arab terrorist El Sayyid Nosiar.

³⁶¹ Madonna House Internal Records, May 1, 1973, 610.

³⁶² Ibid.

worried that his driver would abandon him. Raya not only provided Kahane with a ride to Haifa but offered him his own room in the bishopric house.³⁶³

There were other forms of opposition. In September, the Arab deputy speaker of the Israeli parliament, Elias Nakleh, a Melkite Greek Catholic from Raya's diocese, asked the Archbishop to halt the nonviolent justice campaign for Ikrit and Kfar Berem.³⁶⁴ Raya refused. A huge Christmas party in Ikrit, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the eviction, was still convened, although the invited soldiers who had participated in the destruction of the village on Christmas Day of 1951 were not "permitted to come" and *The Jerusalem Post* refused to print Raya's anniversary speech.³⁶⁵ During the following week, the villages of Ikrit and Kfar Berem were forcefully closed by order of the Israeli army.³⁶⁶

The Archbishop was simply not deterred from holding to his convictions. The fight for justice for the refugees of Ikret and Kfar Berem had to remain nonviolent, and actions taken were either positive steps toward peace or passive resistance to army orders. That strategy demanded considerable persistence and creativity. Under Raya's leadership, the supporters of the campaign conducted "illegal" prayer sessions, live-ins (some of the old people from the villages moved into the churches), baptisms, and weddings in defiance of the unjust laws and oppressive military actions. The point was to renew the Church and to demonstrate to the authorities that Christians were present in

³⁶³ Sima'an interview.

³⁶⁴ "Prelate Will Continue Protest for Villagers," in *The Boston Pilot*, September 2, 1972.

³⁶⁵ Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*.

³⁶⁶ Asher Wallfish, "Ikrit, Bir'im closed by army order now," in *The Jerusalem Post*, January 1, 1973.

the Holy Land, and that the Church was still alive.³⁶⁷ When periodic arrests occurred,³⁶⁸ Raya spent the day alternating between visiting the prisoners and pleading for help by writing telegrams to the Pope, Golda Meir, and various ambassadors.³⁶⁹ The Archbishop always taught his people not to get involved in fights and not to hit back. On one particular occasion, following the violent arrests of approximately fifty Arabs living “illegally” in the two Christian villages, police transported the prisoners to the Naharya Center for imprisonment. The prisoners did not respond to the violence. Raya arrived within fifteen minutes but refused to enter the police station, insisting, “I will not enter this police station until all my people are out of there. My Church in Europe helped save the Jewish people from the Holocaust. For that you cannot take my people from church to prison.”³⁷⁰ And the prisoners were immediately released, leaving the protesters feeling strong and protected.

Baptism at Ikrit

One memorable and very effective incident exemplified Raya’s ability to find a solution that was neither violent, nor did it require submission. On August 15, 1973, an entire convoy of busses and cars, carrying the displaced Ikrit villagers and their descendants, drove to Ikrit, led by Archbishop Raya’s car. The first obstacle was an army roadblock. Raya spoke with the officer in charge who claimed that his general needed to know where the convoy was going. Raya replied, “If he wants to know exactly

³⁶⁷ Yousef Atallah, interview by the author, Haifa, Israel, May 3, 2007. Atallah was a refugee from Ikrit.

³⁶⁸ Madonna House Internal Records, 1973, 651.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibrahim Atallah, interview by author, Haifa, Israel, May 3, 2007. Ibrahim is the grandson of Yousef Attalah, also a refugee from Ikrit.

where I am going, [he should] come and follow me. I'll show him the way. We are not here in the Soviet Union, a slave to the government. We are free and we are going to exercise this freedom."³⁷¹ The officer telephoned his general, and the general allowed the convoy to continue to Ikrit. The second obstacle was hundreds of soldiers, with shields and batons and helmets, blocking the entrance to the village.³⁷² Raya responded first with reasonable, peaceful dialogue, telling the commander, "You should not send all these police and army. No more than one. We have no guns. We have nothing to fight you and you have the whole army here. I suggest that you all be with your wives on the Sabbath and not here."³⁷³ The commander told Raya that he would be able to baptize the children in the church if he would ask the army's permission. Raya emphatically said, "No! I will never ask anybody's permission to go into my church, but I will obey the orders of the state."³⁷⁴ He turned to all the people gathered around and pointed to the church of Ikrit on the hill, "That church is made of stone and mortar but we are the Church. We do not need that church. We do not need the stones and mortar. We will baptize our children right here." And off into the field the crowds went, following the Archbishop. He vested in front of everyone and performed the baptisms. This was followed by processing around the field, singing and praying while the military watched. Since it was the custom of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church to sprinkle perfumed water over everybody in attendance, Raya asked the women to sprinkle perfumed water

³⁷¹ Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*.

³⁷² Mary Davis, interview.

³⁷³ Sima'an, interview

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

on the military police, which they did.³⁷⁵ Raya later remembered that “three or four of these soldiers had tears running down their eyes, their cheeks.”³⁷⁶

The Fast at the Knesset

The government of Israel did not relent in its treatment of the displaced Arab villagers. Since the Emergency Regulations of Israel expired on December 31, 1972, the Cabinet applied the British Mandatory Regulations of 1945 to the villages of Ikrit and Kfar Berem, which allowed for drastic measures of control, including house demolitions, indefinite detention, imposition of curfews and sealing off of territories. The Archbishop was undeterred from his fight for justice. As a Byzantine Christian, Raya believed that fasting and prayer were an effective means of fighting evil. After consultation with his advisors, Raya chose to accept all risks, including humiliation, and on July 2, 1973 he wrote to the government stating that he would be fasting and praying in front of the Knesset:

Believing in the heart of the Jewish people, I have declared three days of fast and prayer for all the people of my diocese, while I, as their representative, fast and pray as a solitary witness in front of the Knesset beginning July 16, 1973.

I invite all people who believe in justice to fast with me in your own homes. I invite all people who believe in true peace to fast with me wherever you are. I invite all people who believe in love to fast with me in unity of spirit. I invite all people who believe in prayer to fast with me in the silence of your own hearts.

I invite all those who believe in the heart of the great Jewish people who believe deeply enough to hope, to dream, when all reason for hope and for dreams seem to have disappeared, all these I invite to fast with me wherever you may be. (Raya, “Letter to Knesset”)

³⁷⁵ Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

This personal fast in front of the Knesset (July 16–19, 1973) raised the profile of the issue yet again in a nonviolent way. The day before the Fast in front of the Knesset he had a press conference in Tel Aviv with 200 foreign reporters.³⁷⁷ Before the end of the first day, in which there were “more Jews that fasted with [Raya and supporters] than Arabs,”³⁷⁸ a member of the Knesset asked the Archbishop to be sure he left by midnight to which he replied, “Only if you pick me up in my sleeping bag and throw me out.”³⁷⁹ In this case Raya was prepared to break the “law [against congregating in front of the Knesset] to give Arabs some dignity.”³⁸⁰

As the fast continued, the Archbishop was surrounded by supporters who were surprised by his “strength, and dignity, and peace and joy.”³⁸¹ They came to greet him and gave whatever assistance they could. Many Jewish people were very supportive. Even Parliament, Raya said, “appointed a special doctor who came to see me twice a day every day we were there.”³⁸² There were several Kibbutzim with placards “Your cause is our cause.” The Knesset guards offered their buffet for food and drink, which everyone refused. Knesset members, Jewish intellectuals, and university professors came to greet the Bishop.³⁸³ Many Jews came to the Archbishop to say that his fight for justice and peace was their fight also.

By the end of the third day, Knesset officials came to Raya to ask him to end the fast with a promise that the eviction of the villagers from Ikrit and Kfar Berem would be

³⁷⁷ Susan Adams, *Our Lady of Galilee Newsletter*, no. 38, August 11, 1973.

³⁷⁸ Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*.

³⁷⁹ Madonna House Internal Records, July 16, 1973, 643.

³⁸⁰ Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*.

³⁸¹ Susan Adams, *Our Lady of Galilee Newsletter*, no.38, August 11, 1973.

³⁸² Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*.

³⁸³ Susan Adams, *Our Lady of Galilee Newsletter*, no.38, August 11, 1973.

brought up in front of the Knesset once more. After a meeting, the organizers of the fast walked over to the Menorah and prayed the Our Father in Hebrew. Thus the fast ended. Raya later wrote that the people “are seeing a new way of resisting, of protesting, of touching hearts and spirits . . . all the Arabs have a new sense of dignity and purpose.”³⁸⁴ The entire event received much media attention, even internationally, perhaps because of its unusual nonviolence.

The suspension of the active Ikrit and Kfar Berem campaign

The Yom Kippur War, which began October 6, 1973, and lasted until October 25, 1973, led Raya to conclude that it was time “to go into quiet activities.”³⁸⁵ He was quick to telegraph his support to the Prime Minister, offering whatever help he could “for the protection and welfare of this country and its people.”³⁸⁶ That assistance included collecting whatever money the priests could spare,³⁸⁷ while committees that had previously been working for Palestinian refugees now offered food, transport, and skills.³⁸⁸ Raya also called for blood donations, setting an example himself. His grief over the needless bombs, hatred, and fear found expression in his hope that the “blood of our boys and the blood of our neighbours” might become “the blood of the new covenant which will make brothers of men who fought and killed each other. May the holiness of their lifeblood rain in love and peace on all of us who are anxiously waiting for that rain” (Raya 1974b, p. 4-5).

³⁸⁴ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Catherine Doherty, July 19, 1973.

³⁸⁵ Sima'an, interview.

³⁸⁶ *Christian News from Israel* 24, no. 2 (Autumn-Winter 1973): 78.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

Conflict and Resignation

Yet in the years following the Yom Kippur War, divisions continued and tensions remained high, particularly in debates and squabbling over the City of Jerusalem. Arabs at the time claimed the city for Muslims, Israel claimed the city for Jews, and the Vatican claimed Jerusalem for Christians. Raya's suggestion to this international problem was to offer the city to the Jewish people. His reasoning was simple: "Jerusalem for the Jew is a symbol of their very existence as a nation and as a religion under God,"³⁸⁹ a place (the Western Wall) where they "are united in God's love," whereas for the Muslims the city of Mecca is their holiest city. Even so, Jerusalem is holy for them; when Muslims meet at the Dome of the Rock, they are filled with "awe and a sense of God's presence under whose wings all find equal refuge and equality with one another" (Raya, "Jerusalem and Christianity," 6). For the Christians, however, the city is a place of scandal because of the constant quarreling between Churches about who may worship there and how:

Doesn't the fact that the holy places of our religion serve to divide us rather than unite us, as the holy places of the Jews and the Moslems³⁹⁰ unite them, prove to us that we do not take seriously the fact of our faith? We destroy the message of Christ by our lust for power. Where is the sacred space where Christ meets the believer? Wherever Christians met in love for one another and for all others in union with Jesus, there is the place of the resurrection. The whole point of our religion is that the tomb is empty! (Raya, "Jerusalem and Christianity," 8)

Archbishop Raya's vision for the unity of Christians was not realized, even within his own Church. There was discord even among the hierarchs. Fundamental differences in attitudes made Raya's position in Haifa eventually untenable: Raya and the Patriarch

³⁸⁹ Raya also identified the significance of Jerusalem to the Jews in *The Eyes of the Gospel*, Chapter 7.

³⁹⁰ This dissertation uses the spelling "Muslim" and its derivatives as compared to "Moslem." However, quotations reflect the spellings utilized by the original author.

both had a zeal for the Melkite Church's reputation and dignity, but Raya was unwilling to see Church leaders compromise their integrity to achieve this goal. A major dispute between Raya and his predecessor, now Patriarch Hakim, developed over alleged financial irregularities and allegations of improper land sales following a meeting in Rome between Patriarch Hakim and Cardinal De Furstenberg, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Church.³⁹¹ A letter was sent to Raya, demanding clarification of financial issues. A second letter, written in Italian, issued prior to the completion of the investigation, expressed concerns about Raya's lack of general and financial administrative capabilities and his performance. Raya openly acknowledged, in his Report to the Synod of the Melkite Church (1973), that he and Patriarch Maximos V Hakim were embroiled in a series of ongoing disputes,³⁹² and that clashes with the Western Churches in Israel had strained his relationship with the Vatican and the Sacred Congregation.³⁹³ He felt that the personal tension with the Patriarch was the primary motivation for the formal investigation into the overall financial affairs of his bishopric.³⁹⁴ An audit proved that Raya was fiscally responsible and honest, and in the words of the financial manager briefly assigned to Raya's bishopric during the investigation, "there is no diocese with better prepared financial records."³⁹⁵

³⁹¹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, Bishopric Report, 1973, See Appendix 5.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Archbishop Joseph Raya, *The Historical Disagreement between Metropolitan Joseph Raya, Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and All Galilee, and Patriarch Maximus V, Hakim*, Bishopric Report, Eintaraz, Lebanon, 1974. See Appendix 6.

The other revelation that should have shed light on the outcome of the investigation was Archbishop Hakim's inappropriate handling of funds;³⁹⁶ necessary records of land sales and other transactions were simply not to be found.³⁹⁷ In fact, incriminating documents had been destroyed earlier. In 2004, Raya finally related some details about his efforts to restore financial integrity to the See of Haifa. He had gathered approximately 300 pages of evidence, including newspaper reports and internal documents, which he then brought before the Synod presided over by Patriarch Hakim; Hakim had asked Raya to leave the volume of papers with him for a few days in order to let the bishops read through the material, which Raya had done. All of those documents were burnt by Hakim.³⁹⁸ Raya did not explain how he knew the fate of the documents, but he clarified the fate of the missing money.³⁹⁹

In a 1973 report issued to the Melkite Synod, Raya charged that the procedure undertaken by the Melkite hierarchy responsible for the investigations of Raya's alleged improprieties was full of irregularities. A Melkite Church Council Committee, created in August 1972 to investigate allegations of financial mishandling and a particular land sale, consisted of three archbishops, all appointed by the Patriarch.⁴⁰⁰ The Council Committee's report was supposed to have been sent to the full membership of the Holy Synod,⁴⁰¹ and only the general assembly of the Holy Synod was empowered to review the report, convene a discussion, and issue a verdict based on its findings. But only a

³⁹⁶ Archbishop Joseph Raya, Bishopric Report, 1973, See Appendix 5.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Archbishop Joseph Raya, email to author, August 31, 2004.

³⁹⁹ In a July 9, 2002 interview between Archbishop Joseph Raya and Lesya Sabada, Raya explicitly indicated that Hakim put the missing money in his own pocket.

⁴⁰⁰ Archbishop Joseph Raya, Bishopric Report, 1973. See Appendix 5.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

portion of the Holy Synod (the Permanent Assembly) and apparently not even all those members were ever given the opportunity to review the report.⁴⁰² Raya also noted other shortcomings in the review process including Hakim's prejudicial position and lack of impartiality. Patriarch Hakim himself was responsible for the charges against Raya, personally appointed the members of the Council Committee responsible for the investigation, personally received the Council Committee's report as president of the Permanent Assembly, and then directed the distribution of the report. Raya was frustrated and in disbelief, that Hakim could serve as accuser, prosecutor, judge, and jury.⁴⁰³ Adding insult to injury, Hakim requested Raya's resignation, even before the summary of the charges and findings against Raya had been read.⁴⁰⁴ Even Raya, as the accused, was never provided with a copy of the Council Committee's report. Almost no one at the Synodal hearing spoke, except for Patriarch Hakim⁴⁰⁵ and Raya was asked no questions.⁴⁰⁶

The particular land sale was referred to as the Deborah Land.⁴⁰⁷ When Raya arrived in Israel, he had been appalled at the financial affairs in his diocese: the lack of adequate pay for his priests, the disrepair evident in churches and schools, the lack of suitable pay for workers in his office, massive debt, and a severe lack of housing for refugees. In an arrangement with the Israeli government, Raya could leverage interest-free construction loans provided he could provide suitable land and a suitable share of equity. Raya worked with a committee of priests, lay representatives with financial training, and other

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Refer to Appendix 4.

experts to develop a strategy by which the diocese could sell the Deboriah Land for the sum of \$1.0M Israeli pounds (approximately \$250,000 US dollars in 1972), using half the money to secure the land for a refugee housing project, and the other half for other needs and shortfalls. Raya was aware of a recent order issued by Rome forbidding unapproved land sales in the Holy Land but argued in his own mind, that need, Patriarch Hakim's urgings, and a bishop's own authority⁴⁰⁸ would allow him to initiate such a sale.⁴⁰⁹ Nevertheless, Raya apparently requested authoritative approval from the Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Church in a letter dated March 28, 1972, but Cardinal De Furstenberg, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Church, refused to provide the requested "nihil obstat."⁴¹⁰ Based on Furstenberg's letter, a deferral was also requested by the Patriarchal Curia pending an appropriate examination of the issue.⁴¹¹ In spite of the significance of this issue, Raya's detailed response to Cardinal de Furstenberg, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Church,⁴¹² which Archbishop Elias Nijme of the Council Committee had considered important "enough to clear this issue,"⁴¹³ was not even mentioned.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁸ "At the Second Vatican Council, Patriarch Maximos IV Sayegh explained clearly and unequivocally the meaning of this primacy according to Byzantine theology: It should be clear that the power of the Roman Pontiff over the whole Church does not take away from the power of the College of bishops as a whole over the Church as a whole . . . a College which always includes the Pope as its primate . . . nor does the Pope's power take the place of the power of each bishop in his diocese. Every canonical delegation of authority within the limits of a diocese comes from the bishop of the diocese and from him alone" (Raya 1984, 103).

⁴⁰⁹ According to the letter from Cardinal De Furstenberg, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Church to Archbishop Raya, April 10, 1972, the land sale was initiated on September 10, 1971.

⁴¹⁰ Cardinal de Furstenberg, letter to Archbishop Raya, April 10, 1972. See Appendix 7.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Archbishop Raya, letter to Maximilian Cardinal de Furstenberg, May 1, 1972. See Appendix 4.

⁴¹³ See Appendix 5.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

The audit proved Raya's competence in the financial and administrative affairs of his diocese and still the Patriarch demanded his resignation.

Raya's lengthy Report to the Holy Synod in 1973 reflected anger: "I am compelled to rightfully demand to have an official legal arbitration whereby the whole truth is revealed. Secret negotiations between higher authorities without the knowledge of the concerned parties, especially if they involve the clergy, are harmful to the truth, the facts, and my dignity."⁴¹⁵ He set out specific demands, with promises to present facts and, if necessary, to resort to an official government court case, during which he could retain a lawyer.⁴¹⁶ A vote was taken and fourteen (of seventeen) bishops threatened to resign if the recommendations of the Permanent Assembly were implemented and Raya was forced to resign.⁴¹⁷

Nevertheless, on May 5, 1974, Raya submitted a written resignation to His Beatitude Maximos V Hakim and the Members of the Holy Greek Catholic Synod. Raya offered his resignation in response to the stated desire of Pope Paul VI as expressed to Patriarch Maximos V Hakim on March 21, 1974. Patriarch Maximos reported this message to the Holy Synod in April 1974: "in these difficult times your Church must be represented in [the] Holy Land by a strong, capable and pious man."⁴¹⁸ Although the Holy Synod asked Raya to reconsider his decision, he begged the Synod to accept his resignation. In accordance with Raya's request, the resignation and its acceptance was to be kept secret until September 20, 1974, to allow time to liquidate in silence and

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Sima'an interview.

⁴¹⁸ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter of resignation to Patriarch Maximos V Hakim and Members of the Holy Synod, May 5, 1974.

tranquility and to prepare for an eventual successor.⁴¹⁹ His formal resignation as Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth, and all Galilee was submitted to Pope Paul VI on July 13, 1974.⁴²⁰

Not discussed in the formal documents of resignation was the possible role of the Israeli government. The relationship between the Churches, at times substantial land holders, and the Israeli government was highly complex, often secretive and manipulative, as Israel constantly sought to acquire more land for additional Jewish settlements. In the words of Uri Avnery, former member of the Knesset, “A lot of bribery and treachery was going on” between the government and corrupt Church officials anxious to acquire private wealth.⁴²¹ Raya’s decision, at one point, to bring in American auditors to check out eparchial records, would not have been welcomed. Equally troublesome for the government was Raya’s compassionate work among the down-trodden and fearful Arab Israelis. Raya gave the Arabs dignity and motivated them to stand up for their rights. He had been a bold advocate for justice, for everyone; so for economic and political reasons, it seems very likely that the government leaned on the Church hierarchy to have Raya removed.⁴²²

Summary of Work in Israel

Archbishop Raya sought to live out, even in the face of a painful resignation, his own teaching about forgiveness and reconciliation. To his eparchy, Raya wrote about the pain of this decision:

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter of resignation to His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, July 13, 1974.

⁴²¹ Uri Avnery and Alex Massis, interview by author, Tel Aviv, Israel, May 6, 2007.

⁴²² Ibid.

I am not going to burden you, my friends, with all the contradictions of my Church. There is a festering wound I tried to heal with all the sincerity of my heart while keeping all the respect and loyalty I owe to the higher authorities within the Church. But I could not in conscience deny the existence of injustice, discrimination. These injustices have been weighing down my people in indignity. I had either to denounce them and thus create hatred, division and confusion, or keep silent and accept the status quo.

I prefer to give up my position of a glorious responsibility and sleep with a conscience that will keep me closer to my God. (1974c)

After the debate of 1973, Raya penned an account of the issues, challenges, and circumstances leading to his resignation: “I have forgiven and forgotten, and I hope that His Holiness [Patriarch Hakim] has also forgiven and forgotten. I hope and pray that He who is going to join us soon will join us in love and peace, singing one to another, ‘Christ is in our midst.’”⁴²³ Raya’s conviction that forgiveness was not optional and his strong desire to accept all human beings in all their weaknesses allowed him to move on from the painful circumstances of his departure from Israel, even as he did not minimize the difficulties, or his part in them:

There was a higher Church power than me that couldn’t bear the comparisons [between the predecessor and the successor] being made by the people and the governments, so our Patriarch, God forgive him, spread hurtful gossip about me, to which I replied aggressively and with unnecessary words.⁴²⁴

I retired because I didn’t want to [reduce] myself to fighting, and I couldn’t bear the lies and the wicked politics. . . . The bishops didn’t accept my resignation, except on the fourth time when I earnestly begged them with tears. Our Patriarch, God forgive him, continued spreading hurtful gossip, [damaging] my reputation, which created suspicion in the hearts of our people . . . and created a fire of humiliation and separation.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ See Appendix 6.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

Subsequent letters and conversations from his later years of retirement reveal that Raya's emotions throughout this very difficult period in his life were more complex, contradictory even, than what is evident in the documents written in the immediate aftermath of his resignation.

Nevertheless, Raya felt that he had lived his priesthood years with honor, pride, and respect from his brother priests, bishops, his parishioners, and the people who knew him. His time as Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth, and all Galilee had been unique. He took comfort in the fact that the Muslims and Druze called him "The Arabs' Bishop" and the Israeli government named him "The Peace and Love Man."⁴²⁶

Based on testimony of those that knew him, in Israel, as in Birmingham, Raya had demonstrated an authentic expression of his own religion with a respect for both believers and nonbelievers. His inclusive approach and his radical commitment to the Gospel message set him apart from many of his peers. Raya's knowledge and commitment to his faith contributed to a different understanding of church, life, and practice. His own approach to religious peacebuilding combined social action and justice, true to the Gospel and Byzantine theology.

During his years of service, Raya advanced various practical actions and demonstrated a significant number of traits and skills characteristic of religious peacebuilders. His demonstrated respect for people and the integrity of his words and actions led to relationships built on trust within both secular and religious circles, and to a reputation as an effective leader. Raya showed compassion and empathy for the other, patiently taking the time to listen; he freely shared his gifts, strengths, and traditions. His

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

patience, joy, generosity were well suited to initiatives in education and mentoring. At the same time he was stern in his expectations of his fellow religious leaders if he thought they were timid, complacent, or slothful on justice issues. Raya became involved in various structural issues: eliminating prejudicial identity cards for Arabs; removing inappropriate references to Jews in liturgical services; establishing schools with peace-oriented mandates; demanding and arranging for housing for refugees. In all these activities, Raya demonstrated a highly active leadership role in religious peacebuilding.

Despite achievements, Raya was not without weaknesses, nor were all his initiatives free of inconsistencies. Certainly Raya had his critics throughout his time in Israel. One of their complaints was that Raya's flair for drama sometimes put him in the limelight, not the issue itself as Raya would have argued. Mark Segal, for example, made a number of unflattering allegations in "The Ambitious Archbishop – Personal Opinion": "Some sources in the Christian community claim that the Archbishop is not too interested in an orderly settlement of the Bir'im-Ikrit issue, and that his highly theatrical campaign is part of a power struggle, both inside his Church and with the Christian Arab community in Israel," adding that "This Arab prelate, holder of a USA passport, has—according to highly placed sources in the Israeli Christian community—wide political ambitions and a strong appetite for power" (Segal 1972). Segal focused particularly on the unfortunate tension between Raya and Patriarch Maximus V, offering a less flattering picture of Raya's conduct than what appears in Raya's own accounts and in those of individuals close to Raya:

They say the key to the puzzle can be found in Archbishop Raya's almost hysterical outburst at mention of the name of his predecessor, Archbishop Hakim, today Pontiff Maximus V. He seemed to hint that Pontiff Maximus had pocketed some of the compensation money for the Ikrit church property, which the latter has roundly denied since then. When asked whether he would allow Pontiff Maximus to join in his protest, the Archbishop's voice became shrill, and he cried: "No, it's my protest, I won't let him into my protest." His predecessor had marked up quite a reputation during his period of service here, improving the material lot of his flock, leading them into the Histradrut and gaining its help for his church schools and in organizing cooperatives. According to my sources, Archbishop Raya is profoundly jealous of the fact that Archbishop Hakim enjoyed such wide regard outside the Greek-Catholic community and was regarded as the spiritual leader and spokesman of the Arab Christian community in Israel. (ibid)

Another newspaper article printed in the *Jerusalem Post* made the following statement:

The only time the Archbishop [Raya] lost his composure was at the mention of his predecessor, Archbishop Hakim, now Pontiff Maximus V of Antioch. When it was pointed out to him that he had omitted all mention of the Government compensation to the villagers (especially Ikrit) in the form of land and money, and that Archbishop Hakim had sold the church land to the Government, his voice became shrill. The prelate became angrier still when asked the reasons for the sudden change in church policy after 24 years. In a clear attack on former Archbishop Hakim, the incumbent head of the Greek Catholic community said; "It is not a question of the policy of the church, but of a man." He even went as far as to charge that "Hakim accepted personally the compensation for church land," adding "But now I am spokesman for the people" ⁴²⁷

Without a doubt, the conflict between Raya and Patriarch Maximos V Hakim was a major issue, poorly concealed from the masses, and not completely understood. Raya was angry at Hakim for mishandling the administrative and financial affairs of the Haifa Diocese. Hakim, on the other hand, had Raya investigated on very similar charges. It seems particularly ironic that Hakim personally ordained Archbishop Raya as his

⁴²⁷ Mark Segal, "Raya to re-enact Christ Passion as protest over Bir'im, Ikrit," *The Jerusalem Post*, August 15, 1972.

successor to the See of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee, and that Raya would serve under Patriarch Maximos V Hakim as the leader of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church for most of his time as Archbishop. These two religious leaders worked in trying times in a troubled land, but could not reconcile their own differences. Their disagreements had become too personal, and Raya admitted that he was sometimes angry and harsh in his responses to the Patriarch.

Although Archbishop Raya would face societal and political conflicts in Lebanon, nowhere did he face internal ecclesiastical conflicts as intense and personally difficult as in Israel. Even apart from the tensions within his Church, the demands made on him were often overwhelming, and Raya was not very good at recognizing if and when he was exceeding his personal limits. His instinctive desire to meet the needs of the people who came to him for help and an equally instinctive desire to correct injustices led to his taking on too many challenges without adequate support. The highly complex political situation in Israel with its historical animosities and forced interaction among the three Abrahamic faiths simply demanded all of Raya's peacebuilding skills. That so many of the people he worked with in Israel regarded him highly and sought to emulate his attitudes and efforts is testament to his lasting achievements.

Peacebuilding Ministry in Lebanon

Although Archbishop Raya spoke of his resignation in Israel as his "retirement," he nevertheless responded to a call to war-torn Lebanon in 1986. He went to serve as a peacemaker for his Church, and to help rebuild and heal the country from the atrocities of the civil war. Most hierarchs dared not enter Lebanon for fear of their lives, but Raya entered the arena of civil war to live as a man of faith and hope in the midst of

unbelievable suffering. As he had done in Israel, he became the leader of Muslims, Christians, Druze, and Jews and began the grueling work of preaching and living the Gospel of peace, love, and forgiveness. He challenged military authorities, terrorists, and his own Melkite hierarchy. His life was threatened on multiple occasions. With few resources available to him, Raya tried to care for the spiritual and material needs of his flock, even as he understood that nation building could not happen without attending to the spiritual need of forgiveness.

Political and Religious Context

The political and religious strife in Lebanon is highly complex. The colonization of Lebanon by the French in 1920 and the subsequent partitioning of Lebanon from Syria, provided the Maronite population redrawn borders and a state in which they were the majority (Ritli 2011). With the Maronite Christians entrenched with political power, the French effectively reduced support for the Pan-Arab nationalist movement. When the French withdrew from the Lebanon in the mid-1940s, the “newly independent states of Syria and Lebanon failed to conclusively establish a formal border” (ibid.). Subsequent attempts to define a border in the 1950s and early 1960s failed: “The border’s porous and undefined nature has been linked to issues including weapons smuggling, terrorism, and the deaths . . .” (ibid.). Many of the issues currently faced by Lebanon and Syria are rooted in the legacy of colonization. The Sunni and Shia Muslims, Christians, Druze and Palestinians suffered greatly as a result of historical injustices and oppression. Each of these groups could legitimately claim some “victimization.” It was not just south Lebanon or the Christian communities that

suffered the anguishes of war and conflict, the entire country was challenged by strife and turmoil.

The civil war in Lebanon started in 1975, initially between Christians and Muslims who fought over control of the Lebanese government. Even after Lebanon was partitioned into Christian and Muslim areas, the strife continued. Christians fought against Christians and Muslims against Muslims to decide who should rule their respective territories. The consequences of the 15-year-long civil war in Lebanon were catastrophic: political disintegration with no compromise seemingly acceptable, massive economic destruction, and wholesale displacement of the population, some to North America or Europe and about a quarter of the population from one part of the country to another. The chief problem was bitterness over 150,000 deaths.⁴²⁸ The ensuing hatred destroyed the possibility of Lebanese living together again as one nation represented by a single government.

The ecclesiastical context was no more encouraging. During the first year of Raya's service in Lebanon (1986), two bishops attempted to administer the devastated and complex Diocese of Beirut. One hundred thousand Christian refugees fled to Beirut from other parts of Lebanon to escape the mass killings. After a year in the See of Beirut, Raya was assigned to the abandoned diocese of Marje-Eyoun in south Lebanon, an ecclesiastical territory, which had lain in ruins for thirty years. Now named "Fatah land," this region had been occupied by Muslim fighters, and proved to be a

⁴²⁸ "Lebanon Profile," BBC News, last modified August 10, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14649284>.

battleground between Jews and Arabs for seventeen years.⁴²⁹ It had also become a last-ditch refuge for 300,000 Christians fleeing the attacks of Muslims, both Lebanese and foreign terrorists from Libya, Turkey, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, and the Philippines. More than 386 Christian villages had been destroyed,⁴³⁰ and many Christians were massacred.⁴³¹ Ironically, the Israeli military presence provided some stability in southern Lebanon because the Israelis needed a buffer zone between northern Israel and Lebanon. Raya, now a 70-year-old hierarch with a heart condition, arrived in Marje-Eyoun. Before his arrival, one lonely eighty-year-old bishop had been serving from a burned-out cathedral in an area effectively devoid of priests for the last seventeen or eighteen years.⁴³² Raya gave the next three years to the work of healing, giving hope, and speaking about love and forgiveness in the midst of hell on earth.

Service in Beirut

Archbishop Raya had assumed temporary responsibility for the See of Beirut in 1986 in response to a plea for assistance. Although he was not sure he would survive here, he was “drawn to alleviate the suffering of these priests and bishops and give the hope and some joy of being in the Church of Christ.”⁴³³ The See of Beirut did have an active bishop, but the complexities and challenges of the diocese, with 385,000 resident Melkites and now an additional 85,000 to 100,000 refugees,⁴³⁴ were simply too overwhelming for one bishop to manage. Living in Beirut was dangerous. The sound of rockets was almost continuous. Even finding a place to live was difficult, and after the

⁴²⁹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, “Lebanon Current Situation,” Audio Tape to Madonna House, May 1988.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Carol Luker, “Bishop Predicts End of Christian Lebanon,” in *Texas Catholic*, August 11, 1989.

⁴³² Raya, “Lebanon Current Situation.”

⁴³³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Father Emile Brière, March 3, 1986.

⁴³⁴ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House, September 22, 1986.

bishops' residence was burnt three times and a rental home was likewise burnt, Raya moved in with his own brother near the seminary. On one occasion, as they traveled to a church for a service, an announcement on the car radio advised that their destination had just been bombed with "three hundred victims around the church."⁴³⁵

In the midst of such conditions, where most of his church members had lost everything and refugees were living in basements, garages, gardens, backyards, and where the priests and nuns were demoralized,⁴³⁶ Raya preached in whatever church was safe. Many evenings he preached at two or three different churches and the crowds, including the youth, followed him from church to church.⁴³⁷ After he moved in with his brother, "people started flocking into the seminary for the services more and more and they [came] from far away sometimes."⁴³⁸ In a country decimated and demoralized by war and violence, with "no economy" and "large areas of the country . . . destroyed,"⁴³⁹ Raya established programs to renew hope and console the people.

Service in Marje-Eyoun

After one year in Beirut, Raya took over the Melkite Archeparchy of Paneas in Marje-Eyoun, in July 1987. He served as spiritual leader to the Melkite faithful, but also worked with Maronite Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Druze and Israelis occupying southern Lebanon. Speaking bluntly, Raya described his new place of service as "a dead diocese with only two priests,"⁴⁴⁰ with "destroyed or half destroyed

⁴³⁵ Archbishop Joseph Raya, *News and Views*, no. 144, April 28, 1986.

⁴³⁶ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House, September 22, 1986.

⁴³⁷ Archbishop Joseph Raya, *News and Views*, no. 144, April 28, 1986.

⁴³⁸ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Mary Davis, February 23, 1987.

⁴³⁹ Directors Meeting Report, Madonna House Apostolate, Combermere, Ontario, May 11, 1987

⁴⁴⁰ Although there were no priests for many years, Raya did receive help from several priests. Accounts vary from two to four priests.

churches,” where “Muslims and Jews are always in confrontations of all kinds and where the poor Christians are in the middle squeezed and bothered on all sides.”⁴⁴¹ The troubles and problems were extensive, “financial, spiritual, political and moral.” Raya was grateful “that the Melkite Catholics [were] the most educated and highest class of people,” even though they were also, thanks to some thirty years of neglect, “resentful of the Church” and antagonistic to clergy.⁴⁴²

Bringing Hope and Community

In this situation, the Archbishop, known for service to all people, made a commitment “to give them hope and make them smile to life.”⁴⁴³ This mandate included putting on simple parties to celebrate whatever occasion he could rationalize,⁴⁴⁴ and hosting gatherings of about eighty-five young adults most Saturday nights at the Archbishop’s home.⁴⁴⁵ Since meetings of young people were forbidden in Lebanon as they had been in Israel, Raya made arrangements with an Israeli general to take responsibility for the youth who gathered in his house. He reconstructed the destroyed grammar school and converted it into a youth center, a place of refuge. Archbishop Raya had already undertaken the hard work of organizing finances so that bombed churches could be cleaned and repaired.⁴⁴⁶ The eight churches that served the twelve villages in this area were all repaired, opened for worship, and the people worked together to maintain them. During the previous 35 years, the diocese of Marje-Eyoun had not had a

⁴⁴¹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House, July 31, 1987.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Madonna House, August 8, 1987.

⁴⁴⁴ Archbishop Joseph Raya, *News and Views*, no. 226, November 30, 1987.

⁴⁴⁵ Raya, “Lebanon Current Situation.”

⁴⁴⁶ Carol Luker, “Bishop predicts end of Christian Lebanon.”

single calling to the priesthood. During Archbishop Raya's short tenure, four young men entered the seminary.⁴⁴⁷ In a place so filled with hatred that even a ten-year-old child could express a desire to "pluck out the eyes" of the Muslim who had "chopped up [his] mother in front of [him]" when he was only four years old,⁴⁴⁸ persuading anyone to take up a call to a life of service and love was a huge step forward.

These brief anecdotes represent some Raya's work in Marje-Eyoun. It is, however, important to look again at the Archbishop's *modus operandi* in a place where Raya's desire to love enemies and his theology of peacebuilding were put to the test.

Following principles of peacebuilding

While Raya's religious peacebuilding efforts could be summarized in other ways, the following three actions are especially typical of Raya's work.

Providing practical necessities first. As an archbishop, Raya focused on the needs of the most vulnerable and worked tirelessly to raise money and to provide what was necessary, first for survival and then for dignity and self-sufficiency. Various institutions in several countries and friends from Birmingham and other places were contacted for funds, often with specific projects in mind. Although he knew nothing about medicine, he did know that a dispensary of basic medicine was essential; funds from World Vision made possible a refurbished three-room house and six doctors volunteered three hours a week each. Distribution of food and clothing also meant much welcomed personal

⁴⁴⁷ Archbishop Joseph Raya, *News and Views*, no. 279, December 12, 1988.

⁴⁴⁸ Raya, "Lebanon Current Situation."

visits.⁴⁴⁹ Land, buildings, supplies, food, hope, and love were offered to devastated refugees.⁴⁵⁰ A high school was offered as home to refugees who had been living in tents and backyards, garages, and basements. Economic needs became the catalyst for development projects. The planting of thousands of olive trees, five thousand of which Raya personally planted,⁴⁵¹ provided hope, food, and future revenue. Most striking of all was the agricultural school built for the whole of southern Lebanon, with the help of the European Common Market. Raya set up a committee of twelve to supervise the construction and guide future development. “The miracle,” he said, “was not that I could find the three million American dollars to finance the construction, but that I succeeded in putting together Muslim, Shiites, and Druze to sit at the same table, say a prayer together with us Christians, and discuss in harmony the future of their children and their fate.”⁴⁵²

Working cooperatively and ecumenically. Once again, Raya’s work became ecumenical in purpose and in practice. In his view, the war in Lebanon was about the survival of Christianity. The majority was now Muslim and given “the new emergence of fanaticism” among Muslims, all who were not Muslim would “have no civil rights.”⁴⁵³ That created an incredible challenge for Christians who were called, Raya believed to, “love one another as I have loved you” (Raya 2006, 122). Raya wanted the Christian

⁴⁴⁹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Father Bob Pelton, November, 1988.

⁴⁵⁰ Carol Luker, “Bishop Predicts End of Christian Lebanon,” in *Texas Catholic*, August 11, 1989.

⁴⁵¹ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Father Bob Pelton, December 22, 1988.

⁴⁵² Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Father Bob Pelton, November, 1988.

⁴⁵³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Father Bob Pelton, December 22, 1988.

faithful to become divinized, to be divine, to be like God.⁴⁵⁴ The people could coexist with tolerance, but love was better. The Christian vision was actually integrated into the teachings of imams and Druze leaders: “As Bishop Raya says love, we are going to love, and everybody claps their hands.”⁴⁵⁵

Archbishop Raya served as an intermediary to facilitate interactions between Muslims, Druze, Christians, and Jews. He met with the leaders of these faiths to discuss the future of Lebanon, many of whom emphatically proclaimed that in southern Lebanon they could live together in peace. They could stop killing and massacring each other. They could serve as a model of coexistence for all the people to see. Although Archbishop Raya was moved, he felt the problems of Lebanon needed to be solved at a higher level. He continued to preach the need for love, and mutual respect. On television broadcasts, he dared to welcome the differences between Muslims and Christians: “I love the difference. I love to see a Muslim by me. He has his Koran and I have my Gospel. And we talk about God and let God do the rest.”⁴⁵⁶

Meeting spiritual needs and building respect. Raya also knew too well the spiritual needs of devastated lives. As he consoled refugees, preached forgiveness, and celebrated the Byzantine liturgical services, he brought countless people into his churches, Muslim and Christian. Brutally divided and exhausted by the chaotic and atrocious environment of war, the Lebanese people were hungry for the celebration of love and the rituals of

⁴⁵⁴ Raya, “Lebanon Current Situation.”

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

religion and beauty. They were “tired of television and of killing and destruction.”⁴⁵⁷ As Raya recounted in a letter, “Some of my Shiite friends dared all old taboos and attended the funeral of Christ. This is another first that never happened before in this country.”⁴⁵⁸ Through the acts of priestly service, Raya was undermining the need for revenge and laying the foundations of religious toleration and mutual respect. Small step by small step, he was eliminating the fears the Christians had of their Muslim brothers and sisters. Raya challenged them to forgive and not to fear their differences: “If you are a strong Christian, do not be afraid of the difference. Love the difference! Love them being Muslim. Help them to be better Muslims . . . We Christians are not afraid of difference. A difference will help me be a better follower of Christ.”⁴⁵⁹

His principles were put to an ultimate test when he visited and faced murderers, one of them the infamous Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt, a prominent Lebanese politician who led the anti-government forces that opposed the ruling Lebanese government in the civil war. He was also a major ally of the Palestine Liberation Organization until his assassination in 1977. Archbishop Raya shivered as he approached Jumblatt’s palace. Hanging all around the entrance of the magnificent palace were the church bells that the Druze leader took as trophies when he destroyed Christian villages. Raya said,

. . . my whole being cringed, you know, to see the bells of my church lined up in front of the Druzes who massacred all these Christians. Anyhow, I visited and talked. After I quieted down my heart, I put my arm around him and said, ‘I’m so proud. I’m so happy that you have all these bells around your palace. God bless you. I want to talk about it everywhere I go—that they are in front of your palace. You have all these beautiful bells of our churches. For us, the bell is a saint who sings the glory of God. That’s why

⁴⁵⁷ Archbishop Joseph Raya, letter to Mary Davis, March 25, 1989.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Raya, “Lebanon Current Situation.”

we put them in our churches and they sing. The bell is baptized with a name. And look, every bell has a name: St. George, St. Elias, St. Peter. And when all these saints ring around your palace and all your people hear our saints singing the glory of God, oh my God, I'm so proud of it. I want to thank you for it.' He looked at me and now he doesn't know what he is going to do with the bells.⁴⁶⁰

Departure from Lebanon

Raya brought peace and reconciliation—or at least diminished previous prejudices in the lives of many. His presence, however, was an increasing threat to many political interests. He had lived with the possibility of imminent death for many years, in Lebanon as well as Israel. However, when Raya's friend Paul McMenemy, a devout Roman Catholic, risked flying into Beirut to pass on information that Raya was now on a "death list of a radical group,"⁴⁶¹ Raya paid more attention. McMenemy tried to convince the Archbishop of the danger, but it took "three days of arguing"⁴⁶² before Raya agreed to do something about it.

Without a doubt, his concern for the people, and his consistent living an example of practical love, made a significant impact. In no other place had Raya's convictions been more evident than in a country where Christians were a persecuted minority, living in the appalling conditions of a civil war.

Teaching and Writing in North America

When he returned to North America in 1990, Archbishop Raya applied his energies to teaching and writing. He wanted to shape his lifetime of giving spiritual care and working for peace into a legacy that could be passed on. In a series of theological books

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Paul X. McMenemy, "Passion and Love," in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

and in many lectures, Raya, now living simply and peacefully in a little cabin on Carmel Hill at Madonna House in Combermere, Ontario, addressed many of the issues facing the Roman and Eastern Catholic Churches.

One of those crucial issues for the Catholic Churches, both Roman and Eastern, was the role of women. Raya had always honored the dignity and worth of women. He emphatically supported the stance taken by Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV Sayegh at the Second Vatican Council: “no one enters the nuptial chamber to advise husband and wife as to what to do for birth control.”⁴⁶³ Regarding abortion, Raya believed the soul inhabited the fetus from the time of conception, and although he opposed abortion, he did not condemn those who had the procedures.⁴⁶⁴ Raya objected to divisive and judgmental actions, insisting instead that loving homes be provided for the women who needed help.⁴⁶⁵ While the Catholic Church was staunchly against the ordination of women, Raya insisted that there were no theological reasons for women not to be ordained: “It’s all baloney. It’s all junk!”⁴⁶⁶ Church traditions were always intertwined with culture and should thus be revised as needed. Women should not “push too much”⁴⁶⁷ for the right to ordination. He also insisted on protecting the Eastern Church’s right to have married clergy.

⁴⁶³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, Study Days Conference, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, March 7-10, 1991.

⁴⁶⁴ Raya requested at the Edmonton Study Days, October 3-5, 1991, that Pro-Life protestors take a more gentle approach and not create division in society. In *Eyes of the Gospel* (103-104), Raya discusses the modern crusades: “Are we today in the churches free from crusades and from waging battles for ideas and sociological conditions? Are our crusades ‘against depression,’ ‘against enemies,’ ‘against divorce,’ ‘against anything that does not agree with our particular present mentality,’ are these crusades any different in inspiration from the Crusades and Inquisitions of old!”

⁴⁶⁵ Archbishop Joseph Raya, Study Days Conference, Edmonton, Alberta, October 3-5, 1991.

⁴⁶⁶ Archbishop Joseph Raya, Study Days Conference, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, March 7-10, 1991.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. Raya was supportive of women’s rights and many feminist issues, but cautioned that actions and movements be advanced without aggression.

The most important contemporary issue for the Church, in Raya's mind, was love.⁴⁶⁸ Love was the essence of Christianity and was therefore his main topic for many conferences. He spoke about the importance on being on guard against one's own hatred, revenge, and lack of forgiveness. He identified Christian love as relationship with four movements: the act of being present to the other, the act of communication with the other, the act of surrendering to the other, and finally the act of identification with the other (Raya 2006, 18-25). The fruits of true love were peace and justice. Raya believed Christianity had gone down the wrong and easier road of making a religion of rules and regulations;⁴⁶⁹ it should breathe freedom instead. The original message of the Christian faith, which had been lost, was divinization, the ability to live and love the life of God by grace. The Church was Trinitarian, incarnational and, consequently, anything physical such as the human body or environmental issues were important.

Although Archbishop Raya was not an academic, nor would he have ever described himself as a theologian, he spent years studying and contemplating the Byzantine Christianity, noting its differences from Western Christian theology and practice, and teaching its traditions in whatever sphere of opportunity arose for him. In his retirement years, he took time for writing what he had learned, not only through study and experience, but through his love and contemplation of God. He wrote numerous articles for religious periodicals, authored and published fifteen books; and edited texts so they

⁴⁶⁸ J. A. Zunti, "Wise man from East gives global perspective" in *Prairie Messenger*, May 25, 1992, 11.

⁴⁶⁹ Raya wrote that the Roman Church was mainly "a visible society dependent on juridical rules" (Raya 1984, 108).

were more inclusive and progressive.⁴⁷⁰ He composed music in the Greek and Arabic traditions. He taught at several universities and seminaries in both Canada and the USA. For over a decade, he also renewed the theological studies curriculums for Melkite seminaries and monasteries worldwide.⁴⁷¹

Two of his books, *The Face of God: An Introduction to Eastern Spirituality* and *The Eyes of the Gospel*, come closest to expressing the foundations of Raya's mature faith, although certain themes appear in all of his published writing, the same themes that appear also in his homilies and letters. In *The Face of God*, Raya briefly outlines the history of Byzantium before discussing the theological precepts that are stressed in the Byzantine church: the Trinity, the source of life and love in all creation; and the Incarnation of Christ, along with the major feast days that celebrate the appearance of the Divine in the flesh (the nativity of Christ, Theophany, and the Resurrection). Raya also discusses Mary, the Theotokos, and the primary teaching of the Gospel, as well as examining the importance of icons and church buildings. The book ends with a discussion of four sacraments and our response to God, which is prayer.

In *The Eyes of the Gospel*, published several years later, Raya returns to his understanding of the spirituality of the Byzantine Church, exploring, once again, the Trinity and Incarnation, the component of elements of love, the various covenants that God has with humanity, namely Noah, Abraham, Moses, and, supremely, Jesus Christ. His conviction that the goal of our faith and the purpose of our religious disciplines is

⁴⁷⁰ For whatever reason, Raya chose to use Elizabethan English in the last edition of the Divine Liturgy.

⁴⁷¹ Curriculum Vitae, which Archbishop Joseph Raya sent to the Studies Days Committee, had no indication as to what this work involved.

the transfigured human being (divinization) appears in his focus on the Byzantine Liturgy, the Sacred Mysteries, the Holy Eucharist, and the mystery of the Church. Yet, at the same time, Raya includes discussion of the delicate relationship that Christians have with Jews and some of his views regarding the Holy places in Israel.

In Raya's old age, the "Lion of the Israeli Left," former Knesset member Mr. Uri Avnery, nominated Raya for the prestigious Nobel Peace prize. A constant stream of visitors from different parts of the world came to Madonna House, not only seek his counsel, but to be with him. A former member of the KKK who threatened his life in Birmingham phoned to apologize to him.⁴⁷² Twenty-eight years after his resignation, the people of Galilee demonstrated in the streets of their cities and in the villages shouting, "We want back our Archbishop Raya!"⁴⁷³ Father David Kirk wrote of Raya, "He has come to the stage of life where he is like the elder St. John, who simply goes about hugging the world and telling each of us, 'my little children, love one another'."⁴⁷⁴

Archbishop Raya died June 10, 2005 at the age of eighty-eight. Shortly before his death, he spoke gently about his coming death. "We find ourselves in the hand of our Maker," he said, "and our last whisper becomes surprisingly serene."⁴⁷⁵ He believed that when the hour of departure came, "men and women feel ready to go. They fall, gently and softly downward . . . more comfortable than they have ever been . . . sustained by grace, mercy and love."⁴⁷⁶ The care of the body itself, "that has been fully divinized by baptism, and by a very special presence of God Himself in the Eucharist," will be left to

⁴⁷² Email to author, March 27, 2003.

⁴⁷³ Archbishop Joseph Raya, telephone conversation with author, April 9, 2002.

⁴⁷⁴ Father David Kirk, "The Man Who Stood the World on its Head," in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

⁴⁷⁵ Sabada, 2005, 197.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

family and friends. His vision of his “pot of clay,” now returned to clay reflected his trust in God and willingness to live with mystery:

The divinized matter of the body will disintegrate; and the deliquescent flesh, divinized as it is, will become the sap of plants, to re-appear, in a leaf or a flower or a tree. It will be transformed into new matter in the myriad, swarming creatures that make up the world’s diffuse subterranean palpitations, and, at last be absorbed in the glamour of the stars. All the world will thus share in our divinization. There is no terror in becoming one with the fecund unstoppable infusion of the divinization of the universe. We commit ourselves to creation as a new life which will climb to the sun, to the stars, to all that God had done for the glorification of our humanity... Free at Last! Thanks be to God Almighty. (Sabada, 2005, 197).

Conclusion

Archbishop Raya’s life combined social action and justice. His experience of religious peacebuilding continually developed wherever he served. While he never wrote a coherent theology of peace for the Byzantine Church, he lived his teachings within a peace theology framework founded on Trinitarian and incarnational theology, as well as divinization. According to Hertog,

Religious peacebuilding centers on indigenous religious leaders who develop, from their own tradition and with understanding of the specificities of the conflict situation, effective and appropriate concepts and practices with a short-term aim to reduce violence or resolve conflicts, and with a long term aim of building a culture of peace, justice and nonviolence. (Hertog 2010, 96).

As a religious actor, Archbishop Raya had identified with and even stood among those who suffered victimization: “Religious actors are among those least likely to trivialize or ignore the community’s history of suffering, the memory of individual victims, or the complex causes of suffering” (Little and Appleby 2004, 15).

Archbishop Raya consistently interacted with Muslims, Druze, Christians, and Jews, seeking their wisdom and winning their cooperation as he worked toward growth

and forgiveness. Raya combined an authentic expression of his own religion together with a respect and love for both believers and nonbelievers. Raya's pastoral and prophetic peacebuilding was not limited to a specific culture or religious belief system. His approaches were unique but philosophically unchanged in America and the Middle East. When confronted by the KKK in Alabama, he responded without violence. In the Middle East, he worked to resolve the very complex reality between Arabs and Jews, again without violence. He consistently demonstrated his pastoral peacebuilding skills. In war-torn Lebanon, he refined and adjusted his approach to contextually specific pastoral and prophetic peacebuilding. His inclusive approach was a personal trademark, and demonstrates the transformative potential of the Byzantine Church for future interactions within the global community. Raya demonstrated the contemporary relevance of an Eastern Catholic Church life and practice for all people. Raya's theological construct and his lifestyle established a model for a higher level of spiritual existence.

At the same time, as is the case for many in leadership positions, his greatest strengths—his impulsive generosity, immediate sympathy for those in difficulties, and passion for establishing justice and peace through love—were sometimes also his greatest weaknesses. His dramatic flair, for example, which made celebratory moments more memorable and entertaining, became, on other occasions, a tendency toward exaggeration, a strategy that Raya employed in many circumstances, both joyous and difficult. Such an approach, however, put his credibility at risk. In some instances, the dramatic acting out drew needed attention to an issue. In other instances, Raya, the extrovert, deliberately drew the attention to himself, gaining energy from the responses

he elicited and enjoying the limelight. Unfortunately, such embellishment of claims and concerns made it more difficult for others to perceive the objective facts, especially in light of general behavioral expectations and the societal reputation of a high-ranking cleric.⁴⁷⁷

Similarly, the over-optimistic and self-assured Raya, who wanted to get things done quickly, tended to be impulsive and easily angered. Frustrated by his many confrontations with Toolen, Raya too quickly penned letters of protest, resisted cooperation, appealed to different or higher authorities, and, on several occasions, threatened to resign his post. Although it could be argued that these actions were often effective, they did increase the stakes in various circumstances, sometimes forcing someone else into an uncomfortable position. Raya's outspoken nature and occasionally spontaneous emotional outbursts were seen as intimidating even threatening in some cases, and as signs of weakness in others. He did not always take the time to consider the consequences of his unfiltered responses.

Raya also had little tolerance for clerics engaged in immoral or unethical behaviour, yet his relationship with religious authority was ambivalent. He demonstrated all manner of respect for the office of his superiors, and at times deliberately demanded deference from others for his own office as archbishop. On the other hand, he did not hesitate to inform ecclesiastical authorities of the error of their ways (regardless of rank) or the inappropriate nature of an ill-conceived religious policy. The problem lay in balancing obedience and respect for authority with a strong desire for change: Raya felt both

⁴⁷⁷ Society's expectations and standards for religious leaders, those involved with the law, political leadership and other positions of trust, seem higher than those for the general masses. An allegation or conviction appears far more scandalous for these individuals.

emotions with his typical intensity, and when they conflicted, he struggled to find his way through. He was most at ease, and most effective in his ministry, when the opinions of his religious superiors or counterparts aligned closely with his own—then he could channel his strengths into dealing with external conflicts and meeting the needs of people given into his care.

This chapter has presented the life and work of Archbishop Raya through the lens of religious peacebuilding. This is the present action, in the language of Thomas Groome's methodology. Through these narratives, I hoped to gain insights and understanding into some of the broader principles of religious peacebuilding and to review the influences on my own experiences in peacebuilding. This chronological account of Raya's experiences in different cultural contexts (Birmingham, Israel, Lebanon, and North America) has depicted religious peacebuilding as strongly dependent on a personal leadership style that is anchored in a particular faith, yet open and applicable to other religious traditions. Archbishop Raya's foundational assumptions were that every individual was loved of God and deserved respect. Individuals and communities had the right to be treated justly so that their needs for security and strong self-identity could be met, and that conflicts should be resolved without violence and through active listening to all parties. Additionally, Raya recognized that human life, if it is to reach its potential, included beauty, joyous celebrations, and trusting relationships. He was often impulsive yet generous, at times perhaps overly dramatic and, on occasion, insubordinate, but his solutions to particular tense situations were usually practical, creative and ad hoc, very much designed for immediate circumstances. He initiated systemic changes and was a

passionate advocate of education that fostered critical thinking and individual potentiality.

The story of Archbishop Raya is of particular relevance for the second step of Groome's methodology, in which I will examine my own life and reflect on my spiritual growth, particularly in regards to religious peacebuilding. To recognize the influences that helped to develop my deepening passion to for peacebuilding in various contexts is important in the process of becoming more intentional about my choices and my efforts to alleviate violence, especially through education. And primary among those influences is the mentorship of Archbishop Raya, who taught me much about the Byzantine traditions and religious expression, and about how to live as a religious peacebuilder. In Chapter 5, we will return to Raya, reflecting on his ministry of religious peacebuilding in the light of academic and religious norms.

Chapter 3

Ministry of Religious Peacebuilding: A Personal Reflective Analysis

The preceding chapter presented some of the relevant aspects of Raya's peacebuilding experience, in response to Groome's approach and the requirement for an expression of the theme in present praxis. This chapter corresponds to the second movement of Groome's pedagogical method, "The Participants' Stories and Visions," in which I share and identify relevant elements of my own life experiences. More than a simple autobiography, this account of my life is an effort to understand what circumstances and influences have shaped my attitudes and what motives determined my actions.

The story of my developing ministry as a religious peacebuilder is told in several sections: early formation as a child in a Byzantine Christian home; early adult influences and development as a young woman; work within various church organizations and post-secondary educational institutions; endeavors on an international stage; and an ever deepening understanding of the life and work of Raya.

Discovering one's purpose in life, which is continually being shaped in interaction between a developing personality and immediate contexts, is the work of a lifetime. This introspective review of my life and reflection on my spiritual growth has made it evident that my purpose has been strongly affected by a definite attraction to religious peacebuilding. My engagement in this unique and complex ministry has evolved in several contexts and has included both formal and informal dimensions. I have often served in a religious peacebuilding role, trying to address and resolve conflicts as an

organizer, an activist, and a public educator. Religion, peacebuilding, and nonviolence were and continue to be paramount in my personal and professional life.

Early Formation

My early childhood was characterized by a simple faith in God and a deep desire to stay close to God, particularly after my first confession. I was sensitive and very conscious about being good. My nature was essentially sociable and expressive, with a wide interest in the arts, and marked by an insatiable, even reckless curiosity. I was always intent on learning whatever I could and sought to understand other people. A strong abhorrence of war, dominance, and many forms of violence was formed by the time I reached my mid-teens, an attitude attributable in part to my Ukrainian parents' stories of traumatic experiences during World War II. My father and my mother knew all too well the horrors of war through forced internment in prison camps, flight from Nazi soldiers or from the Soviet military, and other abuses. They were intimately acquainted with fear, violence, tragedy, and shattered families. It was impossible for me not to reflect on questions of evil and suffering. Much of my early life has thus focused on a search for solutions for the problems of war, violence, injustice, and domination, but it quickly evolved into teenage dreams of helping the poor and vulnerable in Africa and then into the practical application of volunteering in homes for the mentally and physically disabled. For me, faith in God was intertwined with a strong sense of

responsibility to better the world.⁴⁷⁸ Each stage of my life served as preparation for the next, and work in the field religious peacebuilding.

Influence of Ukrainian Catholic Family

My faith in childhood and early adulthood was shaped by both positive and negative experiences of Ukrainian Catholicism. In my own home, my experience of religion was very positive. My parents were Ukrainian Catholic but were open to the Ukrainian Orthodox faith. They also remained very respectful and open to other forms of Christianity.⁴⁷⁹ This was an attitude misunderstood and generally disdained by most Canadian-born Ukrainian Catholics in Saskatchewan. Although my parents attended church regularly, they did not admire or promote proselytization. We sometimes attended services as a family, but by the time we were teens, my five siblings and I were free to believe or not to believe and to worship as we deemed appropriate. My parents encouraged critical thinking skills and an inner freedom with regard to the rules of the Church.

My mother assumed responsibility for the home and up to five rental properties, and both parents fully participated in decisions regarding the children and finances. They were a partnership, but generally speaking “Mom wore the pants.”⁴⁸⁰ My mother had experienced enough discrimination in her early experiences in Germany and Canada that she had learned to be strong. She fostered that strength and independence in her children.

⁴⁷⁸ Although I was baptised and raised in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, a portion of my education was delivered in a Roman Catholic high school and college. Moreover, I was a regular listener to evangelical radio and television programs and donated frequently to associated charities.

⁴⁷⁹ My mother’s first husband was a Ukrainian Baptist.

⁴⁸⁰ This was atypical for our circle of friends.

Both my parents had a strong sense of justice and insisted on the truth. It was acceptable to challenge and question authorities. In spite of their past experiences, they were generous and compassionate, rarely embittered or cynical. That kind of openness to life through the power of their living faith left a deep impression on me.

However, not all of my experiences of the Church were equally positive. Other families, including that of my in-laws, modeled other ways of being together and forging connections with the Church. More common than the egalitarianism and freedom of my family of origin was a strict adherence to gender roles, with the husband and father working as provider for the family, often cultivating a strong public image, while the wife and mother took care of the household and children. There was also a virtually unqualified and excessive respect for the clergy and religious and an insistence on obedience to Church rules, practices, and dogma without critical thinking. A woman's identity, in this view, depended on her children, which often resulted in attempts to control even adult children.

Having experienced two different approaches to family lifestyle and religion, I consciously chose a path in which religion could be a positive force without heavy indoctrination, guilt, and coercion. Religion and nonviolence became my preferred area of study. Even now, these subject areas remain dominant in my teaching, my studies, and in my life. As opportunities came, I repeatedly made choices that increased my understanding of violence and nonviolence in three main relationships: among humans, between humans and animals, and between humanity and the environment. A positive religious experience, an openness and acceptance of other Christian expressions, freedom to believe or not to believe, strong feminine leadership within the family, and a

resilience of spirit and faith that could be used to overcome adversity and strengthen an individual, helped me prepare for religious peacebuilding.

Canada World Youth

An early, formative experience, the Canada World Youth (CWY) program showed me what religious peacekeeping might involve. Against the wishes of my parents and our parish priest, I left the security of home and postponed my academic future to join CWY. The vision of Canada World Youth is to develop active, engaged global citizens who share a responsibility for the well-being of all people and the planet. Its mission is to increase the ability of people, and especially youth, to participate actively in the development of just, harmonious, and sustainable societies.⁴⁸¹

During my time with Canada World Youth and upon my return to Canada, I formally studied structural violence and poverty caused by powerful multinationals and corrupt governments. I explored in depth the military dictatorships in Chile, Argentina, and communist regimes. As my fascination, shock, and understanding of the problems of evil and suffering deepened, I searched for ways to address these issues. A major inner shift had occurred; it was no longer possible to share a worldview with most of my siblings and peers.

Canada World Youth opened my eyes to a variety of new insights: there was life beyond the parochial vision of my community and parish church; a heightened awareness of the opportunities available in Canada together with the potential trap of

⁴⁸¹ "Canada World Youth," Taking It Global, last modified 2016, accessed December 10, 2014, <http://orgs.tigweb.org/canada-world-youth>.

materialistic behavior; the responsibility and benefits of sharing; a need to minimize wastefulness; and the desire to alleviate poverty. I simply thought and saw differently.

Reflection on Early Adult Experiences

In my early adult years, as I began to try to find my place as a young wife and negotiate some unexpected changes in our plans as a couple, those differences in thinking and my growing focus on social justice were strengthened. Reflecting now on my development then, I have found it helpful to situate myself within broader cultural and societal trends.

Social Consciousness

In *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution*, Steve McIntosh describes three historical time periods of social consciousness, all of which I recognized in my life: the traditional, the modernist, and the postmodern. Traditional consciousness “sacrifice[s] self for the group’s transcendental purpose, [maintains] a black and white sense of right and wrong, [and values] loyalty to the rules of the mythic order and salvation through obedience and faith” (McIntosh 2007, 44). My parents lived in this traditional time period with its strong sense of law and order, respect for authority, and preservation of traditions, yet, unlike most of their peers including the family I married into, they showed few of the characteristics of traditional social consciousness. They were able to sacrifice themselves for the greater good and, like most of their local Ukrainian contemporaries, were definitely prejudiced against non-whites and Jews. As a result, my religious experiences as a child would be best described as a contemporary example of belonging to a traditional faith, but I did not have the classical traditional pathologies: rigid intolerance, dogmatic fanaticism, prejudice, and chauvinism

(McIntosh 2007, 44). Except for a strong sense of belonging to a traditional faith, I had contempt for the traditional social consciousness and actively rebuked its pathological manifestations.

Typical of most baby boomers, I was exposed to the modernist consciousness, which, according to McIntosh, seeks to achieve wealth, status, and the “good life,” believes in progress through science and technology, focuses on winning competitions, and strives for excellence, individual autonomy, and independence (McIntosh 2007, 50). Contemporary examples of this era include corporate culture, modern science, mainstream media, and professional sports. Their pathologies are materialism, exploitive natures, unscrupulous attitudes, selfishness, and greed (McIntosh 2007, 50). Although I belong to the modern era chronologically, and do have a drive to excellence and a yearning for individual independence, I consciously rejected and actively fought against most other aspects of this value system. The modernist consciousness also strives to escape from dogmatic systems. I did embrace that need to escape from oppressive systems, particularly systems that were active in my Ukrainian Catholic Church: patriarchy and the restricted role of women in the Church, exclusivity, parochialism, an insular nationalism, gender roles, lack of salvation outside the Church, and the use of contraceptives, to name a few.

In retrospect, I would situate myself primarily in the postmodern consciousness that perceives in current life conditions, the presence of exploitation, corrupt hierarchy, environmental degradation, shallow materialism, and suffering of others (McIntosh, 2007, 56). The world view of the postmodern consciousness values the inclusion of those previously marginalized or exploited, consensual decision making and

egalitarianism, environmentalism and a preference for the “natural,” multiculturalism and spiritual diversity, personal growth of the “whole person,” and sensitivity (McIntosh, 2007, 56). Some of the pathologies McIntosh identifies for this era are relativism, narcissism, denial of hierarchy, and contempt for modernism and traditionalism (McIntosh, 2007, 56). I embraced the values of postmodernism wholeheartedly, as will be evident throughout this chapter, but I also admit to possessing several strong postmodernist pathologies: the contempt both for modernism, particularly its emphasis on materialism, and for some aspects of traditionalism particularly chauvinism. However, as McIntosh notes, the postmodern consciousness finds its advantage over modernism in its unique ability to bring about change through nonviolent political action and moral strength, as Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. have exemplified. This is a “significant legacy of postmodern consciousness,” in its “potency of nonviolent resistance to bring about change” (McIntosh, 2007, 57). My whole being resonates with this truth.

Formative Experiences in the Church

I did have a genuine love for the Church, yet as I learned more about the Church, I was appalled to recognize the hierarchical dominance under which I was living. The patriarchal world of Ukrainian Catholicism first came into focus for me shortly after I married and enrolled in a class offered at the parish level. The parish priest taught that only Catholics were going to be saved and allowed into heaven. As a twenty-one-year-old woman in the Church, I stood up and stated that I did not believe that to be true. The priest tried to convince me otherwise, but to no avail. I persisted and was soon asked to

stop attending these classes if I was going to challenge his authority as a priest. Publicly humiliated, but unrepentant, I did not return.

After completing a Bachelor of Education Degree, I had an opportunity to learn more about practical peacebuilding when my husband and I lived in Syracuse, New York (1979 to 1982). I supported him in his studies by teaching in Roman Catholic inner city schools, first as a volunteer and then later as a teacher. Ninety percent of the students I taught were African Americans from inner city slums, often from homes with minimal care and far too much violence. I tried to provide a nurturing atmosphere in which the kindergarten children could learn and acquire a foundation for their future education. With only one exception, the children were able to learn to read, write, and do math two to three years above their school grade. I organized sleepovers at the school so that some of the children who were harmed at home would know the safety and security of my love for them. I also worked with their families, visiting homes, teaching parents basic skills such as cooking and nutrition for their children. I collected clothes for the poor and distributed them. This work was advanced without the support of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church in Syracuse. I was surprised, and disappointed with the attitude and behavior of our parish church. With the exception of a few individuals and families, I found the community less than welcoming, very nationalistic, and quite racist. These years definitely left me disenchanted with my own parish church, but strengthened my interest in those who were impoverished and otherwise disadvantaged. I became very aware of connections between poverty and violence.

Another major shift in thinking occurred for me after we moved to Toronto, and I enrolled at St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto from which I eventually

earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in comparative religious studies. For the first time, through courses in Eastern Christianity, I was introduced to the depth and beauty of Byzantine theology. I formally came to understand that the Holy Spirit's truth enters the minds and souls of all Christians individually. Divine guidance could be found inside and outside of the hierarchy. Clergy, monks, nuns, married, and single people could be spokespersons for important Church issues. I also learned more of how one might be able to affect change in the workings of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Egalitarian in principle, but not so much in practice, bishops and laity had the same responsibility for sanctifying the world and deciding on the direction of the Church. From the local to the synodic level, everyone had a say about the issues of the Church, at least theoretically. For me, it seemed that some of the Church's problems were rooted in the fact that the laity was not taking an active role in the life of the Church, and the hierarchy was not actively including laity in their decisions.

Another important discovery for me, during our time in Toronto, was the story of Mahatma Gandhi. The movie *Gandhi* had just made its debut. It showed me a way to overcome evil and to diminish suffering. Gandhi became my hero and his nonviolent philosophy and life history were my daily bread. His writings transformed me and gave purpose in a time when our short term plans were made and then abruptly changed.

My husband and I had planned to go overseas under the auspices of the Canadian University Student Organization (CUSO) to work in either Gambia or Zambia. CUSO was an international development organization that sought to reduce poverty and inequality through the efforts of university-educated volunteers. It placed people in assignments with local groups or agencies on collaborative development projects. I

looked forward to fulfilling my teenage dream of going to Africa; however, I became pregnant, our placements were postponed, and we returned to Saskatoon.

Inspired by the richness of my Eastern Catholic Church and the nonviolence of Gandhi, I felt ready to start making a difference—and my first efforts would be directed towards my own Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy. The experience of actively living my faith in the Church posed many challenges, not the least of which was the cause of another major change in plans. In the summer of 1983, I supported my husband's desire to study for the diaconate. We enrolled in independent study programs offered by the Ukrainian Catholic University in Rome. Early into our respective programs, I was hospitalized with the threat of a miscarriage. After three or four days in hospital, my condition stabilized, and I was discharged, but was advised by the Italian doctors to discontinue my studies in favour of total bed rest. Since I could not continue my studies, I was not allowed to reside at Santi Sergio e Bacco, near Madonna dei Monti. The organizers of the educational summer program asked me to leave their guesthouse. Thanks to the institution's inflexible policy of no women near the men,⁴⁸² no possibility of staying in or near the minor seminary, no opportunity for billets, and inadequate resources for a six-week stay in a hotel, we had little choice but to withdraw from our programs and return to Saskatoon. Upon our return, we listened to a missionary priest, Father Harvanko, routinely present sermons explicitly stating that women had no role in the Church and were to keep quiet in all matters. The oppressive attitudes exhibited by some

⁴⁸² Meals and housekeeping services were provided to the seminarians and their priest instructors by a community of Ukrainian Greek Catholic nuns, the Sisters Catechists of Saint Anne. The nuns were not allowed in the same room as a man. Laundry and cleaning services were provided when rooms were unoccupied by men. Meals were prepared in a segregated kitchen area, and finished meals were made available by means of a lazy susan. Dirty dishes were gathered and tables were cleaned after the men vacated the refectory.

of these priests were very frustrating. What was worse, most women seemed totally unaware that this was a form of oppression and agreed to the status quo. I felt I could not serve in the Church I loved unless I served in the kitchen.

The Eparchy of Saskatoon was heavily Latinized and, in my opinion, spiritually bankrupt. To make change possible, I thought the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Saskatchewan needed a better understanding of its own history and theology, and a sensitization to nonviolent values. There was a dire need for education. In 1983, after much thought, I approached our parish priest with an offer to teach classes about Byzantine Christianity. My offer was immediately rejected because I was neither a priest nor a nun.

For the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Saskatchewan, the greatest loss of the faithful occurred concurrently with and in spite of a wave of post-World War II immigration of Ukrainians to Canada (Luciuk and Kordan, 1989, Map 14).⁴⁸³ Many Ukrainians who were part of the first emigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had adjusted well to life in Canada, and had become acculturated to life in Canada. Post World War II immigrants, deeply nationalistic and scarred from the war, had different ideas of how to administer the Church. Many divisions occurred over the use of the Julian or the Gregorian calendar, the use of English or Ukrainian, etc. This tension, combined with general trends in North American society, resulted in a massive exodus of the faithful from local Ukrainian Catholic churches. Some left to the Roman Catholic churches, others went to Protestant Churches, but many simply stopped going to church.

⁴⁸³ The post-World War II wave of immigration of Ukrainians to Saskatchewan included my parents and their closest friends. This wave of immigration swelled the numbers of Ukrainian Catholics in Eastern Canada and the United States, but did little to offset the decline of faithful in Saskatchewan.

This general decline in the number of faithful in the Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches from 1941 to 2016 has been recognized as a major issue with multiple causes, as noted by Luciuk and Kordan (1989):

Estrangement from the traditional Eastern Christian churches has occurred as a result of intermarriage, loss of facility in the Ukrainian language, urbanization, and the accompanying effects of social and economic integration into the mainstream of Canadian society. Significantly, adherents of Ukrainian Catholicism and Ukrainian Orthodoxy are concentrated in the group aged 55 and over. The natural disappearance of these people will result in the weakening of these two traditional churches in the religious life of Ukrainian Canadians. (Map 14)

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, an additional reason for the loss of faithful is that “like Canadians in general, more and more Ukrainian Canadians report that they do not belong to any religion.”⁴⁸⁴

On an eparchial level, the ethnic and cultural composition of the Ukrainian Catholic Church has also changed. Inter-denominational marriages changed the religious landscape. Inter-racial marriages are still not significant, but many of the larger Ukrainian Catholic parishes do have such family units. Certainly, it is true that the composition of church membership is now less homogenous than it was fifty years ago. Most of the faithful are older and fit in the traditional social consciousness, but enough have a modern or postmodern worldview to create a healthy mix.

My peacebuilding dreams were shaped by several different context specific experiences. In Syracuse, religious peacebuilding was delivered through two Roman

⁴⁸⁴ “Ukrainian Canadians,” *Historica Canada*, last modified 2016, accessed July 18, 2016, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/ukrainian-canadians>. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, 51,790 people in Canada belong to the Ukrainian Catholic Church and 23,845 to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada (respectively 4.1% and 1.9% of all Ukrainian Canadians), while Luciuk and Kordan (1989), Map 14, identify Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox populations in Canada as 159,095 and 98,695 respectively.

Catholic parochial schools with a focus on the basic physical, educational, spiritual and emotional needs of the students. Toronto provided the opportunity to discover more of my Eastern Christian heritage, expand my circle of contacts and friends active and committed to the Church, and see the richness and benefit of different faith perspectives. Returning to Saskatoon, with an increased passion and awareness for justice, I was ready to start implementing some peacebuilding ideas – sharing through education and my faith.

Initial Peacebuilding Efforts in a Local Context

As I have reflected on my experiences and my developing commitment to religious peacebuilding, it seems appropriate that my first opportunities to begin working actively for peace should have begun in the local church and that those first opportunities should already have been inherently boundary-transgressing activities. As the parameters of my active work expanded, I frequently discovered that, if peace is to be achieved, prejudices and fears must be overcome, and that frequently means breaking down old barriers and offering people wider perspectives. Education does seem to be an inevitable part of building peace, including the continuing practical education of the peacebuilder.

The Millennium Committee

In 1984, Bishop Basil Filevich, who was open to new ideas, was appointed bishop for the Eparchy of Saskatoon. With his encouragement, I accepted, in my twenties, the time-consuming volunteer position of Chairperson of the Spiritual Committee for the Millennium Committee for the province of Saskatchewan. The mandate was to prepare the people spiritually for the celebration of 1000 years of Ukrainian Christianity in

1988.⁴⁸⁵ This was a formidable task, and a formative one for me, as I moved actively into a role of peacemaker in the midst of existing tensions and in the face of opposition to my gender and my youth.

The most immediate and divisive challenge within the Church at this time, a challenge I could not and did not want to avoid, was the issue of identity. According to Vatican documents, the Eastern Catholic Churches were to return to their Eastern spiritual heritage. This would require change in a heavily Latinized Church, and the faithful intuitively resisted change. As appointed chairperson and organizer, I tried to address differences and conflicts, to heal divisions, and to bridge a very polarized community. Province-wide gatherings were organized and a platform for the laity to speak about their concerns for the Church was provided for first time in eparchial history.⁴⁸⁶ The grassroots response was overwhelming. Visible signs of a return to an Eastern spiritual heritage included the introduction of iconostases in St. George's Cathedral and most major parishes, distribution of the Eucharist to children, greater use of marriage crowns in matrimonial services, restoration of three sacraments of initiation, and baptism by immersion.

Study Days

With the support of Bishop Basil Filevich and to build on the momentum generated in the four-year preparation for the millennium celebrations, I subsequently founded

⁴⁸⁵ According to the 1991 national census, there were approximately 20,200 Ukrainian Catholics in Saskatchewan.

⁴⁸⁶ The Exarchate of Saskatoon was established in 1951 and elevated to Eparchy of Saskatoon in 1956.

“Study Days.”⁴⁸⁷ This intergenerational, inter-parochial, and eventually inter-eparchial conference was held annually. As organizational chairperson, I developed an agenda that helped our Eparchy move forward as it grappled with its role and significance in a changing society. Dialogue was used to address the principal divisions and challenges within the local Church. An operating guideline for Study Days and our Church was conformance with the decree of the Second Vatican Council to “aim always at more perfect knowledge and practice of its rites, and if it has fallen away due to circumstances of times or persons, it is to strive to return to its ancestral traditions.”⁴⁸⁸ Concerns still included the issue of identity and the return to our Eastern Christian heritage, the use of Julian and/or Gregorian calendars, the adoption of English or Ukrainian language in liturgical services, but expanded to include the role of women in the Church, and the integration of immigrants and newcomers into the Church.

Despite the Bishop’s obvious support, this initiative provoked opposition. There was resistance from several priests who were concerned that a laywoman could initiate and influence such a gathering.⁴⁸⁹ Another priest, purportedly speaking on the behalf of others, stated that the clergy was very angry because they were inadequately consulted and considered it a form of disrespect.⁴⁹⁰ Criticism also came from the Ukrainian

⁴⁸⁷ Study Days spread to several Canadian and American Ukrainian Catholic eparchies.

⁴⁸⁸ Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, Vatican II, *Orientalium Ecclesiariusum*, 21 November 1964, Preservation of the Spiritual Heritage of the Eastern Churches, Article 6.

⁴⁸⁹ I was told that I was running the eparchy and not the Bishop, but I refused to defer to the priests. I confronted them directly about their misogyny and desire to maintain power.

⁴⁹⁰ Fr. Methodius Kushko, letter to author, February 27, 1991. The Studies Day committee had six clergy on the committee: Bishop Basil Filevich, Rev. John Kratko, Rev. Rudolph Luzney, Rev. George Melnick, Rev. John Pazak and Deacon Jeffrey Stefaniuk. This group of clergy included the Bishop, the Eparchial Chancellor and the pastors from all the churches in Saskatoon. The Bishop and Chancellor assumed responsibility for communications with the remaining clergy, who were unable to make the frequent trips to Saskatoon for regular meetings.

Catholic Women's League because I did not develop the event within the established organizational structure of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.⁴⁹¹ Many post World War II Ukrainian immigrants, challenged the relevance of such gatherings because they were conducted in the English language. In spite of the voiced concerns, the feedback and evaluations forms for Study Days I and II (1989 and 1990), confirmed that the conferences were extremely successful.

These first informal experiences as peacebuilder, although I did not think of myself in such terms, were both exhilarating and frightening. I was beginning to understand the importance of education. To learn more about one's history and cultural background and to recognize what particular influences might shape one perspective is a necessary step in understanding others. It is impossible to put oneself in the position of the other group, without first broadening one's perspective. I was also learning how traumatic experiences might encourage a reliance on tradition to the point of being resistant to change. However, I was still young and relatively inexperienced; the strong opposition that I encountered in these first efforts to develop greater cooperation within the Church I loved was a definite challenge. It was at this point that I first met Archbishop Raya, whose subsequent friendship and teaching were formative for me.

⁴⁹¹ The laity in the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada was traditionally structured in three distinct and recognized organizations; men were represented by the Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood, women were represented by the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League, and the youth were represented by the Ukrainian Catholic Youth. Bishop Filevich structured the Millennium Committee and eventually the Study Days Committee in the form of an eparchial committee that included and involved all three of the provincial chapters of the existing entities. Communication and collaboration was frequent. Newsletters and reports were issued regularly to the public and the provincial and local chapters of the UCB, UCWL and UCY. Participation and representation was requested from each parish and from each provincial and local chapter of the three lay organizations to all major events organized by the Millennium and the Study Days Committees.

Archbishop Raya as mentor

Raya and I became informally acquainted through numerous phone calls and a few letters. Just before his first visit to Saskatoon for Study Days III in 1991, he initiated a letter with the following statement:

Our Church will save the Church, nothing else.⁴⁹² With what she has to offer she will save us from the insanity of intellectualism and legalism applied to our Christian religion. She liberates, she enlightens, strengthens, and gives dignity and hope amid despair and hopelessness. I hope, dear Lesya, to develop all this in your forthcoming celebration.⁴⁹³

In our first face-to-face encounter, I immediately sensed Archbishop Raya was a man of deep convictions. As an Eastern Catholic, he had an enthusiastic love for his Church. He was charismatic and captivated people with his grand vision of life. Most importantly, he was committed to the preservation of peace and love in all aspects of life. As he understood the wider Christian heritage, nonviolence was a central dimension of Christian spirituality, which Christians had forgotten or were unwilling to use for lack of understanding or lack of courage. His message of nonviolence really excited me because I could integrate this perspective with the knowledge I had previously gained. Raya enlivened religion, making it a vital force for transforming the human being and society. His formation by Martin Luther King Jr., and the application of Byzantine spirituality to challenges in Israel, intrigued many people. I could identify with his passion and central vision.

⁴⁹² Raya was passionate about the Church. As a Christian writing to a Christian, he was free to express emotion. Raya's comments were offered in response to a concern I expressed in previous correspondence – what can we do to prevent the faithful of our church from losing their way? When the Church can find within itself the capacity for objective self-criticism, reflection, and improvement consistent with the teachings of Christ, then the Church can move ahead. Churches have to find within themselves a dynamic way forward: if the faithful of the Church come to understand and integrate into their beliefs and practices the best of the Church, personal and community growth is inevitable.

⁴⁹³ Archbishop Raya, letter to author, January 27, 1991.

At the Study Days, Raya challenged many of the people to return to their roots as Eastern Christians, but more importantly and fundamentally, he declared that our roots were in God. We were God's children. He objected to the wording of some of the translations of various prayer services, insisting that the language should be inclusive.⁴⁹⁴ God was not the "lover of mankind," but "the lover of every human being." Raya questioned the nature and legitimacy of Christian liturgical translations that mentioned the word "hate" or "despise" as in "Oh God how I hate your enemies."⁴⁹⁵ Instead, he spoke about Christian love and Christian peace. He also empowered and protected women. At the priests' session, he admonished priests who abused or diminished women in any way. At the main plenary session, he stated that contraception was the choice of the husband and the wife and that the Church should not enter into the "nuptial chamber." God made every gene possessed by women, and a woman can say "this is my body!" There was also no theological reason for women not to be ordained as priests. Arguments for the exclusivity of male ordination were founded on historical tradition. It was stated at the main banquet that Archbishop Raya "created an atmosphere of dignity and worth of womanhood."⁴⁹⁶

In this interaction, Archbishop Raya contributed to a transformation in my life. He strengthened my sense of womanhood and taught me through his example. He tutored

⁴⁹⁴ Study Days Conference III, March 7-10, 1991, videotape, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid. Raya was not an academic; he was focussed on the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the commandment to love one's enemies. The words "hate" and "enemies" were offensive to Raya and he wanted them eliminated from the services. Even early in his ministry, Raya was sensitive to tension, violence, and the lack of inclusiveness. He therefore sought to update and modify the translations of selected liturgical texts to enhance dignity and minimize discrimination, all without compromising the spirit of the original text. Raya's aversion to prejudice, hatred, and violence was not diminished as a result of his experiences in Israel and Lebanon. By the time he shared his opinions during his retirement in North America, his perspectives were mature.

⁴⁹⁶ Study Days Conference III, March 7-10, 1991, videotape, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

me through correspondence and telephone conversations about the essence of Christian life. In some of his letters, he defined truths about Christian life and peacebuilding, stating emphatically and without reservation, “It is very hard to be a real disciple of Christ. But it is the key to all beatitude, and only way to the salvation of our society.”⁴⁹⁷ Raya argued Christians should not try to explain evil (Raya 1984, 166) but heal it: “When asked, He [Christ] refused to give any explanation for evil. He rather gave clear orders to heal it. . . . Evil is to be conquered and wiped out. Evil is everywhere. Darkness is everywhere and He told us to be the light in the darkness, children of God, citizens of his Kingdom, more precious than the universe.”⁴⁹⁸

As I learned about the potential opposition that followed active work for peace or justice or women’s rights, I benefited from Raya’s counsel that women could respond in one of two ways: “Either you spit right in the eye of the abuser and tell the person why. Or try to create a thought of wellbeing. ‘Good to have been the victim for someone else who could have found despair and annihilation of personality’.”⁴⁹⁹ For Raya, suffering abuse while working for peace became “an occasion to acquire more compassion and tenderness for the wretched criminals and the despicable deceivers.”⁵⁰⁰ To complain, to be hateful, revengeful, to become bitter were signs of defeat while the inner powers of love, of compassion and forgiveness were signs not only of dignity, but of a sublime character and a noble human being.⁵⁰¹ However, Raya was also concerned that human

⁴⁹⁷ Archbishop Raya, letter to author, May 28, 1992.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Archbishop Raya, letter to author, April 9, 1991.

⁵⁰⁰ Archbishop Raya, letter to author, May 28, 1992.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

beings not be involved in anything that would cause self-destruction. Personal limits and thresholds had to be respected.

I was able to glean several important features about religious peacebuilding from Raya: one's strength and identity are rooted in God; work could be advanced through a commitment to unconditional nonviolence; the response to injustice or violence should not be passive; the dangers of hatred, revenge, and bitterness had to be recognized and addressed; the love of enemies as described in the Gospel of Jesus Christ was central to his peacebuilding; the empowerment of women was still an outstanding issue and needed to be addressed; and enthusiasm, courage, and joy were founded in the Resurrection of Christ and characteristic of his approach. Raya, as an experienced peacebuilder, was showing me the attitudes and tools I would need for the next major challenge in my life.

Peacebuilding in the university context

Ready now to expand peacebuilding beyond my Ukrainian Catholic Church, I sought to explore opportunities in a university setting. A flexible Master's program at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, provided a creative way to complete graduate work through five years of summer classes at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Redwood Valley, California. I completed electives at the Lutheran Seminary, Saskatoon, to satisfy the balance of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Theology. Throughout my studies, I was introduced to students from various branches of Christianity. The program at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery was very creative and experiential insofar as the classes were supplemented by church services, liturgical

traditions, and a practical demonstration of monastic life. The music and melodies of the Byzantine services were beautifully rehearsed and executed during daily liturgies. This was a formative time for me as I was fully immersed in the Vatican II mandate of returning to my Eastern Christian spiritual heritage. In a counterbalance to the Latinization of our Church, the classes at the monastery provided me the opportunity to understand an authentic Eastern Church theology, spirituality, and liturgical practice. Class tours also facilitated introductions to various Orthodox communities. This was most enjoyable and beneficial in my growth.

However, I was outraged by what I discovered researching a paper on the historical plight of women in the Church. I read original documents about women, their evil natures, and their exclusion from the Church hierarchy and decision-making processes. Yet I was afraid that the abbot of the monastery, my professor, would fail me if I voiced my opinion about women in the Church, so I wrote a historical overview of why women should not be ordained. In hindsight, I was disappointed in myself for not possessing enough courage or power at that time in my life to write my true thoughts.

St. Thomas More College

Following the completion of my graduate studies in Eastern Christian theology and pastoral counselling in 1993, I served as a lecturer in the Religious Studies Department at St. Thomas More College (STM), a Roman Catholic College at the University of Saskatchewan. I taught two classes from a historical and spiritual perspective: Religious Studies 315.3 - Eastern Christian Thought in the First Millennium, and Religious Studies 316.3 – Later Eastern Christian Thought. To augment the class offering on Eastern

Christian Thought, I founded Windows to the East, a local ecumenical initiative involving Eastern and Western Catholics, and various Orthodox Christians. Characterized as “bridge builder and peacemaker”⁵⁰² between divided Christian groups, I tried to augment the spirit of cooperation and harmony among these Christian churches. The Eastern Churches were divided along jurisdictional and ethnic lines, were tied to historical hatreds, and were very suspicious and hurt by the “Other.” The conflicts within the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches⁵⁰³ and the Orthodox abhorrence for Roman Catholicism and Protestant Christianity were the obstacles I had to overcome.⁵⁰⁴ The role of peacemaker was thrust upon me. Exposure to the historical and well known conflicts between Ukrainian Christian and Russian Christian Churches was not explored in this capacity as there was no Russian Orthodox involvement in Windows to the East.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰² Words used to describe my work from a St. Thomas More College colleague in a letter of nomination for the Women of Distinction Awards in Saskatoon.

⁵⁰³ The Churches involved were the Antiochian Orthodox Church, the Evangelical Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church in America, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Romanian Orthodox Church.

⁵⁰⁴ Dr. John Thompson, President of St. Thomas More College, discusses some of the challenges I experienced in the book, *Windows to the East: Eastern Christians in a Dialogue of Charity*. The work of Windows to the East also helped to establish the Prairie Centre for the Study of Ukrainian Heritage. Furthermore, on the First Sunday of Great Lent, all Orthodox communities celebrated together for the first time ever in the history of Saskatoon.

⁵⁰⁵ Relationships between the Ukrainian Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches have become significant in various circles, but from my perspective were difficult to address in my regular sphere of activities. Even though I have visited a few Russian churches and can claim a few Russian friends, the opportunity to advance dialogue locally is extremely limited. There is not a single Russian Orthodox Church in the entire province of Saskatchewan. “There are currently 135 Orthodox congregations and missions in the province. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church, an independent jurisdiction in eucharistic union with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, includes 108 congregations and missions. The Canadian Diocese of the Orthodox Church of America includes twenty-one congregations and missions; of these, six belong to the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada), under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, includes four congregations and missions. The Serbian Orthodox Church and the Antiochian Orthodox Church each have one congregation.” Almost all of these Orthodox Churches were involved in the Windows to the East initiative.

Windows to the East

My first step in establishing the Windows to the East initiative was to approach the President of St. Thomas More (STM), Dr. John Thompson, with a proposal to invite the locally based Eastern Christian Churches to the university to discuss Eastern Catholicism and Orthodoxy. My goal was to try to convince STM that this group of Churches represented a legitimate part of Christianity, and as such, their collective contributions needed to be added to STM's program of studies. Once the first conference was held, Dr. Thompson would see directly how many communities were involved, and he would make an informed decision on future possibilities. The President supported me but gave me all the responsibility: "You own this, Lesya." And I agreed.

Although not oblivious to the challenges, I was still unprepared for the depth of suspicion and ill will that existed among various priests, and the magnitude of the tensions between the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox priests. Having a young, married, lay woman attempt to lead the way just added to the complexities. I invited all the Eastern Catholic parishes along with representatives from all the Orthodox churches to meet in the relaxed atmosphere of a home. Representatives from all the Orthodox churches hesitantly attended. I vividly recall the first meeting where I stated the reason for the gathering. To convince St. Thomas More College of the necessity of Eastern Christian studies, I believed all the communities needed to be involved. I asked all the Orthodox churches along with all the Eastern Catholic parishes to join forces and participate in the Windows to the East conference.

"Orthodox Churches," Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan. 2006, accessed July 18, 2016.
http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/orthodox_churches.html.

I naively thought I could get them all to agree because I had eight successful years of conference work within the eparchy. I was unprepared for the barrage of questions and hostility I received while sitting in the hot seat for three hours of the very first meeting. I tried to answer every question calmly and coolly. I was not clergy with an agenda, but rather a woman who believed that the Eastern Church has something to offer to society. I was gentle yet assertive and direct. My aim was to foster a sense of community and dialogue. I advised these church leaders that I was on contract for only one academic year and this could be our only chance: “If you want people to know about us, put your fears aside, let’s work together.” They hesitantly agreed to give it a try.

Despite the challenges and obstacles,⁵⁰⁶ my initiative was strongly supported by the administration of St. Thomas More College. The remaining step was to convince the Orthodox, who already found it difficult to work with Eastern Catholics, to consider cooperating with a Roman Catholic College to organize a conference. President Thompson attended one of our meetings to assure the Orthodox representatives that there was no hostile or hidden agenda and that all would be well. I did much of the organization and arranged details personally because most parties had a skeptical wait-and-see attitude.

The first Windows to the East conference, held in February of 1994, was, by all reports, a success. President Thompson wrote, “Panelists and members of the audience expressed both wonder and delight at such an occurrence.”⁵⁰⁷ The Dean of the College, Dr. Kevin Corrigan, called this a public lecture program, “a path-breaking one in many

⁵⁰⁶ I reported on progress and challenges to the President of STM, Dr. John Thompson, and to the Department Head of Religious Studies, Dr. Chris Foley.

⁵⁰⁷ President John Thompson, letter to all faculty members at STM, February 22, 1994.

ways in that it brings together for the first time religious communities of the Eastern Christian tradition.”⁵⁰⁸ Dr. Chris Foley, the Department Head, in a letter of gratitude, wrote “the conference was an unqualified success,” noting that “the impact . . . you have had” on “the level of the wider Christian community is substantial.”⁵⁰⁹ He had already written earlier that “this series represents an important landmark, spiritually and intellectually, for both the religious communities of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan in general, and for the academic community concerned with religious studies”⁵¹⁰ Father Callum, former Head of the Department of Religious Studies, commented that “Only a woman could have accomplished such a gathering.” Orthodox women in attendance marveled that the men could get together in such a manner and believed it was because women possessed intuitively a great ability to work for peace.

Subsequently, President Thompson agreed to support my other initiatives. On behalf of STM, I began to explore potential connections with the Sheptytsky Institute at St. Paul University in Ottawa. Through long distance technologies, more courses could be introduced on Eastern Christian thought. I also began a foundation to gather money for developing programs in Eastern Christian Studies at STM. I was rehired for the next year, and the second Windows to the East conference was sanctioned and proved to be even more successful than the first. Because of the large gatherings, the administration of STM could also commit itself to programs for the Eastern Church. The relationship between STM and the larger Saskatoon community was positively enhanced. I was

⁵⁰⁸ Dr. Kevin Corrigan, Dean’s Report, Faculty Administration Forum, January 20, 1994.

⁵⁰⁹ Dr. Chris Foley, Department Head of Religious Studies, letter to author, February 12, 1994.

⁵¹⁰ Dr. Chris Foley, letter to author, December 17, 1993.

subsequently asked by the Dean of the College and the Head of the Department of Religious Studies to set up a summer school in Israel.

By the third year at STM, I began to have some misgivings about my work. New Orthodox clergy from other centers in Saskatchewan were now joining the Windows to the East Committee, and I was told to “go back into the kitchen where I belonged.” Some of my family members received harassing phone calls. An anonymous Orthodox caller contacted the Dean of the College to insist that “Lesya was destroying the Church. Stop the conferences.” Even as Orthodox began to attend our Eastern Catholic St. Nicholas concerts, I was approached by some Orthodox men who said they wanted another conference “so that [they] could fight with [their] fists for the real truth of Christianity and none of this dialogue stuff!”

In these times of stress, Archbishop Raya offered me wisdom, compassion, and understanding. He himself had suffered greatly and offered guidance to help me through the challenges I had with the local Churches. I wrote to Raya about my growing regret in the work among our Catholic and Orthodox brothers and sisters:

I’ve managed to round them up and they have been strengthened by their unity, but I feel I have unintentionally solidified that which I deeply despise—their fanaticism, obsession with doctrinal formulas, and juridical order and ritual exactitude. I have given the Orthodox a louder, more influential voice, binding people with their obsessive traditionalism and deep-rooted rigidity.

Probably the very act of trying to explain—knowing that Raya would understand—my unease with the unfolding tensions among the Orthodox over their “strict theological formulations” gave me new insight into the reasons for my discomfort:

It is no accident that many creative persons leave the Eastern Church or other denominations for that matter of fact. The Church has so often been defensive about progress, social issues, science, and human creativity. . . .

The Church becomes . . . [as Marx said] “An opiate of the people.” It professes to be concerned with the souls of people, yet it is not concerned with the economic and social conditions that strangle us. The Church, which should remove the shackles of life, is not only the author of many of them, but perpetuates them shamefully. I always look for the face of love . . . but they say, “We have the fullness of Truth”—We Are Right which spells WAR! ⁵¹¹

After much reflection, I encouraged the committee to explore dialogue with an expanded representation of Christian denominations. I felt that there was one spirit, one God, but many gifts: “Throughout all of history of the human race, there have been religious women and men, in all climates, in all geographical parts of the world, and in all religions, who have witnessed to God’s love.” For me, that was enough evidence to prove that “my way, or no way” is wrong. ⁵¹² I therefore personally invited every local Christian denomination to attend and participate in the discussions with hope some of the openness of the other branches would rub off onto the Eastern Church. In spite of initial hesitance and skepticism, the involvement of a delegation of Evangelical Christians opened the eyes and hearts of many participants. Women were encouraged to share their knowledge and opinions. Eventually, with my persuasion, Eastern Christian women delivered major presentations. ⁵¹³

New faculty position in Eastern Christianity

By 1996, STM agreed to establish a tenure track position in Eastern Christian Studies and hired Father Dr. Myroslaw Tataryn as fulltime faculty to lead the Eastern

⁵¹¹ Lesya Sabada, letter to Archbishop Raya, March 28, 1996.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Frances Colie from the Melkite Church and Dr. Elaine Hanna from the Greek Orthodox Church delivered the major addresses in 1998.

Christian Studies program. This was astonishing progress. In his letter to me expressing his gratitude for my peacebuilding work through Windows to the East, President John Thompson wrote, “You challenged the longstanding divisions among Eastern Christians in Saskatoon. . . . Without your efforts, these divisions would have continued.”

President Thompson acknowledged the “battering” I had received in the process but also recognized that underneath the initial and outward opposition Eastern Christians appeared to demonstrate, there was actually a “desire for unity” that was “more attractive than the odd smugness of old animosities.”⁵¹⁴ What had been necessary had been the vision of someone who could give them permission to feel that desire. Without knowing it at the time, I was stumbling into one of the principles of peacebuilding that Archbishop Raya would later clarify—let people discover what it is that they deeply desire and then encourage and empower them to seek its fulfilment.

With my objectives seemingly accomplished, I left STM in 1997 and the Windows to the East committee in 1998. Unfortunately, the momentum did not continue. Within two years, misunderstandings and open hostilities erupted between various members of the Windows to the East committee and representatives from STM. The conferences ceased.

My early experiences on campus were rewarding, enlightening, but at times frustrating: I was very naïve and shocked about the level of cruelty that existed in the relationships between Churches; individuals were entrenched in the historic animosities and were initially hesitant to consider critical analysis as a means to dialogue; face to face encounters were the most effective means to understand and

⁵¹⁴ Dr. John Thompson, letter to author, August 24, 2000.

appreciate the positions, biases and concerns of the other; leadership set the tone for a respectful atmosphere and an appeal to their higher nature of the person; pure motives and neutrality were a definite asset; administrative support was an essential aspect leading to the success of these conferences; immediate and short term achievements and success did not assure sustainability; although I had confidence in my goals, there were times I personally doubted the validity of the outcome.

University of Saskatchewan

In *Why Religion Matters*, Smith, a religious studies professor in the United States, explained why such courses and opportunities are becoming increasingly rare on campuses. While the first universities were created to train clergymen, who learned in a pervasive religious atmosphere, today the once dominant presence of religion on campuses has all but disappeared (Smith 2001, 79). Universities are now secular at their core. The most recent newcomers to the educational industry have been schools of business, management, technology, and the sciences. Today's science-dominated universities have turned into mega-versities, providing efficient but depersonalized education (Smith 2001, 82). The humanities, which were at one point in history the heart of the university, have now lost their central place on campuses. The budgets and prestige previously associated with religious education have plummeted (Smith 2001, 88). With a scientific and secular worldview dominating campus life and serving as a conduit to truth, courses in religion are difficult to maintain, and pursuits of spirituality and nonviolence are extremely difficult to establish. As Smith states,

The takeover [of science] is simply the culmination of the unconsidered out-workings in the university of the scientism that imbues modernism throughout. The incredible success of science acts like a magnet on the other departments of the university and causes them to ape its methodology. . . . Religion, being unscientific, could have no reality claim in any case, though as a private belief or practice it may by some be admitted to be psychologically helpful for certain people. (Smith 2001, 84)

Extension Division

Aware of the inherent challenges, potential risks, and frustration, I succeeded in developing several university courses in religion. I knew that socio-cultural shifts from modernism to postmodernism were facilitating greater openness to nonviolence and environmental concerns. The high ideals and sensitivity of this epoch, which values spirituality, provides a new ability to see the excesses of modernism and has offered many different perspectives. Yet at the same time, postmodernism has failed to offer realistic solutions to the problems it has identified. Ken Wilber, author and philosopher writes:

Simply asserting that we should all learn a world centric ecology, or embrace a global compassion, is a noble but pragmatically less-than-useful project, because world centric waves are the product of development, not exhortation. As noted, the ‘new paradigm’ approaches exhort a goal without elucidating the path to that goal—they are cheerleaders for a cause that has no means of actualization, which perhaps explains the deep frustration among new paradigm advocates who know they have a better ideal but are disappointed at how little the world responds to their calls. (quoted in McIntosh 2007, 77)

Extreme relativism and indiscriminate pluralism leave postmodernism too weakened as a culture to offer a challenge to promote and live a nonviolent and an environmental ethic. My vision, keeping in mind the strengths and weaknesses of

postmodernism, was to teach the theory of nonviolence and include ample examples of the practical implications of that theory.

From 1995 until 2010, I developed and taught fifteen new non-credit courses through the Extension Division and the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education at the University of Saskatchewan: Gandhian Nonviolence, Christianity, Ecological Spirituality, Christian Nonviolence and Mysticism, The Dalai Lama, and Religion's Contribution to Sustainable Development, to name just a few. For my first course, Byzantine Iconography, I used a theological and historical framework, but several lectures focussed on the use of iconography for political agendas. The history of several major icons in Russia demonstrated a close collaboration between faith and violence, art and armaments, achieved by capitalizing politically on the popular reverence for icons. Pictures or sculptures of Lenin in the "red corner" of factories and public places replaced the traditional icons of Christ and the Theotokos in their "prayer corners." Generals had themselves painted in semi-iconographic style for the Russian populace.

My academic focus expanded from a specialization in Eastern Christianity to a broader study of the Abrahamic faiths and a developing interpretation of nonviolence. I started exploring religious nonviolence as a precursor to ecological spirituality and religion's contribution to sustainability. I started investigating interactions of different religious traditions with the environment as based on their understandings of that environment. I came to believe that concerns with the environment were integrally linked with nonviolence and peacebuilding.

Department of Religious Studies and Anthropology

The time I spent at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), with the Department of Religious Studies and Anthropology, later renamed the Religion and Culture Department (2000-2009) was particularly relevant for me. As a lecturer, I had the opportunity not only to prove my teaching abilities, but to experience other educational methods. In Religious Studies 110.3 (Introduction to Western World Religions), and Religious Studies 284.3 (Religion and Nonviolence), I used a historical, critical, and phenomenological approach. I extended this logic to the study of other topics and issues: female genital circumcision, the modern state of Israel, the environmental crisis, the role of women, terrorism, and Osama Bin Laden's letter to the United States, to name a few. Face-to-face encounters with Muslims at their mosques, Christians in their churches, Jews in their synagogues, and First Nations people were frequent adventures. Through these encounters, misunderstandings, and stereotypes slowly started to disappear.

A major focus of mine was helping students awaken to their responsibilities to themselves, to each other, and to the world.⁵¹⁵ I also used community service learning pedagogy in my classrooms. Service Learning for me was a form of experiential education in which students engaged in activities that address human and community needs within structured opportunities designed to promote compassion for the oppressed and suffering in society. It was not uncommon for my classes to serve the poor at the Friendship Inn.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ As quoted in the *Star Phoenix* local newspaper on May 3rd, 2010, "The University's instructor [Lesya] has promoted a message of nonviolence to her students, awakening their social conscience and encouraging them to live lives of peace."

⁵¹⁶ Friendship Inn is a non-profit organization which serves the poor of Saskatoon. It is the largest free meal service in the city. The Ministry of Social Services helps people with legal issues, housing challenges, and various crises.

I believe Raya's approach to nonviolence was crucial for his version of peacebuilding and for developing both self-awareness and awareness of others. This therefore became my shared philosophy as well. This perspective offered me a clear mandate: I wanted to encourage, challenge, and empower my students to realize their full potential through the establishment of a positive, personal, intellectually stimulating, and caring classroom. In contrast to other course offerings focusing on the conflicts of various groups or religions, I made a conscious effort to present the same subjects illustrating both the positive and the negative aspects. I tried to create a non-hierarchical and non-threatening atmosphere in which we could speak openly and learn from each other. I strove to awaken in the students a sense of responsibility and applied what I had learned from Raya. I believed a holistic and sensitive approach would create awareness in students and give them confidence to apply their personal power to make the world a better place. Selected material for research and discussion was intended to stimulate the mind and the heart and were community oriented. I have always striven for the development of the total human being and tried to demonstrate my convictions through example.

Further Reflections – Frustrations and Looking Ahead

At this stage of my life, and particularly in light of this study of Archbishop Raya as possible model for religious peacebuilding, I can reflect again on my early efforts and re-examine my current activities as a religious peacebuilder.

Although my early endeavours within the community and at the university were rewarding in many ways, they yielded numerous frustrations and disappointments. As a

younger woman, I personalized almost all negative talk and dissatisfaction. I blamed myself for every shortcoming and unresolved issue. It was only later that I gained the confidence and ability to constructively evaluate complaints and expressed anger. In many instances, the frustrated individual was expressing an opinion about a matter that was beyond my sphere of influence. I was not responsible for the world's problems nor could I find solutions that would satisfy everyone's demands.

Many of my early initiatives at the University of Saskatchewan and, most specifically, the teaching opportunities in the Eastern Christian Studies Program met with early success, but ultimately failed to achieve sustainability and independence. So long as I was willing to put in long hours of voluntary involvement, most of the programs flourished, but as soon as I pulled back, the programs seemed to stumble. I wonder now if the programs had been adequately endorsed and shared by others to achieve a successful transference of leadership.

The other individuals who worked with me, supporting or participating in some of these peacebuilding activities, seemed to be motivated in different ways. Promises, agreements, and good intentions were respected so long as there was a personal benefit. I met very few people who seemed genuinely inspired or satisfied solely by the prospect of making their communities a better place, yet I naively trusted everyone.

As I reflect now on the work accomplished and my role in it, I wish I could have realized sooner that all people do not have the same vision for working with others. There is more than one viable approach to making progress in the field of peacebuilding. Twelve years of commitment to demanding roles—motivated by love of the work but also by an over-responsible nature—proved too difficult. I would have done much better

had there been more support. Sharing the burden might have left more space for the energy and creativity of others and increased the possibility of succession. As it was, my withdrawal from this role without appropriate back-up contributed to the weakening or collapse of these programs.

The other main source of disappointment and frustration was the repeated interruptions in what might have become an established career in this field. Family commitments and community obligations often meant that opportunities I would have eagerly embraced, if time and energy been available, were left untaken. I do not regret most of my choices to respond to family and community needs, but I also feel now that there were times when I was asked to sacrifice too much. It can be difficult to accept that meaningful work, which seemed right for me to do, was not accomplished.

Local and International Peacebuilding Opportunities

Fortunate to have been in the right spot at the right time, I was able to participate in a number of international peacebuilding initiatives – nothing particularly grand in scale or prestige, but significant to me in building confidence, experience, and setting the stage for future endeavours.

Teaching in Post-secondary Educational Contexts

While still employed at STM, I had already started looking into a few international activities. In the summer of 1995, I accepted an invitation to teach summer classes at the Lviv Theological Academy in Ukraine. Before I taught the classes, my husband and children and I had visited some of the sites relevant to my understanding of

nonviolence. Babyn Yar, on the outskirts of Kiev, was the site of the extermination of approximately 34,000 Jews (Fisher, 1999, 247)⁵¹⁷ by the German army, and local collaborators.⁵¹⁸ It was my very first experience of a mass murder site. It was revolting. Aware that Patriarch Joseph Slipyj and Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky were sympathetic towards the plight of the Jews, and had sheltered them when they could, I wrote, “there were individuals who saw the light, but as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals. I lament deeply over this truth about us.”⁵¹⁹ My lament became more agonizing after visiting my family in Western Ukraine for the first time. We heard story after story of the atrocities committed during the Soviet Regime and World War II. We saw many machine gun-riddled churches, and newly uncovered mass graves. I listened to stories of rape, torture, and humiliation. This was an experience of deep grief for me.

In my teaching at the Lviv Theological Academy (a few students were priests and nuns, but most were aspiring young lay people), I augmented the material, which dealt mostly with basic Christian formation, with a few of the things I had learned from Archbishop Raya. A disciple of Christ seeks peace, justice, and love, a commitment possible only for those who live with conviction. I spoke about divinization, the healing of psychological wounds, and forgiveness. The painful fighting between the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches had to be faced and healed. Some of the students responded, “We Ukrainians only know how to fight!” Forgiveness was impossible. I

⁵¹⁷ Fisher also states that “26,000 [Jews were murdered] at Odessa, and 32,000 at Vilna – Probably totalling hundreds of thousands.”

⁵¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zB7S5l-y-Qg> reported 33,771 Jews were killed.

⁵¹⁹ Lesya Sabada, letter to Archbishop Joseph Raya, December 16, 1995.

wondered if a Truth and Reconciliation Commission among the Churches and between Ukraine and Russia was needed to heal both of their deep wounds.

Another new initiative had already begun during my time in the Religious Studies Department at STM when I was asked to participate in the development of a St. Thomas More summer school program in Israel. Dr. Chris Foley hoped the summer school would offer courses in archeology, Eastern Christianity, and biblical studies. In conjunction with the Saskatoon Centre for Ecumenism and St. Thomas More College, I was able to organize and implement the first locally based International Study Tour to Israel in 1997. The vision for these tours was not only to visit the holy sites of Israel, but also to focus on and experience Eastern Christianity and nonviolence. It was hoped that each participant would gain a deeper respect for and understanding of the religious and political traditions of this conflicted part of the world. Students had opportunities to meet local Arab Christians involved in sulha and to encounter members of communities who dedicated their lives to nonviolent peacebuilding. The students also had contact with segments of the Israeli populace who were working for a peaceful, nonviolent resolution to the painful relations among the Abrahamic faiths. This allowed the students to reflect on their own lives and their roles in peacebuilding.

Educating the Public

Various other avenues became available for me to increase awareness and openness to the “Other.” In 1991 and 1992, I served as the Ukrainian Catholic appointee to the Saskatoon Ecumenical Center. The Center promoted inter-denominational dialogue, understanding, co-operation, and inter-religious encounters in our communities. In 1994, a local TV station approached me to be the program coordinator and hostess for an

eight-part television series entitled *Identity in Dialogue*. This television series, which aired numerous times for several years, promoted a deeper understanding and appreciation of various Christian communities.

As a board member of the Multi-Faith Committee from 1998 -2002 in Saskatoon, I was involved in fostering mutual understanding and respect among various religious traditions. Other objectives included raising ecumenical awareness, and collaborating with people of various religious perspectives through educational programs and activities. The dialogue among people who shared their respective perspectives was encouraging. I spearheaded local Earth Day celebrations. Prayers and reflections about nature were offered by Unitarians, Roman Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Bahá'is and Eastern Christians. For a number of years I also participated as a guest lecturer in the annual conferences of the Saskatoon Peace Coalition. All talks, presented to believers and nonbelievers, centered on the importance of bringing peace to the world from within.

My commitment and experience in peacebuilding in the area of women's issues began with invitations, in 2000, to speak at women's conferences in the Chicago Eparchy and at the University of Saskatchewan. On these occasions, my focus was the Eastern Christian scriptural vision of women, one that sees women as spiritually gifted, and equal to men. This vision of women emphasizes the reciprocity of love and service, its positive reading of the Genesis account of the Fall (Eve as representative of the religious principle of human nature was sensitive enough to grasp the vulnerability of the communion between God and human beings and hence had to be the one to be

wounded first (Evdokimov 1994, 157)), and its recognition of women as fully human and full of dignity.

I also explored the theme of sacredness of body and matter, and introduced Raya's idea that the body is sacred because it is the vehicle in which humanity would be saved: "It is the limit of the Unlimited."⁵²⁰ Following Raya's example, I affirmed the spirituality of bodily functions and pleasures, in contradiction to negative traditions such as exclusion from communion during menstrual cycles.⁵²¹ That affirmation has to become part of peacebuilding, beginning in conjugal relationships based on reciprocal love and respect⁵²² and moving out into the world in ways that enhance cooperation and respect differences. Thus, women are particularly called, and equipped, to foster radical respect for the other and willingness to be vulnerable; both qualities are necessary for an integrated relational spirituality.

Learning about Violence and Systemic Injustices

My preparation for building peace on the international stage had begun when I had formally studied structural violence and genocides as part of the Canada World Youth program during my stay in Colombia. It was an on-site approach that I pursued ever since. My desire to understand the realities of violence and the various approaches to nonviolence has motivated me to acquire direct knowledge necessary for personal

⁵²⁰ Study Days in Edmonton Eparchy, October 3-5, 1991.

⁵²¹ In our church, I was taught that when women had their menstrual periods they were ritually unclean and diseased. Therefore, women could not go to communion during their monthly cycles nor could they go to church until postpartum bleeding had ceased.

⁵²² Archbishop Raya was one of the few Eastern theologians who had the courage to write about sexuality. See Raya's *Crowning: The Christian Marriage*. In a telephone conversation with Father Ron Cafeo, Raya's personal assistant, it was indicated that Fr. Pelton did not want to sell a book that challenged the official position of the Church. Raya's *Crowning* is therefore not available for sale from Madonna House.

growth. I wanted to be more than a competent instructor in nonviolence; I wanted to engage students in the learning process. When invited to speak in places such as Thailand in 2000 and 2010, I visited slums and an AIDS home in Bangkok and a Burmese refugee camp in northern Thailand. While teaching, researching, and guiding students on study tours in Israel in 1996, 1997, and 2007, I frequented the Aida and the Dheisheh refugee camps located in the West Bank. I also studied the Rwandan, Tibetan, and Cambodian genocides, before, during, and after site visits in 2008, 2010, and 2012. A venture to India in 2014 allowed me to visit the National Gandhi Museum to study his teachings and Raj Ghat, the place Gandhi was cremated. This was followed by another excursion to northern India where the Dalai Lama lived and practiced his nonviolent faith.

My study of violence was not limited only to humans. In 2008, I cared for orphaned chimps at the Chimpanzee Sanctuary on Ngamba Island, Uganda. Most orphaned chimps were a result of the violence of poverty. The absence of resources and education led to the destruction of the habitats of the African chimpanzees. In 2012 and 2014, I visited places of environmental devastation caused by the palm oil industry on the island of Borneo. The palm oil industry is the single greatest threat to orangutans in Malaysia and Indonesia. I came to understand the connection between our life styles and the violence done to the animal kingdom and the environment.

My continuing connection with the Orthodox Academy in Crete (OAC) has also broadened my horizons. An institute focused on the relationship of theology and ecology, the OAC “encourages mutual understanding and solidarity on an inter-Orthodox, interfaith, intercultural and inter-scientific basis, in order to contribute to the

reconciliation of peoples, the consolidation of peace and human progress” (Andrianos, Sneep, and Kenanidis, eds, 2010, front cover). I attended three Ecological Theology and Environmental Ethics Conferences in 2008, 2009, and 2013. The papers I delivered at the last two conferences focused on the relationship between religious peacebuilding and the environment. Because of my close association with this academy, I served as co-chair of the international committee that organized the 2014 Sustainable Alternatives for Poverty Reduction and Environmental Justice (SAPREJ) conference in Antananarivo, Madagascar and the 2016 SAPREJ Conference in Kampala, Uganda. These meetings, supported by the World Council of Churches, gather the international community together to promote dialogue to facilitate a responsible way of thinking and living.

In 2010, I began pursuing an initiative to establish a Centre of Peace at the University of Saskatchewan. I proposed a holistic approach to nonviolence that would eventually include humanity, animals, and the environment. I have tried gentle and systematic lobbying with the College of Arts and Science and St. Thomas More College to pursue this dream. Some success has been realized. STM President, Dr. Terrence Downey, advised me that rotating scholars for the new Catholic studies program would now be able to include peace studies as a theme in Catholic education.

Joys, Fears and Trepidation

Even as I can now recognize the stumbling blocks in the midst of the early successes, I look forward to continuing the work of peacebuilding with greater mindfulness and knowledge of available resources. New possibilities for expanding my work are both exhilarating and intimidating. I feel I have a message to share, but at the same time, there is so much I still have to learn. It has taken years to make various

observations, draw some conclusions, generate new questions and ideas, and develop the confidence to share some of these insights in the classroom and lecture hall. I feel I know so little, but time is relentless. Waiting to gain perfect knowledge of my subject area is not a realistic course of action. I must get these ideas, imperfect and as underdeveloped as they might be, in front of my students, so that we might both be inspired. Connection with my university students has had a very positive impact on me, providing the opportunity not only to teach, but to learn at the same time. I embrace the journey of discovery with hope, respect, and trepidation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed Groome's second movement which was to reflect critically on the evolution of my life as a religious peacebuilder. I discussed my early formation as a child within my family and came to appreciate the openness and respect my mother had towards other religious traditions, her powerful example of a woman, and the resiliency of spirit of both my parents.

The formative experience of Canada World Youth laid the foundation for me to become an active, engaged global citizen. My exposure to Eastern Christian studies in Toronto and California were most stimulating, but I was also influenced by Gandhi. However, the introduction to the practical works of Archbishop Raya brought it all together; it took theology from an abstract, theoretical study to a tangible and very real Christian experience. His rare integration of Catholic and Orthodox theology and practice integrated everything I had pursued. Our friendship strengthened my identity as a female child of God rooted in the Byzantine Christian tradition and confirmed my

vocation as a religious peacemaker. Our relationship was mutually supportive and respectful. He saw in me an opportunity to pass on the ideals of the Byzantine spiritual tradition and peacebuilding while I saw a living example of a mature, integrated Christian faith.

As my life evolves as a teacher in the Church, through the community, on campus and internationally, I am still trying to realize my goals of religious peacebuilding. I feel this combination of pursuits is consistent with a long-standing sense of responsibility for the well-being of all people and the development of a just, harmonious, and sustainable world. Reflecting on my early adult experiences, I discovered that the core of peacebuilding could be adapted wherever I lived. From this I learned peacebuilding in Syracuse was attending to the practical needs of the students. On campus, effective peacebuilding involved face to face encounters, listening to concerns of others, empathy, and building trust. Pure motives and persistence, combined with community commitment, could lead to sustainable success.

Course offerings on campus included positive and negative aspects of religion. Creating a warm classroom atmosphere in which students and the teacher could pursue truth in open sharing proved to be most effective. Experiential and community centered learning stimulated the mind and the heart.

Adapting Groome's third movement, the next chapter explores the Christian story and vision. Relevant topics include Hertog's framework and summary of religious peacebuilding, and the current peacebuilding theologies embraced by the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Melkite Greek Catholic Churches.

Chapter 4

Contextual Framework for Religious Peacebuilding

Raya's story and my initiatives as an aspiring peacebuilder need to be situated and understood in relation to the "Story/Vision of [our] faith community as it pertains to . . . the focused theme" (Groome 1998, 215). There are historical and theoretical contexts that offer insights to the relevance and significance of Raya's work: religious peacebuilding as summarized by Hertog; the broader visions of Catholicism and Orthodoxy;⁵²³ initiatives within Byzantine Catholicism; and finally the more specific perspectives of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. These perspectives collectively establish the broader framework for this analysis. The merits and potential of Raya's work will then be assessed in the next chapter in the context of religious peacebuilding within the Eastern Catholic churches, eventually focussing more and more sharply on the evolving insights of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church.

Recent observations and developments in the field of religious peacebuilding will prove helpful for interpreting the potential significance of Raya's life and activities. Katrien Hertog's *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding* has been used as a framework to explore the positive and negative possibilities inherent in religion as a catalyst for peace (Hertog 2010, xiv).⁵²⁴ Hertog's overview of the development of religious peacebuilding and her specific explorations of the Russian Orthodox Church help place the contributions of Raya's life and efforts into perspective. Her work offers

⁵²³ It is important to remember that Raya saw himself as Byzantine Catholic—Catholic with Orthodox roots. For this reason, the successes and failures of the Universal and Orthodox Church communities as they pertain to their theological and practical formulations for peace are of interest and relevance.

⁵²⁴ In Chapter 1, I have provided a rationale for using Hertog.

an analytical framework for the analysis of Raya's story and my own experience, as it was precisely religion that motivated both of us to seek to build peace, and it was religion that sustained us in our efforts and gave those efforts their particular shape.

Religion's Role in Peacebuilding

Like the main contributors to religious peacebuilding before her, Hertog begins with an acknowledgement of "the ambivalence of religious traditions," resisting the temptation of "focusing solely on the comforting aspect of religion or condemning religion altogether" (2010, 81). Such a "prevailing 'either peace or violence' discourse," Hertog insists, "tends to be reductionist" while an "acceptance of the ambivalent role of religion in the realities of conflict can lead to a balanced and constructive analysis" (2010, 81). As has already been made evident in Chapter 2, Raya's experiences of religious peacebuilding cannot be understood without an awareness of that ambivalence.

I begin with some necessary definitions and summarize Hertog's theory of religious peacebuilding under three main headings: barriers to and limits of religious peacebuilding, contributions of religion to peacebuilding, and principles of religious peacebuilding.

Definitions

The term "peacebuilding" as distinct from "preventative diplomacy, peacekeeping, and peacemaking" has entered the vocabulary of conflict studies partly as a result of the focus of former secretary general of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros Ghali in his "Agenda for Peace" in 1992 (Hertog 2010, 43). Initially understood in terms of controlling violence, it has "evolved into an integrative, holistic concept" (ibid.) that includes two broad categories of building peace: short term goals such as crisis

management, that is, building peace in the midst of conflict or its immediate aftermath; and long-term peaceful community building, that is, developing the sustainable conditions that will make recourse to war or other forms of oppression unnecessary and unlikely (ibid.). Peacebuilding thus includes a wide range of activities from negotiating ceasefires and providing adequate security to creating new governments and establishing workable economic systems. In the words of Hertog, “as a process, peacebuilding encompasses the prevention of violence up to the reconstruction of society after violence. It is a dynamic but not necessarily linear process” (ibid., 44).

Other authors similarly use “peacebuilding” to connote activities that extend well beyond the crisis intervention usually meant when the term “peacemaking” is used. Peacebuilding thus includes a broad range of activities and initiatives: “preventing, reducing, transforming, and helping people recover from violence, even structural violence that has not yet led to . . . civil unrest” (Schirch, 2005, 57); “human rights activism, relief aid, . . . dialogue, negotiation, mediation, restorative justice, transitional justice, development, . . . education, and research activities” (ibid.); long-term efforts focussed on the establishment or support of just structures that encourage a sustainable culture of peace (Schirch, 2004, 26); and initiatives that protect the environment (ibid., 13). A variety of individual contributors and agencies have made observations and suggestions that promote the enhancement and capacity of governance structures and institutions (including non-governmental organizations and religious institutions) for peacemaking and peacebuilding (Lederach, 1995; Enns and Mosher, 2013).

“Religious peacebuilding” is a particular subset of peacebuilding. To understand the term from Hertog’s perspective, it is necessary first to summarize briefly the

“peacebuilding architecture” developed by Luc Reyhler, which, with some personalized reflection, Hertog adopts as a premise. Reyhler sees five “peacebuilding blocks” as all necessary “to build a sustainable peace” (Hertog, 2010, 44).⁵²⁵ The first building block “deals with an effective communication, consultation, and negotiation system” (ibid.). People have to learn to speak, listen, engage in dialogue, and negotiate mutually desired outcomes that are nonviolent. The second building block consists of the institutional structures of a society, including political and health systems. The various elements of the requisite infrastructure should work together to promote peace (ibid., 44-45). The third critical building block is leadership within the society. Peacebuilding leaders must have the knowledge and integrity to pursue an attractive and relevant peaceful future while modelling behaviour consistent with a commitment to a shared nonviolent vision (ibid., 45). The fourth building block is “a supportive regional and international environment” that offers funding that can support peacebuilding economically (ibid.). Finally, the last building block refers to the complex inner person, “the emotional, psychological and socio-psychological aspects” involved in peacebuilding (ibid.). For Hertog, this building block comprises the “soft aspects” of peacebuilding⁵²⁶ and is the main focus of her research and discussion, although she maintains that all five building

⁵²⁵ The physical infrastructure associated with the majority of Reyhler’s building blocks is relatively easy to achieve for an affluent nation. The greatest challenge for every government and institution is to rationalize and defend its peacebuilding initiatives with ethically and morally defensible value systems. The value system should be able to withstand an independent assessment and critical evaluation which confirms legitimacy for the majority if not all involved interest groups. It is important to note that Raya gave practical legs to the Greek patristic Byzantine thought. He was a practitioner of peacebuilding and did not develop explicitly religious peacebuilding. His Byzantine theology implicitly led him to a peacebuilding mentality. The values he obtained were from his Byzantine tradition

⁵²⁶ The hard aspects of peacebuilding involve structures and institutions and the elements of infrastructure within society.

blocks are necessary for peacebuilding and are “interdependent and mutually reinforcing” (ibid.).

Hertog defines the soft aspects of peacebuilding as,

the emotional, psychological, socio-psychological, and existential-spiritual issues involved in peacebuilding, such as the attitudes, perceptions, cognitive thinking patterns, values, expectations, desires, emotions, traumas and wounds, assumptions, motivations, relationships, frustrations, intentions, concerns, taboos, principles, norms, beliefs, identities, loyalties, worldviews, and memories. (ibid., 47)

These issues are, and generally have been, the province of religion, which deals with the ongoing interaction between the individual and his/her inner state, enculturation, and experiences within his/her culture. While religion is concerned with the individual’s understanding of the great questions of meaning, identity, and place in the universe, the tentative answers to those questions are inevitably lived out in relationships with others of the same religion, those of other religions, or no religion at all. Those relationships need to be established on foundations of truth and justice and in a culture that fosters peace, if peace is to become sustainable. It is in these soft aspects of peacebuilding that healing, trust, and hopes are inculcated since the soft aspects “touch the deeper layers of peacebuilding” (ibid., 49).

Religious peacebuilding therefore approaches the problems of conflict with a continual focus on the soft aspects of peacebuilding, drawing on the various resources within a particular religion’s traditions (from institutional structures to strong religious actors and including myths, beliefs, and rituals) to contribute to all five building blocks of peace, but particularly to the creation of an “integrative climate” in which reconciliation and healing can occur, and hope and trust can be established (ibid., 99).

Barriers to and Limits of Religious Peacebuilding

While it may seem obvious to adherents of the world religions that the work of building peace in a conflict-ridden world needs to involve religion, there are distinct barriers to such involvement that must be acknowledged.

Religion can be a source of conflict

Historically, there have been times when religion has been the root of conflict and not its resolution. Even when it is not the direct cause of the war, religion has the power to invest the warring sides with sacred legitimacy, particularly in cases where national and religious identities have coalesced. One need only remember recent Middle East conflicts to recognize the powerful motivations that religion adds to the political and economic injustices that began or fuelled the unrest. Hertog writes, “‘the religious paradox’ refers to the fact that religion can be a source of violence, hatred, injustice, and intolerance as well as one of peace, social welfare, justice, nonviolent action, and human rights” (Hertog 2010, 80). Hertog also observes that the values, teachings and practices of a particular religious group sometimes find meaning only in the context of its own group, thereby excluding and alienating those with different views, other faiths and nonbelievers (ibid., 84). This approach tends to divide the world into “us” and “them,” and compromises the potential merits and benefit of even the best-intended practice. In fact, the division of the world into “us” and “them” often leads to distinctions between “true believers” and “false believers,”⁵²⁷ “a dehumanization of the other,” and not to

⁵²⁷ Because religious peacebuilding is an emerging field, there are no criteria for what a true believer is, or what a false believer is.

greater compassion and respect (ibid.). Religious peacebuilders also face huge obstacles gaining credibility in a world that is increasingly secular.

As Hertog points out, the issue of religious identity, its associated worldview, system of ethics, and, often, a cultural tradition are crucial. If one “identifies . . . primarily and solely as an adherent of one particular tradition, external challenges can make [one] feel that [one’s] whole identity” is threatened and make interactions with the Other very difficult (ibid., 85). Whenever a religion is closely intertwined with cultural and national identity (e.g. Irish Catholic, Sephardic Jew), especially if that particular identity has been forged under political oppression, the tendency to see the Other as evil is strengthened. Religious peacebuilders then must acknowledge that religion itself is often a deep source for conflict.

Internal religious conflicts

Religions are often internally divided by factions and intractable internal differences. By and large, world religions have developed extremist branches that appall their fellow believers as much as they appall the world at large. The temptation to resist and even demonize those whose beliefs and loyalties are different, even if only in degree, operates with equal force within each religious tent, as well as across religions. Few quarrels are ever as bitter as those within the “family” of faith. Zealous fundamentalists of various faiths “[obstruct] peace processes” (ibid.). Various internal separations—between those who choose a more progressive hermeneutic in relation to sacred texts and those who cling to literalist readings; between liberal elites who embrace the values that foster change and the masses who resist betrayal of the true

faith—can sabotage sustainable peacebuilding efforts. Therefore the task of religious leaders who desire to be peacebuilders is to ensure “that their own religion is not used to promote intolerance, enmity, and violence, and in refraining their coreligionists from doing so” (ibid.).

Necessary separation of church and state

As Hertog points out in her review of Reychler’s five building blocks for peace, efforts to end violent conflicts have typically focused on the hard aspects of peacebuilding, the “structural and pragmatic side” of things (ibid., 47). Particularly when global conflicts were spurred by the drive to establish nation-states and redraw political boundaries—the wars of Realpolitik⁵²⁸—the solutions seem to lie in objective (and non-religious) construction of appropriate institutions. These include fair elections to establish representative governments, mechanisms by which disarmament and demobilization could take place, and economic programs to “bring about stability and equity and reduce social tension triggered by imbalances in income and wealth” (ibid., 57). At another level, international institutions can negotiate between and among sovereign nations to maintain human rights. While religious peacebuilders can contribute individually to such initiatives, the hard aspects of peacebuilding often rule out the involvement of most religious institutions and organizations. It is also a commonly perceived assumption that religions “should be independent from the state

⁵²⁸ The term “Realpolitik” was coined and recorded by Ludwig von Rochau, a German writer and politician in his 1853 book *Grundsätze der Realpolitik angewendet auf die staatlichen Zustände Deutschlands*. Realpolitik usually refers to actual or practiced politics rather than ideological or ethical ideals.

authorities and other possible influencing or manipulating powers” to become meaningful forces for peacebuilding (ibid., 86).

Although acknowledging the possible pitfalls of religious involvement in peacebuilding efforts, Hertog argues that religion does have a place in public work for peace, provided that “the religious actors who choose to take up this role and to work effectively for peace” cooperate “with people from all religious as well as nonreligious backgrounds” (ibid., 117). So long as the focus of peacebuilders remains objectively and impartially on the technical, practical, and institutional issues, the particular contributions of religion will be overlooked. However, as Hertog emphasizes, “Neither a functioning democracy nor a thriving economy will guarantee that an old conflict does not erupt again if the ‘hearts and minds’ have not been addressed properly” (ibid., 56). That is the particular contribution of religion.

Religion’s Contributions to Peacebuilding

According to Hertog, religion’s strongest contributions become evident through introspection of weaknesses. Although the religious potential for peace should always be considered through the concept of ambivalence (ibid., 80), religion can provide “peace, social welfare, justice, nonviolent action, and human rights” (ibid.). Most religious traditions contain “paradoxical attitudes and countervailing trends, such as religious legitimization for war, the practice of conflict resolution, principled pacifism, promotion of ethical values, or the attainment of inner peace” (ibid.). This dichotomy is rooted both in the sacred texts that form the foundation of specific religions and in the traditions that arise from the interaction between those ancient texts and current cultures and practices. Therefore one of the unique contributions that religion can offer to religious

peacebuilding is a deep understanding of the process of rethinking assumptions and reinterpreting primary stories.

The value of the living tradition of religion

Through the experience of “living tradition,” religion can powerfully promote peace. Contrary to popular stereotypes of religion as rigid and unchanged, Appleby points out that religions are actually fluid and evolve over time through the interaction of believers with their sacred texts, their history of interpretations of those sacred texts, and their specific time and place (Appleby qtd. in Hertog 2010, 81). The very existence of ambivalence within religions—the often-opposite interpretations of texts and criticisms—makes it possible and necessary for “religious traditions to criticize themselves, an ability which definitely strengthens their credibility when they consciously choose to take a peacebuilding stance” (Hertog 2010, 81). The reality of a constant hermeneutic process means that religious sources can be reinterpreted to foster peace not conflict.

Religious experience in continually and adaptively reinterpreting ancient texts and traditions to current cultures, often in the face of resistance, also provides awareness that it takes time to change long-held assumptions and to assimilate new information. Conflicting information, or “cognitive dissonance,” can call into question deeply held beliefs and attitudes, causing psychological uneasiness. Hertog argues that “these processes are important to understand, the persistence of enemy images and the possible ways to break through established attitudes and beliefs” (ibid., 66). That is why theologians, religious scholars, and religious actors, as agents of interpretation in a

unique historical and cultural moment, are as important as the scriptures themselves (Gopin qtd. in Hertog 2010, 82).

Ethical values and teachings that foster peace

Another particular contribution that religion can make to peacebuilding also emerges out of the sacred texts and the necessary ongoing reinterpretations of those texts—their primary emphasis on peace:

In all religious traditions one can find a commitment to work for peace in the different spheres of life, from one's own life, over the lives of one's families, communities, societies, and nations, up to the global level. Some religious traditions even understand engagement in peace work as a sign of faithfulness to one's religion. They see peace as a call to the heart of their communities, as a requirement of believers, and as the ultimate service to God. (Hertog 2010, 77)

Not only is peace itself celebrated as “the ultimate service to God” but many other values that enhance peace are also embraced and taught. Hertog's list of such values is extensive (ibid., 77-78), but I am choosing to emphasize and paraphrase three of her specific values that will be particularly relevant in subsequent chapters of this dissertation: respect for all human beings, obligation to seek justice and show compassion, and nonviolence.⁵²⁹

Respect for all human beings. This is the religious principle that undermines the above-mentioned human tendency to divide the world into “true believers” and

⁵²⁹ Other values include sanctity of life, self-awareness, interiority (experience of divine love, recognition of faults, commitment, forgiveness, inner stillness, knowledge of the self, etc.), equanimity, loving kindness, patience, empathy, moderation, discipline of the body, self-control, restraint, messianism and imagination, social criticism, envisioning social justice or new social order, wisdom, openness to and love for strangers, generosity, good relationships (cooperation, solidarity, friendship), responsibility, service, self-sacrifice, humility, honesty, sincerity, integrity, truth, courage, respect, joy, enthusiasm.

“unbelievers,” or “false believers.”⁵³⁰ In opposition to the fearful demonization of the Other, most religious traditions include “unitary visions of creation, in which every human being is created as equal” (ibid., 84). If every human being is a unique creation of God, for example, or is created in the image of God, then a foundational principle of devout action will be to accord respect and dignity to each human being. Many religions teach the sanctity of life and command the giving of care to all forms of life. Such teachings “foster awareness of fundamental interdependence . . . of the ultimate belonging of one another, and of unity and inclusiveness.” Without such dignity and respect, and the “affirmation of the life of every human being” (ibid., 109), which is basic to harmonious relationships, establishing a lasting peace is impossible.

Obligation to seek justice and to show compassion. One of the primary functions of religion, along with providing a framework of meaning and purpose, is to answer questions concerning how we should live. Virtually all religions speak to the concept of justice, perhaps most well known in the various expressions of the Golden Rule; we shall treat others as we would wish to be treated, a guideline that follows logically from the assumption that every human being is a unique creation and worthy of respect. Many religions also push that rule further into the active seeking of justice for all peoples, particularly those who are oppressed. Hertog

⁵³⁰ Fanatics might also be added to this list because such individuals and groups tend to share common and fundamental values with others of their faith, but pervert the beliefs of the many with excessive zeal and or a focus on only a partial segment of the larger truth. It is generally harder to identify and criticize such “believers” and “false believers” because they tend to share common and fundamental values.

repeatedly alludes to the impossibility of building peace without first hearing the truth from all sides and then addressing past wrongs and injustices (ibid., 50-51, 108), not through retributive justice but through restorative justice, which “focuses on the restoration of social order [and] the rebuilding of social relationships” (ibid., 51). Religions have not always been known for seeking justice, particularly not where religious hierarchies have colluded with political systems to solidify power, but the admonitions to seek justice are clearly evident within sacred texts and devotional writings.

The struggle for justice, not necessarily for oneself but for the weak, the disadvantaged, the ill, the marginal, is rooted in compassion, that deep attitude of the heart which asks human beings to feel for others. Other virtues are almost synonymous with compassion: “equanimity, loving kindness, patience, empathy,” as well as “openness to and love for strangers, generosity” (ibid., 78). These virtues require a willingness to sacrifice oneself for the sake of others, also a common value in most religions. Above all, religions teach the primary imperatives of love, forgiveness, hope, healing, and unity (ibid., 79), all of which begin with compassion, with the basic assumption that all humans are equal and equally worthy of our respect and care.

Nonviolence. The theory and practice of active nonviolence has long been understood as part of the foundation for sustainable peace, quite apart from the teachings of religion, although the most well-known advocates of active nonviolence—Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Leo Tolstoy, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu—were all strongly motivated and

guided by their religious beliefs.⁵³¹ Hertog describes the practitioners of active nonviolence as deeply reflective and self-disciplined people, possessing real inner strength and courage. They eschew hatred, revenge, and violence, and embrace suffering rather than lift a hand to hurt someone else. For them, active nonviolence is a “path of deep personal transformation and self-realization, since the outer action of nonviolence is inextricably linked to the inner workings of the heart, mind, and spirit of the individual” (ibid., 54). In active nonviolence, a distinction is made between the evil and the evil-doer, and the evil-doer is seen as a potential partner: “Nonviolence is based on a positive view of human nature and sees the potential for good in every living person. . . . [affirming] the human dignity of the other” through deliberate empathy (ibid.). These are all qualities that are strongly encouraged by religious teachings and practices. In many religions, nonviolence is a basic principle, arising out of the fundamental command to live in love.

Focus on relationships. As is already evident, a strong contribution of religion to the work of peacebuilding is its pervasive emphasis on relationships. Hertog’s initial distinction between the soft aspects of peacebuilding and the hard aspects makes clear that structures and institutions alone cannot create sustainable peaceful communities. The opportunity and need for “resolution” and “reconciliation” (ibid., 46), which include “healing, empowerment, trust building initiatives, dialogue, changing attitudes, truth-telling, humanizing the other, expressing respect, fostering a sense of belonging, reformulating identities, breaking down stereotypes, dealing with emotions, negotiating

⁵³¹ Almost every religion can claim an advocate of nonviolence.

expectations, relationship building, regaining hope, and inculcating values” (ibid., 48) are also essential. All of these attributes depend on the existence and development of healthy relationships, a primary role of religions. In the religious worldview, individuals find meaning and fulfilment in relationships with the divine, with other human beings, and in many instances with the rest of the natural world. When relationships break down, conflict results and, in the aftermath of conflict, the restoration of those relationships through reconciliation and forgiveness is crucial. Much of religious practice and teaching is aimed at developing the qualities that support reconciliation: humility, generosity, self-sacrifice, self-control, honesty, integrity, knowledge of self and other virtues (ibid., 78). These are foundational elements in personal and community development, leading ultimately to the evolution of a righteous and moral society.

Conflicts are, above all, relational, and must be dealt with at the interpersonal level. Thus, religions contribute to peacebuilding at the level of personal improvement (self-awareness, repentance, self-discipline, inner peace, etc.) and at the level of interpersonal relationships (forgiveness, truth-telling, honesty, love, encouragement, etc.).

Sense of identity and community. Identity and belonging can be found in many ways and often beyond religion. Groups formed out of biological ties or common interests or geographical location can go a long way toward telling us who we are and what our obligations are to the relationships that have formed us. These sources of identity can foster peaceful living or encourage its opposite, depending on shared history and the cultural climate. Without a sense of belonging, and without a surrounding community that offers ongoing relationships in a stable environment, people lack security and

become more vulnerable to violence, either as victims or perpetrators. Here again, religion has a particular contribution to offer through its holistic worldviews (who we are and why we are here and what the world could and should be).

The grand narratives of religion that undergird particular expressions of faith through ethics and values and rituals confer a strong sense of identity and define necessary obligations to the Other. Even the narrative impulse itself, embedded in religious traditions—so many symbols and rituals arise out of stories—develops people’s narrative imaginations and encourages empathy with those who are different or are simply on the other side of a controversial issue. These originating myths give people a sense of place, and depending on the interpretations of those myths and stories, can “foster awareness of the fundamental interdependence of former opponents” (*ibid.*, 109). While it is certainly true that such holistic worldviews can also be narrow and suspicious, particularly in places where conflict and oppression have a long history, the grand narratives of religion, more often than one might expect, “can foster . . . unity and inclusiveness” (*ibid.*). In a pluralistic and complex world, specific religious myths can offer a secure and confident identity out of which to celebrate diversity and encourage “a shared identity with humanity, the creation, or the divine” (*ibid.*). Out of such an inclusive vision can emerge mutual respect that will call forth from the individual a sense of responsibility for oneself, one’s neighbours, and all of creation.

Above all, it is the inherent task of religion to offer hope, not necessarily an unrealistic deferral of all hope to some future afterlife (which has too often been an underlying source of conflict), but a vision for a “better present or a better future,” in which “there is space for personal and social improvement, . . . an inherent

potential in life and in human beings to make this world a better place” (ibid., 111). Here too, the strong narrative impulse in religions contributes to the necessary hope through stories that teach the possible meaningfulness of suffering and offer new visions of peaceful societies. Old stories can also be re-interpreted within the new context to revitalize hope and defuse old antagonisms. Religion can not only restore trust in oneself, but in the world itself and “restore a sense of existential, metaphysical, and spiritual security” (ibid., 112).

Principles of Religious Peacebuilding

In summary, after having established the ways in which religions have legitimate and unique contributions to make to peacebuilding, Hertog lays out the fundamentals of her own approach to peacebuilding:

Religious peacebuilding centers on indigenous leaders, who develop from their own tradition and with understanding of the specificities of the conflict situation, effective and appropriate concepts and practices with a short-term aim to reduce violence or resolve conflicts, and with a long-term aim of building a culture of peace, justice, and nonviolence which encompasses conflict prevention and reconciliation, and which can be sustained by themselves in cooperation with other actors. This process can be either developed by indigenous leaders themselves; initiated by external actors training indigenous leaders in nonviolent conflict transformation, supporting them to recover peacebuilding resources from their own traditions; or as a result of a crisis situation which forces religious leaders to improvise their roles as mediator, arbiter, advocate, educator, reconciler, or facilitator. (Hertog 2010, 122)

Several points here are worth unpacking and rephrasing for greater clarity, since they will become relevant for the re-examination of Archbishop Raya’s practices of religious peacebuilding.

Religious peacebuilding is based on indigenous leaders within their own tradition

Aware of the importance of acknowledging identity in building trust and developing relationships, Hertog observes that local leaders, whether religious or not, who are solidly grounded in their own traditions and in their culture and language are best suited to shape “appropriate concepts and practices” to deal with immediate crises. Whether they have been trained in “nonviolent conflict transformation” or not, they are the ones who can use their moral authority and the peacebuilding resources from their traditions. A basic respect for individuals and recognition of the need for belonging imply a focus on peacebuilding from within.

Furthermore, it is the local, indigenous leaders who will have at least some understanding of the local specificities of the conflict situations. It is important that all voices be heard, that the truth be told, and that wrongs and injustices be acknowledged. Rather than having arbitration enforced through external means or a separation created through artificial means, those directly involved in the conflict should be invited to tap into their own resources to seek resolution and reconciliation.

Religious peacebuilding will seek to develop a culture of peace

Drawing upon the traditions and teachings of personal transformation, peace-enhancing virtues, and the principles of nonviolence, the aim of religious peacebuilding is to develop an “integrative climate” that will foster respect and honor, humanize the enemy, break down stereotypes, lower levels of hate and

suspicion between people and encourage joint programs and interfaith dialogue (ibid., 99). Such a climate supportive of peace will require continued education in civic responsibilities, theological foundations for peace, and knowledge of universal human values (ibid., 99).

The ongoing task of fostering reconciliation and seeking justice will require cooperation with other actors and other agencies. Although Hertog assumes that religious peacebuilding focuses on relationships, the “soft aspects” of peacebuilding, she also sees individual religious peacebuilders, as well as religious organizations, as called to work with existing “political, security, judicial, economic, and health structures”(ibid., 98). These actions may be expressed through the support of reforms against unjust structures, lobbying for particular initiatives, advocating for victims and for nonviolent action, providing places of safety, and so on (ibid., 98). Cooperation in practical services, such as providing food and shelter, is crucial both to defusing immediate conflict and to developing long-term communities of peace. In all of these tasks, effective religious peacebuilders gain credibility and moral authority.

In her conclusion to the discussion of her sustainable religion-based peacebuilding framework, Hertog reiterates her focus on an “understanding of conflict transformation and peacebuilding which is centered on consolidating peace in the hearts of people, moving their minds from conflicting to reconciling mindsets, transforming adversial [sic] and violent relationships into cooperative, peaceful ones, and creating an overall climate of peace” (ibid., 120-121). These four actions are particularly suitable for religious peacebuilders because of religion’s

capacity to foster relationships, encourage ethical values of peace, develop strong yet flexible identities with openness to the Other, and offer a living, dynamic worldview that offers meaning and purpose even in the midst of suffering. Religion is not “a magic panacea or *the* key to bring the complex and difficult process of peacebuilding to a good end,” but it can be “a potentially powerful but largely unused contributor to peace processes” (ibid., 125).

Hertog’s observations regarding religious peacebuilding have considerable merit from a conceptual and theoretical perspective, unfortunately the use of the Russian Orthodox Church’s experience in Chechnya as a case study leaves much to be desired as a practical example of successful religious peacebuilding. Recognizing the theoretical ideal of a separate Church and State, Hertog would be hard pressed to convince most interested readers that the Russian Orthodox Church functions without political influence or interference from the Russian Federation.

Given the challenges and difficulties in facilitating the first four building blocks of Luc Reyckler’s peacebuilding architecture, it would have been refreshing to explore the emotional, psychological and socio-psychological initiatives demonstrated by the local religious actors of the Russian Orthodox Church

Respecting the fact that most of Hertog’s early field experiences were based in the Russia-Chechnya conflict, the opportunity to focus on a more successful case study might have been more compelling. Since the Russia-Chechnya peacebuilding experience proved to be less than inspirational, the aspiring religious builder looking for motivation might find the practical results discouraging, even

demoralizing. The obstacles to success were well defined, but everyone likes a success story with a happy ending.⁵³²

With this ethical vision for religious peacebuilding in mind, we now turn our attention to the realities of the Catholic and Orthodox Church contexts in which Raya's work must be situated.

Christianity – Catholic and Orthodox Contexts

Throughout her theoretical discussion of potential contributions by religions to the establishment and maintenance of peace, Hertog has noted cases in which religious actors from different religions have helped to bring resolution to conflicts or even prevent conflicts. While such an overview is helpful for situating the life and work of Raya in a broad context and for understanding the prophetic dimension of his actions and teachings, it is also necessary to examine the particular religious context that shaped Raya's understanding of peace and that determined the avenues through which Raya took on the role of "religious actor." As Hertog observed, one of the strengths that religion brings to peacebuilding is the unique living tradition of each religion. She notes that not all religions have an equally developed theology of peace or the infrastructure through which that theology can be practically applied. Archbishop Raya was a Melkite Greek Catholic hierarch steeped in his Byzantine heritage. That context is very significant as he would have been familiar with different theologies of peace.

⁵³² For positive examples, see David Little's book, *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*.

Raya was certainly aware of differences between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy: Roman Catholicism thought it necessary to “express revealed truths and the nature of our relation with God within a system of human knowledge” (Raya 2006, 41); while the Orthodox placed a great deal of emphasis on the mystical dimension of faith.⁵³³ Raya writes, “Latin piety tends to emphasize the humanity,” while “Byzantine piety dwells on the divine aspect of the mystery of Christ” (Raya 1984, 75). Extending this focus to humanity and mystery, “Christmas acquired, in the Roman Church, a picturesque character: a beautiful little Baby surrounded by animals and birds in an idyllic setting. For the Byzantine Church it is a feast which synthesizes all the aspects of the love of God who sends his only-begotten Son, and by whose *kenosis* the world is brought back to the Father” (Raya 1984, 76). He affirms that “There are two separate and convergent expressions, two outlets, two faces to the one and unique reality of the one Body of Christ” (Raya 1984, 114) and continues “. . . it is this variety in unity which makes the Church of Christ on earth so colorful, so attractively human and rich” (Raya 1984, 76). The differences between the Roman and Byzantine Churches are most obvious in the organization of their respective governments since the Roman Church emphasizes a visible structure dependent on rules while the Byzantine Church speaks of a mystery of fellowship with a reality that transcends immediate experience (Raya 1984, 108).

At the same time, Raya chose to concentrate on the opportunities and strengths that united the branches of the Church: “The essence or substance of East and West

⁵³³ Raya is referring to the debate between the philosophical approach favoured in the West compared to acceptance of the “‘mystic’ character of God’s love and incarnational atmosphere of ‘sacramentality’” embraced by the East (Raya 2006, 41).

is the same: there is but one Christian spirituality. Viewpoints and emphases can be different, but the essence is one. Both outlooks are valid and they should complement one another” (Raya 2006, 7). Recognizing their respective differences, Raya supported a mutually beneficial co-existence: “the East needs the West as much as the latter need for former, and . . . the two, in humility and truth, make perfect partners in the renewing of the life of humanity in God (Raya 2006, 42).

Roman Catholic Peace Theology

The Catholic perspective of war has changed over time. The earliest Christians embraced the concept of pacifism, but a holy war theology emerged in the early fourth century. The holy war was defined and rationalized shortly after Constantine’s vision of the cross led to military victory over pagan forces in 312 AD. The holy war argument eventually fell into disfavour, and evolved into the just war theory, which was used by Western Christians to justify the Crusades. Another perspective, with an “emphasis on justice is dated from the great social encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (‘Of New Things’), issued in 1891” (Groome 2011, 137).

Roman Catholic adherents of the just war theory believe that war is unavoidable in some instances, and under certain circumstances may be just. In such cases, Christians may participate in a just war, and arguably have a responsibility to do so. The just war theory is based on the premise that wars are rooted in the evil in the hearts of humans (cf. James 4:1-2). If all people loved God and their neighbour, there would be no war. But we live in an imperfect world

where evildoers pursue their own misguided objectives. It is the duty of righteous civil leaders and just governments to stop injustices and maintain or restore peace.

The Roman Catholic Church⁵³⁴ has modeled its version of the just war theory on the concepts and formulations of Ambrose, Augustine, and Aquinas,⁵³⁵ and scripture. It was composed of two main elements, each of which has been restated to list criteria that must be met for a war to be justified (Nojeim 2004, 21). The first element is what Aquinas called *jus ad bellum*, or “justice of war.” This means that one must have a just cause, such as the protection of basic human rights or the defence of the innocent from unjust aggression. War cannot be used for settling a grievance, for personal gain, for domination or acquisition of land or goods. It must be used as a last resort when all other means of resolution have been exhausted, and with the right intention, that is, to seek to restore order and justice. Even those with a just grievance cannot go to war out of hatred or a thirst for vengeance.

Furthermore, the use of force must be ordered by a competent and lawful authority with responsibility for the common good. Because war is an action between nations, an individual acting alone cannot legitimately declare war (Nojeim 2004, 21).

The second major element of the Just War Theory is *jus in bello*, which means justice in war. Prisoners of war, for example, cannot be treated unfairly or executed without due process. Civilians cannot be intentionally attacked, and the degree of violence against combatants and military institutions must be proportional, that is,

⁵³⁴ It must be remembered that each of the twenty-three Eastern Catholic Churches has its own liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony. These Churches are not bound automatically to adoption of the Just War theory.

⁵³⁵ The roots of the just-war theory go back even further, to non-Christian Romans, particularly the Roman orator Cicero.

the country under attack can respond only with a comparable level of force (Nojeim 2004, 23). This consideration of the amount of damage leads logically also to a serious evaluation of the probability of success. A just war will not waste human lives and resources in an unwinnable conflict.

While the Just War Theory was the official position of the Roman Catholic Church for many centuries, it has come under question in recent decades, as ties between Church and state have been steadily loosened. Given the current military capability of many countries to cause destruction beyond the possibility of recovery, more effort and thought are focused on the prevention of war. In any case, there is little merit in further discussion of Just War in the context of Raya's life, given his consistent commitment to nonviolence. However, the most recent theory on peace with an emphasis on justice deserves further exploration.

Since the time of Pope Leo XIII, various popes have issued social encyclicals and teachings on the "rights of workers, moving on later to the responsibilities of wealthy nations toward developing ones, to halting nuclear proliferation, and most recently to emphasizing care for the environment" (Groome 2011, 137). These teachings support justice and peacemaking and are now referred to as the social doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. This contemporary peace theology is based on justice, love, and faith—elements integrally related to "right relationship," and with special emphasis on "the poor and the alien" (Groome 2011, 138). Within this framework, peace is no longer defined in negative terms as "the lack of violence or war" (Himes 2010, 268), but rather as a positive term conveying "an abundance of

life within community, a sense of well-being having economic, social, familial, religious and political aspects” (ibid.).

This approach is consistent with a “culture of prevention” in place of a “culture of reaction” wherein the Roman Catholic Church and other institutions might focus on ways to avoid violence, rather than resolve, restrain and contain violence after it has erupted (Himes 2010, 265). As Michael Schuck’s study of papal social teaching has made clear, certain basic points have remained consistent: “images of a God who desires community, humans as essentially relational, and society as both necessary and natural” (Himes 2010, 267). That translates into a “communitarian world view” which sees “the creation of communities” as the foundation for peace (ibid.), and peace is understood positively, both as an “interior serenity” (ibid., 269) that rests on our confidence that we are part of the body of Christ, loved and cherished, and as a hope for a future “fulfilment of creation beyond history” when God will rule in power and justice (ibid., 268-69). However, Catholic teaching also includes a political, immediate vision of peace as “rightly ordered political community,” in which “an order of tranquillity” is created as a “result of a political community that is rightly structured, meaning that people in truth, charity, freedom, and justice directed toward the common good” (ibid., 269).

The Second Vatican Council associated this type of peace with development (Himes 2010, 272), and not just material development that addresses economic inequalities. Human development includes all of the human being and must address cultural and social inequalities as well, so that individuals may achieve their potential, materially, socially, and spiritually. The phrase “peace and development”

thus “means the work of peace must establish essential freedoms, secure basic goods, promote necessary relationships, and reform social structures and institutions that make the right to development effective” (ibid., 273). What Roman Catholicism, as seen in various papal encyclicals, offers particularly to the project of peacebuilding, however, is the concept of solidarity: “peace, from [the] perspective of recent Catholic social teaching, is the outgrowth of a certain kind of interdependence (solidarity) and a particular vision of human flourishing (justice as integral development)” (ibid., 274). People are called to seek the common good, to work for the flourishing of all humanity, because only together and in relationship can peace be built. That means that special attention must be given to the poor and the marginalized. The measure of success of a community is the quality of life that is accessible to “the least of these,” (Matt. 25.40). In “any fair assessment” of a community, it is important to ask if the “least well off [can] be contributing members to, and beneficiaries of, the common good” (ibid., 276).

As part of this communitarian emphasis, the concept of “subsidiarity” was also adopted as a principle of action, articulated by Pope Pius XI (Himes 2010, 277). Subsidiarity means that higher levels of government or any hierarchy should not assume functions that can be performed better at lower levels. Local communities will understand their needs better and often have the resources to do what needs to be done. Participation by all, as much as possible, builds community and strengthens solidarity. While some peacebuilding work needs to be done at the level of nation-states or even in larger corporations, grassroots participation, including

“NGOs, local churches, ecclesial and civic groups as well as individual volunteers” is crucial for peacebuilding efforts (ibid., 278).

It is also important to recognize that this new Catholic attitude did not eliminate the theology of just war, but rather made clear that any discussion of war and peace began with a presumption “in favor of peace and against war” (ibid., 281).

However, as Himes point out, this new tradition of peacebuilding fails to directly address conflict resolution, but calls for the resolution of differences by “good will and voluntary cooperation” (ibid., 282). The consistent emphasis on communitarianism “has tended toward avoidance when confronted by social conflicts and the need to develop strategies for resolving them” (ibid.). Himes also suggests that Catholic teaching does not take sufficient account of the complexity of human reality “that there will be conflict but that it can be managed and resolved without the need for coercion and violence” (Himes 2010, 288). The work of peacebuilding also needs to assist people in learning to manage the inevitable differences of opinion and divergences among needs within a community. Another gap in Catholic social teaching, according to Himes, is the work of peacebuilding in the aftermath of humanitarian disasters. Once the major threat has been addressed, peacebuilding work needs to “incorporate the experience and wisdom that arise from the local churches and grassroots activity” (ibid., 293).

In summary, Roman Catholic teaching has much to contribute to the overall work of peacebuilding, especially in its strong connection between peace and development and its emphasis on community and solidarity.

Orthodox Perspectives of Religious Peacebuilding

Given that Raya's religious background included a foundation in the orthodox tradition and that approximately 12% of all Christians are represented by Orthodox faithful, this voice in the field of religious peacebuilding cannot not be ignored.⁵³⁶

Absence of developed peace theology

No formal peacebuilding models were identified in literature reviews for the orthodox traditions. Fr. Stanley Harakas, Emeritus Professor of Orthodox Theology, at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, admits, "there is no such thing as a coherent body of Orthodox peace studies. Few, if any, Orthodox theologians have concerned themselves with the problems of pacifism, disarmament, nuclear war, just war theory, peace movements, etc." (in Bos 1999, 182). The absence of a developed theology of peace is a major obstacle to the realization of peacebuilding, confirmed Hertog in reference to the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC):

There is an overall vagueness and generalization in the thinking of peace and peacebuilding in the ROC today [and] not much willingness or understanding . . . to develop and apply its peacebuilding resources. Although peacebuilding is central to the discourse and mission of the ROC, it does not seem to be a priority in practice and still remains an undeveloped, vague, and general concept. (Hertog 2010, 208)

One of the key reasons for this lack of theological development is that many Byzantine Christians were divided along ethnic and denominational lines.

⁵³⁶ "Christian Traditions," PewResearch Center, 2016, accessed July 24, 2016, <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-traditions/>. Orthodox Churches represents approximately 12% of all Christians, while Catholic and Protestants groups represent approximately (50%) and (37%) respectively.

Furthermore, many of the national Churches were caught up in long-standing conflicts among themselves and their associated societies. Historically, various Eastern Churches were subjected to Islamic rule and oppression or liquidation under Communist regimes. The inter-ecclesiastical and inter-religious strife introduced by such subjugation often led to complicated divisions among the faithful, leaving the Christian communities impotent to address the challenges besetting them.⁵³⁷

A further explanation for the absence of a developed peace theology, at least in Western perceptions, is that the stance of the Eastern Church differed considerably from that of Western Churches. Fr. John McGuckin, professor of church history at Union Theological Seminary and professor of Byzantine history at Columbia University, explains that the common histories of Christianity “seem to pretend that its eastern forms . . . never existed” (2004, 4) and thus, “the figures of Augustine of Hippo . . . and Thomas Aquinas . . . loom very large in the normative western form of the telling of the tale. Both theologians were highly agentive in developing the western Churches’ theory and principles of a ‘Just War’” (ibid.). But in the entirely different histories of Eastern Christianity, “these two monumental figures” are absent, and so is “theory on the moral consideration of war and violence which has so dominated the western imagination” (ibid.). Eastern Christianity “endorses no formal doctrine advocating the possibility of a ‘Just War’” (ibid.). Fr. Alexander Webster, another highly esteemed Orthodox moral theologian, likewise maintains that the Eastern Church never had a social ethic for a “holy war,” and therefore the “holy war” is not considered “a viable moral option for

⁵³⁷ Robert Taft, in his introduction to “The Melkite Church at the Council” also notes that the Ukrainian and Romanian Catholic Churches were unable to provide effective “Eastern” leadership to the wider Catholic Church because of persecution.

Orthodox Christians in America or elsewhere” (Webster 1998, 87). That the absence of a holy war theory does not necessarily mean a total absence of thinking about peace will become evident in the following brief overview of liturgical texts and spiritual writings.

Understanding of peace in ancient Eastern sources

The Eastern Church has been a witness to peace. In his historical overview of the Orthodox Church’s view on peace, beginning with Christ, Olivier Clément, a French Orthodox theologian, makes the general observation that “The Christian, wherever he finds himself, has to become a peacemaker of human and cosmic existence” (in Bos and Forrest 1999, 172). Of the apostolic period, Clément observes:

The first Christian communities are to be found in a “universal” Empire which is a vast area of peace. They pray therefore for its preservation, while refusing to divinize the power of Rome and of the Emperor. But this refusal, which discloses the area of the free personal conscience between the Kingdom of God and that of Caesar, does not express itself through rebellion but through martyrdom, that is to say, through a non-violent stance, which has remained characteristic of the Christian East to this day (in Bos and Forrest 1999, 172).

In the words of Fr. Harakas, “The Sermon on the Mount commandments of non-resistance to evil, the return of good for evil, the spirit of reconciliation and brotherhood underpin for the Fathers the reference to, and the understanding of peace” (in Bos and Forrest 1999, 185). For the patristic writers, this commandment manifested itself as “a personal spiritual phenomenon,” “an inner peace” that expressed “itself in outward behavior and external relationships, as a function of the proper relationship with God” (Harakas in Bos and Forrest 1999, 186). All this was based on “the control of the passions, as well as love and forgiveness” (ibid.). Such “striving for peace” was “not

unconnected with other virtues, such as justice and righteousness” and particularly “the chief of the Christian virtues, love” (ibid.).

The combination of patristic thought and the teachings of the gospels “on non-retribution, the avoidance of violence, the returning of good for evil” results, in Harakas’ view, in “a holistic view which sees peace, peacebuilding, and the harmony of peoples among themselves as a normative good which Christians must seek to realize with God’s help” (in Bos and Forrest 1999, 187). Although, as Harakas points out in *For the Peace From Above – An Orthodox Resource Book on War, Peace and Nationalism*, “few Orthodox writers and thinkers . . . have dealt deeply and thoughtfully with these issues [and] still fewer, if any, have provided the theoretical underpinnings for a consistent and authentic Orthodox Christian social ethic,” it seems obvious that peace should be “an ideal for the Christian Church” (ibid., 182).⁵³⁸

The most significant liturgical texts within the Byzantine Churches are the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great and the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy of St. Gregory. There are also the liturgical services such as Vespers and Matins. The texts of these liturgies are permeated with invocations, prayers, and petitions for peace: “In peace let us pray to the Lord,” “for peace for the whole world,” “for the peace from above,” “for the whole day to be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless,” and finally, “that we may spend the rest of our lives in peace and repentance.” According to Webster, “these and other liturgical references

⁵³⁸ The collected research information suggests that Raya directed his energies towards humanitarian concerns; he gave blood, raised money, and visited wounded soldiers in the hospitals, rather than actions addressing national conflict or politically inspired war. Although he lived through the Yom Kippur War and the Lebanese Civil War, Raya’s preferred sphere and level of activity appeared most effective and focussed on interpersonal and community issues. He did not embrace the just war theory, and his action typically transcended religious and national agendas.

to peace express the understanding of peace as ‘spiritual serenity’” (Webster 1998, 200) and include an emphasis on mutual nonviolence, since the pacifist patristic writers saw bloodshed as a contradiction of the life and teaching of the Prince of Peace.

From the ancient sources onward, the focus of Eastern Christian teaching and practice was to create peace within oneself. What definite movement there was in the direction of non-resistance to evil began first through the striving for inner peace, for “only a Christian at peace with God and the world is truly able to endure insult, injury and injustice without resistance” (ibid., 246). Christ’s teachings about forgiveness and loving one’s enemies are frequently found in the religious texts of the Church. The writings of many of the Church Fathers and the martyrologies of saints allude often to voluntary kenotic suffering for the faith. As Webster notes, “the pacifism of non-resistance entails a pure witness to the moral theological virtue of *philanthropia* rooted in the peace of spiritual serenity” (ibid.).

Two trajectories in Eastern attitudes toward peace

While Eastern Orthodox Christianity does not have and never did have a purposefully shaped theology of peace, it gradually came to demonstrate a “dual morality in accordance with two distinct, parallel trajectories” (ibid., 256).

Justifiable war. By the modern global period, and much earlier, in fact, the Orthodox Church had accepted warfare as a necessary evil (Bos 1999, 177), although it has not developed a specific “Just War” doctrine (ibid., 175). The “‘justifiable war’ trajectory”

is “evident everywhere and all times in Eastern Orthodoxy as the mainstream social ethical trajectory for the moral problem of war and peace” (Webster 1998, 87). That that position is essentially problematic and inconsistent with the emphasis on inner peace seems clear. However, some steps toward a more specific stance on peace have been taken. For example, the text of the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference (which met in 1998) states clearly,

The basis for peace can be none other than the unconditional respect for the human person who, being made in the image of God, is rooted beyond this world and in Christ, becomes irreducible . . . Peace is inseparable from justice, which is the social aspect of communion; and from freedom, where the mystery of the image of God is inscribed.
(in Bos 1999, 178)

Absolute pacifism. The other trajectory, of complete non-resistance, is “the moral position of choice of only a few contemporary Orthodox theologians” (Webster 1998, 218). To put that minority choice in context, Webster adds, “What ought to strike us as truly amazing is not the minority of Orthodox pacifists in Russia, Greece, the Balkans, and the Middle East, but rather that there are *any* pacifists on the blood-soaked soil of those lands in the first place!” (ibid.). Interestingly, as Benz writes, it is out of the “blood-soaked soil” of Russia that writers have arisen whose “world-class fiction” has “captured ‘the mind of the Church’ on the issue of war and peace – at least that part of the antimonial Orthodox mind that consistently upholds nonviolence, non-resistance, and universal forgiveness as moral and spiritual ideals” (Benz qtd in Webster 1998, 219).

That part of the Orthodox mind “that consistently upholds nonviolence” and that maintains peace as an utmost concern has been nurtured within the Eastern

Church historically by the ancient spiritual writings and liturgical texts of the Fathers of the Church. It is a spiritual-mystical understanding of peace, however, in keeping with the Eastern Church's focus on developing the inner being and seeking to become like the Triune God. According to Webster, the mystic-ascetic spirituality supporting a pacifist rejection of violence is found in five facets of the unique Eastern Church ethos (ibid., 200). These he identifies as the passions, spiritual warfare, stillness, dispassion, and the spiritual pacifist virtues. The passions refer to "disease[s] or disturbance[s] of the self," (ibid.), which are "viewed universally by the Church Fathers in the Orthodox East as foreign to the rational self, destructive of equilibrium, and consequently requiring extirpation" (ibid., 201).⁵³⁹ Spiritual warfare is the process by which the soul wages war against the passions to bring the body and soul into balance. This is done through prayer, fasting, and the performance of good works. Stillness and dispassion are spiritual qualities or "means to the ultimate end of peace of soul" (ibid., 206). Stillness is part of the *hesychast* tradition of the Eastern Church that dates back to the fourth century beginning with the desert monks in Egypt. *Hesychia* is not only the "absence of disturbance" but also the active and dynamic state of love (ibid., 207). Dispassion or *apatheia* has no association with the modern understanding of apathy but is, as Webster states,

man without passions, in control of his 'rational state,' stable and in equilibrium, insensible to 'immoral emotions' called forth by immoral objects . . . Again it was not an emotionless state, but rather one wherein the

⁵³⁹ Some authors such as Webster take the position that the patristic literature wants to extirpate the passions, while other authors such as Gregory Palamas want to have the passions refocused or redirected. Some of these points are debatable. Raya wanted the passions to be balanced and not destroyed.

rational or potentially useful emotions are held in check and diverted to their proper ends by the independent power of the rational will (ibid., 209).

Finally, the spiritual pacifist virtues include “the peace of spiritual serenity,” (ibid., 212), (when the soul is at peace with God and with itself), and those virtues in particular that “restrain . . . the outward expression of anger” and “angry thoughts”: “patience, meekness, long-suffering, . . . forbearance” (ibid., 212, 213). In Orthodox spiritual writings, “anger, in particular, required extirpation because of its presumed linkage to the sin of physical violence” (ibid., 213). What all these virtues have in common is the willingness to suffer wrongs or offenses in a nonviolent, non-resistant manner (ibid.).

Hertog and the “Third Way”

As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, Hertog’s development of a framework for religious peacebuilding in *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding* is supplemented by a case study of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in the context of the conflict in Chechnya. Thus Chapter Three of *The Complex Reality* “presents a screening model to thoroughly analyze the peacebuilding potential of one particular religion . . . through a screening of its resources and obstacles” (Hertog 2010, 127). The primary contribution that Hertog makes through this analysis is to define and describe a “third trajectory” for peace, a third way of peacebuilding that bridges the gap between absolute pacifism and justified war.

To begin, Hertog presents the official position of the ROC as presented in the document “The Foundations of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church”⁵⁴⁰ and interviews with some of the ROC hierarchy, clergy, adherents and experts. In this official view, “peace is seen as a gift of God,” but also as “a task for the Church of Christ and has to be manifested outwardly” to society through preaching and peacebuilding (Hertog 2010, 136). For the most part, this is translated into action through cooperation between Church and state, through assistance in bringing together “nations, ethnic groups, governments, and political forces” (ibid.). The Church is called upon to expose unjust laws and hateful propaganda, and as the above document states, to “[identify] with the victims of aggression” (ibid., 137).

While the official position as set out in “Foundations of the Social Concept” emphasizes dialogue between institutions and higher level negotiations, personal interpretations of the Church’s call to peacebuilding vary more widely. Not all those whom Hertog interviewed were even willing to concede that peacebuilding was the task of every Christian. For some, peacebuilding was an inner state of being that subtly influenced others through prayer and demonstrations of love. For others, peacebuilding meant “doing good deeds” (ibid., 139) or loving enemies. As one priest told Hertog, “only with love can we reconcile and console people and conquer evil in this world” (ibid., 140). Yet others saw peacebuilding as an evangelistic work done by the institutionalized Church. Among clergy, there was “a clear tendency . . . to think of

⁵⁴⁰ In 2000, this document was adopted by the Bishop’s Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. An analysis of this document was considered beyond the scope of this study, but Hertog indicates that the debated document represents the ROC’s current and “only authoritative text which expresses in a clear and comprehensive way the official point of view on questions of war, violence, conflict and peacebuilding.”

peacebuilding as educating people in the faith, converting them, or administering the sacraments” (ibid., 140). While most interviewees focused on the necessity of inner peace and a bringing together of people, even of very divergent beliefs or ethnicities, a few clergy were more aggressive and reliant on the military because “the good has to be with fists,” and “the best form of peacebuilding is destroying those who form an obstacle on the way to peace” (ibid., 142).

Following her description of the various understandings of the work of peacebuilding, Hertog devotes considerable space to the discussion of particular activities and examples of peacebuilding as observed in connection with the Chechnya conflict, noting both successes and failures, as well as pointing out definite obstacles to peace, whether embodied in individuals or in institutional structures. Her work here is an extensive examination of the methods of peacebuilding that she laid out in the framework of religious peacebuilding in an earlier chapter. She also discusses in some detail the resources of the Russian Orthodox Church, liturgical, scriptural, and organizational, for the work of peacebuilding. Of particular relevance here, however, is her observation that “the justifiable war and the pacifist trajectory . . . exist separately, as parallel options,” which she sees as inhibiting “the development of a full-fledged peacebuilding approach” (ibid., 199), and preventing “moral and practical clarity” (ibid., 200). And the issue of peacebuilding is often relegated to the individual rather than Church policy. Results are thus not consistent: “the proclaimed inner peace and nonviolence related to pacifism are not internalized, practiced, or understood as a consistent way of life, but just propagated and understood on an intellectual level” (ibid.).

Nevertheless, as she understands the Orthodox tradition, it “does contain various theological and spiritual resources, which could form the basis of a ‘third way’” (ibid.). This theoretical possibility of a third trajectory which is “more peaceful than justifiable war and more active than pacifism” (Hertog 2010, 200) has not been formally explored or implemented by the ROC. In theory, the Orthodox tradition still has the theological and spiritual foundation for the more complete development of peacebuilding ethics and practices: the theological concepts of Trinity, theosis, and creation, and divinization through participation in the liturgy and the sacraments (Hertog 2010, 200-202). A deeper exploration of this potential peacebuilding model and new theological developments might be realized through “contacts with creative Orthodox theology in the West . . . and the inspiration coming from other Orthodox and Christian churches” (ibid., 202). Her findings have particular relevance for the study of the life of Raya, who as an Eastern Catholic had the resources both of Eastern Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church, and also had experience in both Eastern and Western cultures.

Eastern Catholic Perspectives of Religious Peacebuilding

The twenty-three Eastern Catholic Churches are much smaller than both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Depending on how their clergy was educated, parishioners would have benefited from the theology of both Byzantine and Roman Catholic traditions. Given their liminal position between those traditions, much of their theological energy was required by issues of identity. Nevertheless, the Eastern Catholic Churches and most specifically the Melkite Church made an important contribution to the preparation for the Second Vatican

Council, a contribution that is of particular importance to the study of the life Archbishop Raya.

The Melkite Greek Catholic hierarchy made some practical suggestions to the president of the Ante-preparatory Commission of the [Second Vatican] Council, Cardinal Tardini on August 29, 1959.⁵⁴¹ Paraphrased from the official document, the following selected issues are worthy of further consideration:

NOTE ON RECONCILIATION WITH THE ORTHODOX

2. Create a Special Commission to Work for Church Unity and include input from the Roman Catholic and Eastern Catholic Churches with the participation and consultation with Orthodox representatives.

QUESTIONS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL

- 5) Restudy the question of married priests;
- 6) Consider the celebration of liturgical prayers and ceremonies in the language of the people;
- 7) Consider unification of the date of Pascha;
- 12) Reaffirm the declarations of earlier councils and the formal promises of the popes relative to the rights and privileges of the Eastern Churches;
- 12c) The Holy See of Rome should take effective measures to prevent the Latinization of the East by poorly-informed Western missionaries;

⁵⁴¹ In his Introduction to "The Melkite Church at the Council" Robert Taft (1992) expressed respect for the role undertaken by the Melkite Church at the Second Vatican Council: "At that time no other Eastern Church in communion with Rome had as yet played any significantly 'Eastern' leadership role in the wider Catholic Church." accessed August 10, 2016 , <https://melkite.org/faith/faith-worship/introduction>

14) Recognize and strengthen Episcopal powers without any hindrance from the Roman Curia. (Sayegh 1969, trans. Robert Taft)

In providing his Introduction to the English language translation of the original French text, Taft retrospectively looked at the prophetic ideas advanced at the Council by the Melkite Church, ideas realized and unrealized in the Catholic Church. He also noted that among the concepts still undeveloped and potentially to be implemented was the principle “that collegiality should be operative not just among bishops, but on the diocesan level, between the bishop and his presbyterate; that the laity, especially women, should be given their proper dignity and role in church life” (Taft 1992). All of these selected issues were particular problems encountered by Raya, including Taft’s observation about the role of women.

Conclusion

The Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Melkite Greek Catholic Churches have had different experiences with formal peace theologies. Each of the Churches looked to scripture to generate their respective perspectives. Over time, the Roman Catholic Church developed the just war theory and what is now known as the social doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. The Orthodox Churches never really formalized a peace theology; they conceded that war was sometimes unavoidable, but did not stand behind the just war theory. In some instances, individuals and Churches demonstrated forms of pacifism. Hertog identifies another potential peace theology – the third way. There has been a dearth of development of peace theology in the East due in part to the loss of spiritual capital in the conflicts between the

Churches, the outright persecution of the Churches, and the turbulence of conflict-ridden societies. As demonstrated by the Melkite Church at the Second Vatican Council, Eastern Catholic Churches could advance peacebuilding on their own terms. Eastern Churches have also contributed to understanding of peace through their strong mystical-ascetical approach to peace, based primarily in scripture, the writings of the great spiritual masters of the tradition, and in the liturgical services.

As Hertog has argued, there have been few individuals who have exemplified love-based peacebuilding. This need for suitable role models has motivated my research about Archbishop Raya who, I believe, has made a significant contribution both to religious peacebuilding and to the Eastern Church. It is critical to recognize Raya's unique situation and perspective as an Eastern Catholic—heir of both Western and Eastern Christian traditions—that allowed him to draw upon and integrate the full breadth of theological traditions in his understanding of peacebuilding.

With the above contexts in mind—both Hertog's specific and detailed study of the role of religion in peacebuilding and Raya's position as heir of both Western and Eastern Christian traditions—the following chapter, "Situating Raya's Personal Narrative within the Story of Christian Peacebuilding," will discuss Archbishop Raya's unique pastoral and prophetic approach to the peacebuilding process. This re-examination of Raya's experience as a peacebuilder within the contexts that shaped his praxis is an adaptation of Groome's fourth movement, in which participants place their individual stories in dialogue with the larger Story or Vision.

Chapter 5

Situating Raya's Personal Peacebuilding Narrative within the Story

Throughout this dissertation, it has been noted that the same religion that incites people to acts of violence and destruction can also influence people to act in love, to work toward healing in all stages of conflict, and to offer hope in difficult situations. As Hertog points out, "Religion can also engage in constructive conflicts, for example, nonviolent struggles for justice, negotiations with state authorities about societal problems, or dialogue with representatives of other religions and cultures" (Hertog 2010, 11). In this chapter, I will revisit and compare the Raya narrative developed in Chapter 2 to some of the themes identified in Chapter 4, as called for by Groome's fourth movement. Raya's practical peacebuilding efforts in a wide variety of contexts will be evaluated through various lenses identified in Hertog's summary of religious peacebuilding, and the approaches and theologies embraced by the relevant Eastern and Western Churches.⁵⁴² Finally, I will also discuss the characteristic elements of Raya's

⁵⁴² The split between Eastern and Western Christianity has traditionally been attributed to 1054 when Pope Leo IX excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople and the patriarch retaliated with anathemas in return. The situation was however far more complicated as strained relationships and misunderstandings existed centuries earlier. Divergence in theology, ecclesiology, and practice culminated in the formal estrangement. The Latin and Byzantine Churches failed to understand and appreciate one another's position, resulting in an inflexible stance regarding the filioque. Other issues also contributed to opposing positions: use of leavened/unleavened bread in the Eucharist; married priesthood; leniency in the fasting traditions of the Latin Church; sacrament of confirmation to be administered only by bishops; and the use of one or three immersions in the sacrament of baptism. The two branches of Christianity continued to diverge after the Schism adopting different perspectives on purgatory, authority, and primacy in the Church. The Crusades, especially the Fourth Crusade, highlighted the cultural and ecclesiastical differences between East and West. In spite of several attempts at reconciliation, the two Churches have developed different emphases within Christianity (Meyendorff 1979, 91-102).

The Melkite Church never formally broke off relations with Rome and with the Pope, but established and maintained strong ties to Constantinople. The strain between Rome and the Melkite Church was attributable in large part to the Crusades. These tragic episodes in history passed, leading eventually to the formal declaration of Roman/Melkite union in 1724 ("The Melkites," Eparchy of Newton, Melkite Greek

unique pastoral and prophetic approach to the peacebuilding process and highlight his particular contributions to that process.

Peacebuilding can occur within the context of conflict, but can also be undertaken to minimize tension, build positive relationships based on dignity and respect, contribute to just institutions and structures, and restore order, thus preventing an outbreak of violent, destructive conflict. The challenges that Raya addressed included, among others, the following: restoring the dignity of the Melkite and Eastern Catholics; advocating for the right of using the vernacular in religious services; upholding the rights of the oppressed in the Civil Rights Movement; restoring dignity for the poor and downtrodden; creating educational opportunities with a focus on equality and eliminating biases; eliminating the prejudice inherent in racially based identity cards; promoting more and better housing for refugees; attempting to restore Arab lands confiscated in the name of security; attempting to bridge relationships between Christians, Muslims and Jews; and demanding ethical practices and transparency by the leadership of the Melkite and Roman Catholic Churches.

Seeing Raya's Work through Hertog's Theory of Religious Peacebuilding

Given that Hertog's work includes a detailed discussion of different approaches to peacebuilding, it is not possible, within the limits of this dissertation, to examine all of Raya's work within all aspects of Hertog's framework. This section thus focuses on those selected points of Hertog's description of religious peacebuilding that overlap

most obviously with Raya's key practices: namely, the living tradition of religion, ethical values that foster peace, focus on relationships, forgiveness and reconciliation, and a sense of identity and community.

The Living Tradition of Religion

One of religion's primary contributions to peacebuilding, according to Hertog, arises out of its living tradition. Religion is not static, either in its interpretations of sacred, foundational texts or in its practices, since both are in a necessary dynamic relationship with surrounding cultures. As Webster observed, "As each historical situation is new, we must think anew: this dynamic principle of organic growth allows for truly creative theology and morality *within* the Tradition" (Webster 1998, 31). Because his life spanned several decades and included work in various countries, Raya was offered unique and abundant opportunities to demonstrate theological and moral principles in the midst of very different situations, some of which were rife with religious prejudices and ancient rivalries.

Hertog notes that religions evolve in response to the changing spiritual experiences of the faithful within different cultures and to the continued re-interpretations of sacred texts. The ambivalence resulting from indeterminate meanings within those texts fosters a continued self-criticism that supports credibility for religious actors willing to advocate a stance in peacebuilding (Hertog 2010, 81). Given the constant re-examining of scripture, religious texts can be reinterpreted to foster peace instead of conflict. Such an evolution takes time, however, and the adaptation of ancient texts and traditions to contemporary cultures is often met with resistance, from both faithful and self-serving

adherents. Hertog notes that attitudes of superiority, honour, and exclusivity embedded in the perceptions of the faithful, combined with persistent and traditional biases against unbelievers, make it difficult to embrace new and more open minded interpretations (ibid., 66). Theologians, religious scholars, and religious actors are thus more important than the scriptures because they are agents of interpretation within a particular historical and cultural moment (ibid., 83). While the texts themselves do not change beyond what occurs through translation, acts of contemporary interpretation might be influenced by differing perspectives, personal agendas, and socio-political contexts (Gopin in Hertog 2010, 82).

Raya, as a priest and hierarch continually engaged in the hermeneutic process, understood very well that religion could be coercive and restrictive—a source of conflict resistant to principles of peace. Although he knew many families and ordained ministers who practiced an “oppressive religion,”⁵⁴³ Raya usually chose to listen to people in order to learn what their needs might be. In Birmingham, he listened to people from various Christian denominations, white and black, and dared to resist systemic injustice and self-interested authorities. In Israel, he listened to Jews, Arab Christians, Muslims, and other groups. Raya sought to provide practical and effective leadership to the people, demonstrating that religion could bring people to love each other, and resolve conflict without conflict.⁵⁴⁴

Raya treated sacred tradition with due respect, yet was prepared to apply the revealed truth in light of whatever specific circumstances he found himself in. Although,

⁵⁴³ Archbishop Raya, conversation with author, January 16, 1999, Madonna House, Combermere, Ontario.

⁵⁴⁴ Almady, interview.

according to Leo Lefebure, “theologians and religious leaders have traditionally rarely taken into account the violence that was interwoven with their own religious tradition” (in Hertog 2010, 17), Raya questioned the typical scriptural rationalization for justified violence. He discerned that his own Melkite Church needed to divest itself of violence against Jews, for example, by eliminating discriminatory phrases inherent in the texts of various liturgical services. In *The Eyes of the Gospel*, Raya acknowledges that the early Church was “frequently in conflict with Judaism”: “The first Christians were hated by the synagogue . . . they were jeered and mocked and smeared in the popular mind as traitors, child killers, donkey worshippers, lechers, and cowards” (Raya 2006, 74). As a result, some of the early writers of scripture were unfair to Pharisees and the deeper aspects of Jewish spirituality (Raya 2006, 74). In spite of the “noble character and genuine piety” (Raya 2006, 74) of many Pharisees, biased writers overemphasized the stereotypical shortcomings of the overzealous ones (ibid.). Thus it was important for Raya to abolish anti-Jewish language from liturgical texts and services, which he did in Birmingham as well as in Israel. He ascribed great importance to the Vatican Council’s “Jewish Document,” in which the Catholic Church officially absolved the Jews of deicide.

In the same spirit, he sought to introduce inclusive language within liturgical texts to correct the bias against women. Raya was keenly aware that Christianity has legitimized discrimination against women, and in his later years, his language was deliberately inclusive; thus, for instance, God was referred to as “Father-Mother, Son-Daughter, [and] a Breath of life” (Raya 1992, 61), phrasing that must surely have sounded heretical to many faithful.

Raya contemplated thoughts and ideas in a retrospective and continual hermeneutic process, and debated with others before finally developing an insight that would allow him to interpret the text. He was prepared to rethink positions such as the unfair representation of the Jews in the New Testament. He desired an ethically sensitive interpretation of sacred texts and the rules and regulations of the Church, and urged the adherents of the Byzantine Church away from narrowly conceived interpretations toward a more tolerant, compassionate, and nonviolent religious perspective.

In service to Patriarch Maximos IV, to provide his parishioners and the wider community with an introduction to the riches of Byzantine spirituality, and to enliven the Melkite Greek Catholic liturgies for more people, Raya actively participated in the translation of various materials to compile the *Byzantine Missal*, *Byzantine Daily Worship*, and other texts from Greek and Arabic into English.⁵⁴⁵ *Byzantine Missal* was published in 1958, *The Holy and Divine Gospel Readings* in 1967, and in 1969, he published *Byzantine Daily Worship* with the Byzantine breviary, three Byzantine liturgies, propers of the day and various offices—in English. The latter, a noteworthy 1020-page English language worship book is still being used in forty countries⁵⁴⁶ and by more than 1000 Orthodox and Catholic churches. Thus, his unique contribution to the ongoing living tradition of Eastern Christianity was a recovery of ancient traditions and movement toward modern ways; he sought to restore to his people their ancient Eastern

⁵⁴⁵ Four different sources confirm that Father Raya helped translate the *Byzantine Daily Worship*, and the *Holy and Divine Gospel Reading*. This was confirmed in an interview by Ferris Ritchie Jr. who helped him with the nuances of the English text; the eye witness account of Fr. Francis Martin who lived with Raya intermittently from 1966 to 1968; a letter from Raya to his spiritual director, Father Callahan; and a letter from Callahan writing about Raya's translations. Documentation regarding the *Byzantine Missal* is not as clear, but Raya was responsible for at least some of the translations. Raya rightfully acknowledged the contribution of José de Vinck and gave de Vinck the royalties from the sale of these books.

⁵⁴⁶ Baron José de Vinck, letter to author, April 18, 2005.

ways of thinking and worshiping even as he fostered the use of the vernacular language in the liturgies. Both of these emphases were intended to strengthen his parishioners' self-identity, without taint of exclusivity.

The legacy of Father Raya's ministry thus celebrates the values of peace and love for humankind. This was his vision of Christianity. Grounded as he was in the Byzantine tradition, Raya saw his vocation as being a shepherd, not only for Christians, but also for Jews and Arabs. Without betraying his Eastern roots and sensibilities—indeed, he encouraged a clear self-identity among his parishioners and among whatever people he encountered—Raya actively interpreted Eastern Christianity's sacred texts and liturgical practices to emphasize inclusiveness, an approach that discouraged violence and encouraged peace.

Ethical Values and Teachings That Foster Peace

For Hertog, another primary contribution that religions bring to the work of building peace arises out of their ethical values and teachings, which clearly foster peace. She examines several of these in her theoretical discussion of religious peacebuilding; three of them in particular summarize Archbishop Raya's attitudes in his work.

Respect for all human beings

That a lack of such respect is often the heart of conflict seems obvious, and it seems equally obvious that establishing a lasting peace is impossible without a confirmation of dignity for every human being (Hertog 2010, 109). This principle was foundational to Raya's spiritual vision and pastoral approach. Raya believed that everyone was a child of God made in the image of God, and thus offered unconditional respect and love to

both believers and nonbelievers. His understanding of the gospel vision was that love must be universal, without exception. Archbishop Raya therefore extended the same reverence to other world religions and their believers as he did to his own faith and its faithful. At the synods of the Melkite Catholic Bishops in Lebanon, Raya declared that believers of every faith should be encouraged to grow stronger in their own convictions and in relationship with their own God without the fear of proselytization or conversion (Adams, Summer 1972, 113). Raya extended this philosophy beyond the sphere of religion. In spite of a difference in perspective, he once shared a public platform with the communist mayor of Nazareth. He listened to the opinions of others even though they diverged, even conflicted with his own (Stern, 1972a, 22).

Obligation to seek justice and to show compassion

Common to many prophetic traditions is a strong focus on social justice. This conviction is clearly evident within Christianity's sacred texts and patristic writings, as well as in the words of modern Christian leaders. "Any person of faith has no real option," Bishop Desmond Tutu writes: "In the face of injustice and oppression it is to disobey God not to stand up in opposition to that injustice and oppression. Any violation of the rights of God's stand-in cries out to be condemned and to be redressed, and all people of goodwill must willy-nilly be engaged in upholding and preserving those rights *as a religious duty*" (Tutu qtd. in Appleby 2000, 12). Hertog repeatedly promotes peacebuilding through the restoration of order and relationships, following an impartial attainment of the truth and resolution of historical wrongs and injustices (Hertog 2010, 50-51, 108). This approach requires compassion, empathy and the capacity to identify

with the pain and suffering of the poor and oppressed. The virtues taught by various world religions: love for others, kindness, open-mindedness, generosity, empathy—are paramount (ibid., 78). The love, forgiveness, hope, healing, and unity taught by virtually all world religions (ibid., 79) were likewise embraced and implemented by Raya.

Practical help to individuals. Archbishop Raya's compassionate spirit was evident throughout his life, beginning with the daily assistance that he gave to various individuals. Simple direct action in response to what he saw as a need and what he was asked to do, often unobtrusively, was a consistent service to God and to his fellow human beings. In Lebanon, at the beginning of his priestly service, he worked with the vulnerable, the lepers, the deaf, and the mute. Later, in Birmingham, he provided sanctuary for both clergy having difficulties with the Church and troubled children and youth. Repeatedly, Raya negotiated ways through seemingly intractable problems to find solutions that benefitted the poor, the marginalized, and the powerless. In Israel, he assisted Arab refugees in their struggle to find adequate housing, advocating for fair rents, arranging necessary repairs,⁵⁴⁷ and initiating new construction.⁵⁴⁸ He showed compassion not only to Arabs, but also to Jews, responding to a massacre of Jewish students by the Palestine Liberation Front, for example, by traveling to Ma'alot to comfort the families, stating clearly, "the blood and tears that spilled at Ma'alot are mine" (Ephraim Katzir qtd. in Sabada 2006). In Lebanon, in the midst of civil war, he did what he could to bring healing at a deep emotional and spiritual level. Speaking

⁵⁴⁷ Noujaim, interview.

⁵⁴⁸ Archbishop Raya, letter to Father Callahan, March 29, 1972.

about love and forgiveness in nearly destitute conditions, he provided physical places of safety and planned practical projects that would provide jobs and reasons to hope. For Raya, practical deeds included whatever was necessary to meet physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. His was an instinctive and consistent response to human need.

Prophetic voice against injustice. Raya's empathy and identification with the oppressed fueled his confrontations with those who would not render justice. He would not remain silent when those in power oppressed the weak. In Birmingham, Raya criticized the Ministerial Association for its lack of support for the Civil Rights Movement, and even when forbidden by Archbishop Toolen to get involved, Raya led by example. He participated in the March to Selma, and also joined the massive March on Washington to protest racism in the South. He violated Southern mores and allowed black people to attend services in his church and enter his own residence using the front door. When the KKK threatened to burn his church in an attempt to block the desegregation of his parish church, he tried to establish an independent mission for African Americans.

In Israel, Raya spoke out as a prophet, opposing missionary activity amongst the faithful of various Christian denominations and other religions, a stance founded on an innate respect for other people and their beliefs. Based on this premise, he endorsed the position of the Orthodox Rabbinate and their refusal to accept instant conversions (Stern, 1972a, 20).

Raya was acutely aware of the tensions between various Eastern and Western Christian Churches and the consequences for ordinary worshippers. For him, it was a lack of justice that the powerful Latin Church should set itself against the poor and weak

local (Eastern Rite) churches.⁵⁴⁹ He made it a priority to report injustices to government officials and the media. His refusal to tolerate injustice was just as firm in the advocacy for his own people, as it was for the Arabs who experienced discrimination from the Roman Catholic Church and the Israeli government.

Raya's zeal for justice and sensitivity to various forms of domination made him much beloved among the poor and marginalized, but it was not so among ecclesiastical authorities who sometimes felt threatened by Raya's directness. He dared to speak the truth, as he understood it, to the powers of the Roman Church, choosing sometimes, as he did in Birmingham, to obey his Patriarch rather than his Roman Catholic superiors. In Israel, he was often quite frustrated with what he saw as a colonization of the poor, smaller Eastern Catholic Churches, and dared to speak his displeasure, even in the presence of the Pope himself.⁵⁵⁰ As he noted in an interview regarding his tense relationship with the Vatican, "All this time we had the bad time. It was a painful situation, painful. Everything was for the Latins. Everything to make people Latins. I have documents of this. 'Make them Latins'."⁵⁵¹ In Raya's mind, the exposure of injustices was part of the peacebuilding process, but it carried a high cost and on occasion appeared to postpone peace rather than to build it.

⁵⁴⁹ Archbishop Raya, letter to Madonna House, January 6, 1969.

⁵⁵⁰ Archbishop Raya, interview by author, July 9, 2002, Combermere, Ontario

⁵⁵¹ Ibid. Archbishop Raya is talking about a hegemonic structure in which the Greek Catholic Melkites in Israel were perceived and treated as second class by the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church was often able to find political or fiscal means and resources to help the poor and marginalized Eastern Catholics, but in ways that encouraged or manipulated their allegiance to Roman Catholicism. Raya resented such dominance and control, seeing it as an institutional and cultural form of violence, the deliberate diminishment of one group by another. Raya protested against policies and enticements that encouraged and rewarded the transfer of Arab Christian loyalty from the Melkite Church to the Roman Catholic Church. This did not have anything to do with a more suitable form of faith, or providing a better form of Christianity. It was a cynical and political approach to building the Kingdom of God through adding more adherents.

In spite of his zeal to protect the poor from discrimination and to support their self-identity, Raya failed to demand a high standard of accountability from his Patriarch and to stand up for the integrity of his Church. The case in point here is Raya's reluctance to demand a formal investigation into the financial affairs of Patriarch Maximos V, starting with the perceived misappropriation of funds while the latter served as Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee. If substantiated, the alleged channelling of funds into Hakim's private accounts represented nothing less than theft, a betrayal of trust within the Church, abuse of the Episcopal and Patriarchal offices, and injustice by every definition of the word. This type of behaviour would be deemed completely unacceptable and condemned in every responsible organization. There might have been a trial, conviction, and sentence for any individual perpetrating such an offense. Arguably in a similar position as the cardinals and bishops who knowingly and consciously ignored pedophile activity within the Church, Raya had the moral and ethical responsibility to have the alleged financial corruption investigated.⁵⁵²

Raya refrained from pursuing this course of action, I believe, because of the scandal it would have created for his Melkite Church and the office of the Patriarch. Raya chose instead to take the "nobler" path of resignation, a sacrifice creating a personal but less reprehensible scandal centered on him rather than creating a greater crisis. This was a decision he ultimately came to regret most of the remaining years of his life.⁵⁵³ An allegation and charge of financial abuse would have been perceived as absolutely

⁵⁵² During a September 2016 telephone conversation with Fr. Ron Cafeo, Cafeo retold a story of travels with the Archbishop in France. In the summer of 1992, a French newspaper in Paris carried an article which described a US\$5.0M loss suffered by the Melkite Patriarch when a Brazilian bank recently collapsed. I have not been able to locate a copy of this reported article.

⁵⁵³ Archbishop Raya, conversation with author, August 15, 2004, Madonna House, Combermere, Ontario. At this point in time I did not have the synod reports and the details surrounding his resignation.

scandalous and would have precipitated an enquiry into some of the financial affairs of the Melkite Church. In time, justice could have been served, reflecting a commitment to greater transparency and the truth. Credibility within the Church would eventually have been restored, an outcome that Raya could have foreseen. Yet in this case, despite his usual willingness to risk consequences of seeking justice, he chose the less difficult route.

Advocate for policy changes and structural change. Raya's criticisms of institutional injustice were often followed by lobbying for specific structural changes. To the extent of the authority that he had, occasionally risking much resistance from hierarchal superiors and from political authorities, Raya did what he could to undo systemic injustice. The establishment of the mission for African Americans was one such effort. In Israel, during visits with Golda Meir, Raya lobbied hard for the elimination of segregated identification cards. He also repeatedly challenged the law that would not allow more than ten Arabs to congregate in the same place. Although Raya often faced conflict, he did not resort to violence.

Raya was heavily involved in fund-raising projects of various descriptions: housing for the elderly, schools, and the material needs of his diocese. He always seemed willing to ask other people to contribute money to alleviate suffering. Despite his frequent challenges to the Israeli government on many issues, he did gain financial support from the Jewish people. In fact, when he travelled to Europe and to the United States, he spoke gratefully about the Jewish people outside of Israel who willingly raised money for many philanthropic and social services needed in the newly established country of

Israel. As he explained to his Catholic and Protestant audiences, “If Jews can demonstrate their brotherhood for their brother Jews in Israel in such a beautiful and unselfish way, . . . so Christians should be concerned for their brothers in the Holy Land . . . helping them help themselves, as together Christians and Jews forge a new country where all men are respected . . .” (Adams, Fall 1971, 161). Indeed, Raya even received help directly from Moshe Dayan, Israeli military leader and politician; in response to a request for assistance when a bank foreclosed on a building owned by the Church, Dayan saw to it that the debt was paid in full.⁵⁵⁴ Given that Raya’s eparchy received support from the Jewish government and that prominent leaders and ordinary Jews supported him in his various marches, even to the point of providing financial support and visiting the villages of Ikrit and Kfar Berem, Raya found it especially difficult to receive so little support from the Roman Catholic Church in congregational matters, both financially and politically. Based on available documents, there was no support from the Roman Catholic Church for the native Eastern Catholic Christians in his diocese. That could not have been easy for Raya, and one wonders how much this tension played into his resignation from Israel, an action that he later regretted.

What is most striking about Raya’s efforts to seek justice and to show compassion is the consistency of his work. Despite the high drama of some of his public actions (which he sometimes appeared to enjoy more than seemed appropriate to his critics or those targeted by such actions) such as the March to Selma or the Fast before the Knesset, his greatest impact was known in simple, daily acts. His unfailing hospitality, the willingness to meet anyone and to listen carefully and empathetically, the regular

⁵⁵⁴ Archbishop Raya, conversation with author, Israel, August 18, 1996.

generosity in sharing his resources and asking others to do the same, and the creativity of his nonviolent solutions to ordinary, ever-present irritations: these are the gifts Raya shared with his people.

Nonviolence. According to Hertog, nonviolence is essential for religious peacebuilders, but that course of action is not for the fainthearted. For Raya, nonviolence was the way to overcome obstacles. His life in Birmingham, under the tutelage of Martin Luther King, Jr., had prepared him for peacebuilding and nonviolent service in the conflicted and racially tense country of Israel. His experience in the Civil Rights Movement provided both motivation and practical knowledge for the campaign of justice⁵⁵⁵ for the villagers of Ikrit and Kfar Berem. In a public letter to Golda Meir, published in *The Jerusalem Post*, he argued that true security could not be based on injustice and that the state of Israel was called to exemplify justice (Raya, “Letter to Meir”). When such a direct appeal failed, Raya ordered the temporary closing of all thirty-three churches of his Melkite diocese, in the “Death of Justice” campaign.⁵⁵⁶ Archbishop Raya also participated actively in various demonstrations and symbolic actions that called for justice in nonviolent ways and encouraged the protesting villagers not to respond in violence. In incident after incident, from leading “illegal” prayer sessions to conducting a baptism in the field after being denied entry to the village of Ikrit, Raya chose

⁵⁵⁵ During this campaign he warned the government that the call of Israel was from the God of Israel, a call that should not “be trodden upon by some narrow politics or politicians or hate-mongers.” He concluded by restating his hope in the courts of Israel, in the people of Israel, and the government who will dispense the justice of Israel.

⁵⁵⁶ Ya’acov Friedler, “In Ikrit-Bir’im protest Greek Catholics skip Sunday services,” *The Jerusalem Post*, August 14, 1972.

nonviolent responses, even using symbols and rituals of worship to include the soldiers, reinforcing his message and defusing tensions. Such unusual nonviolence, even warmly inclusive tactics, in the face of seemingly unsolvable problems made it easier for both sides to shift from issues to relationships, which he saw as foundational.

Focus on Relationships

In Hertog's framework of religious peacebuilding, relationships are central because there is no lasting peace without reconciliation: "Reconciliation as a process starts from the personal level and consequently spreads to the interpersonal, communal, intercommunal, national, and international levels" (Hertog 2010, 53). This is the process at the heart of world religions, which begin their work in the development of the person who is then guided into ethical behavior toward others. The relationships required to "foster cross community cooperation, break down stereotypes, support (re-) integration, enhance respect, mutual understanding, and humanization, and reduce hate and suspicion among people" (ibid., 109) will not develop without attention to Hertog's "soft aspects" of peacebuilding—the private fears and losses, the antagonisms, the prejudices and misconceptions, the frustrations and hopes, assumptions and memories (ibid., 47), all of which religion is uniquely capable of influencing. For Hertog, an inclusive vision, which can celebrate diversity yet seek unity, is crucial. There can be no peace without mending relationships and accepting "responsibility for oneself, the other, the immediate environment, and the whole creation" (ibid., 110).

This focus on relationships as a foundation to peace is consistent with Raya's continual efforts to establish, build and restore relationships. As an Eastern Catholic hierarch, Raya understood that relationships begin from within by deepening one's

knowledge of God's love for self, which begins the process of divinization (through discovering how much God loves each one, not by following rules of behavior).

Believing in the transformative power of love, Raya recognized that love takes root in people when they are shown love (Raya 2006, 32). For Raya, inner peace contributed to outer peace. Consequently, Raya paid close attention to people's personal feelings, attitudes, and perspectives. He practiced empathetic listening and offered respect, doing his best to communicate clearly. As a result of his understanding of the experiential nature of love, Raya paid attention to interpersonal relationships, albeit not enough attention to a few particular relationships, as will be explained in the next section.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Forgiveness and reconciliation were central to Raya's vision and experience. These acts take courage and humility, as well as selflessness and empathy with others, qualities that were grounded in his faith and his commitment to nonviolence. He admonished people to be reconciled with their brothers and sisters.⁵⁵⁷ He understood that the origin of conflict was in the hearts and minds of his people, and this implied a fundamental personal responsibility.

Thus Raya's peacebuilding theology aimed at addressing the deep-rooted conflict within, which he believed was part of the human condition, and re-establishing the power of love. He dealt with the underlying conditions of conflict by fighting the ego and self-centeredness (Raya 1984, 168-69). For the Christian, Raya insisted, peace was a way of life. One was liberated from negative forces such as hatred and revenge through forgiveness, prayer, fasting, and selfless good works and practical acts of compassion.

⁵⁵⁷ Daoud Bshouty, interview.

Wherever he served, he developed a peace consciousness and awareness of the possibilities of nonviolence.

His life was an example of reconciliation and relationship building, both through his specific actions and his direct call to others to likewise end injustice and discrimination through loving relationships. In Israel, he challenged both Jews and Arabs to work together and to see one another as fellow citizens, not as hated enemies. He regularly asked for forgiveness from his priests before Lent. He demonstrated this conviction in a more radical expression when he protected his ostensible enemy, Rabbi Kahane.⁵⁵⁸ For Raya, the virtue of forgiveness was integral for his peacebuilding.

Likewise in Lebanon, another country riven with religious based hatreds, Raya worked at building good relationships between Christians and Muslims. On one Holy Saturday, Raya dared to call upon both worshippers and guests (including Muslims), who didn't even believe in the resurrection, to "stand in beauty and forgive . . . Those who do not forgive should go home."⁵⁵⁹ Even those who had witnessed atrocities against their own family were admonished to ask for divine help to forgive (Sabada 2006, 178-9).

In his call for forgiveness, from those who had suffered pain and injustice, Raya moved beyond Hertog's descriptions of reconciliation. He did everything he could to reduce hatred, creating places of refuge for youth, for example, because he understood that neither community building nor nation building could happen without first attending to the spiritual needs for forgiveness.

⁵⁵⁸ Simaan, interview.

⁵⁵⁹ Archbishop Joseph Raya letter to Mary Davis, March 25, 1989.

It was Raya's very awareness of the Christian requirement for forgiveness that made some of his own struggles to forgive so painful. Indeed, one might wonder if his repeated admonitions to others to forgive were a subconscious reflection of his own difficulties in forgiving those in his own brotherhood of priests who had deeply injured him. Extending hospitality to a public opponent like Rabbi Kahane was easier. Even asking for forgiveness from priests under his authority, as he did as part of Lenten practices, seemed easier than the equally important task of forgiving his superiors. There is no record that Raya ever made peace with Archbishop Toolen, although he did express public gratitude to Toolen on the occasion of his (Raya's) departure from Birmingham. The seemingly, never ending conflicts with representatives and organizations within the Roman Catholic Church in Israel may also have been complicated and exacerbated by Raya's inability to forgive.

Though Raya outwardly sought reconciliation with Patriarch Maximos V, a difficult process, by all accounts (and made more difficult because Raya remained under the authority of the Patriarch after his resignation in Israel), he struggled with their relationship until the end of his life.⁵⁶⁰ That tortured relationship weighed on Raya's conscience to the end. Raya's own difficulties in forgiveness do not, however, minimize the crucial role that reconciliation plays in peacebuilding or the profound effects that Raya's repeated calls for forgiveness had on the people who observed him.

⁵⁶⁰ Archbishop Joseph Raya, conversation with the author, August 16, 2004. This conversation took place less than a year before his death on June 10, 2005.

Sense of Identity and Community

Paradoxically, while the work of reconciliation and building relationships demands a willingness to forego selfish interests and to reach out to identify with others, it also requires a strong awareness of self-identity and a place in a specific community. The lost and lonely soul lacks the necessary security out of which genuine love can be offered. Hertog argues that religion can specifically offer this personal identity, built solidly within a community that shares a common narrative and worldview. A religious identity encompasses an entire worldview and system of ethics and often a cultural tradition as well, thus providing a strong, relatively homogenous community in which to develop a secure sense of self. But that same entity can embrace a perspective too narrow to allow for free interaction with those of other religious persuasions (Hertog 2010, 85), especially if it has been shaped over against a perceived hostile group, as often occurs in the context of oppression. The work of a religious peacebuilder, Hertog notes, is thus to encourage a more expansive understanding of oneself with multiple identities, and a religious identity that is framed to be inclusive of the Other and charitable toward all. A community, even an ethnic one linked to a specific religion, can be close-knit yet still porous, with flexible, permeable boundaries.

Raya had a strong sense of identity that encompassed all people. All human beings were first of all children of God, which meant that they had an inherent dignity and divine worth.⁵⁶¹ At the same time, Raya recognized that people grew up within specific communities and with particular identities that could not be undermined without serious consequences. He believed that the particular individual had great worth in the eyes of

⁵⁶¹ Archbishop Raya, Sunday Homily, Madonna House, Combermere, Ontario, October 26, 1997.

God and a specific, beautiful place within the general category of human being. Both positions needed to be strengthened if lasting peace was to be achieved. In Birmingham, for example, that conviction was translated into an immediate and sustained effort to maintain Eastern Catholic traditions and the restoration of identity for his people as a foundational contribution to the multidimensional unity of the greater Christian community. His participation in the translation of the Byzantine liturgy fostered a strong sense of Christian community and identity in Birmingham and also created a stronger interest in the Eastern Catholic Churches all across the United States. Raya's arguments for the use of the vernacular language were eventually accepted and the Eastern Catholic Church had a chance to survive with dignity in the West. Raya's simultaneous ecumenical efforts prevented a strengthened identity from developing narrowed boundaries; frequent shared services and common goals within the larger city built a wider community in which diversity could be welcomed. A parish school, which welcomed children from all faiths, races, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds attempted to develop a social conscience in all involved,⁵⁶² and provided another tangible example of a peacebuilding initiative.

In Israel, Raya again sought to develop a strong self-identity that remained broad enough to leave room for individuals of other ethnicities and faiths. He taught his people that they were Christians, with Arabic cultural backgrounds, but also that they were Israeli citizens.⁵⁶³ This three-fold identity would be less divisive within civic society, thereby creating an opportunity to create a cohesive world within the secular state of

⁵⁶² See Appendix 2.

⁵⁶³ Sr. Marie-Noëlle, "Mgr Joseph Raya." *Regards Sur Israël* 11, no. 7 (1975).

Israel. He also initiated community ties with people of other religions. In a number of ways, practical and spiritual, private and public, he created initiatives and coalitions among people across ethnic, religious, and secular boundaries, yet without threatening the individual traditions represented.

In Lebanon, Raya informally served as a spiritual and practical leader to the Maronite Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Druze, and Israelis occupying southern Lebanon. A striking example of his ability to forge community was the creation of a shared agricultural school in southern Lebanon. In his old age, when he served mostly in North America, Raya still taught people, as he had in Israel and in Lebanon, how to be Christian in a secular society. Throughout his many retreats and sermons, Raya stressed Christian identity, community, and a place in the larger created order.

In spite of Raya's consistent effort to encourage a strong sense of identity in the people he ministered to, in tandem with an ecumenical acceptance of the right of others to be equally at home in their faiths—or perhaps precisely because of this effort—Raya found it difficult to conquer his own antipathy to what he saw as the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church. His reservations regarding Western theology and sensitivity to any disparagement of Eastern Christian liturgies and traditions may have had its origin in his early training in a Roman Catholic Seminary. While Raya did not challenge the faith or theology of the Roman Church, he was often in conflict with his Roman Catholic superiors, and his public criticism of their policies and procedures were sometimes confrontational. It might be argued that Raya needed to exercise greater tact.

Given the complexity of the relationship between the Melkite Catholic Churches under their Patriarchs and the Roman Catholic Church, the issue of authority was

frequently controversial, not just for Raya. However, Raya was aware of the fact that his strong convictions about self-identity were fueling ongoing problems with various Roman Catholic hierarchs.⁵⁶⁴ Particularly in Israel, where, as archbishop, Raya now had considerable authority of his own, he openly criticized Roman Catholic activities and objectives, particularly over matters that challenged the identity and independence of Eastern Christians or his right to function freely as archbishop.

On the other hand, Raya was often respectful toward various Roman Catholic authorities and commended policies that he saw as beneficial and just. Even in the midst of heated debate, Raya kept his letters polite, and his resignation from the archbishopric in Israel was motivated, or at least partially rationalized, by his respect for the stated wishes of Pope Paul VI. It should also be noted that Raya maintained his connection with Madonna House to the end of his life and deeply valued his Roman Catholic friends. His lapses into confrontational attitudes and behaviors seem to have arisen out of his impatience over any delays in correction of wrongdoing and elimination of perceived injustices, his zealous pride in the Byzantine Church, and his insistence that the Catholic Church should immediately demonstrate that it was “breathing with two lungs.” If anything, Raya’s ongoing struggle to extend to the Roman Catholic Church the acceptance of her essential identity that he so readily extended to other faiths and traditions demonstrates the importance of self-identity to the work of peacebuilding.

⁵⁶⁴ Raya thought that his position on the use of the vernacular was the reason for an unfavourable report sent to the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, Amieto Giovanni Cicognani, which resulted in a generally poor perception of Raya (Father Francis Martin, “Archbishop Joseph Raya – Tidbits of his Life,” May 1, 1998. Madonna House Archives).

In summary, Archbishop Raya embodied many key principles of religious peacebuilding as presented by Hertog. This is particularly exemplified in his working from the living tradition of Eastern Catholicism, in living out the ethical values of Eastern Christianity that foster peace, in his focus on relationship, and in his consistent efforts to build community and develop a strong sense of identity. However, in certain key areas, Raya's peacebuilding praxis actually went beyond the principles that Hertog had outlined.

Going Beyond Hertog – Added Dimensions

While Raya's life demonstrates the values and wide-reaching potential of religious peacebuilding very much as described by Hertog, his religious commitment and his willingness to take risks in living out that commitment resulted in greater successes in peacebuilding than Hertog had envisioned in her encounters with the institution of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Hertog's awareness and experience of religious peacebuilding includes both theoretical and academic perspectives. Based on her assessment of the Russian Orthodox Church, she felt it would be difficult for that institution to make an immediate contribution to peacebuilding theory and practice for several reasons, including low academic and methodological standards; lack of qualified teaching staff; lack of appropriate literature and facilities; outdated programs; lack of integration of modern science; traditionalism characterized by fear of innovation; patriotism; conservatism; and a lack of interest in dialogue (Hertog 2010, 202-203). Furthermore, "there is no experience with regard to the concrete 'how' of theological and ethical concepts, which are not developed in a practical way. Therefore, traditional theological education does

not contribute to bridging the gap between theology and life, between Church and society” (ibid., 203). Hertog’s observations also lead to the assumption that individual leaders could be more likely to make a lasting impact than the institutions they represent. Since the benefits of sustainable religious peacebuilding come about through changes in perspective of the individuals involved in conflict, it is the individual religious actor who has the best chance of bringing about change. After all, the individual actors, and not the institutions, have personal understanding and knowledge of the challenges, combined with direct and personal access to the affected parties. An outside observer is less likely to have the understanding, vision and impact that a committed local religious peacebuilder might be able to inspire (Schreiter et al, 2010).⁵⁶⁵

In spite of his ranks as priest and archbishop, Raya would fall into the category of individual peacebuilder, in addition to a role as representative of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. Although his clerical positions gave him power and authority to act, there were times when it was probably inconvenient to be associated with a defined institution. Raya’s most significant peacebuilding successes were, according to him, derived from his personal theology of love and commitment to God and neighbour, more than to his institutional allegiance and a systematic application of institutionally

⁵⁶⁵ Schreiter, et al (2010) have recognized that individual religious leaders have the privileged opportunity to provide leadership in peacebuilding because these leaders “have a social mobility that most others in society lack. They can meet with state ministers, governors, and commanding officers on the same day that they meet with farmers, factory workers, and armed militias. Religious leaders command a level of trust that is often withheld from politicians, government bureaucrats, and military officers. Many feel they are better at listening to people’s grievances and identifying with the plight of victims of discrimination and violence, and more likely to have the people’s best interests at heart. Consequently, people tend to be more honest in what they confide and reveal to “their own” leaders than what they might tell to “others” – those in positions of power or authority – of whole good will the people are unsure. Obviously, people are also more ready to consider seriously proposals for compromise for the sake of peace from their trusted leaders than from those toward whom they feel estranged, envious, or resentful” (255).

prescribed mandates and practices. His practical response to injustice and conflict based on love, joy and celebration exceeded Hertog's stated perception and vision.

Politics and Religion

Raya's theology of peacebuilding was founded on the practical, although not always conventional, applications of his theological beliefs, and not on academic guidelines or institutional formulations. However, there are many consistencies with Hertog's framework, and in many ways his approach embodies Hertog's definitions of the particular strengths of religious peacebuilding, at times going beyond what Hertog advocates. Regarding politics, Hertog stated clearly, "for religion to be able to become a meaningful force for peacebuilding, it should be independent from the state authorities and other possible influencing or manipulating powers" (Hertog 2010, 86). Raya's situation might best be described as politically involved, but not controlled by, dominated by, or dependent on political and government structures. He did not assume the role and responsibility he had in Israel by personal choice, but accepted the challenges in an inherited role within the traditional Arab Israeli governance system.

The millet system originated in the Ottoman Empire and continued in the Middle East when Muslims did not distinguish between religion and politics. As Ware explains,

From their point of view [Islam's], if Christianity was to be recognized as an independent religious faith, it was necessary for Christians to be organized as an independent political unit, an empire within the Empire. The Orthodox Church [as well as Eastern Catholic Churches in Palestine-Israel] therefore became a civil as well as a religious institution . . . The bishops became government officials, the Patriarch was not only the spiritual head of the Greek Orthodox Church, but the civil head of the Greek nation – the ethnarch." (Ware 1993, 89)

For Hakim, Raya's predecessor, civic and political lives of the local Christians were essentially organized around the Church. However, religious leaders were

very susceptible to one of the “melancholy effects” of the millet system which is “being caught up in a degrading system of corruption and simony. Involved as they were in worldly affairs and matters political, the bishops fell prey to ambition and financial greed” (Ware 1993, 90).

While Raya himself did not become enmeshed in the “darker side” of the political system, the corruption that had been permitted before he arrived caused him much trouble. His efforts to function honestly and manage finances with integrity brought him into repeated conflict with his predecessor, now his Patriarch. In the long process that eventually led to his resignation, Raya was faced with the problem of how to deal with the alleged misuse of funds and miscarriage of justice. In his reports to the Synod, following the proceedings against him concerning the sale of Church-owned property, Raya was clearly hurt and agitated. The issue was not just his anger and frustration at being unjustly accused. His choice, as he seems to have understood it at the time, was between exposing inappropriate, even illegal behaviour in his Patriarch and in other clergy, and avoiding public scandal by doing nothing and ultimately resigning to avoid further conflict. In these circumstances, Hertog’s caution against political involvement by religious actors seems entirely justified.

Yet, apart from Raya’s hesitance to make public the suspected corruption that had been unchecked under his Patriarch’s term as archbishop, Raya defied the expectation that all religious actors would be influenced or corrupted. According to Uri Avnery, former member of the Knesset, the same ability that had made it possible for Raya to persuade Christians of various denominations and leaders of

other faiths to work together made him “an extraordinary politician.”⁵⁶⁶ Avnery acknowledged that Raya had accomplished much for the unity of Israel: “In this struggle for Ikrit and Berem, the important thing was to get people together, especially Jews and Arabs, then Arabs of different parties . . . The Jewish element was really which got the government upset. They don’t mind so much if Arabs protest. That’s natural. But when Jewish and Arab people protest, this upsets them. . . When we are together, it is unpleasant for the government.”⁵⁶⁷ If peace was to be achieved, such cooperation was essential, as was demonstrated in the context of the nonviolent struggle for the villagers of Ikrit and Kfar Berem. Archbishop Raya was an example of both effective nonviolent protest and political negotiations.

Raya accepted responsibility for being both a religious and a politically involved leader, giving him unique religious and political leverage. As a religious man, he envisioned a biblical community that included all people, believers and non-believers who were all children of God. He tried to guide his people and the nations of Israel and Lebanon towards God and to transform them into “one people of God.” As a politically conscious and involved leader, Raya knew that this vision had political implications. Raya tried to remedy political and social conflicts in Israel through various forms of direct action and collaborative efforts. When needed, he was critical, as his many open letters to the government demonstrate. He was trustworthy and had good arbitration skills, particularly during the Lebanese civil war. His goal was to bring unity and peace as he mediated tensions between Muslims and Christians. On the other hand, he was less

⁵⁶⁶ Uri Avnery, interview by author, Tel Aviv, Israel May 6, 2002.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

successful in bringing about cooperation between the Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics, especially in Israel where a complicated history with too many sacred overtones and conflicting political interests created a situation that seemed resistant even to Raya's skill in arbitration. It is possible that his willingness to act on behalf of his people had made too many enemies among those whose interests were challenged. It can also be argued that Raya's deeply rooted antipathy to Roman Catholic domination, evident in some of his undiplomatic and direct opposition to his Roman Catholic superiors, as noted above, hampered his efforts to build cooperation.

Kenotic Suffering and Self-Sacrifice

Raya's interpretation of theology probably added another dimension to Hertog's peacebuilding framework through the acceptance of kenotic suffering and a willingness to risk one's life. Kenotic love empties one of a false ego allowing an expression of courageous love. Raya states, "Byzantine asceticism presents man's salvation as intimately connected with the degree one shares in this divine self-emptying, this divine 'descent' and self-giving and lowliness. This 'kenotic' life involves peaceful resistance, or even the absence of any resistance to suffering, war, and obedience" (Raya 1984, 217).

Raya understood the cost of such love. In Birmingham, he was beaten three times by the KKK for expressing an open friendship to black Americans. In Israel, after only a year and a half of service, his life was repeatedly threatened, yet he was not cowed. People who knew him in his years in Israel repeatedly emphasized Raya's love for the

people, his continual demonstration of the “love of the Gospel,”⁵⁶⁸ regardless of the cost.⁵⁶⁹ In Lebanon, he went from one church to another amid the daily bombings to serve the people, repeatedly risking his life. He persevered for many years in spite of the possibility of injury or death. In no other place had Raya’s convictions and self-sacrifice been more evident than in a country where Christians were a persecuted minority, living in appalling conditions in the midst of a civil war motivated by ancient sectarian hatreds and religiously fueled political ambitions.

Despite these evident examples of Raya’s willingness to risk his life and endure physical and emotional suffering, Raya is not a perfect example of kenotic suffering. His desire for attention, evident in his dramatic style, and the problems identified in his relationships with his superiors suggest that any account of his selflessness needs to be nuanced and qualified. Motivation is, in any case, often difficult to understand fully, and for leaders such as Raya, whose ecclesiastical role guaranteed considerable public exposure, as well as some adulation, determining which actions are, to some degree, self-serving and which are authentically self-sacrificial is necessarily a tentative judgment.

The Joy and Celebration of Life

Raya’s peacebuilding theology offered another value that could augment Hertog’s work. He believed that one of the greatest sins in Christianity was not to be joyful. As Raya wrote in *The Face of God*, “He sings and wants to make us sing in joy and wonder at the discovery of God and all things in God” (Raya 1984, 53). That joy arises out of

⁵⁶⁸ Soad Haddad, interview by author, Haifa, Israel, May 1, 2007.

⁵⁶⁹ Edward Sa’ad, interview by author, Haifa, Israel, May 4, 2007.

the central belief of Christianity: “The Resurrection is the wondrous fact which brings humanity the greatest joy because it is the passage of man from death to life and from slavery to freedom. Man becomes a participant in the life of God, and the heavenly kingdom can now be seen on earth” (ibid., 85). Referred to as the “Apostle of Joy,”⁵⁷⁰ Raya believed we were not to be controlled by circumstances, no matter how difficult, and that all people were, in fact, greater than the challenges they faced.⁵⁷¹

Having this attitude in relation to peacebuilding was important. During the nonviolent campaign in Israel, Archbishop Raya often ended gatherings with song and dance. The powers of dance made the people feel free. Rather than feeling like victims, people were transformed—they felt alive and vibrant with life. At the fast in front of the Knesset, Raya was surrounded by supporters who were awed by his “strength, and dignity, and peace and joy.”⁵⁷² Archbishop Raya himself exercised creativity in restoring joy to the liturgical celebrations, but especially in the feast days.⁵⁷³ He stressed the Resurrection and taught of its great joy and happiness.

In Lebanon as well, the Archbishop strove to create joy and celebration. Even in the midst of war, regular youth gatherings and celebrations were something to look forward to and set the stage for internal peace from within. He felt that it was important to share simple human joys and pleasures. Such gatherings could transform people’s worldviews and their relationships with their community and others, and give meaning and purpose to life.

⁵⁷⁰ Affectionate title used by many members of Madonna House.

⁵⁷¹ Archbishop Raya, conversation with author, Haifa, Israel, August 16, 1996.

⁵⁷² Madonna House Internal Records, July 18, 1973, 644.

⁵⁷³ Kamilia Samara Shehade, interview.

The complexity of his character, though, is evident in the manner in which he also struggled with depression. Those who were close to him would have known that Raya used anti-depressant medication to help him through periods of difficulty. The worst of those times followed his resignation from the bishopric in Israel, when he must have felt despair about the effectiveness of his work and his own future. Yet he persevered and found strength to continue his work as archbishop and mentor.

Raya's Eastern Theology of Peacebuilding

Although much of his work as a peacebuilder can be understood in Hertog's terms, even taking into account the ways in which Raya moves beyond Hertog's understanding of a religious peacebuilder, it is not possible to outline Raya's actual theology of peacebuilding without considering also the Eastern Christian doctrine and spiritual practice that so profoundly shaped his identity and life. It is particularly important to understand that, as Alexander Webster explains, quoting Fr. John Meyendorff, "Byzantine ethics were eminently 'theological ethics'" (Webster 1998, 31). In other words, Eastern Christians cannot conceive of secular or philosophical ethics because their moral choices are grounded in their doctrine, particularly the incarnation, which is assigned a "normative role" (ibid.). For this reason, I begin the examination of Raya's theology of peacebuilding with a discussion of the particular orthodox doctrines that formed the basis of Raya's convictions about peace and determined his ideas and initiatives.

Eastern Christian Theological Resources in Raya's Peacebuilding Action

Raya's faith was the cornerstone of his existence and the very foundation of his ministry. The expression of his belief in the form of love and service for his brothers and sisters was a consequence of his belief in God. A review of some of the fundamental aspects of Byzantine theology and the implications of his convictions contribute to understanding Raya and his work.

First and foremost, for Raya, there IS one God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. For Raya, this fact was indisputable—God always was, is, and always will be. Raya believed “in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.”⁵⁷⁴

Divinity of Christ

Raya also believed in the “one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father.”⁵⁷⁵ These basic truths are the essence of Christianity, and Raya was fully committed to these fundamental facts. As Raya believed, “One cannot appreciate Christ, nor apprehend his redemptive worth, nor understand anything Christianity stands for, unless one is constantly alive to the fact that Christ is the Son of God, true God of true God” (Raya 1984, 22). Elsewhere in *The Face of God*, Raya restated this central tenet of Christianity with an awareness of the other Abrahamic faiths: “One does not have to be Christian to believe in God. But one does have to be a

⁵⁷⁴ Nicene Creed.

⁵⁷⁵ Nicene Creed.

Christian to believe that God has come to earth and that he became man” (Raya 1984, 65). For him, “Jesus Christ is one and unique reality wedded in one divine Person, the Word of God made man. To witness to such a savior is the most exalted, and at the same time, the most bewildering witness to a truth that is beyond intellectual human grasp, yet so real and so true” (Raya 2006, 70). Throughout his life, Raya repeated the words of Christ “Love as I have loved.” As he wrote in *The Face of God*,

The only commandment of Christ that is peculiar to him and to him alone in the whole of recorded history is this: “Love as I have loved.” [John 13:34] Christianity is the splendor of human life supported, purified, saved and deified by God’s presence. And this Presence is not static. It is the incomprehensible outpouring of God’s Love, always active, never ceasing to surrender Himself to man in Jesus Christ (Raya 1984, 5-6).

Raya clarifies the practical implications of this commandment: “The recitation of the litany of intentions is an exemplification of the Christian’s answer to the command of the Lord to ‘love one another as I have loved you.’ Here the Christian goes beyond the shores of his limited personal interests and enlarges the embrace of his love to all the members of the human family” (Raya 2006, 122). Although Raya was surprisingly open to other faiths in his interaction with people in his various parishes, in his theological writings, he is firm about the exclusivity inherent in Christian doctrine:

Christ the Son of God, came to this world to give full meaning to man’s existence. Christ is the Way to the Father and in him only can man become deified. In this world, where there is so much sadness, suffering and fatalism, man cannot know why he exists. But in Christ he clearly recognizes that his existence is of an unsurpassed grandeur and beauty, (Raya 1984, 63)

The final letter Archbishop Raya wrote before his death encapsulated the work of his life: “I love, I love, I love.” His peacebuilding work was framed by him as an expression of Christian love.

Incarnation and Divinization

Given that Christ was the Son of God, Raya marveled at the manner in which God chose to identify with humanity: “This very God broke into time and assumed human nature, and thus he became one with mankind. Without this incarnation, in which the Son of God, God himself, became Son of Man and specifically Son of a human mother, Mary, Christianity has neither meaning nor relevance” (Raya 1984, 22). Raya embraced this mystery without hesitation: “The Incarnation is the presence of God in the flesh. The Father sent his Son to his creation, and the Son, accepting the will of the Father, took upon himself the ‘form of a servant’, thus pouring forth his Divinity into all created beings, and identifying himself with the entire cosmos” (ibid., 64). In the incarnation, the Divine Lover of all of humanity took on human form that he might fully share his nature with humankind. The real union of God with the human body is a “sacred melody” because through that union, God calls us to divinization, or to “be elevated to a higher level of being” (Raya 1990, 13). In essence, this means that God gave humans the grace to love and live as God:

It is by this favor of divinization that we can think and love and act like God. It is a pure gift, the gift of a sacred life with him. No creature by itself could ever think, or love, or act on the level that is proper to God. But by coming to us and joining himself to us, God has enabled us to think and to love as he does, to be truly like him, to be one in mind and heart with him. (ibid.)

These theological concepts are foundational elements of Archbishop Raya’s peacebuilding theology.

In this focus on incarnation, however, it is important to note that while many Eastern Christian theologians, when discussing ontological and ecclesial visions of life, speak of the fall of humanity, that fall is not the primary motivation or occasion for the incarnation. Raya himself mentioned it, but did not emphasize it. Instead he focused on the healing of evil, not its origin, using Christ as his example: “Christ did not give an explanation of evil, nor did he propound any thesis about it. His only answer to evil was a practical one: he defeated it” (Raya 1984, 166).

For Raya, the immanence of God, made known in the incarnation and divinization, had strong peacebuilding implications. All life is bound together in unity and is sacred because through the incarnation, the entire cosmic community is infused with a spiritual force and depth of love and life, which is worthy of reverence and awe. In Raya’s mind, creation and divinization were linked, implying a common glorious fate for humanity and every element of the cosmos. All creation was constantly moving toward God (Raya 1984, 67). Men and women were made in the image of God and are to grow in the likeness of God. Divinization, for Raya, was about experiencing God’s love, becoming aware of God’s love and accepting that love (Raya 2006, 34). Loving human beings cannot be made by rules and regulations (Raya 2006, 32), only by being loved. The practical application of this theology is that divinization is “growth towards inner peace and the spreading of peace” (Hertog 2010, 202). Christian holiness and divinization are foundational for absolute nonviolence.

As Raya attempted, in the pursuit of divinization, to shape an environment disfigured by the Lebanese civil war, he made it clear that divinization was not just

a personal journey, but “collective entities such as nations, society, even the world in a global sense may participate in this dynamic process” (Webster 1998, 35). He practically translated this theological construct, which “enables men and women to transcend their own limitations and to advance along the path of personal transfiguration and *theosis*” (ibid., 13), into a direct response to the problems of hate and revenge in the heart and thus laid a foundation for sustainable peace. He not only called Christians to live this higher life, but also people of other faiths, thus helping them to realize their human potential and fulfillment in the most challenging of circumstances. In the words of Hertog, “The central focus in the Orthodox tradition on the transformation of the person, personal growth, and divinization, points to the importance and huge potential to address the most fundamental layers of peacebuilding” (Hertog 2010, 202). Raya demonstrated ways in which this “potential” could be realized by encouraging the Christians to love the Muslims, even help them to become better Muslims.⁵⁷⁶

Resurrection

Central to the faith of the Christianity and emphasized in the Christian East is the Resurrection of Christ. Raya wrote,

Every tomb since the beginning of humanity, and every tomb until the end of time, is marked with a sign, which tells of the person lying there: “Here lies Moses. Here lies Mohammed. Here lies Stalin.” The bones of all the saints, prophets, world conquerors and of all men lie in the ground where they have been deposited. However, the tomb of Christ carries a special sign, unique and incredible: ‘He is not here: he is risen! That very same person who lived for 33 years and at the end suffered, died and was buried, instead of turning into dry

⁵⁷⁶ Archbishop Joseph Raya, “Lebanon Current Situation,” Audio Tape to Madonna House, May 1988.

bones and ashes, is now alive... The event of the Resurrection is the most astonishing fact of human history. (Raya 1984, 81)

Later he added, “The whole point of our religion is that the tomb is empty!” (Raya 2006, 64). In spite of pain, suffering and the realities of this world, which Raya often felt acutely and personally, Raya felt it necessary for all Christians to all share in joy and celebration: “For the Christian, even death is a celebration. Through all the anguishes of the world, through all horrors, all desperations, we see the light of Christ shining because Christ is Risen and he is alive” (Raya 2006, 127).

Although as an active writer, Raya explored numerous theological themes, he never wrote extensively about the Resurrection—he felt it was beyond human words to express this magnanimous reality. He did, however, live out the Resurrection, according to Father Émile Brière, priest of the Madonna House Apostolate:

He has been and is many things, which others will enumerate; but the core of his being, the essence of his contribution not only to the Church, but to the whole human race is this: In season and out of season, in good times and bad, in pain or joy, among friends or “enemies,” valiantly, enthusiastically, joyfully he proclaims: Christ is Risen and glorious. Alive in you, in your family, in your country, in the whole universe.⁵⁷⁷

Appropriately then, Raya’s story, despite its failures and setbacks and incomplete actions, was concluded with triumphant last words just before his death. His final letter, dictated to his friend and assistant, Fr. Ron Cafeo, was sent to his many friends and family:

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen! I am now at the end of my time. I cannot do anything for myself. I suffer, I pray, I hope. I want to thank all those my friends and families for their love and acceptance of my friendship. I love, I love, I love. I thank you from all my heart for our friendship and wonderful relation—social

⁵⁷⁷ Émile Brière, “Christ is Risen and Glorious,” in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

and religious. I thank you once more and thank you every day of my life. He is truly Risen! Kyr Joseph.

Trinitarian understanding of all things

Raya believed that one of the main characteristics of the Byzantine Church was its emphasis on the ultimate reality—the Holy Trinity: “The Trinity is the foundation upon which the Christian religion stands and from which all its theology and spiritual life proceed” (Raya 1984, 21). According to Raya, God “in His inner life is essentially relationship, he overflows in the outer sphere of creation” (Raya 1992, 17); “it is God moving, acting, pouring out himself and creating. The overflow of love is from all eternity. The Love-God or God-Love overflows in the Trinity and from the Trinity’s inner life into creation” (Raya 1984, 32). God is “the Lover [*Philanthropos*] of his creation and of every human face in the world” (Raya 1990, 20). Byzantine theology uses the term *Perichoreisis*, a great dance, to describe the “constant eternal movement of love and life,” a rhythmic and joyful playfulness (Raya 2006, 11); the Trinity is a great dance (Raya 1992, 61). All three persons are unconfused and undivided as they move and live in each other: “They are a unity of motion, a one and unique harmony, a one and unique beauty of ecstasy in motion” (Raya 1992, 62). Raya states that every name that carries light and joy can be applied to God: “Above all names and beyond all realities, God is a person: he is Father-Mother, a Son-Daughter, a Breath of Life” (ibid., 61).

A human being, a reflection of God, is thus relationship-oriented because God is relationally oriented: “‘To be’ for a person is ‘to be with’ another person” (ibid., 17). We

are all connected with everything in a system of reciprocity; we are made from the heart of love, live in the reality of love, and will return to the heart of God (Raya 1990, 19). The Trinity is therefore the model and paradigm of Christian life (Raya 1992, 62) that, practically speaking, rules out all egotism, individual or collective, all life-destroying division, separation, and subordination. Thus Raya's emphasis on relationship, in family and in social life, and in wider spheres, is grounded in his understanding of the Trinity (ibid., 61), for "God is not a lonely Being abiding in isolation and separation" (Raya 2006, 17). Human "destiny is to be united in love with the God who is Love, and thus become God, not by nature, but by grace" (Raya 1984, 37).

This central theological concept of the Trinity has an all-encompassing worldview that is important for peacebuilding and is evident in his pastoral and prophetic peacebuilding activities. The Trinity—Raya's model for all relationships—gave him the vision of a community dedicated to unconditional peace, love, and respect. As Hertog explains it,

The Trinity entails the vision and example of a peaceful, nonviolent community, characterized by personal distinctiveness and identity, the fullness of the personhood, the equality of all persons, freedom in communion, fundamental interconnectedness, unconditional respect and love, active compassion and service, while it also implies action against injustice and oppression. (Hertog 2010, 200)

Raya's understanding of the Trinity in terms of equality and freedom make his peacebuilding fully compatible with individual human rights, and it encourages toleration for differences within society, rather than defensive reactions against otherness.

Philanthropia – the great Lover

Perhaps no Eastern Christian concept contributed more to the peacebuilding theology of Archbishop Raya than God as the Lover of every Human Being, a phrase common among Eastern Christians, who often refer to God as “Lover” (Raya 1984, 173). Raya believed that it was the experience of the “Lover” that would heal and free human beings: “As a great Lover, he accepts to be rejected evicted and expelled. God can do anything and everything except force himself on his human creatures” (Raya 2006, 33). Raya’s God did not live in isolation, but was involved in all of life and in all love (Raya 1992, 61), even in the deepest intimacies of life: “In the complete surrender of ideal marriage, the flame of love intensifies and makes us ready to experience God the Lover, the *Philanthropos*, the One who loves every human being in this world without limit or condition” (Raya 1992, 29). For God not only loves us but is “in love with us.”⁵⁷⁸ Having a God who loved us, as opposed to having a God who was “in love” with us, for Raya, represents different levels of intimacy. In the latter, the Lover is penetrated by the beloved one and the beloved is penetrated by the Lover.⁵⁷⁹

If God, the ultimate Other, is thus conceived of as an intimate Lover, it is not surprising that Raya’s very way of being was other-directed. As Webster explains, *philanthropia* underscores universality to the extent that our very “ethnic heritage [can be] more encompassing,” and we can have an “other-directed identity” (Webster 1998, 81). This was characteristic of Raya whose love for others was felt in the midst of clashing cultures and racial tensions. In Israel, for example, he won the support of the

⁵⁷⁸ Pentecost Sunday Homily Combermere, Ontario, May 23, 1999.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

Muslims who generously supported Raya's nonviolent activities. Raya became "Sir Bishop of the Arabs."⁵⁸⁰ The famous March to the Knesset was extremely peaceful, and one chant in particular, "Arab-Jewish Brotherhood," was a surprise to those who assumed continued hatred between the groups. *Philanthropia* included loving people like Rabbi Kahane, known for his famous call "to clear the sky of Israel of all crosses and crescents,"⁵⁸¹ whose life was saved by Raya.⁵⁸²

Philanthropic love, which "[resists] the redirection of religion to national or sectarian ideology" (Appleby 2000, 19) and is "without partisan, religious, or political discrimination" (Appleby 2000, 54), was the centre and foundation of Raya's peacebuilding throughout his life. In the very midst of war, such as the Yom Kippur war between Israel and a coalition of Arab nations, or in the Lebanese civil war, Raya lived the principle he had introduced to the Melkite Synod of Bishops in August of 1989: A Bishop belongs to everyone and not just his national Church. And the "real sin of the bishop is isolation or easy and egotistical allegiances."⁵⁸³ During the Yom Kippur War, this conviction meant Raya offered whatever practical help he could "for the protection and welfare of this country and its people"⁵⁸⁴ including collecting whatever money the priests could spare,⁵⁸⁵ and calling for blood donations even as he grieved over the needless bombs, hatred, and fear.

⁵⁸⁰ Sima'an, interview.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² Archbishop Raya, *Justice for Arab Villages*.

⁵⁸³ Archbishop Raya, Synod Report to the Melkite Hierarchy, August 15, 1989.

⁵⁸⁴ *Christian News from Israel* 24, no. 2-3 (Autumn-Winter 1973): 78.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, 87.

Building the kingdom of God

Another fundamental theological concept that contributes to Raya's peacebuilding theology, and is connected to *philanthropia*, is the concept of building the kingdom of God. When Christians pray "thy kingdom come" in the Lord's Prayer, this means, according to Raya, that God should

"take over," "be the only one who inspires, directs and rules my life." . . . "Kingdom of God" means justice, peace and love. It is not simply a personal salvation and fulfillment, but it establishes a new order of things. Those in the kingdom give to whomever [sic] asks, treats all men as real children of God, forgives without question, resists evil. The kingdom is characterized therefore by healing, forgiveness, sharing, reconciliation, all of which are acts that a "family" shares and enjoys. (Raya 2006, 99)

Raya also believed that as Christians we were made for paradise and were to create paradise wherever we are: "Be alive in the midst of darkness. The dream of the Christian is to make this world a heaven, peace, love, unity, and to smile at each other."⁵⁸⁶ In another homily, Raya challenged his listeners, "Create love! Create love even in hell. You have all the powers to create heaven."⁵⁸⁷ Raya's vision of a possible earthly embodiment of the kingdom of God is described in terms of building peace and love, with universal brotherhood and sisterhood and harmony as a consequence. Peace and love are the chief characteristics of an ideal community, and these sacred values were understood practically in the work of achieving political security, material well-being, and righteous living. Raya worked tirelessly for decent housing for those who did not have it, for the freedom to earn a living and to gather in groups without fear of discrimination, for equal treatment for women in patriarchal and abusive situations, for

⁵⁸⁶ Archbishop Raya, homily, Madonna House, Combermere, Ontario October 20, 1996.

⁵⁸⁷ Archbishop Raya, Sunday Homily, Madonna House, Combermere, Ontario, November 3, 1996.

Arabs in a Jewish country (and for Jews in an Arab country), and for blacks in a white country. Whether it was sharing his food with the destitute, or offering his own room to an individual the community perceived as an enemy, Raya did not hesitate to live out his frequent exhortations to transform violent situations into experiences of the Kingdom community: “Dream the impossible dream! Christians love to dream. It’s impossible to turn this place into heaven, but we try.”⁵⁸⁸

Turning conflict-ridden places into heaven did not, however, for Raya, imply coercive proselytization. As he explained, the kingdom will be filled with people “who throb with sympathy for every human person . . . and they do not convert; they lead others to religious experience. They do not moralize; they reveal the true dignity of those who inhabit the kingdom” (Raya 1990, 140).

The more conscious they are of their divine origin, of their present divine state and divine destiny, the more joy there will be in their whole attitude towards life. When the intelligences and imaginations of men and women are free from fetters and fears then they enter the Kingdom. When they go on discovering, admiring, and playing the noble game of life, they are in the Kingdom. When they can feast in wonder and praise, they are in the Kingdom. When they have vitality and joy, they are in the Kingdom. When they know that the only true joy is to live in the present moment and not worry about tomorrow, they are in the Kingdom. When they have developed all their human faculties and become totally human, they are in the Kingdom. When men and women become fully alive to the presence of God within them and to their presence in God, then they become divine, and dwellers of the Kingdom. (Raya 1990, 141)

This “leading of others to religious experience” falls into the category of mysticism, not surprisingly, since Eastern Christianity is often referred to as the mystical branch of Christianity. And mysticism is not remote from the work of peacebuilding. As Appleby notes,

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

The mystical traditions of the world's major religions, which are centered on the direct experience of the holy, are exceedingly relevant to the practical problems of peacemaking since they penetrate beyond the formal expressions of organized religion, such as religious laws, dogma, doctrine, and other boundary-setting instruments, to preserve the unity-in-diversity of the sacred and all its manifestations (in Hertog 2010, 219).

The Fool for Christ

A peculiar characteristic and beauty of Eastern Christianity is found in the spirit bearer known as the “fool for Christ” or “holy fool.” A rare vocation and unconventional category of saintliness in the Byzantine world, holy fools are very dear to Eastern Christianity. Inspired by the Spirit, these holy fools carry the act of *metanoia* or “change of mind” beyond the limits of most of the faithful. Standing the pyramid on its head, these saints are a living witness to the truth that Christ's kingdom is not of this world (Ware 1995, 98):

The true fool in Christ, possessing purity of heart, has upon the community around him an effect that is life-enhancing. From a practical point of view, no useful purpose is served by anything the fool does. And yet, through some startling action or enigmatic word, often deliberately provocative and shocking, he awakens men from complacency and pharisaism. Remaining himself detached, he unleashes reactions in others, making the subconscious mount to the surface, and so enabling it to be purged and sanctified. He combines audacity with humility. Because he renounced everything he is truly free. (Ware 1995, 99)

That freedom of the fool, a consequence of “his utter poverty, of his voluntary rejection of all outward status or security” (Ware 2000, 155), is the basis of his/her prophetic function. Even with the highest authorities, “the fool is free to speak when others, afraid of the consequences, choose to keep silent—free to tell the truth” (ibid.). And the truth that the fool most often speaks concerns the degree to which Christians

evade the demands of the Gospel and live comfortably in the world. By virtue of his freedom, the fool “mocks and calls in question any attempt to reduce Christian life to the level of respectability and conventional moral standards. He mocks all forms of legalism that turn Christianity into a code of ‘rules’” (Ware 2000, 169). As Christos Yannaras explains, “the fool . . . is the incarnation of the Gospel’s fundamental message that it is possible for someone to keep the whole of the Law without managing to free himself from his biological and psychological ego, from corruption and death” (qtd. in Ware 2000, 169). In his/her condemnation of hypocrisy, the fool is guided, not by laws but, as is characteristic of prophets from biblical times, “by the voice of God speaking directly in the heart” (Ware 2000, 169). He/She “bears witness to the preeminent value of *persons* rather than *rules*” (ibid.).

However shocking their words or actions may be, fools do have limits to their behaviour. They are “not schismatic[s] or heretic[s], but faithful [children] of the Church”; the fool “is eccentric, but not immoral” (ibid., 165). Yet fools for Christ live controversial lives, unafraid to fight the insanity of the world and the crimes of the mighty. Both their words and actions are sometimes outrageous; they challenge the norms and immorality by speaking truth.

In some important ways, the life of Archbishop Raya does resemble the holy fools of the Eastern Church, but not consistently. Like a fool, Raya held his material possessions lightly, freely giving them away, refusing to lock the doors of the Bishop’s Palace in Israel, disdaining the pomp and circumstance that usually accompanies the bishop’s status. He seemed not to care about his personal safety either, since he repeatedly risked his life in conflict-filled situations. Some of his most drastic and

dramatic protests against what he saw as injustice could be perceived as prophetic actions, outwardly as foolish as some of those recorded in biblical accounts. Like many fools, Raya often showed a disregard for rules, particularly when they created hardships for lay people in the Church. That was the behavior that most often irritated his superiors.

In particular, Raya was given to incautious speech—he often exaggerated his points, deliberately shocking his listeners with a startling image or forbidden topic, and he made up stories to tell a deeper truth. On one occasion he commissioned an icon of Marilyn Munroe, sending the iconographer (a monk) home “to contemplate the challenge of perceiving this famous America ‘icon’ of Hollywood in a different light.”⁵⁸⁹ Raya believed that one should take risks for love, and, like a fool for Christ, he risked personal comfort and humiliation. He risked being a fool by the norms of society in order to bring a little life to somebody and in order to love somebody. The following narrative attests to his wise “foolishness”: “As he entered the nursery of St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage in Beirut, Uncle Joe prayed for a sign to help pick the right baby. He played with all the children in the cribs, but as he came to the last crib our Bobby held onto his finger so tightly and wouldn’t let go. This was the sign he needed.”⁵⁹⁰ He then took the baby with him to the international airport and told the security officer that this baby was his, doubtless provoking some gossip about yet another cleric who hadn’t been able to keep his vow of celibacy. Raya would not have cared about any such reaction.

⁵⁸⁹ Hieromonk Damian, “An Unusual Icon,” in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

⁵⁹⁰ Rosemary Raya, “What a Difference you Made in our Lives!” in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

Led by his conscience, he certainly enjoyed the joy and freedom of being a Christian, often rejected norms and convention, and spoke his mind even to various authorities. His deliberate, unconventional, and sometimes shocking actions and activities stirred reactions in many. Yet his actions were purposeful, and he maintained honour and dignity in his work. I believe Raya felt a responsibility to the dignity of the priesthood and his role as archbishop. As an archbishop, he did not live the life of a fool in the traditional sense. Nor did he perceive himself to be a fool for Christ. He was, however, an authentic Christian and in the eyes of world, living the Gospel as he did may have appeared to be foolishness.

Asceticism as road to freedom

With his positive and joyful grasp of the incarnation with its inherent call to grow into our potential, to become like God, Raya inevitably transformed the theological concept of spiritual warfare into a far more positive challenge, calling asceticism “the royal road” (Raya 1990, 107). From Raya’s vantage point, humanity’s “struggle is not a struggle with [its] true nature but with the deformation of this nature” (Raya 1984, 169). By that, he meant that we need to bring the passions within us to a good balance. In the words of Archbishop Raya, “Apatheia . . . is [a] state in which the love of God is so active and burning as to leave no room for self-centeredness and egoism . . . As the prayers of this Sacrament [baptism] express it, ‘he ceases to be a child of this world’ (Lk. 16:8) and becomes a ‘child of the kingdom’ (Matt. 8:12)” (ibid., 201). This practice

of overcoming one's selfish tendencies was a much-loved theme of Archbishop Raya.⁵⁹¹ He did teach that becoming divinized is achieved through experiencing the love of God, but it also required the death of one's ego-self so that, in the words of St. Paul, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). For Raya, life was about the personal development of one's fullest potential, pursuing perfection in personal transformation and destruction of the ego. As he explained, "When we die, we become alive to develop again and again towards fulfillment and perfection in Christ."⁵⁹² This task of personal transformation is not easy, nor is it accomplished quickly. As Raya also discovered in his six years in Israel, "the Fathers of the Church Basil, Chrysostom, and the two Gregories these became my daily bread, light and life. Their writings illumined all that a priest of God wishes to have come alive in him" (Raya 2006, 10). Hertog expands on the same theme:

[they had] described how to live that inner peace and bring peace in the world. . . . They have offered practical wisdom . . . [emphasizing] that peace implies a moral and social application, such as solidarity with the poor, cessation of strife, nonviolence and non-resistance, forgiveness, love, and peacemaking. They present a spiritual moral model of faith, love, and self-sacrifice in order to overcome the violence that reigns in the hearts and minds of men and the physical violence that . . . results from this. (2010, 198)

The implications of such self-disciplined self-control for peacebuilding are obvious. Raya saw the problem of violence as rooted in the egocentricity of the heart: "We cannot deceive ourselves into thinking that peace will come to this country [Israel] as long as the seeds of bitterness, resentment, and opposition remain in the hearts of the people of this land" (Raya, "Cry for Peace," 6). Without personal transformation occurring first,

⁵⁹¹ Carmel de la Theotokos et de l'Unité, "Vraiment Monseigneur Raya est Surprenant!" in *Celebration of the 60th Anniversary*.

⁵⁹² Archbishop Raya, speaking in Haifa, Israel, August 15, 1996

societal transformation was not possible. Hence he prayed “for peace, an unconditional peace that stems from within, from a mutual respect and co-operation, brother with brother, Arab with Jew” (ibid.).

Not only did Archbishop Raya attend to the task of communicating to the Israeli citizen the need to be watchful of one’s attitudes towards the Other, but as a Byzantine Christian, Raya believed that fasting and prayer were an effective means of fighting evil. He was prepared to fast publicly in front of the Knesset, for example, and to invite others to join him in this cleansing of the heart. Raya was also convinced that the fight against the ego included dealing with the sin of over-attachment, whether to material wealth, to holy places or even to traditions. Raya had chosen an ascetical way of life to avoid that snare—he gave away gifts given to him and treated the material and physical benefits that came with his office (such as the palatial residences for bishops) as temporal and dispensable.

As a priest of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, Raya translated some of the key doctrines of the Church—God as supreme Lover, Trinitarian in nature and the divinity of Christ, the world as the platform for building the Kingdom now, the Incarnation as the doorway to Divinization, ascetism as the path to freedom, and the conquering of death and evil with the resurrection of Christ, all of which had been understood primarily as relating to our relationship to God—into the foundations for an active life of peacebuilding. These doctrines were thus the source of his ongoing innovations within the Eastern Catholic Church.

Going Beyond the Orthodox and Catholic Churches

Although Raya was, first and foremost, an Eastern Catholic Christian who identified with his Church and was shaped in his peacebuilding by the doctrines of the Byzantine Church, he was also an innovator. He functioned prophetically in many ways, challenging his fellow Christians to live out Christ's selfless way of peace, reinterpreting the Scriptures and his Church's traditions to follow that call to peace, and moving forward—often well ahead of his superiors—in the direction of needed change. As Raya lived out a more radical peacebuilding than what Hertog had envisioned, so he went beyond the teachings of his Church to develop a nonviolent response to the conflicts of the world, beginning with his unusual work in education.

An emphasis on education

For Archbishop Raya, education was the primary tool in the spiritual struggle to find the face of Christ.⁵⁹³ His ongoing passion to cultivate equality and mutual respect through education was evident in many ways during his years in Birmingham. One of Raya's contributions to civil rights for African Americans was expressed in the establishment of a Montessori school focused on the restoration of dignity for every human person. Raya wanted students of all ethnicities and all faiths (even no faith at all) to feel equal and welcome. Similarly, in Israel, Raya became involved in education as he traveled through the villages in northern Galilee. He wanted all students to realize their potential as they grew from rote learners to become critically thinking, creative beings. Given the context and time in history, the 1960s and 1970s, this was an unusual

⁵⁹³ Archbishop Raya, fund-raising letter, November, 1971.

emphasis because education often meant simply rote learning. As Archbishop Raya stated, the Church wanted everyone merely to “Pray and obey!” Raya, on the other hand, wanted to offer the inner freedom that comes with understanding, not only in the mind through an ability to evaluate issues and practices critically, but also in the heart. His vision was that all should worship willingly and within their traditions, hence Raya’s unusual stance of openness to all Churches and, indeed, to all religions. Raya’s peacebuilding through education was a multifaceted approach. He developed schools, using a methodology and content that encouraged critical thinking and explicitly promoted the understanding of the Other.

Raya embraced a focus on education with the establishment of the agricultural school in Lebanon, and did not stop teaching when he returned to North America. Different contexts, different expressions, but always recognizing the consistent need for education.

A refusal to proselytize

Raya’s life was characterized by openness to other religions and other branches of Christianity. Many of his peacebuilding efforts were ecumenical in nature and hence more acceptable to people involved in conflict because their faiths were validated even as Raya challenged them to love their enemies. Marc Gopin’s argument that very few models were authentic to their own tradition, yet accepting of other traditions, would have been challenged by Raya’s conviction. Raya offered a model that combined a passionate love of Byzantine traditions and rituals, with genuine respect for and knowledge of other forms of Christianity and of other religions. Raya exemplified this

approach further by refusing to proselytize non-believers and atheists. Raya deliberately invited representatives of other churches and other faiths to share in the celebratory rituals in his own church, and eagerly participated in the holy services of other churches and other faiths. To demonstrate a measure of good faith and as an ecumenical gesture, he appointed representatives from other denominations to serve on the boards of organizations he administered.

Raya not only encouraged people of other faiths to develop and live fully in their own faith, but he rebuked Western Christians who missionized and tried to “convert” people who belonged to other Christian denominations. He was an outspoken critic about the policy towards converts, implemented by the Roman Catholic Church in the Holy Land. Although he respected individual missionary efforts, Raya despised the attitude of superiority, domination, and colonialism that often accompanied such initiatives. Here again, Raya’s difficulties with the Roman Catholic Church come to the surface, illustrating clearly Hertog’s cautionary observations about the problems caused for religious peacebuilders when they are hampered by the internal conflicts of the religion that is foundational to their identity and their work as peacebuilders. Raya’s repeated calls for forgiveness and refusal to seek revenge or harbor grudges arose not only out of theoretical convictions but also out of his own experience.

As noted above, it is not that Raya was always consistent in his own life; there are accounts of occasions in which Raya behaved in less than exemplary fashion. However, he was aware of his own weaknesses and failures, particularly in his later years when he had the time to reflect on his past experiences and recognize where he had failed to live up to his own preaching. He did then describe himself as struggling with the negative

forces of revenge, and his own domination,⁵⁹⁴ yet he did not give up his lifetime desire to be openhearted and loving.

Archbishop Raya engaged with other world religions in a manner that exemplified respect for other ways of life. Raya, in fact, was very aware of the dangers of conversion from one faith into another faith tradition. He would have understood and agreed with Gopin, who, decades later, stated that “Christianity had an aggressive form of proselytism” (Gopin 2000, 158), and noted, “there is great danger in the future from religious institutions that have difficulty recognizing the limits of proselytism or who have a problem theologically with Others who will not eventually convert” (Gopin 2000, 202). Raya clarified his position against coercive “truth” in his letter of resignation from his post in Israel:

As a bishop, a preacher of the Gospel, I never tried to “convert” a Jew or an Arab Muslim to Christianity. Rather “convert” them to be a better Jew, better Muslim, better Druze. My vision of a Catholic Bishop is to identify with his people, with all people. Cultures, all cultures, Jewish and Christian and Muslim, are all of God. Men, all men, are holy, sacred and good. But men, all men, of all cultures and religions, always need “conversion.” Conversion to openness, understanding, respect, even awe in the presence of each other, and forgiveness! This is the “conversion” preached by the Gospel. The Gospel should be a light at man’s feet and his guide. Conversion! Metanoia! (1974c)

Likewise in Lebanon, Raya served as an intermediary to facilitate interactions between Muslims, Druze, Christians, and Jews, as they discussed the future of Lebanon. Not content with their promises to live together in peace in southern Lebanon, Raya urged them to live in love and mutual respect. He was convinced that “perfect love casts out fear” (I Jn. 4:18) and through his example helped both

⁵⁹⁴ Archbishop Joseph Raya, conversation with author, Combermere, Ontario, June, 1996.

Christians and Muslims not to be afraid of one another. Without a doubt, this attitude was a major factor in his peacebuilding work, and made it easier for him to refuse the fear of Otherness that so often leads to an identity-protective violence.

A commitment to nonviolence

Although a commitment to nonviolence is understood within peacebuilding positions generally, it is not an absolutely essential component of either Roman Catholicism or Orthodoxy. Although some of the Byzantine Churches can lay theoretical claim to forms of pacifism, they have not had a strong history of practical demonstrations for nonviolence. Raya moved beyond the expectations of Eastern Catholicism. He publicly acknowledged that everything he had learned about nonviolence, he had learned from Martin Luther King, Jr. In a public address delivered in Washington, DC, to the Friends of Galilee (a group of Christians, Muslims, and Jews), he said,

I marched beside Martin Luther King Jr., carrying with him the signs and symbols of dignity, equality and freedom that should unite us all . . . The humble dream of Martin Luther King Jr. grew every day in my soul until it became the quest of my own life. I too, found myself having a dream – a dream deeply rooted in faith burning in me – that one day “the land of the Holy” would be transformed into an oasis of justice and love, that one day every valley would be exalted, *every mountain and hill be made low, the rough places made plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together* – Christians, Muslims, and Jews (Isaiah 40:4-5). My soul was on fire to see Arabs and Israelis understand and have a share in the splendor of living together in peace and love. I imagined every village having a mosque, a church and a synagogue, side by side. I wanted to raise their heads together in dignity and pride, to come out of their places of worship and dance together. I wanted them to live fully rather than to

wallow in fear and suspicion of each other, in humiliation and vengeance, passivity and blindly.⁵⁹⁵

It is clear that Martin Luther King Jr. shaped him. Raya was unafraid of adding the Protestant understanding of nonviolence to the treasures of the Eastern Catholic Church. That unique perspective led Raya to live out nonviolence, creatively and unconditionally, in some of the most volatile places. Raya's vision of peace "was formulated in both "social-relational terms" and in "spiritual-religion-mystical terms" (Hertog 2010, 168). One can perceive in Raya's commitment to nonviolence, many of the features and personal characteristics requisite for both the Orthodox "Third Way" and the Roman Catholic way of peace and development.

Peacebuilding inspired by religious based justice

Other people will have to determine whether or not Raya's life and work fulfills the requirements of these two evolving peacebuilding models (Orthodox "Third Way" and Roman Catholic peace and development), but Raya's case study is, I am convinced, a concrete and unique example of religious peacebuilding. Hertog's "third trajectory" (Hertog 2010, 200) calls for the outward extension of attained inner religious convictions to achieve justice. Raya's work could probably be considered an expression of peacebuilding concurrently compatible with both Orthodox third trajectory and Roman Catholic social doctrine integrating peace and development.

⁵⁹⁵ Archbishop Raya, The Friends of Galilee speech, Washington, DC, December, 1997.

His life and work could be an example of an active pacifism that showed concern for justice and sought to actively transform the outer structures of human life instead of focusing only on transforming the inner person into a peaceful being.

Inspired by the Second Vatican Council

Patriarch Maximos IV invited Raya to participate in the Second Vatican Council as an *aid-referendaire et courier* in support of the Curia of the Patriarch for both the 1962 and 1963 sessions. Inspired by many of the actions and proposals of his Patriarch and his Melkite Greek Catholic Church, Raya had the time and opportunity to study some of these potential initiatives before he was nominated as Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth, and all Galilee.

It seems more than coincidental that Archbishop Raya proposed or implemented some of these ideas shortly after his installation. During one of his earliest interviews in Israel, Raya announced a seemingly radical proposal for the unification of the date of Pascha for the Melkite and other local Orthodox Churches.⁵⁹⁶ In this specific context he proposed the observation of Easter on the Julian calendar, but his larger dream was a celebration shared by all Christian denominations. This action was a practical sign of reaching out to others, peacebuilding by encouraging a change in traditional thoughts and customs, an effort to show respect through inclusivity, based on the joy and inspiration found in the Resurrection.

⁵⁹⁶ This concept was included in the proposals made by the Melkite Greek Catholic hierarchy to the president of the Ante-preparatory Commission of the [Second Vatican] Council in a letter issued to Cardinal Tardini on August 29, 1959.

The concept of creating a joint commission for church unity including representatives of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches, was arguably the inspiration for other inter-denominational initiatives. Raya established an executive-advisory team for his Christian Youth Club in Haifa consisting of representatives of six Christian denominations including even Protestant leadership. The board of his agricultural school in Lebanon included Christian, Muslim and Jewish advisors. In these and other actions, Raya demonstrated and reaffirmed trust and faith in people of all faiths, challenging the restrictions and traditional limits of ancient rivalries. Based on a foundation of love and respect for everyone created equally in the image of God, Raya built peace through this type of common community initiative, taking the prejudice and hatred and fear for the “other” out of the equation.

A consistent theme for Raya, probably dating back to his youth and early priesthood,⁵⁹⁷ but certainly brought to the fore with the issue of the vernacular and the occasion of the Second Vatican Council was the restoration of the dignity of the Eastern Catholic Churches. Raya was without question a Catholic Archbishop, but this did not stop him from bringing to the attention of his Roman Catholic peers and superiors some of the injustices consciously or unconsciously inherent in many of their attitudes and deeds. Raya understood that the Roman Catholic Church was much, much larger than all of the Eastern Catholic Churches combined, but this did not deter him from fighting for the rights of the smaller group. In his eyes, all of the

⁵⁹⁷ Exposure to the Cairo Circle was certainly an influence, not only for Raya, but for many of the active hierarchs making suggestions to the Second Vatican Council Preparatory Commission.

churches and faiths offered a way to God—all were special and deserved to be treated with love and respect. Every effort had to be taken to honour the rights and privileges of the other. There was no need for proselytization or conversion between the faiths and there was little patience or tolerance for Latinization. This peacebuilding attitude was maintained throughout Raya's entire life. He sought to teach all parties mutual respect for each other.

Similar examples could be brought forward for initiatives defending the rights of the poor, women, married priests, minorities, and the injustices imposed by various governments and faiths. Raya based his perceptions of right and wrong on his own religious beliefs, and then sought to eliminate injustice. Raya himself acknowledged in his retirement years that there were times when he had handled things inappropriately. However, Raya did much to create peace throughout his life.

Conclusion

Archbishop Raya made a valuable contribution to religious peacebuilding and understood key elements of contemporary peacebuilding years ahead of his time. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of the Eastern Catholic tradition along with the experience he gained working with Martin Luther King Jr. in Birmingham, Alabama, Raya enacted and modeled nonviolent behaviour throughout much of his life in different countries and cultures and in the context of racial, religious and political tensions and ongoing conflicts. Hence, his peacebuilding was not limited to a specific culture or religious belief system. He addressed the human condition. His approach was founded on the same convictions in Alabama as in the Middle East, but was expressed in actions

suited to the local context. When confronted by the KKK and the challenges associated with the Civil Rights Movement, he responded non-violently. In the Middle East he worked in his own small ways to resolve the complex conflicts between Arabs and Jews, and in war-torn Lebanon, he continued to demonstrate pastoral peacebuilding skills. His seminal work offers an example of the transformative potential with the global community because he combined an authentic expression of his own religiosity with respect and love for others, believers and nonbelievers. The mystical orientation of Eastern Christianity, with its profound individual experience of the love of God, was the foundation of his beliefs. The extension and application of his faith allowed him to embrace other elements of humanity.

Raya based his peacebuilding initiatives on the foundations of his faith. He wrote about theology, spirituality, and the liturgy for years, and if, as he believed, one becomes what one contemplates (Raya 1984, 155), he should have been saturated with the truths of his faith. Raya was not an academic or a peacebuilding theoretician; he was a practical practitioner. He did not explicitly develop religious peacebuilding theories, but intuitively understood a peacebuilding mentality and framework and applied his knowledge. Archbishop Raya's foundation was Eastern Christian theology but with all the practical benefits found in the broad branches of Roman Catholicism and Western Christianity, maybe even snippets from the other Abrahamic faiths. In this way Archbishop Raya transcended some of the norms of conventional peacebuilding.

For him, the love of God and neighbour transcended the limitations and biases of humanity. Raya demonstrated many characteristics associated with contemporary peacebuilders: he recognized the importance of relationships, trust and social justice and

sought to make systemic changes within the institutions in which he worked to generate peace-oriented structures; he demonstrated accountability and transparency in financial and administrative affairs; he mentored and inspired others to take on their own peacebuilding initiatives; and he lived joyfully, generously, and in celebration of his convictions.

If there are faults to be noted—and which of all leaders in religious peacebuilding is without fault?—they arise primarily out of overzealousness for the Byzantine Catholic way of life and unhealed wounds in his relationship with the Roman Catholic Church authorities. The pastoral impulse that led him to disobey civil laws and to fearlessly take on the Israeli government, his own Patriarch, and the Vatican could well have blinded him to the conflicts he left in his wake. Raya was not always diplomatic. His actions sometimes seemed motivated by self-centered arrogance rather than inspired by a quest for justice and the sharing of God’s love for others. His internal quarrels with the Roman Catholic Church and with his own Patriarch were extremely difficult for him.

The life of Archbishop Joseph Raya demonstrates a unique alignment of history, personality, and conviction. He tested his convictions against the negative forces of racial prejudice, ethnic oppression, religious dogmatism and narrowness, political inaction, ongoing war, excessive materialism, and spiritual apathy, and often left an example of how to love, to forgive, and to build a life of mutuality and community. His nonviolence was grounded in the values of peace, justice, forgiveness, kenotic suffering, openness, and selflessness. His spiritual and holistic understanding of peacebuilding is important in and of itself and even more important because positive role models of religious peacebuilding are so necessary for all peoples and all faiths.

One important point needs to be made here before I can move on to the final stage of Groome's methodology—the practical application of Raya's example of peacebuilding to my own life. Much of what Raya did and was able to do came about because of his position as a religious leader—priest and archbishop. As a priest, he necessarily had a strong and public influence on his parishioners; he had the authority that permitted him to teach, to interpret Scripture for his people, to inspire and then to disperse charitable giving, and to choose the liturgies through which his people worshiped. An ecclesiastical leader is often invited to serve on various committees—provided he makes himself available and indicates interest—and will take part in Church conventions and initiatives beyond his own parish. All of these aspects of the role of a priest can become avenues for peacebuilding.

As an archbishop, Raya's authority and visibility was considerably expanded. If he chose to begin a fast in front of the Knesset, for example, the press took notice and publicized his initiative. Raya, who was unafraid of using the media to draw attention to injustices or even to challenge the government directly, used his respected position as archbishop to work for peace in ways that ordinary citizens could not, particularly in times and places where political authorities forbade simple gatherings of small groups, let alone large demonstrations like Raya's March to the Knesset. As archbishop, Raya was also in a position to advocate for changes in the structure of the Church or in its liturgies in a way that lay people cannot. He had access to assistance when needed, such as his call to Madonna House for help in Israel, and he could publish in Church newsletters as he wished. He also had access to ecclesiastical authorities above him, and the privilege of submitting reports to

those authorities. Both in the sphere of the Church and in the external sphere of politics, Archbishop Raya worked for peace at the institutional level. His sphere of influence was thus large enough that even when he retired and took up residence at Madonna House, he was so well-known that he became a much-sought-after speaker and teacher. His work as peacebuilder could continue as writer and mentor. His function as an ecclesiastical leader is important in the re-consideration of the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the dissertation.

In the next and final chapter, I will examine, using Groome's fifth movement as guide, the effects and challenges of Archbishop Raya's model for religious peacebuilding on my own ministry.

Chapter 6

Applying the Lessons of Raya's Religious Peacebuilding Practices

Following Groome's methodology as outlined in Chapter 1, I have, in the preceding chapters, presented first of all the story of Archbishop Joseph Marie Raya as a religious peacebuilder in Chapter 2 (Groome's first movement – "Naming/Expressing 'Present Praxis'") and then, in Chapter 3, my personal story of peacebuilding activities, shaped by the influences of Eastern Catholic Christianity (Groome's second movement – "The Participant's Stories and Visions") before moving into more reflective analysis. That analysis began in Chapter 4 with summaries of two main broad contexts for Raya's peacebuilding work: a theoretical overview of religious peacebuilding as presented by Hertog and relevant religious traditions of peacebuilding in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Melkite Churches (Groome's third movement – "The Christian Community Story and Vision"), and continued, in Chapter 5, with a critical re-examination of Raya's peacebuilding activities (Groome's fourth movement – "Dialectical Hermeneutic between the Story and the Participants' Stories") through the lens introduced in the Story and Vision outlined in Chapter 4. This re-examination of Raya's story allowed me to focus on the characteristic elements of Raya's approach to the peacebuilding process and to synthesize them into a possible model for religious peacebuilding. His core principles of were based solidly on his Byzantine Christian tradition and theology.

Now, in this final chapter, it is necessary to return to my own story and reflect on the ways in which I can appropriate the vision of religious peacebuilding that has

emerged from the critical examination of Archbishop Raya as a possible model of religious peacebuilding (Groome’s fifth movement – “Making decisions in light of Christian faith”). This chapter therefore discusses the impact that the study of Archbishop Raya’s peacebuilding principles—in the larger contexts of religious peacebuilding and the theologies the selected Churches have had on my life and may well have on my future.

As was pointed out at the end of the previous chapter, any appropriation of Raya’s religious peacebuilding principles will need to keep in mind a basic distinction based on the spheres of influence—clergy and laity—available to religious actors. It is certainly possible to find examples of clergy whose influence was far greater than that wielded by lay members of the church in places where religious rank matters or at least is respected, but there are also examples where the converse is true, particularly in instances where an anti-religious sentiment comes to play. My point here is that in the specific case before us, the contexts in which I function as a religious peacebuilder are smaller and far less politically influential than the contexts in which Archbishop Raya functioned as formal religious leader engaged in peacebuilding.

As I return, in this final chapter, to the hypothesis of this dissertation, “*a practical theology for a pastoral and prophetic approach can be synthesized from Archbishop Raya’s life, actions, and spirituality,*” for a final evaluation of its validity and practical implications for readers of this dissertation, that awareness of what is possible for particular peacebuilders in specific contexts needs to be kept in mind.

The Evolution of My Calling

Intuitive in the beginning, my peacebuilding interests developed out of my responses to several influences and key events. My earliest exposures to conflict and resolution occurred in the relatively uncomplicated contexts of family, early education, and church experience. Of particular importance was the immigrant experience of my parents with their knowledge of European conflicts, balanced with the love and security I knew as a child. With the benefit of some education, work, and travel experiences, and greater maturity in choosing which opportunities to pursue, my subsequent undertakings took on more complicated and sophisticated dimensions and evolved into more deliberate religious peacebuilding initiatives, primarily in education and teaching.

The Canada World Youth experience was crucial in letting me fulfil early dreams and achieve personal milestones; it definitely sharpened my hunger for more service to the disadvantaged. The insights gained from eight months of work with Inuit and Aboriginal peoples in remote northern Canadian villages combined with exposure to, and teaching experiences with street children and destitute people in Columbia widened my perspectives on many issues, and also raised troubling questions. My interest in formal study of structural violence, social and economic development was now solidified. I had seen something of life well beyond my church and local community and knew that my chosen field of activity would likely be education. Accordingly, my first postsecondary degree was a Bachelor of Education.

In the early years of our marriage and establishment of our careers, I was most impacted by the experience of teaching kindergarten in inner city schools and some timely opportunities to learn about Eastern Christianity. The former gave me confidence

that I could make a difference in the lives of children; the latter restored, in my eyes, the honour, beauty, and dignity of my religious tradition, as well as prompting a more definite focus on my identity. Both experiences inspired me to do something positive in my religious and ethnic circle and to make a difference for the poor, particularly those living outside our privileged country. I had been reminded that my faith was an important part of my being, but was frustrated with my inability to integrate a seemingly inward-focussed Byzantine Christian spirituality with an outwardly focussed commitment to social justice and development.

That uneasy combination characterized my initial efforts to find outlets for my teaching aspirations and desire to share my new discoveries in my religious understanding in Saskatoon where we established ourselves and began to raise our family. While it was possible for me to begin a teaching career with some success, at the onset there was very little openness or flexibility in my church to accommodate an energetic young lay woman in any sort of leadership role.

Two further important developments shaped my growing realization of what my calling was to be. One was my introduction to the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. That gave me a contemporary example of unconditional nonviolence and social activism based on a religious view of life, in this case Hinduism. The other was the arrival of Bishop Basil Filevich in 1984. He was prepared to allow a young lay woman to try her strength as an educator and an organizer. Both of those roles required an ability to help resolve conflicts and encourage others to develop greater openness to difference.

In the work that I took on under Bishop Filevich, and in subsequent years as I developed in several areas of ministry, I was influenced and indirectly encouraged by a

variety of exemplars. Besides Gandhi, I discovered and researched Martin Luther King Jr., and the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Thich Nhat Hanh, Mother Teresa and Aung San Suu Kyi. I studied the lives and work of these models, traveling if possible to see relevant sites, collect information, and learn about the cultural contexts that had shaped them and their visions. Individually and collectively, the actions and deeds of these individuals helped me understand myself a little better and inspired me to actively seek different perspectives and opportunities. I was also influenced by Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Biruté Galdikas, three female researchers known for their work with chimpanzees, mountain gorillas, and orangutans respectively. Their passion for conservation added environmental concerns to my broadening understanding of the need to work for peace in our world. The mentorship of Archbishop Raya began somewhat later, when my calling to work for peace had become much clearer and I had become more conscious about what that might entail.

Ministry of Public Education

My training in education and growing commitment to sharing the beauty and dignity of my Eastern Christian beliefs and traditions came together in several initiatives, supported and facilitated by Bishop Filevich, initiatives that led directly to conscious peacebuilding efforts. I served as chair of the Eparchial Millennium Celebration Spiritual Committee, a role which eventually evolved into the leadership of the Study Days program. These conferences were an important avenue for the faithful of Ukrainian Catholic Churches and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the teachings and traditions of Eastern heritage and to replace their initial scepticism and doubt with trust and optimism.

Besides these conferences, some of which overlapped with my teaching at the university level, my efforts in public education included an eight part television series *Identity and Dialogue*, to promote Christianity in a public forum, which I developed and hosted. I was gaining confidence in my ability to address wider audiences and to promote the reconciliation of differences in a variety of contexts. As I became more involved in post-secondary education, opportunities arose for me to present papers at international conferences and accept temporary teaching assignments overseas. More and more, my calling to religious peacebuilding was becoming more definite and more clearly defined.

Ministry of Higher Education

My preparation for teaching at the postsecondary level became possible, when I completed a Masters of Theology Degree in Eastern Christian Studies. I was offered a position as Sessional Lecturer at St. Thomas More College (STM), affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. My hope had been that a series of courses on Eastern Christianity would not only benefit students seeking broader knowledge of Christianity but also encourage Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox youth to learn more about the histories and identities of their Churches.

Content of University Courses

The level of commitment my students had to their respective faiths and the background knowledge of their own church history, spirituality, and tradition varied widely. Most came with a distrust of others born in the context of local Catholic and

Orthodox politics and tensions. To counteract the latent animosity, I chose to use a lot of discussion and interaction in the classroom. It was rewarding to see that initial distrust and inherited prejudices begin to give way to more openness, understanding, and greater tolerance. I was discovering a basic principle of peacebuilding here: thoughtful and thorough education about one's own identity and about the "other" is necessary before barriers can be dismantled. According to student reviews and personal observation, the courses had a value beyond their formal content.

In time opportunities expanded into classes with the University of Saskatchewan Extension Division. These teaching opportunities had their own particular benefits both for me and for the community at large. Although they were offered in the context of the university, they provided learning opportunities for those in the broader community who were interested in understanding more about Eastern Christianity. Therefore, my goal of making it possible for the faithful to gain more specific knowledge of their spiritual identities was being met. Furthermore, I learned from the continued teaching experiences.

Subsequently, I taught numerous courses for the University of Saskatchewan, St. Thomas More College, and most recently, St. Peter's College in Muenster. Teaching in the Department of Religion and Culture gave me many opportunities to speak about injustices, both past and present. The courses I taught on Eastern Christianity were heavily influenced by the teachings of the early Christian monastics and ascetics. I explored early spiritual teachings and discussed their practical insights with students. We looked at nonviolence, spiritual warfare, philanthropy, and unconditional forgiveness as understood in the Eastern Christian spiritual tradition; we examined the

kenotic tradition and the deep personal transformation made possible by divinization. At the same time, I did not avoid problems in the tradition: the support of war in particular icons, the patriarchal bias in church structure, and the avoidance of timely personal action rationalized through the prioritization of the search for inner perfection. The earlier confusion I had felt in the contradiction in Eastern Christianity between the call to social action and the focus on inner peace, I could now explore together with my students. My intent was to balance a critical analysis of Eastern Churches with an emphasis on the formation of peacemakers.

My increasing interest in environmental issues and a deepening understanding of ecological spirituality led me into active advocacy for an expansion of course offerings. I actively advocated for the teaching of courses such as Religion and Nonviolence and more recently, Religion and Ecology.

Approach to Teaching

Promoting greater understanding among the world religions was a part of my vocation as a teacher interested in peacebuilding. I chose to dialogue personally with representatives of other religions and cultures, focussing on interreligious peacebuilding. I taught my courses on Western world religions (primal faiths, Judaism, Christianity, Islam) to emphasize the good that each of these religions contributed to humanity. Fully aware of the use of religion for political and other distorted purposes, I consistently challenged stereotypical images of religion as supporting violence and promoted active nonviolence and peacebuilding.

Even before I met Archbishop Raya and saw his consistent acceptance of people of all races and creeds, I had understood that my teaching (and conference work) would be successful to the degree that each participant and student felt heard, understood, and supported. At the same time, I felt that students and contributors should be respectfully challenged to think through their opinions and convictions. I wanted to remain as impartial as possible, sharing multiple perspectives and arguments for and against a variety of positions. It was gratifying to discover, in later formal study, that this emphasis on mutual respect and open minded discussion is essential to religious peacebuilding. Indeed, Raya's contribution to the development of this strategy of respectful dialogue as a religious peacebuilding principle was based in the application of Eastern Christianity's Trinitarian and philanthropic thinking.

Like many of my models, especially Archbishop Raya who consistently made education part of his peacebuilding work, I firmly believed that progressive education was a matter of liberalizing the mind from narrow perspectives and ignorance, and freeing the heart from fear and prejudice. I agree with Bell Hooks that "[e]ducation is about healing and wholeness. It is about empowerment, liberation, transcendence, about renewing the vitality of life. It is about finding and claiming ourselves and our place in the world" (2003, 43). That statement could just as well apply to religious peacebuilding. That was my goal. I wanted to impact my students for good and encourage them to make a difference.

Thus, another focus in my teaching, which I carried out through practical involvement of the students whenever possible, was the plight of the poor in Saskatoon, particular in the aboriginal community. Personally, I made an effort, and still do, to

accept substitute teaching positions at elementary and high schools which have high aboriginal enrolments. In my university classes, I arranged for students to visit soup kitchens in the city and serve the poor; my students and I participated in marches in protest against the continued negligence of the rights of the poor in our city. Many of the students later wrote moving reflections about their interactive experiences.⁵⁹⁸ In many ways, I was simply carrying into the classroom the convictions and methods of encouraging service that I had already developed in our home with our children.

Ministry of Service in the Family

In many important ways, it is difficult to separate my professional work as an educator from my ministry of service within the family and the broader community. The same longing for peace, desire to love unconditionally, and willingness to offer respect to all can permeate all the aspects of life and the various roles that adults fill in the course of an involved life.

Family Life

The home especially is a place where values are passed on in the midst of quotidian actions as well as taught consciously. Often the practical help given to one another in the family merges seamlessly with prophetic protest against injustice. Devout Eastern Christian families do not base their decisions on secular or philosophical ethics because their moral actions are grounded in religious doctrine, especially the Incarnation and the

⁵⁹⁸ In his letter of endorsement for the Sylvia Wallace Sessional Lecturer Award, November 12, 2007, Dr. James Mullens wrote, "This educational approach is invaluable to our students. Lesya's course sections are always highly subscribed and her evaluations are consistently in the top rank of our instructors due to her ability to integrate experiential learning with the more usual teaching methods."

Resurrection. My vision was to create respectful relationships in which every family member, every student, every person I encountered could feel his or her dignity and worth wherever I lived or worked.

So I taught my children, and my students, to have the courage and strength to enjoy a life lived to the best of their abilities. That meant having the courage to show a love that was more than gentle; love had to be strong and firm to defend truth and justice. The central theme that I hoped my children would absorb was “Come and see the beauty that God has made.” They were children of God and of His kingdom; they were loved and accepted, as I sought to encourage them to love and accept others because they too are children of God.

Consequently, our home became a welcoming home, open to all. People of every race, colour, creed, and age (sometimes as many as a hundred at a time) walked through our doors for social gatherings, work place functions, and the celebration of various feasts. Because we embraced individuals from all walks of life, it was not unusual during Christian feast days to have members of other religious communities come to share in our celebrations. Our children and my students were encouraged to understand and deepen their own spiritual traditions, but they were also encouraged to visit various temples, mosques, and synagogues around the city to experience different ways of knowing and worshipping God. In our travels as well, we deliberately tried to expose our children to other cultures, to deepen their appreciation of their own traditions and to broaden their understanding of other ways of being in the world.

In an effort to confront injustices, in whatever ways were possible, I made a commitment to help the underprivileged and involved our children in that undertaking.

My husband and I wanted to instil in our children an awareness of their responsibility to others. As a family, we raised money for the poor through garage sales and the sale of home-made Christmas cards at various church bazaars. We engaged with the poor who came to our home and those whom we met on the streets. Our family informally adopted children from Haiti and from eastern Africa. Our children were encouraged to play with a variety of different children: those isolated in their school playgrounds, those affected by Chernobyl, Masai children living in Tanzanian villages, those living in a Bangkok slum, and orphans in a Thai AIDS hospital.

The ways of peace, if fully incarnated into daily life, translate inevitably into more public spheres. Love taught to a family unit is expandable and exportable. Teaching one's children that the poor and all others are beloved of God becomes prophetic to the extent that the lesson is turned into practical assistance for the family next door and into hospitality for strangers anywhere in the world.

The Impact of Archbishop Raya

In the various ministries outlined above in which I developed an ever-stronger focus on religious peacebuilding, I was encouraged and taught by many exemplars.

Archbishop Raya, however, has been the most influential, and his mentorship was direct and personal. We had a common Byzantine Christian heritage and thus understood one another's spirituality; we likewise had a common passion for education, believing that is was essential for peacebuilding. In our deepening friendship, he respected me and valued what I had to offer. We communicated frequently, especially in the last years of his life when he freely shared stories about his challenges. Although the calling to peacebuilding in my life was clear before I met Raya in 1991, there is little doubt that

his influence had a significant effect on the more detailed formation of my current vision of life.

Mentorship of Archbishop Raya

Archbishop Raya reinforced for me the beauty, dignity, and richness of Byzantine Christianity. Peace, love, joy, forgiveness, reconciliation, and justice were central in Raya's understanding of the Trinity, the Incarnation, *philanthropia*, the resurrection, and the building of the kingdom of God. Although I was reasonably familiar with most of the theological and spiritual concepts through my studies, I was constantly trying to integrate many of these ideas into my daily life. When we first met, I was still one of the confused and frustrated young people he repeatedly encountered in our Church. Gradually, I began to understand and absorb some of his attitudes concerning our common Byzantine Christian roots and his interpretation of the Gospel. I could stand tall and unashamed of my own faith, but I could also see this approach applied to the faithful of other religions—all denominations.

Grasping the fact that we were all equally loved children of God gave me the confidence also to celebrate my existence and identity as a woman. Womanhood and manhood were divine gifts and should be acknowledged with equal dignity and respect. It was important to me that Archbishop Raya did not attempt to whitewash the historical record of the Church in this regard. He expressed concern and regret that the institutional and administrative structure of the Church, and organized religion in general, often kept women suppressed and subordinate. He spoke openly about the historical restrictions and limited opportunities imposed upon women seeking to actively participate in the life of the Church. In his mind, this was a great injustice. He felt that it was time for the

Church to assess its own failures and to validate women—to do anything less would undermine the moral authority of the Church. I was impressed by his courage in speaking willingly and honestly. I felt empowered and strengthened and sought to share this message with others, especially women.

In keeping with Byzantine Christian theology, Archbishop Raya wrote about the very difficult task of developing inner freedom through fighting against the ego (Raya 1984, 204). Refinement of body and soul was achieved through inward spiritual warfare as understood by Eastern Christians, leading to a life closely connected to God. I understood from Archbishop Raya that one must be personally aware of what is going on inside oneself. He taught me that the greatest sin for a Christian was not to be joyous and cautioned his readers about becoming moralistic and to ask themselves, “Are you happier people because of the Good News?” (Raya 2006, 104). Negative energies such as fear, hatred, the lack of forgiveness and despondency stifled joy, and should be addressed quickly or risk losing the capacity to love oneself and cut oneself from others. Raya taught me that people function better in a state of love and compassion than in a state of cynicism, isolation, anxiety, and fear. I learned that whenever there is internal harmony, positive virtues including joy, love, and peace and sacrifice arise with ease and pleasure. Christianity was a religion of freedom: “Our Lord clearly expressed the view that to be his disciple, to live his way of life and enter the Kingdom, it is necessary to break all bonds that enslave us” (Raya 1990, 120).

Archbishop Raya demonstrated that freedom from the passions was not the exclusive domain of asceticism, but that personal and spiritual development could also be attained through adversity. Suffering could be transformative, allowing for growth

through *theosis*. In other words, suffering could enable individuals to become better people. Raya himself embraced adversity, recognizing that “we are bigger than the circumstances of life.” Challenges were an opportunity to grow and not a formula for defeat. Raya used to tell me, “Suffering teaches us what is precious.” His attitude inspired me to tolerate hardships more readily and made me want to be a stronger person.

Archbishop Raya felt no need to try eradicate the energy of anger. Like Gandhi who transmuted anger into energy, Archbishop Raya used anger productively. He was frequently angered, most often because of injustice to others, but that anger was generally channelled into seeking solutions. Raya’s passionate social criticism of injustices within the modern state of Israel, demonstrated to me that anger could be a healthy motivator and a tool for righteousness. He illustrated through his actions that anger can be felt, contained, and then re-directed into productive energy. Social conditioning, on the other hand, taught me that respectable women did not get angry. This contradictory and conflicting perception was resolved when good resulted from anger-inspired resolve. I realized that I was no less a woman for being angered in the context of addressing an injustice; in fact, I felt I became a better human being.

Archbishop Raya as My Exemplar

The general direction of my life may have been already established before I met Raya, but his influence had a positive effect in my life. He was not only a warmly supportive friend to me and my family, but also, and an example for me.

Positive lessons

His practical guidance and example put Byzantine spirituality and social justice into my current perception of peacebuilding. His way of life was built on mutually enhancing Trinitarian-modeled relationships; on *philanthropia* (the openness to all and the love and forgiveness extended to those who hurt you); on the call to establish the kingdom of God through peace, truth, justice, and love; on divinization (the call to personal growth and potential); and on asceticism (fighting one's selfish tendencies). For me to follow this path has not been easy; it is a difficult way of life, yet most dignified and fascinating.

Just as Raya's basic principles have informed my development as an Eastern Christian and have given me a solid foundation for my journey into peacebuilding, so his particular approaches to peacebuilding—practical, daily acts of kindness and service; confrontation of injustice; and advocacy of structural changes—have taught me how to live out peace. As Raya wrote, "Some writers too easily dismiss Christian spirituality as being 'spiritual,' and not concerned with society. For Christians, and especially for Eastern and later Byzantine Christians, 'spiritual' and 'spirituality' are realities deeply connected with the 'social'" (Raya 2006, 119). Like Raya, I am moved by compassion for others to meet the practical needs of individuals, from adopting children overseas to offering hospitality in our home, and including taking my students to work in downtown soup kitchens and organizing conferences to bring people together to talk to each other and listen. Raya also taught me that meeting basic physical needs will not be enough to build peace. There can be no peace without justice; that he demonstrated repeatedly in his public resistance of injustice and oppression.

The phrase 'justice of God,' in Byzantine spirituality, means, as it does in the Holy Scripture, 'the help that God bestows on the poor and the needy.' It is not a juridical verdict that dispenses punishment for evil and reward for good. Rather, the justice of God is his love shown in freeing the oppressed and delivering the slaves. It is his fidelity to his promises. (Raya 1984, 174)

While I do not have Raya's ecclesiastical position of authority, I have used my position as a university instructor and as a member of the community to expose injustices and to teach my family and students, in various venues, to become inclusive and understanding of others. I have striven to challenge patriarchal attitudes in the Church and spoken out for the vulnerable. Raya's example as an advocate for policy changes and for structural reform has influenced me as well, especially in the area of environmental concerns. He motivated me to become informed and then to begin speaking out, both locally and internationally, to the best of my ability.

Raya was also a strong example of hospitality for me. Although welcoming family and friends and strangers into our home had become a conscious practice for me before I met Raya, his free use of material goods for others, open door policy for both residence and church, and delight in celebrations of all kinds reinforced my conviction that peacebuilding is strengthened by authentic hospitality. Raya had a blessedly guilt-free and unusually generous attitude toward material prosperity: he refused to attach too much importance to having either too much or too little wealth. He simply used freely whatever was given to him, making it possible for others to enjoy beauty and to celebrate occasions with dignity. Raya's open door policy confirmed my similar policy as a teacher and a mother, and his delight in celebrations likewise encouraged me to

celebrate religious feasts days, birthdays, anniversaries, and rites of passage within the family and wider community.

In this regard, I want to note also that Raya's consistent efforts to get to know his parishioners, his practice of connecting with people where they lived and worked, walking the streets where the poor lived, and paying attention to the ordinary details of life, even with the children, were a strong affirmation of my efforts in community-centered peacebuilding. Even before I met Raya, I tried to integrate my faith and culture with justice and morality, but I do not think I could have realized many of my achievements without an understanding and application of Trinitarian relationship, divinization, and the Incarnation. His example strengthened my belief that knowledge of and sensitivity to local spiritual and cultural contexts were essential. Based on my observations and the example of Raya, who worked hard at becoming intimately familiar with pertinent issues, I have concluded that success in peacebuilding initiatives is easier to achieve if undertaken by a religious actor accepted by the community as one of them. That principle was especially important as I was organizing Study Days and the Windows to the East conferences; the cultural and religious context was familiar to me, and I could anticipate problems and recognize difficulties far more easily than someone from outside that context.

On the other hand, while Raya was closely associated with the contexts in which he worked (the faithful of Birmingham and Galilee, and the Melkite Church), he also exemplified the need to extend hospitality to and work for peace among those who were not initially familiar to him. He became involved in the Civil Rights Movement (he knew the context of his Birmingham neighbourhood, but was not a member of the Afro-

American community); he led the protests for Ikrit and Kfar Berem (he was the Melkite Archbishop, not the religious leader of the Maronites). Raya believed we are our “brother’s keeper.” Raya certainly recognized different creeds and colour, and encouraged people to know their identities, but he looked at Jews, Druze, Muslims, and Christians as brothers and sisters who he was responsible for. All were children of the same God.

This was an ideal I intuitively tried to emulate in my activities and personal dealings in the early stages of life, and more consciously as time went on. I have undertaken a variety of practical ways of demonstrating compassion to people of whatever race or creed. In recent years, with a new awareness of disabilities and medical needs, our family has procured and delivered wheelchairs to Thailand, increased disability awareness in Brazil, Argentina, Belize, and the Philippines, and made donations to the disabled in India. We are currently working on delivery of medical supplies to Nepal.

Archbishop Raya, in his role as mentor, served as an exemplar for me in my religious peacebuilding work: in his translation of Byzantine Trinitarian theology into daily living; in his peacebuilding efforts through meeting practical necessities and advocating for justice; in his generous hospitality; in his community-rooted leadership that was based on close familiarity with those he worked with; and his willingness to reach out to the Other and become part of the unfamiliar communities as well. These qualities can be enacted in any context, however limited or expansive the sphere of influence might be. No exemplar, however, achieves perfection on earth, and Raya was also a model through his weaknesses.

Lessons on the dangers inherent in religious peacebuilding

Much of what Raya taught me has been positive. His willingness to act, has inspired me to act with courage, and his living out of the principles that he had considered carefully inspired me to strive for a consistent life of service. He also demonstrated what not to do. Archbishop Raya was fallible as all humans are; some of what I observed in him has served as a caution for me.

Failure to recognize and respect personal limits. Archbishop Raya's ecclesiastical role in itself included significant demands, and his generosity of spirit and impulsive nature likely increased those demands. One cannot have an open door policy, as he did, without having people walk through that door and trustingly ask for help. His compassionate spirit made it hard for him to refuse. Inevitably, he faced multiple tensions, often without sufficient support. His very public position as archbishop effectively isolated him from many of his friends and potential confidantes.⁵⁹⁹ Raya's close friend Fr. Eddie Doherty died in 1975, and his spiritual advisor, Fr. John T. Callahan passed away in 1984, leaving him few individuals to turn to for advice and consolation in his later years. The Patriarch and a number of bishops within the Melkite Church, who should have formed a dependable circle of support, were involved in questionable activities that Raya rejected.⁶⁰⁰ Like many individuals in a leadership role, Raya had strong confidence in himself, a confidence bolstered by others' trust in him, so it was difficult for him to ask for help from others because such requests implied weakness. Many people depended on

⁵⁹⁹ There were times that the activities of the Church were conducted under vows of secrecy: activities related to the Second Vatican Council, and the discussions of the Melkite Synod, for example. Raya admitted that he was sometimes "lonely at the top."

⁶⁰⁰ Raya's long standing conflict with the Patriarch was well known, as was the Capucci conviction.

his leadership—he was popular as a priest—and that undoubtedly made it hard for him to refuse assignments, additional work, or requests for help. Unfortunately, he did not like the thought of asking for professional support.⁶⁰¹ These and other factors left him alone as he faced many challenging issues.

The resultant stress of dealing with too much work with not enough emotional support led to unpredictable emotional responses—Raya’s natural impulsiveness was intensified and his reactions were sometimes ill thought-out and based on anger. Then in late 1974, shortly after his official resignation, Raya suffered a bout of severe depression. He deliberately undertook yoga activities and exercises designed to overstress his heart.⁶⁰² Doctors initially suspected a heart attack, but despite many tests, medical professionals were unable to diagnose the problem. Embarrassed about the situation, Raya concealed the truth even from trusted individuals at Madonna House.⁶⁰³

For me, Raya’s admission that he had failed to establish a healthy balance in life was a strong warning. While I have the benefit of a less public and lower position in life, with fewer expectations of me, I still need to recognize what Raya did not, at least not sufficiently: we have to be humble enough to acknowledge and honour our capacities and our limits, or risk burnout, depression, and despair. Even good intentions can compromise the goals we were called to achieve, if we allow an inflated sense of our importance to impair our judgment. It is also important to seek adequate support, whether through a spouse or even through professional help, which is available for everyone. Raya’s experiences have made me grateful that I work on a much smaller

⁶⁰¹ Raya insisted that “psychologists need us,” and that Christians did not need psychologists.

⁶⁰² Archbishop Raya, conversation with author, August 2004.

⁶⁰³ Archbishop Raya, letter to Catherine Doherty, December 19, 1974.

stage with correspondingly smaller stakes. My mistakes will have less catastrophic consequences. Nevertheless, it is crucial for me to understand the inherent risks in religious peacebuilding, and to recognize that I may need help in deciding when quitting or saying “no” is a reasonable option and when the only alternative is to move forward with the strength that God has given.

Lack of transparency. Another area of weakness for Raya was his reluctance to deal thoroughly with the corruption that he saw within his own church. It is true that Raya had frequently been in conflict with his superiors, but these had been his Roman Catholic superiors, and then his strong identification with Byzantine Christianity took precedence over his commitment to obedience to authority. In his position of Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee, however, Raya was faced with serious wrongdoing within his own Church. This was a situation in which he could not resolve. Charging his Patriarch with wrongdoing seemed impossible. Although he generated the Synodal report presented to the Bishops of the Melkite Synod, these documents included his defence against the unjust charges made against him. Whether his decision to choose resignation rather than to initiate charges was an overzealous attempt at taking the high road, or an overly respectful gesture to the position of the Patriarch is difficult to say.

In my opinion, Raya failed to propose or implement an action plan that would have brought to scrutiny the actions of the Patriarch. Raya certainly did not want to create a scandal within the Church, nor discredit the office of the Patriarch, but his failure to act effectively enabled the inappropriate behavior. Even though it was undoubtedly an extremely difficult decision for him, I feel that Raya’s resignation was the easy way out.

This approach allowed Raya to wash his hands of the whole affair, while giving the impression of making a noble self-sacrifice in the name of obedience to the Pope, Patriarch and Church. A more painful, but in the long term more responsible, course of action would have included direct dialogue with the Pope regarding the latter's feelings about Raya's competence as Archbishop, and submission of a request for a Synodal enquiry into the Patriarch's administrative and financial affairs. An investigation into the affairs of the Patriarch would have been perceived as scandalous at first, but if there was evidence of wrongdoing, mechanisms and protocols might have been established to minimize or eliminate similar behavior in the future. The Melkite Church would probably have been stronger after the test.⁶⁰⁴

This incident has highlighted the need to take appropriate steps, even extraordinary measures to embrace transparency and implement measures to avoid corruption and injustice. A religious peacebuilder must establish and maintain trust and credibility with the conflicted parties. If this foundation is compromised, suspicion will creep in and the probability of success will be significantly diminished or squandered.

The Challenge of Forgiveness. Since reconciliation is such an important part of peacebuilding, it is noteworthy to recognize that Raya himself had a very difficult time forgiving Archbishop Toolen and the Patriarch. This is understandable. Raya cared so deeply about meeting the needs of the poor and marginalized and powerless, and he had

⁶⁰⁴ It should be noted that Archbishop Cyrille Bustos of Beirut has led a boycott of Melkite bishops requesting the resignation of Patriarch Gregory III Laham over allegations of financial mismanagement. Without a quorum, a June 2016 synod of the Melkite Catholic Church had to be postponed. ("Melkite synod postponed; Patriarch decries bishops' 'open rebellion'," Catholic World News, last modified June 22, 2016, accessed on September 14, 2016. <http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=28645>)

such a high vision of what the Church could do—was required to do, according to the Gospel—that he grew frustrated with those who thwarted his efforts. He seemed more ready to forgive actual enemies, i.e., those in political opposition or outright racists or anti-Christian agitators, than to forgive those in his own Church from whom he had expected brotherly support. Although he had gone through the process of seeking reconciliation with the Patriarch, a lingering bitterness in his heart remained even in his latest years.⁶⁰⁵

What Raya's struggles have shown me is that it is probably easier to deal with direct antagonism than with betrayal. The internal conflicts are the most difficult, and peacebuilders need to be aware of the problems that arise from internal divisions, whether they are within religious institution or families or otherwise tightly knit communities. Given the tendency within religious institutions, where status and power are ever present temptations, toward fighting over seemingly crucial viewpoints, Raya's example is important. That he who was known for preaching about the love of God and for his living out of that love in his life could still struggle with the difficulty of forgiving is instructive. I have seen that religious peacebuilding is not risk-free and that it calls for the willingness to suffer and the absolute necessity of self-awareness and self-care.

In summary, Archbishop Raya, as my mentor and exemplar, impacted me deeply. He also influenced many other people as an exemplar. His creative and dynamic

⁶⁰⁵ In a September 2016 telephone conversation, Fr. Ron Cafeo related an incident Raya shared with him. In the early 1990's while attending a Melkite Synod in Lebanon, Raya had confronted Patriarch Hakim V, "You took money from the diocese!" "Yes I did. Do you forgive me?" came Hakim's reply. "Yes I forgive you." The Gospel requires me to do this, Raya had told Cafeo (Fr. Ron Cafeo, conversation with author, September 2016).

approach to his Christian faith was rooted in a practical Byzantine religious worldview that was focused on becoming like gods by grace. Christ's teaching "To love as I have loved" was the guiding force that determined many of the conscious choices in Raya's life. This Christ-centered existence was a reality that he tried to pass on to all who came into contact with him. An unconditional respect for humanity was intertwined with an authentic Byzantine theology.. Raya's inclusive approach modeled for me an integrated way of thinking and living. With the benefit of his interpretation, integration, and embodiment of the Gospel vision, I have been able to embrace more deeply many attributes of Christian living. More than anyone else, his conviction and approach to peacebuilding influenced my personal life, my community roles, and my professional work.

This study of Archbishop Raya's life and work as a model of peacebuilding has helped me understand my early, intuitive efforts at similar work and my more deliberate and informed later peacebuilding work. As I re-evaluate his example, both positive and negative, my future efforts will be informed by what I have learned through this study.

Looking Ahead to Future Peacebuilding Work

The intent of Thomas Groome's fifth movement, which has formed the basis of this chapter, is to examine how the articulation of the particular story related to the theme—in this case, religious peacebuilding seen in the particular story of Raya and my own story—explored in the light of the larger Christian Story and Vision can inform future decisions. In other words, the principles discovered in the juxtaposition of personal narratives with contextual, framework narratives, need to be applied in practical ministry.

For me, this application will take the form of clarifying what challenges I will face in continued religious peacebuilding and how I might address them in light of what I have learned through this study. At the same time, I want to review my plans and goals for future work to see how the principles of religious peacebuilding outlined in this study can enrich my work.

Working in a Patriarchal Church

One of the difficulties that I encountered repeatedly as I began my first educational initiatives seeking to address the ethnic and ecclesiastical divisions in the Ukrainian Catholic churches was the pervasive assumption that, as a woman, I had no right to a leadership role and no voice within the hierarchy. Even when I achieved some success, as in organizing the Windows to the East conferences and bringing together clerics and parishioners who had previously refused to cooperate, that very success led to my being pushed back to the margins again. Such deeply ingrained cultural assumptions and prejudices are not easily overcome, but some progress is being made. Bishop Bryan Bayda, Eparch of Saskatoon, has recently supported my appointment to the World Council of Churches - Working Committee for Climate Change. Although it takes time to alter long-standing habits of thought, I feel it is now easier for a woman to work within the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

Even before I met Raya, I had already discovered the efficacy of collaborative methods and attentive listening. With what I have learned through the formal study of religious peacebuilding, and through Raya's example, I will continue to promote inter-denominational dialogue, understanding, and cooperation. My leadership will be manifested through the service of increasing interaction and tactful sharing, not through

achieving power. My gift is to establish relationships, a gift that I will use more consciously. I am interested in relating with people and creating equality through the conscious avoidance of bureaucratic power structures. I prefer networking to controlling, and have sought support and good relations with the various authorities in the Church and the inter-religious community. I have sought new ways to maintain or define the relevance of both traditional and diverse religious traditions. I am encouraged to claim the legitimacy of my voice, and to continue my work as an educator and collaborator. My hope is that coming generations of women and men will come to understand the power of cooperation and strong relationships within the Church and in the wider community.

Lack of Peace Emphasis in Religious Education

That there would have been an absence of formal peace training in the schools that I attended as a child and a young woman is perhaps not surprising. Disciplined study of peacebuilding in the universities is a relatively recent initiative, and religious peacebuilding did not become a recognized field, according to Hertog's literature review at the beginning of *The Complex Reality of Religious Peacebuilding*, until 2000. There was a similar lack of peace training in Eastern Christian Churches because, as noted in Chapter 4, the theology of peace had not received definite emphasis. Consequently, I am deeply grateful for the peace teaching that I received from Archbishop Raya and from examples such as Martin Luther King, Jr. In recent years, conflict studies have become a definite field of study in many religious universities, such as Saint Paul University and other colleges established by historical "peace churches" such as the Mennonites and Quakers.

Thus, as I have mentioned above, I have advocated strongly for the offering of courses on nonviolence and peacebuilding at St. Thomas More College and the University of Saskatchewan, with limited but growing success. My endeavours in this area will be continued, now with greater awareness of their importance. My work in local community service and in the university setting has now expanded into international efforts. I have attended and presented papers at various conferences focused on nonviolence, peacebuilding, and ecological justice. I am gaining an enhanced awareness of and interest in the economic and political frameworks that need to be changed so that the good of the people and the environment might be taken into consideration.

My ongoing pursuit of peacebuilding initiatives with other institutions has opened doors to opportunities such as working with Sustainable Alternatives for Poverty Reduction and Ecological Justice (SAPREJ). The SAPREJ /World Council of Churches conference at Kyambogo University in Kampala, Uganda, in April 2016 was very successful, involving about 100 professors from various universities located throughout Africa. Several of the represented institutions extended invitations to me to teach their campuses about peacebuilding, focussing on the environment and inter-faith peacebuilding. I have tentatively committed myself to teach at the University of Nairobi. I will also meet with representatives of the University of Peace in Costa Rica in February 2017 to discuss the potential of future initiatives between the United Nations-sanctioned University of Peace, SAPREJ, and the World Council of Churches. My calling to work for peace is still being fulfilled in the classroom and lecture theatre, but is assuming more of an international flavor.

I am eager to pursue recent opportunities in religious peacebuilding, ecological sustainability, and international peacebuilding initiatives with EcoThee, SAPREJ, and especially through my recent appointment to the World Council of Churches Working Committee for Climate Change. I would consider a short term overseas appointment to take up some of these opportunities, but I also wish to remain relatively close to my children and grandchildren. Such a decision will call for careful reflection and consideration of what I have to offer to the international community. Archbishop Raya had the pulpit and his authority as bishop to support his peacebuilding platform; such a position has never been an option for me. The appeal of the classroom and international conferences to advance my aspirations is strong. I am optimistic that education is a realistic and viable strategy. I am gaining increased confidence in the possibility of working in an institutional setting, involving a host of different churches and various universities.

The lack of a peace emphasis in religious education was certainly a real challenge for me in my development as a religious peacebuilder. Now it is my challenge to do my part to make appropriate peace education available for future peacebuilders.

Inter- and Intra-Religious Conflict

As I reflect on the religious conflicts that Raya faced in his many years as a Church hierarch and peacebuilder, such as the conflicts between Western Christian Churches and Eastern Christian Churches, between Orthodox and Catholic Churches, between the Israeli government and Arab Christians, or between the Muslims and Christians in Lebanon, I realize that wherever I work as a peacebuilder, whether at international conferences and universities or here in Saskatoon, I will continue to face the challenge

of religious conflict at different levels, from local squabbles among churches or among clergy to bitter prejudice against other religious groups. Current events, now in 2016, indicate that prejudices are more virulent than ever and the need for religious cooperation is more desperate than ever.

Here the example of Raya is especially important, but I recognize that I have to distinguish between his role as an ecclesiastical leader, with all the influence and publicity that come with that role, and my less public and more limited role. Nevertheless, as I noted in earlier chapters, Raya's influence was perhaps greater and less controversial in his daily contacts with people where they lived. His simple gestures of love and practical assistance, often in seemingly small matters, built the kind of relationships that provide a foundation for more systemic changes. The efforts he made to provide an education that encouraged critical thinking skills and provided greater insight into the social and political context in which students lived are a continued model for me. In the various classrooms in which I have taught and will teach, there is great diversity among students. That is an opportunity to foster open dialogue and model acceptance of others. Within my own local church, I want to continue working for more openness toward and less prejudice against those of other faiths. Raya's emphasis on the love of God above doctrinal differences will also be a model for me.

Review of Hypothesis

Having reviewed the role that Archbishop Joseph Raya served as my mentor in meeting the various challenges that I have faced and will continue to face, I need to return to the hypothesis with which this study began—*that a practical theology for a pastoral and prophetic approach can be synthesized from Archbishop Raya's life,*

actions, and spirituality—and ask “Can the life and teachings of Archbishop Joseph Raya serve as a model for a pastoral and prophetic love-based approach to religious peacebuilding?”

Raya demonstrated clearly, albeit imperfectly, that the teachings of the Gospel can form the basis for a religious commitment to peace, love, justice, and truth. Furthermore, Raya’s Christian beliefs served as a foundation for his public and private actions, many of which can be considered peacebuilding actions. There were, however, instances of inconsistency in his approach that undermine the credibility of his contributions to the field of peacebuilding.

The hypothesis can be substantiated by many of the relationships he nurtured among individuals, races, creeds, and cultures. With his dynamic personality and compelling vision, he was a shepherd and spiritual leader for many. He was an advocate for Byzantine spirituality in the West, and became a defender of its rights and traditions. As a communicator of the word of God, he changed people. He worked for ecumenism with other Christians and with other religions. He compelled the Church to recognize and act upon its God-given role of fighting for the poor and the unjustly treated. He challenged the country of Israel with a vision from the Hebrew prophets. He offered the adherents of the Abrahamic faiths a new story of peace, a new beginning through demonstrated nonviolence. All sacred texts could be read and understood as a calling for peace and not enmity. His work of reconciliation in Israel transformed angry, bitter people into agents of nonviolent social change. In Lebanon, he brought healing from the pain and suffering

of his people through his goodness and built bridges with the “enemy.” In the eyes of many, he became a “symbol of justice and peace in a troubled world.”⁶⁰⁶

However, Raya did not always follow perfectly the peacebuilding principles which he had made the basis of his work and which he had taught. Although there was a high level of consistency in the application of his theological principles in regard to the subservient faithful in his flock, these same scripture-based principles appeared to be more negotiable when the conflicts affected him more personally. Raya consistently promoted forgiveness for those within his pastoral charge, yet there were times when he struggled with forgiveness when the Church he loved, was wronged. Even though he was a persistent and seemingly tireless advocate for addressing injustice, he failed to pursue an effective course of action in the face of discrediting his Patriarch and causing pain for his Melkite Church. He actively promoted life and joy, yet at times found himself in despair. Nevertheless, I do not think his failure to meet consistently the high standards that he espoused invalidates his theological approach to religious peacebuilding. What his example teaches us is that we can expect too much of our religious peacebuilders. A practical theology can be synthesized from his life and work, provided that we recognize also the difficulty of living out consistently that practical theology.

His work and his role as an authoritative figure did have a lasting influence on many of the people who entered his life, and who decided to walk in his footsteps. He was an exemplar not only for religious authorities but potentially for educators, politicians, aid workers—religious peacebuilders of various callings. Although Raya’s methods and

⁶⁰⁶ Rev. John Catoir, letter of support to the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, January 5, 2005.

strategies did not resonate with everyone, his life, actions and approach to peace have inspired many to follow in his path.

Conclusion: The End of the Story Is Its Beginning

Throughout this dissertation, I have been telling stories. The story of Archbishop Joseph Raya is the core of this research. His narrative, based on letters by and to Raya, his books and personal papers, as well as external sources such as newsletters, newspapers, interviews, and official documents, has been examined through the lens of religious peacebuilding and relevant convictions of the Church. Raya's story served as both the personal narrative that began the examination of the theme of religious peacebuilding and the normative story against which my own story was examined and compared. To understand those two personal narratives (Chapters 2 and 3) in context, it was necessary to interpret and compare the classical model of religious peacebuilding as summarized by Hertog and the traditional elements of peace theory as defined by the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Melkite Greek Catholic Churches. Archbishop Raya was very familiar and aware of spiritual and theological richness of Byzantine Christianity. This perspective gave him meaning and purpose and guided him throughout life. He did not know of the academic theories of peacebuilding or Hertog's analysis that would follow years later; he simply lived out, very practically, many of the principles that she eventually articulated. Indeed, Archbishop Raya, in his expressed approach and willingness to become involved, moved beyond what Hertog imagined as possible and appropriate for peacebuilding and beyond what the relevant Churches had

previously articulated. The very fact that Archbishop Raya's and Lesya Sabada's stories can relate to Hertog's theoretical study and the traditional positions of selected Christian Churches suggests the universality of the need for peace and some of the important principles through which it can be achieved.

Archbishop Raya's story, although it included some failures, setbacks and incomplete actions, ended in a triumphant note. His final letter, dictated to his friend and assistant, Fr. Ron Cafeo, was sent to his many friends and family:

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen! I am now at the end of my time. I cannot do anything for myself. I suffer, I pray, I hope. I want to thank all those my friends and families for their love and acceptance of my friendship. I love, I love, I love. I thank you from all my heart for our friendship and wonderful relation—social and religious. I thank you once more and thank you every day of my life. He is truly Risen! Kyr Joseph.⁶⁰⁷

Written within the Easter season, Raya's letter begins with the most important theological words of his life: "Christ is Risen." Raya based his entire life and hope, confident in the knowledge of this truth. Then he speaks of his gratitude for his relationships: "I want to thank all my friends and families for their love." With that statement, he summarized his strong Trinitarian conviction, experientially tested throughout his life, that only in community and through interdependence can human beings thrive. Without that solid foundation for self-identity and support for spiritual growth, the inclusion of the Other that must precede lasting peace cannot develop. Finally, he encapsulated the work of his life: "I love, I love, I love." His peacebuilding work was based on love.

⁶⁰⁷ Archbishop Raya's final letter recorded by Fr. Ron Cafeo, August 9, 2005.

In that ending is its new beginning. Glimpses of his story have been captured. Wherever his story is read, and wherever it is told by readers or by those who knew him, new beginnings are possible as people take up the challenge left by Archbishop Raya. I came to know Archbishop Raya as a friend, mentor, and exemplar.

This dissertation itself is a new beginning in the sense that it offers the Raya story in a larger context and within a theoretical framework. If, as has been argued in this dissertation, a practical theology for a pastoral and prophetic approach can be synthesized from Archbishop Raya's life, actions, and spirituality, then his story could contribute to the further development of religious peacebuilding, not only among Byzantine Christians but among other religious actors from who might learn from Raya's example and build upon their own faith foundations.

While my encounter with Archbishop Raya was not the beginning of my peacebuilding work—my heart had been called to seek peace long before I met him—his influence on me through his continued mentorship was the beginning of a greater consciousness of the need to work for peace and a better knowledge of how to go about that work. Writing this dissertation will serve as motivation to serve to the best of my abilities and within the spheres of influence and opportunities granted to me.

Yet another beginning must be mentioned here. Good scholarly research, even as it presents provisional truths, always invites further scholarship. Knowledge is never complete. I hope that the story of Archbishop Raya's life and his peacebuilding work will lead to the re-examination of existing stories and the discovery of new stories. It might be very useful, for example, to do a comparative study on Archbishop Raya's work and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s work; these men did work together and Raya was

much influenced by King. Another study might be done on the parallels between Archbishop Raya's peacebuilding and that of Christianity's "peace churches," such as the Quakers or the Mennonites, both of whom have a long history as peace witnesses. Perhaps a longer, more thorough study focused particularly on the legacy of Raya's nonviolent work in the country of Israel would offer new perspectives and insights. I believe more research material is available, and will eventually become available, particularly in the archives of the Knesset, and the Roman Catholic archives in Jerusalem and in Rome. These centres contain the letters exchanged between Archbishop Raya, the Israeli government, and the Vatican. One can hope also that, at some not-too-distant point in the future, there will be sufficient peace in Lebanon that more stories of Raya's work there could be recovered.

Best of all, in this context of religious peacebuilding, would be the discovery of recent and future peacebuilders whose stories have been influenced by the story of Archbishop Raya. Then we could say with certainty that his theology of peacebuilding, his pastoral and prophetic approaches, have brought about new beginnings.

Appendix 1: Chronology of Joseph Marie Raya

1917 (August 15): Birth of Joseph Raya in to Almaz and Mikhail Raya in Zahle, Lebanon.⁶⁰⁸

1917 (August 15): Baptism of Joseph Raya.

1922-1926: Beginning of education in Oriental Primary School of Lebanon.

1926-1931: St. Anne's Seminary grade schooling and Raya completed secondary education at St. Anne's Minor Seminary in Jerusalem.

1931-1937: St. Louis College in Paris, France.

1937 - 1941: St. Anne's Seminary in Jerusalem

1940 (July 20): Ordained as deacon.

1941 (July 20): Ordained as priest at St. Anne's Seminary.

1941-1946: Priest in St. Joseph's Parish in Zahle, Lebanon. Duties include working with lepers, teaching religion to deaf and mute children and adults, teaching anatomy and biology at the Oriental College in Zahle, Lebanon.

1944-1946: Director of the Diocesan school in Zahle, Lebanon.

1946-1949: Head of the Greek Catholic Patriarchal College in Cairo, Egypt.

1946-1949: Professor of French Literature

1949 (December): Emigrated to the United States.

1949-1952: Assistant Pastor at Saint Ann's Melkite Catholic Church in Paterson, New Jersey.

⁶⁰⁸ Sources are contradictory. Some sources state that Raya was born in 1916.

1952-1968: Priest in Birmingham, Alabama, at St. George Melkite-Greek Catholic Church.

1955-1965: Raya was the official spokesperson for the Patriarchate of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem at liturgical conventions of the United States.

1955: Father Raya becomes Chor-Bishop.

1959 (April 5): Dedication for the new St. George Melkite-Greek Catholic Church.

1959 (July 1): Father Raya takes vows as first auxiliary priest of Madonna House Apostolate. Father John Callahan is his spiritual director.

1963 (August 28): Father Raya joins the March on Washington.

1963 (October): Father Raya serves as assistant to Patriarch Maximos IV at the Second Vatican Council.

1964: Granted the title of Grand Archimandrite of Jerusalem in recognition for the work done during the Second Vatican Council.

1963(October): Byzantine Daily worship is accepted as the official translation for English speaking countries of the Byzantine Rite.

1965 (March): Father Raya joins the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.

1967: Elected by the Synod of the Patriarchate to the See of Galilee as Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee.

1968 (October 20): Consecration as Archbishop.

1968-1974: Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and Galilee.

1972 (August 13): Death of Justice campaign. All churches in the Diocese of Acre Haifa and all Galilee were closed

1972 (August 23): March to the Knesset on behalf of villagers of Ikrit and Kfar Berem.

1973 (July 16-19): Fast outside the Knesset, Jerusalem, Israel.

1973 (October 6 – 25): Yom Kippur War.

1974 (July 13): Formal letter of resignation submitted to Pope Paul VI.

1974: Wrote numerous articles for religious periodical in English, French and Arabic, composed music and wrote theological and spiritual books.

1983: Delegated by the Holy Synod to renew the theological studies in the Melkite seminaries and monasteries according to the Byzantine traditions.

1986-1990: Archbishop Raya serves in Lebanon, first in Beirut, then in Marje-Eyoun.

1990: Retirement to Carmel Hill at Madonna House in Combermere, Ontario.

1990- 2005: Travel in North America, Western Europe, Israel, and Lebanon, teaching and leading retreats.

2005 (June 10): Death of Archbishop Joseph Raya in Combermere.

**Appendix 2: Letter from Father Joseph Raya to the Apostolic Delegate, Cardinal
Egidio Vagnozzi**

St. George's
R.C Byzantine Church
425 16th Avenue, South
Birmingham 5, Alabama
AL 2-5788
December 22, 1959

The Most Reverend Egidio Vagnozzi, D. D.
3339 Massachusetts Avenue Northwest
Washington, D. C.

Excellency:

I have just received, through my Bishop, His Excellency, The Most Reverend Archbishop T.J. Toolen, Archbishop-Bishop of Mobile-Birmingham, the order of your Excellency to refrain from any use of the English language in the Divine Liturgy and all other services of our Byzantine Rite. I understand that all of my fellow priests of the Melkite Rite in the United States received the same order. Such an order seems to aim at the destruction of the Oriental Rite and at the discouragement of its followers but we accept it with respect as an order from our religious authority.

Excellency, we Orientals believe that the Vicar of Christ on earth and His voice is our Holy Father, the Pope of Rome. Because of such belief, we united with Rome and this union, as you may know, brought on us untold sufferings and persecutions in our own countries of origin and in countries where Latin Catholics are in the majority. All these sufferings and persecutions were caused by bigotry, misunderstanding, and lack of love if not because of hatred of something different and superior. Our faith is still unshakable and our surrender to the Vicar of Christ, our Holy Father, the Pope, unconditional.

The Popes of all times and especially since the glorious Leo, the XIIIth, have made strong and unmistakably clear declarations of their love and consideration of the Oriental Church and the Oriental Rites. They promised in so many ways and speeches to help them grow and progress and to recognize them for what they are; an integral part of the Catholic Church "where there is no Latin, nor Greek, nor Slav but all Catholics, children of the Church" (Benedict, the XVth). Acceptance and toleration are not human, not Christian, certainly not Catholic. Why are we not recognized any more but only accepted or tolerated and why is there no Christian consideration in the dealing with us anymore?

The new Canon law for the Oriental Church is clear proof of our Holy Father's concern and love for the Oriental Church; yet those who worked on it stripped our Patriarch of his rank and dignity of Patriarch almost to reduce him to the position of an ordinary bishop against all the promises of our Holy Fathers to recognize the traditional dignity and position of the Patriarch but still this same Canon law recognizes him as the supreme authority in liturgical matters even in churches outside his patriarchal territory, as, for instance, the United States of America. The Patriarch; namely, His Beatitude, Patriarch Maximos IVth Sayeg, gave orders and encouragement to all his priests in the United States, both by letters and in public pronouncements, to use the vernacular or English language in the Liturgy. I have in my possession a dozen such letters. Now your orders, Excellency, transmitted to His Excellency, Archbishop Toolen, my local Bishop, seem in complete opposition with the Canon law of the Church and with the orders and wishes of our Holy Patriarch. The use of the vernacular, especially in our Byzantine Rite, is the only means by which we can reach the people, teach them, and make them understand and appreciate their Rite and their beautiful traditions. It is the only way we can improve their spiritual life and their devotion and piety. Besides, the vernacular in our Divine Liturgy was accepted and recognized by His Eminence Cardinal Tisserant himself while Prefect of the Oriental Congregation a little while ago. All of our dissident Orthodox brothers use it in all their liturgies.

The reason Your Excellency is advocating to prevent us from using the vernacular is not to "offer an opportunity to the promoters of the abandonment of the Latin language in the sacred Liturgy" of the Latin Rite. How can we, a small minority, influence a whole country with their most learned priests and bishops into such a move? Besides, there is much more "admiratio" about the distribution of Holy Communion in our Rite under both species. There is so much "admiratio" about our beautiful way of making the sign of the cross. Should we expect to give up one day distributing Holy Communion under both species and give up our way of making the sign of the cross in case some priests or magazines and reviews should ever ask for the same way of doing in the Latin Rite?

Having thus exposed to Your Excellency in an objective way the impact of the recent order, I beg to present my opinion as a priest and as the head of a thriving parish of the Byzantine Rite and, very simply, as a man of logic and honor. I am utterly amazed, disturbed, and disappointed by a move such as this. I cannot conceive what motive could have brought about such a drastic change in a manner which, to say the least, is peremptory and offensive. Compared with the caution and prudence with which changes are made in languages in the Latin liturgical ceremonies and compared with the progressive introduction of such languages in the actions and sentiments of the faithful of the Latin Rite, an order such as the suppression of the use of English in our Byzantine ceremonies and Liturgy comes as an unprecedented, unwarranted, and destructive blow.

It seems that we are being punished for some twenty years (in the case of my parish, fourteen years) of successful effort to bring the Liturgy to the people and the people to the Liturgy.

I would like to bring to Your Excellency's attention the following facts:

1. First and foremost, I will submit to the decision of my religious superiors, even if in my own heart I feel it is unfair and harmful to my people.
2. The switch-over from English cannot possibly be completed in a few days. . . from one Sunday to another. Our altar boys and parishioners are used to English for some fourteen years. It is simply impossible, materially speaking, to effect such a change instantaneously. I beg Your Excellency to grant me the time to work out this matter which will entail not only time but also much hard work for the renewal of the Greek and Arabic languages which ninety-eight per cent of my parishioners ignore completely.
3. It is impossible for me to believe that such a decision is final and that it was based on a serious consideration of the problem. These are a few of the arguments against such a change:
 - a. It will be taken as a direct insult by many religious and lay people who, in all good faith and with excellent results, have consistently been using English in their liturgical prayers for so many years.
 - b. It will tend to reopen ancient wounds that had too frequently been inflicted on Oriental Catholics by inopportune and discriminatory measure taken against them in the past.
 - c. It will undermine the authority of our Patriarch who, by the very rules of the recently-approved Canon law, is responsible for everything related to the Liturgy.
 - d. It will work in a direction exactly opposite to the spirit of reunion which prompted our Holy Father to prepare an Ecumenical Council.
 - e. If it reaches the ears of our Orthodox brethren . . . and God grant that it does not . . . it will confirm in their belief that union with Rome will mean subservience to a spirit that is entirely alien to their own and harmful to their traditions and to their Rite.

I hope and pray that Your Excellency will read this letter with great attention and understand the spirit in which it is written, a spirit of respect, love, and complete submission but also utter amazement and consternation.

I beg Your Excellency to allow me a little time to prepare for the change so as to minimize the surprise and scandal that are bound to arise among the people if anything is

done too hastily. Even with the greatest precautions and substantial delays, I venture to say that there will be a considerable amount of surprise and scandal among the people who will have to suffer most from the change.

Thanking you for your patience with me for reading such a long letter and humbly awaiting your reply, I remain,

Respectfully yours in Christ,
Reverend Joseph Raya
Pastor
St. George Catholic Byzantine Church

Appendix 3: Montessori School

Memo: On utilizing the full Apostolic Potential of the Maria Montessori School in Birmingham, Alabama

Purpose of the School:

- * 1) To offer to the community of Birmingham a service: namely the particular advantages of the Montessori Method.
- * 2) This service is the contribution of the Byzantine Church, and is given with the desire to restore the image of God in the children attending this school. These children come from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish homes, and are both white and negro. No explicit religious instruction is given during the four school hours of the day. Both the pastor of St. George's parish and the teachers are available, however, at any other time of the day for any type of apostolic contact, involving either children or parents.
- * 3) The ultimate goal of this apostolate is the blending together of these children and their parents who share the school's ideal of respecting the intrinsic dignity of every human person, and his right to the full flowering of his being, according to the teaching and mandate of the Second Vatican Council.

A Description of the Apostolic Potential and Future of the School:

Already the PTA of this school includes a Jewish President and Treasurer, a Greek Vice-President, and a Catholic Secretary, all elected by the members themselves. The members of the PTA have not only raised money for the school, and unanimously attended the meetings, but have come themselves to clean and paint the school. In this spirit of cooperation they have made plans for the school's expansion, and have provided funds so that the children of less fortunate families are able to attend. With such a beginning, the apostolic potential of this school is obvious:

- * a) The money allocated for scholarships could be increased, with the more fortunate people of every background contributing to a common fund to be administered by the directorate of the school.
- b) The visiting of the homes of the children provides a beautiful contact with people of many levels of society who are already interested in a common goal.

c) The contact with the pastors and ministers of these people provides a means of creating that type of mutual understanding which can lead to many constructive ecumenical efforts for the alleviation of poverty, injustice, etc., in this area.

d) The PTA meetings themselves offer the opportunity of informal exchange between the parents and the teachers with all that this could mean in terms of a truly human communication.

e) This school, which is completely free of any governmental or ecclesiastical entanglements, could be an effective instrument for healing the gaps in our society.

What is required for the realization of the goals?

* 1) Obviously, qualified teachers; so that the fundamental service offered by the school maintains the level of other Montessori schools. This is especially valuable in a state whose elementary and secondary education is at a low level. A Montessori teacher must have two years of college or its equivalent, and must have completed at least a six month course in the method itself: This course can be offered to the teacher for greater self-improvement, and indeed the Montessori method encourages a great deal of creativity on the part of the teacher.

* 2) The more deeply motivated the teachers are, the more effective will they be in realizing the specific goals of the school in Birmingham. The motives behind this effort are deeply Christian, and most in keeping with the tradition of the Byzantine Church. This will be the first missionary contribution of the Eastern Church here in the West.

* 3) It is obvious however, that for the full utilization of the apostolic potential of this endeavour, dedicated, well trained, and full time apostles are necessary. Think for instance of the responsibility of allocating scholarships for the benefit of the underprivileged; of the possibilities for a chit-chat apostolate implied in the visiting of the homes of the children; of the possibilities, open only to a real apostle, for real ecumenical collaboration in the alleviating of suffering, etc.

* A point to be expanded in conversation

Appendix 4: Deborah Land Sale

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May 1, 1972

S.E. Maximilian Cardinal de Furstenberg
 Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Church
 Via della Conciliazione, 34
 00193 Roma, Italia

Eminence:

A few days ago, I received your letter of April 10, 1972, regarding the sale of 1,00 dounams situated in Daboureh in our diocese of Galilee. In this letter you asked me to consider your refusal of the Nihil Obstat with serenity and objectivity. For two years I have studied this situation of the sale of the land, unfortunately too slowly and with too much objectivity and serenity. I have studied it with my priests, with my financial committee of lay people, and other experts.

If you have the time and patience to listen to me, I shall be happy to give you the reasons which led me to such a decision. Perhaps then you will come to a different decision. Our decision was inspired by the spiritual, physical, and social situation of our diocese.

THE PRIESTS:

The priests of Galilee have always been badly paid, badly housed, and badly treated. When I took over the diocese four years ago, the salary of the best paid of my priests was one hundred Israeli pounds a month, the equivalent of \$25. The worst paid priest received forty-five Israeli pounds, that is \$11. But they were allowed to do business. Some unscrupulously used the passports of the Auxiliaries of the Apostolate, missionaries or even foreigners to buy goods at a cheaper rate and then resell at a higher price. Others hid contraband goods even at the Archbishopric from the eyes of the police. Others used their priestly dress to traffic in contraband goods. One of these priests was caught by the police because he could not pay his debtors. To keep him from prison and to avoid scandal I have had to pay up until now 24,00 IL in debts. I am still not finished with his debtors. One priest went as far as selling hashish. The scandal of it still reeks. Another used his

church and altar as a hiding place for contraband goods.

I do not blame them. It is the Church who is to blame. I try to increase their salary a little each year. Now I am giving them 450 IL a month. But it is still a mere pittance. The cost of living in Israel is one of the highest. One kilo (2 lbs.) of meat costs 17 IL (\$4.25). A village priest is always visited by his own people, passers-by, and Moslems. Coffee is the minimum he can serve. This costs 13IL (\$3.25) a kilo. How can a priest live on this salary? And those who have a wife and children?

POOR HOUSING FOR PRIESTS: There is not one rectory which is not in need of urgent repair to make it habitable. All winter many of the priests suffer from cold and rain coming through windows and doors which don't close properly. These rectories were built 50 and 100 years ago and are now in a state of disrepair. Other villages have no rectories and the priests have to live with their families.

This is absurd and discourages young priests. How can I be comfortably housed and have these poor priests suffering always. This pains me and hurts my conscience. How can I preach patience and justice.

A young priest just came the other day to tell me, "The Church is unjust and selfish, but I don't care. I can leave and work in a University. I will have more honor and human dignity!"

OUR CHURCHES: All of our churches (without one exception) are in need of repair. They have been neglected for over 30 years. Some of them look more like stables. Our young people are ashamed of the state of their churches. Many of these young people go to university or work on kibbutzim. They have learned what self-respect is. They despise us. They consider us landlords. We are not implementing Vatican II and this does not help us to re-establish our relations with the youth and the Church.

Eminence, you may smile or say exaggeration. But I invite you cordially to come and see with your own eyes if you are interested.

My priests complain constantly of their untenable situation, and I can no longer hold up under it. I understand them and suffer with them. At this point I can attack in many directions but I withhold out of deference for so many people.

OUR SCHOOLS:

Our schools are a bottomless pit as far as our financial means are concerned. But who is interested in helping our local institutions? The only seminary, St. Joseph's, will have a deficit of one hundred and fifty five thousand Israeli pounds this year. Add to that the orphanage and the two other schools, and we will have a deficit of three hundred thousand Israeli pounds.

Because of this enormous deficit we are not able to make even the necessary repairs nor to buy the necessary equipment for modern methods of teaching. Our school in Shefa Amr which has a magnificent

for its high standard of education and its academic results is an old stable-like building of almost one hundred years old.

AUXILIARIES OF THE APOSTOLATE:

Two months ago I found out that the Auxiliaries have no social insurance, no home for retirement, and no regular pay. Helen Janssens has devoted her life to this diocese for more than 25 years. Shall we put her out on the streets? And the future of the others? This year I have accepted the services of three congregations of religious. We will have sisters in four villages. Must we not think of them also? We are in desperate need of their services.

REFUGEES

The most serious and sensitive issue is that of the refugees who for 20 years have lived 10, 12, and even 15 in one room. The washing, the cooking, the loving are all done in the same room. All this is in the presence of grandfather, sister-in-law, cousin etc. This week I counted 12 children in one room. How do you think that I, their Bishop, can console them by telling them that God is Love? The youth revolts. Our people are suffocating. They want to leave at any cost. Emigration has become a big problem. I have spoken and written on this situation. The Christian world of the West has heard my appeal. No one, least of all your own Congregation has asked a question about it or offered to help. We speak of "justice and peace" in the Church. It's beautiful. But it was the Jews of Israel who heard my cry and offered to help.

"Find land," they said, "and we will put up 75% of the construction ~~with~~ without interest and for a period of 20 years."

If we sold the thousand dounams of Daboureh, it was not to spend the money foolishly. It was to invest it in such construction and development for my people. These enterprises would allow us to better the salaries of the priests at least and help us solve some of our problems.

You ask how much money we would receive from the sale. One million Israeli pounds.

With one half of it we are going to buy some property that our venerable patriarch urges me to purchase in letter after letter, (and now he protests the sale you say!!!).

With the other half, and a loan from the government we can house more than one hundred families.

If His Excellency the Apostolic Delegate would like to be an advisor in this matter, I would be happy to have him. He is a man of God and very intelligent.

I would like to tell you in all simplicity what is in my heart as Bishop. My conscience and my life is overflowing with suffering. I have spent four years in this diocese. It has been like hanging

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on the Cross. I cannot take any more. I can no longer preach peace and justice and love.

I hope to see you in Rome on the 23rd of May. I shall give you my resignation as Bishop.

I prefer to have a parish somewhere in the world or retire in my motherhouse at Madonna House in Canada where I have been a member for 12 years. This is not an idea which has come to me suddenly. I have already spoken about it to my priests. They already know about my decision. I wanted to be the leaven, but instead I am being choked. I can no longer stand up to it.

I pray sincerely and humbly that Our Lord will grant me this, and will allow me to finish my days in the woods of Madonna House.

RESPECTFULLY,

Joseph M. Raya
Archbishop of Galilee

Good

13-1-13

Appendix 5: Synod Report

Most Reverend Bishop Joseph Raya Archbishop of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth and All Galilee Bishopric Report – 1973

Introduction

A. The dispute between me and HG Patriarch Maximus V Hakim

The Holy Synod had decided in August 1972 to create a council committee to investigate my financial handling of the bishopric area of Al Galilee, my bishopric, and this was because, if you remember, of the conflict between me and my predecessor bishop of this bishopric, as to the administration of this bishopric.

The designated bishops: Nicolas Haj, Elias Negma, and Elaryon Kabojee, assigned by HG the Patriarch, arrived in September of the same year and spent a month investigating and checking, and I decided to facilitate their job as much as possible. As a result, the committee submitted a full report of their findings to the Holy Synod, and the whole Synod, or at least some of its members, have read the report and carefully studied all that was written in it according to their responsibilities.

B. Purpose of the Case

It is important to remind everyone? that the purpose of this case, for which the council committee was created, was the sale of the piece of land known as “Daboriah Land” by me; the same land that my predecessor had sold at more than twice what I did. The main difference between the two sales was that the funds received from this sale stayed in the bishopric and was invested for the benefit of the bishopric. It was said I sold the acre of the land for 1,000 Israeli Lira, and this was a very low price for this land, and was a false accusation:

- a- The priests whom I consulted about the price agreed with me on this price
- b- The experts that we asked agreed that this was a fair price
- c- The committee members consulted some experts and were told that this was a good price
- d- HG bishops Botros Kamel Modawer and George Haddad, who recently arrived in Israel, investigated this price, and they were told (according to what I heard) that this was a good price
- e- If Bishop Hakim sold the acre of the same land for 150 Liras ten years ago, what would be the lira difference between 10 yrs and 2 yrs ago? Would the sale price of the acre I sold be not fair or cheap?

C. Reasons for sale

It must be noted here that I have written a comprehensive report about this sale in May 1972 to Cardinal De Forstenberg, the secretary for the Eastern Synod Council. At the time, I gave a copy to the assigned bishops to investigate my administration. It was the duty of the General Assembly members to have read and fully studied this report before

issuing their verdict against me; they did not ask me anything during that hearing despite its importance, and I think that they had not read it.

D. “Al Atshana” land

I’d like to point to another side-case, which augmented the dispute between me and my predecessor bishop of the Acre bishopric; it is known that the bishop owes the bishopric a piece of land in Lebanon known as “Al Atshana Land.” The bishop claimed that he left 372,000 liras in the bishopric, the cost of this land. This claim was discussed in Rome at a secret meeting between HG and Mr. Elias Nakhla, a member of my bishopric and who is a member of the Israeli Parliament. This person came to Israel and revealed this news, I think, on the advice of the previous bishop, in all the Hebrew, Arabic, and English newspapers. But, in reality, no one ever found any trace of such a large amount, neither in a bank nor in any “hidden corner.” The priests who took over the bishopric administration after its vacancy had no knowledge of this amount, and according to their signed testimony, which I present to you here, “they had not received even 1 lira or a piece of paper that proves that such an amount exists in any bank.” According to what is mentioned in that testimonial, “Bishop Hakeem was the only person who handled the huge funds of the bishopric, which was in the millions and he doesn’t tell anyone about it nor can anyone ask him about it.” In this case, and based on these facts, I request the Holy Synod to take all the necessary actions to return to my bishopric its full rights in claiming Al Atshana land.

E. The dispute with the Eastern Council

Another dispute that I should refer to because it sheds solid light on the case is the dispute between me and the Eastern Council. I was defending the honour of my “Royal” church and its priests who the Cardinal and his deputy Brini used to call beggars, “mendicants,” or deceitful. The other reason for this dispute is my defending my Acca bishopric against the “Latin” militants in the Holy Land – my courage, my self-esteem, and my pride regarding the honour of my church forced me to refuse financial assistance from that council. All of you, fathers of this council, may have heard about my stance during my reigning time, and before it in defending my church’s honour. The council’s anger against me increased because of my letter to Cardinal Villot in which I exposed the lies and hypocrisy of the Eastern Council members in recording their votes as told to me by an American friend who told me this before, but I didn’t believe him. I asked him to go back to the council with a hidden recorder in his pocket and so he did. Now I am in possession of a tape where all their voices are recorded that they cannot deny. I wrote this to Villot and part of this letter said, after giving full details about those men of the Eastern Council (I mean de Forsternberg, Brini, and McCarty). Either they don’t know the true facts about the church, or they purposely lied with bad intentions to drain the already struggling church’s power ... These men who lost their humane Christian love for a status that’s not theirs cannot but be involved in immorality (hopefully they do not sure what the hopefully they do means), and they cannot be saints, arrogantly proud and blinded by their non-repentance. Such people responsible for the church should be removed from their administrative position to guide the church nor should they be in the church of the Lord... etc.... At the end of the letter, I said: May God remove the blindness in the hearts of some of its leaders who are dark and immoral at the time when

they should have been love and light. The wrath of these men and the previous wrath of the bishop towards them turned to love and treaty between them.

2. Permanent Assembly judgment in my case

After all these preliminaries that should have put everything into perspective, I moved to the *meeting of the Permanent Assembly when a verdict was passed against me that I have no adjective for except that it is an illegal verdict as will be evident from my exhibit of all the facts.*

Some may object that the Permanent Assembly did not issue a verdict but recorded an arrangement, which I personally approved. I should state that this arrangement, which was appointing a financial manager for the bishopric, was offered to me to help me and free some of my time to attend to spiritual and social matters. But what actually happened proved that the aim of this arrangement was to punish me because of my corrupt and improper administration. Therefore, I say and repeat that the PA's decision was not a brotherly arrangement but a verdict, and it should be protested. This was in addition to what happened at the trial as a result of not following protocols and ignoring some proceedings, e.g. not permitting me to view some of the most important documents as will be explained.

A. Session circumstances

On the 9th of February, I was summoned from Israel to Lebanon to attend the session held by the P Assembly based on the report issued by the committee members assigned by the HS. It appeared to me from the oddity and secrecy surrounding this historical session and later from official documents that I insist on appealing the legality of this verdict issued by the PA and to consider this judgment with its precarious financial and moral repercussions as unfair and illegal because it is a stab in the heart of truth and human dignity. It resulted in unwarranted consequences that harmed not only me but also the reputation of our church Patriarch who was called, 1) in Israel a thief and robber who dealt with and personally benefited from the poor people's money; 2) in Europe, some clergy called him "profiteur de la misere de son people." This confirms that Patriarch Hakim's reputation is diminished in the global community. In addition, some doubt his reputation in the East, West, and America.

Before going into details, I wonder if it is rightful for the P Assembly to solely issue a judgment in this dangerous case that was presented specifically to the Holy Synod, which, in turn, assigned the committee to investigate the matter and submit their findings to issue their judgment. Is it right in this case that the PA ask me to resign and go into seclusion as if I am fired from my bishopric position like a criminal? HH opened the meeting saying, "I ask Bishop Raya to resign and his resignation is more honorable and dignified." Why I raised this query in this particular case is because the committee that comprises the PA under the presidency of HG is a small committee, and I am afraid that his influence will dominate, and HG will be both the prosecutor and judge as it was what happened in that court session.

Here are some details pertaining to this odd session:

- a) Despite the seriousness of this session, it did not last more than half an hour, and the excuse was His Grace had other commitments. This seriousness was not for the Bishop only but also for the Patriarch himself,

the Patriarch of our whole church, and for the great and world importance of a diocese in its present and general situation. No but also to the whole congregation; but other people's appointments are more important for His Grace.

Nonetheless, to rule in a delicate case surrounded by suspicion is not easy nor is it easy to show what is right or wrong and give a reason for such a quick ruling. The committee decided on a 10:30 a.m. meeting, but it didn't start until 11:50 and ended before 12:30. I would like to ask the meeting's secretary – Bishop Negma – to investigate the legitimacy of this or (wouldn't it be better to have “and” instead of “or” to believe the notes I recorded in my notebook.

- b) In that meeting, the only speaker was His Grace, and not one of the fathers shared their thoughts whether positive or negative except one – Ker Soor – who requested to hear the assigned committee's decision (here I ask Bishop Negma, the committee's secretary to investigate the truth pertaining to this). This request from Bishop Haddad proves, if at all, that one of the fathers of the PA or the Synod did not read it, and the case, despite its importance, was not considered based on the statements and arguments. In fact, HG was the opponent and the judge. If HG was speaking for all, I would ask the following: on whose authority does he speak for all while there was not any discussion or mutual agreement regarding the case during or before the session since one of the members asked that the statement of the case be read to him. HG, hesitantly, replied, “I speak in my name and the name of Rome.” In matter of fact, HG should have spoken to the fathers of the Assembly and in their name ... a matter that makes us believe that HG called the Assembly to convene while he had the verdict ready in his pocket.
- c) Normally every verdict announced by any lawful organization is preceded by rational arguments presented to the members of the organization and the accused (here I'd like to ask Bishop Negma, a prominent lawyer, how this escaped him?). The PA ruling did not take this fact into consideration, but HG, before issuing the ruling, only expressed his regret that it was the first time he had asked a bishop to resign and the day before he had banned an escaped monk (what an honourable and noble meeting...), and no one opened his mouth to challenge this ruling. HG then read, in Italian, a letter sent to him from Cardinal De Forstenberg, and since it was in Italian, it was thought that most of the fathers didn't understand the indirect reference that raised suspicions surrounding the case at its roots, as will appear later. Bishop Haddad was the only one who requested a translation of the contents of the letter, while the others: Al Sha'er, Khoury, Kabouji, Haj, and Negma shook their heads consenting to that letter. Did they really understand the Italian to shake their heads in acceptance of the contents of the letter?
- d) As a matter of fact and based on legal proofs, the ruling should have been based on the report of the assigned committee, and it appears to me that

all the fathers did not see that report based on the fact that one of them, as I mentioned earlier, requested to hear the report. When I requested in the meeting to have that report read to all the present fathers and myself, which is my right, the answer was that Bishop Adelby had the report and he was out of the country, in America, but

- i) One wonders about how such a report, which is a document of the organization, could be missing from the Synod's files; how could such a document, even if it were in Bishop Adelby's possession be eligible (hope I haven't changed the meaning here)? Here I would like to ask him how it is lawfully right for him what is prohibited to others? Why did you, my brother, take such a report that affects me with you to America, or how rightful is it that you leave it in your bishopric files during your absence, when it should have been in my bishopric files.
- ii) Even if such an important report was oddly missing, there must be a copy of it in the bishopric.
- iii) How permissible is it to convene an important meeting without the report?

I hereby request Bishop Negma, the committee's secretary, to read to you its proceedings and confirm the truth of my claim. Anyway, I requested His Grace then, in front of the Assembly, to send me a copy of that report because it was my right to see and it should be in my bishopric files. His Grace promised to send it to me asap and until now, i.e. after 7 months from that promise he did not send me anything.

As it is obvious from all this, this case remained based on studies and discussion, was between an angry Patriarch, for personal reasons, and Rome who fought for my dignity and my Church's royalty.

Whoever is familiar with this report might say that all these are personal issues between me and HG and are irrelevant to the grievance raised by Rome against me. In reply, I say the following: it is important that my relationship with HG be known to all as I believe that this relationship is the main reason for this complaint. Though for each point that you want to judge me, I am ready to answer with precision and in detail when the time comes.

3. The Documents

Cardinal De Forstenberg's letter to His Grace:

That's somewhat of the mystery and oddity. The insinuations associated with the case were enough to throw suspicion on the integrity of intent and to support an appeal of the legality of the verdict.

Now let me add to that what will be revealed from the official document, which is the letter sent by Cardinal De Forstenberg in Italian, which he read in Italian to the Synod fathers, which means that there is an absolute definite malicious intent, and therefore the ruling is illegal and unjust. Here I present you with a translation of that letter, and I was cautious to have the Papal rep in Jerusalem translate it though I have a copy of the original Italian document that HG sent to me.

- 1) The message mentioned that a conversation between HG and the Cardinal in Rome had taken place about the issue before the committee issued its report, or at least before sending the report to Rome. The message further mentioned the report and the procedures that followed its receipt. Allow me to request reading the report that the assigned committee issued in this regard.
- 2) The Cardinal's report to HG claims that the complaints against Bishop Raya in regards to the general and financial administration is based on a just foundation "fondement juste" and that Bishop Raya could not endorse his duties in front of the assigned committee. The fact is that I wrote a detailed letter to Cardinal de Forstenberg validating all my duties, especially the reasons that led me to sell Daboreya. I gave a copy of this letter to the assigned fathers – and this specific report, despite its importance, was not referred to by HG at any time during the meeting. Not one of the fathers showed his knowledge of it that suggested their disregard, at the least, that disputes the truth and justice. For an instance, I wanted to hide the letter and the reasons that led me to sell Daboreya because all those reasons, in some aspects, were based on criticizing my predecessor's 25 years of administration. But when Bishop Negma "cornered" me to know some reasons, I had to show him that letter though it was not my intention to reveal it, maintaining the dignity of my Patriarch. When B. Negma saw the report, he expressed joy, pride, love and respect and said exactly to me: "Joseph, this is an important letter and enough to clear this issue."
- 3) I had received an empty bishopric burdened with debts that can be described as bankrupted. My predecessor said he left millions; the story of these millions is the same as the 372,000 lira story that he said he left and took the land of Al Atshana instead. Yes, he left 50,000 Liras in the bank for the bishopric, but this amount was a debt on the bishopric for the \$100,000 mortgage on a building we own in Haifa, for which the requested 50,000 was paid to Georgette Laham from the bishopric funds, so where did the other \$50,000 go? Not 1 cent entered the bishopric. From the remaining 50,000, the bishopric paid 10,000, and I paid the remaining 40,000 to release the mortgage on building No. 19 in Yafa Street (see note 1) Here is a list of some debts that accumulated during my predecessor's administration. When I received the bishopric, I accepted all these debts with pleasure and patience and paid off most of them:
 1. The bishopric lands that were not registered in its name and **have paid 140,000 Liras** to put this in order and to finalize its registration
 2. Teachers Seminary school L. 450
 3. Nasera (Nazareth) Pastoral school L. 14,000 (paid)
 4. Wasfia school L. 20,000
 - Fr Ghazal debts are L. 24,000 (paid)

5. Shefa Amr school	L.150,000
6. Hotel Grand New	L.660,000 (paid)
7. Pastoral Travel expenses	L. 13,000 (paid)
8. Shefa Amr hospital	L.170,000 (paid)
9. Ammara church renovations	L. 45,000 (paid)
- My predecessor ordered its renovations	
10. Tersheeha church renovations	L. 50,000 (paid)
11. Trade debts with “tenbom”	L. 41,000 (paid)
12. Hanasy House	L. 75,000 (paid)
13. Debt to Marga’eyon bishopric – ask Bishop Alsha’er how much?	
14. Cost of books etc. to Hareesa	L. 8,000 (paid)

Nothing was paid to the church’s congregation box, and I paid the arrears on his [Patriarch Hakim] behalf and much more. This is not the time to detail – this amount is only equivalent to L.1,765,000.00 – are these the millions that my predecessor is telling “the far and near” he left for me? I paid or cut more than 1 million liras of this amount, and we have in the banks L.1,800,000.= frozen (except L.300,000.= frozen for the clergy).

NOTE: There is also L.15,000. commission he took from Barclays bank in Haifa.

Should I say that this is a miracle I achieved in not more than 5 years? Can I say that this is proof and praise of a strong financial administration? In spite of this, I have constructed a seniors home that cost L.860,000 and nothing of this amount was funded from any outside source, neither from Rome or a generous donator, except by my efforts and my good administration.

I have restored what I found ruined churches and other buildings that cost L.220,000. and this was also from the diocese and still there is L.1 million left in the box. I have constructed a school in Ableen, a new residence, and a residence for the nuns. I fixed the Al Gadeeda residence, constructed a new residence in Tara’an that cost me alone L80,000. It’s not finished yet. I placed nuns in five villages and pay them monthly, and still have more than L.2 million in the banks. Which bishop bought seven cars for priests and paid them monthly the gas cost in addition to their salaries, like I did in my diocese? I have L.150,000 in a special account for the priests’ medical expenses e.g. doctors, hospitals, and any medication they take. In the senior’s home, I constructed four rooms for priests who want to stay away without commitments. The priests’ salaries in the past reached L.16,870., while with me the salaries reached L.95,959., and today they reached L.140,530. With the increases next year, it will reach L.170,000 and still the frozen funds increase and not decrease. These are surveyed as not only recorded funds as all do; this is in addition to what I paid to students and poor people that’s been recorded in the bishopric accounts. Assistance: \$30,000 and L.10,000. Can I say that all this is a commendation of my administration? I do not want to say what the experts said; it’s financial administration praise; this was all in a less than five year period. How should the commendation be?

In facing the horrendous accusations, I am compelled to rightfully demand to have an official legal arbitration whereby the whole truth is revealed. Secret negotiations between higher authorities without the knowledge of the concerned parties, especially if they involve the clergy, is harmful to the truth, the facts, and my dignity in addition to what it will entail in terms of severe consequences. That is why with this statement I submit a legal petition against my brethren, the Synod members, requesting that they work to rectify what transpired from their unintentional actions that led to slandering the reputation of a bishop who performed and is performing his duties to the best.

If I did not do so, every bishop would have been slandered unrightfully and falsely and removed from his position.

- 4) In the Cardinal's letter to HG, here is the absolute deceit: "Bishop Raya" – the words in the letter to HG quoted in brackets – "is living today in isolation from his clerical duties and congregation." This is a definite fabrication and does not relate to the truth. Strangely, HG, in the GA's urgent meeting, twice confirmed this and said, "All the priests do not want B. Raya." Who made this referendum? I asked HG twice if he can mention who those priests were and what reasons they gave for this rejection. He did not reply at all. Yes, I lived in solitude and isolation, psychologically struggling, because of the unexpected shock I received when I first took over the administration of the bishopric. I heard all the horrible criticisms about my predecessor, regarding his general administration since he took over the bishopric, and his behavior during the 1948 occupation, and later his relationship with the refugees; in addition, he was being accused of egotism, love of money, and trading with everything possible relating to the church. At the beginning, I thought this was prejudice and ungratefulness, but after personal experience, it didn't take me long to see things were not as I thought. My congregation started to accuse me of lying when I was defending my predecessor, e.g. in the case of the Yafa street building's mortgage. I don't want to elaborate on this unless you want to hear more, and, in this case, I am ready to submit all the details. I am only referring to the allegation of the clergy being estranged from me. I was shocked and hurt when HG accused me of this twice: "No one wants such a bishop." This was the most horrible accusation leveled at a church clergyman. I asked him twice to prove this, but he did not reply. I didn't find any of the GA fathers.--all are responsible to God and his conscience--utter a word asking HG to disclose the truth in such a critical case. It's a request that the Holy Synod expected from them to explore the truth and justice in such a critical case. I remembered what some of my bishopric priests said, "No one dared to ask him anything about it." If some of them felt some hatred, alienation, and non-acceptance of Bishop Raya, this is not because of Bishop Raya but because, in their view, he represented who, they hate and don't want. Who did a questionnaire to find out whom of the congregation wanted or didn't want B. Raya?

Do I reveal a secret if I assured HG that one of the bishops or clergy don't want him as Patriarch for many genuine reasons, or for no reason except for personal and imaginary reasons? Does HG see that he should be treated in this case in the same way as he wants to treat Bishop Raya?

- 5) Cardinal de Forstenberg's letter to HG accused
- 6) Bishop Raya based on the previous conversation between them, to which I referred to previously, and on the assigned committee's report, which led to their decision based on that conversation. The Cardinal's letter then accuses Bishop Raya, based on what I quoted before, of two very serious accusations:

Firstly: Failure of Bishop Raya in his pastoral management

Secondly: Failure in his financial administration

True, the higher ups were responsible, and this was very hard on their consciences, which forced them to demand resignation of any bishop who was accused of such accusations because keeping him as head of his congregation is an abdication of their responsibilities towards God, the church, and people. If I was such a failure, where are your consciences and your fear of God? You left me as head of this bishopric, and I am still, the sole one responsible for its financial and pastoral management.

As a matter of fact, to give a completely failed bishop the option to choose between two or three choices: in the case, 1) to resign, or 2) to regain the land he sold, or 3) be under a guardian's guidance is definite proof that such failed the accused, I mean Bishop Raya. This is not because of a total discrepancy because in case he returned the land, in their belief, this means that he was a good minister, not following his conscience; and if he followed his guardian's guidance in financial matters and concentrated on his pastoral administration, he would be considered in their view a good spiritual administrator, though according to HG's claim, he "lives in isolation of his clergy and his congregation and all his priests don't want him as their bishop ... and resignation is better and honourable for him"

Should it be said, in this case, that the bishop who personally benefits from financial transactions pertaining to the bishopric is the good shepherd, but the one who sacrifices and gives his life to his congregation and Church and corrects old discrepancies, builds a church, a congregation, a nation, dear and honest people, should resign... ?

Here are some examples of the previous financial circumstances and their consequences that I suffered, and am still suffering:

- candles factory;
- chicken and egg hatchery;
- hotel Grand New;
- Al Hakim Travels;
- Al Hakim printing services;

- purchase and sale of lands by forging of Suleiman Katran's and George Laham's signatures;
- bulldozer;
- export of tons of canned meats etc. claiming that they were distributed to the poor, orphans, schools and needy Arabs (not Jews);
- trading of music tapes in collaboration with Music of the Holy Land company from Tel Aviv that sued us for L.80,000., for tapes that Bishop Hakim distributed in Europe and didn't pay the cost to the . The bishopric was bound to this company by a signed contract by HG the bishop until 1975;
- Foreign passports traded from "Auxiliaries" and other to buy things cheaply and sell for profit;
- Alice Nagm and Mary Khoury traded business for thousands of liras between Cyprus and Israel that Bishop Hakim, as per the ladies, took the "majority of the gains";
- The financial records of the contributions and donations from Europe and America didn't show that anything entered the bishopric or diocese And other non-existing projects e.g. the new orphanage in Haifa. The orphanage in Nazareth. OR to existing projects e.g. a hospital, seniors' home, and Nazareth orphanage that received none from these donations;
- Refund of taxes from the government for L.1,100,000. as donation from the Ministry of Religious affairs that not 1 piastre (cent) existed in the diocese (letter of Ministry of RA)
- Bottled Jordan and Galilee water;
- "Moniales" nuns convent registered from the bishopric funds but not paid for;
- \$50,000 lost, supposedly the bishopric paid but not one dollar exists

This is some of the history, but the bishop who suffers from all this and is trying to rebuild the ruins--is it honorable for him to resign and leave his diocese – the one who sells land even it is unworthy to use its funds to invest in what is more profitable and "what he did was according to the bible spirituality, church teachings and the Vatican, and the latest public sermons of the Popes." (These were Bishop Negma's words to me, and he is aware of all this – I did not read nor do I know anything about these letters). So this bishop who works considering his conscience, Jesus' conscience and the inspiration of the church is not a good shepherd, must resign or be removed from his duties or humiliate himself to a guardian's guidance?

- 7) Guardianship: The guardianship mentioned in the letter of C. de Forstenberg to HG that if Bishop Raya did not resign, he must submit to a guardian, according to article 399 of the Administrative regulation and that the "all and partial" duties of the diocese's financial administration

be handled by the assigned guardian. It's a matter of fact that this total dismantling is proof that this person is one of three things:

- i) either he is like a child or idiot in the administrative matters,
- ii) or he spends and wastes the diocese's funds lavishly in what is not of benefit to the diocese,
- iii) or he is a thief working in the dark to secure to himself or his family a treasure from the diocese's money that is for God, the poor, and the Church.

Here I request those who accuse me to bring and show proof, which of the three is Bishop Raya to force his resignation from his duties or force a guardian on him... I'd like also to ask the assigned bishops of the Assembly:

- i) have you seen an official budget for the past 25 years that my predecessor spent in the diocese (illustrates the difference between recording and surveillance).
- ii) didn't I ask, as you requested, an auditor to shed some light on my predecessor's books, for the last four years of his reign, and do you remember what he told you and here is what he wrote in his findings: "unexplainable ambiguity and darkness and bad intentions." This matter cost me for four years L.13,000 (e.g. 1966 budget – where I built the new orphanage in Nazareth? No.7 Galilee's nuns in Nazareth? I present you the budget of the last four years – whoever of you understands accounting "will have goose bumps."
- iii) You, the Assembly of assigned bishops, did you record in your report how you found my books and financial administration? (It's the best administration, not only in my diocese, but in any diocese). Did you talk about my great efforts in this regards? Did you record what is not in any diocese, the L.150,000 available for the priests' medical expenses for any disease, any hospitalization, or any medicine, to the L.20,000 the diocese pays.

If Bishop Raya, to the contrary of imposing a guardian on him, who took the diocese funds from darkness to light, which can be perceived, who records every incoming or outgoing "piaster" accurately, according to legal accountants, who are closely checking and watching each other, who, in turn, watch the bishop, and the returns of the diocese are closely distributed according to a detailed yearly budget. If Bishop Raya is such a person, on what basis is it said that he failed in the diocese administration?

Based on what was reported, I strictly requested the Holy Synod, without hesitation, to cancel the ruling of the General Assembly regarding my resignation or forcing a financial guardian on me. Would it be illogical of me and out of reason of rightful and dutiful fairness if I requested inspection of other accounts, or if I requested

not only the return of Al Atshana land, but also the return of the millions that he depleted my diocese of? And I have the true facts of this and will present these facts to you in time.

The ruling for me to resign or be under guardianship, though I had agreed to it hastily in that historical meeting out of pride, nobility, and respect for a high church organization. At the same time, I was oblivious to what disastrous moral consequences this would entail. It's a biased ruling and I request again that this be cancelled by an official decision of the Assembly. And if it's not canceled, I am obliged to insist on my previous request, which is holding an official government court case according to the legal procedures whereby I can, if I so wish, retain a lawyer who will not leave any point of the case unrevealed and not brought to light. For righteousness and truth and my dignity's righteousness, I will not refrain from endorsing the truth until the end.

I no longer know where I am in relation to actual human dignity or my religious dignity, which I was proud of. I don't know if you feel the pain I am in when I see myself obliged to cut all my connections to this Church, where I see today at the top of injustice and irresponsibility. These issues have created suspicion and confusion amongst the members of the congregation, inside and outside the Holy Land, and demolished all my efforts and sacrifices in building the Church. Forget about the instability of my congregation who went on to hold meetings, some accenting and other times criticizing, which made us the talk of the Muslims, the Jews, and the rest of the religious sects.

Here are my demands at the present time:

- 1- Return of Al Atshana land to my diocese
- 2- Return the US\$50,000 of the original \$100,000
- 3- God forgive him for the millions he is stacking for his old age
- 4- I need the report of the Committee assigned by the General Assembly
- 5- I need the report that HG sent to Rome claiming that it was the Synod's
- 6- I want to see the minutes of the meeting where the Permanent Assembly objected to the report submitted by the assigned committee and the text of the resolution submitted by the Permanent Assembly
- 7- Official letter by the Assembly revoking the guardianship
- 8- Official letter issued by the Holy Synod clearing my name, my financial, and pastoral administrative management
- 9- Reserve my right in taking any other actions

After all this, and if all this is agreed to, it will be my decision whether to resign or not.

Signed: Bishop Yousef Raya

Haifa 15 August, 1973

Appendix 6: Synod Report

The Historical Disagreement between Metropolitan Yousef Raya Archbishop of Acre Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee And His Holiness Patriarch Maximos 5th Hakim

Preface:

Many of my brethren, the priests, asked me why I do not participate in the Liturgy with our Patriarch, and why I never speak or express any ideas at any of the meetings of the Holy Synod, when, in the past, I was the only speaker, and the one with the reasonable and unreasonable ideas to express. I was also the only speaker in the daily spiritual Synaxis readings.

Why this absence?

You will find my answers in this document. The hearts are still angry for the Holy Kiss (forgiveness).

Your Brother Kyr,

Archbishop Yousef Raya

The Historical Disagreement between Metropolitan Yousef Raya Archbishop of Acre Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee and His Holiness Patriarch Maximos 5th Hakim

This document is a historical record, not to revisit the past or open closed files, but to provide a lesson to our clergy and to correct the record regarding the reputation of a patriarch and an archbishop who were the victims of gossip by people and the newspapers and to describe the crime that befell the archdiocese and the parishioners who were only seeking peace and love for all.

I, Bishop Yossef Raya, presented this announcement to the Synod of our glorious Church in 1974 in Ein Taraz and sent a copy of it to our patriarch three months before the synod meeting for him to read and comment upon. He received the document, but he never commented on it. Here, then is the announcement with supportive dates.

I have patiently waited until I reached a respectable old age, and our patriarch has reached a respectable old age, as well, to publicize this document—only to my brethren, the priests.

I have forgiven and forgotten, and I hope that His Holiness has also forgiven and forgotten. I hope and pray that he who is going to join us soon will join us in love and peace, singing one to another, “Christ is in our midst.”

Why I resigned?

I retired when I was only 57 years old, when I lived all my priesthood years in honor, with pride, and with respect from every one of my brotherly priests, bishops, and people who knew me. Every place I visited, whether in the country or overseas, I had renewed, renovated, and beautified the old and the demolished whenever there was a need. I have always carried my priesthood with dignity, love, and honor, and my parishioners reciprocated with pride and dignity. I have never received money when I [provided] service [in terms of] liturgy, memorial, wedding, or baptisms. I gave, but never received. My pride and honor is in my priesthood, and no one can take away anything from it.

I have spent seven years presiding [over] the Bishopric of Acre, Haifa, Nazareth, and all Galilee. My honesty and love for my Church and people were an incentive for all my victory and success in the spiritual and administrative tasks. The Muslims and Druze called me “The Arabs’ Bishop” and the Israeli government named me “The Peace and Love man.”

There was a higher church power than me that couldn’t bear the comparisons [between the predecessor and the successor] being made by the people and the governments, so our patriarch, God forgive him, spread hurtful gossip about me, to which I replied aggressively and with unnecessary words.

I retired because I didn’t want to reduce myself to fighting, and I couldn’t bear the lies and the wicked politics. I submitted my resignation four times to my brothers, the Bishops, and it was unanimously rejected four times. The Bishops didn’t accept my resignation, except on the fourth time when I earnestly begged them with tears. Our patriarch, God forgive him, continued spreading hurtful gossip, damaging my reputation, which created suspicion in the hearts of our people and the people foreign to us, and my answers to him created a fire of humiliation and separation.

The Different Incidents

The disagreement between His Holiness and me happened the first day I came to the Archdiocese. At the beginning, I used to run to him with joy to let him know about my success with finances, and his question always was, “Where is my share?” After a while, I stopped telling him about anything, and he started threatening me if I didn’t bring him his share from the income of the diocese. In addition, he started a rumor saying that I was illegally and irresponsibly spending the millions he left behind, until these accusations reached the media, and then the Arab, Jewish, and foreign countries. This resulted in disgrace and humiliation for our Church and its people.

I assumed leadership of the diocese with no records or documents about its holdings, estates, or spiritual condition because His Holiness had hidden everything before handing over the diocese. Once I took over the office, and after a year, the news of our debts started to reach us: debts [owed] to some government office, debts to some merchants, debts [as the result of] some personal trades, which I never heard about

before in my life, and which [involved] the trading of the canned beef donated by the government to be distributed to the poor and needy Arabs. In fact, this was never distributed but sold [for] higher prices to the wealthy merchants. Also, there was some woodwork industry in the “Holy Land” and [these] products were exported to foreign countries and sold for His Holiness’ benefit, while he never paid the workers – the Arabs – in compensation [for] their hard work, or never [on] time. Also, he didn’t pay the cost of the books, which were sold to the schools, to “Bolous Library” in Juniah for twelve years.

I asked all the priest[s] of the dioceses about all that debt, but they knew nothing because they were controlled by Bishop Hakim, and he never informed any of them about the income or expenditures of the diocese. Attached is the signed attestation from all the priests certifying this fact.

I didn’t despair or become negligent but always worked with zealousness, dedication, and determination.

Financial Management

The Patriarch’s campaign focused on our financial management. He flooded the eastern church council with letters insinuating [that we] lacked financial capabilities, and he invited some of the priests and other parishioners, whenever he traveled to Rome, instigating the public against us. As a result, the local media got involved, and I had no alternative but to react to this campaign by writing tough letters, which were sometimes harsh, to the newspapers and to Rome, in reply to His Holiness. I had hoped this wouldn’t happen.

This rumor reached its peak during the August 1972 synod meeting when His Holiness assigned a bishop’s synod committee, consisting of Bishops Elarion Kaboujee, Nicholaos Haj, Georgios Haddad, and Elias Nigma, to investigate our management of the diocese’s financial matters. The bishops stayed for one month [at] my house at Haifa, conducting various investigations, and I [facilitated] their carrying on of their duties. As expected, and this was obvious from the beginning, the assigned committee presented its complete report after concluding its investigation to the permanent Holy Synod (which we thought existed, but it didn’t until after a temporary assignment). All the members of the Holy Synod, or at least the members of the Permanent Synod read and carefully studied the contents of the report according to their responsibilities. It was discovered after a while that there was not a functioning “Permanent synod,” but there were some temporary assignments of some bishops under the name “Permanent Synod,” but actually this was in name only. The Patriarch, in order to have the upper hand to direct the management of the Patriarchate for his benefit without opposition, has little by little “freed” those who served the Patriarchate all their lives. He sent Bishop Yousef Taweel to the States, Bishop Adelbi to Halab, Father Shakkour back to his convent, Bishop Kerr Ra’ey, who is well versed about the legal rights law, was sent to Venezuela. Even the saintly Bishop Boutrous Kamel Modawar, who was the director of the Patriarchate for thirty years and who was known for his integrity, honesty, loyalty, and sound judgment, was never told by the Patriarch anything about the patriarchal administration. So he left the patriarchate and went to Egypt where he died. This way,

everything was under the sole control of the Patriarch, and no one dared to ask about anything until this day.

In this instance, it's important to mention that the main purpose of the case for which the temporary council committee was formed was the sale of the piece of land known as "Dabbouria land," which I sold. That [is the] same land that my immediate predecessor had sold [at] more than twice of what I sold, but with one difference. The money which [was] received during my service was deposited in the Archdiocese account and used for the diocesan investments, while the money received from the sale before was credited to my predecessor's personal funds. There is no evidence in the diocese books nor in any bank of it. What I sold was not due to irresponsibility or personal interest as His Holiness insinuated, but it was for important humanitarian and religious Christian needs. Here is some proof:

1. The priests I consulted agreed with me about the sale and the price of the land.
2. The experts that we consulted said that the price we asked [was] reasonable.
3. The council committee asked some experts, and they told them that the price was right, and if it were higher, then the price would be unrealistic and questionable.
4. Bishops Boutros, Kamel, Modawar, and George Haddad, who visited Israel lately, inquired about the price, and they were told that the price was right and fair.
5. Ten years ago, Bishop Hakim sold [a] donem (acre) of the same land at an unreasonable price at that time, and he accused me of selling the land at less than its value and without reason or responsibility. His selling [of the land] was the sale that was unfair and irresponsible.

I should also mention here that I wrote a comprehensive letter on May 1, 1972, to Cardinal Du Forstenburg, the treasurer of the Eastern Council at that time, explaining the reasons for selling the piece of land, and [I] sent a copy of the letter to the committee assigned to investigate my administration. When Bishop Nigma read that letter, he earnestly commented that "This is how the bishops should be. . ."

My courage and integrity and pride in my holy Church pushed me to reject any financial aid from that Council, and you, all the Fathers of this Council, perhaps have heard about my stance during the time of my [service as bishop] and before that, [as well as] my fight for the dignity of the Holy church. My letter to Cardinal Villot enclosing the voice recording of the Council meeting exposing their lies and deceit made the members of the Council very angry. The record was sent to me by an American friend (Doctor Levin) from Chicago who, at one time, expressed interest in joining our Church with his family, and who told me what he heard in the synod meeting about us. I didn't believe him, and I asked him to go back to the Council with a secret tape-recorder in his pocket to record the meeting. I have that tape with their voices, which they cannot deny, so I wrote a letter to Villot about this matter. A small paragraph of my strong letter, after giving a long description of those members of the "Eastern Council" says, "Those men (I mean Du Forstenburg, Brini and MacCarty) are either ignorant of the relative facts of the Church or they purposely lie with devilish intent to exhaust the Church's power, which it can do without, since it is burdened with lots of other things.

"Al Atshana" Land in Lebanon.

Here I would like to point to another incident that widened the discrepancy between the Patriarch, my direct predecessor of El Akkaweya Archdiocese, and me. The Patriarch claimed that he left 372,000 liras in the archdiocese for the piece of land known as “Al Atshana” land, which is now called “Al Rabwa,” which he bought. He discussed this in Rome in a secret meeting with Mr. Elias Nakhla from Rama – member of my archdiocese, who was then a member of the Israeli parliament. This person returned to Israel and spread the news that the Patriarch had left too much money in the bank, which disappeared after I took over the responsibility of the archdiocese. This news spread to the Arabic, Hebrew, and English newspapers. However, no one could trace any funds that belonged to the Diocese in any bank or in any hidden corner, and the priests who resumed the administration of the Diocese after it being vacated, confirm that they have no knowledge of any funds nor had they received even one lira or a piece of paper that proves the existence of this money in any bank. This is also confirmed in the document signed by all of them and which I put into your hands. In that same certificate is mentioned that all the funds of the Diocese, which were in the millions, were under the sole control of Bishop Hakim. He was the only one who controlled it, and no one dared to ask him about it. In this regard, and based on these facts, I am asking the Holy Synod to take the necessary action to return “Al Atshana” land to my Diocese.

There are two other disagreements that I should mention because they shed some light on this case. First was the disagreement between me and the Eastern Council. In my defense, I am proud of my Church and of its bishops, whom Cardinal de Forstenburg and his deputy call “the beggars and liars” (mendicants and quemendeurs”) when, in fact, the Patriarch is the “master of the liars (un menteur invetere)”. The second disagreement involved defending my Diocese in Acre from the “Latins” and those who claim to be “Latins” in the Holy Land.

The Campaign against my Reputation as a “Shephard of my Diocese.”

In addition to the financial campaign against me, the pope spread rumors about my popularity with my parishioners and [insinuated] that they don’t love and don’t want me. The people were angry about hearing this news. My reply against these rumors was to publish the letter from Father Boutros Haddad, whom the people considered a saint. Here is a testimony that I read yesterday in the meeting of the “Love and Peace Society” in Abu Saeed Al Khooly’s house and everyone shared my happiness hearing it. This is enough glory and pride for me.

Your Grace:

I had hoped [to have] a tape recorder during my visits with my parishioners to record the nice things that one of your [spiritual] sons said to me. He is a simple noble man who lives in a very humble house with his wife, and has no children. He described his bishop as [being] a compassionate and humble father, who opens his heart to all who

visit him and seek him, who is honorable and trustworthy, who serves people with love and for no personal rewards. His wonderful testimony was free of any personal [agenda]. His exact words were “Our bishop should be carried on shoulders because he is priceless.” I listened to him with joy, and hoped that I had recorded it for you because it came from his heart and without any prejudice, and I believe he was expressing his opinion [and was speaking] for the majority. From what else I heard about you from the people, I know very well that people’s praise doesn’t add to your status, but one day, Jesus loved to hear from his disciples what the people said about him.

I hope you’ll accept this “rose,” which I liked and which I picked from “the garden of your [spiritual] sons’ hearts,” so that, in turn, you submit it to our Lord Jesus Christ, who chose you for this diocese to teach Biblical knowledge to the people.

The People’s Servant
Your son Boutros.

March 2, 1973.

The Council that convened in August, 1973, did not issue a “verdict” but made a recommendation to hire a financial manager for the diocese “to assist me so that I can free myself for social and spiritual services.” I approved the recommendation when it was presented to me, but what exactly happened proved to be a punishment for me “because I did not give His Holiness his share of the archdiocese income” Therefore, I insist that the Permanent Council’s decision was not a brotherly arrangement, but it was a real verdict, and I believe it should be rebutted. This is in addition to what happened during the hearings. They were not adhering and neglecting some of the proper proceedings; one of which was refusing to let me read some of the important documents.

The financial manager was His Grace Bishop Elarion Kabojee who, after one month of the assignment, sent me a letter saying, “No need for a financial manager because there is no diocese that has proper books like our diocese.” So he left and didn’t return.

February 1974 Meeting in Beirut

On February 9th, I was summoned from Israel to Lebanon to attend the meeting that the Patriarch called to discuss my situation, based on the recommendation that the Council Committee prepared. It was obvious to me from the odd and mysterious way this meeting was conducted, and, from some other official documents, that the meeting was based on lies. I was forced to rebut the legality of the verdict issued by what His Grace called “the Permanent Synod,” and to consider this dangerous ruling, which has personal and financial implications, as unjustifiable and illegal. It is a stab in the heart of truth and human dignity. Furthermore, this ruling brought harm not only to me but to the reputation of our Church’s patriarch, who was called during these incidents by 1) Israel as the thief and burglar who handled and benefited from the congregation’s and poor

people's money; and 2) in Europe, some bishops called him "profiteer de la misère de son peuple (the benefited of his people's misery).

Before getting into details, I'd like to ask: Is it the prerogative of "the Permanent Council," especially when it is an illegitimate "permanent council," to have the sole ruling in this dangerous case, which was specially presented to the "Holy Synod," which, in turn, delegated the Council Committee to investigate the fact and report its findings and to issue its verdict, which was seeking my resignation and my seclusion. His Grace brought the meeting to order by saying "I request Bishop Raya's resignation, and this will be more honorable and dignified."

Details of the Mysterious Meeting

1) Despite the treacherousness of that meeting, it didn't last more than half an hour. His Grace had the excuse that he had a dinner engagement with a person called "Bo Adal". This fact jeopardized [not only] the Bishop [Raya], but also the Patriarch of our Church, and the people of the diocese who play an important role in the Church's dignity in its present situation. Even to the whole world. But appointments with general people were important in His Grace's view, so when His Grace left the meeting, one of the bishops, Bishop Haddad Kerr Soor told the members that the meeting was over. There was no resignation, and the meeting was adjourned.

Obviously to deal with such a sensitive case, surrounded by suspicions [about] this case, it was not possible to show what was right or what was wrong decisively in such haste. The meeting was scheduled for 10:30 a.m., but did not start until 11:50 a.m. and ended at 12:30 p.m. In this regard, I am requesting the secretary of the meeting that day, Bishop Nigma, to confirm what I said and the facts that I have recorded in my notebook.

2) The meeting convened and His Grace was the only one speaking, and no other Fathers shared any ideas, positive or negative, except one, Bishop George Haddad. [He] requested to hear the report of the assigned Council Committee (here I'd ask Bishop Nigma, the meeting secretary, to confirm this). This request from Bishop Haddad proves that one of the Fathers of the so called "Permanent Council" or the Synod did not read the committee's notice, and that the whole case, despite its importance, was not properly investigated. This meant that His Grace was truly the enemy and the judge. As His Grace was speaking on behalf of all, I asked him in whose name was he speaking when he didn't receive any argument or a different opinion on the case, during the convened meeting, or before it, since one of the members requested to see or read the notice. After some hesitation, he replied, "I speak in my name and [in] the name of Rome." In all fairness, His Grace should speak to the Committee and in the name of the Committee, a matter that made us believe that His Grace requested the Synod to meet. The verdict was [al]ready in "his pocket."

3) It is known that any judgment announced from any legal organization is preceded by arguments [put forth] to the organization and the defendant (here I ask Bishop Nigma, who is a law scholar, how he forgot this fact). But the judgment of what is called "the Permanent Council" he did not respect. He [Patriarch] went on saying

before announcing the verdict that he was sorry because this was the first time he asked a bishop to resign. Then he [Patriarch] read a letter from Cardinal Du Forstenburg, addressed to him, in Italian. I think not all the Fathers understood its contents because it contained suspicious implications about the case, which will be shown. It was only Bishop Haddad who requested a translation of the letter and its contents, while the others: Al Sha'aer, Khoury, Kabojee, and Nigma didn't say anything. We knew later on from Bishop Adelbi, who specifically traveled to Rome to see Cardinal Du Forstenburg and inquire about this resignation case that Rome never requested Bishop Raya's resignation (Please read Bishop Adelbi's letter attached).

4) It is logical and legal that the judgment is based upon the notice of the assigned Council Committee, and it was clear to me that all the Fathers had not read that notice because one of them, as I have previously mentioned, asked to see that notice. When I requested, during the hearing session, that this notice be read in front of all the Fathers present and me, which was my right, the answer was that the notice was with Bishop Adelbi, who was out of the country in America.

So, is it right that such a notice not be in the synod's files? Is it right, even if it is Bishop Adelbi, to solely keep this, and on what basis? I would like to ask His Grace, in this instance, why is it right for him and not anyone else? How did you, my brother, take to America a notice concerning me, or why did you keep it in your diocese during your absence, when it should have been left in my diocese's files. He replied that this is not true and that he gave the files to His Holiness before leaving for America and it was with him and in his possession. If such an important notice like this one wasn't available then a copy must be available in the patriarchate. How [could] such an important meeting be convened without notice?

Now I request Bishop Nigma, the meeting secretary, to read to you the facts that happened at the meeting if he recorded them and to confirm what I have said.

Anyhow, I requested in front of the Synod that His Holiness send me a copy of that judgment because it is my right to see it, and it is the right of the Diocese to have a copy in its files. His Holiness promised to send me a copy very soon, but until now, i.e. after seven months of that promise, he did not send anything. From all this, it should be obvious to you that this case lacks the proper investigation and discussion, except for unsolicited victimization.

The Documents: Cardinal Du Forstenburg's Letter to his Holiness

His Holiness mentioned that the Cardinal's letter wrote that the complaints he raised against Bishop Raya with regard to his general administration and financial management are based on true foundations (*fondement juste*). And, Bishop Raya couldn't justify his work in front of the assigned Council Committee. I answered that I had presented the best justifications in front of the Committee and that I had written a detailed letter to Cardinal Du Forstenburg justifying all my work, especially the reasons why I sold "Dabouriya" land. I had given a copy of this letter to the assigned Fathers, and despite the dangers of this letter, His Holiness never referred to it during the

sessions, and the Fathers did not indicate that they had read it. I think this is my fault because at the beginning I wanted to keep that letter and the reasons that made me sell the “Dabouriya” land a secret, as it proves the mishandling of my predecessor in his financial manners during this 25 years in the diocese. When Bishop Nigma cornered me to know the reasons, I showed him the letter, though it wasn’t my intention to give it to him to safeguard the dignity of my patriarch. But when Bishop Nigma read it, he jumped with love and respect for me and his exact words to me were, “Joseph, this is a very important letter and it is enough to exonerate [you] in this case (not guilty).

Appendix 7: Cardinal de Furstenberg's Letter

Sacra Congregatio

00195 Roma, April 10 1972

Pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus

Via della Conciliazione, 34

Prot.N 138/50

Mentionen facias, quaeso, huius numeri in tu responsione.

Si prega di citare questo numero nella risposta.

Most Reverend Excellency,

In a letter dated last March 28, which arrived at the Sacred Congregation on April the 8th, you requested from this Department (Dicastère), in conformity with the prescriptions of Canon Law, the authorisation to proceed with the sale of one thousand « dounoms » of a parcel of land situated in Dabaoury, belonging to the Haifa Eparchy.

As I acknowledge the receipt of your letter, I immediately add that it was the object of serious consideration.

Indeed, Your Excellency is not without knowing how carefully and with what great benevolence the Holy See considers the various initiatives of the local Churches, especially when they are called to promote and develop projects of social assistance, in particular, those that aim to resolve urgent problems related to providing basic necessities and improving the conditions of Catholics in the Holy Land.

I, however, will not hide from you that the facts provided concerning the transactions your Excellency has already made regarding the sale of the land caught the Sacred Congregation by surprise. This surprise is motivated by the reasons that I feel obligated to express to you in this letter.

During the month of March 1971, the Apostolic Delegation, to whom you should have referred this matter, or, at least, usefully consulted,

had made you aware of the dispositions and of the precise directives established by the Holy See, stating clearly “the absolute defence to alienate ecclesiastical properties in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land”.

Yet, according to the indications of your letter, it appears that your Excellency started the operation for the sale of the land of Dabaoury on the 10th of September, 1971, without obtaining the express consent of the Holy See, which is absolutely indispensable for the canonical validity of these acts, and furthermore that is required by the existing law (cf. *Motu Proprio* “*Postquam Apostolicis Litteris*”, canon 279).

I know of and appreciate the zeal you bring in your effort to improve the material problems and the life conditions of the flock that is entrusted to you in these particularly hard and difficult times. However, the Church has thought it best to introduce canonical norms and to determine special disciplinary rules in matters of alienating ecclesiastical assets.

These dispositions, as you know, exist essentially to assure the good of the Eparchies, the religious endeavours, and the economic future of the clergy and the people themselves.

This is why, notwithstanding the current administrative considerations, the Church wishes, in such cases, to make a thorough examination of the situation, not to thwart the useful and generous initiatives, but to insure the opportunity and the wisdom of such acts.

I, therefore, regret to inform you that the Sacred Congregation cannot grant the “*nihil obstat*” your Excellency has asked 1° for the sale of the assets in Dabaoury and 2° to contract the necessary loan for the construction of the described building.

Finally, I would add that your request is sinful in its lack of sufficient elements and facts indispensable for an objective examination of this matter. As an example, the total price of the sale of the land in Dabaoury and the global cost of the construction of the building, for which you would have the intention to use the product of the sale, are not indicated. This does not conform with the requirements of canon 280 of the *Moto Proprio* previously cited.

Furthermore, it happens that the Patriarchal Curia, having heard about your SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO ECCLESIIS ORIENTALIBUS initiatives, has asked the Department (Dicastère) to defer the eventual granting of the requested authorisation.

In conformity with the regulations of canon law that regulate the “subjecta material,” I have asked today His Beatitude the Patriarch Maximos V Hakim to examine the request of your Excellency and to submit it to the permanent Synod.

I am quite certain that you will interpret with serenity and objectivity the dispositions of the Sacred Congregation, as the proposed sale would bring about grave consequences that are easily foreseeable. To avoid them, the Holy See holds precisely to the adhering, without any reservation, to the canon law regulations in this matter and cannot endorse your decision, especially after the sad and well-known experience of the sale of “Notre Dame de France” in Jerusalem.

I thus ask you to envisage the consequences of the legal commitments contracted in spite of the current canonical prescriptions having force of law, by avoiding to complete the transaction of the land that you had planned for the middle of April, and by making sure that any operation relative to the loan of the State in favour of the construction of the building be suspended.

The Sacred Congregation awaits the conclusion of this matter after its examination by His Beatitude the Patriarch, and his Synod. Please find in the same occasion, Most Reverend Excellency, with the assurance of my brotherly dedication, the expression of my most distinguished sentiments.

Maximilien Card. de Furstenberg

Appendix 8: Unpublished Sources

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Appendix 9: Audit Report

Research Audit of Lesya Sabada's Doctoral Dissertation

Report prepared by Dr. Anna Sheftel, School of Conflict Studies, Saint Paul University

September 29, 2016

I have prepared this report as was requested of me, in order to help assess whether the interviews that Lesya Sabada conducted as part of her research, as well as her use of them in her dissertation, are sufficiently rigorous and academic. In order to do so, I reviewed materials provided to me by the candidate, which included a draft of her dissertation, recordings of all of her interviews, and all of the notes she took on these interviews. I also read the examiners' reports to get a sense of what the concerns were about the quality of her research. I then proceeded to select interviews at random in two ways to spot check her work and assess and verify the quality of the interviews and how they had been used. Some interviews I chose randomly by sorting through the CDs and DVDs, and then I cross-referenced them with what was written in her dissertation. In other cases, I started with her dissertation, and chose random locations where she referenced an interview, and cross-referenced them from that direction. In total, I listened to or watched twelve interviews, about half in whole, and the rest in part. At the end of this report, I have listed which interviews I consulted.

Before continuing, I must stress the breadth of scope as well as limitations of conducting such a research audit. This audit concerned the interviews conducted by Ms. Sabada, which form only one part of the myriad of sources she uses in her dissertation; I should note that I did not look at copies of the correspondence or other primary documents which she cites at length in her work.

This is important as certain examiner concerns related to the rigour or reliability of her sources as a whole—interviews, letters, conversations, etc.—and I cannot comment on that. All I can do is discuss the role the interviews play in her research and writing. I also have tried to abstain from any assessment of the quality of her dissertation, as would be the role of an examiner, and I have tried to ensure that I focused only on whether the research had been properly done, and used and referenced appropriately in the written work. Finally, the draft I was working from was still in progress, and therefore I must note that any cross-referencing or critique I did can only refer only to that draft, as I received it in August 2016, and not to the final one which examiners or other evaluating parties might read in the future.

The Interviews

In general, Ms. Sabada's interviews are competently executed and worthy material for academic analysis. While she may be very close to the material in her dissertation, as an interviewer she is professional, respectful, asks open-ended, non-leading questions, and

lets her informants speak and express themselves clearly. Her familiarity with the topic is often a strength in the interviews, as she knows what her informants are talking about, and is able to ask pertinent and appropriate follow-up questions. They are also at ease while speaking with her. While the interviews are quite informal, she is generally clear in articulating their structure and purpose at the outset of most interviews (some recordings do not start at the beginning, so I was not sure if this always happened), proposing an interviewee-led semi-structured interview format, which she largely goes on to follow. Whatever her personal investment in the topic, she does not interject more than necessary, and really spends her time asking questions, listening, and taking notes. I cross-referenced many of the claims she makes in her dissertation that are attributed to these twelve interviews, and they are all generally fair and accurate, although I will make a few suggestions on this issue below. It is worth noting that all of the interviews I listened to came from people who had been involved in Raya's work in some way and were sympathetic to him; as such, the positive and beatific stories came easily, and it was not her own personal investment in the topic that elicited them. I do not see this as a problem as these are worthy people to interview when trying to understand his life, and if there is a problem with critical distance in the dissertation, then it is a problem of her analysis and interpretation in her writing, and not really with the interviews themselves. In other words, I see no issue with the generally admiring tone of the interviews because it comes from the informants themselves and is not imposed by her; to my mind, the need for more critical analysis is the job of the researcher after the fact, not the informant, who is free to feel however they wish to feel about the subject at hand.

Concerns

While the interviews are competently conducted and fairly represented, I did have some concerns about how Ms. Sabada writes about them and about her methodology. The most serious concern is a lack of clarity about her method in her methodology chapter. While I tried to refrain from assessing the content of the dissertation, this section is important as a more robust explanation for, and framing of, how she interviewed is key to representing the interviews and the role they play in the dissertation fairly. Ms. Sabada talks about whom she interviewed, where, etc., but she gives little detail about how she interviewed, such as her use of a semi-structured interviewee-led method. There is little academic methodological backing for her interviewing choices. If she does include more detail like this in her dissertation, she should also include appropriate academic references that help to justify why this method is valid for her purposes. On Page 6 of the draft I had in hand, she says, "I have chosen to use the qualitative research method for my dissertation." "Qualitative" is not a method, but rather an umbrella term for the hundreds of methods that are qualitative in nature. Even interviewing has a great many iterations in qualitative research; a focus group is different than a life history approach, yet both involve interviewing. Some more precision, description, and use of methodological literature would greatly aid her in arguing her case and showing why her interviews are worthwhile and credible sources.

While Ms. Sabada generally cites her interviews correctly, it would be worth noting their length in her bibliography. It might also be interesting and illuminating for her

examiners if she included a copy of her questionnaire as an appendix, if she had one. (I do not think it is a major concern if she did not have a standardized questionnaire, as the interviews were open-ended in nature, although it should nevertheless be standard practice.) She should also be sure to mention the rare cases where she interviewed with a second person or through an interpreter. There is one case in the interviews that I looked at where an interpreter was in the room, in her interview with Yousef Atallah, and it is crucial to be transparent about that aspect of the process. Something that seemed odd about her use of most of her interviews is that very rarely did she quote them, or really discuss their contents beyond citing them as sources of information about Raya's life. I suspect that this may be at the heart of some of the examiners' concerns regarding her use of sources. For example, she cites her interview with Richard and Donna Smaha on page 70 only to justify the statement, "As a respected teacher..." This seems like an odd use of a qualitative, semi-structured interview, where the purpose is to understand people's memories and impressions of this man in addition to gaining information about his life. As was mentioned above, the informants themselves are people who worked with Raya and admired him; this is fine, as long as the researcher is willing to wrestle with their words and unpack them, beyond simply citing what they said as fact. Why did they think he was a respected teacher? What evidence did they provide for such a claim? They are not merely documentary texts. To give another example, she cites Father Frank Milienewicz on page 45 for the statement, "As a priest, Father Raya was motivated by a concern for his people." This is an interpretation, not a fact. And as such it should be presented as Father Milienewicz' perspective, which the author may argue is justified or not, but to present the internal workings of this person (by commenting on his motivation) so matter of factly without discussion lacks some rigour. Using the actual quotes from the interviews to show how and why the informants thought the way they did about Raya, and then interpreting and unpacking their statements for the reader would lend more credibility to these statements. This is the purpose of qualitative interviews.

In a rare passage where Ms. Sabada does refer to an interview at length, on page 113, she says:

In the words of Uri Avnery, former member of the Knesset, "A lot of bribery and treachery was going on" between the government and corrupt Church officials anxious to acquire private wealth. Raya's decision, at one point, to bring in American auditors to check out eparchial records, would not have been welcomed. Equally troublesome for the government was Raya's compassionate work among the down-trodden and fearful Arab Israelis. Raya gave the Arabs dignity and motivated them to stand up for their rights. He had been a fearless advocate for justice, for everyone; so for economic and political reasons, it seems very likely that the government leaned on the Church hierarchy to have Raya sent elsewhere. (Uri Avnery and Alex Massis, interview by author, Tel Aviv, Israel, May 6, 2007). I cross-checked this claim, and it is an accurate representation of what was said in the interview. However, the researcher would do well to point out that Mr. Avnery makes it clear he has no proof for these claims, even though he does think it is likely. While she says "it seems very likely," it is important to

specifically make clear the informant's own stance on the proof and likelihood of this idea.

I suspect that some of the concerns around the rigour of these interviews, as I suggest above, have more to do with desiring a more thorough analysis and more transparent interpretation of them, rather than problems with the interviews themselves. By presenting the interviews mostly as footnotes, and not discussing them, the circumstances in which they took place, the standpoint the informant was coming from in making their claim, the reasons why they might see Raya how they did, they come across as being mined mostly for "facts" which are not always readily accepted by an academic reader as "facts." The interviews cannot be treated as impartial documents; they require a more thorough analysis and interpretation. A more in-depth and transparent treatment of the statements being attributed to these interviews—for example, why did the Smahas say he was a respected teacher, and who were they to observe this—might go a long way to making them seem like more credible sources for the dissertation, which I believe that they are. I will repeat again that referring to some of the methodological literature, as much of it discusses how to analyze and use interviews, might help the candidate do this.

Finally, I must stress that I have only been able to assess the quality of the interviews and how

Ms. Sabada uses them in and of themselves. I noted that the examiners were, in many ways, concerned about the "whole" of her sources and whether or not they were sufficiently academic or credible, or whether other sources should have been used in place of these on certain topics. I cannot comment on how the interviews fit in with the other research and subject matter in the dissertation, and consider it outside the scope of this audit. I hope, nevertheless, that this report has provided some clarification as to the interviews themselves and their quality.

Interviews Consulted

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