

George F. McLean: Reminiscences and Reflections

Edited by
William Sweet & Hu Yeping

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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Preface

William Sweet

When George McLean passed away on September 6, 2016, at the age of 87, an outpouring of condolences came from all parts of the world – from Argentina to Canada, from South Africa to Poland, and particularly from Central, East, and South Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. For some 50 years – through the International Society for Metaphysics, the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies, and particularly through The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) – McLean had helped to make contacts, support, and build relations with philosophers in most countries of the world and, as a result, thousands, if not tens of thousands of them are in his debt. He persuaded many to join in his work, helped to organise hundreds of regional conferences in order to create philosophical networks, invited scholars particularly from countries on the philosophical periphery to come to research and network in the U.S., and published and distributed much of the research that came out of these meetings.

McLean has been described as “an architect of dialogue,” a “philosopher in the service of humanity,” “a philosophical visionary,” an “ummah,” “a pioneering spirit,” a colleague, a friend, and much more. Possessed of a prodigious energy, he was very self effacing. He sought to exemplify the kenotic character. One colleague once wrote:

Normally, I don't really know how to conduct myself in front of someone whom I admire. That's the case when I meet, for example, Charles Taylor or José Casanova. But with George, I felt at ease from our first encounter. I experienced him as a gentle father, curious about what one is doing, having the gift of appreciating almost every utterance a person is making as a worthwhile contribution. He was living the dialogue he was propagating.

George McLean did not seek the spotlight, and he took care that others always were recognized even when it was George himself that did so much of the background work. It was this humility, I believe, that led many very famous philosophers – Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Tomonobu Imamichi, Jean Ladrière, Tang Yijie, and Charles Taylor, to name a very few – to explicitly give him their support and to join the Council and the Board of the RVP. Indeed, George seemed to think that if the focus was on him, it would detract from the more important work to

be done. For example, in 2003, he was surprised at the award of an honorary degree from the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan. He acknowledged it graciously, but quickly removed the gown and cap before photos could be taken. On the other hand, in 2013, when it was not he but the RVP that was being acknowledged with the award of the “Global Dialogue Prize,” given by the Global Dialogue Council for being “currently the most significant promoter of intercultural value research” – he was more than happy to accept the award.

Shortly after he died, a number of scholars wrote to Dr. Hu Yeping, the Executive Director of the RVP, sharing stories of how important not only the RVP, but George personally, was to them. It was clear that many of these stories needed to be recorded and to be shared – in order to understand the impact of George’s work, to understand what motivated him, but also to capture more of his deep sense of faith, justice, and equality – to grasp better the man who George McLean was.

Little more needs to be said in these introductory comments, as the friends and colleagues of George McLean say much in this volume. If one were to ask who George Francis McLean was, one might mention his early years, or his decision to enter the priesthood, or his studies in the U.S. or in Rome, his academic work, and his administrative activities. Or one might point to his books – particularly his edited books – and his articles. But none of these would capture the essence of George McLean. He is buried in a small cemetery in Tewkesbury, Massachusetts, at the Oblate Immaculate Heart of Mary Residence. But who he was – his ‘monument,’ so to speak – is not to be found there or, indeed, in any one place. A plaque in Saint Paul’s Cathedral in London, England, says, of the English architect and mathematician-physicist, Sir Christopher Wren, “*si monumentum requiris, circumspice*” – “If you seek his monument, look around you.” Something similar can, I think, be said of George McLean; “If you seek his monument, if you seek to know who George McLean was, look at the work of the RVP around the world.”

As noted in the Festschrift offered in his honour on his 75th birthday in 2004, what was important to George was not to luxuriate in what had been done, but to keep moving forward. Sometimes he described his vision of philosophy, drawn from an image in the book of Isaias, as that of different people and different cultures, coming from different directions, moving towards a fusion of horizons – at ‘the holy mountain.’ But another way of describing this vision of philosophy was to see it as a quest. Hence, at the conclusion of virtually every seminar or workshop or conference that he attended, he raised the question: “Where do we go from here?”

It is to capture how this pressing question was received by so many of his collaborators and colleagues, to show how it animates the newly-designated McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values, and to

record the legacy of the man whose selfless work inspired friends, colleagues, and former students, that this volume is directed.

Foreword

Charles Taylor

I first met George McLean at a conference on secularism in New York. There, he invited me to Washington to take part in a discussion (which turned out to be a debate) with the late Cardinal George of Chicago. But George had a wider agenda than just this one debate. He was deeply concerned at the degree to which the magisterium of the Catholic Church was alienating so many people of good faith in our society that were in some way or another drawn to the Christian faith, but were often told directly or indirectly that they had come to the wrong address.

Taking off from this first meeting, George began to organize a series, bringing together Catholic scholars and philosophers to try to determine what could be done about this. These came to a climax at a 2015 meeting in Rome, in which some of our thoughts and recommendations at last got through to (some) important figures in the Curia.

George led us, he kept us going, but in such a low key and non-authoritarian fashion, that it seemed miraculous that we actually persevered – particularly when one thinks of the congenital difficulty of organizing scholars and intellectuals, which has often been rightly compared to herding cats. At the end of each meeting, George simply asked us to contemplate the next stage, and somehow we did, then he proposed a meeting, and we all went along. His vision and his quiet dedication created an atmosphere in which we were bound to continue our advance. A leadership more through being than through doing.

But in the course of this series, I learned more and more about George McLean's pioneering work of contact and exchange with other faiths and non-Western philosophies, and came to a better grasp of the vision behind it. He had gone way beyond what one might call an ecumenicism of politeness, or civilized co-existence, where different faiths stop attacking or poor-mouthing each other (first stage) and even begin to collaborate with each other on common projects (second stage – such as working for peace or defending core human rights).

George was convinced that we had something important to say, and to learn, from each other, about what it was to be human, something grounded for each faith in its own spirituality. This was central to the "next stage" he was thinking about when he died. The project was focused on the next meeting of the great five-yearly international Congress of Philosophy, set for summer 2018 in Beijing. This was to be the site for an exchange about the meaning of being human at its fullest stretch.

We, who followed and worked with George, may not be able to mount something as full-scale as he would have hoped for. But plainly, he has sketched out our future agenda, which needs to be further defined and mapped out in a series of meetings, which can culminate in the kind of mutually enriching exchange that he had in mind.

The underlying vision is there. It is not just that, when we can get past condemning each other, we have much to learn; but also that to see our faith in the light of this exchange can bring about a shift from concentrating on the darker shadows generated by mutual fear and condemnation, to articulating the visions of transformation which each faith/philosophy posits and hopes for. In the Christian case, this ultimate horizon points to theosis.

Knowing and working with George McLean has greatly enhanced my (often flagging) courage to engage in this exchange.

(Honorary President, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy)

Fr. George McLean: A Christian Divine

Gholamreza Aavani

It is a great honor to me to write about my dear friend, the late Father George McLean. It is a very difficult task, because he had so many good qualities and perfect character traits which are not within my capacity to write about, but I will point out a few of them in the short space at my disposal.

Professor McLean was a lover of wisdom in the true sense of the word; I would not say a philosopher in the modern sense, even though he was well versed in modern philosophy. He was a lover of wisdom in the sense that one applies to the Christian saints and Islamic sages, such as Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas, and Avicenna, all of whom he admired and adored.

His sagely and saintly demeanor and his magnetic charisma attracted many scholars and friends from all the continents. Again, the late Father McLean had always my admiration as a Christian divine. He fit very well with my conception of a pious Christian according to my readings of the Gospel and the life of eminent Christian saints. He was an exemplification of the noble Christian virtues of piety, love, humility, charity, and spiritual poverty.

He also accorded well with the description of the good Christians in the Quran: those who believe in God and the Last Day, enjoin right and forbid wrong, and hasten unto good deeds (Quran. 3: 113-114); those who have observed the Torah and the Gospel and have received nourishment from above and from beneath their feet (Quran. 5:66); those who are the nearest in affection toward those who believe (Muslims); those who say we are Christians (Quran. 5:82); those who are the followers of Jesus who was given the Gospel and God “placed kindness and mercy in the hearts of those who follow him” (Quran. 57:27). These are the high spiritual virtues reiterated in the Quran and commanded for Muslim believers.

Another feature of the late Father McLean which made him unique in our so-called age of the Clash of Civilizations was his interest – nay, his zeal – for a global dialogue among civilizations, in which the best representatives and scholars of each culture and clime took part.

The outcome of these dialogues, held in diverse countries and multifarious cultural zones, was a series of some three hundred volumes related to the most urgent intellectual, cultural, religious, social and political needs of humanity in the present situation.

It was a good occasion for me to participate in some of these congresses and to present papers in them. In fact, three of these seminars were held in Iran in the Iranian Institute of Philosophy while I was its president. I also attended three seminars in Shanghai, held in the Academy of Social Sciences, one in Fudan University, another in the Wuhan University, another in Peking University, and still another one in an international university in Moscow. I also attended two seminars in Washington, DC – of course all of them sponsored by Professor McLean. He also used to organize pre-conferences in the World Congresses of Philosophy of which I attended the 22nd and the 23rd ones held in Seoul, South Korea and in Athens. The theme of the 22nd World Congress of Philosophy was “Re-thinking Philosophy” and the subject of my paper was “Rethinking Philosophy in an Oriental Way,” in which I demonstrated how Greek philosophy, when introduced into the Islamic World, was completely reconsidered by the great Persian philosophers such as Avicenna in his eponymous Oriental philosophy and Suhrawardi in his philosophy of illumination culminating in Mulla Sadra’s Transcendent Philosophy. Professor McLean liked my paper very much and, as the concluding paper, gave me enough time to present my point of view.

Since the tenure of some members of the steering committee of FISP had expired, I was nominated by Professor McLean and some others, and was elected as a member of the steering committee in Seoul in 2008. I was also able to found the International Society of Islamic Philosophy (ISIP) with the assistance of Professor McLean, Dr. Hu Yeping, Dr. Husain Heriyanto, Dr. Karim Crow, and Professor Yasien Muhammad, and it was registered as an international society in FISP within two years after I provided the necessary documents.

As a preliminary measure, Dr. Heriyanto arranged for ten one-day seminars in ten different universities in Indonesia, and I organized an international congress of Islamic philosophy in Iran. It is evident that most of these activities were made possible with the support of the late Father McLean.

I was in Boston when I heard of the sad demise of Professor McLean. I, together with my daughter, had the privilege of attending his funeral service held in a local church, fifty miles away where only his family members and a very few close friends were present. I always had the impression that I was providentially destined to be present in his funeral as a friend. May God bless his soul and may his soul rest in eternal peace.

Professor McLean as a Person and as a Philosopher

John Abbarno

Sometimes Heaven sends us – us human beings – individuals who are far above what is simply Human – individuals who arrive in our midst from vastly elevated spiritual dimensions of Being, in order to show us who we ourselves could be, how we might be in accordance with that image, corresponding to that of the Creator, that He gave us when He created us. These are devoted individuals who have renounced all personal interest in order to dedicate their lives to the whole of Humanity. Such persons descend, perhaps, from those so exalted spiritual spheres in order to give more light to human life, to illuminate the path for each one of us towards ourselves and towards Heaven. They bring to human existence messages of timeless significance, messages which, so understood, can make human life happier and more harmonious.

Father McLean was one of those initiated persons sent by Heaven to illuminate the path of humanity. He was not a simple human being. He was not even just a reverend Father, in the conventional sense of that word. He was more than that – he was a Saint, truly representing what is divine in the human being. And who had, perhaps, a divine mission for humanity. He conducted this mission through philosophy with an unbelievable activity which recognized no limits either of borders or of the philosophical subjects that were discussed both in the course of conferences organized all over the world and in the seminar that took place every year at the Catholic University of America and that brought together intellectuals from the entire world.

A special feature of this seminar, constituting a significant part of his philosophical activity, where I met him for the first time, was the rarely-found combination of exceptional breadth of views on the issues discussed and the remarkable depth of analysis, as well as the open-minded attitude to all intellectual perspectives found in the cultural heritage of humanity, and the real tolerance of cultural differences, represented by participants belonging to different cultural and religious traditions. The breadth of the intellectual framework finds a clear expression in the diversity of subjects discussed, which have resulted in more than 300 books published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy at the Catholic University of America.

In the course of organizing this seminar, unique of its kind, various themes were treated. The most characteristic feature of them was that their scope embraced fundamental notions ranging over metaphysics, ethics

and values, to the social and human sciences, as well as issues dealing with the present-day life of society, such as freedom, democracy, human rights, pluralism, communication, civil society, the globalization process, the place of religion in social life, cultural identity, and so on.

(A small illustration of this scope of subjects treated is found in the titles of the seminars, organized over more than 30 years: “The Social Context of Values,” “Urbanization and Values,” “The Place of the Person in Social Life,” “Moral Imagination and Character Development,” “Diversity in Unity,” “Civil Society and Social Reconstruction,” “Civil Society as Democratic Practice: Solidarity and Subsidiarity,” “Civil Society and Social Reconstruction,” “Cultural Identity: Pluralism and Globalization,” “Globalization and Identity,” “Communications across Cultures: The Hermeneutics of Culture in the Global Age,” “Reasoning in Faith: Cultural Foundations for Civil Society and Globalization” and many others.)

At the seminar last cited, namely “Reasoning in Faith” (2004), I met Professor McLean for the first time. And I was more impressed by his personality, so out of the ordinary, than by his incredible intelligence, his open-mindedness, and his qualities as a person. Persons from different cultural traditions were assembled at this seminar, allowing room for real intercultural and interpersonal communication. And the previously-mentioned breadth of outlook and depth of analysis, characteristic of the seminar discussions, were combined with tolerance and real respect for otherness in all its manifestations. Attentive, delicate, open-minded and concerned about the other’s intellectual concerns, Professor McLean gave every one the opportunity to articulate his or her own ideas, respecting all of the opinions expressed, and suggesting possible future elaboration of the thoughts shared. Moreover, despite his busy schedule, he found time for everyone who wanted to speak with him personally, and was ready to help anyone in his or her philosophical activities, including the publication of books which resulted from the work of the nationally and regionally formed teams. In one word, in his personality one could see a real interiorization and manifestation of the values of love and generosity, charity and compassion, patience and forgiveness, kindness and humility.

That is why in his presence one felt oneself to be in contact with a person who is more than a great intellectual, but with a person who in large measure incarnated the notion of holiness. So, besides the professional enrichment, the seminar organized by Professor McLean also provided the participants with the exclusive chance and the pleasure of working with a really exceptional person – a pleasure extended later to the unusual opportunity of continuing this collaboration on national and international levels.

The incredibly broad scale on which the philosophical activity of Professor McLean was extended, through participants in the seminar in

Washington, DC and through the conferences dedicated to all reasonable philosophical subjects, is the most remarkable feature of his work: it was carried out all over the world, from North and Latin America, through Central and Eastern Europe, to Africa and Asia. And it was directed always to the most urgent needs of humanity, needs to which philosophical reflection – enhancing the possibility of mutual understanding, and aided by unified human actions undertaken on every level of social life, theoretical, political, cultural, interpersonal, and so on – can contribute to a better solution.

That is why the label commonly used for many philosophers, namely, “armchair philosopher,” which has become emblematic of philosophical activity nowadays – was absolutely inappropriate for him. In his understanding of the sense and significance of philosophy, as well as in his own practice, Professor McLean approaches, rather, the family of such remarkable individuals as, for example, Albert Schweitzer (a German philosopher, humanist, and Nobel Prize Laureate for 1952), who did not hesitate to leave the comfort and tranquility of civilized life in order to help people who were in need, and to bring the light of hope to places where it seemed to be eclipsed by misery, pain, and desperation.

But if Albert Schweitzer, who was not only a philosopher but also a medical doctor, concentrated a great part of his effort to the cure of the physical diseases of poor people, the humanistic activity of Professor McLean was directed to the level of the mind, and pursued the liberation of the human consciousness from those prejudices which divide mankind and very often assail the different religions, nations and civilizations. Thus, this philosophical activity reveals itself as a kind of “cure from illusions and delusions” which hinder the harmony of life on a global level – “cure” devised through the common endeavours of intellectuals (philosophers, sociologists, political scientists, cultural and educational researchers, and so on) from all over the world. The interdisciplinary, intercultural and really synoptic way of the philosophical approach to the issues treated is the most significant feature of the philosophical work of Professor McLean, which, in its deepest sense, goes beyond pure academic philosophy and reveals itself as humanism. Through the medium of philosophy, he consecrated his efforts to a “mission” to bring peace and harmony to the world, to contribute to reciprocal enrichment between different cultural traditions and the establishment of a final harmonious unity of mankind – a unity in which oppositions between civilizations are replaced by mutual tolerance and understanding; where cultural differences give way to mutual respect and acceptance of otherness, and where the international contradictions are overcome through wisdom and peace-oriented actions. That is why he was characterized as a “philosopher in the service of humanity” or as an “architect of dialogue.”

An *Ummah*, a Man of Wisdom and a Priest

Sayed Hassan Akhlaq

It is not just that we lost a distinguished colleague, a mentor, and a friend; it is not just that the philosophical community lost a great philosophical bridge-builder and dedicated scholar, but all of humanity lost a great treasure when Professor George F. McLean passed away on September 6, 2016. Father McLean was an *ummah*. While the word *ummah* is normally used in the Islamic context to refer to the faithful community and nation, the Quran once mentions Abraham as an *Ummah* (the Quran, 16:120), to highlight his unique status. To be sure, the loss of Father McLean was more than the loss of an individual. It was the loss of a community, a nation. As a Farsi poem says, “The eye missed one individual, but the intellect missed more than one thousand ones.” This statement is not an exaggeration, for two reasons.

We have two terms, in Islam, to refer to one who is engaged in philosophical activity: philosopher (Filsuf) and wise man (Hakim). While they are distinct, they overlap often: for example, you may hear of Peripatetic philosophy (Falsafih) and Peripatetic wisdom (Hikmat), or the Illuminative philosophy and the Illuminative wisdom. There is an association between wisdom and divinity, but not between philosophy and divinity. Wisdom sees the nature (Mahiyyat) of things, but philosophy examines the qualities of things.¹ According to the Quran, God is Hakim (the owner of Hikmat) (i.e., 2:129; 3:6 & 18 & 62 & 126; 6:18 & 73; 29:26), the Quran itself is described as the book of Hikmat (3:58; 10:1; 36:2), and the prophetic mission is to deliver wisdom to people (i.e., 2:129; 3:48; 4:113). Thus, wisdom is more relevant to the meaning of life and the true and total connection of the person to the world. It goes beyond the senses and sees the unity behind the diversity. Philosophy can separate the subject and object, but wisdom cannot isolate the human from the world. Moreover, wisdom is spread among all nations and in various ways of life. People may ignore philosophy, at least to some extent, but they cannot ignore wisdom. Some nations might consider their philosophy their own property, but wisdom belongs to all humanity. Philosophy, more or less, is accompanied by reason, but wisdom has greater resources, including reason, intuition, and self-awareness. Of course, everybody is encouraged to seek wisdom, but this is not necessarily the case with

¹ See William Sweet, George F. McLean, Oliva Blanchette, and Wonbin Park, eds., *Philosophy Emerging from Culture* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2013), 75.

philosophy. Professor McLean reflected all the wonderful features of wisdom as far as was humanly possible.

The Quran reminds us that good is given to those who listen to all things, and then follow the best of them. They receive guidance from God and will possess understanding (39:18-19). Professor McLean was one of these wise men. He was a philosopher, but he was much more than a philosopher. He was curious to learn about and from other civilizations, and he followed the truth wherever it led. He saw the world as a place full of great meaning, but which needs to be explored. Professor McLean saw clearly the unitary meaning behind the various historical and cultural phenomena. He had the exceptional talent to both understand and to explain that the journey of human beings from the beginning to the present time, from totemism to civil society, and from India to Africa, is a *Way to God*. McLean deserves the good tidings of the Quran, because he was really listening to the divine word. He was open and embraced other cultures. He build a Center to deconstruct the heavy Western tradition of knowing “others” only through Western eyes. Professor McLean lay the foundation for others to speak for themselves. And I have to testify that he had an extraordinary gift of understanding the other, as he already lived with them. He was an upright and wise man who could see how far human beings can seek God in a world filled with technology, science, media, and politics.

Father McLean’s wisdom allowed him to go beyond the formal limitations of philosophy as well as narrow religiosity and dogmatism. There is a text of the Quran that says to Muslims why and how far Christians are close to them, it is because they have priests and monks who are not proud of themselves, but rather who are inspired by the truth, and witness to it (5:82-83). The last verse clearly calls such people “faithful” (Mu’min), and rejects the popular misconception that “the people of the book” are unfaithful or infidels. McLean was a true and humble priest who was faithful to the Quranic revelation and witnessed it by his life. He was not merely a theoretician of religious pluralism, who talked of the *Multiple Paths to God*, but had himself experienced the elements of truth in other faiths and cultures. This experience could be seen through his knowledge, respect, and insight. Father McLean was an inspiring example of faith – of a faith that is associated with the openness, welcoming, forgiveness, kindness, humility, and everlasting search for the truth. He was, indeed, an enlightened person of deep faith, who saw himself as one who is seeking and approaching the truth, rather than possessing it.

To conclude, McLean was a clear example of a combination of philosophy and religion, of reason and revelation – and a response to those who believe that these two are irreconcilable. He was not only a man of knowledge and faith, he was a man of ethics. In spite of his high position

in philosophy, he was approachable and reachable. When I used to talk to him in my poor English, he was patient and not judgmental. When there was a need, Father McLean was ready to lend a hand. He was brave enough not just to confront new ideas, but even to challenge his own views. He was an extraordinary example of how beauty, kindness, and knowledge can come together. The first time I saw McLean was in Qum, Iran in 2003; the last time in Washington, DC, a few months before his death. Every day in between, I came to learn more both about and from him, and I marveled at his unique way of bringing the West and the East closer together. For McLean, the dialogue among civilizations was, in a way, a movement towards a “fusion of horizons,” where humanity would come to acknowledge more fully and to be grateful for the beauty of life, the effect of benevolence, and the spirit of knowledge. And McLean himself was very grateful to be part of this, as his last words were “Thank you, Thank you, and Thank you.”

A Letter to George McLean

Edward Alam

Dear Father McLean,

I am not sure how and when this letter will arrive to you, but I am confident that somehow, someday, it will. My confidence springs not from any superficial optimism or wishful thinking, but from something you taught me: hope. Nearly forty years have passed since I first met you, but the power of your presence as someone who embodied hope is not only still with me, but is getting stronger as I move into late middle age. It is not that I am becoming more optimistic. On the contrary, I see and feel more than ever the inevitable despair and inescapable tragedy built into the very order of things. The world is in bad shape and getting worse at every imaginable level. Those who speak “optimistically” about the wonders of how smart technology has the potential to fix, and is already fixing, so many of our contemporary problems, seem to forget the root causes of these problems in the first place; it’s a vicious circle. No, I think I will take the side of a Walter Benjamin and claim we are at the point of no return. We are heading, one might describe it, for a cliff, and the only option left is to just slow down the inevitable. And, yet, there is this other reality, what I call hope, not optimism, but hope. So the first thing I would like to express is my gratitude to you, Fr. McLean, for keeping hope alive, even in your death, and perhaps even more so in your death, because the international network you have created is still strong, and there seems to be an awareness among those who have been influenced by your life and work, that it is now our responsibility to deepen the bonds of world-wide friendship and understanding established during your long and fruitful and dedicated life. One way of doing this is to cultivate our understanding and possession of the hope which your life exemplified. Thus, the following reflection on hope is intended to do just that. I address it to your global network of friends and colleagues and fellow philosophers, and I dedicate it to you!

Some Reflections on Hope

How does any human being who lives life at any level of human depth and empathy continue to hope? What is hope? How do we get it? Where does it come from? These are the questions I have settled on for this reflection and, of course, such perennial questions need a lifetime to answer, but I will say just a few things about what I think hope is and

about how people like George McLean get and keep it – even in seemingly hopeless situations. My immediate and evident answer is that hope is a theological virtue which is divinely given to those who are disposed to ask for and receive it; that is what Fr. McLean taught and believed. He was disposed to receive and ask for this heavenly grace, and it sustained and indeed perfected him through many years of difficult challenges and trials. But, as he was also quick to point out, the *philosophical* presuppositions involved in saying that grace works upon and even perfects nature are complex and demand much elaboration. How is someone disposed to receive the grace of hope? Is there some dynamic built into human nature which disposes it to receive a transformative power that is not inherent to that nature? Or is hope built into human nature?

There are those who would say that these are purely theological enquiries and clearly outside the realm of philosophy proper. This observation is understandable *per se*, but reveals an ignorance of not only one of the most foundational philosophical treatises in Western philosophy, namely, Aristotle's *Ethics*, but also an ignorance of what is perhaps the most important philosophical work on hope in modern times. For if Nietzsche is *the* philosopher of Power, Heidegger *the* philosopher of Being, and Whitehead *the* philosopher of Process, then Ernst Bloch is par-excellence *the* philosopher of Hope.¹ That he was not only not a 'believing' theologian, but among rather the brightest and best of all the intellectual giants in Western Marxism, pretty much puts to rest any reticence about hope and the necessarily-related topics of nature and super-nature not being properly philosophical. His *magnum opus*, simply titled *The Principle of Hope*, winds its way through "ethics, aesthetics, mythology, natural law, and anthropology to fantasy, popular culture, sexuality, religion, and the natural environment."² To say that, for Bloch, hope is ontologically built into the very structure of the entire cosmos would be an understatement; better to say that, for him, "[b]eing itself is hope in its very essence, such that without this inner striving it would lapse into nothingness."³ One gets the impression, indeed, that Nietzschean power, Heideggerian being, and Whiteheadian process all coalesce in Bloch's metaphysical principle of hope, wherein the good, and the true, but especially the beautiful, gradually work their way onward and upward toward the future, slowly taking their course through history, not in a strictly deterministic way, but in a way rather that rescues and recovers that genuine sense of responsibility for the future found in the writings of

¹ See Terry Eagleton, *Hope without Optimism* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 90. Many of the ideas in this reflection were inspired by this excellent work.

² *Ibid.*, 93.

³ *Ibid.*, 95.

Marx – a reading which was lost in the gross Soviet misinterpretations of Marx. Bloch's life, in fact, testifies to this in many ways, for it took him a long time to finally see through the Soviet propaganda, which he himself helped design and disseminate during the years when he was convinced that Nazi ideology and Hitler were the most prevailing threats to human civilization.

In the light of Bloch's philosophical masterpiece on hope, perhaps the questions I raised earlier take on greater significance, even if my answers are not perfectly commensurate with his. For Bloch does not appear to hold, as I do, or as Fr. McLean did, that hope is ultimately a divine grace which may be "implicit in human nature, but is not a product of it."⁴ I do not mean we should despair because grace and hope are ontologically foreign to nature, but only that we should not presume they will inevitably come to our rescue because they are inherent and organic processes already built in.

I have suggested that there may be some dynamic built into human nature which *disposes it* to receive a transformative power that is not inherent in that nature. I suggest that we accept with Nietzsche that what is also built into nature is the horror of tragedy. But, rather than despair before this horror, or create a superman to transcend it, we need to ask humbly and with the confidence of children for the divine grace of hope to face and transform it by going through it. This is what George McLean did. This is what *I hope*, through his example, we can do!

⁴ Ibid., 127.

Filial Testimonial in Honor of Fr. George F. McLean, O.M.I.¹

Robert Peter Badillo, M.Id

A Bit of Context Prior to Meeting Fr. McLean

Ever since I was a youngster, born of Puerto Rican parents in the South Bronx, I had a precocious fascination for the meaning of human life. To learn from my pious mother and the Dominican Sisters at St. Luke Church about God the Father and the Son and Mother Mary, in preparation for my First Holy Communion, furnished me with answers that were intimately confirmed in my spirit: that I was a child of the eternal Father, brother of Jesus Christ, who died for me and nourished me with his very own life in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, and a son of Mary my loving Mother, who cared for me, my family, and everyone who walked on the earth. At St. James School, experiencing puppy love firsthand when I first beheld youthful Julie by the church schoolyard, I read with delight Dickens' *Great Expectations* to the last page wondering whether poor Pip would gain the hand of the so-alooof Estella. Then came Cardinal Hayes High School, with Mr. Kroczak, who introduced me to Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* and world literature, including the Greek tragedies; indeed we read, among others, *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, and discoursed about whether she was right or wrong in burying her brother notwithstanding imperial decree.

By the time I went to Fordham University, I was an earnest disciple, a romantic with a tender heart for human tragedy. There, as a freshman, I chose to study psychology in the hope of accompanying (empathizing with) those without clear meaning in their own lives, equipping myself so that I might help others to perceive and experience the aperture to transcendence. Yet to my consternation, I discovered that the pioneers in psychology, Freud and Watson, to name but two, were atheists, chained within an intellectual cavern and bereft of the passageway that leads to the contemplation of the supernal Light beyond. It was during this time that I met at Fordham Rose Calabretta,² a well-traveled graduate of the Jesuit

¹ I am grateful to Fr. Dr. Luis Casasús, General Superior of the Idente Missionaries, and Dr. Glenn Statile of St. John's University for their judicious observations on this article.

² Rose Calabretta completed shortly thereafter a Ph.D. at Fordham University with a dissertation on the fact/value distinction in Kant's three Critiques, a version of which Fr. McLean published under the title "Methodology in Crisis: The Fact-Value Dichotomy as a Metaphysical Issue," in eds. Christopher Wheatley, Robert P. Badillo,

university, who had encountered a new religious institute of consecrated life in Munich, the Idente Missionaries,³ that was founded in Spain by Father Founder, Fernando Rielo, who proposed a new metaphysical model that sought to provide rational support for Christ's revelation of the Godhead as constituted by relational persons rather than by the typical philosophical conception of God in terms of an identity-laden conception of the Divinity. In association with members of the Idente Missionaries,⁴ there arose in me a vocation to learn the Christian philosophical tradition such that, by mid-spring semester of my freshman year, I decided to see the philosophy chairperson, the genteel Fr. Gerald McCool, S.J., and express my desire to be admitted as a philosophy major.

Providential Meeting of Fr. McLean

That same spring semester, on Easter Sunday, April 14, 1974, I professed private vows in the New York residence of the Idente Missionaries in Astoria, Queens, and was subsequently sent by Father Founder, Fernando Rielo, to continue my philosophical studies at The Catholic University of America. At the time I could not have known what wonders Providence had in store for me, but this became abundantly clear when Fr. McLean entered the classroom and began to teach. I knew that I was before a consummate master who would lead me to fulfill my stated vocation as a student of philosophy. My eternal Father placed me under the paternal solicitude of my mentor and friend: Reverend Father George McLean, O.M.I., who was to guide me through the labyrinth of Western philosophy and, especially, metaphysics, explicating, with the greatest deference, the philosophers and their worldviews, discovering at every turn, nuggets of truth, goodness and beauty in the immensity of the philosophical landscape, both classical, modern and contemporary.

While completing MA courses at Catholic University, my teaching schedule at a DC multicultural high school for immigrant students, especially from war-torn El Salvador, made it difficult for me to take courses with Fr. McLean, so that we were not communicating regularly

Rose B. Calabretta, and Robert Magliola, *The Humanization of Social Life: Volume I: Theory and Challenges* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004), 51-70.

³ On July 4, 2009, Benedict XVI elevated the Idente Missionaries to the status of a religious institute of consecrated life of pontifical right.

⁴ Rose Calabretta formed part of a study group, which I joined, together with Elaine Schenk (who later completed a Ph.D. at New York University on Marcel) and David Murray (who now is an Idente missionary priest and Director of the World Conferences of Metaphysics celebrated triennially in Rome under the aegis of the Idente School); the group was under the guidance of María del Carmen García, pioneering student of the thought of Rielo.

then. Yet, in prayer, when it came time to write the MA thesis, it became clear: *Ite ad Fr. McLean*. That same afternoon, I boarded a bus to the Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, next to the campus of the Catholic University, and as I walked up the winding path to the Shrine, there, at that very moment, Fr. McLean was exiting the doors of the Shrine. We embraced, he with paternal affection and I with filial affection. I confided to him that I wanted to be a metaphysician, that I wanted him to teach me how. He invited me to dinner across the street from the Shrine, to Oblate College where he lived. There he spoke of two possible thesis directions: either to do a critical review of Alexander Mourelatos' work on Parmenides, the so-called "father of metaphysics," titled *The Route of Parmenides*;⁵ or to do a study on Jacques Maritain's *The Degrees of Knowledge*. Without hesitation I opted for the former: to delve into the reasoning of the originator of the Western metaphysical tradition. At the end, even though I was critical of the identity-ridden implications of Mourelatos' *speculative predication*, for which Fr. McLean had a more favorable reading, Fr. McLean walked with me and supported my reading with simplicity and meekness of spirit.

Later, after having completed my doctoral studies at The American University, where I had adventurously sought new challenges, when it came time for the writing of the dissertation, I again sought the wise counsel of Fr. McLean, and this in the light of the challenges of post-modernist thought. He then introduced me to Jürgen Habermas, a modernist philosopher who championed communicative reason without yielding to the vagaries of irrationalism. For the dissertation, I read Habermas' *ideal speech situation*, as reminiscent of a Platonic ideal, whose formal rules for discursive engagement purportedly provided orientation for adjudicating truth and normative claims without appeal to metaphysical groundings. Though Fr. McLean urged me to then make the move to show how the formality of the ideal speech situation can be harnessed in terms of the classical metaphysical One and the transcendental properties of Being, I went, rather, in the direction of Fernando Rielo's Binitarian notion of the metaphysical One, as consisting at the metaphysical level of two *personal* and hence *dialogical* beings who would *de facto* be the existing realization of the exigencies of the ideal speech situation and its demand for transparency and equanimity. Indeed, Fr. McLean supported this critical approach to Habermas, and encouraged me to read the writings of Kenneth Schmitz who most incisively indicated the philosophical relevance of the study of the Christian Trinity: "[the] disclosure into the inherent 'sociality' of the divine life has not yet been

⁵ Alexander P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1970).

cultivated in philosophy to the degree that it needs to be done.”⁶ Later, he asked that I read Habermas in the light of St. Thomas’ transcendental properties of Being, which gave way to a book which he published under the title of *The Emancipative Theory of Habermas and Metaphysics*,⁷ i.e., for the purposes of this work, *Thomistic metaphysics*.

Fr. McLean’s *raison d’être*

Then, on October 12, 1991, while in Budapest, Fr. McLean happened to meet Fr. Jesús Fernández Hernández, Apostolic President of the Idente Missionaries, and María del Carmen García, General Superior of the sisters’ branch of the Idente Missionaries, whom I had previously introduced to him. There, in a residence for visiting professors, they discussed possible avenues of collaboration. The next morning, before his early departure, he wrote a manuscript letter dated October 13, 1991, addressed to Professor Fernández and Professor del Carmen García, the body of which I transcribe below in its entirety, for it reveals the *raison d’être* of this man of God with a universal heart.⁸

It was a great pleasure to meet you last evening and to find that Providence is guiding us along the same paths: I hope and pray that your work will be of great success in bringing the spirit of Christ and the Holy Trinity to new life in Eastern Europe.

In trying to discern God’s plan in bringing us together, it occurs to me that it is probably related to Dr. Badillo. As I mentioned, I consider him my prime continuation in metaphysics especially as it is a spiritual mission. At present I am getting older and wonder about God’s plan for the work I have been doing. It has always seemed to be that of a catalyst to bring to life the Spirit in the work of philosophers. Now it appears more complex, to take a longer time than my life, which raises the question of how it might be continued as part of a broader project such as yours.

All of which brought to mind during the night that I might suggest/request/invite you to have Robert Badillo work with me in Washington for some years as an alter ego doing everything I do, learning everything I know, meeting everyone I meet so

⁶ Kenneth L. Schmitz, “From Anarchy to Principles: Deconstruction and the Resources of Christian Philosophy,” *Communio: The International Catholic Review*, 16 (Spring 1998): 87.

⁷ Published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in 1991.

⁸ Letter printed with permission of Professors Jesús Fernández and María del Carmen García.

that he might link our efforts and put our contacts and teams and works at each other's disposition.

I do not see this as simple repetition as my efforts have been to serve as a catalyst to raise the issues and stimulate the efforts through which the Spirit might come more to the consciousness of philosophers and their cultures in our times. It might be called the evangelization of culture or being at the service of Christ as He works in the history of people in their pilgrimage toward Him. My sense is that this is coherent with the concerns of the *Idente School*,⁹ though without the proximate goal of uniting Christians or being formally Church; but rather with the sense that all are moving toward Christ in their many modes and through their many crucifixions, that Christ is working in their history and thus that there is much to be done to promote the emergence of the image of Christ, not only in the baptized but in all and entire peoples as their cultures evolve and as they structure and implement their social and community and personal lives now, and not just at some future time, and doing this at the level of the fundamental reflection on being at the level of metaphysics.

Please do take this suggestion/request/invitation into your prayerful concerns and considerations. I will be in Washington from December 18th and can be contacted via my address there at any time.

With all of God's blessings in your work,

George F. McLean

This masterful piece of literature, written in the very early hours before his departure from the residence, provide insight into the spiritual depths that moved this charismatic master who lived to foster the plenitude of truth and goodness and beauty in all of God's children. In the next section, I will provide a concrete direction in which his concerns may be approached.

Suffice it here to say that, with respect to working with Fr. McLean, the Father Founder, Fernando Rielo, in late October of 1991, directed me to relocate from Philadelphia, where I was teaching at the time at Villanova University, to Washington, DC to work with Fr. McLean at the Oblate College while completing my theological studies for priestly ordination. By January 1992 I was in Washington, DC, where Fr. McLean,

⁹ The *Idente School*, a school of thought founded by Fernando Rielo, is the direct depository of his metaphysical, theological and literary works for its study and dissemination, under the direction of Fr. Dr. José María López Sevillano.

retired from teaching at the philosophate at Oblate College, recommended to the authorities there that I teach, in his stead, his courses in Metaphysics and Natural Theology, while completing the Master of Divinity for priestly ordination. But two years later, in November 1994, the Idente Missionaries received the care of their first parish for the Archdiocese of New York, Santa Maria, formerly an Italian national church in the Bronx. Fr. Fernando Real, an Idente Missionary, was assigned as pastor, and my superiors indicated that I was to leave Washington, DC in order to prepare for priestly ordination with a view toward assisting Fr. Real. With heavy heart, I departed from Fr. McLean, who, of course, wholeheartedly acquiesced to the will of the superiors. Arriving in New York in January 1995, a few months later, on the occasion of my ordination to the diaconate on April 8, 1995, I asked Fr. McLean to come to Santa Maria Church so that he could perform the ceremony of investiture at which he would help me vest with the dalmatic of the deacon before His Excellency Patrick Sheridan, Auxiliary Bishop of New York. There are no words to describe the ineffable reverence and veneration that I bore this holy priest and spiritual father.

Promising New Directions

During the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, Fr. McLean and I met in Rome where we both participated, with others of his collaborators, including Juan Carlos Scannone, Kenneth Schmitz, Hugo Meynell, Tran Van Doan, William Sweet, and Oliva Blanchette in the *Metaphysics for the Third Millennium Conference*, organized by the Idente School as part of the official Vatican events celebrating the stated Jubilee. There Fr. McLean, a plenary speaker, presented a seminal paper titled “Metaphysics and Culture: the Bridge to Religion,”¹⁰ in which, among other insightful directions, he articulated, especially to Christian philosophers in view of their religious sensitivity, the need for more work on two fundamental areas of concern, viz.: first, reflection on a God who, in contradistinction to the Aristotelian Prime Mover, indeed “*does know and love us*”; and, second, reflection on human persons in view of their *sacredness* as constituted in relation to God and others. These two areas, as further understood as a function of the letter above in which he discloses his vision of the peoples of the world permeated by a divine presence that orients cultures and their varied expressions in the direction of a unifying summit of fraternity, demands serious reflection, and, I believe, should animate future studies furthering his worldwide project consisting of both

¹⁰ George F. McLean, “Metaphysics and Culture: A Bridge to Religion,” in *Proceedings of the Metaphysics for the Third Millennium Conference* (Rome, September 5-8, 2000), 187-210.

symposia and publications. His integrating and non-reductive vision endeavors to unite all the peoples of the world with a common supernal origin/ destiny and sacred nature.

Please allow me to provide some indices of how Fr. McLean's concerns can be addressed. I previously examined these same concerns succinctly in a paper titled "McLean's Millennial Vision in the Light of Rielo's Genetic Metaphysics,"¹¹ that proffers Rielo's call for substituting the vacuous and tautological pseudo-principle of identity, as Rielo terms it, for the living *genetic principle* or more properly the *genetic conception of the principle of relation*. Briefly put, Rielo contends that all putative metaphysical proposals advanced within the history of philosophy share a common deformity. All incorporate, either explicitly or implicitly, the so-called Original Sin of metaphysical speculation contained in the Parmenidean principle of identity,¹² purporting that A is A or that *every being is itself and nothing other than itself*: such a being therefore being utterly *in* itself, *with* itself, *by* itself, *about* itself, *for* itself, and hence wholly without intrinsic or extrinsic relation. To apply this so-called principle to the Absolute would be tantamount to elevating to absolute a hermetically-sealed Being, a logical tautology, *in* itself and *with* itself, and hence absolutely *bereft* of intrinsic and extrinsic relation that, as such, would render it unable to serve as an agent of creation, for creation necessitates that the Creator be eminently relational first within and then without, i.e., in relation to what it creates and to what it maintains in existence.

Rielo contends that his relational conception of God provides the ground for a God who "*knows and loves us.*" The metaphysical Absolute cannot be constituted by one self-same absolute, the *unum simpliciter*, bereft of inner relation or distinction, as the classical Parmenidean conception holds, or as an absolute ego, if such an "absolute" is conceived as conscious, as the Aristotelian conception contends; but, instead, by an Absolute that is formed intrinsically by two complementary relational beings that, constituting the metaphysical One, the *unum geneticum*, is accessible to reason without the aid of theological faith. Rielo sees his work as explicating what he takes to be Christ's original metaphysics, implicit especially in the Gospel of John, when he declares: "*Pater et ego*

¹¹ "McLean's Millennial Vision in the Light of Rielo's Genetic Metaphysics," in eds. William Sweet and Hu Yeping, *To the Mountain: Essays in Honour of Professor George F. McLean* (Taipei: Fu Jen Catholic University Press, 2004), 267-286.

¹² Fernando Rielo, "Hacia una nueva concepción metafísica del ser," in *¿Existe una filosofía española?* (Madrid, Spain: Editorial Fernando Rielo, 1988), 119-20 [English translation my own].

unum sumus” (Jn 10:30).¹³ If the metaphysical Absolute is ultimately constituted by two beings, two persons – given that, for Rielo, the *person* is the highest expression of being – then with certainty these two persons in an intrinsically complementary and loving relationship would, in turn, reflect this loving complementariness in creation.

Moreover, regarding the issue of the sacredness of human persons, this resides, for Rielo, precisely in the fact that the human person, as in the case of the Absolute, cannot be defined identically, i.e., as a human being *in, with, by* and *for* itself, but genetically as “human person (+),” the *more* referring to the term which serves to define it. Since the notion of person is the supreme expression of being, the human person cannot be defined by anything inferior to a person. Whereas the divine persons mutually define each other, for Rielo the human person is defined by the *divine constitutive presence*, i.e., the *ad extra* indwelling presence of the Absolute in the human person. This indwelling presence renders the human being, a replica of the divinity, a mystical deity of the metaphysical Divinity.¹⁴

Fr. McLean always expressed great interest in how his major concerns for the relationality of the Divinity, the mystical sacredness of the *human person* (expressing something more than human being) and the inter-relatedness of peoples and their cultural expressions, and the bridge-building between cultures and traditions are enriched in the light of Rielo’s Binitarian metaphysical view and mystical aperture of humans to God. In 2002, when I was in India for missionary purposes and teaching at the Sacred Heart Philosophical College (Kerala), he prompted me to pursue these inter-relationships in the First Asian Regional Conference of the International Institute for Metaphysical and Mystical Studies (Rome), and, thereby placed me in contact with Dr. Warayuth Sriwarakuel of Assumption University in Bangkok, where associates of Fr. McLean – Tran Van Doan, Ranilo Hermida, Sr. Marian Kao, Manuel B. Dy and Edward Alam – presented papers on the theme of the *metaphysical ground of religious experience*.¹⁵ The following year, Dr. Alam organized an international conference at Notre Dame University, Beirut, on *Christian Mysticism*, in which, among others, William Sweet and I presented papers

¹³ The Trinitarian formula, for Rielo, is proper of theology, but the Binitarian notion of the Absolute is proper of metaphysics for it represents a rupture of the absolute enclosure of an identity conception of the Divinity.

¹⁴ Fernando Rielo, *Dialogue with Three Voices*, trans. David G. Murray (Madrid, Spain: Fernando Rielo Foundation, 2000), 144f. For Rielo Christ expresses here a constitutive or ecumenical presence of God in all human persons; the sanctifying presence or salvific presence is brought about by the sacrament of Baptism.

¹⁵ Dr. Sriwarakuel published the papers in *Prajña Vihara: The Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 3, No. 3 (January-June 2002) (Bangkok, Thailand: Assumption University).

on mystical foundations in the work of Edith Stein and Rielo respectively.¹⁶ Indeed, for decades Fr. McLean proposed that seminar themes be developed in the light of the spiritual, human, philosophical, cultural, artistic expressions proper to peoples in their own context.

Why not now propose worldwide symposia where various study groups would be dedicated to studying in-depth Fr. McLean's twofold concerns with the resources rooted in each cultural group's multifaceted endowments. What a great and enduring testament this would be in honor of Fr. George McLean!

Doxology

Be praised ever living God and Father for thy holiness and glory untold

Be praised for the human family which Thou hast fashioned and in which Thou dwells and which Thou hast destined to be eternally with Thee.

Be praised expressly for creating one such as George McLean abounding in thy ineffable attributes:

loving and merciful,
quiet servant,
whose volumes spoke in deeds
with an adventurous spirit soaring high

ultimately to Thee
who are our wings and our tears for release
like Keats's noble Ode to the Nightingale to rise to Thee
to be with Thee and the likes of Thee:

our sacrificial Oblate ascending
regal son of Mary the Immaculate.

Amen.

New York, the 29th of June of the Year 2017
Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul
88th Anniversary of the Birth of George F. McLean
LVIII Anniversary of the Foundation of the Identite Missionaries

¹⁶ The papers were published in *Christian Mysticism* (Beirut, Lebanon: Notre Dame University, 2004).

A Man out of Time and Place

William A. Barbieri

George McLean was a towering figure in the international scholarly community, an intellectual emissary for the ages. But, if his accomplishments have not yet been fully recognized in the United States, it is likely due in equal parts to his own pronounced modesty and humility, and to his propensity for “thinking ahead” of his peers and surroundings.

In the two decades I was acquainted with Professor McLean, I had the good fortune to take part in several of his renowned international faculty seminars at the Catholic University of America, join him for overseas conferences in China and Europe, and collaborate with him on diverse research projects. Only very gradually, however, did I come fully to appreciate the significance and magnitude of the underlying project that linked those efforts, and that represents the signature achievement of Professor McLean’s long and distinguished career: the creation of an immense global research network collaborating on an expansive inquiry into basic features of the human person and culture and their importance for our common life. Indeed, the more I have learned about his work, the more deeply impressed I have become.

It seems that in the late 1970s, George McLean – already a distinguished professor of metaphysics – developed a compelling vision of the potential of philosophical studies to contribute to constructive social and political change, and he began to institutionalize this vision with indefatigable organizational efforts and prolific scholarly work on a grand scale. This entailed crisscrossing the globe, organizing cooperative ventures among scholars of philosophy and the social sciences under the auspices of his Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), which has produced over three hundred volumes of research writings over the years. His collaborators have represented the cream of the intelligentsia in each country: members of national academies, professors at top universities, and leaders of professional organizations encountered in his years of service to international philosophical associations. At the same time, he showed an acute awareness of the importance of nurturing the next generation of scholars and, in addition to providing opportunities for many young academics through the activities of the RVP, he personally helped along the careers of a number of junior colleagues.

It was integral to his effort that no country was off-limits, and one of his amazing achievements was to forge ties throughout Eastern Europe and into Central Asia (not to mention East Asia, Africa, and the Middle East) well before the collapse of the Communist bloc. Professor McLean’s

pioneering ethos led him to form early links to the Solidarity movement in Poland; and later to build relations with the religious academies in the holy city of Qom, Iran – where he delivered a legendary set of lectures on philosophical hermeneutics, and subsequently promoted the study of human rights and the “dialogue of civilizations.” I myself was present in 2001 in Zhongnanhai (中南海) – the former imperial garden – in Beijing, at a meeting he arranged with the Chinese minister of religious affairs, to discuss how to improve religious and philosophical pedagogy in that country, and he went on to found a branch of his institute at one of China’s most prestigious institutes of higher learning, Fudan University in Shanghai. In Africa, Professor McLean’s institute has donated copies of its entire research output to university libraries throughout the continent. The list of scholars who worked with him reads like a Who’s Who of thinkers in each of these regions, and if there is any other academic nexus with a comparable global scope and concentration of intellectual energies, I would like to know of it.

The key to the success of this enterprise was George McLean’s guiding insight regarding the interlocking significance of culture (in the anthropological sense), the value of the person, and human freedom. The interplay of these elements has been reflected in virtually all of the projects he carried out, commissioned, or inspired, whether they dealt with applied topics like democratization and the promotion of civil society or with theoretical concerns such as cross-cultural understandings of human nature and transcendence. For my part, I suspect his organizing inspiration stemmed in more or less equal parts from his training in the Catholic humanist philosophical tradition, his engagement with the public intellectual and theologian of culture, Paul Tillich, in his early writings and doctoral thesis (written at roughly the same time as Martin Luther King Jr.’s dissertation on the same figure), and the formative time he spent as a young scholar in India, where he first encountered Hindu thought and culture. In any event, there can be no question about the power and prescience of his deeply global and humanistic vision.

Although the core of his network and the balance of his labors were concentrated in the broad field of philosophy, in assessing his achievements it is important to appreciate that Professor McLean also placed his stamp on the field of religious studies. As a Catholic priest, he always carried a degree of religious credibility that afforded him access and influence with scholarly representatives of religious traditions around the world. Acutely aware of the diverse ways in which religion, theology, and philosophy are constructed and interpenetrate one another in different cultural settings, he succeeded in using his focus on human values to foster dialogue within and between traditions across a broad range.

At the same time, he engaged Christian theologians in important and visionary ways. In 2009, for example, he initiated a nationwide collabora-

tion of scholars to explore the ramifications of shifting conceptions of secularity (and “post-secularity”) for the engagement of churches and other religious communities with the socio-political order. This effort was inaugurated by a public debate at Catholic University, bringing together the head of the U.S. Catholic Church, Francis Cardinal George, with the world-famous philosopher and theorist of secularity, Charles Taylor – a match, incidentally, that likely could have been arranged by no one other than George McLean. In the midst of preparations for this debate, I was bemused to discover that many of the issues concerning the role of religion in public life that our event seemed to address in a cutting-edge way had, in fact, been broached in a two-volume set that Professor McLean edited in the late 1960s, on theological and political debates surrounding the “Death of God” controversy. As usual, he was decades ahead of his times.

Another part of the success of Professor McLean’s global project has no doubt been due to his own irenic and humble disposition. As an organizer, he displayed an admirable ability to press his own overarching vision while fostering a sense of ownership among his various collaborators, by encouraging them to take responsibility for the specifics of his various research initiatives. His work was also always marked by deep sensitivity to divergent cultural sensibilities and a certain canniness in not binding his scholarly agenda to particular political causes or hardened positions in academic debates. These qualities enabled him to serve as a mentor to numerous scholars from different fields and settings, and to inspire creative work by many more. The stack of *Festschriften* in his honor that gradually piled up on his desk was but one testament to his impact on the broader scholarly community.

Late in his life, Professor McLean became convinced of the need for a kenotic approach for humanity’s spiritual and intellectual guides – for an ethic, that is, of self-emptying service and humility. It is therefore perhaps fitting to say, in conclusion, that George McLean gave us a stirring, perhaps one-of-a-kind example of what might be called intellectual servant-leadership, through which he ultimately emptied himself. His global impact in articulating a conception of human dignity and potentialities that is linked to the foundations of Western democratic societies but engages representatives of divergent cultures is immeasurable. In large part because he was always reluctant to tout his own achievements, the public remains largely unaware of the scope and scale of his contribution to the study of humanity. This is, I think, just how he would have wanted it.

Living What We Believe: Professor George McLean's Legacy

Ernest Beyaraza

Introduction

It is common to belatedly celebrate heroes, martyrs, conscientious objectors among social pillars. One reason is unawareness. Many people are better known and appreciated in their absence.

One way of fondly remembering Professor McLean is to contrast him with his fellow theologians, philosophers, anthropologists, linguists, historians, social scientists, among others, who got so swayed and carried away that they forgot to live what they believed. Aristotle's doctrine of the 'mean' comes in handy. While all these thinkers may be categorized as 'Western' philosophers, theologians, or any other area of study, and while they may be categorized as Christian or even Catholic thinkers, a patient and critical look at both extremes shelters one from the fallacy of generalization. At one extreme is Fr. Albert Mueller,¹ who held that certain people had no souls just to justify exploitation of their resources. Genuine people who think of him click tongues in disgust and disbelief, wondering whether he was a man of God at all. At the other extreme, those who think of Fr. George McLean snap their fingers in approval and with full confidence in their religious faith and humanity. Black people have had encounters with other people world-wide and made a mark on the world.² Many of those in the Americas, Middle and Far East, Asia, and Europe went there long before colonialism and imperialism, and suffered no apartheid or other form of discrimination. The propaganda, racism, and other ideologies are new strategies for colonization and exploitation. Standing against this lucrative strategy can be described as heroic for lack of a better term. While others look down on some people and dismiss them as sub-human, Professor McLean looked at every human being as God's

¹ Albert Mueller was a Belgian Jesuit Missionary who is on record for having sanctioned not only colonialism and imperialism but also the appropriation of natural resources on the ground that beings such as those inhabiting Africa and Latin America were not human beings because they had no souls.

² Deliberate efforts have been made to change history and remove the presence of certain peoples, particularly Blacks whose influence in the world dates long before the slave trade, colonization, apartheid and other mistreatments suffered by these Blacks. Counter efforts are being made to reveal the hidden or obliterated truth. Professor McLean comes in handy when he joins the bandwagon of these truth seekers and liberators of the oppressed.

creature. God creates no junk. While others dismiss ‘other peoples’ cultures’ as superstition-based, Professor McLean saw the Spirit of God in every culture. While others build walls between peoples, Professor McLean built bridges between them, thus living his Christianity which basically teaches love and unity.

A Personal Experience with Professor George McLean

As a distinguished member and leader of a number of world-famous academic organizations, Professor George McLean was always seen and heard at international conferences. My chance to see and hear him came at the beginning of the 1980s in Nairobi, Kenya, where I presented papers during the main conference on Metaphysics and the parallel one on Ethics. However, at that time, I was like Zacchaeus peeping at Jesus from a tree. My real chance to meet him came in 1987, when I was at Kenyatta University, Nairobi. I heard the bell, opened the door, and was surprised to see the very face I had seen only at a distance in the course of conferences. I felt humbled when he told me he was coming all the way from Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, looking for me. His striking simplicity and clarity of mind relaxed me. Soon, we related as if we had been close members of staff for ages. The message was clear. He was running a research center at CUA where a ten-week seminar took place every fall, and I was cordially invited to participate. I held my breath, waiting to wake up from a deep slumber any time.

This was the first time I travelled to America. It was in winter, and I had never seen any place where all the trees were leafless and ‘dry,’ as if struck by lightning. Worst of all, small needles mercilessly pricked me all over at J.F. Kennedy Airport. It was Professor McLean’s blue and warm jacket that saved me. The academic atmosphere soon took my mind off the weather. Working for ten weeks with academics from all continents, races, and religions, was yet another new experience. The duration was enough for research and the writing of a paper. The group, reflecting the world’s diversity, made interaction meaningful. Questions, answers, discussions and other forms of interaction were personal, vivid, and more realistic than academic.

In addition to benefiting from this teamwork and the CUA facilities, I was lucky to work very closely with Professor McLean. In Nairobi, I had been involved in planning the transition from The Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa (CHIEA) to The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). As a result, I had been awarded a KAAD scholarship for further studies. As I was told I could carry out my Ph.D. study anywhere in the world, I chose CUA, and approached Professor McLean for supervision. So, throughout my stay, my focus was divided between the seminar and preparations for my doctoral studies. While, eventually, the

sponsors took me to Bayreuth University in Germany, I had had ample time to be exposed to Professor McLean's academic expertise, ingenuity and thorough methods of work. I was staying with a Consolata Missionary, but Professor McLean insisted on inviting me to the house of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.). Here, I came to understand well the expression, 'be a philosopher but be also a man,' from Professor McLean's kindness and generosity. He balanced theory and practice very well, and had a good sense of humour, too.

Our cordial relationship continued. Whenever we met at conferences, the atmosphere was different. I no longer saw a lofty scholar, high up in the skies, but a human being. When I last visited Washington, DC, I made it a point to try to meet him, but was informed by Professor Jude Dougherty of the School of Philosophy, and Dr. Hu Yeping of the RVP, of his absence. I left America towards the end of August, and Professor McLean went to heaven a few weeks later, on September 6, 2016. May his light shine for all as his soul rests in eternal peace.

A Brief Confession

Andrew Blasko

I heard the name of Father George McLean for the first time in the mid-1980s in Sofia, Bulgaria, not long after he had founded The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. Father McLean had come into contact with scholars at Sofia University and elsewhere as a result of an earlier visit to Bulgaria in connection with the 1973 World Congress of Philosophy that had been held in Varna. Colleagues of mine in Sofia – I was living there at the time, studying at Sofia University – were asked to participate in a colloquium in Poland organized by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. Although not all of them were able to attend that gathering, the influence of Father McLean nevertheless resulted in the establishment of a committee of Bulgarian philosophers, some of whom were my colleagues and friends, who became associated with the activities of the RVP. What I heard from them about the Council piqued my curiosity about the nature of the organization and those who directed it, and I decided to learn more about them.

It subsequently became apparent to me that, over a period of years, I had gradually developed certain interests and had become involved in activities that shared certain goals with the RVP. Since the background for how this developed is important, particularly for how I came to meet Father McLean and began taking part in the activities of the Council, I will take the liberty of briefly explaining what I mean.

My scholarly interests had become focused on Bulgarian studies for reasons connected with the fact that the Bulgarian language and culture had played a formative role in medieval Christian Europe in the establishment of higher written culture among the Slavic nations. I had had the good fortune to become acquainted with important and influential figures in the field of Slavic and East European Studies in the United States, and they opened the door for me to become involved in the world of professional scholarship in Sofia. As my research progressed, opportunities to work more intensely for longer periods in European educational institutions presented themselves, and I did not hesitate to avail myself of the possibilities this created. This led to me being able to study and conduct research in Bulgaria, not as a visitor from an institute of higher education in another country who was hosted by a Bulgarian institution but, rather, as a regular participant in programs of study organized by Bulgarian educational institutions.

One direct consequence of this was that I was able to develop a close contact with Bulgarian culture in a way that was not often available to

visiting scholars who, for various reasons, not infrequently associated with each other more than with their local colleagues. Perhaps more importantly, I experienced in a very direct manner what it meant to live and work in a culture and community that was markedly dissimilar from that into which I was born. This was true in respect to daily life, professional relations, historical traditions, and personal interactions. In short, I came face to face with having to live and work in a manageable way in a community that was far from being familiar to me.

This led to me having to deal on a personal level with some of the basic issues that are at the center of concern in the work of the RVP, such as establishing dialogue and cooperation between different communities and cultures. This did not emerge initially as a scholarly interest – my dissertation in Sofia addressed the political philosophies of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre – but rather on the practical level, in the sense that I had to learn how to live in a place that was very strange to me in many ways. I had to confront the need to find ways in which to construct a space where I could live and work in what for me was a new world. I had to engage in personal dialogue and gain the interaction skills needed to break down ideological barriers when I presented my research to new colleagues and was challenged to listen to their views as well.

Colleagues from Sofia University and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences introduced me some years later to Father McLean, and I became more formally involved with the work of the RVP in Eastern and Central Europe. This included conference participation, working with publications, and attending the Council's annual seminar in Washington, DC. This drew my own work into closer engagement with the themes and topics that Father McLean had worked with for many years, such as interdisciplinary cooperation, creating opportunities for scholars to come together in dialogue, building ties between professional communities with differing – at times seemingly conflicting – traditions, and finding what in the history of a given community or nation can help point us towards a more fulfilling future in harmony. This last point may be better stated as coming to the realization that the cultures and ways of life of all peoples have something to contribute to making our own lives better – if we can get beyond our biases and listen to what they have to say.

These issues gradually became topics of importance in my own research and teaching. The clear and powerful example provided by Father McLean, as he travelled throughout the world, building bridges between people of greatly differing traditions, faiths, customs, and types of learning, left its mark on what I read and the ideas I incorporated into my writing and course preparation. As I taught students from a wide range of backgrounds – Asian, European, Christian, Islamic – I sought to find ways in which to communicate how our differing beliefs and ways of thinking – all that which we accepted as normal or anticipated in some

sense – brought us together more than they separated us, as long as we listened and spoke to each other carefully and respectfully. This is not merely a question of tolerance and openness, but, perhaps most of all, a willingness to accept and learn from that towards which we might well be prejudiced. Perhaps I was not always successful in this endeavor, but I recognized its importance and persisted.

The lessons I learned from the work of the RVP led to another result as well. While there clearly had been a significant change in the intellectual topics I addressed, I also found myself motivated by a sense of obligation to put these views into practice in a somewhat different fashion. I briefly described above the difficulties I encountered when I first began living in a markedly different cultural, intellectual, linguistic, and social environment. I must confess that there were moments when I would have welcomed some sort of a guiding hand in learning how to deal with the realities of not only a new way of daily life, but also of a new way of professional activity. As the situation in Europe began to change substantially after 1990, I met growing numbers of younger scholars who saw the importance of being able to play a role on larger professional stages, to make their voices heard, and to share knowledge with colleagues in distant corners of a globalizing world. However, they often had neither the collegial contacts, nor the linguistic skills to do so in a convenient manner.

Under the influence of Father McLean's example, I increasingly turned my efforts to helping build ties between such scholars, particularly in Eastern Europe, and the larger international communities in which they sought to participate. In subsequent years, I have sought to play the part of which I have been able in helping new generations of intellectuals establish contacts, gain experience, make contributions at international conferences and symposia, and have their books and articles be translated, edited, and published. Depending upon the circumstances, I have relied upon the resources of both the RVP and other organizations for these purposes.

None of these activities would have been possible without what I had learned from Father McLean, for I have sought to instill in my own work the spirit of the activities that he initiated, organized, and promoted. Coming to know him and some of those with whom he worked changed not only my work and the ways in which I work, but also how I have sought to conduct myself with others. Both his example as a scholar and his example as a person have left their deep mark on me, as they have on so many others.

George F. McLean

Tony Carroll

George taught by example that a liberating authority has meaning today. In an age of conflicting interpretations which require careful discernment, his gentle and kind hand led the RVP through its many projects, conferences, and publications. These ventures are being continued under the able leadership of its honorary president Professor Charles Taylor and also through the significant organisational resources of its executive director Dr. Hu Yeping, and others.

The volume on *Authority* for the *Faith in a Secular Age* research theme, which George asked me to facilitate, had several dimensions to it, which impacted on me and my former colleagues at Heythrop College. First, the theme came with a guiding orientation. George made it clear that the understanding of authority that we require in the church today should be kenotic. Other options have been and indeed still are on the table, but, through joining the meaning of authority to the practical needs of our global situation, George indicated to many of us in the RVP the better option to follow. This was helpful by pointing in the direction that we should embark upon as a team at Heythrop; indeed, it was indispensable for us in order to successfully complete the volume.

From the start of the project it was clear that only a team of colleagues could accomplish such a difficult task. No one scholar has the necessary insight or experience to accomplish this task alone. This is not to suggest that *Towards a Kenotic Vision of Authority in the Catholic Church* is the last word on the subject. It is not, but it is a serious engagement with the theme within the strengths, limitations, and constraints of the team at that time. That we were able to publish this prior to the March 4-5, 2015 conference, *Renewing the Church in a Secular Age*, held at the Pontifical Gregorian University under the patronage of the Pontifical Council for Culture, was a source of great joy, as it brought to completion the task which George had put in our charge. The input of both George and Hu to the volume was considerable from start till finish, and I hope for George's sake that he is not charged with any more copyediting in Heaven! He really does deserve some rest as I hope his tireless efforts for the RVP during his earthly life have disposed him to freely and gratefully receive. Not that George, of course, would have countenanced a false understanding of justification by works (as our Lutheran friends and colleagues would rightly avert us to) but, rather, that it is evident to all who knew George where the focus of all his efforts lay. It was the Lord whom George sought, and so it is with confidence in faith that we are

justified in hoping that he is enjoying a well-earned rest with the one he loved.

May George rest in peace and rise in glory.

“Cross Far Horizons”: A Tribute to George Francis McLean

Karim Douglas Crow

After I met Professor Emeritus George McLean in Kuala Lumpur in 2003, I was drawn deeper into the global network of thinkers and educators which he worked so hard to take root and foster. I quickly came to regard him as an old friend or a relative that one trusts implicitly. I owe to him a growing appreciation of the historical significance of our pluralist cultural heritage for the cosmopolitan era now being born, and of the great potentialities that diverse human cultural and religious experience harbour for a more peaceful, equitable and dignified existence.

McLean may aptly be compared to the intrepid 10th century Muslim voyager and sympathetic observer of world religions and cultures AL-Mas’ūdī (d. 956 CE)¹ who, in remarking upon his own tireless travels seeking out new peoples and cultures for his unique study of world history *The Narratives of Time* (now lost), observed of his labours:

Time did not cease to fling him cross far horizons,
beyond the reach of caravans.

This comparison is all the more relevant, given Mas’ūdī’s deep engagement with philosophy. Commenting on Mas’ūdī’s vision, L.E. Goodman portrays it as an integrated ideal “preserving and interrelating achievements in the arts and sciences, with the wisdom of the sages, and the broad experience of humanity in law, ethics, rhetoric, theology, and government...as the memory of human culture.”² This applies well to Professor George McLean.

The following statement by Professor McLean from 2007 exemplifies his concern for inciting philosophic reflection upon the role that human experience has played and may still play for awakening cultural

¹ For this remarkable historian and student of comparative religions, see the informative study by Ahmad Shboul, *al-Mas’ūdī and His World. A Muslim Humanist and His Interest in non-Muslims* (London: 1979). He knew thirteen languages and visited societies from Europe and West Africa to China and Indonesia. He was able to identify the quotation from Plato’s *Republic* engraved in Syriac on the city gates of Harran (an ancient center of pagan astral worship in Southeast Anatolia).

² L.E. Goodman, *Islamic Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 190. The deep debt owed to Mas’ūdī by the North African social historian Ibn Khaldūn is rarely recognized.

transformation within societies in the ongoing process of realizing one's own authentic mode of modernity:

Given the global social-political and economic transformations underway, there is a need to shift into a period of social reconstruction. Philosophy may now draw upon the cultural resources of many world peoples and apply them in a creative retrieval of the dignity of persons and societies. What is sought is a new integration of humanity with nature, of persons with society, and of the secular with the sacred.

From his statement flow several questions: How do particularist values inherent to specific cultures or societies hinder the emergence of more adequate modes of discourse and thinking which may facilitate new integration? Conversely, how may the retrieval of universal human values and ethico-social ideals embedded in one's own particular religious and intellectual legacy, or latent in the rich spectrum of cultural resources found in a specific society, transform the constraints and limitations of particular societies today – in other words: *how may philosophy emerge from culture?* We may understand this task by envisioning 'philosophy' as embodying a universal and more adequate mode of discourse and thought (*not* necessarily more 'rationalist' in the post-Enlightenment sense); while 'culture' represents the multiplicity of our diverse particular legacies forced to rub up against one another in late-modernity. Asking 'how' invariably requires one to deal with 'what' and 'why.' Professor McLean was gifted with an ability to cross the boundary between one's own philosophic and intellectual legacy, inevitably culture-bound and needing to be critically unpacked and reexamined, and the complementary legacies of other peoples and societies or civilizations – which he often referred to by the word 'peoples.' Here we must bear in mind our present global context: the prevailing dominance of Euro-American economic, military and cultural presence impressed upon peripheral Asian, African, and South American societies (from the perspective of Immanuel Wallerstein, A.G. Frank, and Samir Amin's 'world-systems' analysis), amidst the systemic transition of civilizational dislocations in which we find ourselves. These dislocations include the eclipse of traditional social orders by urban marketised secularity, massive migrations within and across continents, and digital modes of being reshaping community and identity.³

The French Indologist Jean Filliozat (d. 1982) once raised the issue of obstacles hindering universal understanding between civilizations:

³ For this latter consult especially James Bridle, *New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future* (London: Verso, 2018).

It is a question worthy of examination to know whether there exists in all human beings a unique, identical structure of the mind or are there several, distinct and irreducible to one another. In other words, it is a fundamental problem for the science of man to determine whether the differences in culture and the divergences of ideas in the great civilizations are due only to the specific circumstances of the evolution of each and whether these civilizations can agree in their essence, or whether on the contrary, a radical difference in the nature of the minds prevents a profound mutual understanding...⁴

Undoubtedly, Professor McLean resolved this question by affirming the possibility of an essential congruence of minds. Yet he did so without minimizing the obstacles facing those seeking reciprocal understanding, nor by denying diversity and the seeming incommensurability of human cultures. His approach is grounded on the promotion of philosophic reflection by means of comparative analysis with reciprocal scrutiny of the cultural format or framework of living societies. A key concept for his resolution was the notion of ‘complementarity,’ derived from the Renaissance humanist Cusanus (d. 1464), rather than of clash. I observed that Father McLean developed a special skill for sustaining one’s will to focus on methods and strategies, on the best means to achieve worthy ends, and upon the creative imagination needed to rethink and envision afresh the possibilities and promise of augmenting the common life mediated by the specific culture into which one was born. Working with McLean taught one that the dialogic intent is to better inform, reciprocally exchange, mutually explore and arouse critical thought – so that peoples of differing even competing cultures are enabled to render a more adequate response to the needs facing their societies. The sought for response requires a self-critical understanding of one’s own intellectual and civilizational resources, joined with a deeper grasp of the underlying perspectives and conceptions of fluid-modernity spread globally by Euro-American cultures and polities.

Something lacking in our world is not emotional empathy, but cognitive empathy – we have difficulty seeing and comprehending things from the viewpoints of other people. Cultural transformation requires the reception and accommodation-domestication of seemingly opposing intellectual and cultural legacies, as well as healing the split between an exclusivist mindset vs. an inclusive open mind. Professor McLean’s work represents a significant model of European and Anglo thought attempting to interpret and comprehend (even at times to assimilate and integrate?) other cultures. He was primarily concerned to demonstrate that other

⁴ Jean Filliozat, “The Western Interpretation of Indian Thought,” in his collected articles *Religion – Philosophy – Yoga*, trans. Maurice Shukla (Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), 311; from remarks he delivered in Saigon in 1949.

‘peoples’ may play an ever more significant role in an emergent global civilization or confluence of cultural currents. Nevertheless, it is legitimate to ask whether the prevailing Euro-American core culture is capable of assimilating all other cultures by *integrating the findings about them into its own general knowledge*, into the global culture toward which our planet is tending, or will it assimilate the ‘peoples’ by *subsuming them for its own purposes?*

George McLean possessed a mind open enough to contain multiple cultures at once, and judicious enough to know how to harmonise and integrate them.

A final note: For many years, George McLean devoted particular attention to Islam and the Islamic world. He pursued research into Islamic philosophical theology with Father Georges Anawati in Cairo (Institut Dominicain d’Études Orientales) in 1991 and 1993),⁵ and he also lectured and spent significant periods of time *inter alia* in Lahore (The Iqbal Lecture, 1999), Tashkent, Kazakhstan, Tehran, Qum, Xinjiang, Kuala Lumpur, and across Java in Indonesia.⁶ His strong interest in Islamic teachings was manifest not only in repeated visits to a variety of Muslim institutions of learning, but in the number of high quality Muslim students of philosophy who trained under him at CUA,⁷ and in his focusing on Islamic topics in the annual seminars convened by the RVP.

⁵ Georges Chehata Anawati (Ar. Qanawāfī, d. 1994) founded the *Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies* in Cairo in 1953 as a center for Christian and Muslim dialogue where Western scholars interacted with Muslim scholars and teachers. He actively collaborated with the select team of Muslim scholars on the edition of Avicenna’s *Kitāb al-Shifā’* (*The Healing*), prepared a bibliography for the millenary of Avicenna’s birth, and translated the *Metaphysics* of the *Healing* into French; he also edited texts by the Andalusian polymath Averroes and the Mu’tazilite magistrate ‘Abd al-Jabbār. Anawati opened philosophical theology in French Catholic circles to Islam, attracting like-minded scholars to Cairo forming a unique faith-based research institute.

⁶ To mention only three: his *Faith, Reason and Philosophy: Lectures at The Al-Azhar, Qom, Tehran, Lahore and Beijing* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000); his *Hermeneutics, Faith, and Relations between Cultures: Lectures in Qom, Iran* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2003); and his introduction and notes to al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty, Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, critical Arabic text established by Muhammad Abulaylah and Nurshif Abdul-Rahim Rif, English translation with introduction by Muhammad Abulaylah (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000).

⁷ These include scholars from Turkey, Iran, Egypt, India and Indonesia; and collaborators of the calibre of Seyed Hossein Nasr and GhulamReza Aavani. See the Festschrift volume for McLean’s 80th birthday, Karim D. Crow, ed., *Cultural Transformation and the Re-emergence of Falsafah* (Tehran, Iran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 2009).

These are just a few of his more notable achievements in a fruitful lifetime of work dedicated to civilizational rapprochement and inter-religious understanding through the lens of philosophy, dialogical hermeneutics and comparative ethics. His intellectual energy was deeply informed by lived personal faith as a Roman Catholic and by his openness to world cultures of the pluralist human family in all their diversity and cross-fertilization. McLean's odyssey from his early neo-Thomist training toward intensive exposure to and penetration of (monist) Hindu Vedānta and Buddhist traditions, liberal European-Anglo philosophies of text interpretation, Russian and Eastern European philosophic thought, Eastern metaphysical teachings (esp. China and Vietnam), African and South American traditions, and his late-blooming engagement with Islamic theology and philosophy, equipped him with an informed trans-national perspective rarely matched among his contemporaries West or East. Above all, his personal commitment, sincere humility and tireless labours endeared him to those who worked with him.

His personal odyssey testifies to a deepened understanding shedding the Euro-American centrism of his social and intellectual formation, and growing to encompass profound universal human values crossing all cultural boundaries.

George F. McLean: A Persevering Spirit Open to Each and All in Their Particular Cultural Context

H. Daniel Dei

As a testimony of affection and gratitude, these modest reflections are a small remnant of what the presence of Professor George F. McLean meant in my personal and academic life.

Professor McLean established a personal bond with each one of us, the members of the RVP and related organizations, and we always treated each other with a simple and reciprocal respect. The spirit of unity is contagious because, from this spirit, each one of us – even though from very different cultural backgrounds – came to learn what to do and how to move in various regions of the world – for example, when taking part in the activities of the RVP or in the conferences of the International Society of Metaphysics organized by Professor McLean.

I would like briefly to relate the story of a time in which I had the opportunity to have such an experience of unity, one that remains with me even now. Professor McLean's legacy and presence – and that of Hu Yeping and many of other professors who participated in that spirit of that entity called the RVP – have left a gratifying trace in not just mine but, I am sure, all of our hearts. Actually, my first connection with Professor McLean was born of the opportunity of a meeting held in the U.S., that encouraged me to continue to participate in a project initiated by him. It is a project that advanced in time and space from which we each speak and work, within the framework of the meaning of the dialogue of cultures.

If I remember correctly, it was in October 1981, at the Tenth Inter-American Congress of Philosophy (Tallahassee), that I had my first encounter with Father McLean. At that time, I did not know he was a priest. At his invitation I became a member, then, of the International Society for Metaphysics (I still remember a blue registration form.)

After that beginning and the gratuity of the invitation and my acceptance, almost providentially, other meetings followed, some of which I would like to highlight. For example, I will not forget the untimely feeling of my participation in the RVP pre-World Congress of Philosophy conference that took place in Boston in 1998. I arrived about noon at Boston College. The University was in vacation time and, therefore, mostly empty. It took me a while to find the place of the meeting. I will never forget the moment that I arrived in the meeting hall, when Professor

McLean gave a kind and sincere welcome to me. He let me leave my luggage in a corner of the room, and asked me to speak at the same afternoon for an hour because an English colleague had just announced his inability to be present. My participation at the conference in Boston was the beginning of a close relationship with many members of the RVP and the strengthening of my bond with all of them. All the participants were attentive and interested in my presentation. But it became a somewhat tense afternoon for me, as the audience raised many questions and I struggled with the limitations imposed by my lack of command of the English language. Everyone wanted to know more about what I had said, but I could not answer with fluidity. Then there was the generous intervention of a Spanish scholar, Pablo López, with whom I still maintain a close link. Professor McLean and others asked me to answer the questions in Italian because they knew our way of speaking in Argentina. In the end, it turned out to be an unforgettable happy moment.

At the conference in Boston, I also met James G. Colbert, who has since become a friend of many years and the translator of several of my books into English. I also met Professor Tomonobu Imamichi from Japan – I was especially impressed by his greeting with a bow – and Professor Oliva Blanchette; I had the pleasant opportunity to receive him later in Buenos Aires. I also cannot forget the conversation I had on that occasion with Professor Jean Ladrière, next to whom I had the honor of being invited to sit at the meeting at which we all agreed to elect Professor George F. McLean as President of the RVP. The same can be said about my special bond with Professor William Sweet, with whom I carried out some subsequent academic activities.

In short, this relationship with Professor McLean, the RVP, and its members has been a long one and continues to this day, and it has been one of the major milestones of my career. For example, I have been grateful to respond positively to the request that I help the RVP in coordinating the Latin American region, participating in the meeting in Rome, and helping with the publication of some edited volumes by authors from my region.

The most important thing, however, is the project and the dream of Professor George F. McLean in building bridges among cultures and civilizations. I often wondered about the origin of the spiritual strength of that special human being, Father George knew how to achieve so many dreams and visions in the academic and cultural world. His honest and simple vocation and his generosity led to the establishment of a network and a dialogue among so many human beings. His work remains for me a gift from heaven that we all should sustain and continue.

In Memoriam: Professor George F. McLean

Dariusz Dobrzański

On September 5, 2001, I arrived in Washington, DC, to attend a seminar organized by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP). The seminar was called *Models of Thinking about Reality: Individual, Communitarian, Global, Virtual, and Religious*.

The seminar drew together a broad spectrum of academics from all continents except South America. Our meetings started at 9.00 am and finished at 1.00 pm. They took place twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The seminar was conducted by Professor George F. McLean: a philosopher and priest in one person, the founding President of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, and a person whose contribution to this world deserves credit, praise, and admiration.

Our seminar on Tuesday, September 11, started with the host's warm welcome and his remarkably precise summary of the conclusions we reached during our previous Thursday debate. He sketched out the topics that were to be covered that day. I remember that we planned to discuss Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development.

After the introduction, the floor was given to the first speaker, who was sitting next to me. I believe it was Professor Abdillahi Hassan Jama, a Somalian and a political scientist working in Moscow. I remember he spoke good English. His presentation was dense with emotion and expressive gestures.

After the first presentation, as was the custom, we were supposed to have a break. However, suddenly a secretary entered unannounced, and gestured Professor McLean out of the room. We were alone for a few minutes. Someone opened the window wider. The warm air reminded everyone that summer was indeed upon us. Professor Abdillahi Hassan Jama calmed his mind by twirling a thin ballpoint pen in his fingers. Professor McLean had an identical one. I thought that these two had a connection. When McLean returned, he told us that something had happened in New York. It was a crash, a disaster – or something equally unexpected. “We must wait for more information,” he said, and suggested returning to our discussion about Kohlberg.

I am not able to recall today whether it was because of information about the attack on the Pentagon or the tragic news that kept coming from New York that we finished the meeting earlier than planned. During the first days after 9/11, the universities, schools and museums in Washing-

ton, DC were closed. The atmosphere was similar to that after the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981. Strangely, I felt at home.

From then on, our seminar was held in the shadow of the events related to the terrorist attacks. We watched the news reports and political commentaries on TV. We tried to wrap our heads around what had happened, and we made predictions about the consequences of the Global War on Terrorism.

There would be heated arguments, too. A few fellow seminar participants thought that America had got its just desserts. Others viewed the terrorist attack not from the perspective of politics, but human suffering. Despite our differences, we all agreed that the time of secure societies and liberal states were over, never to return again.

To vent off negative emotions, Professor McLean arranged a set of outdoor activities. The weather was great for taking car trips. I vividly remember our trip to the ocean. I recall visiting the Arlington National Cemetery, where John F. Kennedy's grave site features the well-known quote "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country." I have the feeling that this maxim was also the *credo* of the Professor's public activities.

Another day, we went to a Hindu theatre for a musical spectacle. I did not understand a thing, neither the form nor the content. But McLean liked the performance, and gently tried to convince me that one could listen to Hindu music with genuine pleasure.

There is a popular saying that "no one is irreplaceable." What this means is that you can replace someone with someone else, and neither the world nor the people in it will see much difference. Actually, that is not correct. There are people whose presence has a profound influence on the lives of others. Professor McLean was one of them.

Sometimes I wonder how people like him to exist in this world. McLean was a thoroughly beautiful person. He liked people. It made him happy to make others happy.

McLean, a philosopher and a priest, knew that there was a fundamental problem connected with good. To make a long story short, good thrives in the sphere of silence and anonymity. This is why he was not in the habit of talking about himself or his work – even though he left a permanent mark on the world, creating a true legacy.

When I think about McLean as a philosopher *sensu stricto*, one word comes to my mind: *emerging*, which is used to describe things and phenomena to emphasize their processual nature.

And when I think about McLean as a Catholic priest *sensu stricto*, the key word is *conversation*. A conversation with a priest is typically a confession. But not in this case. McLean not only patiently listened to his interlocutor, but often himself confessed to the "sin" of not knowing.

Probably that is why he never became Pope.

The Great Sorrow of Separation

Mamuka Dolidze

Father George McLean, such a prominent person and outstanding philosopher...It is so hard for me to accept that he has passed away! Father McLean left behind a significant philosophical legacy, yet, above all, he was considered to be a kind and gentle person, who devoted his life to good deeds. We, Georgian philosophers are very obliged to him. He was the pioneer of Georgian-American scholarly contact which, step by step, thanks to his cordial and sincere nature, nurtured the friendship between us. He loved his country and he wanted American philosophy to be open to the entire world. His Christian faith led him to collaboration with representatives of other religions. Father McLean was, indeed, a citizen of the world, aspiring to reach out to all people, inspired by his mission as a Christian man. We miss him so much. Love is wisdom and wisdom is love; that is the motto that we inherited from him. Everyone who knew him, loved him and treated him as a close friend. So did I. He taught me to view my philosophical ideas from the viewpoint of international friendship. Thanks to the mutual efforts of the well-known Georgian philosopher, Niko Chavchavadze, and Father George McLean, the borders of our thinking became wider. Through exchange programs, they created a philosophical bridge between Georgia and America. My gratitude is ineffable, since he showed the way to reconcile cosmopolitanism with true nationalism, teaching how to become a citizen of the world while maintaining love and loyalty to the homeland. The kindness of his nature enabled him to transcend so many of the conflicts and difficulties arising in clashes of ideas and diversity of cultures and confessions.

Father George McLean was a brilliant man, a beloved person, a true Christian, and a good philosopher. He had deep insight into modern philosophical thought. Our journal (*Culture and Philosophy*) republished one of his most significant works, "The Role of Imagination," in which he expressed the idea that "in the new human experience called globalization we find ourselves at the juncture of objectivity and subjectivity." He considered imagination to be the human capacity to separate oneself from objects, and to identify one's unique self as residing at the juncture of spirit and matter. Another key insight that he articulated was to see subjectivity as a condition of globalization, against an impersonal integration of cultures. It was not an abstract idea or theoretical method, but the living expression of his heartfelt nature! Father McLean treated globalization as a unity of differences, as a vital interaction between the

nations analogous to the friendship between unique selves! Subjectivity played a pivotal role in this living wholeness.

As time passes, we will acknowledge more and more the mission of persons like Father McLean. He had a calling as a Christian and as a philosopher. He devoted himself to love for God and for his neighbours. His work towards the rapprochement of different confessions and cultures appears to be the only solution for the contemporary world, trembling under the Sword of Damocles of ethnic conflicts and terrorism. We hear his voice calling for peace and for all-embracing love! His kind, gentle smile, that was a symbol of his benevolence, will accompany our memory of him – of our outstanding and unforgettable teacher and friend – Father George McLean.

Professor George McLean and Vietnamese Philosophers

Pham Van Duc & Tran Tuan Phong

Professor George McLean first came to Hanoi in the late 1990s, about ten years after Vietnam started the process of comprehensive renovation known as Doi Moi, and at the time when Vietnam actively engaged in international integration. (In 1995, Vietnam and the United States of America fully normalized diplomatic relations and, in the same year, Vietnam became an official member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).) Those important and positive changes, both in domestic and international relations, brought about new opportunities and challenges for Vietnamese philosophy. In the course of a comprehensive renovation of our country, including a renovation of thinking, more attention has been paid to researching and teaching non-Marxist philosophy simultaneously with a reconsideration and renewal of the methods of teaching Marxist philosophy. In the pre-renovation years, tendencies of non-Marxist philosophy were introduced rarely or mainly for critical purposes. However, since the beginning of the Renovation, and in the spirit of expressing a respectful attitude towards all cultures including philosophical cultures, there has been much research on the positive and strong points of Western philosophy, as well as on the value of non-Marxist philosophical trends and doctrines in modern Western thought.

It was beginning with this interesting moment in the development of research and the teaching of philosophy in Vietnam that Professor McLean came to Vietnam. He was officially invited by Professor Nguyen Trong Chuan, who was the Director of the Institute of Philosophy from 1991 to 2005, through his friendship with Professor Tran Van Doan (National Taiwan University). During the meeting and discussion with Professor McLean, many scholars and students of the Institute of Philosophy of Philosophy, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, started to learn more about the themes and issues of the trends of non-Marxist philosophy, especially modern Western philosophy. Professor McLean's lectures at that time also encouraged Vietnamese researchers and students to engage in research on Vietnamese traditional philosophy. With Professor McLean, Vietnamese philosophers began to learn more about phenomenology and hermeneutics, about the importance of cultural identity and traditional cultural values in the age of globalization, and about cultural dialogue. With the support of Professor McLean, the Institute of Philosophy, led by Professor Nguyen Trong Chuan, organized in 1998 an important international conference on the theme of *Tradition*,

Value and Development and then, in 2001, another crucial international conference on *Traditional Values and Challenges of Globalization*. For the first time, the Institute of Philosophy was able to invite scholars and philosophers from many Western countries like the U.S.A., Canada, England, Germany, France, and Italy, as well as famous philosophers from countries in Asia, South America, and Africa. Many of them were members of the Steering Committee of The International Federation of Philosophical Societies. These philosophers were close friends and colleagues of Professor McLean and his Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. These international conferences, as well as the lectures and discussions with the outstanding philosophers, were memorable in the scientific life of the Institute of Philosophy. Before the Renovation period, Vietnamese philosophers worked mostly with scholars and experts from China, North Korea, Cuba, or the former USSR and socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

Thus, with the help and support of Professor McLean, scholars and researchers of the Institute of Philosophy began to learn more about non-Marxist philosophy and about the contemporary issue of globalization. Not only did Professor McLean help Vietnamese philosophers discover and investigate modern trends in the development of contemporary non-Marxist philosophy, but he also encouraged the introduction of Vietnamese philosophical thought to the world. With the support of Professor McLean, at the 20th World Congress of Philosophy in Boston (U.S.), together with Professor McLean and his team including Professor Tran Van Doan, the leaders of the Institute of Philosophy, Professor Nguyen Trong Chuan (Director of the Institute of Philosophy) and Professor Nguyen Van Huyen (Vice Director of the Institute of Philosophy) organized, for the first time, a Round Table to introduce foreign philosophers to Vietnamese traditional philosophical thought and trends, as well as to academic work on the theme of the Teaching and Researching Philosophy in Vietnam. Immediately after the World Congress in Boston, Professor McLean invited Professor Nguyen Trong Chuan to visit The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in Washington, DC. There, Professor McLean introduced Professor Nguyen Trong Chuan to the Council and introduced him to the team of American and international scholars who were participants in annual ten-week fall Seminar.

The visit of the leadership of the Institute of Philosophy to the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, as well the discussions with Professor McLean and international participants of the annual fall seminar, were important events that provided new opportunities for researchers of the Institute of Philosophy to contact and establish friendship and scientific collaboration with international philosophical communities around the world, to learn more about contemporary philosophical issues and problems, as well as to introduce Vietnamese

traditional philosophy and the philosophical concerns of our scholars to the world. Professor McLean was eager to bring the researchers of the Institute of Philosophy to engage members of the international community. One way in which he did so was to invite our scholars in his annual fall Seminars in DC. In 2002, Professor Pham Van Duc was the first scholar from the Institute of Philosophy to participate in the annual Fall Seminar, on the theme of *Globalization and Identity*. Since then, with the support of and encouragement of Professor McLean, about 10 scholars from the Institute of Philosophy have been able to take part in the fall Seminars. The participation in the work of the seminars have helped our philosophers to become familiar with the difficult and challenging issues raised in modern Western philosophy, as well as introduce the research work of Vietnamese philosophers. The fall Seminar has also given us the chance to work and live together with international philosophers under the roof of Professor McLean's house on Monroe Street. With the experience of participation in the fall Seminar, scholars of the Institute of Philosophy have become more competent in their participation in international conferences or in research projects with international scholars. Many former participants of the fall Seminar have become leaders of various research institutions in the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. For example, Professor Doctor Pham Van Duc, a participant in the 2002 seminar on *Globalization and Identity*, became Director of the Institute of Philosophy and then was promoted to the post of Vice President of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences and President of Graduate Academy of Social Sciences. Associate Professor, Doctor Nguyen Ngoc Ha, a participant in the 2006 Seminar on *History and Cultural Identity*, became the Editor in Chief of the journal, *Vietnam Social Sciences*, the prestigious journal of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. Associate Professor, Doctor of Sciences Luong Dinh Ha, a participant in the 2007 Seminar on *Philosophy Emerging from Culture*, became the Director of the Institute of Human Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. Associate Professor, Doctor Nguyen Tai Dong, a participant in the 2011 Seminar on *Responsibility: Personal and Social: Foundations for Life in a Global Age*, became Vice Director and then Director of the Institute of Philosophy. Dr. Tran Tuan Phong, a participant in the 2004 Seminar on *Reason in Faith: Cultural Foundations for Civil Society and Globalization*, became the Vice Director of the Institute of Philosophy. Associate Professor Hoang Thi Tho, a participant of the 2005 Seminar on *Symbols in Cultures and Identities*, became the Head of the Department of Oriental Philosophy, the Institute of Philosophy, and so on.

Apart from organizing seminars in Vietnam, inviting international scholars to come to lecture in our Institute of Philosophy, as well as encouraging our researchers to participate in the fall Seminar in Washington, DC, Professor McLean also encouraged our scholars to participate in

different events and play a more active role in world affairs. With the recommendation and strong support of Professor McLean and colleagues from the RVP, Professor Pham Van Duc was the first professional philosopher from Vietnam nominated and then selected to the 2008-2013 Steering Committee of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) at the 22nd World Congress of Philosophy held in 2008 in Seoul, South Korea. And then, in August 2013 at the 23rd World Congress of Philosophy held in Athens, Greece, as well as in August 2018, at the World Congress of Philosophy held in Beijing, China, he was again selected the Steering Committee of FISP for the period of 2013-2018 and 2018-2023.

Thus, in the memory of many scholars from the Institute of Philosophy, Professor McLean is remembered as a close friend and senior colleague, who actively contributed to the dialogue between Vietnamese and international philosophers. With his generous support and encouragement, Vietnamese philosophers, especially scholars from the Institute of Philosophy, have had opportunities to learn more about the modern issues and trends in contemporary philosophy, as well as to introduce the philosophical thought of Vietnam to the world. He helped us to organize a number of international conferences in Vietnam, as well as to participate in various philosophical conferences abroad. The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy led by Professor McLean also actively organized the publication of the research results of many Vietnamese scholars, including the works of Professor Nguyen Trong Chuan, Professor Nguyen Tai Thu, and Professor Pham Van Duc.¹ Some volumes of Vietnamese philosophers are among 300 volumes published and then distributed to 350 different libraries worldwide by Professor McLean and The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. Thanks to the efforts of Professor McLean and his Council, Vietnamese philosophers have had an opportunity to introduce their work and the distinctive features of Vietnamese philosophical thought to the world. In this way, many scholars from the Institute of Philosophy have received recognition and become renowned scholars because of his kind support and encouragement. Professor McLean was always ready to help and find ways to help our philosophers.

¹ For example, William Sweet and Pham Van Duc, eds., *Rethinking the Role of Philosophy in the Global Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2009).

Excessively Subjective Memories

Magdalena Dumitrana

There are personalities whose presence seems not to be limited by their life events – people whose place with us does not seem to be restricted to the usual space/time categories. Their body, indeed, obeys time, but inside it, and beyond it, there is another reality. These beings are not confined to the usual rules, in a certain sense. So, when the matter of the body is no longer visible, a presence, an extension of the real being, remains.

That is how I knew Father McLean. His disappearance from human space and time, may mean, in fact, the strengthening of his genuine presence which, free from barriers, can guide, support and facilitate what exists. And this is why my memories, to use an inadequate word, have nothing to do with the past nor with the future, but exclusively with the present.

I saw Father McLean for the first time in an institutional context that, I understood later, was limiting and frustrating for him. But he did not give any sign that he noticed the problems in the organization of the event. At that time, I was not particularly influenced by his personality, by his words, by the type of discussion he initiated – open than magisterial. It was, as I would later learn, his characteristic style of stimulating ideas. In fact, I did everything possible to say “no” to his attempts to bring the conversation towards a certain plan, on a certain level.

At that meeting, which I had attended by accident (‘Let’s fill the room,’ somebody had said), there were several people, some of whom were quite well-known, and who had been called specially for the event. Now I understand, after many years, that his intuition, experience, and even his benevolence with regard to people, removed all the unnecessary layers of conduct and language. Perhaps, that was why I now think that he may have preferred novices for his projects. Only now do I understand that my mode of behaving was that of a child during the development period of the negation.

Less than a half a year later, I was invited to attend the RVP fall seminar – something about which I had not heard before. Only a few years had passed from the so-called 1989 revolution and, although I had started traveling (unimaginable before 1989), I knew nothing about anything. I was actually shocked by the invitation, and I immediately answered: I think you have mistaken me for someone else; it must be, very likely, a confusion of names. Maybe he laughed or maybe not. I do not know. But

I received a serious answer that he certainly meant to send the invitation to me. I am not sure that I fully believed that, but I went.

Although Father McLean had sent a few books published by the RVP to the institution I was working at that time, they did not reach me. Also, there were no computers in the institution; only the director and the secretary had such a thing. Owning a personal computer? – no, I did not even dare to dream about that. So I did not have any clear information about the content of this seminar. As a result, my trip to Washington, DC was a fiasco. Totally.

But I found out something about Father McLean. For example, that he clearly separated the presence/absence of the appearance of the abilities of the person from the person as such. His evaluation criteria referred to what you were, and not to what you appeared to be. He worked, in many respects, with the potential in the people. And I found out something else – his persistence in giving a second or third chance to someone still at the beginning of the road. I received such a second chance, myself.

Silently, and naturally, he saw, understood, and helped. He had an extraordinary ability to construct situations in such a way that the one who was helped may not see it as such, did not understand who was actually the active factor of the emerging opportunity. Father McLean seemed, at times, somewhat detached, but constantly attentive to the course of the events.

It was amazing to see how a balanced, equanimous, even-tempered person (this was the way that I perceived him) – in any case, a man deeply immersed in his work – could awaken such passions in others – a “linear” person, with a unique, profound, absorbing interest and with predictable external behavior, but who stimulated in others a certain sensation, a kind of intuition of the existence of a completely different reality from what appeared.

I noted that Father McLean had some “weaknesses.” For instance, he told me once that he was colorblind – that he did not distinguish certain colors and what he saw were just gray shades. One might think that he lived in a gray world, but it was not like that. It is only prejudice that gray is a flat color. What we see as different colors, Father McLean saw as lights of varying intensity. Perhaps this special way of seeing things made the world he lived in far more beautiful than the one others see. I also remember that he did not like chamomile tea, he just couldn’t taste it. But he liked sugar-free coffee. In succeeding years we met at different RVP conferences in Europe, so I started a kind of ritual. I always had tools to make my coffee, Turkish style thus, and I would offer him fresh, steaming coffee.

But there were many things which were opaque to me. He seemed to take things as they were, without judging them, without criticizing them, silently and keeping inside whatever he felt. I remember that he asked me

once what my opinion was about a certain subject. My answer was direct and sharp; he allowed this in the seminar. He smiled and said nothing. I think he agreed with my opinion then, but beyond what he thought, he always considered the responsibility of his duty and the discipline of it.

Another time, the participants in the seminar were invited to the chapel, to see a new way of representing Jesus Christ. One could see clearly on my face what I was thinking, but I remained silent. What stopped me was his calm, understanding glance. He was calm; I was anxious.

Let me dare to say that his greatest weakness was the excess of work. Early in the morning, until late at night, he just worked. I asked myself very seriously at one point, what percentage of him was human and what percentage was, I do not know...something beyond? Because his work capacity was indeed, amazing.

He provided many opportunities to many people. I remember one time when he wanted to offer a chance to contribute to the seminars to those who, for various reasons, could not participate physically in them. I wrote and sent a text. The volume was published with my paper, though I did not know about that. I found out, when it was already too late. Still, it is not too late to say thank you.

I always thought that my attendance at the seminar was somehow accidental, but not without a certain purpose. I saw the countries represented by the RVP publications and I also saw that my country was missing. I believe that that's how the series of Romanian volumes started. Then I hoped to have a conference. Father McLean had come to Romania several times before, but we had a conference in Sinaia – with a visit to the Royal Castle, a walk through the forest, and the visit to a legendary church and monastery, Curtea de Argeș – legendary in every sense, witness – Mircea Eliade. Thus, on the RVP map, Romania has become visible and for this I am deeply indebted to Father.

I am grateful for his incredible gentleness and patience, but also for his iron resolution. I am also indebted to him for his way of being, for his work and for his example in everything. Next to him, I always felt young and still a student. And, last but not least, I am indebted to him for reawakening my taste for philosophy. Having lived for a long time in the shadow of an authoritarian ideology, I hardly remembered the existence of “genuine” philosophy, forgetting also about the gratuitous pleasure of a simple exchange of ideas.

We know in part, said the Apostle Paul, with great righteousness. I am very glad I met Father McLean – and I believe that his Presence is big enough that it will be with us, forever.

The Vision and Mission of Professor George F. McLean

Vensus A. George

My First Encounter with Professor McLean

It was Monday, December 7, 1981. I was at the School of Philosophy office to discuss with the Dean, Professor Jude P. Dougherty, about the Masters program at the Catholic University of America, which I was intending to begin in Spring 1982. As I came out of the office, in the corridor I met this young professor who came up to me, greeted me with a broad smile on his face, and introduced himself as George F. McLean, one of the faculty members of the School of Philosophy. After I said who I was, and finding out from me that I had some time to spare, he invited me to join him for lunch at the Oblate Seminary. The next two hours or so that we spent together over the lunch were very enriching and informative for me, someone who hails from India, was for the first time out of my native country, and had arrived in the U.S. only a few days before. I was fascinated by Professor McLean's perception of the Spirit of India, her diversity and cultural richness, and, above all, the respect he had for her people. Probably it was this ability of Professor McLean to respect and accept the richness of diverse cultures and peoples, which made him reach out to me, a young foreign student, with such sincere acceptance and concern. He made me feel at home, offered his assistance during my stay in the country and my studies at the School of Philosophy. My relationship with Professor McLean, which began in 1981, continued, on both personal and professional levels, until he left this world. I have learned a great deal from Professor McLean, both as his student and in working together with him on many academic projects. For me, Professor McLean is a *Mahatma* (Great Soul) and a *Jivanmukta* (Living Divine Soul) – one whose God-Experience (*Brahmanubhava*) makes him move beyond every barrier that divides people, see everyone as God's children, and reach out to them with respect, empathy, care, and concern – and but also one who has achieved his *Videhamukti* (Final Self-Realization) with his passing from this world. I believe that the nobility, high-mindedness, magnanimity, and generosity of spirit, embodied in Professor George F. McLean, stem from his vision of Life and Reality.

Vision of Professor McLean

In elaborating on Professor McLean's vision of Life and Reality, we must keep in mind the fact that, besides being a Great Human Being, he is a Christian, a Catholic Priest, and an academician. The qualities of being a *Mahatma* and a *Jivanmukta* made him a Great Human Being, who sees the equality of all as God's children and respects them, despite their cultural and religious diversities. As a Christian and a Catholic Priest, he not only believed in the Good News that Jesus preached, but also recognized his obligation to be a bearer of Jesus' Good News. The dimension of the Good News of Jesus that particularly fascinated Professor McLean was the message of Christmas. The purpose of Christ's birth is twofold: the first, to bring glory to God, and, the second, to bring on earth peace to people of good will (Lk. 2: 14). He believed that God can be glorified only by establishing peace and harmony among diverse people of the earth. Hence, as an academician, Professor McLean visualized a scenario of bringing together persons of good will from the academic communities of diverse nations and cultures in view of accomplishing peace on earth. He believed that he, as an academic professional, can bear witness to the Good News of Jesus, by working for peace and good will among nations and peoples and, specifically, by bringing together the cream of each nation, culture, and religion – the good willed members of the academic community – and working towards peace on the local, regional, national and international levels. This vision of Life and Reality animated and moved Professor McLean in all that he did in his life.

Mission of Professor McLean

Actualizing the above-described vision of Life and Reality became Professor McLean's mission, in addition to his academic commitments at both the School of Philosophy and the Oblate Seminary. This mission implied networking with good-willed members of the academic community from all over the world, with the goal of bringing them together – by providing an academic platform for serious discussions on relevant themes that have a bearing on bringing about a just and equitable social order, by publishing the fruits of these deliberations, and by making the publications available to the universities all over the world. To accomplish this goal Professor McLean, along with his collaborators at The Catholic University of America, embarked upon the task of bringing together like-minded academicians from different universities, and organizing them locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, in view of making his mission a global endeavor. Years of hard work, "missionary journeys" by Professor McLean and his collaborators to various countries and universities, and the regular contact and networking of like-minded academi-

cians from diverse universities of the world, led to the establishment of the “*Center for the Study of Culture and Values (CSCV)*” at the Catholic University of America and the “*The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP)*.” The former served as the headquarters to animate the actualization of the vision and mission of Professor McLean, and the latter provided an international academic platform for serious academic deliberations and publications. The above-mentioned *Center* and *Council* are the concrete actualization of the vision and mission of Professor George F. McLean.

Afterword

As Professor McLean has achieved his *Videhamukti* and is no more with us physically to continue the work he had begun, his vision and mission have become his legacy, which needs to be embraced and sustained by those of us who share the aims and goals of his vision and mission. I believe that renaming the “*Center for the Study of Culture and Values*” as “*The McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values*” is, indeed, the first step in perpetuating his memory and continuing his legacy. As we carry on the work of Professor McLean, his Spirit will guide us, bring blessings of God, and fructify our efforts. May each of us, as persons touched by his Spirit, contribute our “little” and continue his legacy by actualizing the vision and mission of Professor George F. McLean.

Personality of Friendship: Father Professor George McLean

Noriko Hashimoto

When I encountered Father Professor George McLean for the first time, he was Secretary General of the International Society for Metaphysics (ISM), an organization that had been established just after World War II.¹ I had to call him in order to make preparations for an ISM meeting in Japan. But when I called him at his office at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, he was always absent – because, as it turned out, he had gone somewhere in the world for a seminar or meetings. This happened many times in the 1990s. Some years later, when the late Professor Tomonobu Imamichi was the President of the ISM and I was Secretary General, we used to speak about McLean as follows: “God is omnipresent, but McLean is omniabsent.”

McLean was always interested in new ideas in philosophy. Professor Imamichi and I once organized a Japan-China exchange meeting on Comparative Studies of Philosophy at Kyoto. McLean gave us some special advice on inviting Chinese professors from two institutes: one was the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and the other Fudan University. Both institutes were in Shanghai, but had had no scientific exchanges between them, officially or privately. McLean’s idea was that “we send them each a round-trip-ticket for a three-night boat journey between Shanghai and Osaka.” In fact, by the time they arrived at Kyoto, they had already become good friends, and had exchanged ideas and discussed interpretations of Chinese classical texts. The exchange between the two Institutes had already begun on the boat.

The most impressive theme in that meeting was “ren (仁) and love” in comparative studies. Professor McLean introduced the concept of “love” in Gabriel Marcel’s vertical structure of “love,” and Professor Imamichi clarified the difference between Marcel’s love and Confucian “ren.” McLean was a maker of topoi – he sought “commonplace” themes – here, of love (existential love) with “ren” (social relationships) – in order to see points of commonality between Western and Eastern thought.

¹ At the ISM’s founding, in 1948, a gathering of philosophers swore to do their best to avoid such tragic war in the future, and to conduct research for lasting peace. At its outset, we can find the names of a number of eminent philosophers: Gabriel Marcel, Roman Ingarden, Jan Patočka, Karl Jaspers, Eugen Fink, and Paul Ricoeur.

In short, while, at that time, Christianity was not allowed in China and it was difficult to bring Christian thought into China, McLean had the courage to do missionary work through philosophy.

Professor Imamichi and I myself admired McLean's ability to open up new ways for different cultures to communicate. At the third International Symposium of Eco-ethica in 1984, we invited Professor McLean to attend in recognition of his efforts in encouraging research for a new ethics suitable for people in the 21st century. He pointed out the new meaning of "tolerance" in the technological age, and suggested a new route for relations between cultures through the notion of "gift." The terms "Gift" and "Given" continue to be discussed as important themes in the 21st century.

McLean also tried to build a bridge between *theoria* and *praxis*, and helped to develop the "Society of Asian Catholic Philosophers," whose members included Imamichi, Inagaki, myself (Japan), Tran van Doan, Vu (Vietnam and Taiwan), Manuel Dy (Philippines), Bambang Sugiharto (Indonesia), Vincent Shen (Taiwan), and philosophers from India and Thailand. We organized a meeting in Nagasaki, and invited McLean's sister, a Maryknoll member and an English teacher at the Catholic Junior High School in Yokkaichi, Japan. At a restaurant at the Nara Hotel, she said to McLean with a sweet voice, "George, please eat with good manners. You are a guest." McLean nodded with a little smile, and said "Yes." It seemed she was like his mother. I could imagine an atmosphere, full of love in McLean's family. (Professor Peter McCormick, who once went with Gabriel Marcel to East Germany, said "Marcel always stained his necktie with food. McLean is a real Philosopher.")

In the summer of 2001, I visited McLean, and stayed at his seminar house in Washington, DC. That house was composed of two big rooms for seminars, several bedrooms, and a kitchen: everything was suitable for a seminar. Although there was no seminar at that time, I met with a number of post-graduate students, and I was able to have discussions with them. I didn't know anything about the difficulties of studying Western philosophy in Islamic countries, and some of these countries had just become independent from Russia.

I adored Father McLean because of his ideals and of his efforts. At his office, I saw his publishing-system for producing journals and books. He opened the drawers of his desk, showed me its contents, and said, "I accepted these papers, I must work hard to check and correct them for publication. Perhaps this will continue until I pass away."

Father McLean once brought me to the Chapel. It was the first opportunity for me to hear his thoughts on religion, and his profound belief in Catholic Christianity. Although I had once participated in the Anniversary Mass for Universities at the Vatican, celebrated by John Paul II, I felt a profound sympathy with Father McLean in that Chapel. He had

the special talent for keeping an open mind and accepting everything as it is.

If I were to describe McLean in Eastern terms, I would say that he understood and realized the concept, “Nothingness,” and that he could speak freely on “Equality, Liberty, and Philanthropy.” His love was profound; his ideas were infinite, and he opened our way to becoming real “World Citizens.” In this world, he exemplified one form of the “personality of friendship” for our future. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the life and work of Father Professor George McLean.

Remembering the Academic Association between the Institute of Philosophy (SASS) and Professor George F. McLean (RVP)

He Xirong

Professor McLean has been gone for more than 2 years, but his hardworking spirit, his kindness to others, and his friendly smile are forever in my memory. The first time I met him was when he visited the Institute of Philosophy at the end of 1988, which means that I had known him for more than 30 years. From being a young researcher, to a research professor and, then, Director of the Institute, I witnessed the growing relationship between Professor McLean (and the RVP), and my colleagues at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS).

Below I will talk about some of our academic exchanges as a tribute to Professor McLean. We will always miss him.

Professor George F. McLean's First Contact with the Institute of Philosophy (SASS)

It was through the World Congress of Philosophy that our Institute established its first relationship with the RVP. In August 1988, the 18th World Congress of Philosophy was held in Brighton, England, and Professor Wang Miaoyang, then Director of the Institute of Philosophy (SASS), met Professor McLean, and began communication with one another. They got to know each other well and had in-depth exchanges. During the World Congress, Professor Wang invited Professor McLean to visit the Institute, and Professor McLean readily accepted the invitation.

Just four months later, at the end of 1988, Professor McLean came to Shanghai to pay his first visit at the Institute; he was there for three days. During those three days, Professor McLean did not do any sight-seeing, but stayed at the Institute. At his request, Professor Wang organized six group conversations and arranged extensive meetings with more than 40 scholars. Five of the group conversations were academic exchanges with researchers, and the last one was a meeting with leaders of the Institute for the purpose of future cooperation. At that time, I was a young research working with the research group in Chinese philosophy. I remember that we talked to Professor McLean about Chinese modern ethics, as we were writing a book on that topic. I reported to Professor McLean on behalf of the group in very poor English; our colleague Dr. Fang Nengyu, who was later invited by Professor McLean to come to

Washington, DC to do research, acted as a translator when needed. Professor McLean showed great interest from beginning to the end. At all group academic exchanges, Professor McLean was always in good spirits, talking to us throughout the day, and even carrying on conversations with some scholars into the night.

After his visit, the Institute and the RVP arrived at an agreement for further cooperation. From then on we began a long period of academic exchanges.

The main contents of cooperation included: 1) The RVP and the Institute of Philosophy at SASS would jointly organize an annual symposium. 2) Both sides would organize and sponsor meetings in rotation in and outside of China: one year in China and one year abroad. 3) The theme of each conference would be agreed upon by both sides in advance. Six people from each side would be present at the meeting and present their papers. The papers submitted by the representatives will be printed and distributed to each participant prior to the meeting. Each meeting will be about 3 to 4 days, so as to allow time to discuss each paper in-depth. 4) After discussion and revision, the papers would be compiled in an English volume and published by the RVP. 5) The SASS can choose a young scholar to attend the RVP seminar which was held each fall for 10 weeks.

Academic Exchange Activities between the RVP and SASS

These arrangements were gradually realized. It was agreed that the first bilateral symposium would be organized by the RVP in Hong Kong, in July 1989. However, due to the June 4 incident in 1989, the meeting was postponed. Thus, the first academic meeting was held in Hong Kong from January 2 to 4, 1991.

Afterward, the foreign academic exchanges of the Institute of Philosophy (SASS) took a new step. In the last decade of the 20th century, a bilateral symposium was held every year as scheduled. From 1991 to 2001, 11 symposia were held in neighboring countries – Hong Kong, Japan, Philippines, Thailand, and India – as well as in Suzhou (2 times), Hangzhou, Shanghai (3 times) and Wuxi in China.

In the 2000s, the RVP established relationships of academic cooperation and exchange with many universities and research institutions in China. It was no longer able to hold meetings in a bilateral manner, but in a set of colloquia along with other universities in China. Usually the RVP leads a group of foreign scholars who take part in a series of meetings in different Chinese universities or research institutions. Our Institute organized meetings periodically as one of the series of meetings.

The topics of these joint meetings included: Chinese Cultural Tradition and Modernization; Traditional Culture and Modernization; Humanization of Technology; Philosophy and Economic Development;

Comparative Study of Eastern and Western Philosophy; Civil Society and Construction of Spiritual Civilization; Beyond Modernization; Modernization and Sinicization; Tracing Buddhist Roots; Comparison of Chinese and Asian culture; Cultural Inheritance and Social Progress; The Role of Philosophy; Philosophy and the World of Life; Re-Learning to Be Human for Global Times; Self-awareness of Life in the New Era; and Reciprocity: Human Values in a Pluralistic World. These themes were centered around globalization in terms of facing and reflecting upon the development and problems of China's opening to the world.

Professor McLean was designated to be a special researcher by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences in June 1998, due to his special contribution to our Institute. His name is still on the list of special researchers of the Academy until this day.

Some Achievements

A) Thanks to the editorial work of Professor McLean, more than 30 volumes have been published from these joint conferences with the Institute in the RVP publication series "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change."

B) Young scholars of the Institute were encouraged to participate in the RVP annual seminars, and more than 10 of them scholars went. Over 100 people from the Institute have participated in bilateral meetings over the last 30 years. These joint meetings and discussions enabled scholars of the Institute to broaden their horizons, to understand the trends in foreign academic research, to learn more of current topics in contemporary philosophical thought, and to come to see, first hand, some of the philosophical achievements of foreign scholars. All of these helped the Institute improve its personnel, their thinking abilities, and the level of understanding foreign languages. In particular, many of the young scholars of the Institute matured faster and became research professors, serving as the backbone of their research disciplines, and even Directors of the Institute. I believe that they all must have been deeply impressed by these exchange activities with the RVP led by Professor McLean.

C) Years of academic exchanges enabled us to realize that the collaboration with the RVP contributed to our growth and development on important research topics. For example, economic, business, and comparative studies between Chinese and Western philosophies were initiated and developed through academic exchanges over the years. On August 26-28, 1994, for example, we had a bilateral meeting in Hangzhou on the topic of "Philosophy and Economic Development." Professor McLean invited Dr. Georges Enderle to take part in that meeting. Dr. Enderle is a well-known scholar of economic ethics at Notre Dame University, in the United States. At that time he was Vice President of the

International Society of Business, Economics, and Ethics (ISBEE). (In 2000, he was elected President of ISBEE.) Through our exchange, Dr. Enderle became a special research professor of SASS along with Professor McLean in 1997. At the 1994 meeting, Dr. Enderle introduced the current status and importance of the study of business ethics. After the meeting, he invited a young scholar of the Institute to visit his University to study Business Ethics. After the young scholar came back, our Institute established a Center for Business Ethics, which has been working quite well. This young scholar later became Professor of the Institute, and even a member of the ISBEE steering committee. Due to the effort and influence of the Center for Business Ethics of the Institute, the Sixth ISBEE World Congress was held in Shanghai in July 2016. The Center for Business Ethics now holds a leading position in China, but also has a great reputation in foreign academic circles.

The comparative studies between Chinese and Western philosophies is a focus of our Institute. Its impact and achievements are also related to the collaboration with the RVP. In the early 1990s, our Institute completed the national project “A Comparative Study between Eastern and Western philosophy,” which won the first prize of “Excellent achievements in Shanghai Philosophy and Social Sciences” (1994-1995). In June 1995, we held an international colloquium on Comparative Studies. Some well-known professors were invited by Professor McLean to come to Shanghai to take part in this meeting. They were Jean Ladrière and Ghislaine Florival from the Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium; Tomonobu Imamichi and Noriko Hashimoto from the Centre International pour l'Étude Comparée de Philosophie et d'Esthétique, Japan; Heinz Holley from the University of Linz, Austria; Richard Graham from America, and so on. The research work of the Institute impressed the participants deeply. Professor Yu Xuanmeng's paper on “Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western philosophy in the New Era” received much attention from the participants as well. Indeed, our bilateral meetings were very enlightening and helpful to further the research of the Institute. Through these ongoing exchanges, discussions and studies, comparative studies between Chinese and Western philosophies in our Institute have been very productive. Three years later, Professor Yu Xuanmeng published his book on ontology, and won the first prize of excellent works on philosophy and social sciences in Shanghai in 1999. This was a breakthrough in the process of comparative studies between Chinese and Western Philosophies. After a long period of effort the two subjects – comparative studies and business ethics – have become the specialties of our Institute.

D) We have made many friends around the world through the contact with the RVP. These academic exchanges and meetings have enabled us to meet scholars from Austria, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Germany, India, Japan, Philippines, Portugal, Thailand, the United States as well as Hong

Kong, Taiwan, and so on. Many of these scholars have established long-term relationships with our Institute. We have come to have many respected friends, such as Professors G. Aavani from Iran, S.R. Bhatt from India, William McBride from America, Manuel Dy from Philippines, and Warayuth Sriwarakuel from Thailand. We particularly want to thank two professors, Vincent Shen and Tran Van Doan, who know both English and Chinese well as well as French and German. During our bilateral meetings, especially in early years, they served to interpret some of the talks by foreign scholars. Professor Vincent Shen recently passed away, and I want to express my deep gratitude and my good memories of him.

Throughout these dialogues and exchanges, Chinese scholars have been able to carry on research and studies and, in turn, have been able to share their own views with the worldwide academic community, so that a window has been opened to the world that allows a better understanding of China.

My Personal Gratitude to Professor McLean

The first bilateral meeting that I attended was held in Hangzhou in 1994. Professor McLean talked to me during the meeting and then invited me to participate in the RVP seminar in Washington, DC the following year. Due to some complications, I was not able to attend the 1995 seminar. The following year, Professor McLean invited me again, even went to the American consulate in Shanghai before I applied for an entry visa. I finally participated in the seminar in 1996. I am very grateful to him and deeply touched by his care for young scholars, especially for “unimportant people.” His personal care for me, and even visiting the consulate on my behalf, impressed me profoundly. Since 1994, I have been involved almost all bilateral meetings between the RVP and the Institute. I have been invited to many countries for conferences. Through these various meetings and discussions, I have learned new perspectives and ideas that have greatly helped my philosophical research.

Throughout the long-term cooperation with the RVP, I was deeply touched by the enthusiasm and personal charm of Professor McLean. He devoted his heart and mind to academic efforts; he cared for scholars in developing countries and tried to provide them with opportunities to participate in academic cultural exchanges. He respected different cultures and beliefs. He always encouraged and supported young scholars in many countries. My colleagues loved to call him in Chinese “*sheng ren*” (sage or saint), which means someone who possesses not only good manners but a highly moral character, and who is not concerned with private interests, but always kept the wellbeing of the whole in mind.

Thirty-one years ago, when I first met Professor McLean, I was a young research assistant, who had just entered into the field of academic

studies. Now I have retired. After decades of contact, Professor McLean's image remains deeply imprinted in my mind. Although he has left us, I believe that the cooperation between the RVP and the Institute of Philosophy (SASS) will continue for generations to come.¹

¹ Some content in this paper draws on information from Professor Wang Miaoyang about our foreign exchange activities, written on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Institute of Philosophy. Here I would like to express my thanks.

The Philosopher's Calling

John P. Hogan

Perhaps the best way in which I can express my long relation with George McLean, is to refer to his individual writings but also the many volumes in which he served, explicitly or surreptitiously as editor. The life work of this philosopher-hermeneut-priest provides a template for the changes that have taken place in twentieth and twenty-first century philosophical reflection, and augurs further changes still to come.

Indeed, the 300 plus volumes of the series, "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change" of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RV), provides a whole library on recent issues in Philosophy: philosophy emerging from culture, globalization, technology, the reconstruction of civil society, the clash and/or convergence of world religions, and the growing global interaction of the sacred and the secular. McLean was not only the General Editor of this multifaceted series but also, and more importantly, mentor and motivator of the contributors, mainly young philosophers from around the world. He was the behind the scene architect and pied-piper, as well as tireless workhorse, of a global movement of "philosophies emerging from local cultures." His manner of philosophical leadership, as this volume illustrates, had more to do with questions, research and dialogue, than with answers, arguments, and systems. He looked for resources of the spirit, and deep insight and motivation. These provide the means for enlightened, free and responsible decision making opening a path forward.

In many ways, his 2010 volume, *Religion and Culture*, sums up McLean's long philosophical calling. This volume mirrors some of the great changes in philosophy and the unfolding dimensions of McLean's own approach. It exemplifies his life-long fascination, not only with Western philosophy, both classical and modern, but his long involvement with Indian, Chinese and Islamic thought.

The new century has seen an intensification of cultural awareness which has generated positive interest in one's own cultural identity and hopefully mutual enrichment from other cultures. However, this new awareness, as McLean indicated, has generated also negative and violent cultural imperialisms "which deepen the vortex of fundamentalisms, one radicalizing the other in a pattern of mutual fear, defense and rejection." These parallel but opposed fundamentalisms have influenced all forms of religious, cultural, social, political, and economic interaction. The long-range strategy of McLean's *corpus* might be summed up in the question: how might Philosophy help to elevate thought, clarify basic issues, and

enable people to dialogue within and across cultures in order to work for the common good?

In his books and articles, and in his work as a whole, Professor McLean sought an enrichment of classical objective knowledge with a new awareness of human subjectivity, self-awareness and freedom. From there he moves to a discussion of person and human consciousness as mapped out along the path of values and virtues honed by cultures and traditions but always freely open to the attraction, at once both imminent and transcendent – to unity – and the true, the good, and the beautiful. As the road is full of potholes and contradictions which cannot be avoided, the “ultimate concern of human life” must burst forth from the dialectic of good and evil.

In this way Religion emerges as the root of cultures and traditions which each people have shaped in their own way through their own sacrifice and creativity. Nonetheless, building on Tillich and Gadamer, McLean maintained that culture and tradition should not be viewed as straightjackets, but rather blueprints for freedom and transcendence. He readily endorses Pelican’s famous quote, “Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”

Hence digging into our traditions should not turn us in on ourselves, but rather should open to the “other” and to intercultural understanding and cooperation. A shared life of philosophy identifies basic polarities: life as good; life become destructive; and life reconciled. Metaphysics sees these as stages: essence or nature; existence; and “their reconciliation in a dynamic harmony of being.” Christians would describe this dialectic as: life as gift (paradise); life as fallen (sin/death); and new life as redeemed (resurrection).

We can only be grateful for the broad vision presented in Professor McLean’s work. McLean brought together whole traditions, Eastern and Western, and showed us a path through the battlefields of current prejudice and violence. He readily called upon old friends to help map the arduous journey: Nicholas of Cusa, Hans Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Cornelio Fabro, Paul Tillich, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Karol Wojtyla, among others.

Philosophy is a calling to define and describe, to get to the root of the question, to interpret and bring into harmony. Most importantly, the calling includes the priestly role of mediating meaning – from gods to men and thence to God, the One. Philosopher, hermeneut, priest – George McLean filled all these roles. He was a sage guide whose philosophy both elevates thought and adds the practical dimension of contributing to the common good in this new global age.

Professor G.F. McLean: A Heavenly Personality and a Messenger of Humanity

Md. Sirajul Islam

I must congratulate Professor William Sweet for his noble initiative to prepare a Reminiscence volume on Professor G.F. McLean who left the world for heavenly abode. I am really obliged to Professor Sweet for giving me a privilege to share my experiences and recalling past events which I spent with Professor McLean in various occasions and academic deliberations.

I have been acquainted with Professor G.F. McLean since 1996, when I joined Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, as a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion. At that time, a two-day colloquium was collaboratively organized (by the RVP and Visva-Bharati), and I actively took part in it. I gave a small talk there which attracted Professor McLean; he expressed his satisfaction after the end of the session, and assured me that I would extend an invitation for me to attend the next year's long term seminar, as well as an academic meeting to be held in Washington, DC I was very much delighted in hearing his words. And so, after his return to the U.S., he extended me an invitation to join in the three-month long international seminar cum post-doctoral research project on "Civil Society and Democratic Practice: Solidarity and Subsidiarity" (September 4 to November 14, 1997). I immediately informed our then Vice Chancellor, Professor D.K. Sinha. He encouraged me, and also granted me special leave for that assignment. Thus, in October 1997, I joined the Catholic University of America as a Visiting Research Professor as well as one of the listed speakers in the RVP International Seminar. Pursuing research work and materials collection can be very challenging for a foreign scholar, but he arranged me to get a library card at the Catholic University of America library, and also a special membership card for the Library of Congress. I greatly benefitted from those arrangements.

While in Washington, DC, I wrote a paper on "Civil Society, Solidarity and Social Reformation: In the Sufi Standpoint." My English was not so good; however, he appreciated my presentation and corrected my paper personally. He also sent an email to my Vice Chancellor, mentioning my name, writing: 'I must congratulate the Visva-Bharati University for producing such fine scholar'; those words still echo in my mind. (After returning from the U.S., my Vice Chancellor called me and asked me to submit a copy of the paper which was presented in the RVP

session. I submitted it to him and, after reading it, he said to me: “Wonderful, go ahead, you will run very far.”)

Before I returned home from Washington, DC, I submitted a copy of my Ph.D. thesis on *Sufism and Bhakti: A Comparative Study* to Professor McLean for publication, and he published it in book form in 2004. I am very grateful to him for this work.

I also want to mention that, while I was in America, Professor McLean took all of the seminar participants to the Gandhi Bhavana in Washington, DC to observe Gandhiji’s Birth Day on October 2. We observed the day with Indian flavor and temperament along with our Ambassador Naresh Chandra. During my stay, Professor McLean also took me for various sightseeing trips, driving me personally, and also took part in many dinner parties hosted by his good friends in Washington, DC. We enjoyed ourselves there very much, and I still miss it today.

Next year, in 1998, my Department organized a one-day Colloquium on *Civil Society a Concept and Perspective in Social Works and Rural Development*, where I presented a paper on the issue from the Islamic perspective.

Since then, Professor McLean kept in touch with me regularly, and informed me – as one of the enlisted members of the RVP – about all the events and publications of the RVP. I joined the RVP’s pre-World Congress conferences at Kultur University, Istanbul (2003) and Soongsil University, Seoul, Korea (2008). That was my last meeting with him. (In August 2013, the pre-World Congress conference was held in Athens, Greece, but I missed it because I was the Head of the Department at that time. I did attend the World Congress, but could not meet him; his health was fragile, and he had already left Athens.

I organized two other collaborative seminars at Visva-Bharati at the request of Professor McLean, which opened up some new avenues for future academic cooperation. One very poignant moment at Santiniketan with Professor McLean, which I would not like to leave out, was at another one collaborative International Seminar at Visva-Bharati, organized by our colleague Professor Sanujkoli Sen. I met Professor McLean at Chhuti Lodge for dinner. After dinner, Professor McLean sang a nice English song which touched my soul, and is still a vivid memory today.

Father McLean was a noble personality, an intellectual of high caliber, a great philosopher and, above all, a good human being. He always encouraged me and advised me to work dispassionately. His amiable disposition, profound thought, multidimensional approach, reasonable mind, and egalitarian outlook always attracted me then – and continues to do so, even today. He was always an inspiration to me. He has left his body, but his spirit is still with us. I pray to the Almighty to grant him perfect peace and tranquility in heaven.

George McLean: A Philosophical Visionary

Peter Jonkers

Typically, philosophers have a rather ambivalent view of visionaries and their grand narratives about the future of humankind. On the one hand, philosophers are very proficient in coining new ideas and concepts, with the help of which they can cast a fresh light on humankind, social evolutions, our era, etc. Some famous recent examples are the terms post-modernity (Jean-François Lyotard) and authenticity (Charles Taylor). These and many other concepts have arguably contributed to realizing what Hegel considered to be one of the main tasks of philosophy, namely to apprehend its time in thought. By doing this, the influence of philosophy has spread far beyond the confines of the academia. On the other hand, philosophers are rather wary of the ideological interpretations that these concepts sometimes get in the media and by so-called opinion leaders, because such interpretations are at odds with the attitude of detachment that characterizes philosophical analysis, as well as with the care for detail, distinctiveness, and nuance that philosophical research requires. So, at first sight, my qualification of George McLean as a philosophical visionary might raise some eyebrows among professional philosophers.

Yet, my reasons for ascribing this term to George McLean are entirely positive. When taking a look at what he accomplished during his philosophical mission, I am struck by the fact that he was far ahead of his time, like a true visionary. At a time, in which philosophical research was mainly done in the ivory towers of academia, most of them situated in Western countries, and undertaken by isolated scholars, McLean had already pleaded for democratizing philosophy, for enriching the insights of Western philosophers with those of researchers from other cultural traditions, and for inviting scholars from different disciplines to create teams in order to dialogue about global philosophical questions, in particular the nature, interpretation, and development of cultures and values. In our times, these new trends in philosophical research have become common practice, but at the time when George McLean started to promote them, they were very innovative. Be that as it may, these new ways of doing philosophy and the way in which George McLean incarnated these new approaches, profoundly influenced my own way of philosophizing – particularly, since I became involved in the projects of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Another reason why my description of George McLean as a philosophical visionary might raise some eyebrows has to do with the

characteristics that are typically attributed to a visionary. They often appear as dogmatic fanatics, who want to push through their own views of the future at all cost. McLean was quite the opposite of this kind of visionary. He certainly had his own ideas about certain philosophical topics, but he always did his utmost to value others' positive views, which were presented in the many books published by The Council for Research in Philosophy and Values (RVP), and he welcomed new perspectives on old questions. In this sense he was a visionary in a very special, yet profound sense of the word, namely one who made his own personal views and ideas subordinate to the outcome of a genuine philosophical dialogue.

What I especially remember in this respect was a meeting with a few people in Vienna, in the spring of 2014. On the agenda were the practical arrangements for a large international conference in Rome (March 2015), at which the results of the research-project, *Faith in a Secular Age*, would be presented, and which also was to serve as a tribute to George McLean. As happens quite often in meetings like these, the atmosphere was rather tense because of conflicting institutional interests and their financial implications. At one point, I was afraid that the conference was in jeopardy. Then George McLean said that he would contact the organizing institution directly to straighten things out. A few months later, I received a message from him, stating, to my great surprise, that all the issues had been solved to everyone's satisfaction. I sent him a reply, asking how he had managed to achieve such a positive outcome about such a delicate matter, because I was sure that I could learn a lot from his way of dealing with it. His answer reflects the kind of person that George McLean was: "Well," he wrote, "you go there in person, have a conversation with them about their and your own priorities and underlying concerns, and eventually everyone realizes that we all have much more in common than what separates us." This and many other, similar examples show that George McLean not only had a profound confidence in the spirit of philosophical dialogue, but also and more importantly, in the Spirit of the One to whom he had devoted his entire life.

Father and Professor George McLean: A Towering Figure

David Kaulemu

Many people, particularly philosophers, have contributed to my professional growth. I will just mention a few outstanding mentors. My mother and father cultivated in me a sense of moral concern for which I shall always be grateful. Nigel Dower clearly stands out as the university teacher who clarified and deepened my interest in the professional subject of moral philosophy. Robert Ware, William H. Shaw, and the sociologist Steven Lukes helped me to link moral philosophy with social and political thought. In many ways, even after the tremendous guidance of these great academics, philosophy remained rather abstract and distant from the complex and deep ethical counsel of my parents and the African urban township communities I grew up in, in southern Africa. Professor George McLean stands out as a towering figure of immense dignity and influence who made philosophy more concrete for me. He assisted me to make the critical link between life and thought – between the personal and the social. He encouraged me to listen to my culture, and appreciate the role of history in philosophy. He encouraged me to appreciate that every society constructs its own form of philosophy and its own form of morality. His whole project was about recording the different philosophies coming out of different cultures, and facilitating dialogues between them.

I first met Professor McLean at an international conference organized by the late Kenyan Professors Joseph Nyasani and Odera Oruka, in Mombasa, in May 1988. The title of the conference was “Philosophical Focus on Culture and Traditional Thought Systems in Development.” I presented a paper entitled, “The Concept of Individual Freedom in African Culture.” I was then, a very young Oxford graduate, teaching at the University of Zimbabwe. After my presentation, Professor McLean, in his unassuming, gentle but powerful manner, introduced himself to me and engaged me in an unforgettable conversation. I felt his presence in the same way I felt the loving, caring ethical force of my parents and African communities. As a young academic, I felt honoured and respected. I also felt, however, the irresistible power of his mind and the overwhelming depth of his heart. He made me feel that I could learn more from him without making me feel small and inadequate. As a student of Hegel and Marx, I felt that he had the wide, synthesizing mind of Hegel without Hegel’s cultural limitations. He had Karl Marx’s sharp social insights without Marx’s political combative postures. He was a great listener,

always listening to hear which direction my thoughts went. At the end of the conversation, he gave me his contact details and promised to invite me to Washington, DC for one of his famous annual international seminars – which he did.

I was able to go to Washington, DC in 1996 for the Seminar on “Civil Society: Who Belongs?”; in 1998 for the seminar on “Restorying the Polis: Civil Society as Narrative Reconstruction”; and again in 2008. What I learned from the George McLean’s international seminars has shaped my professional growth. First, the intense but respectful engagements with philosophers from many parts of the world, including Africa, India, China and Europe, encouraged a global view of the world. Second, the seminars had a great interest in the particular cultures from which the participants and their philosophies came. He helped me to appreciate that no philosophy comes out of the skies. Every philosophy comes out of a social and cultural context. This lesson, and with his encouragement and support, helped me to start the project on Zimbabwean philosophy which culminated in the book, *The Struggles after the Struggles (Zimbabwean Philosophical Studies I)*, published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. This was an important professional achievement, not only for me personally, but also for a number young philosophers at the University of Zimbabwe, who were struggling to publish their work. But, as I said in the introduction of the text, the process of doing philosophy and the manner of doing philosophy were more important than the book-product that came out at the end.¹ Contributors to this project, who referred to themselves as “The Philosophy Support Group,” met every Friday afternoon in the Seminar Room of the Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy at the University of Zimbabwe to think-with-others and think-in-community. We believed this approach was consistent with African cultural practice. Participants wrote and re-wrote their drafts several times. We eventually organized a conference at which most of the papers were presented to a wider audience. Professor McLean and Dr. Hu Yeping attended the conference, after which final drafts were submitted. With Professor McLean’s support and guidance, and always working with Dr. Hu Yeping, I edited the papers for publication. Professor McLean was a great formator and inspiration. He taught by example the virtue of hard honest work.

After this project, Professor McLean supported us to co-edit with Yuriy Pochta and Gan Chunson, *Re-Storying the ‘Polis’: Civil Society as*

¹ David Kaulemu, “Introduction,” in ed. David Kaulemu, *The Struggles after the Struggle: Zimbabwean Philosophical Studies, I*, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series II, African Philosophical Studies, Vol. 12 (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), 5.

*Narrative Reconstruction.*² I learned many things about publishing from Professor McLean. In those days, in 1996 and 1998, he used to organize international seminars, out of which book articles would be prepared with his guidance. He would then edit, typeset, print, and bind the book, and arrange to ship it to libraries in different parts of the world. I also remember him organizing fundraising for all these activities. The support of Dr. Hu Yeping was always there. And yet his support for Dr. Hu Yeping was unflinching. I am very grateful to have been involved in his work. It was in this involvement that I experienced his humanity, generosity and perseverance. He supported the professional development of many young academics but also engaged renowned philosophers from all over the world. Through him, I met many young African philosophers from all over Africa.

All these lessons came in handy when I became the first regional coordinator of the African Forum for Catholic Social Teachings (AFCAST), a regional network of individuals and institutions working in the areas of social justice in Eastern and Southern Africa. Using the McLean thinking-with-others seminar methodology and publishing process style, I helped the regional network to harvest many of its conversations on various topics on social justice at seminars, conferences and workshops. When I left the organization after 11 years, we had published many books, manuals and booklets that are still helpful to social justice organizations in the region.

The Idea of Civil Society

One of the most important philosophical ideas that I remember learning from Professor McLean is the concept of civil society, which we dealt with in the seminar on “Civil Society: Who Belongs?” in 1996. Following the history and significance of this concept widened and deepened my philosophical appreciation of the social and cultural context of philosophy. I remember him pointing out that the idea of civil “embodies for many an ethical ideal of the social order.”³ Civil society is a realm that recognizes, respects and facilitates the growth and fulfilment of individuals, groups, and associations. It does not seek to annihilate those individuals, groups, communities and solidarities that do not conform to some arbitrary standard given a priori. It is this idea of civil society that could act as a paradigm for the fight for equality and for

² In *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change*, Series VII, Seminar: Culture and Values, Vol. 28 (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2015).

³ Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), x.

democratic politics in Africa and the world in general. He helped me to see that cultural liberty is a vital part of human development, because being able to express one's identity without losing the respect of others or being excluded from other choices is important in leading a full life. He pointed out that the undermining of civil society is at the center of many challenges in the modern world. Democracy is weakened when civil society is diminished. Modern society has seen the expansion of the state, on the one hand, and the capitalist market, on the other, at the expense of 'intermediate' institutions which are the basis of a healthy society. These intermediate institutions are the family and voluntary associations which are based on voluntary participation and solidarity. Civil society is the realm which builds the relationships that sustain society. It contrasts itself to the logic of contracts found in the market and that of the coercive public obligation of the state.

Professor George F. McLean and the New Sensibilities in the World Context

Important changes are taking place in the world. With the scientific and technological revolutions taking place in and transforming the world through the spheres of information and communication, there have been fundamental changes in ways of thinking, organizing, acting, and being in the world. The end of colonialism in Africa, the end of liberation struggles coupled with the end of the Cold War, and the collapse of the really existing socialism, have brought about new conceptual paradigms that encourage new social behaviours and political cultures. Old binary oppositional approaches are being challenged by more inclusive politics informed by a more nuanced sense of history and social analysis. The old sharp conflicts between the white world and the black world; between the colonizers and the colonized; men and women; the young and the old, are being transformed into collaborative global fights against racism, exploitation, oppression and poverty. More and more transformative efforts are being made across cultures, religions, economies, and ideologies to establish global standards for the respect of human rights and the environment. As Sékou Pathé Guèye, an exciting African philosopher I met through Professor McLean, pointed out, little by little and through various cultural, intellectual and psychological difficulties of adaptation and adjustment, without the participants necessarily being conscious of that, politics is moving from the paradigm of "exclusion" and "conflict," to a new paradigm of "communication" and "dialogue."⁴

⁴ Sékou Pathé Guèye, "Public Sphere and Deliberative Democracy: Rethinking Politics," in eds. Antonio Perez, Sékou Pathé Guèye and Fenggang Yang, *Civil*

Professor McLean was concerned about the need for world leaders that could bring in new approaches and sensibilities to world politics. He wanted to see a shift from the politics of confrontation to that of engagement; from the politics of the “clash of civilisations” to that of the dialogue of civilisations and cultures. Professor George McLean characterizes this shift in the following way.

Now, however, the peoples of the world seem to be moving beyond rationalism to a great project of reconstructing democratic practice. This focuses no longer on ideologies and structures, but on people in natural communities and solidarities and their efforts to become increasingly creative and to take responsibility for their life. This, in a way, is the utopian vision of Marx as people seek to realize the conditions of freedom to begin, with others, to shape their common life after the ideals of justice and peace, harmony and cooperation. As a result, the focus of attention reaches beyond the political with its focus on power, and the economic with its focus on profit. It focuses upon its people, now no longer as amorphous masses or tools of industry, but as persons informed and responsible, uniting freely in human solidarities, to act responsibly and creatively each in their own field. This is the reality called civil society or civil culture emerging as a newly vibrant reality which promises in contrast to the negative and skeptical critique of modernity to begin positively to shape a more globally sensitive third millennium.⁵

This realm of civil society is the new paradigm that can inform not only world politics and economics but also African social imaginaries and practices. In the above passage, George McLean demonstrates the significance of civil society as a realm which rediscovers the importance of human beings as social agents and not merely as tools for religions, ideologies, and economic systems. This rediscovery of human agency and enhanced human moral responsibility is critical for the future of human civilization. This is why we have to deal with the backlash of leaders who are resisting this new social imaginary by preaching hatred, division, and the building of walls between peoples.

Civil society, therefore, has come to provide a new vision of a moral order that informs alternative views of politics and economics. This new social imaginary is about the new “ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the

Society as Democratic Practice (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005), 129.

⁵ George F. McLean, “Solidarity and Subsidiarity as the Social Exercise of Human Freedom,” in *Civil Society as Democratic Practice*, 89.

deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations.”⁶ The new paradigm inspired by civil society in the world of globalization forces us to face the basic question about how we can live with each other and how we can re-learn to be fully human again.

These changes in the conceptualization of politics and economics are affecting Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular. Authoritarian approaches to governance are being challenged from different angles. Most of Africa’s so called “strong men” are either dying or losing power and influence. The few of them who are prepared to reintegrate into society as ordinary citizens are gaining admiration and respect.

Zimbabwe and other modern African states emerged, first, as rationalist modern colonial projects. As such, modern African states were invented as appendages to European political power and economics. Their visibility and significance were taken from the point of view of modern Europe. The cultural vitality and social creativity of African local communities and solidarities that should have made up the civil society were denied public legitimacy and official recognition. African social realities were therefore not officially allowed to be present in into the colonial state structures and market economy. Thus, African civil society and culture were, at best, regarded as private, irrelevant or, at worst, criminal and evil. African peoples themselves were made invisible as active moral and social agents. They could only redeem themselves by making themselves useful as tools for the slave trade, slavery, colonialism and global political, economic and ideological contestations.

However, the colonial project did not succeed in annihilating African civil society in the form of African families, communities, and other solidarities. It failed to eradicate African value systems, ways of organizing, and relating to others. It, instead, pushed them underground, where they reconstructed themselves for struggle and war against colonialism. Yet the orientation of war and violence affected African local communities and solidarities. They moulded African personalities that were traumatized by slavery, slave trade and colonialism. The divide and rule tactics of the colonial system helped to reconstruct, reinvent and intensify existing ethnic and other local conflicts. But, in those conflicts, positive solidarities and personalities emerged, although they were limited by the boundaries of struggle. African civil society needed wider social imaginaries to expand their solidarities beyond narrow ethnic and racial groups. These began in the processes of the globalization of African struggles, as illustrated by the world-wide Anti-Apartheid Movement. Religion, in general, and the church, in particular, were deeply implicated in the universalization of African struggles. As a universalist institution,

⁶ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 23.

the church helped turn African local struggles into human struggles. It provided channels for African local solidarities to escape dangerous exclusivist and violent approaches. Globalization processes and communication and technological developments continue to enhance the universalization of African struggles. Professor McLean's global philosophy project is needed more today than ever. It can contribute towards the global philosophical engagement of peoples of the world in a way that speaks to world peace. It will contribute towards the reconceptualization of global politics and economics in the light of the paradigm of civil society and in line with the new global sensibilities. It could help us move towards greater social equality in the world. The project reminds us that politics, economics, culture and development are about human beings as moral agents, and not tools for political ideologies and economic systems.

Finally, it is important not to forget that Professor McLean was a Catholic priest. He never went around announcing this fact, but he was an Oblate. In a world where the priesthood is under tremendous strain, Fr. George McLean exhibited, for me, the ideal of a modern and socially-engaged priest. He was not caught up in clericalism, authoritarian religiosity, or exaggerated spiritualism. He lived and demonstrated the universal nature of Catholic social teaching. He proved to me that genuine modern and responsive priesthood is possible and desirable. May his blessed soul enjoy eternal glory. Thank you, Father and Professor George F. McLean.

Father George McLean at the Catholic University of America

John A. Kromkowski

Father George McLean was intensely interested in cultural pluralism in the United States, and his rootedness in the Catholic University of America (CUA) and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) were dimensions of what he understood as the unity of the local and global. The importance of such grounding and stability appears to be a constant of integrated personalities that are able to engage diversity and change. Understanding personhood and community is a precondition for the development of second and third cultural competencies, and ‘being Catholic and catholic’ is a way of overcoming shallow and generally abstract forms of universalism, such as the Weberian rational actor or bureaucratic personality. Fr. McLean’s interest in America and the activity of the Catholic University of America was an ongoing process that was woven into the substance of his teaching and his practice of philosophy as a way of life. An assessment of the substance of his research and a note about his teaching are presented as a coda and recommendation at the end of these comments.

Evident from the outset of our first meeting until our last telephone call of importance was his distinctive practice of philosophy – it was ever-present and seamlessly personal and, yet, simultaneously and totally for others, devoted to the service of others that included the researchers he energized and whose findings he would promote through the transmission of insights that he hoped would contribute to the healing and flourishing of human cultures and human values within countries and among countries throughout world. This vision of the purpose of philosophy within and among cultures and civilizations, ethnicities, and other religious traditions was comprehensive. He was interested in the practices of regimes and power-fields and how and if they were attentive to deep articulations of the human-divine substances that constituted social realities. He hoped that humanization could be enhanced by the exercise of better choices, and by the use of structures and practices designed to promote the equitable shaping and sharing of burdens and benefits. His expectations from early on, being in Rome at the beginning of what would become the European Union, were deep templates of his mind and spirit. My sense was that he deeply understood the need for balance required among the primordial elements of being: the divine, nature, social orders, and persons. These elements are simultaneously unified as the mystery of being, yet also pluriform in existence and in their manifestations in the

ongoing process and flow in time and in particular places. It was within and among particular ‘partners in being’ that he participated as an active person.

The following honest-to-memory account of his life at the Catholic University of American, of his participation as an energizer of research at CUA and in Washington, DC, may provide a framework into which other accounts of the influence of his thought and practices away from his home university can be placed. A valuable companion to my remarks, the only book length treatment and application of Father McLean’s insights, and a volume that is especially helpful in understanding the last phase of Father McLean’s attention to Christian philosophical studies, is John M. Staak’s book, *Freedom for Faith: Theological Hermeneutics of Discovery in George F. McLean’s Philosophy of Culture* (2013). In one respect, it is an answer to Father McLean’s frequent observation and question gently asked at the end of many conferences or seminars; “Where do we go from here?” My remarks here answer another question: “Where did he come from?”

“Where do we go from here?” Curiously, that was the exact question I asked myself after my first encounter with Father McLean – an encounter that began a long conversation with him about the reform of urban education and that continued for about thirty-three years. That encounter occurred in the mid-1980s when he visited the offices of the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs (NCUEA). When Father McLean visited, NCUEA was a premier applied research, training, and educational organization. Founded in 1970 by Monsignor Geno C. Baroni, NCUEA was focused on the revitalization of urban ethnic neighborhoods in America. NCUEA pioneered the application of ethnic studies and community-based approaches to resolving issues of cultural, social, political, and economic anxiety. It also developed and advocated for national policies and programs to address various types of community concerns and the urban crisis in the United States. By the mid-1980s American ethnic organizations had become increasingly interested in relations with their countries and cultures of origin. In retrospect, the encounter with NCUEA was a pivotal moment, and the beginning of decades of collaboration that should be reported and gratefully remembered. The following account will reveal a neglected dimension of Father McLean’s research and action focused on the United States. Moreover, the recounting will explain a few institutional ambiguities regarding The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, The Center for the Study of Culture and Values, and The Catholic University of America.

As Father McLean often recalled, CUA was a seed-bed of intellectual energy and was his home. The RVP and NCUEA were 501c3 corporate affiliates of the U.S. Catholic Conference dedicated to research, education, and service as independent non-profit organizations and, as NGOs,

operated without overtly emphasizing church affiliation. Well before the founding of the RVP, Father McLean was engaged with off-campus outreach activities which in some respects mirrored the missionary thrust of his religious congregation, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.). In some respects, his first visit to NCUEA was an off-campus venture in Washington, DC and our very long conversation revealed his intense interest in the following topics: the reemergence of American ethnic groups in a “melting pot culture,” how such cultures and values interacted with their countries of origin, how intergroup relations could be improved, the meaning and dynamics of cultural pluralism in American Catholicism, and the differences between immigrants, refugees, and ethnicities. Father McLean came to NCUEA on the recommendation of my former colleagues at the University of Notre Dame, who had participated in a research team organized by Father McLean.

As I look back over the years after that first conversation with Father McLean and the decades of project development that followed, I was especially drawn into his approach to the recruitment and organizing of scholars and the production and distribution of knowledge. In retrospect, after our first very long conversation that day at NCUEA and our subsequent discussions, it seemed clear we both were interested in the new pathways that he was exploring with the RVP. Our mutual conclusion was that an international dimension should be added to the type and substance of research and educational activities that NCUEA had pioneered, but had focused on America. Moreover, adding the ethnic factor to education reform would foster a fuller fusion of the essential aspects of virtue and character related to the research completed in the first published series by the RVP, on *Moral Education and Character*. These common elements underscored an existential dimension of lived cultural experiences, neighborhoods, and the challenges of cultivating second and third cultural competencies in pluralistic societies. It also confirmed cultural heritage as a dimension of character that bonded our mutual search for new research approaches. This mutuality suggested the benefits of extending horizons. Thus, a convergence of research agendas between NCUEA and certain dimensions of the RVP seemed likely.

The convergence, which emerged from the dialogue of those days, included the extension of the NCUEA’s research and education toward other countries. And Father McLean’s interest moved toward the exploration of the ethnic factor as a core dimension of culture; his appropriation and targeting of narrative and hermeneutics moved him well beyond traditional philosophy, toward the inclusion of other disciplines and competencies, and much closer to the social, economic and political and socio-anthropological and comparative religions or the philosophy and phenomenology of religions and mysticism. Such considerations, the turned-toward the ethnic factor in the philosophy of culture, and the

phenomenological recognition of culture as the context within which philosophy could become really real, provided a new horizon. In sum, we both viewed the dynamics of our time as driven by the following aspects of modernization: urbanization, immigration, and migration, economic and political change. We viewed this as an arena that needed serious multi-disciplinary, long-term research, grounded in deep philosophic probes into the sources of order and disorder in our time. In sum these crises of the moment required attention to cultures and the turn of philosophy toward critical clarification of contemporary social realities. The convergence of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) and The National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs (NCUEA) in the research and education moved from conversation to practice, when the NCUEA Board of Directors and the President of the Catholic University of America agreed to moving the location of NCUEA to the campus of CUA.

One of the first fruits of moving to CUA was to participate in seminars with visiting Polish scholars who were affiliated with the Catholic University of Lublin; this was firmly related to Father McLean's early missionary work and sponsorship of joint colloquia with the academies of sciences in several central and Eastern European countries. The record of this activity was discovered when Hu Yeping was preparing the McLean papers for deposit in the CUA archives. Hu discovered a *samizdat* edition of a collection of articles from the late 1970s that included an introduction written by Father Karol Wojtyla, who would become (a few months later) Pope John Paul II. The collection also included an article by Father McLean. The next phase of the project with Poland was to organize a three-day seminar in Poland on comparative social, economic and political aspects of the United States and Poland. CUA awarded a travel grant for an American team; some of my new CUA colleagues from the social sciences were invited to participate, and we began to prepare papers. Father McLean worked arrangements in Poland, and Father Leon Dyczyewski prepared a Polish team. The collection of papers presented was published by the RVP in Polish and English, and titled, *Public and Private Social Inventions in Modern Societies*. The seminar was a stunning event. It was held in Kazimierz at a Solidarity safe house, the day after the election that toppled the Communist Party in Poland.

We returned to CUA after witnessing first-hand an event of singular importance which, in some mysterious way, seemed to be suggestive of a trail of Father McLean's participation in world events and the inclusion of researchers from CUA in his work. This team and many others began to vigorously engage in the RVP and NCUEA seminars after an initial exploration of comparative culture and values studies. The RVP and NCUEA welcomed another group of scholars from The Catholic Univer-

sity of Lublin, and Father McLean's missionary travels produced an ever-increasing and wider array of visitors from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, China, and other Asian countries. The RVP and NCUEA seminars in the 1990s were by far the most interesting academic community at The Catholic University of America. Several international scholars did research sabbaticals in relation to philosophical or cultural studies with the RVP and NCUEA. Father McLean and I sought a variety of funding sources for expanding our research agendas.

These were exciting days of rich expectation for fresh approaches and the promise of human solidarity, driven by the challenges of regime change and ideological collapse. This collaboration produced a series of collaborative research ventures that included the social and political sciences, law, social work, art, the humanities, and well as religious studies, but McLean was a professional philosopher. The volumes produced in these years were arrayed in series that were titled: "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change," "Values and Contemporary Life," "Cultural Heritages and the Foundation of Social Life," and also the beginning of series titled "Annual Editions: Race and Ethnic Relations," a yearly compilation (now in its 21st edition) of current articles and data about ethnicity and ethnic groups, used as a supplementary resource for university courses.

At the outset, our collaboration also included an off-campus outreach effort to the national offices of American ethnic organization in Washington, DC. On campus, an international seminar was held yearly for two of three semesters. Father McLean and I assisted the CUA Office of Development in proposing the development of Polish and Polish American Studies, and Italian and Italian American Studies, as well as expanding CUA's Master's Program in Irish Studies. Thus, some campus institutional change seemed to be moving toward internationalization. After two years, I was asked to create a new range of academic initiatives, and appointed Assistant Dean of International Programs and Internships for the School of Arts and Sciences. CUA created study abroad opportunities for undergraduates that included semester-long parliamentary internships in Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the European Union, and an Italian Studies Program in Rome. Thus, Irish Studies, British Studies, Italian Studies, and Contemporary European Studies became components related to the expansion of research published by the RVP. Father McLean presided at events held on campus and on Capitol Hill, announcing the RVP books on Eastern European countries. These events included representatives from the embassies of the countries about which these books were written as well as the public at large, a few elected representatives, the press and Congressional staff, leaders of ethnic group organizations in Washington, DC and the ethnic liaison person of both political parties.

Our activities in Poland were extended to a new relationship with the Jagiellonian University and its School of Law as well as the Jagiellonian University Press, which published an analysis of the work of Dr. Danuta Mostwin, an emigre novelist, social worker, and professor at the CUA School of Social Service. Dr. Mostwin's applied research and pastoral planning for services to new Polish immigrants was sponsored by the NCUEA. Her project was designed to bridge the gap and resolve conflict between new immigrants and the ethnic communities into which they moved and, thus, provide a new model of cultural formation. At the outset, her focus was Polish immigrants and Polish Americans, but the implications of her findings extended to the general contour of social change in large pluralistic societies. Her work along with others from NCUEA, especially Dr. Thad Radzilowski, led to refashioning the previously-dominant paradigms of assimilation and acculturation. This approach was no longer viable because of new factors of development in a new age of mobility, rapid and ongoing communication between populations from sending and receiving countries, and, most significantly, an accelerating degree of ethnic pluralism in America and attendant social change.

The 1990s at CUA included the NCUEA and also the relocation of The Polish American Historical Association (PAHA). This research network and professional association of historians generated funding for the recovery of previously inaccessible historical research about Polish Catholic parishes in America, found in a fourteen-volume work of collaborative research done by scores of priests and directed by Rev. Wacław Kruska. The books were translated and then published by the Catholic University Press. Dr. James Pula, Dean of the CUA Metropolitan College and editor of the scholarly journal, *Polish American Studies*, worked with Father McLean to deepen our capacity to assist ethnic communities and to bridge new relations with countries of origin. This overall agenda of weaving international understanding into a new model of pluralism and intercultural competencies, could become a source of personal identity and meaning as well as a new expression of a common humanity found in unity as well as diversity.

The RVP enabled the PAHA to experiment with community-based approaches to ethnic history and culture, by assisting a group of Polish-Americans in California with archival and oral historical documentation at the community level. The RVP published the findings of this research project on the historical settlement of Poles and Polish Americans in California, which highlighted the differences between enclave settlements of the older industrially cities and farms of the Northeast and Midwest, and the experiences of immigrants and migrants from earlier enclave situations. Thus, a form of spatial variable and another temporal change was documented and added to modeling ethnic cultural pluralism. The RVP volumes on contemporary Poland and on the philosophical foun-

datations of Solidarity and Polish values were the bases of panel discussions at scholarly national meetings in Atlanta, New York, Chicago, and Washington. The RVP and NCUEA conference at St Mary's College in Detroit and at the Piast Institute in Hamtramck, Michigan addressed both domestic and homeland issues. The former was related to data collection on ancestry populations by the U.S. Census, particularly the shift from the decennial collection to the American Communities Survey, an ongoing rolling collection designed to make data more current than a survey done every ten years. Thus, demography and data mining were added to our research tools. The homeland issue explored was the borderland between Germany and Poland and the awesome gap in stages of development and wellbeing, and its implications for relations between countries in the transition from a command to a market economy. Thus, economics and economic and community development theory were added to our analysis of culture and values. This widened multidisciplinary character of research into culture and values went well beyond strictly philosophical approaches, but, more interestingly, enabled Father McLean to sharpen their capacity to see reductionist foundations and the logic of explanation and causality.

The RVP published a particularly vigorous series of books on Italy that was promoted by the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) and the Sons of Italy in America (SOIA) through panels at their annual meetings. A few of these volumes were republished in Italian, and research on diasporic studies in Italian was significantly broadened by the advocacy and translation projects of Peiro Bassetti and Paolo Janni, and the founding of *Globos et Locus* as a network of researchers and marketers of cultural studies, styles, and commercial products related to the resonance of ethnicity and its meaning-carrying capacity. Thus, another element was added to the study of culture and values – the social and cultural entrepreneur and the process of shaping consumer consciousness. Both the Italian and Polish initiatives included the theme of local and global manifestations of national and ethnic cultures and values and the relationship of diasporic populations, acculturation, and cultural pluralism in the United States, Australia, Argentina and Chile. In addition to these activities, Father McLean's outreach to Iran, especially his lectures in Qom, were followed by Shia scholars who came for public conferences and academic seminars at CUA.

My relation with CUA was regularized when I was offered and accepted a tenure track appointment in the Department of Politics. At this time, Father McLean and I chatted regularly about the future and especially about the importance of "transmission belts" from research to praxis, and the importance of finding new ways to engage learning with experience and to develop a prototype for the transmission of research to audiences beyond academic boundaries. Father McLean and I thought

about and tried to secure funding for educational ventures and applied research on world-wide urban policy.

The American context of pluralism and research freedom and Father McLean's insistence on being rooted to his home university, made adopting a long-term investment in the cultivation of university scholarship the answer to our decade-long discussion about the "transmission belt" problem. We also resolved that there be a balance between applied research and the deep long-term clarification of reality and the mystery of pluralism through which our common humanity must discover its way home. A central aspect of unpacking the analysis of human sociality emerged from the operational fusion of NCUEA and the RVP, that led to planning for creation of a CUA Center for the Study of Culture and Values. This unit would be the CUA's locus for the bonding of a philosophy of culture and attention to ethnicity throughout the world, as well as a means of integrating the social sciences as research approaches to the understanding of cultures and values and contemporary issues. When Hu Yeping joined the RVP, it was able to expand its capacity not only to ship books to fledgling university libraries throughout the world, but also to massively expand access to the RVP collections by internet. Dr. Hu Yeping also took on the task of coordination of off campus seminars and conferences. This solved another aspect of the "transmission belt" problem at the level of shared ideas, interpretation, discoveries, and arguments that open access reading yielded. Such a significantly expanded outreach and readership provided access to genuinely rooted scholars practicing the work of philosophical culture studies.

The RVP began to focus its recruitment on younger scholars and fledgling colleges and university in Africa and Asia. It also expanded its invitation to scholars in residence at the CSCV, and many of these researchers began to plan seminars and conferences which Father McLean and Hu Yeping vetted and linked to more senior Associates of the RVP. Adding the ethnic factor widened the angle of vision regarding the exploration of the collapse of ideologies. Research proposals were fashioned to explore differences between immigrant-sending countries and understanding the new American matrix that seemed to be grounded in pluralism, as well as the pluralistic nature of experiences. Others moved toward understandings of the processes of enculturation, and the experiences of religious traditions and their texts, including a refreshed view of the Catholic tradition that drew on deeper dimensions of human endowment found its tradition of philosophic social thought.

On October 30, 2000, seventeen years after the founding of the RVP, a new phase of Father McLean's mission was marked, with the creation of the CUA Center for the Study of Culture and Values (CSCV) as a research unit joined to the university's Office of the Provost. The provost encouraged Father McLean to hold faculty consultations in most Schools

of the university to survey their research agendas and to encourage the renewal of research at CUA rather than just writing a report about the findings. The new Center for the Study of Culture and Values sought proposals and provided a seed fund to catalyze the formation of a Catholic Studies Center among historians, and an Institute of International Social Development that included the National School of Social Service, the Columbus School of Law, and Department of Politics. The CSCV joined in the effort re-energize the CUA Life Cycle Institute, which was transformed into the CUA Institute for the Policy Research (IPR). Father McLean and I became fellows of the IPR, and joined a cluster of scholars from the Departments of Politics, Economics, Education, Psychology, and Sociology.

Father McLean was the only faculty member from the School of Philosophy. His presence in weekly informal research reports when he was on campus became a source of energy for this academic community. The public programs of the Institute for Public Policy were frequently held off-campus, and included leaders of the think-tank research industry of Washington, DC. Father McLean's new outreach effort, The Center for the Study of Culture and Values, was open to the CUA faculty as well as practitioners of ethnic culture development, such as Dr. Alfred Rotondaro, the former executive director of the National Italian American Foundation, Paolo Janni, the retired Second in Charge of the Italian Embassy in Washington, DC and John Zogby, president of Zogby International.

On August 1, 2001, The Center for the Study of Culture and Values and the Institute for Policy Research jointly sponsored an event at the National Press Club to introduce the findings of James Zogby's book, *What Ethnic Americans Really Think*, based on the Zogby Culture Polls (Zogby International). This empirical research on culture and values significantly expanded public attention and the discussion of pluralism in America. This pioneering national perspective on the views that ethnic groups had of themselves and on issues of common and specific concern of ethnic Americans provided a unique "Pre-9/11" systematic baseline for the study of values and opinions held by various ethnic groups. This study was assisted by the input of various ethnic group leaders and ethnic organizations engaged in national advocacy, education and service. The findings were grounded in the largest sample of ethnic group specific respondents ever compiled. The independence of Zogby International and its reputation for accuracy in marketing research and political polling certified the findings in ways that commissioned research rarely can. The climate of that time was free of the national trauma that emerged after 9/11, and prior to the massive cultural shift that transformed public opinion as responses to 9/11. That this "Pre 9/11" moment seemed ripe for the formation of a national cultural/ethnic coalition among the nearly

seventy national ethnic organizations located in the Washington, DC region was a highpoint of cultural pluralism is now indisputable.

This coalition of American ethnic groups was eager to support the articulation of deeper insight and actions related to the recovery of meaning that are discoverable in ethnic traditions. They understood their traditions as contributions to a pluralistic democratic culture in America. The intention of this collation and this public initiative was to catalyze a new scholarly and community partnership devoted to the search for convergence and equivalence among groups in their social symbolic forms, i.e., as communities. A new partnership between researchers and community leaders was ready to promote the exploration of religious and transcendent dimensions embedded in foundational texts of remnant and diasporic communities. This initiative was sponsored by The Center for the Study of Culture and Values and a steering committee of ethnic group organizations that held regular discussion and planning meetings at CUA. Father McLean and I drafted proposals that included the prospect of the RVP sponsoring empirical data collection in Islamic countries with Zogby International, as an ongoing dimension of other philosophical and humanistic research. The promise of that spring and early summer faded after 9/11.

The public climate for such hopeful ventures withered in the trauma and anxiety of 9/11 and with the post 9/11 transformation of public consciousness. Though the production of empirical findings on members of American ethnic groups continued, and another batch of findings was generated in 2005, the post 9/11 era muted diasporic organizations and, even more disastrously, diminished financial support from major foundations whose interest withered for this approach to understanding democratic pluralism. The Center for the Study of Culture and Values significantly retreated from off campus activities regarding the recovery and development of cultural heritages in the Post 9/11 era. Nonetheless, Father McLean continued to lead campus seminars for visiting international scholars and CUA faculty. The RVP network continued to organize conferences throughout the world as well as to design and direct the Annual Seminars for visiting scholars. Scholars-in-residence for one or two semesters enlivened noon research colloquies and the attendant fellowship.

Father McLean's ongoing outreach was woven into his practice of philosophy as a way of life, and crises were perceived as opportunities. His last large-scale public event at CUA was the Charles Taylor-Cardinal George discussion that grew out of Father McLean's attention to the question of secularization. The research teams of the Center for the Study of Culture and Values and associates of the RVP continued their work on Islam and began work on economics, ethics, and Chinese culture; six teams in India explored the roots of Chinese Buddhism; there were

Southeast Asian projects in Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Phnom and Hanoi, and Central Asian seminars in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

The final period of Father McLean's research agenda was a turn toward Christian Philosophical Studies. This culminated in a series of twenty-three volumes and in a major international conference that was held at the Gregorian University in Rome – where Father McLean had studied for seven years in the 1940s and 50s. In advance of this capstone event, he invited the philosophical network of scholars to draft preliminary reflections, which he circulated as the preparatory soundings for the considerations and explorations of importance to the church. The findings of this event were published in a volume entitled *Renewing the Church in a Secular Age: Holistic Dialogue and Kenotic Vision*.

His attention to mobilizing research on the central aspects of the relationship of contemporary culture to the Catholic Church and its tradition was a driving concern of his last years, which increasingly were lived away from CUA and with his congregation in Massachusetts. A pre-philosophic element that seems appropriate to mention suggestively in relation to his final conference at the Gregorian, is his experience of a statue of Nicholas of Cusa which he saw through a window of his room when he was a student at the Gregorian. Father McLean's affinity for and interest in the work of Cusanus, a rational mystic and active philosopher, a liminal person whose vision of unity may be more than a bridge between eras in the history of philosophy, indicates parallels to Father McLean and to the ever important nexus between a philosophic and a religious way of living.

In our last phone conversation about two weeks before he died, Father McLean told me that he intended to send a letter to the CUA Provost Andrew Abela recommending my appointment as director of The Center for the Study of Culture and Values. I was on sabbatical and planning to retire after the following semester. I was not surprised when the Provost invited me to use my sabbatical to take up the work that Father McLean had initiated. About a year after the passing of Father McLean, and seventeen years after the founding of the Center for the Study of Culture and Values, The Catholic University of America renamed the CSCV, The *McLean* Center for the Study of Culture and Values. The inauguration of the McLean Center was celebrated by the leadership of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, visitors from many countries, and Father McLean's CUA campus colleagues. This event signaled the next phase of the ongoing work of Father George McLean at The Catholic University of America.

The McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Value has been endowed, and shall have capacity to serve as the secretariat of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and to foster research

efforts of CUA faculty and visiting scholars, which include the following tasks:

- To organize and arrange the annual intensive seminar on culture and contemporary issues;
- To host visiting international post-doctoral researchers for either a semester or an academic year;
- To maintain an international network of scholars and scores of organizations that include national academies of science, universities, various institutes, academic departments in the full range of disciplines in humanities and social sciences, as well as research associations and societies related to the study of culture, moral education and character development;
- To facilitate yearly an average of ten regional conferences, seminars and research initiatives of associated scholars and associated organizations;
- To sponsor campus research colloquies for faculty, graduate students and advanced undergraduates;
- To review, edit, publish and disseminate selected collections or books, on an average of ten volumes each year, based on the aforementioned conferences, seminars and research teams.

In closing, a few words about memories and legacies and a recommendation about the lasting success of Father McLean come to mind. To be with Father McLean is to engage his lectures that are now significant texts. More specifically, my recommendation to the reader is to ponder the lectures found in *Beyond Modernity: The Recovery of Person and Community in Global Times: Lectures in China and Vietnam* (2010).

Beyond Modernity is devoted to systematic explorations into cultural heritages and the contemporary challenges and transformations under the impact of modernity. In these lectures, McLean illustrates a central feature of the RVP's approach to the intersection of the philosophic tradition with the realities embedded in the foundations of social life. He masterfully engages the truth value found in such texts, and the importance of re-engaging them not simply as artifacts in the history of ideas, but as sources for an ongoing quest for insight. These lectures by McLean avail the reader access to his steady and balanced command of the history of philosophy as well as cultural-religious phenomena and foundational texts. They also echo his decades of interaction with the "brain stems" of the members and associates of the Academies of Science and their philosophic Institutes in Eastern Europe and Asia. McLean was invited to join them, as they grappled with the tasks of recapturing deeper patterns

of human consciousness and bonds of cultural grounding that remained embedded in the social realities of their peoples.

Our time continues to require a turn to the exploration of cultures, phenomenology, personalism and fresh hermeneutics needed for the contemporary needs of civil society, and the relevance of philosophy for public affairs. Father McLean did not view philosophy as a truncated life in the isolation and compartmentalization of the bureaucracies of academic governance. *Beyond Modernity* provides the reader with direct and extended access to the voice of a great teacher. McLean's lectures address the recovery of a central mission of science – the explication and articulation of various ways of knowing and various modes of being. He engages contemporary concerns about person and community that have resurfaced in the wake of the collapse of modernity. He does not dwell on modernity's all too confident proclamation and imposition of certainties, remedies and fallacious hopes. Rather, he draws the reader into a grander argument and a larger body of evidence. He presents a positive therapy of the search, as he recovers philosophic literacy and reveals the ground from which such new competencies emerge. This leads the reader to discovering anew the transformation of reality that privileges the centrality of the person as the locus for the fullest participation in reality and thus expresses the “really real” bonds of union that constitute communities among persons.

In our time, science and wellbeing are yoked, and the task of unpacking and critically clarifying this new landscape, and especially the particular portion of its global configuration in Asia, are the topics found in the fourteen lectures of *Beyond Modernity*. But this volume has more. The approach of the RVP to the intersection of cultures and representative texts is devoted to searching for understanding and meaning that deepens, to becoming truly human, to participating in the mystery of existence as it is found in the processes of lived cultures. Like Father McLean, it is by engaging the reality of cultures on other than one's own terms, and on the most serious terms of their expressions of the primordial structure and process, that we find the really real.

Interestingly, *Beyond Modernity* concludes with an appendix – an appendix by Veerachart Nimanong of Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand, entitled “Thai Theravada Buddhist Understanding of Non-Attachment: A Middle Way for Culture and Hermeneutics in a Global Age.” It is fitting Father McLean saw that an indigenous voice and articulation of culture and values should have the last word.

A Universalistic Humanism from a “Biased” Perspective

Plamen Makariev

I first met Professor George McLean in 1996, and had occasion to talk with him many times afterwards – most extensively, at some of the seminars held in Washington, DC, during which time we had many opportunities to discuss a broad range of subjects. What has puzzled me throughout the years was an apparent paradox. Professor George, a member of a religious congregation, was doing his best to involve scholars from all over the globe in dialogical relationships – scholars from very diverse religious backgrounds and, in some cases, from entirely secular milieus. As far as I can judge from my personal observations, he did this with a complete and genuine respect for everyone’s beliefs and world-views, even in cases when someone’s behavior or manner in the seminar seemed bizarre and sometimes even grotesque.

So, I asked myself, how is it possible for a person of faith, a serious scholar, someone whose self-respect would never let him approach inter-religious relations in a frivolous way, to establish and maintain relationships of mutual understanding and trust with people whose beliefs were in some cases, at least *prima facie*, incompatible with his own, and with whom he had very little in common in terms of life experience, intellectual interests, and cultural attitudes?

I tried to find a solution to this paradox throughout the decades during which I knew Professor McLean. One possible solution would be to apply the most popular approach to matters of religious tolerance, the one based on “common values,” otherwise known as “the common thread.” The metaphor of the mountain usually illustrates it – it is possible to climb it from any side, but at the top the trails converge. We all believe in the same God but in different ways, due to historical and cultural circumstances. The ultimate religious values are identical, or at least similar, across the world, but are merely interpreted and applied in different manners. Is it not true that all major religions preach love, justice, peace, wisdom, self-realization, duty, honor, and other values? These values may be regarded as an ideal of what ought to be, and their divergent cultural interpretations as simply an expression of different ways of realizing these ideals. So, on this approach, it seems that one could easily understand and justify the attempts to establish relationships of mutual respect and even cooperation between representatives of different religions.

This approach to interreligious relations has, however, been much criticized throughout the years. First, it is based on the assumption that the

various realizations of common ideals cannot differ drastically. In other words, people who subscribe to identical or similar fundamental values are allegedly not able, under any circumstances, to engage in practices that put them in conflict with one another. Historical experience shows that this is not the case. For example, I could not justify stoning someone to death as a punishment for adultery, even if I should share the value of “marital fidelity” with the executioners.

Another objection to the “common thread” argument is that the awareness of fundamental commonalities among the major religions does not guarantee reciprocated relations and mutual recognition. Indeed, a profound identification of a genuinely pious person with her or his faith makes it unlikely that she or he would approach the representatives of other religions as equals. Oftentimes, one assumes that values common to one’s own religion and those of “others” are primarily the property of the former, and that the “others” have them in a partial or incomplete way.

In my meetings with Father George, I never noticed the slightest element of a condescending attitude towards me or towards other non-Catholics. Of course, quite a few of the scholars with whom he worked over the years were secular persons, coming from former socialist countries. And still, every one of us felt like a very special person in the presence of Professor McLean.

The political philosopher John Rawls takes a very different approach to the relations among religions, as well as between them and society at large, in his conceptions of overlapping consensus and public reason. As is well known, Rawls differentiates between reasonable and unreasonable comprehensive doctrines. Certain religions may have something in common, not in the realm of fundamental values but in terms of shared reasonability. However, from this it follows that religions can play a significant role in public life only if religiously justified claims on political matters are accompanied by a second justification, which involves universally accessible reasons.

This idea of finding a “common language” between religions and the general public, which would be a form of realizing religious tolerance, has also met with much criticism. Objections have focused on Rawls’s requirement that religious people would have to formulate their public messages in two “languages” – one in their own, and one in universally accessible terms. First of all, this seems unjust, because secular citizens need not resort to such “bilingualism.” And second, this requirement places a substantial psychological and moral burden on people of faith, who would have to split their identity into a religious and a civic part. Would this not put them in a “schizophrenic” situation?

In my opinion, in a late modern, liberal-democratic society, there is no such danger. We all have multiple identities, and there is no problem with this, as long as these identities do not clash with one another. I see

no reason why a profoundly religious person cannot be at the same time also a good citizen of a, in Rawls's terms, "well-ordered society." As long as we are speaking about a religion which meets the appropriate criteria, it would qualify as a reasonable comprehensive doctrine. However, Rawls' theory is relevant only to political matters. In order to find an explanation of our paradox, I would like to extend somewhat the understanding of the dual identity of religious citizens, which we can find in Rawls' "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited" (1997).

Consider modernist universal egalitarian humanism, which proceeds from the assumption that every human being is valuable in her/himself and precisely as much as anyone else. Alternatively, in Kant's formulation, *only the human being, and with him every rational creature, is a purpose in itself*. How, then, should profoundly religious persons make sense of their relations with people of different religious or cultural backgrounds? Should they pursue it within the frame of reference of their faith, or the one pertaining to a universal egalitarian humanism?

If this is a religion of the "reasonably-comprehensive" type, I don't see why this could not be done in both ways, so that one's attitude to the Other is shaped in a balanced way by motives of both a religiously specific and a universally humanistic nature. The two identities, in such a case, should be not in a mutually exclusive, schizophrenic relationship but, rather, in a mutually complementary one. So, in my opinion, this can explain why George McLean, a good Catholic, approached all of us – Protestants, Eastern Orthodox, Muslims, Buddhist, non-believers – with unconditional respect and genuine interest in our beliefs and worldviews.

I will finish this reflection by sharing a story. In 1998, I was organizing a RVP conference in my home town, Sofia. It was late November, and the weather was nasty. We slept and worked in a hotel high up on the Vitosha mountain near the city. The road to that place was what you would expect: narrow, winding in many places, and with a deep precipice by the side. I had to collect a couple of Romanian colleagues from the railway station and drive them in my shabby little Skoda up to the hotel. Unfortunately, when we were about to climb the mountain, we entered such dense fog that I could not see more than a couple of meters ahead. Besides, it was quite late, and we had almost no daylight. There were no other cars in front of us, so I had no idea where we were going. But still, we had to move on. The situation was getting worse from minute to minute.

At this point, I asked my colleagues whether they were Christian. They replied "yes." I told them this was the moment for them to pray for their lives and that in our situation we really "couldn't make it" without help from "above." It was a joke, of course, and they took it as a joke – and yet they suddenly became silent and somewhat withdrawn.

After some time, we reached, at last, our destination. Later in the evening, I told Professor McLean what happened, with all the details. Then he asked why I did not pray myself during that exciting journey. I replied that I was a non-believer, and even if God existed, he would not consider my prayer. At that moment, Father George looked at me in a somewhat sly manner and said: “Who knows, who knows...”

That Special Mixture of Gentleness and Wisdom

Carlos Eduardo Maldonado

The first time I met Fr. George McLean was in Lima, Peru. An important international conference had been jointly organized by the RVP, the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (UNMSDM), Peru's most prestigious university, and the Latin American Chair of the International Philosophical Association. At that time, I did not know I was going to meet Fr. McLean on three other occasions.

The conference lasted four days. I was the last person to present a paper. I was very young at the time. I had just earned my Ph.D. at a prestigious university in Europe, and this was my first major international presentation. Everybody had listened to the most important papers, was already tired.

As I was reading my paper – something related to phenomenology and civil society –, some people in the audience started calling out that it was time for me to stop. Time was due, apparently. Then, to my surprise, the chair of the conference, Professor Francisco Miró-Quesada, together with Fr. McLean, together and in unison, called for silence and to let me be allowed to finish my presentation. So I did it.

In short, when I had finished, I was immediately congratulated by both elder Professors. They openly declared that mine had been the best paper presented in the four days of the conference. That was immediate Platonic love: I felt in love with Miró-Quesada and with McLean, and they liked me, too.

As usually happens, the organizers of the conference had organized a small get-together for some of the participants for the next day. I was invited to join. It was a wonderful gathering, with very nice Peruvian food, and many kinds of liqueurs. Comments, questions, discussion, laughing, anecdotes... everything came together. A most lovely session.

I mentioned to Fr. McLean that the next year, 1996, I was going to be a Visiting Scholar at the University of Pittsburgh, thanks to a grant I had been awarded. We exchanged phone numbers, emails, and planned to get in touch for an upcoming meeting in Washington, DC.

I arrived in Pittsburgh at the very beginning of January. The weather was very cold, and heavy snow had been falling and would continue to fall for many days. After a few days, I called Fr. McLean mentioning that, so to speak "I was already in town." We agreed to meet sometime in February. To my surprise, he invited me to stay at his home for a few days.

I then learned that he was an Oblate priest. Most generously, George came to the Greyhound station in Washington, DC in person to pick me up.

Of course, I had come to the U.S. with a plan of research and study for my stay in Pittsburgh. In the end, I was able to write a paper on the theory of rationality and rational choice, a paper that was very well received upon publication. George suggested that I write a book on civil society and subsidiarity. We discussed the issue a couple of times while in Washington, DC. I returned to Pittsburgh and continued with my research as I had planned.

I cannot avoid mentioning that, in Pittsburgh, I worked with and managed to befriend Nicholas Rescher, a philosopher whom I had already read but had never met before. I will always remember such an impressively nice, warm, and intelligent professor.

In short, while in Pittsburgh, I wrote a book with the title *Human Rights, Solidarity and Subsidiarity. Essays on Social Ontology*. I travelled that summer back to Washington, DC and I handed in my book to Fr. McLean. This time, he was the person surprised by my speed. The book was published the next year, in 1997.¹

The next time I met George McLean was in Brazil. A meeting was organized at Rio Grande do Sul, at the Jesuit university (Universidade do Rio Grande do Sul) there. I was very pleased to meet George once again. In Brazil, the conference lasted three days. Not many people managed English that well. So I was the “official” translator for Professor McLean on various occasions. Three or four years had passed since we had last met. Still, our friendship and warmth had not diminished at all.

In 2008, I applied to participate in the Seminar at the RVP, and was accepted. The subject of the seminar was History and Cultural Identity. That was the longest time I spent together with Fr. McLean. It was then that I got to know him better. It is true that the knowledge of people is very much the knowledge of time.

The seminar was coordinated by John Hogan, but George McLean was a very active participant. Professors from Bulgaria, Russia, Nigeria, Romania, Poland, and Colombia (myself) participated that year. The seminar was a wonderful experience. I stayed at the host house that the RVP has for these events, and I enjoyed the good ambiance at The Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington, DC.

During the seminar, a trip was organized to Vermont. A particularly memorable experience was that, when in the van, we all spontaneously began to sing. One of the songs was the one originally performed by Louis Armstrong, “When the saints.” But then, all of a sudden, George started singing songs by Marian Anderson, a black American singer. We sung

¹ *Human Rights, Solidarity and Subsidiarity: Essays toward a Social Ontology* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998).

“My Lord, what a morning,” “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen,” and probably one or two more – but I remember these. I was the only person who knew these songs, and we were the two only people in the van singing for a while. A special connection arose then, and our eyes contacted in joy and happiness. It was my father who had first introduced me to the songs and figure of Marian Anderson, many years before.

The subject that I worked on in the RVP seminar was the relationship between history and complexity. In Pittsburgh, some years before, I fell in love with the sciences of complexity – a recent field, focused on increasingly complex systems, and a cross-disciplinary field, where biology and mathematics, physics and computation, and chemistry and the social sciences meet in the search for explaining and understanding phenomena such as non-linearity, emergence, self-organization, fluctuations, and turbulence, among many others. Ever since I had been in Pittsburgh, this had become my main intellectual field of work and research, in which philosophy, broadly construed, and science come into a wonderful interplay. I have been convinced since then, that no one single science or discipline is enough for understanding and explaining nature, society and the universe.

The very good databases at CUA enabled me to plunge into the then-existing literature on history and complexity. At the end of the day, I wrote a paper, “History as an increasingly complex system.” A translation of that paper was first published in Bulgaria,² and later it was a chapter published in *History and Cultural Identity*.³ As it happens, my intellectual interests had shifted from social ontology to the sciences of complexity – whence my text and emphasis.

Let me now turn to Fr. McLean. My head and heart are full of clips, short videos, and pictures of him. I have never found such a person as George. What most struck me was his soft manner, his extremely gentle mood, the soft tone of his voice, the peace he irradiated – all this, combined with an extreme intelligence and an open-minded attitude – the closest expression to wisdom, ever.

This is my guess: he had always an open attitude towards different forms of knowledge, and other cultures and civilizations. The work and prestige of the RVP is primarily his, by and large. Real deeds embody such a wise attitude; a look at the books published by the RVP is enough to give oneself an idea of the broad and yet deep relationship to other forms of philosophy, religion, and science (<http://www.crvp.org>). No

² “History and Complexity,” *Filosofski Alternativi* (2008): 5-17, ISSN 0861-7899 (original in English, published in Bulgarian).

³ “History as an Increasingly Complex System,” in ed. John Hogan, *History and Cultural Identity. Retrieving the Past, Shaping the Future* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2011), 129-152.

other research center or institute in the world has such an array of books, seminars, meetings, conferences, and prestige over such a vast arena: research, values, and philosophy – a large umbrella that covers nearly the best features of the human spirit.

George had the capacity to listen to every person and every argument, and take the best from them. I never heard him criticizing an argument, rejecting a position, or refuting a mistake or an error. Quite on the contrary, he shifted the issue to what it had of value and helped to develop it. Fr. MacLean was a real polymath in philosophy, ethics, and religion. Later, I came to know about his very good relations with the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP), and how the RVP came to be reckoned as a center of excellence.

Professor McLean travelled almost all his life, I learned – from Europe to Asia, from Africa to Latin America, from rich and wealthy countries to small and unknown universities. Philosophy was his master key to open previously closed or half-closed doors. “Metaphysics, he once told me, is about practice, acting and relating with others and the world.”

My own background is in philosophy. I graduated in philosophy, having had the best professor in the field in my country. Later on, I went into a Ph.D. at one of the best universities in the world, and there I met many of the luminaries of philosophy of our time – for they were often invited to a conference, to give a lecture, or to receive an award. From analytic philosophy to continental, from the U.S. to Europe, I never met as wise a philosophy professor as George McLean. All the others were clever and smart, no question about that. Some had a very refined sense of humor, and others were distant and rather indifferent to the world and the surroundings. Nonetheless, up until today, I have never met anyone who combined knowledge and gentleness, erudition and kindness, intelligence and warmth so well. I am sure that every single person who had the chance to meet and to come know George McLean experienced something similar, even if they expressed it differently.

To be sure, George was and remains a magnificent example of that difficult mixture of life and knowledge. In his case, the mixture resulted in an atmosphere of peace, of soft and refined joy, of a smile gently sculpted in his face and his blue eyes, looking at the world and others with respect and attention.

He was a Catholic and a priest as well as a philosopher. With all due respect, regardless of one’s beliefs, George is now enjoying heaven or paradise or that place where everything seems to be just perfect and in accordance with one’s own soul. His legacy will last in the ongoing conferences, publications and academic events organized by the RVP both at CUA and abroad. May his memory be always greatly honored.

Father McLean and the Globalization of Philosophy

William McBride

Here in the United States it has been difficult, in recent months, to avoid being engulfed in the political. As one for whom political philosophy has always been a central concern, I might have been expected to revel in this state of affairs, but that is very far from the case. The political, in this country, has come to be characterized by hatred, venom, a deep disrespect for those with differing viewpoints, and even the acceptance, by a wide segment of the citizenry, of outright lies by public figures as normal. In addition, there has been an intensification, in the public at large and sometimes at the highest levels of government as well, of nationalist fervor and expressions of disdain or worse for people who do not share a few select European ethnicities and for those who profess religious beliefs outside a certain mainstream, most broadly defined as Judeo-Christian and sometimes even more narrowly defined than that.

Father McLean died early in the fall of 2017 as these tendencies were beginning to take clearer shape. He was their antithesis, both in his person and in his worldview. His entire career, from very early on, was devoted to creating a worldwide community. It was, first and foremost, a community of philosophers. His Center for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) sponsored conferences all over the world and published dozens upon dozens of proceedings from them. But it was also his intention, I am sure, that this community of philosophers could be seen to serve as a model for the world community at large.

Around the time of George McLean's eightieth birthday, in 2009, several *Festschriften* were published in his honor on several continents. (William Sweet was the co-editor of one of them.) One that is in my possession was edited by Karim Crow and published in Tehran. It is entitled *Islam, Cultural Transformation, and the Re-Emergence of Falsafah: Studies Honoring Professor George Francis McLean on His Eightieth Birthday*. It is true that in many parts of the Islamic world there is a suspicion of *falsafah*, philosophy, but in Iran, however one may regard the theocratic political regime established by the Ayatollah Khomeini and still in place there, philosophy occupies a place of honor, a tradition that goes back for centuries. Father McLean was a lecturer in Qom, the principal seminary city of Iran, for several months, which is some measure of the high regard in which he was held by prominent Iranian clerics. In fact, he rather prided himself, as I know from conversations that I used to have with him periodically before he took seriously ill, on being regarded

by some as an honorary Muslim. The volume that I own includes contributors from across the Islamic world and beyond.

Karim Crow's brief introduction to this volume begins with a survey of moments in Father McLean's career. It is, unsurprisingly to me, breathtaking in scope, beginning with his Catholic seminary days, particularly at the Gregorianum in Rome, through his Ph.D. dissertation critiquing the thought of Paul Tillich from a Thomistic standpoint, through intensive studies of Indian philosophy and his global travels in the interest of bringing different philosophical traditions into dialogue with one another. In other words, he epitomized what I like to call "the globalization of philosophy," this being understood in a very positive sense. Here I would like, first, to say a little bit about what I take to have been among Father McLean's special concerns, his special orientation, in advocating and advancing this globalization, and, then, to reconsider this enterprise in light of recent developments, particularly those that I mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Lastly, I would like to offer a few reflections on the era, the period of time, with which I associate Father McLean and on what has been lost with his passing and is being lost with the passing of others of his generation.

George McLean was deeply committed to philosophy, and at the same time, as should be obvious, he was deeply religious. For him, of course, these two commitments went together and were intertwined. The theme of next year's World Congress of Philosophy, in Beijing, is the meaning of being human, and this question was always one of the greatest interest for Father McLean. For him, a proper understanding of humanity had to involve two dimensions at once, that of the sacred and that of the profane. To the extent to which, as is characteristic of large segments of contemporary societies throughout the world, the former dimension is dismissed or neglected, we are in very serious trouble, and the meaning of the human is being fundamentally misunderstood. Our world must, he felt, get beyond this unbalanced perspective; one of his books is entitled *Beyond Modernity*. But, unlike so many of his clerical predecessors in the Catholic and other religions, he advocated the achievement of this needed progress in a completely undogmatic fashion. He saw philosophy as a precious, valuable means to this achievement, and by "philosophy" he understood, as is so obvious, not any single approach, but *all* serious approaches worldwide – and all of them in dialogue with one another, increasingly in community, not in conflict. I can think of no other philosopher over the course of the last century and a half, and no doubt much longer than that, who has pursued this course so wholeheartedly – and certainly none who has done so successfully. If we go back far enough in the history of Western thought, perhaps the name of Leibniz comes to mind, since he, despite the limited communications and limited resources of those times, at least pursued an intellectual opening to China while

striving valiantly to dampen the religious enmities that were ravishing Europe. Well, then, let us say, without being too literal-minded about it, that George McLean was our Leibniz.

It would be ludicrous to contend that attitudes, sometimes extremely insular, of superiority concerning certain approaches to philosophy are not still widespread in the United States and much of Europe as well. There are still many who maintain that whole traditions of philosophy “are not really philosophy” at all. The analytic persuasion is especially notorious for having encouraged such attitudes, but one should not overlook the strong Eurocentrism evident in Husserl’s historical references or the unconcealed, so to speak, Germanocentrism of Heidegger and others. That there are connections, sometimes obvious and sometimes more difficult to establish, between historical phenomena such as colonialism and this colonization of philosophy would serve as the basis of some interesting studies in the sociology of philosophy. A glance at the roster of members of the Steering Committee of FISP, the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, during the two five-year terms, 1978-88, of George McLean’s membership on it, or at the programs of the World Congresses of Philosophy held during those same years, reveals an overwhelming predominance of participants from Europe, mostly Western Europe, and the Americas, mostly North America. (For example, if I have counted correctly, out of 41 listed for 1983-88, 37 had addresses in Europe or North or South America and only four on other continents, one of whom lived in Israel. The composition of the current Steering Committee is still highly disproportionate, but a little bit less so: 32 and 11.)

It was in order to combat this state of affairs, to create genuine “openings” or “clearings” of the sort of which Heidegger could only dream, that George McLean devoted so much of his life. And he was in fact extremely successful. The number of cities and countries in which he sponsored meetings of his Council for Research in Values and Philosophy is truly staggering – and, at least as far as I know, the attendance at them was always very high. Somewhat typical of them, I guess, was one held in Shanghai some years ago at which, incidentally, I met Fenggang Yang, a colleague in the sociology of religion who had been teaching at Purdue, my institution, for several years already, but whom I had never before encountered. (I recently saw him at a reception at Purdue and learned that he and his wife had made a special one-day round-trip to attend Father McLean’s funeral – so highly indebted did they feel towards him.) FISP voted some years ago to endorse these sessions – not that Father McLean really needed this endorsement, but he appreciated it and it was certainly deserved. He had admirers all over the world. He was living disproof of the once-popular thesis of the “clash of civilizations.”

I would like now to return to the situation with which we are confronted today, above all in the United States, but also in Europe and worldwide. I say “above all in the United States” because, although of course there are many places in the world in which suffering due to deep divisions is much more severe, it is here, at least for the moment, that the battle between exclusivism and openness is being waged with exceptional intensity, and an attempt is being made to resuscitate the Huntingtonian worldview to which I just referred. As everyone knows, a recent U. S. Presidential decree, soon blocked by the courts, had as its purpose the creation of a temporary “Muslim ban,” as it was called. In this atmosphere, there has been an upsurge of anti-Muslim violence in various parts of this country and even one appalling episode in Québec. At the same time, of course, we must not disregard the sponsorship of organized violence on the part of some relatively small segments of Islam over roughly the past two decades. What is desperately needed under these circumstances is precisely the kind of cultivation of mutual understanding and dialogue that Father McLean undertook with such ardor. Now, one might retort that that may be well and good among philosophers, but that it is far removed from the lives of ordinary people, West or East. Not so, in my opinion: Philosophy, if given the opportunity, does have the capacity – by contrast with the false economic view that money amassed by the increasingly rich few will inevitably trickle down to the poor masses – to trickle down even to quasi-illiterate, chauvinistic political leaders, and certainly to ordinary people of good will. We all owe it to Father McLean’s memory to try to reject the combination of self-righteous esotericism and bunker mentality that characterizes too much of professional philosophy today. The globalization of philosophy, unlike the other, primarily economic and political, forms of globalization that have been the subjects of so many books and articles, genuinely laudatory at the beginning but then increasingly tinged with doubt and concern, of the past two or three decades, cannot but have positive consequences for this weary world as we approach the second quintile of the twenty-first Century, and discover that our often bright hopes at its outset have given way to deep fears.

This reference to what Hegel called the “objective spirit” of a given age brings me to my final theme in this talk, a backward look at Father McLean’s era, his generation. Stefan Zweig, driven out of his native Austria and living in exile in Brazil, about to commit suicide there, wrote an autobiography, *The World of Yesterday*, which reflects the spirit of what I am trying, in a way that will at best be inadequate, to do here in the case of Father McLean. I know very few details about his early life – only that he grew up in Massachusetts (as his way of speaking in later life reflected), as a Catholic of Irish, or Scotch-Irish, descent. He lived his early childhood through the period of the Great Depression and his early

adolescence during the Second World War. Although his studies in Rome lasted a long time, seven years, he spent most of the rest of his life, when he was not traveling, at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, first as a graduate student and then as a professor. What I want to underscore is how remarkable, in many ways, was the turn that his life took. The large Irish Catholic community in the greater Boston area was its own world – not homogenous, far from that, but still bound together by some communalities that produced a certain self-confidence and at the same time a strong sense of interconnectedness. It had its elite – John F. Kennedy was born into that world some dozen years before Father McLean – and it identified closely with America and American history. It supplied the Church with some of its children as priests and nuns, and if it still retained a collective sense of inferiority because of its religious traditions, this was largely eliminated by the election of Kennedy as President despite his adherence to them. Father McLean came to Washington, DC just four years before that election, and the roughly four decades that followed were the years of American hegemony at its height. It was a heady time for those who shared, to some extent or other, in this privileged world.

But Father McLean was obviously not content simply to enjoy the privileges, reduced but real, of a priest in this milieu. The trajectory of his career is nothing short of astonishing. He regarded with utmost seriousness the obligation that he felt to connect philosophers and to *connect with* philosophers all over the world – not in the spirit of the hegemon that in fact constituted just five percent of the world’s population, but in a spirit of humility and service, as well as of intellectual curiosity and adventure. Given his sense of obligation, as I have described it, we are obliged to honor and maintain his legacy.

At the same time, however, his world, as I have depicted it, is, to recall Zweig’s title, a world of yesterday. The American Catholic priesthood itself has greatly diminished in size, both relatively and even absolutely, from around 50,000 at about the time of Father McLean’s ordination to just over 37,000 last year, despite the considerable population growth over that time period. (Incidentally, during the 45 years between 1965 and 2010, the number of Catholic nuns in the United States, of whom a sister of Father McLean who died on the same day as he was one, shrank even more dramatically, by more than two-thirds.) Washington, DC remains a thriving metropolis, to be sure, but the American claim to world hegemony is no longer taken for granted, as the popularity of the nostalgic slogan of the victorious Presidential candidate in the recent (2016) elections, recalling past greatness and promising to restore it, should make evident. But ironically enough, this promise was accompanied by an appeal to ultra-nationalism, a move to construct literal walls to keep out the barbarians, as in Hadrian’s Britain or Ulrich’s East Berlin

– ironically, because the old post-war American hegemony was premised on a kind of misguided but real cosmopolitan spirit. It should not be forgotten that the United States was a leading force in the creation of the United Nations (out of which, through its International Council for Philosophy and the Human Sciences, FISP itself originated).

I say “misguided” because there was the widespread assumption that *our* supposed values and *our* way of life were best, and should serve as guides for the rest of the world. (To some degree this “we” was thought to include Canada, the U.K. and perhaps parts of Western Europe, but let us leave aside that ambiguity.) Father McLean, from early on in his career, exuded and lived the spirit of cosmopolitanism at its best, without buying into the arrogance of hegemony. At a time when a serious assault is occurring against that spirit – not only, as I said earlier, in the United States, but in other parts of the world as well – I would like to conclude my tribute by citing his own words, which I am taking as a call for the renewal of that spirit:

Given the global social-political and economic transformations underway, there is a need to shift into a period of social reconstruction. Philosophy may now draw upon the cultural resources of many world peoples and apply them in a creative retrieval of the dignity of persons and societies. What is sought is a new integration of humanity with nature, of persons with society, and of the secular with the sacred.¹

¹ In Karim Douglas Crow, ed., *Islam, Cultural Transformation, and the Re-Emergence of Falsafah: Studies Honoring Professor George Francis McLean on his Eightieth Birthday* (Tehran, Iran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 2008), viii.

George Francis McLean: Engaging Philosophers of the World in Dialogue

Asha Mukherjee

I met Professor McLean for the first time in 1992, when he visited Santiniketan out of love, and to meet some of his old friends from the International Society for Metaphysics. He told me that he had been, and was also currently involved in a number of international activities including a series of conferences, beginning in 1976, that took place in major centers around the world including Santiniketan (India), New York, Jerusalem, Bogota (Columbia), and Nairobi, mainly on themes such as the human person, society, and culture. Some of the papers presented at these meetings later published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in volumes titled, *Person and Nature*, *Person and Society*, *Person and God*, and *The Nature of Metaphysical Knowledge*. The aim of these meetings was to build bridges for joint philosophical reflection and to promote exchange among philosophers from Western, Eastern, and European traditions.

Honestly speaking, at this first meeting, I had the initial impression that, since he was a priest, he must have some kind of missionary intentions wanted to propagate Catholicism, whereas my training in Philosophy was mainly in logic and analytic philosophy. But, just after talking to him for an hour, I realized that he was Christian with a difference. His philosophical outlook was very impressive, and there was something very attractive in him that I could not ignore.

George McLean was inviting philosophers from all philosophical traditions for communication and cooperation – ‘to the table’ – and wished to build bridges among very different world views. He would very carefully listen to what others would say, earnestly taking notes with pen and paper always in his hand, and, at the end, would raise questions with a childlike smile and ask for clarifications. It was as if he was a graduate student. He was a true believer that “doing philosophy requires listening to others and letting their voices be heard.”

In 1995, we organized a conference in Santiniketan on Civil Society. Young Dr. Hu Yeping joined Professor McLean, and we had wonderful exchanges. Later on, the proceedings of the conference were published by the RVP as *Civil Society, Indian Philosophical Studies*. In 1997, I, along with 11 people from different countries, was invited for a 10-week workshop on civil society, and to have a close dialogue with these scholars from different traditions of the world. The first few days were quite difficult, as our food, culture, language, etc., were very different, and, for

some, our expectations were dashed, as they thought that, being in Washington, DC, they would have a lavish lifestyle. It was quite a shock to find that we were staying in a house, and that Professor McLean would take us shopping on the weekends to buy our groceries. But soon we discovered that for Professor McLean, philosophy is a vocation, and his support for global dialogue stems from a deep sense of faith, hope, and love. Just as the Oblates' chief mission is to help the poor, the neglected, and the abandoned across the world, Father McLean was helping everyone in the workshop (with very limited resources), providing opportunities to the Library of Congress, and to work on their own areas of interest. I still remember how excited I was to collect reading material that I was unable to get in India, xeroxing them myself in the RVP office, and buying books – while Professor McLean was busy publishing books through his own RVP press.

Living together with participants from a number of different countries and with varied cultural backgrounds provided a special opportunity to learn how to live with others in a harmonious and friendly way. The experience was unique, and it both widened our vision and understanding of ourselves and allowed all of us to develop deep friendships and a sense of family. It also helped us to understand other cultures and to develop a positive yet critical appreciation of them.

In 1999, McLean organized a series of small conferences in India, in which he invited eleven Chinese philosophers to visit six universities in India, in order for them to come to know better the Hindu roots of Chinese Buddhism. Santiniketan was included in the list of universities. Santiniketan being the first university having a Chinese Studies Centre in the country, Professor McLean was very keen on having an opportunity there for dialogue, and our meeting was very pleasant. The whole group also visited my home.

McLean's love for India was evident in his efforts to reach out from his own cultural tradition and background. Inspired by the insights of Paul Tillich, during his first sabbatical (in 1969), he went to the Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, at the University of Madras. There, he studied the Hindu classics with T.M.P. Mahadevan (1911-1983) and R. Balasubramanian (1929-2017). At that time, the research of the Institute focused on the Advaita philosophy of Sankara. McLean attended classes in the University and was fascinated by the richness of Hindu philosophy and religion – a richness which enabled him to understand his own philosophy in a deeper and clearer way. He published a book with the Madras Institute on *Plenitude and Participation*, developing very interesting ideas parallel to unity in diversity.¹ McLean returned to India

¹ George F. McLean, *Plenitude and Participation: The Unity of Man in God* (Madras, India: The University of Madras, 1978).

for his second sabbatical in 1977, when he spent three months in Darjiling, reading through all the commentaries he had collected on the Indian classics. McLean visited India often, to organize colloquia and to give lectures. A number of Indian scholars from different universities were invited to RVP conferences organized in different countries. The Indian Council for Philosophical Research designated him as Annual Lecturer for 2004, and invited him to give lectures in six universities across the country.

McLean was engaged with philosophical organizations from an early age – particularly, The International Society for Metaphysics and The World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies. He also founded the RVP, with the objective of breaking through ideologies in order to engage deep human concerns, to bridge traditions and cultures, and to seek new horizons for social transformation. The RVP aims to mobilize research teams to study the nature, interpretation, and development of cultures; to bring their work to bear on the challenges of contemporary change; to publish and distribute the results of these efforts; and to organize both extended seminars for deeper exploration of these issues and regional conferences for the coordination of the work. But the most important objective was to bring scholars into dialogue, and this came from Professor McLean's deep optimism for the future. His dedication and work for more than four decades was recognized by the World Congress of Philosophy in 2013, when he was awarded the Global Dialogue Prize for the largest network with over 400 associated members from 65 countries.

This is all that I have to say as a token of respect and deepest appreciation for all that Professor McLean has done for the cause of philosophy and to help philosophers of different cultures, languages, and traditions to come together and make them feel as friends and one family.

Recalling Experiences with Professor McLean: The Man and the Philosopher

Sreekala Nair

After a long, tiring day at the University, I was home and sunk into my sofa, with a hot drink, before the television to watch the happenings of the day, when my mobile phone rang. It was Sreekumar, an official of the ICPR¹ and a longstanding friend of mine, at the other end: “Do you know, Professor McLean passed away.” I wasn’t shocked or taken aback with the news; I knew that he was suffering from a fatal disease. Indeed, from a typical Indian outlook, for someone like Professor McLean – somebody in his late eighties, who had been ever active and contributed in such great volume to philosophy, who has completed his core – to have left the stage, there is absolutely no reason to lament. But somewhere deep within me there was loss felt, a deprivation, an orphaned feeling.

Professor McLean, the founder-director of the RVP, had been known to me for more than two decades. However, it was during his visit to my University (SSUS)² in 2006 that I had a chance to have a close acquaintance with him. Along with Professor Panneerselvam,³ I received him at the airport with flowers, and all three of us proceeded towards the humble stay I had booked for him – all that was available at that time in Kalady. On our way to the hotel, due to some traffic problem, our vehicle was diverted, and soon we found the driver taking us through some unknown village paths. Professor McLean rejoiced over this long route diversion that gave him a chance to have glimpses of village life in Kerala. For someone like Professor McLean, who had been engaged in cultural studies for so long, such opportunities, where you can visualize conceptual convictions translated into customs and practices, were indeed matters of joy. It was evening, and the sun slowly began to disappear behind the mighty Western Ghats. Through the glass panes, Professor McLean was curiously watching the village women gathering flowers to make garlands for the Lord, washing the door steps in the evening twilight, lighting the traditional lamp that wards off evil, and the children settling down before the big lamp to chant prayers. At times he would turn

¹ Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) is a governmental agency under Ministry of Human Resource Development established for the development of philosophy.

² Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit is established in Central Kerala, one of the southern coastal states of India.

³ Professor S. Panneerselvam is a former Professor of Philosophy from the University of Madras.

to me, to clear doubts as to what the village folk were doing. After a while he turned to Professor Panneerselvam: “Why don’t you settle down here after retirement?” Professor Panneerselvam kept quite. That was the last thing he had in mind, I knew. He hadn’t thought of leaving Chennai even for career options, so why would he do so for the scenic beauty? I chuckled within.

In the morning of the day of the lecture, there came a call from Professor R. Balasubramanian:⁴ “Sreekala, take Professor McLean to the birth place of Sankara and show him all the monuments related to Acharya’s life.” That was an order. Only masters’ order, and today, remembering him, I realize that one has to be a true master even to try to order a disciple. “And, he is an Indian more than many of us,” he quickly added. Indeed, he was, and I literally experienced this when I took him around Kalady.⁵ It was curious to watch him saluting the Hindu deities, bending a little forward, and standing respectfully before the idols, the deities worshipped. I was thrilled to be in his company, and tried to explain the historical and philosophical significance of the place – and, slowly, I found myself slipping into the deep metaphysical thoughts that Sankara came up with. Professor McLean knew everything. Still, he showed interest and prompted me to speak on Sankara – and, for the first time, it was revealed to me that I was deeply devoted to this saint Philosopher, who is indeed much more than a philosopher. It has been extolled in the ancient Indian scriptures that one should seek the company of those who help bring out the divinity in you; at the phenomenal level, the vision of the self is often actualized with the help of the *other*. Probably it’s the role of language, as the mediator in the functions of consciousness, that does the magic. While consciousness remains the hub of all mysteries, language, too, inhabits consciousness – but, unlike the rest, consciousness is intimately related to language, almost in a unique way. Consciousness, indeed, becomes language. Together, they seem to form a single mystery. Placed within the halo of Professor McLean. I had turned to a philosopher, and I myself stood drenched in the beatitude emanating from the cultural manifestations of the philosophical insights that have stood the test of time here in this land. Indeed, Truth gets unfolded by itself in the company of the wise. It has been said in the traditional lore:

Durlabham trayamevetat daivanugraha hetukam
Manushyatvam mumukshutvam mahapurushasamsrayah II

⁴ Professor R. Balasubramanian was a renowned Advaitin who passed away recently.

⁵ Kalady, where my University is located, is a small village in the central part of Kerala and is also the birthplace of Acharya Sankara.

Three things are rare to come by, and are indeed achieved only with the grace of God, a human life, the longing for release, and the company of the wise.

I took myself to be blessed; it is with His grace that I got the rare opportunity to describe the early life and philosophical aspirations of Sankara to this great soul. By all means, Professor Balasubramanian would have been the right person; why did the Lord depute me for the task? – a question I fail to answer to this day. The logic of the Infinite, as Sri Aurobindo reminds us, is something unfathomable to us ordinary humans.

Two days went peacefully. I was quite apprehensive. It was my very first direct exposure to a Westerner, and all through I kept worrying whether he would demand better facilities – but my worries proved unfounded. At the end of the lecture program we gave him a memento, of a boat race for which Kerala is popular world over. While seeing him off at the airport, I found the boat protruding out from his bag. “This might not be permitted in the flight. They might throw it off.” My voice was down with regret. “Nothing will happen, don’t worry. I have great experience of travelling by air worldwide. I will, by all means take it home to decorate my drawing.” His reassurance really did wet my eyes. I knew for sure it was not the boat, as such, but the love with which we gave it, made him take the trouble to carry it all the way home.

Years later, I met him, at the World Congress of Philosophy in Athens. The RVP was organizing a two-day pre-conference in Athens, to which he was kind enough to invite me. On the first day, during the tea break, I suddenly located him talking with a group of people. I ran to him and, instinctively, I bent down and touched his feet, the typical way in which we Indians greet elders deemed to be respected. It was unexpected and he stepped back, but he soon understood what I was doing. He smiled at me and extended his hand, which I took with respect. During the conversation, he enquired about his friends in India, their whereabouts, and wellbeing.

During the World Conference he was given an award which, as I remember vividly, he received with folded hands, quite like an Indian. Was he an Indian in his previous birth, I wondered? Most of his interventions in philosophy had a practical edge; the seminars and conferences he organized were mostly contemplating peace, reconciliation, and cultural convergences of peoples of different continents, races, and religions. A friend of humanity and a Philosopher in the true spirit of the term, he would ever live in the minds of thousands of philosophers the world over. I see it as our bounden duty to advance the work of the RVP and bring his dream projects to their final form; and I know that we philosophers in India shall be delighted to take steps towards this.

George F. McLean

Rahim Nobahar

In the Name of God the Companionate, the Merciful

I first met Professor McLean at Mofid University in Qom, where he came to teach the philosophy of existentialism for graduate students. At that time, as the Secretary of the International Conference on Human Rights and Dialogue of Civilizations, I was thinking of the possibility of holding an international conference. Professor McLean helped very sincerely and effectively. Neither Mofid University nor I had ever had such an experience. But McLean's scientific and intellectual contributions made this possible. He mentioned the conference to many foreign scholars and he himself attended the conference.

Professor McLean, as a philosopher, was very interested in religion. I do not forget that day that we walked in the beautiful campus of Mofid University. He said, "Rahim! Governing in the name of religion is very delicate and sensitive. The bad effects of governing in the name of Christianity still exists in Europe and the West after four hundred years. In Iran, clerics must be careful that religious government does not turn into a cause for religious aversion." My understanding was that he was in favor of a rational and humane presence of religion in the public sphere.

He was very modest and grateful for the points he learned from others. In a scholarly discussion between him and the founder and chairman of Mofid University, Ayatollah Mousavi Ardabili, he reminded us that we, Muslims, who are concerned with the intention and will of God and the Prophet, are in favor of intentionalism in interpretation, and do not accept other hermeneutical approaches. McLean told this story in many meetings with much admiration, and revered it greatly.

Professor McLean was exceptional in educating students and giving them a sense of confidence. When, at his initiative, I visited him at the Catholic University of America in 2007, he asked me, only a few days after my arrival, to give a joint lecture with two other professors. He modestly edited my lecture. After the lecture, he also praised my presentation and encouraged my work.

Sometime later, he asked me to give a lecture on 'Islam and the Common Good' at the annual meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association. When I expressed that I felt unable, he encouraged me, and he and a significant number of participants came to my presentation. This event is very memorable for me. When, in giving an example of altruism and sacrifice, I mentioned a story about the

companions of the Prophet, who, while in battle, were wounded and thirsty, nevertheless sacrificed themselves so that others could remain alive. In the discussion afterwards, some objections were raised. Some participants criticized my opinion. The problem, according to them, was: If all human beings have dignity and all are equal, then why one should choose others over him or herself? My response was that in such a case it is the person himself who decides to aspire to a higher level of existence by choosing others over himself – and this is, in no way, against one’s dignity and/or equality. I could not convince the audience. Now, we were supposed to have in dinner in Dr. Hu Yeping’s home on the same day. McLean and Hu invited those friends to come with us and to continue talking about the issue. They came, and we spent some time on the subject. Professor McLean was very open-minded and strongly in favor of diversity. He liked the views of Islam on matters such as the common good, altruism, and sacrifice, and wanted them to be expressed. Moreover, as far as I know, he did not tolerate liberal extremist individualism, and criticized it. Once he told me, in a comforting tone, about the famous statement of Alasdair MacIntyre that, from his birth, a person is under the influence of traditions and society, and that the concept of the individual, as it is expressed in classic liberalism, is more of an abstract and imaginary concept. Under his influence, I became familiar with the philosophy of personalism and, in particular, that of Emmanuel Mounier – a philosophy that is a rival of individualism.

Professor McLean was very sensitive to environmental issues. One day at the Catholic University, in the middle of a half-day conference, there was a brief reception. Although the reception was simple and the number of participants was about fifteen, a relatively large bucket of garbage was soon full. He told me: “This is our scandal, as the modern men who produce tons of rubbish in a matter of minutes.”

McLean was a symbol of humility and scientific generosity. When I was writing my doctoral dissertation at the Catholic University, I often went to meet him. I was worried about the time that I took from him. One day I asked him, “How often can I come and learn from you?” The answer was, “Whenever you wish.”

He was not officially responsible for my thesis, but followed the course of my progress with care. One day, after about three months, he asked me, “How much have you written of your thesis?” I said, “I’m still note-taking.” One or two months later he asked me the same question. My response was the same as before. This time he said, “Not so good. Try to write two or three pages a day. We Americans say the enemy of good is the better.”

McLean was very prolific in his writing and research. In Iran, when I saw the great volume of his work, I suspected that he had a large department and staff. When I went to the Catholic University of America

in August 2006, his simple work room and few facilities surprised me. He had a simple, unimpressive room, and with only the help of Professor Jack Hogan, Dr. Hu, and a few others, managed a huge amount of work. I've mentioned this point over and over again with my colleagues, and I've referred to it as an informative example of high productivity with few facilities.

McLean's spirituality infused his work. In May 2008, he came to Iran for a while. I liked to visit the Laleh Hotel, where he was staying, but I was worried that I would intrude on his time and work. I called him one day. I said, on one hand, I'm worried that you are lonely, and on the other hand, I'm worried that I will waste your precious time if I come and meet you. His answer was not to worry about his loneliness. "I was already in conversation with angels," he said. I believe that he was serious in this statement. To me, he had an enormous potential.

His aversion to war and his interest in peace and peacemaking was unparalleled. He respected the beliefs of others whole-heartedly. As a child, I often heard the name Mohammad intoned in a great and majestic way. But I remember that Professor McLean, in a lecture at the branch of Science and Research at the Islamic Azad University in Tehran, uttered Mohammad's name so magnificently that I got goose bumps.

Professor McLean had a brilliant sense of humor. I was writing my dissertation on a criminal law Issue. My friend, Dr. Adel Sarikhani, who was a criminal lawyer, had come to The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy before me, and we both had come to Catholic University through the generous help of Dr. Ahmad Iravani, who was a friend and colleague of Professor McLean. McLean once joked to me: How many criminals does Iran have? Ahmad is often sending the criminals of Iran to me!

Long story short, I learned ethics and charity from every moment I spent with Professor McLean. God bless his soul.

Beyond Dogmatism and Relativism: Trying to Understand (Other) Faiths in Their Own Terms: George McLean’s Pluralism-Sensitive Philosophical Work in the Field of Religion

Ludwig Nagl

In a globalized world that suffers from unresolved tensions resulting, *inter alia*, from serious (mis-) readings and the political exploitation of religion, a pluralism-sensitive, and at the same time non-relativistic philosophical dialogue on religious issues is of utmost importance. George F. McLean, during his entire life, was an authentic promoter of, and participant in, complex international encounters dedicated to this concern.

When I recently read in Robert N. Bellah’s study, *Religion in Human Evolution. From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*,¹ that today, “in a dramatically different way than most humans have ever done before,” an understanding of “our deepest cultural differences, including our religious differences” becomes possible² via “the emergence of a new point of view, one that could understand and appreciate all religion on their own terms,”³ I immediately thought of the non-dogmatic, pluralism-sensitive attitude characterizing the work of George McLean.

Herta Nagl-Docekal and I had the privilege of meeting Professor McLean over a period of more than thirty years at philosophy conferences in Africa, Asia, and in Europe.⁴

As I see it, what Bellah sketches captures well one core intention of George McLean’s work. Bellah emphasizes that the “new point of view” he addresses is neither identical with an eclectic “‘new age’ consciousness,” nor with standard, and limited, modes of “inter-religious dialogue.” New age relativism, Bellah insists, can rightly be satirized, as Max Weber wrote, as a shallow attitude of a cultural elite who decorate “their souls with antiques drawn from all the world’s religions” – an approach “that culminates in the tendency to read what one wanted to find into other religions rather than to try to understand them in their own terms.”⁵

The new and promising attitude which Bellah sees becoming possible today differs significantly from such an eclectic relativism. It is, however, also not just the continuation of a traditional (well-established

¹ Robert N. Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution. From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 603.

² *Ibid.*, 602.

³ *Ibid.*, 603.

⁴ For further details see Herta Nagl-Docekal’s contribution to this volume.

⁵ *Ibid.*

and well-controlled) inter-religious dialogue (“important though that is,” as Bellah emphasizes⁶): “What I am thinking of now,” Bellah continues, “is the increasing number of serious students of religion who can accept religious pluralism as our destiny.”⁷ This is, indeed, a deeply innovative approach – a new take that presupposes (something like) the idea of a *constitutive family resemblance* with regard to the *core reference* of (all) religions, “*the divine*.” Such a non-dogmatic philosophical approach has, for instance, informed William James’s⁸ and Ludwig Wittgenstein’s explorations of religion.⁹ Bellah seeks to further elucidate this complex reading of religion by quoting Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s *Toward a World Theology*, where the author “uses the word ‘God’ as the basic reference of all religions,” while at the same time “recognizing the difficulties in so doing.”¹⁰ Smith, according to Bellah, identifies himself as a Christian, but “wants to include the whole of human religiosity in his perspective without privileging any one tradition or any kind of tradition”: he has taught me, Bellah continues, “that religions don’t differ so much in giving different answers to the same questions as in asking different questions.”¹¹ (In a similar way, Hilary Putnam defended some years ago, in a mode inspired by James, the positive value that the *varieties* of religion imply.)¹²

The result of this new approach, according to Bellah, is not at all an abstract relativism, but the claim that “universal categories” like “the divine” come bound up with particularities that give them different emphases.¹³ He writes: “Thomas McCarthy puts it well,”¹⁴ quoting him

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1982). James advocates a “wide notion of the divine” – a notion that includes not only theistic forms, but also forms such as Buddhism, i.e. “systems of thought which the world usually calls religious, and yet which do not positively assume a God.” Ibid., 31.

⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barrett (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1972).

¹⁰ Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution*, 604.

¹¹ Ibid. According to Bellah, another author who emphasizes that religions have to be “taken seriously in their own terms” is Charles Taylor. See, in this context, Ludwig Nagl, “‘The Jamesian open space.’ Charles Taylor und der Pragmatismus,” in eds. M. Kühnlein and M. Lutz-Bachmann, *Unerfüllte Moderne? Neue Perspektiven auf das Werk von Charles Taylor* (Berlin: Suhr-kamp, 2011), 117-60.

¹² Hilary Putnam, “Plädoyer für eine Verabschiedung des Begriffs ‘Idolatrie,’” in ed. Ludwig Nagl, *Religion nach der Religionskritik* (Vienna-Berlin: Olden-bourg-Akademie Verlag, 2003), 49-59.

¹³ Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution*, 605-606.

¹⁴ See Thomas McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Bellah votes, with McCarthy, for a *refined version* of “universal history”: for “Kant’s understanding of [...] universal

that: “The conceptual point is this: *by their very nature*, the universal cannot be actual without the particular, nor the formal without the substantive.”¹⁵ Thus, no easy solution is possible: we are together with our theories, practices, and narrations in a shared world, “even though we must contend through mutual discussion with abiding differences.”¹⁶ Only a complex global *learning process* might “make a bit more likely,” Bellah says, “the actualization of Kant’s dream of a *world civil society*.”¹⁷

The tireless and extensive intellectual activities of George McLean – an impressive body of work which remains present in the many publications produced under his editorship – contribute, indeed, in a lasting manner to this complex learning process.¹⁸

In a “secular age,” religion continues to be a central theme in philosophy since, in our “unfinished modernity,” the opportunity to be enlightened about the limits that mar *abstractly radicalized modes* of Enlightenment has not disappeared. This core message was disseminated, indirectly as well as directly, by the conferences that Father McLean organized all over the world. My own publications in the field of philosophy of religion were motivationally backed up by this central message of McLean’s work: it was not only important for the two essay collections that I edited in 2001 – *Religion nach der Religionskritik* (with contributors including Hilary Putnam, Charles Taylor, Onora O’Neill and Nicholas Wolterstorff)¹⁹ and *Essays zu Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, “Religion”*²⁰ – but also for *Religion, Moderne, Postmoderne* (2002)²¹ and *Die Grenze des Menschen ist göttlich* (2007),²² as well as for my

history from a cosmopolitan point of view – as the object neither of theoretical knowledge nor of practical reason, but of ‘reflective judgment’.” Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution*, 599.

¹⁵ Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution*, 606.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See Hu Yeping with William Sweet, “George Francis McLean: A Philosopher in the Service of Humanity,” *Prajñā Vihāra* 5, No. 1 (2004): 1-17.

¹⁹ See n. 12.

²⁰ Ludwig Nagl, ed., *Essays zu Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, “Religion”* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2001).

²¹ Klaus Dethloff, Ludwig Nagl, and Friedrich Wolfram, eds., *Religion, Moderne, Postmoderne. Philosophisch-theologische Erkundungen*. Schriftenreihe der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Religionsphilosophie, Vol. 3 (Berlin: Parerga Verlag, 2002). This book includes contributions by Gianni Vattimo and Johann Baptist Metz.

²² Klaus Dethloff, Ludwig Nagl, and Friedrich Wolfram, eds., *“Die Grenze des Menschen ist göttlich.” Beiträge zur Religionsphilosophie*. Schriftenreihe der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Religionsphilosophie, Vol. 7 (Berlin: Parerga Verlag, 2007).

monograph, *Das verhüllte Absolute. Essays zur zeitgenössischen Religionsphilosophie* (2010).²³

I was very pleased to find that George McLean, in the two RVP conferences that he organized in Vienna (2011 and 2013), cooperated closely with Charles Taylor, whose work on social philosophy and on (the limits of) secularism had interested me for a long time.²⁴ In the first of these Viennese meetings, “The Church and the World,” I had the opportunity to present a paper (not yet published) on the topic “Misguided answers to ‘the very widespread spiritual seeking in the West’,” in which I offered some critical reflections on some confession-related doctrines held (against the widespread practices of even traditional believers) in the Catholic church: on a topic of importance, it might seem, for a non-superficial ecumenical discourse in the Luther Year 2017 (when – within Christianity – a new, and complex re-assessment of the theology of “the sacraments” could be a *locus* of substantial theological and philosophical reflection, as well as of mutual learning). George McLean was, at all times, an enabler and supporter of such debates – of discourses, that is, that are open-ended and cannot be resolved, validly, by reiterated dogmatism.

The last time I met George McLean in person was at the Gregorian University in Rome, in 2015, when I had the opportunity to hear (parts of) the Conference “Renewing the Church in a Secular Age. Holistic Dialogue and Kenotic Vision.” I was in Italy at that time as a participant in an Austro-Italian symposium devoted to the topic “La religione dopo la critica della religione.”²⁵ The paper that I presented there, “(Neo)-Pragmatic Explorations of Religion: Richard Rorty, Cornel West, Hilary Putnam,”²⁶ was – as far as its intellectual background is concerned – again motivated by McLean’s core message of pluralism-sensitivity and of attentiveness to the other.

²³ Ludwig Nagl, *Das verhüllte Absolute. Essays zur zeitgenössischen Religionsphilosophie* (*The Shrouded Absolute. Essays on the Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*) (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2010).

²⁴ See Ludwig Nagl, “Begegnungen mit Charles Taylor, Anregungen durch Charles Taylor,” in eds. Ulf Bohmann, Gesche Keding, and Hartmut Rosa, Charles Taylor zum 85. Geburtstag, *Transit. Europäische Revue* (Frankfurt a.M., 2016), No. 49, 62-65; Ludwig Nagl, “What is it to be a Human Being? Charles Taylor on ‘the Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity’,” in ed. Brigitte Buchhammer, *Learning to be Human for Global Times: Challenges and Opportunities from the Perspective of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2018), 117-136.

²⁵ See also Herta Nagl-Docekal’s contribution in this volume.

²⁶ Ludwig Nagl, “(Neo)Pragmatic Explorations of Religion: Richard Rorty, Cornel West, Hilary Putnam,” in eds. Herta Nagl-Docekal, Wolfgang Kaltenbacher, and Claudia Melica, *La religione dopo la critica della religione. Un dibattito filosofico* (Napoli, Italy: La scuola di Pitagora editrice, 2017), 115-146.

George McLean's legacy – not just of tolerance, but of a new and serious attempt to understand (as far as possible) other faiths *in their own terms* – will, it is to be hoped, not lose but gain in strength in the decades to come.

Joint Explorations and Probing Discussions

Herta Nagl-Docekal

It is with sincere gratitude that I now look back on the numerous meetings with Professor George McLean that I had the privilege to enjoy in the context of international philosophy conferences across the globe. On each of these occasions, Professor McLean conveyed to me fresh perspectives on current philosophical issues which have influenced my research in many ways. Moreover, I vividly remember the kindness and patience that have always shaped the tone of his professional relations, as well as his concern for the personal development of the people he was in touch with: these are attitudes that one finds very rarely in the academic realm.

I first met George McLean in Nairobi, Kenya, when I attended, together with the Viennese philosopher Ludwig Nagl, the international philosophy conference “Society and Truth,” held from August 13 to 17, 1981. Co-organized by the International Society for Metaphysics, the Philosophical Association of Kenya, and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Nairobi, this conference was chaired by Ivor Leclerc, George McLean, and Odera Orika. One outstanding intention was to support the philosophical debate across the language barrier between Anglophone and Francophone African countries – a divide that, to a large extent, also implied differences in terms of “schools” of thought. Other participants of this conference came from India, Pakistan, and several countries of North and South America as well as Europe. The thematic focus was the issue of which tasks philosophy might be competent to take up with regard to the current, post-colonial living conditions in Sub-Saharan Africa. The papers addressed a wide range of topics, including: the relation between academic philosophy and traditional African wisdom; the contextuality of truth; the ways in which antagonisms among dominant ideologies may be mediated by means of impartial reasonable analysis; and issues of human rights and moral universalism.

This focus meant that the non-African participants at this conference had the opportunity to be introduced to the specific challenges philosophers in Sub-Saharan Africa were facing – an opportunity that was very rare indeed at that time. For me, this experience represented my first encounter with what I now consider one of the most significant – and indeed unique achievements of George McLean’s work, namely drawing attention to the debates going on in regions of the world, that what was commonly understood as the “international philosophical discourse” had failed to include. From that time, I observed with admiration how George

McLean succeeded in implementing this core idea at an ever more inclusive global level, particularly in connection with The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) that he founded at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC in 1983. Importantly, the Council has provided the institutional basis not only for organizing and administering numerous international conferences in cooperation with the respective local hosts, but also for disseminating the proceedings in various series of publications.

As regards my own research, I took up the experience of the conference in Nairobi in co-editing a volume of essays under the title *Post-koloniales Philosophieren: Afrika* (Postcolonial Philosophizing: Africa), which was published in 1992.¹ This book contains ten papers written in English, French, or German by philosophers from Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zaire, among them Peter O. Bodunrin, a Nigerian and a member of the RVP. The book also includes a comprehensive bibliography intended to introduce the German-speaking readership to publications by and on philosophers in Africa. My introduction to this volume begins with a report on the international conference in Nairobi in 1981, mentioned above. In the year 1993, my involvement with this topic continued with an international conference on Philosophy in Africa held in Vienna, that I co-organized with Franz M. Wimmer in cooperation with the representatives of UNESCO in Austria. One of the speakers invited was Mary Kente from Tanzania, a member of the RVP.

In the following years, I met George McLean many times in the context of the World Congresses of Philosophy organized by Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie (FISP), in which I served as a member of the Steering Committee from 1998 to 2013, and as vice president from 2008 to 2013. At the 23rd World Congress, held in Athens in August 2013, I gave a paper as an invited speaker at the round table “Women Philosophers and the Enrichment of Philosophy,” organized by the Council and chaired by Hu Yeping. The title of my paper was: “Conceptions that seek to promote just gender relations.” At that congress in Athens, Ludwig Nagl and I also had the pleasure of attending the ceremony in which George McLean received an award for his lifetime achievement in philosophy.

What proved most fruitful, however, were various forms of personal cooperation with George McLean in Austria. Ludwig Nagl and I were invited to participate in two international conferences that the RVP organized in Vienna in cooperation with Charles Taylor – who at that time was one of the academic directors of the Institute of Human Sciences in

¹ Herta Nagl-Docekal and Franz M. Wimmer, eds., *Postkoloniales Philosophieren: Afrika* (volume 6 of the series *Wiener Reihe. Themen der Philosophie* [Vienna Series. Topics of Philosophy]) (Vienna and Munich: Oldenbourg, 1992).

Vienna – and with José Casanova. It is most significant that these conferences, held in the years 2011 and 2013, were based on an idea that George McLean had spelled out decades earlier. Seeking to explain the innovative approach of his work, George McLean had written to us in a letter dated May 31, 1993 that “some small colloquia are being planned in order to enable participants to spend the large part of the time in direct and probing discussion regarding the topic. In other words, the colloquia are conceived not as the presentation of ideas already possessed and elaborated, but as the joint exploration of themes merely introduced through the papers. The discussions in the sessions will be given the large part of the time in the hope that intensive joint exploration by philosophers might itself generate needed new insight.”

The first of the two international RVP conferences in Vienna, which was held at the Institute of Human Sciences (June 12-13, 2011), focused on the topic “The Church and the World.” In order to facilitate a structured debate, a short text written by Charles Taylor was distributed among the participants (about twenty scholars from different academic fields) in the run-up to this event. In this text, Taylor presented four existential disjunctions marking the contemporary condition that call for an in-depth investigation: first, the disjunction between seekers and dwellers; second, the disjunction between the mode of the Church’s magisterium and the contemporary sense of responsible critical engagement; third, the disjunction between morality and historicity; and, fourth, the disjunction between other forms of spirituality and Christianity. The second conference, held at the Oblate House in Vienna (June 8-9, 2013), took up these issues once more, as the title indicates: “Four Disjunctions: Renewing the Church in a Secular Age.” The main focus was of a more empirical kind, however, as the specific situation of the Church in various European countries was analyzed.

Reading Taylor’s text for the first conference, I found the third disjunction to address core concerns of my own research and teaching. Taylor noted, for instance: “The questions of sexual morality, and of gender, should be examined more closely. Sexual morality is defined by the magisterium in terms of an ahistoric notion of the “natural.” At the same time, the institutional Church has shown a lack of concern for issues of the dignity of the person.” The backdrop to my particular interest in these reflections was my scholarship in the field of feminist philosophy² as well as my experience with a number of lectures on this topic that I had been invited to give at institutions such as the Faculty of Catholic

² See, for instance, Herta Nagl-Docekal, *Feminist Philosophy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004).

Theology at the University of Graz, Austria (1999),³ the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Innsbruck, Austria (2000), the Faculdade Sao Bento, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2003), and the Cardinal König House (2003) and the Otto Mauer Center (2007),⁴ Vienna. At the RVP conferences in Vienna, I truly appreciated the spirit of free discussion, as explained in McLean's letter cited above. These meetings also gave me the opportunity to get to know McLean's assistant, Hu Yeping, in a more personal way; being in touch with this immensely dedicated philosopher from China has been a pleasure ever since.

Gladly accepting the invitation to contribute an essay to the volume of proceedings from the conference of 2011, I wrote an article titled "Issues of Gender in Catholicism: How the Current Debate Could Benefit from a Philosophical Approach."⁵ Since then, more invitations to give talks on the heated controversy on "genderism" have reached me from Catholic institutions in Germany and Austria; some of these lectures have resulted in recent publications.⁶

For George McLean and the RVP, the conferences in Vienna mentioned here were part of an ambitious project involving many teams of scholars in North America and across Europe. This project of many years culminated in the international conference, "Renewing the Church in a Secular Age. Holistic Dialogue and Kenotic Vision," held at the Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Rome, March 4-5, 2015. Marking "50 Years after Vatican II," this conference was intended to lead "Towards: A Listening Church, A Discerning Church, A Welcoming Church, A Serving Church."⁷ Attending some of the keynote lectures of this conference, I

³ Herta Nagl-Docekal, "Egalität und Differenz in der philosophischen Perspektive," in eds. Anne Jensen and Maximilian Liebmann, *Was verändert feministische Theologie?* (Münster-Hamburg-London: LIT, 2000), 37-46.

⁴ Herta Nagl-Docekal, "Philosophische Reflexionen über Liebe und die Gefahr ihrer Unterbestimmung im zeitgenössischen Diskurs," in eds. Herta Nagl-Docekal and Friedrich Wolfram, *Jenseits der Säkularisierung. Religionsphilosophische Studien* (Berlin: Parerga, 2008), 111-142.

⁵ Charles Taylor, José Casanova, and George F. McLean, eds., *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2012), 155-186.

⁶ See Herta Nagl-Docekal, "Geschlechtergerechtigkeit: Wie könnte eine philosophische Perspektive für die theologische Debatte von Relevanz sein?," *Theologische Quartalschrift Tübingen* 195 (2015): 75-94; "Die Spannung zwischen Religion und Moderne am Denkort von 'Geschlecht'," *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society (J-aT)* [online] (July 2017); "Geschlechtlichkeit und Normativität: Die katholische Kontroverse zu Gender aus philosophischer Perspektive," in *Jahrbuch für Moraltheologie, vol. 1: Gender – Herausforderung für die christliche Ethik* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder, 2017), 36-67.

⁷ These aims are specified on the front page of the program brochure of this event. The core concerns of this RVP project are explained in the introduction to the program

listened with particular interest to José Casanova's talk on "A Catholic Church in a Global Secular World," in which the open problems that had been discussed at the RVP meeting in Vienna in 2011⁸ were taken up again. Based upon the diagnosis that "our global secular age" presents "the Catholic Church with very serious challenges, to which the Church will need to find some creative responses if it is to realize its global potential and its global responsibility," Casanova addressed "those global challenges under four broad headings – secularization, pluralism, clericalism, and gender."⁹ Discussing the fourth topic, he emphasized, in line with what he had said in Vienna: "The gender question is arguably the most serious and complex challenge facing the church today and in the foreseeable future,"¹⁰ and he suggested that this challenge should be seen in a historical perspective: "The 'gender question' is in many respects the fundamental moral question of our times in the same way as the 'social question' was the fundamental moral question from the middle of the nineteenth century."¹¹ In an attempt to address the very core of the current heated conflict, Casanova pointed out that "on issues of gender and sexual moral theology, the Catholic hierarchy, since the publication of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968, has reasserted a traditionalist ontological conception of human nature and of human biology based on the essentialist conception of an a-historical, unchanging and universally valid natural law."¹² For me it was surprising that, while the vivid debate that followed this lecture addressed a variety of issues Casanova had touched, no one in the large audience referred to what had been said under the "fourth broad heading." This silence left me wondering what its reasons might be.

From the perspective of my general interest in issues of contemporary philosophy of religion, the conference at the Gregoriana in 2015 provided several additional important approaches. It so happened, however, that its date partly overlapped with the bilateral Austro-Italian symposium "La religione dopo la critica alla religione. Un dibattito filosofico/Religion after the Critique of Religion. A Philosophical Debate" (on March 5-6, 2015) that I co-organized at the Austrian Historical

brochure: "Report on the Project 'Faith in a Secular Age: Disjunctions/Conjunctions between Church and People'," 1-8.

⁸ José Casanova, "The Contemporary Disjunction between Societal and Church Morality," in *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, 127-135.

⁹ José Casanova, "A Catholic Church in a Global World," in eds. Charles Taylor, José Casanova, George F. McLean and João J. Vila-Chã, *Renewing the Church in a Secular Age. Holistic Dialogue and Kenotic Vision* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2016), 69 (67-83).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹² *Ibid.*, 79.

Institute, Rome, which is affiliated with the Austrian Academy of Sciences.¹³ Significantly, the two conferences held in Rome at almost the same time shared some core concerns, in particular with regard to the pressing issue of how Christianity might be or, rather, ought to be, reinterpreted so as to make it clearly accessible for people whose identity is inspired by the moral and legal standards that have been elaborated under conditions of modernity. The papers read at the Austro-Italian symposium examined what philosophical research can contribute to meeting this challenge; their aim was, first and foremost, to emphasize that the highly influential critique of religion voiced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by no means represents *in toto* the way in which modern philosophy has addressed the topic of religion. From this point of view, the papers focused on authors representing leading schools of contemporary philosophy, analyzing their diverse suggestions for reconsidering religion today. These investigations focused, for instance, on the ways in which Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Derrida, Maurizio Ferraris, Jürgen Habermas, Hilary Putnam, John Rawls, Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor have – regardless of their otherwise very different lines of thought – insisted on rejecting any form of a sweeping, dogmatic critique of religion.¹⁴

Ludwig Nagl and the author of this essay had contacted George McLean in December 2014, expressing the hope to see him on the occasion of the two overlapping conferences to be held in Rome in March 2015. He responded with particular kindness, asking whether we could think of “modes of cooperating to the mutual benefit of both conferences and their participants and of course in the promotion of your own ever generous efforts.” When we received this mail on December 26, 2014, we could not foresee that this would be the last correspondence we would receive from Father McLean, who had always been full of understanding and encouragement. Then, in March 2015, the international conference at the Gregoriana provided the opportunity to greet Father McLean briefly, before hearing his very personal address to his Alma Mater, which conveyed so much of his life that we had not been aware of before.

¹³ This symposium was organized in cooperation with the Istituto Italiano per gli studi Filosofici, Napoli. For the proceedings see Herta Nagl-Docekal, Wolfgang Kaltenbacher, and Caudia Melica, eds., *La religione dopo la critica alla religione. Un dibattito filosofico* (Napoli, Italy: La scuola di Pitagora editrice, 2017).

¹⁴ From an Austrian perspective, this symposium at the Istituto Storico Austriaco, Roma, presented some results of research work that has been conducted in Vienna for many years. For information on this research program of more than two decades, see Ludwig Nagl’s contribution to this volume. For my contribution to the symposium in Rome see Herta Nagl-Docekal, “Religion in the Context of Modernity: John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas,” in *La religione dopo la critica alla religione. Un dibattito filosofico*, 35-58.

One mode of showing gratitude is to continue with “joint explorations and probing discussions.” Taking up the RVP idea of hosting smaller conferences across the globe in preparation for the 24th World Congress of Philosophy – organized by FISP under the heading “Learning to be Human” (and which held in Beijing on August 13-20, 2018), an international symposium was held at the University of Vienna, Austria. Co-organized by Brigitte Buchhammer¹⁵ and myself, in cooperation with the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the “Interdisciplinary Research Platform ‘Religion and Transformation in Contemporary European Society’,” based at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna, this symposium focused on the issue “Re-Learning to be Human for Global Times: Challenges and Opportunities from the Perspective of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion.” Philosophers from Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Romania and Austria examined a variety of recent approaches to this topic, while also advocating that the reflections of authors such as Kant, Hegel, and Schelling might help to enhance the current debate in terms of subtlety as well as argumentative differentiation. At the time of this writing, the plan is to publish the proceedings of this symposium with the RVP, so as to make possible participation in presentation of books of the Council at the World Congress in Beijing.

¹⁵ Brigitte Buchhammer, who received her Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Vienna, participated in the RVP research seminars held at The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, in the years 2014 and 2016.

A Philosopher with Universal Love: Recollections of Professor George McLean¹

Ouyang Kang

I know that my English is not good enough to express my feelings, but it is both necessary and an honor for me to have the chance to say something about my impressions of Professor George McLean.

I believe that most of you have had many opportunities to be in touch with Professor George McLean – by joining his seminars or conferences or working together with him. As a Chinese scholar, I had some singular opportunities to meet him. The first time I met him was at a conference in 1989, when I worked at Shaanxi Normal University in Xian as Vice Chairman of the Political Education Department and at the Center for the Cross-cultural Studies. That was a rather early opportunity to meet foreigners because, at that time, China just opened its door to the outside world. We held an International Conference in Chang'an (ancient Xi'an) for Eastern Asia and the Pacific Culture Studies. At that conference, we invited about 40 foreign scholars from more than 10 countries to attend the conference. The conference focus was on cultural, especially cross-cultural, studies.

Several years after the conference, from December 1997 to March 1998, I was invited as a visiting scholar by the International Research and Exchange Board in Washington, DC to come to the United States to do research on Asian values. I then came to the Center to visit Professor George McLean. We discussed many issues and the possibility of future cooperation. After that visit, we began working together closely in organizing many conferences. Professor McLean visited Wuhan University, when I served as the Dean of the Philosophy School. After I moved from Wuhan University to the Huazhong University of Science and Technology, he also visited me there.

The last time I met Professor George McLean was at the University of Athens in Greece in 2013, at the pre-World Congress of Philosophy, organized by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. I also attended the ceremony at the opening of the World Congress of Philosophy in Athens, at which Professor McLean was awarded the Global Dialogue Prize. While there, he asked Dr. Hu Yeping to set up an appointment for us. We had lunch together and discussed many things. What he wanted to talk to me about was that he wanted to know how to continue the effort of the RVP and its research focus across the world.

¹ Read at the Memorial Service for Fr. McLean on November 13, 2017.

I felt very fortunate to have had the chance to go to Athens that year. In 2016 he left us; I could not come to attend his funeral. In 2017, I made a special effort to go to Washington, DC to attend the commemoration of Professor McLean, and even cancelled a trip to a conference in Japan that I had planned to attend.

Father McLean was one of the most respected professors and scholars I have ever known; I have always had a very deep impression of him. What is particularly striking about him is, first, his view of philosophy. I have studied philosophy for some forty years since 1978, and I know that he was a true and a genuinely good philosopher. What is a good philosopher? A good philosopher is the one who has his/her own philosophical views and ideas, but is also able to connect philosophy with history and with the future, while not losing sight of the needs of the present. Professor McLean is such a philosopher!

Professor McLean's philosophical activity and work give us important insights about how we can face the world, how we can relate to other human beings, and how we can situate ourselves in our time and place. If you look at his papers, his books, themes of conferences that he organized, you will find a very clear line throughout – he always focused on the most important theoretical and practical problems that humanity is facing. Why was he always able to identify and seize on such urgent problems? It is because his philosophical studies and views go deep into the natures of the human being and of cultures. He was able to relate philosophy with culture, nature, and human society. I was deeply impressed by his philosophical views. We should learn from him.

The second thing striking about Professor McLean was his universal love. I found that, for Professor McLean, there is no divide among different cultures, religions, and ethics. He treated every culture, every country, and every people with the same love, which is a universal love. He organized many conferences in different countries and in different cultures – for instance, in China, Vietnam, Greece, etc. – but he treated all people and cultures equally. This is not easy to do, but Professor McLean was able to handle it. His spirit enlightens us here.

A third thing that impressed me was his unique personality. Professor McLean was a friendly person, and wanted to help people whenever they were in need. I was especially moved by the fact that he helped so many people, but none of them were his relatives. He contributed all his time, energy and money to the RVP – an effort to support not only the philosophies and cultures of the world, but all of humanity. I was indeed always touched by his spirit. Through him, I was lucky to be given many opportunities to meet so many people, centers, universities, and countries throughout the world. This has allowed me, like many others, to exchange ideas about important problems, questions and issues.

In the future, I hope all of us can continue to support the efforts of the RVP, and all kinds of its various projects. We can continue and build on Professor George McLean's spirit. Let him really live with us.

George McLean: Mentor, Colleague and Friend

Jānis (John) Tāļivaldis Ozoliņš

I first met George McLean at the World Congress of Philosophy in 1998 in Boston. My first impression of him was of a quiet, gentle person who listened to others, rather than having a great deal to say himself. He seemed to be content to remain in the background. Over the years that followed, I was drawn into the great project that was the RVP, and was able to make some contribution to its activities. I also had the good fortune to get to know George, both as a person and as a philosopher, over the following eighteen years. He was a kind, generous, and unassuming person, who would rather listen to what others had to say than to put forward his own opinions. He was, nevertheless, charismatic, drawing many people to his vision of a world connected through common interests in seeking to live the good and virtuous life.

He was unusual for a philosopher who had studied with some of the great Western philosophers of the twentieth century in that he did not regard philosophy as practised in the Western world, analytic or continental, as definitive of philosophy itself. He was open to the possibility that there were other perspectives, other ideas, other ways of thinking from which we could all learn through dialogue and the exchange of ideas. He also understood that philosophy as practised in the Catholic intellectual tradition could be one way of bringing Christian culture, traditions and values into dialogue with other cultures, values and traditions. He was confident that there was common ground, since he had great faith in common human nature and that, typically, human beings all desired the same thing.

By the time I met George, he had already spent nearly thirty years organizing conferences in many different corners of the world. While the Cold War was still raging in the 70s, he organized conferences behind the Iron Curtain, and I remember him relating stories about how he and his travelling companions would try to smuggle books into Eastern Europe. By the 1980s he was organizing colloquia in China. The impact of these colloquia was astonishing. In 2009, I was privileged to be with George in China for some conferences on the occasion of the celebration of his 80th birthday, and Chinese scholars, many of them elderly, made the journey to the conferences in order to celebrate with him. These were revered scholars, eminent in their own country, who nevertheless acknowledged what George had accomplished in terms of dialogue between East and

West. It was clear that they regarded him as a preeminent scholar, a wise man.

More importantly, George was someone who drew people into the important work of the RVP. He did not do this by cajoling people, but by allowing them to come to their own conclusions about its worth. This approach resulted in a very large number of people around the world being inspired by his understated, but nevertheless powerful advocacy of dialogue amongst peoples. Importantly, his self-effacing approach to philosophical dialogue gave scholars from all different corners of the world confidence to engage in philosophical discussion about the nature of what it is to be human, about moral philosophy, the nature of virtue, and of values, and many other significant philosophical questions. With the support of willing local philosophers, he set up RVP centers around the world, so that they could carry out the work of philosophical discussion and dialogue in regional centers. The many volumes published by the RVP are a testimony to the way in which George, perhaps more than anyone else, valued all types of thinking, and did not insist that philosophy worthy of the name could only be done in the Western analytic tradition. For someone coming from a small, provincial, distant country, Australia, where only analytic philosophy was regarded as real philosophy, this was a considerable revelation and inspiration, since it made evident that there were many ways of doing philosophy that were just as legitimate as analytic philosophy. It opened up new horizons, and showed how different philosophical approaches could provide fresh perspectives on the common problems that human beings face – problems into which analytic philosophy was unable to provide much insight. The many-faceted nature of philosophy was confirmed to me over the years through travel to RVP conferences in different parts of the world and learning from scholars from different traditions. Travel in China, for instance, opened the Confucian tradition to me, one that I had not had much encounter with previously.

One of the most interesting trips that I had with George was a trip from Nanning to Guilin by car, a journey which took about five hours. Travelling through the Chinese province of Guangxi with George provided the opportunity for some interesting philosophical chats. During a discussion of the self and personal identity, I discovered that George had taken some courses with Gadamer. This was a moment of revelation for me, since I also found out that George had also known Paul Ricoeur, whose book *Oneself as Another*, I was at the time reading in English translation. George did not dwell on this, nor on his connections with other well-known philosophers of the twentieth century, merely mentioning it to make a point about something that we happened to be discussing. The big revelation was that George was completely matter-of-fact about his studies with Gadamer and his intellectual discussions with the leading

philosophers of the twentieth century. Although he gave due credit to these stars of the philosophical firmament, he did not see them as the only significant sources of learning, and was happy to take part in philosophical discussion with anyone, including with me, as it was through dialogue with others that there was an opportunity to learn something. Significantly, the lesson I learned was that new philosophical ideas and novel perspectives did not just come from the acknowledged leading philosophers, but from many less-heard voices. If these voices were to be heard, one needed to be prepared to listen, and not simply present one's own point of view. It was George's listening skills and his ability to weave a cogent narrative from what he had heard that was one of his most impressive talents.

On this very memorable journey, but also on subsequent journeys, I discovered that George, despite having travelled in China for many years, was no linguist. His grasp of the Chinese language never rose beyond being able to say "xie xie" or "thank you" in Chinese. Perhaps this was the most important phrase to be able to say. Certainly, for me, I would like to say "xie xie," George. You taught me what it means to truly listen, to be humane, to be respectful of the many different ways in which we can do philosophy. I am also proud to be one of your successors as Secretary General of the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies, though I am far from being able to adequately fill your shoes.

Rev. George McLean: A Scholar with Vision and Passion

Kuruville Pandikattu, S.J.

My first contact with Professor McLean was an unexpected email, received when I was a student at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. I was pursuing my Ph.D. in Theology on the dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity, based on the work of Bede Griffiths, a British Catholic priest who adopted Indian customs and Hindu philosophy, and lived in India for more than 40 years. That was in 1996. On his own, he wrote to me to ask if I needed some help in collecting materials. He also wanted me to send him my manuscript, which he read meticulously and gave many comments. These remarks were immensely insightful. After my thesis defence, he made a special effort to publish my book on his own.

The first time I met Professor McLean was after I returned to India. I went to meet him, along with some Chinese scholars, in Delhi in 1999. The conference was organized by me, but he brought all the scholars to India, and we had a lovely discussion.

After that he visited us at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, in Pune, where he had known many scholars, including Professor Richard de Smet, and where he delivered the prestigious De Smet-de Marneffe Annual Memorial Lectures on “The Contribution of Philosophy to the Growth of Civilizations: Eastern and Western Perspectives.” His lecture to the philosophy staff and students followed another special lecture only to the staff of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth. Both of them were highly appreciated.

His contact with Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth helped us to become “family friends,” and we kept ongoing contact with each other. This led to publication of another book and to other seminars, where he would take the initiative to invite as many philosophers as possible.

When I think of him, I am impressed by his following qualities:

His academic excellence: He would correct each and every line of the manuscripts that I sent to him, making elaborate and helpful comments. He was a scholar par excellence, and was a devout servant of academic discipline.

His philosophical passion: Philosophy was his passion, his way of life. He would eagerly read and reflect on many philosophical issues, and articulate them for use in the contemporary context. Philosophy was his passion and his life.

His committed vision: He had a vision that took him to different continents and cultures to spread the message of universal brotherhood

and dialogue. He excelled in reaching out to different traditions, with a vision that is truly humane.

His personal warmth: He was a man who could relate to many scholars, from different parts of the world, with ease and with genuine warmth. He was truly interested in the personal well-being of each person he encountered. We could easily feel the warmth of his friendship, which radiated incessantly.

His dialogical approach: Professor McLean was a man of dialogue, ready to embrace different view-points, cultures, and perspectives. At the same time, he was truly rooted in his own tradition and experiences. His approach was inclusive, without rejecting any culture, and always eager to draw on others.

His encounter with the Divine: One could sense a commitment and faith which truly elevated his spirit, and enabled him to experience the Divine in and through his day-to-day life. His research and explorations led him to God, who is all-inclusive and unconditionally loving.

I was truly privileged to have been associated with this man: an eminent scholar who reached out to various cultures and traditions, with intense love, devotion, and commitment. He truly radiated joy through his life, wisdom through his writings and compassion through his travels.

McLean's Testament for the Ukraine

Yaroslav Pasko & Korzhov Henadii

Ukraine's intellectual circles discovered George McLean rather late, unfortunately – only in the 2000s. The work of such a prominent scholar is so important and his understanding of the problems of the Ukrainian transformation is so relevant that the value of his intellectual contributions – for the different communities and groups of Ukrainian society, intellectuals, the political class, and civil society – can hardly be overestimated. His life and work, having a truly global scale, only now, from the position of a certain historical distance, allows us, Ukrainians, to realize a very simple and important thing. Social change requires solid values and a foundational worldview. To carry out complex socio-political and economic reforms, strengthening the principles of identity is possible only in the presence of strong cultural and moral-normative prerequisites, which are the fundamental basis for the formation of values, deep-seated norms, and rules.

Father McLean constantly emphasized the significant threats to the “young states” associated with the post-communist evolution. It was important to consider cultural foundations and rethink “the experience of occupation” in post-communist societies, and he contributed to a deeper understanding of the post-totalitarian heritage that makes complex change in Ukraine impossible or transforms such change into a banal “simulation.” His workshops and lectures provided illustrations of practical change, while rejecting the tendency of the mechanical imitation of Western trends that is popular in our country, but counterproductive. Father McLean noted the need for the Ukrainian society to focus on global cultural markers and common cultural heritage with other countries. At the same time, however, he appealed to the “ethos,” the traditional foundations of identity, that allows the country to evolve despite unfavorable global trends and the lack of natural resources.

Realizing the importance of intellectual assistance and the dependence of the processes of “social modernization” in the Ukraine on the presence of a powerful intellectual environment – and reflecting on American and European ideological and cultural concepts – Father McLean impressed his audience by the depth of his analysis, his sensitivity to various historical and cultural determinants, as well as his exceptional combination of the styles of academic scientist and public philosopher, able to connect with the widest audience.

It is difficult to overestimate the role of George McLean for the development of Ukrainian society and science. The authors had the

opportunity to get acquainted with him for the first time in Lviv, in December 2001, at a conference devoted to the issues of civil society. The country was experiencing difficult times, separating from the totalitarian past. It was unclear in what way it would be possible to change society which, as a result of the irresponsibility of the political elite and social clientalism, was incapable of overcoming the “family spots” of its communist past, of adapting to global change and creating networks of civil interaction, moving away from economic determinism and the Marxist paradigm of social development towards modern European concepts.

In this context, the Ukrainian scientific community was simply amazed by his presentation at the 2001 conference, where he offered theoretical approaches unknown to Ukrainian humanists. He focused on themes such as: communicative rationality, communitarianism, critical theory, modernization theory, and postcolonial studies. Criticizing the economic determinism of Marxism and the classical theory of modernization, which presupposes evolution as the single and universal way of development, Father McLean emphasized the dimensions of “ideal communication,” promoted ways of modernization alternative to those existing in the Ukraine, and highlighted the importance of cultural and religious factors of social change in Eastern and Central Europe. Equally important was the fact that George McLean drew attention to the decisive role of intellectuals and representatives of the “middle class” in shaping new cultural and social contexts. He was also interested in the emergence of new identities in countries undergoing the path of “late modernization.” Being an exceptionally educated man, a specialist in the theory of knowledge, humanities, and philosophy of culture, McLean revealed to us, the inhabitants of a post-colonial country, the broad horizons of “public sociology” and the social sciences, and which stimulated the young scientists of our country: philosophers, political scientists, sociologists as well. This was especially noticeable at conferences and seminars devoted to the problems of civil society, social modernization, and social identity. Due to historical reasons, all the above problematic had previously been pushed away to the margins and studied only in a very schematic way. Consequently, the RVP joint seminars on civil society were particularly illuminating in this context.

At the time, it was believed that civil society was a purely political concept associated with the development of non-governmental organizations. Professor McLean greatly deepened our understanding of this concept, disclosing the links between civil society and the concepts that directly affect the formation of this social institution: the concepts of life-world and system, community and civil society, community and subsidiarity, decentralization and federalism. He drew attention to the role of the traditions of republicanism (“common cause”) in shaping the new social order, as well as the role of local communitarian traditions in

shaping the global world. Realizing the complexity of the Ukraine's transition to democratic models, this scientist and great friend of our country high-lighted two factors, without which, in his opinion, it was impossible to change anything in the country. The first is the role of the moral-normative sphere, which is the basis for overcoming corruption and moral decay. In this context, he attached great importance to the understanding of Aristotle's political philosophy. (A number of studies on this issue has since been translated into Ukrainian.) Second, he understood the practical preconditions and peculiarities of the path of each country in overcoming the consequences of the communist and colonial past.

The workshops conducted by McLean in Central Europe stressed that the Ukraine faces two obstacles to social change. First, there is the obstacle of the rudiments of the communist past, which are connected to the total bureaucratization and absorption of the life-world by the system, when the latter, through its own media, power, and money, colonizes, reduces, and destroys the former, while leveling the role of civil society in the country and making serious social change impossible. In the process of fruitful discussion during public forums and private conversations, McLean stated that Soviet socialism defiled all forms of authentic communal life, turning people into faceless masses, incapable of self-organization and social partnership. A second obstacle in the Ukraine, according to McLean, is the dearth of authentic individualism. The reason for this is the existence of a total monopoly and the lack of competition. In the end, post-soviet society generates a type of person who constantly feels depressed, unable to preserve his own historical memory and patterns of his own traditional culture.

McLean quite critically summed up the consequences of the Soviet past in our country, contributing to the awareness of the terrible form of Leviathan reproduced in the post-Soviet space. He outlined the awful situation in the humanitarian field, where everything that went beyond the limits of ideology was eliminated or put aside on the margins and practically not developed.

Another critical focus of McLean concerned the role of cultural industry in promoting a national culture – a notion that is not clear enough in the West and is perceived by most advanced countries through Russian culture. Thus, McLean emphasized that, without first developing culture in all its forms – traditional, high, academic – one cannot substantively develop civil society. It was also important to find those social groups that could be the engine for social integration and that could unite society on other principles. McLean emphasized that, due to the lack of development of private property as the basis for the formation of the middle class, there was little chance that those social groups that are classic in the West could become the drivers of modernization in the Ukraine. He accentuated the

decisive role and social mission of intellectuals in social change, emphasizing their symbolic meaning for Ukrainian and Polish societies.

The problem was, in Father McLean's opinion, the coordinated behavior of all actors of social change, in the context of the transition from the post-communist social order to the rules and norms common to Europe. He proposed drawing on the invaluable experience of social transformations, conflicts, and intellectual disputes in Central Europe, in the formulation of a shared public space. This is greatly lacking in our society, which, due to the irresponsibility of the political class, the socio-cultural amorphousness, and the weakness of democratic identity, did not fully take advantage of opportunities presented to us in recent years.

Therefore, McLean's critique of the Central European and, especially, of the Polish experience of the Third Republic is especially appealing to us: the liberal vision of national transformation in contrast with the mechanisms of the functioning of post-communist power, which remains organically linked with the Soviet legacy that was extremely ineffective and prone to corruption. It is very important for us to note his "deconstruction" of the post-colonial experience: a discussion of the optimal sociocultural path to democracy, which would allow reconciling the specifics of the Ukrainian cultural archetype with the requirements of global trends: liberal optimization, pluralism, and tendencies towards forcing moral and normative virtues into the private sphere.

The unquestionable value for Ukrainians is McLean's vision of the nature of modern "post-metaphysical liberalism," which, as Ukrainian experience also proves, is constantly expanding its monologic claims, and avoiding serious philosophical discussions about moral and religious concepts. Such a liberalism, according to McLean, is contrary to recognized authentic liberal patterns and increasingly gravitates towards "ideological neutrality," narrowing the space for democracy. In the context of his intellectual approach, this model appears as "socially distorted and unfair." This social order is extremely restrictive of the ability of communities and groups to realize their cultural and religious heritage.

McLean explicates the modern moral and ideological crisis of post-communist societies by referring to the processes of the "liquefaction of tradition" – the global victory in former post-Soviet countries of "gray" democracy, deprived of the deep sense of democracy. This 'liquefaction' is extremely insensitive and unfavorable to serious national projects; it despises people's aspirations for a "common good," and rejects the special mission of the spiritual authorities who were the driving force behind the velvet revolutions of 1989. Diagnosing the signs of crisis in Ukrainian society, Father McLean essentially foresaw its consequence: a comprehensive change of power in Ukraine and the practical elimination of the power levers of political actors – i.e., "old politicians," who were the

personification of the “colonial past” – and the definition of a new vector of life in Ukraine.

McLean’s theoretical views, although only briefly touching upon Ukrainian issues, lead us to a better understanding of the fundamental problems of Ukrainian transformation, which, unfortunately, were neither solved nor even comprehensively put forward by Ukrainian society. Why in the 25 years of the formally independent existence of the Ukraine have there not been complex changes in the political and social sphere? Why are not the common guidelines for society and the government identified as seeking a common good that is coordinated with individual interests? What should be the social design of the future? Why have civil society and the ruling political class neither resolved nor even clearly outlined the problems of cultural decolonization and the arrangement of public institutions on the basis of global and national development? Instead of the meaningful discussion of such issues in the public sphere and their gradual solution, we observe the primitive replication of meaningless universal economic recipes, which are, over and above, used selectively and in an arbitrary way. The negative effects of the non-critical assimilation of Western models are too frequent, in particular, due to the lack of comprehensive understanding of Father McLean’s views. His legacy is an intellectual testament to us, Ukrainians, to help us understand our problems and to provide a recipe for their solution.

In Memory of George McLean

Yuriy Pochta

It is difficult to describe George McLean because of the greatness of his personality. He was a multi-faceted man, and irreducible to any one sphere of his activities. Who was he? A philosopher, theologian, priest, professor, editor, publisher, organizer of scientific workshops and conferences, an educator, a humanist? He simultaneously combined all these vocations.

His calling was to serve humanity. He perceived the diversity of religious, scientific, cultural, and ethnic forms as the heritage of humanity.

He valued the spiritual heritage of traditions, but also the insights of the modern and postmodern eras, and sought to create an integral, holistic approach to the history of mankind.

He was constantly searching for answers and, thus, was ahead of many in his knowledge of the current problems of mankind, the latest philosophical ideas and their systematic analysis and criticism, and in the synthesis of established ideas with new concepts. He generously shared all his knowledge with like-minded people and young scholars through the seminars and conferences that he organized. The products of these meetings were prepared by him for publication: edited, revised, published, and distributed around the world.

He had been repeatedly nominated for the Nobel Prize, but I believe that the scope of his work goes beyond the limited appreciation of the Nobel Committee. George McLean was too complex and unfathomable for people limited by geographical, political, ethnic, confessional, and civilizational frameworks. We are just beginning to grasp the scale of his personality and his achievements, and can be proud that we knew him, that we were his contemporaries.

Father McLean and Dialogical Civilizations

Riccardo Pozzo

When I started teaching at the Catholic University of America in the fall term of 1996, I was assigned the outer room of a split corner office in Saint Bonaventure Hall, a brick building that stood on the triangle between Michigan, Monroe and 7 Street N.E., which was built in 1925 to serve as the House of Studies of the Conventual Franciscans, and which had been acquired by Catholic University after the war. (It was torn down in 2014, and replaced by a multi-venue complex.)

My office had a heart-warming view of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, whose dome – as is well-known – reflects rays of gold and blue. On the door of the office on the opposite of the corridor, hung a plate that read “McLean.”

I had already heard about Father George McLean, O.M.I., and I was truly happy to meet him in person, which happened very soon. I still have quite a vivid picture of his big office, also a large corner office (unsplit!) with a big table and other small tables and chairs scattered around. Overflowing bookshelves and piles of books contributed with the lowered shades to create the impression I first had, that of a cave.

A cave of wisdom, for Father McLean shared the view made popular by Karl Jaspers, that when Confucius and Laozi lived and taught in China, the *Upanishads* were produced in India, where the Buddha lived, similarly Zarathustra in Persia, the prophets in Palestine, Homer, Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Plato in Greece: “Everything implied by these names developed almost simultaneously in China, India, and the West.”¹

Today we know well that the idea of founding and running the Centre for the Study of Culture and Values (CSCV) was right on. “We now have a dialogical civilization” – as Tu Weiming stated, introducing the magnificent paper he gave at the 24th World Congress of Philosophy (WCP) in Beijing, August 2018.² A dialogical civilization is much more than a dialogue of cultures. It is a culture that is born dialogical. Learning to be human is an ongoing task and we fulfill it by means of exposure to the arts and the humanities. Having passed away only twenty-three months before the start of the 24th WCP in Beijing, August 2018, Father McLean could not witness one of the greatest achievements of the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie (FISP),³ an association to

¹ Karl Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Zürich: Artemis, 1949), 5.

² Tu Weiming, *Spiritual Humanism: Self, Community, Earth, and Heaven* / 精神人文主义: 己、群、地、天 (Beijing: The 24th World Congress of Philosophy, 2018).

³ See <https://www.fisp.org> (accessed September 3, 2018).

which he dedicated some precious years of his life, when he served on its Steering Committee from 1978 to 1988.

FISP was founded at the 10th WCP in Amsterdam in 1948. FISP is a member of the Conseil International de la Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines (CIPSH),⁴ the non-governmental organization that constitutes the link between all international humanities federations and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). FISP is the highest non-governmental world organization in philosophy. Its members are philosophical institutions at national, regional, and international levels. Each World Congress was a significant cultural event.⁵ Until 1998, all WCPs were held in Western countries. The first time the World Congress was held in Asia was the 21st WCP in Istanbul, August 2003; the first time in the Far-East was the 22nd WCP in Seoul, August 2008.

It is significant that, after the long-due homage to philosophy in Greece, which was the 23rd WCP (in Athens, August 2013) – the last World Congress that Father McLean attended – the 24th WCP in Beijing, August 2018 – was once again held in the Far-East, this time marking the irreversible trend of establishing philosophy as the foundation of a dialogical civilization. In fact, the international program committee did more than that: it convinced FISP to abandon Aristotelian-Scholastic disciplinary classifications for the plenary sessions and to introduce instead items rooted in the tradition of spiritual humanism (*jingshen renwenzhuyi* 精神人文主义). Instead of the initial plenary session being on logic and metaphysics, the 24th WCP started with a plenary session on self (*ji* 己); instead of the second plenary on ethics and politics, it had a plenary on community (*jun* 群); instead of the third plenary on science, there was a plenary on nature (*di* 地); and instead of the fourth plenary being on religion, it was on spirit (*tian* 天). The scheme was completed by a fifth historical plenary on *traditions* (*chuantong* 传统), and was continued in the choice of the titles of the ten symposia.⁶

In conclusion, I am most grateful to Father McLean for having taught

⁴ See <http://www.cipsh.net/htm> (accessed September 3, 2018).

⁵ All proceedings have been published and are currently available through the Philosophy Documentation Center, which is also in charge of the FISP website. See <https://www.pdcnet.org/wcp> (accessed September 3, 2018).

⁶ The full titles of the symposia held at the 24th WCP were: *Self*: (1) Ren, Ubuntu, Love, and the Heart, (2) Mind, Brain, Body, Consciousness, Emotions; *Community*: (3) Philosophy at the Margins: Domination, Freedom, and Solidarity, (4) Rights, Responsibility, and Justice; *Nature*: (5) Human, Non-Human, Post-Human, (6) Science, Technology, and the Environment; *Spirit*: (7) Creativity, Symbol, and Aesthetic Sense, (8) Reason, Wisdom, and the Good Life; *Traditions*: (9) Expressibility, Dialogue, Translatability; (10) Differences, Diversity, Commonality.

me that innovation lies in understanding dignity and otherness as shaped by history, but threatened by historical, philosophical and – above all – religious illiteracy.

“Write Books!”

A Tribute to Professor George F. McLean

Anthony Savari Raj

“Write books!” was the loving exhortation of Professor George F. McLean, to my query on how to become “rich and famous.” I haven’t really been able to follow up on his advice, but I’ve generously allowed him to write books in my heart and I’ve only seen enriching and enhancing results in my personal and academic life.

My first meeting with Professor McLean, along with Dr. Hu Yeping, goes back two decades ago, at University of Madras, where I was then a young Lecturer. The positive reception and impact he had, both in his ideas and in his person, on the predominant non-Christian surrounding was truly amazing. In fact, one senior Hindu faculty member even confessed that it was due to Professor McLean that he could feel a resonance of Western and Christian insights in his own Hindu tradition; otherwise they would have always remained very far away, he ascertained.

This confession indeed vouches for the pluralistic and universalizing spirit of Professor McLean, for which he was widely recognized by the philosophical fraternity all over the world, all through his life. He painstakingly endeavoured to present the truths of his tradition to the world in such a dialogical way that a person belonging to another tradition could easily and readily feel a resonance of the same in his/her tradition without any rupture.

And there was gentleness in this endeavor. He never transgressed others’ borders horizontally. His border crossing was of another kind. It was perhaps, vertical, in the sense that he, remaining in his own house, always kept the windows of his tradition open, so that he could always hear the descriptions of his neighbors who might come from a totally different perspective. As we know, this ability to listen to the other is impossible, if one does not first recognize and acknowledge the radical contingency and self-insufficiency in one’s own self which the verticality ultimately stands for. As all those who encountered Professor McLean would readily acknowledge, humility, which is only another word for courage, was the real hallmark of this mutational and cross-cultural person!

My series of personal and academic encounters with Professor McLean principally took place in the year 2004, when I was for a year the Woodstock International Fellow at Georgetown University, in Washington, DC. It was a sheer delight to be part of the Annual Seminar which he

regularly conducted for many years at the RVP Center, at The Catholic University of America. To illustrate the true spirit of Professor McLean's universality and the quest for interchange of philosophical insight which I adduced earlier, no other example is needed than this Seminar, with its diverse and pluralistic composition, both in terms of participants and deliberations.

Truly unforgettable is the long car drive that we took during this time from Washington, DC to Boston, to meet up with and celebrate Christmas with his beloved sister's family and affectionate priest-brother. It is through his family that I could easily sense from where his great generosity, gentleness, and hospitality really sprang.

Further, it was during this lovely trip that I posed my question on becoming rich and famous. Given the life-long endeavor of Professor McLean to promote dialogue, communication, and cooperation among different peoples, cultures, and religions around the globe, his exhortation to me to "Write books!" has only meant "be a pontiff" – a bridge builder. Professor McLean was surely a supreme pontiff and leader in this endeavour!

Father George F. McLean: A Mentor for All

Abdul Rashid

We are living in an age of crises, and we are facing challenges to resolve these crises. At the same time, we have the impact of religion and philosophy in our societies. These forces are playing vital roles for the development of healthy societies all over the world, especially in my country Pakistan, and in the region of South Asia as a whole.

Among the philosophers who have helped change sick societies into healthy societies through their research and practice on values is Father McLean. His historic contribution of transforming thought into action will be ever remembered in the heart of peoples all over the world.

It was a very pleasant evening of August 1996 when my research associate, Professor William Cenkner of the School of Theology and Religious Studies, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, brought me to the office of the Director, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), and introduced me to Professor George McLean. This was a turning point in my life and, until his demise, I was in touch with him and continuously benefited from his guidance for the reformation of my society, Pakistan.

He had been designated a lifetime visiting faculty member of our University, the University of Karachi, beginning in 1998. He visited the University and other affiliated research institutes many times, and delivered a series of lectures and was keynote speaker at the international seminars and conferences on the following themes:

1. Muslim-Christian Perspectives on Shia and three different schools of Sunni
2. Society, Culture and Cross Cultural Adaptation: Impact on Values
3. Philosophy and the Challenges of the Present Day World
4. Philosophy Emerging from Culture in the Subcontinent: Pakistan and India
5. Dialogue among Cultures
6. Promoting Tolerance and Peace by Building Bridges between Peoples of Pakistan and the United States
7. Peace and Justice: Philosophical Perspectives
8. Cultural Change in Pakistan: Value Perspectives
9. Realization of Interfaith, Ideal Action Beyond Dialogue
10. Values of Forgiveness in the World Philosophical Traditions

The speeches of Father McLean on these topics were result oriented. Large numbers of students, faculty members, and elites of civil society benefitted from these programs. He was kind to our faculty and to the people of Pakistan. We loved him deeply. Father McLean was recognized in both the religious and philosophical spheres, and his impact of teaching on society can be observed in all regions.

Today, in an age of crises with challenges and perspectives, we can follow his example and engage in our own efforts for a healthy society in our region and across the world.

My students and fellow faculty members as well as members of civil society in Pakistan miss his presence, and offer heartfelt prayers for the rest of the soul of Professor George McLean, an eminent philosopher, researcher and reformer of our contemporary age.

In Memory of Professor George F. McLean

Michał Reka

The depth of Professor George McLean's personality cannot be conveyed in a few pages. However, I will try to provide a couple of my glimpses about breakthrough discoveries that I could gradually make in his presence.

I first met Professor McLean when I was about to start research for my doctoral thesis at the Catholic University of America, in the academic year 1989/90, where he was then responsible also for administering exchange scholars, of whom I was one. After a few weeks of developing, with his help, my research agenda, he suddenly invited me to take part in his annual seminar about globalization. After some hesitation, I agreed, even though at that time globalization seemed to be a minor thread of my research. In the course of that seminar, I came to be familiar with his unique attentiveness – his listening to diverse discussions, and then providing deep and deadly accurate summaries every week. In so doing, he was a master who respected his listener's time! One can find traces of that extraordinary skill in each of his publications.

After some time, he asked me to write something about my Polish work in the area of moral imagination. And it was then, thanks to my conversations with him, that I noticed that, having been involved in the Solidarity movement in the eighties, I should re-think it, and understand it better within categories of universal values, given their impact on the course of Polish history and of many countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Slowly, I was coming to understand the meaning of the establishment of The Council of Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), as the place at the University that explores what is most neglected and tries to find out what has contributed to the death of many dimensions of our culture. If philosophy is mostly the product of reasoning, and its *episteme* is to gain "being as being," then we cannot investigate "values" without considering the factor of "will." The recovery of the recognition of the interdependence between reason and will in the field of philosophy was his great achievement. Why did he emphasize this so strongly, making the RVP his lifetime project? It seems to me that this is a result of his accurate axiological diagnosis of the condition of European/Western culture perceived against the background of other cultures discovered in the process of globalization – what, in our contemporary world, already appears to be an "axiological disaster."

To illustrate this problem, let me refer for instance to analyses of Friedrich Nietzsche in his works of 1876/77 that I found in perhaps the

first translation into English – *The Genealogy of Morals*¹ and *Appendix*, added by the publisher, consisting of unstructured essays for his subsequent book *Peoples and Countries*.

What is Nietzsche promoting and what are conclusions of his analyses? Here are some examples of this still topical and trendy way of thinking: “Enough! (...) let us leave these curiosities and complexities of the modern spirit (...) those things shall be handled by me more thoroughly and severely in another connection (under the title *A Contribution to the History of European Nihilism*, I refer for this to a work which I am preparing: *The Will to Power, an Attempt at a Transvaluation of All Values*).² What kind of future does Nietzsche predict here? (...) this is that great hundred-act play that is reserved for the next two centuries of Europe, the most terrible, the most mysterious, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all plays.”³

What does it mean for him more precisely? Nietzsche describes this devaluation process in more details in his notes in the following way: “(...) I believe that everything which we Europeans of today are in the habit of admiring as the values of all these respected things called “humanity,” “mankind,” “sympathy,” “pity,” may be of some value as the debilitation and moderating of certain powerful and dangerous primitive impulses. Nevertheless, in the long run all these things are nothing else than the belittlement of the entire type “man,” his mediocrization, if in such a desperate situation I may make use of such a desperate expression. I think that the *commedia umana* for an Epicurean spectator-god must consist in this: that the Europeans, by virtue of their growing morality, believe in all their innocence and vanity that they are rising higher and higher, whereas the truth is that they are sinking lower and lower – i.e., through the cultivation of all the virtues which are useful to a herd, and through the repression of the other and contrary virtues which give rise to a new, higher, stronger, masterful race of man – the first-named virtues merely develop the herd-animal in man and stabilize the animal “man,” for until now man has been “the animal as yet unstabilized.”⁴

Today, when I am writing this paper, the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris is on fire. George McLean knew that the junction between values and philosophy is not accidental in order “to touch” the reality. Being “is,” therefore what “is good” exists. *Malum* – evil is a lack of goodness. Hegel’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807) is dialectically negated by Marx and Engels, which in case of Nietzsche leads to the final decision of

¹ F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Horace B. Samuel, M.A. (New York: The Modern Library Publishers, 1918).

² *Ibid.*, 174.

³ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 193-194.

will: (...) “a will for Nothingness, a will opposed of life, a repudiation of the most fundamental conditions of life, but it is and remains *a will!* – and to say at the end that which I said at the beginning – man will wish *Nothingness* rather than not wish *at all.*”⁵

In such a system of practically formed “twisted culture” I had to live on the side of the Easter Block, in Poland in the sixties, seventies and eighties, where the generation of my parents and grandparents had to cope with consequences of WW1 and WW2 – Auschwitz, Hitler’s and Stalin’s regimes, numerous uprisings, etc.

If there is, in the end, only the arbitral will to choose – in front of “NO-Spirit” culture – what values remain? To escape into “NO-Being”? Illusions? Only syntax? Games? If conscience has nothing to decide about, what can responsibility be replaced with? And what remains for the future? We can find a few of such dangerous projects for the future in Nietzsche’s notes to the supplement of Chapter VIII of *Beyond Good and Evil*:

(...) Parliaments may be very useful to a strong and versatile statesman: he has something there to rely upon (...) however, I could wish that the counting mania and the superstitious belief in majorities were not established in Germany, as with the Latin races, and that one could finally invent something new even in politics!⁶

(...) England’s small-mindedness is the great danger now on earth. I observe more inclination towards greatness in the feelings of the Russian Nihilists than in those of the English Utilitarians (...). We require (...) a giving up of the English principle of the people’s right of representation. We require the representation of the great interests.⁷

We require an unconditional union with Russia, together with a mutual plan of action which shall not permit any English schemata to obtain the mastery in Russia. No American future!⁸

A national system of politics is untenable, and embarrassment by Christian views is a very great evil (...). I see over and beyond all these national wars, new “empires,” and whatever else lies in the foreground. What I am concerned with – for I see

⁵ Ibid., 178.

⁶ Ibid., 186-187.

⁷ Ibid., 187.

⁸ Ibid., 187-188.

it preparing itself slowly and hesitatingly – is United Europe (...). Only in their weaker moments, or when they grew old, did they fall back again into the national narrowness of the “Fatherlanders” – then they were once more “patriots.” (...) Money is even now compelling European nations to amalgamate into one Power.⁹

For the tasks of the next century, the methods of popular representation and parliaments are the most inappropriate imaginable.¹⁰

Now it is obvious by evidence of the last periods of history, that all today’s de-constructions, post-modernisms, pure humanistic views, “neutral” or “point-zero” secularisms, different kinds of socialism etc. are only half-way processes to gain the final target in Nietzschean dialectic negation of *all values*: the mature and strong “stabilitated animal man”! And if soon artificial intelligence will substitute comfortable man in “tiring” thinking processes, then the vision of the German nihilist may reach its maturity in the near future.

I was very fortunate to meet Professor McLean, who was a thinker 24/7, wholly and actively involved in changing the course of such “dialectical necessity.” Some of us remember his humorous stories from the time of his youth – for example, that he recalled that his native town was located on a river where fishing vessels arrived on the eve of the fishing season, and that their captains ‘conscripted’ some of the local sailors who had been drinking too much. Once captured and before sobering up, they were already among the ship’s crew, far away on the open sea, to help in catching fish. When they returned to their homes, their families found them sober and more affluent. This was how Professor McLean understood his Platonic role of “reminding about and enlightening” the emerging reality of the globalized world. And I am thankful to him – even though I was somewhat sleepy and indifferent to the problems of the immense, globalized world – for “pushing” me to wake up and “get sober,” and to start thinking more globally about contemporary reality. I also admired him for the fact that, while travelling extensively, he saw in his interlocutors not only a diversity of cultures and many different ways of thinking, but also what was necessary – always in the context of freedom. Often, he initiated a discussion about these fundamental issues, sitting around “a philosophical table” in the Grahams’ farm home near Chesapeake Bay. He was not satisfied with the answer that freedom is merely “the recognition of necessity.” Among the various

⁹ Ibid., 188-189.

¹⁰ Ibid., 189.

responses, I added, once, the definition coined by our Lublin philosophical school, that “freedom is a free choice of the currently recognized truth.” Only then it is possible to transcend the necessity. Freedom must be real and “personal.” And Professor McLean acted just like this.

What else was fascinating about him? His fundamental openness to the diversity of the huge global world. This openness was for me an inexhaustible source of access to his existential awareness of the world as he was knowing and experiencing it, for he was capable of sharing this awareness. How? Because he was an unparalleled, emphatic listener at every meeting. It seemed to be obvious that nobody was a “stranger” for him. I remember him repeating: “Whenever I visited other countries or universities, and I looked at their wall maps, I always saw their country in the center, and others on the periphery.”

It is interesting that he did not carry out cross-cultural studies and then return home with a handful of notes and photographs to work them out “scientifically.” His study of philosophy, the new reality of the globalized world, reflected an original methodology. And how effective that methodology was! It is sufficient to mention that the book that he wrote during more than a year in India, has been regarded by native Indian readers (e.g. Professor Ajay Verma from New Delhi) as the best study of their own culture! Whenever McLean mentioned his stay in India, he always did it with a wry smile, saying that it cost him 30 pounds of his own weight. And this is also an example of that empathy, that new methodology, based upon “one’s own commitment to understanding” the sense of culture in which he found himself, and expressing it in a language understandable both to himself and to his Indian readers. Somebody had to care! This is, perhaps, the same sense of active empathy¹¹ that Edith Stein attempted to describe in her doctoral thesis – the empathy which the German word, *der Einfühlung*, or the Polish expression, *wczucie się*, convey even more bluntly, as they mean mutual understanding and existential meeting. Professor McLean was a pioneer of thinking outside of the box, and engaging directly and personally what was distant and alien. His involvement in building new bridges of mutual understanding and his deep trust was based on his recognition of the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation of alien sides. His recognition of this enabled him to be ready to give serious answers to posed questions, wherever and whenever he met someone. This was his attitude towards substantive questions, and he sought to answer them carefully.

I remember a situation that took place in 2005, in the course of a RVP seminar about symbols. I was waiting for Professor McLean at front of St. Bonaventure Hall on Michigan Avenue, where he had his *cave* (a big office with a philosophical library) in the basement. (For many years, the

¹¹ E. Stein, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* (Halle, 1917).

building was located on a small piece of university land, separated by that avenue from the rest of the campus. Later on, it was sold and, today, there is a commercial bookstore there.) The night before, I gave him my article titled, “The Creative Power of the Symbol in the Final Revolution: Solidarity,”¹² and was waiting for his approval. When his car arrived at the front door, he only lowered the window and asked: “Could you add one chapter more from the global perspective?” I managed to ask: “What do you think of the article?” “Fine, I’ve got a proof,” he answered. “What proof?” I asked. “A historical proof that it works!” he answered. “Hmm,” I thought to myself, “this will be a new challenge for me!”

It took me three days to think over how to take such a step into the unknown. Then, following his example, I raised a bold question in my third chapter: “Can Solidarity be global?” It was an easy question to ask, but how could one answer it? A disturbing thought came to mind: How is that even philosophers of *his* kind need proofs? Isn’t it possible today to do philosophical research in a way other than copying science and its ways of reasoning?¹³ Anyway, for McLean, that proof was based on the facts of the past that had set a new direction in the history of Central and Eastern Europe. When I asked myself how such facts can influence the global processes, that question directed my attention, with hope, to the future. I slowly realized how far today’s world is interconnected by a network of mutually dependent relations, and that this new being must be understood anew as a “being.” I asked myself: How can the global culture of solidarity be developed? The exploration of my topic led me to recognizing that the political solidarity is dependent on answering a further question – a question which I continue to ask today: “Can love be commanded?”

One part of our seminar classes in 2005 were held in St. Bonaventure Hall (earmarked in the foreseeable future for demolition), and the other in the new building of the Life Cycle Institute on the other side of CUA’s campus. Our seminar group had, before and after the sessions, therefore, some time to walk from one building to another, and had a tremendous experience of truly Peripatetic conversations with each other. At that time, Professor McLean had already acquired a small office in the new LCI building, but one that he probably could not get used to easily. During these Peripatetic conversations, a puzzle-metaphor came to my mind which I wanted to bring to his attention: Where are we to get the inspiration, tools, and sources needed to examine the times of globali-

¹² In John P. Hogan, ed., *History and Cultural Identity: Retrieving the Past, Scoping the Future* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2011).

¹³ This is still an open question to me that is worth discussing. A draft including an attempt to find an answer can be found in my article prepared for a pre-Congress conference in Jinan, China, in August 2018: “Fear?... Proof?... Truth?... What can enable our move?,” printed in the conference manual.

zation? Therefore, in part two of my text, I asked the question: “Globalization with a human face? Or how far is St. Bonaventure Hall from the Life Cycle Institute?”¹⁴ There is no space here to analyze how philosophy departments are treated in view of contemporary conditions prevailing at *modern universities*. The situation was a little funny, because right there in Washington, DC, part of the Catholic University of America would soon be sold and the beautiful building of Philosophy Department demolished. Is there enough time today to consider anew the role of philosophy in the university, and is philosophy today fresh and adequate enough to work on the new issues in which contemporary and globalized man is immersed, with his current questions about something that is most obvious but unnamed, about the cycle of life, and life’s sense, meaning and purpose? (Who after all should name such questions?) I thought then that the solution might be a kind of a fundamental reform of the university structure and the role of a philosophy department within it, necessary to recognize these newly-emerging problems of the ever-more globalized world, and to grasp the changes.

What a surprise we experienced at the pre-Congress conference in Seoul in 2008, when we witnessed the genius of Professor McLean during the presentation of his outstanding, up-to-date, solution to this problem – when he presented to us all a research project titled “Philosophy Emerging from Cultures.” All of his global experience was embedded in it; it raised the question of a new paradigm on how to formulate philosophy. He challenged us to step down into real life questions where peoples and nations co-develop, into the Areopaguses of the world, and to address common or contradictory visions of the globe! The same ancient questions posed by the contemporary Socrateses from different cultures are to be answered in a new way! Can’t we see here McLean’s Aristotelian awareness of each individual, composed of his own essence and existence, substance and accident, matter and form, and so forth, which requires acknowledgement of the truth about himself, and the dignity and value of his life? Isn’t this another way to find the lost harmony between will and reason? He was right in this intuition of the importance of searching for the answer to contemporary challenges. Looking today at the whole output of the RVP, with its various publication series, it seems to me that the research principle “philosophy emerging from cultures” was the necessary culmination of the intention of Professor McLean, and a formal principle for further analysis. This extraordinary research project, rooted in the thousands of conversations and conference debates he had had in scientific centers over the whole world, must not be squandered by us. I am thankful to Professor McLean and to all those whom he gathered

¹⁴ Unfortunately, the last editor or publisher lost the meaning of the full sentence, reducing it only to its first part and even omitting a question mark at the end.

around himself in the RVP, for this example of a courageous and suitable way of thinking about diversity and solidarity in the globalizing world.

The Grace of Otherness: A Tribute to George F. McLean, O.M.I.

Philip J. Rossi, S.J.

Prior to the invitation that Fr. George McLean had extended to me, in 2009, to participate in the project “Faith in a Secular Age,” my acquaintance with him and with his work consisted of periodically seeing his name in connection with his long involvement with the American Catholic Philosophical Association, most notably his years of service as that organization’s Secretary and as editor of the proceedings of its annual meeting. After meeting him in person for the first time, I very quickly learned that not only was he truly a person of many parts – scholar, editor, educator, tireless organizer, and catalyst for projects to foster and promote cross cultural understanding – but also a gracious, humble, and holy priest, an authentic servant of the world and of the Church.

This tribute to Fr. McLean will highlight what, during the brief time of less than a decade that I was privileged to be a participant in projects he had organized, I perceived to be an extraordinary and deeply admirable quality that suffused his work: his profound respect for, and his welcoming embrace of what I propose to call “the grace of otherness” – a capacity to recognize the good, the value, and the beauty to be encountered and affirmed in each and every form of human cultural expression, however different and “other” it may present itself to us. This graced recognition, moreover, invites us to acknowledge how deeply we, too, stand in otherness.

What this particular enactment of grace consists of may best be shown by reference to how it was and continues to be present in the works and projects of cross-cultural engagement that Fr. McLean initiated and fostered. Consider, for instance, the robust array of regional and international conferences, seminars, and publications that over a span of four decades he helped to organize and promote, beginning in the 1970s, with his involvement with International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) and the International Society for Metaphysics (ISM), and continuing to this day under the aegis of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy that he founded in 1983. In retrospect, a remarkable feature of this work was the expansive vision of cross-cultural engagement with which he animated it, particularly in the face of what, in those early years, was the still looming presence and divisive impact of the ideological otherness of the Cold War. Long before others had located sites for bridge building across this and other ideological and cultural chasms, he was a pioneer, particularly through the formation of many

personal contacts, East and West, North and South, in getting in place the firm footings of personal encounter and dialogue on which to build those bridges. His skill in such networking – long before it became an entrepreneurial buzzword – provided a solid basis in personal human relationships on which to meet the objective that has been, and I fervently hope will continue to be, at the heart of the work of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, i.e., “to move beyond ideologies in order to engage deep human concerns, to bridge traditions and cultures, and to seek new horizons for social transformation.” This objective aptly expresses Fr. McLean’s zeal to engage and graciously embrace the rich variety of cultural otherness with which we stand before one another in the interdependent global community.

There was a gracious urgency to the way in which Fr. McLean imparted to co-workers in these projects the depth of his dedication and zeal for intercultural engagement as a locus from which we can be empowered to join with one another in seeking social transformation for the wellbeing of humanity and of the fragile world entrusted to us. It was a gracious urgency that I believe is rightly called prophetic. This may be the reason why I think it appropriate to conclude this tribute by reference to a passage in the Second Book of Kings (2:9), the one in which, just before the prophet Elijah is taken away by a fiery chariot, his disciple Elisha asks that he may inherit “a double portion” of his mentor’s prophetic spirit. For a world in which the “others” are more often coldly and unkindly turned away rather than being respectfully welcomed in recognition of the good and beauty of their very otherness, there is pressing need that we make Elisha’s prayer our own – and even increase its boldness: May we be granted a double and a triple portion of the welcoming spirit that enabled Fr. George McLean to embrace and be transformed in and by the grace of otherness.

Knowledge and Wisdom in George F. McLean's Writings

Emanuel Salagean

Changes that began in the modern period continue to produce effects in the third millennium – and it is very difficult to imagine what transformations will occur in the years to come. However, it is obvious that the profound changes that have taken place were possible due to a new perspective on reason and knowledge. In modern times, the tendency to turn to the field of metaphysics to find answers to questions and to the challenges of life has been replaced with an approach that focuses on rational knowledge based on scientific experimentation and confirmation through the senses. Without undervaluing the progress and benefits of science, the loss of interest in metaphysics and the transcendental dimension, along with the increasing desire to control nature and to use every discovery for the material benefit of humanity, have made the vision of the world and the life of postmodern man more anthropocentric and more dependent on material and quantifiable achievements. As a consequence, existence has become centered on visible, external, and material reality and, in this context, cultural exclusivity has also occurred.

This situation motivated George McLean to see in what sense the accumulation of information that broadens the spectrum of knowledge may affect one's ability in the third millennium, so that one is able to make wise decisions to help to understand the meaning of life and to develop social relationships that go beyond the specific cultural horizon of each individual. This is what I wish to try to present in this paper – how Professor McLean deals in his works with the concepts of *knowledge* and *wisdom*. I will pay special attention to some aspects about how people think and represent reality. Also I will refer to some epistemic changes that have taken place last five decades, and that are effects of the transformations of the modern age. The interest for technical information and the tendency to represent reality from an anthropocentric perspective have been amplified lately under the pressure of globalization.

A presentation of Professor McLean's views should include both the themes he addressed in written texts and conferences, and the places that influenced his education and research. Having the academic formation of philosopher and theologian, his work covers various themes, but most are centered on the understanding of the person and the relationship between the human and the divine at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. His studies and articles cover many topics in the field

of philosophy and theology and reflect a multicultural and inter-religious approach that contains ideas specific to Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.

In addition to the subjects of individual liberty and hermeneutics, McLean showed in his works a constant and profound concern for that wisdom that helps humanity to feel fulfilled in all its dimensions, but above all, helps it to find answers to metaphysical questions. McLean's attention to this subject is primarily justified by the fact that the wisdom to which he refers provides an opportunity for a multicultural and inter-religious dialogue. This transcultural and inter-confessional communication is possible because wisdom goes beyond the scientific knowledge that comes through the five senses. In addition, this wisdom is necessary and useful at the beginning of the third millennium at least as much as it was in the past, and, arguably, it will be indispensable in the future. This wisdom is necessary, first and foremost, because of the increasing tensions that emerge in response to the cumulative trend of globalization – i.e., what leads to conflict, and provokes the affirmation of cultural and religious identities. Second, we need wisdom that transcends time and space to maintain a point of reference in relation to artificial intelligence, technology, mass culture, and the lack of interest in metaphysics. That is why, in his writings, McLean specifically uses the terms knowledge (gnosis/knowledge) and wisdom (sofia/wisdom).

George Francis McLean: The Person

McLean's academic and research activity was rooted in his work in the summer of 1960 when, at the University's suggestion, he organized several workshops in a summer philosophical school, a project that he continued until 1968. "*What should people do?*," "*What means should I use?*," and "*Can philosophy play an active role in social and cultural change?*"¹ were only a few of the questions that were raised in these workshops during the years preceding the cultural and social movements of the 1970s.

After several conferences organized in South America, the Far-East, and even Eastern Europe (in 1978, he first visited Romania), in 1983 he founded The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP). Since its beginning, the RVP has successfully fulfilled its mission: "to identify areas related to values and social life which are in need of research, to bring together the professional competencies in philosophy

¹ Hu Yeping and William Sweet, "George Francis McLean: A Philosopher at the Service of Humanity," in eds. William Sweet and Hu Yeping, *To the Mountain: Essays in Honour of Professor George F. McLean* (Taipei: Fu Jen Catholic University Press, 2004), 5.

and related human sciences needed for this research, and to publish the resulting studies.”²

Knowledge and Wisdom of George F. McLean: Premises

In McLean’s view, the Platonic tradition is representative of wisdom, and the Aristotelian tradition of knowledge *qua* science. Although he makes this distinction, he does not look at them in a derogatory (good and/or bad) way, or separately, but emphasizes the positive result that can be reached when they are put together by means of a conciliatory approach and with the intention of discovering everything that may be in favor of man. McLean borrows this method from Thomas Aquinas who similarly approached the two terms of knowledge and wisdom in the 13th century. The wisdom of the Platonic Christianity of the early Christian centuries came into contact with the Aristotelian scientific approach that had been recovered and continued in Arabic thinking. It is well known that this encounter between Platonic wisdom and Aristotelian science gave rise to many debates and controversies. To emphasize the importance of this time, McLean quotes Arthur Little who wrote that, during this period, “one of the most decisive struggles in the world was given.”³ In this context, Platonic wisdom had an important role in formulating the systematic Thomist philosophy of participation. This concept was later developed by Thomist theologians and philosophers. Professor McLean had the merit to bring out this theme in a period of profound transformation, in the threshold between the second and third millennia.

In several places in his writings, Professor McLean says that he shares the conception that Thomas Aquinas has about knowledge and wisdom, both on the sources of knowledge and on the need for man to assume responsibility in engaging in the process of knowing. One argument in this respect is the plea that McLean makes to see the five ‘ways’ by which Thomas Aquinas establishes the existence of God as also five ways by which man can follow the path of metaphysics implicitly to God.⁴ McLean’s Thomist conception is also supported by the argument that St. Thomas’s balance between faith and reason opens a new way of knowing between the extremes of mysticism and crude empiricism. Thus, the premises of a dialogue with other religions and cultures are created, and McLean refers to common aspects of Christianity and Islam, such as Greek philosophy, the prophets, and the discussion in the 10th to the 12th

² <http://www.crvp.org/about-RVP/rvp-mission.html>.

³ George F. McLean, *Ways to God, Personal and Social at the Turn of Millennia: The Iqbal Lecture, Lahore* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research and Values in Philosophy, 1999), 145.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 374.

centuries, which were a period of encounter between Christianity and Islam, especially in their philosophical and religious writings.⁵

Also, McLean supports the Thomist vision of, and the role that the “Holy Spirit has in the process through which knowledge matures in wisdom”⁶ so that man can perceive and understand divine realities. In fact, St. Thomas argues according to Scripture that there is a superior wisdom that comes from above (James 3:17) and is the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 16:13). However, he also speaks about “two complementary forms of wisdom, a philosophical one based on intellectual capacities and a theological one that has the basis of revelation and which studies the content of faith in order to penetrate the mystery of God.”⁷

McLean believes that this wisdom that “goes beyond speculation and reaches a higher level of experience”⁸ is also present in Islam and other religions and cultures. In this regard, he refers to Muhammad Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), a key figure in Muslim culture, and a theologian and philosopher. Although he was Sufi in his religious practice, his vision of wisdom, based on the strong belief that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10), helped him to rise above the conflict between Sunni and Shiite. Also, being convinced that education plays a very important role in helping people to reach wisdom, he accepted Nizam Al-Mulk’s invitation and taught at the Baghdad School where he also wrote his mystical books.⁹

The Relationships among Knowledge, Wisdom, Tradition, and Culture

Even in a postmodern era deeply marked by the urgent present and attitudes trying to reject tradition, none can absolutely deny the need to transmit information from one generation to the next. This information is the result of a process of trial and error in the continual additions and corrections that take into account the human dignity and the values that form, develop, and have an undeniable contribution to the unity of a social community. In this respect, George McLean claims that “the historical prophetic and prophetic books of the Bible are an extended, concrete account of one such a process of a people’s discovery of wisdom in interaction with the divine. Moreover, this wisdom is not a matter of mere tactical adjustments to temporary concerns; it concerns rather the meaning that we are able to envision for life and which we desire to achieve through

⁵ Ibid., 221.

⁶ Ibid., 44.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 199.

⁹ Ibid.

all such adjustments over a period of generations.”¹⁰ In fact, through this process, the history and the experience of our forerunners became part of who we are, independently of empirical science.

But the significance of historical events, both for the individual and for the community, is seen at a higher level, leading to what can be the basis of the values and the meaning of the human being, “metaphysical knowledge which is not available to the senses, as these are specialized in registering only physical differences. Metaphysics concerns the common characteristics of all reality, the uniqueness of each act of freedom, and the particular characteristics of the ultimate source of being, meaning and value.”¹¹ To exemplify this truth, McLean refers to ritual, dance, and music, arguing that they bring together common meanings for different cultures and religions. Also, to support the presence of wisdom in tradition and to explain how it worked through the principle of continuity in the experience of human transformation, McLean refers to his work on synchronic and diachronic cultural phenomena. He presents a description of the situations where certain aspects of wisdom have played a decisive role in the progress of humanity over time, have been present in all historical periods – and, implicitly, must have the same importance today.¹² But to discover and understand this wisdom, McLean believes that a proper hermeneutical process is needed.

Knowledge and Wisdom through Hermeneutics

The main reason why hermeneutics is a major and recurrent theme in Professor McLean’s writings is due both to the place it has in the interpretation of sacred texts and to the new insights it offers in the process of knowledge. McLean also draws attention to the fact that hermeneutics today has a more important role because of the new context in which understanding of the experiences of man in his search for knowledge and wisdom takes place. In his books and articles on hermeneutics, McLean tries to take into account everything that has made a positive contribution to the development of this method over time. McLean’s preoccupation with hermeneutics is also motivated by the need to have an overview of how truth is understood by man in the context of globalization and under the pressure of the various changes at the beginning of the third millennium. In fact, the significant stages in the development of hermeneutics that McLean describes and brings to his work are important for each

¹⁰ George F. McLean, *Hermeneutics, Faith and Relations between Cultures* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research and Values in Philosophy, 2003), 30.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 13.

individual person involved in her or his progress in knowledge of the truth. This leads from knowledge and science to wisdom.

On McLean's view, the origin and etymology of the word 'hermeneutical' reminds us of the role it has to link the sender of the message with the receiver through the messenger, following the model in Greek mythology where the message of the gods was transmitted to men through Hermes, the son of Zeus. Thus, Hermes's role was not merely to convey, but to explain the truth of the gods to people, so that this truth would make sense to those who received it. This illustration shows the importance of the hermeneutical approach, since a message makes sense only if it is well understood and is meaningful. Through the same process, knowledge becomes wisdom. Therefore, for contemporary man, the crisis of meaning in life is due not only to the lack of time to understand a message or to the tendency to reject absolute truth, but also to an indifference to the hermeneutical approach that is required to understand the truth which leads to wisdom. But, even if it often seems senseless for postmodern man to talk about the meaning of life, this situation motivates McLean to draw attention to the importance of the hermeneutical approach, particularly because in Christianity and Islam *kerygma* and the *message of the prophet* must be interpreted.¹³

Finally, I want to point out that McLean returns to this hermeneutical process in several of his works, indicating that it is a path that must be traced by each person in their path to knowledge and wisdom. McLean emphasizes both the difficulty of and the need for this hermeneutical approach, as well as its importance. In this way, McLean shows the strengths and capacities of the hermeneutical approach, indicating that the hermeneutical method should not be limited to the interpretation of sacred texts, and that each person must seek to understand the meaning of existence in the world.

Conclusion

Using the terms *knowledge* and *wisdom* together, frequently in a correlative relation, George McLean avoided the charge that philosophy was detached from reality. Moreover, this allowed him to show that is not afraid to assume responsibility for a personal assessment of existence, given the context of relativity and subjectivity at the beginning of the third millennium. And, further, McLean initiated dialogues and proposed meetings and multicultural or interreligious projects that he believed would produce solutions.

In the ambivalent relationship between knowledge and wisdom proposed by McLean, knowledge is power, and wisdom means the science

¹³ McLean, *Hermeneutics, Faith and Relations between Cultures*, 8.

of administering power with love and freedom. This is what I see to be McLean's distinctive approach. A knowledge that leads to wisdom, and a wisdom that encourages and sustains knowledge, is a knowledge that is in favor of man, not against him. It is a knowledge that brings new perspectives in the development of a humanity caught in an environment of continuous and accelerated progress, but that respects and continues the traditions of values that have been the foundation of humanity's existence and emancipation over the millennia. The use of knowledge only to gain power is just another form of expression of *the will to power*, as proposed by Nietzsche. But this approach downgrades humanity, as Mircea Eliade wrote, to an arbitrary concept of *superman*.¹⁴

By seeing the relation of the two concepts, *knowledge* and *wisdom*, in the writings of George McLean, we can see that, through knowledge, we can discover and understand the problems of contemporary man, but through wisdom we can find solutions and ideas to solve these problems for both human persons in particular and humanity as a whole. This relationship can be a great step towards solutions to the problems of late modernity, because it eliminates the suspicion and the ignorance that blocks collaboration between different fields of research, such as philosophy and theology, but also between different cultures and religions. This approach is revealed in a metaphor that we find often in George McLean's writings – that cultures and religions are, indeed, different, but that they will converge at the Holy Mountain.

¹⁴ https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Ricœur#cite_note-3.

A Spiritual and Brilliant Mind: Some Memories of George McLean

Pulat Shozimov

In 1998, at an international conference on the special features of the establishment of civil society in Central Asia, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, I noticed that someone was asking the speakers, and those in the room in general, questions that sharply changed the direction of the discussion towards a deeper and broader perception of the issue. This man was Professor George McLean. His voice was somewhat agitated, but inwardly firm, as he steered people towards an essential understanding of things and the world, while also managing to find a balance between universal and national values. I saw that he never put his interlocutors in the awkward position of having to sacrifice their national values for the sake of universal ones, or vice versa. In a remarkable way, he was able to express values in the language of rational discourse and to place ideas within a system of values, thereby reconfirming their strength and truth.

People like Professor McLean are close to my heart. He represents an ideal future, and was a true 'citizen of the world.' Historically, in the Islamic world, such figures have been called 'people of virtue.'

This was my first acquaintance with Professor McLean. Just seeing and hearing his speech made me think that it would be very interesting to talk to him about philosophical subjects close to my heart, and to discuss certain issues that were hot topics at the time.

I approached him straight away, in the break, introduced myself, and, to my delight, knew immediately that we would be friends. He suggested that I visit one of Almaty's universities, where he had been invited to talk about his participation in the World Congress of Philosophy that had just been held in Turkey. I was delighted to accept.

His lecture was to be given in English and translated simultaneously into Russian. However, when the lecture was about to start, there was no interpreter. Though everyone was in their places, including lecturers, administrators and students from various faculties, Professor McLean coolly continued to wait for an interpreter. I then asked the audience, which included students from the Faculty of English, if anyone could help. But no one came forward.

Professor McLean looked at me and calmly suggested that I start the lecture. I realized that there was no choice, and, although my English at the time left much to be desired, I took the risk of translating his text as he went along. I was surprisingly calm, no doubt because conceptually I understood and agreed with his arguments regarding values and phi-

losophy. It was an honour for me to interpret for such a person, and even more so that he trusted me to translate his main thoughts. This lecture cemented our friendship for many years.

Professor George McLean was able to set out complex ideas and concepts clearly and simply, and, most importantly, always managed to convey them fully to whomever he was addressing. His capacity for intellectual work, which I put down to his profound spirituality and devotion to his interests, was astonishing. In his conversations, he sought to strike a balance between faith and reason. On one occasion, I was invited as a philosophy scholar to one of the RVP seminars at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. There, I saw the full strength and greatness of his human spirit and devotion to his work, and realized the full importance of what George McLean had worked towards all his life – namely to create, through philosophical discourse, an association of intellectual and spiritual communities from all over the world, finding numerous points in common in terms of culture, values, and religion. Various philosophical schools from different countries were represented in the seminar, creating a remarkable atmosphere in which an intensive exchange of ideas and fundamental questions took place. The most interesting and important questions arising from these seminars paved the way for other seminars attended by specialists from a range of countries, helping participants to move, little by little, towards a better understanding of the world, and thereby to improve it. Today, I am actively applying these approaches and ideas in Central Asia, through the publication of the public lectures organized by the University of Central Asia's Aga Khan Humanities Project. They are also helping me in developing curriculum materials based on a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural approach, and in creating platforms for students to debate today's most pressing issues. I believe that many of my successes in this field would not have been as effective had I not met someone like Professor George McLean. He was one of the people who gave me the strength to believe that it is possible to change the world for the better if you continue to believe in yourself, and to be responsible for and love the world you live in.

I remember a story he told about a sparrow that lay on the ground with its legs in the air. Asked by a lion, an elephant, and other animals why it was lying there, it replied that it knew that the sky was going to fall down, and it was trying to help as best it could. In short, it was not physical strength that was the issue, but responsibility and willpower – and this fit George McLean's vision of philosophical work in an exemplary way.

I have no doubt that his achievements will live on, and our memory of him and our good deeds to make the world a better place will confirm this. Let us long cherish the memory of a brilliant and spiritual thinker, Professor George McLean.

Remembrance of Fr. George F. McLean

Vasiliki P. Solomou-Papanikolaou

I had the honour to meet Fr. George F. McLean for the first time back in the academic year 1983-1984, when, as a graduate student at the School of Philosophy of the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, I attended his course “Being and Truth: Hermeneutics.” This course and the method used by Professor McLean in his teaching were very fruitful for the development of my philosophical thought and generally of my way of thinking. He was an excellent, talented, and inspiring professor. One could easily see that he was a great intellectual. Later on, I was honoured to have him as my supervisor during the writing of my MA dissertation, entitled *Polis and Aristotle: The World of the Greek Polis and Its Impact Upon Some Fundamental Aspects of Aristotle’s Practical Philosophy*, and I benefited greatly by his wise guidance. He was very open-minded, and was very pleased to see how I worked through my thesis from my own point of view and through my own cultural tradition. I was touched by his exceptional character, his humanism, and his infinite kindness to me and to everybody else. I will never forget the fact that he showed great confidence in me when, while going to Caracas for academic reasons, he asked me to give a lecture on Aristotle’s ethics in one of his classes.

If, according to Plato, a genuine philosopher must combine high intellectual qualities and high morals, then Professor McLean was a personification of such a philosopher. In my opinion, which I am sure that all those who knew him share as well, Professor McLean followed in Socrates’ steps by calling us to think together on human matters, on values, and on our common future.

In October 1999, Professor McLean visited the Department of Philosophy, Education, and Psychology of the University of Ioannina, Greece, as an invited Professor. His lectures made a great impression on both our undergraduate and graduate students. He was also one of the evaluators of the Graduate Program of our Sector of Philosophy in its initial steps.

I was impressed by his generosity in inviting colleagues, students, and friends, worldwide, to participate in the numerous conferences organized by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. For nearly forty years, this remarkable man made ceaseless efforts to bring together members of the global philosophical community with the objective of developing philosophical answers to current challenges, answers which would be capable of influencing, from the grassroots, policy makers, and which could lead towards a better future for mankind.

His wish was for young scholars and mature intellectuals alike, within the context of philosophical dialogue, to find out what unites us all, thus reducing ideological differences and cultural prejudices. His vision was for our world to gain sociopolitical harmony. For all these reasons he was rightly characterized as a “living ‘bridge’ between and among diverse cultures and peoples.”

Traditions, Philosophy, and the Man of Dialogue

Warayuth Sriwarakuel

Philosophy can mean different things to different people. Philosophers in different places and ages, from the pre-Socratics to today, have given different definitions of philosophy. However, etymologically speaking, the word “philosophy” is derived from the two Greek words, “philia” and “sophia,” which mean “love” and “wisdom” respectively. From its roots, the word “philosophy” means “love of wisdom.” Thus, it follows that a philosopher is a “lover of wisdom.” From this we may roughly conclude that, while the physical and the human sciences seek explanation and understanding respectively, philosophy seeks wisdom.

Philosophy can be seen as conscience or mindfulness, according to the Buddhist understanding. If ideologies concerning nature or culture go wrong, philosophy can raise questions, critique these ideologies, and make people aware of possible and actual problems. If any ideology becomes an obstacle for authentic growth and development, if there is no way to improve it, then philosophers should not hesitate to encourage people to adjust, transform, or even throw it away.

In 2013, the 23rd World Congress of Philosophy was held at the University of Athens on August 4-10. Its main theme was “Philosophy as Inquiry and Way of Life.” This implies that philosophy may be seen not just as an inquiry but also as a way of life. On the one hand, if philosophy is an inquiry, then a philosopher can be seen as an inquirer who plays an important role in raising questions. On the other hand, if philosophy is a way of life, then a philosopher can be seen as an innovator or co-creator who creates wisdom and learns something from other people through dialogue.

Dialogue is an effective means for all people to learn from one another and be mutually enriched. As mentioned above, we all, so to speak, wear eye-glasses with different colored lenses. This makes us see things in different ways. If we do not have dialogue with other people, we will see things only as they appear to us. Consider an ambiguous picture – the famous optical illusion in which one can see a young girl and/or an old woman – as an example. If some people see the person in the picture as an old woman, then they will see an old woman for good. All questions and inquiries will be centered upon the old woman. On the other hand, if some people see the person in that picture as a young girl, then they will see a young girl in the picture for good, too. However, if these two groups of people learn from each other through dialogue, then both groups will

see the same picture as both an old woman and a young girl. This is what Gadamer calls the “fusion of horizons.” To have dialogue is like exchanging eye-glasses. Dialogue promotes such mutual enrichment.

In my journey of philosophy, I have met and learned many things from different philosophers. I was lucky to meet a philosopher who taught me a lot about dialogue from both his method of enquiry and his way of life. I am very proud to have been one of his students. He was a philosopher who travelled a lot to different parts of the world. It is not an exaggeration to say that he was a great philosopher who was a true lover of wisdom, a keen inquirer, and a beloved travelling companion who created mutual understanding, harmony, and wisdom. This philosopher was Professor George McLean. He deserves to be called “The Man of Dialogue.” His words, deeds, and wisdom will always inspire us. It is my great honor and pleasure to have this opportunity to say something about him.

George F. McLean

Marietta Stepaniants

I first met Dr. George McLean in the 1970s. It was in India, and we saw one another at a number of meetings organized by Indian philosophers. Later on, we met at various international conferences in Morocco, Turkey, Greece, Italy as well as other places, and we were in regular correspondence from 2000, when the preparations for the First Moscow International Conference on Comparative Philosophy started. Dr. McLean strongly supported the idea of that conference and helped me and my Russian colleagues make that conference a success. He not only participated personally in the work of the Conference, which took place in Moscow from June 5 to 7, 2002, but suggested that The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy publish the English version of the texts presented at the Conference. Thus the volume, *Comparative Ethics in a Global Age*, saw the light of the day in 2007.

Dr. McLean also helped us to prepare the Second Moscow International Conference on Comparative Philosophy, which took place in Moscow from May 30 to June 4, 2006. Once again, he not only joined us and presented a paper, but had earlier helped me as the Director of the Conference to formulate its theme. The volume with the proceedings was published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in 2011 under the title *Knowledge and Belief in the Dialogue of Cultures*.

By his support to the above-mentioned conferences, Dr. McLean played a crucial role in establishing Moscow as an international center for comparative studies. No less important was the publication of the proceedings, through which he introduced to the world community the views and writings of the Russian scholars – many of whom were unknown beyond the borders of, Russia because of the Iron Curtain which separated us from free world and due to language barriers.

Our case is only one among many; Professor George McLean by all possible means supported scholars from the non-Western world, practically from all the corners of the planet. It is hard to imagine how one man (of his age!) managed to travel to far distant places (often with hard climate conditions) in order to help, to support, to give good advice, and to mentor. There was no need to ask him in advance, since he was always ready to be supportive and helpful. He did not make it his business to formulate the theme of a conference. Yet when he received a request from those of us whose English was rather poor to help to express our ideas, he immediately responded, sending a highly professional text and never asking for his name to be listed as co-author. He took the same approach

in publishing the volumes in the series of books produced by the RVP. On the covers of the books he put just the names of the foreign scholars, like me, while in fact he had worked hard to edit the texts into good English.

I had no chance to participate in the annual seminars and summer schools organized by Dr. George McLean, but I am aware how much the participants learned and professionally profited from those academic meetings.

Today, there is much talk about the need of tolerance, mutual understanding, and the dialogue of cultures. George McLean was almost like Don Quixote – fighting for these ideas, trying to realize them in our lives. He was a great man, a great missionary of good will, who daily taught us to be wise, honest, kind, and love others.

George F. McLean and the Project of Philosophy across Cultures

William Sweet

I first met Fr. George McLean in 1974. I was an undergraduate student who had found his way to Washington, DC, where the American Catholic Philosophical Association (ACPA) was holding its annual conference – a conference commemorating the 700th anniversary of the death of St Thomas Aquinas. I had just started editing an undergraduate philosophy journal, and an advisor had suggested that I write to the Secretary-Treasurer of the ACPA, Fr. McLean, to tell him of my participation in the conference. I did, and I thought nothing more of it until I arrived in DC. Then, just prior to the first plenary session – and much to my surprise – George sought me out to welcome me, and to ask if there was anything that he could do. George was certainly busy with the many many things involved in the conference, so you can imagine how a philosophical tyro was impressed that he took the time to make contact.

I mention this story because, for me, this was characteristic of George. Seeking out those who were not the ‘stars,’ and wanting to make them understand that they, too, had something to contribute.

At this time, George (an Oblate priest, who was a Professor of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America, in Washington, DC) had also just been made the Secretary-Treasurer of the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies. The World Union had been founded in 1948, and George came to be associated with it in the late 1960s. Its role was, initially, to help to make better known the work of Catholic philosophical groups around the world, and to play a role in ensuring that the Catholic traditions were present in the international philosophical discussions following the war. The World Union was a founding member of FISP – the International Federation of Philosophical Societies – that, in turn, had a close connection with UNESCO.

For George, however, the World Union was not just a ‘capital C’ Catholic organisation; it was also, and perhaps more importantly, a ‘small c’ catholic organisation. It was an organisation that, for example, sought out philosophical groups at universities in Eastern Europe at a time when those universities were marginalised not only globally, but even within their own countries. While its contacts were initially with Catholic universities in Eastern Europe, George’s interest was a larger one: to help to bring all philosophers together – and this meant engaging not just Catholic philosophers but – in Eastern Europe – their Marxist counterparts. Philosophy needed not only to reach out to, but to draw on the insights of a

diversity of cultures. At the core of George's beliefs – though I believe that this was initially not explicitly stated – was the view that the philosophical traditions of each culture had something to contribute to philosophical discussion, so that what was sought was not just a diversity of voices, but something that (George believed) could be the basis of bringing philosophical voices together. It was a pluralism before pluralism was the fashion.

It was at one of these World Union events that I met George for the second time – more than 20 years after my first meeting. I was in Poland, in August 1996, at the World Congress of Christian Philosophy. The Conference, organised by the Catholic University of Lublin, was co-sponsored by the World Union, and it brought together philosophers from across the globe – Catholic, non-Catholic, and many non-Christians. By this point, however, George was wondering whether the World Union had outlived its purpose. I suggested to him that there would always be a constituency for philosophers from the Catholic traditions who might feel or might be marginalised, and who were seeking a larger network in which to work, and that continuing the activities of the World Union would be helpful. And so the work of the World Union continued.

Why had George become involved with the World Union? We never discussed this, but I cannot help but think that, back in the 1970s, an association that drew on Catholic philosophical traditions allowed contacts to be made in a number of countries, no doubt partly because Catholicism itself has historically been involved in establishing educational institutions, particularly schools and universities, around the world. Catholic educational institutions also frequently provided an access point to engage philosophers of all traditions within those countries. But, of course, some people were suspicious of Catholic organisations. Though the World Union had – and still has – the capacity to cross cultures and traditions, some philosophers were undoubtedly wary of it.

In the mid-1970s, George came to be involved with the International Society for Metaphysics – newly-established following the 1973 World Congress of Philosophy in Varna, Bulgaria, and then led by H.D. Lewis of King's College, London. This group sought to renew metaphysical enquiry, but also sought to find a way to bridge to cultures where metaphysics was still respectable, even where – though this was not explicitly stated – Catholicism was not. With George as a key organiser, the ISM quickly organised a number of conferences – notably in Santiniketan (India), New York, Jerusalem, Bogota (Columbia), and Nairobi (Kenya) – on the themes of the human person, society, and culture. It also held a number of meetings with the leading philosophical institutes found in the national academies of science in Eastern Europe.

Yet, for some, even metaphysics was not a sufficient bridge to other cultures. So, by the early 1980s – I believe it was 1983 –, a 'sister' organi-

sation arose: The Council for Research and Values in Philosophy. While some might be suspicious of Catholicism or of metaphysics, every culture saw itself as the bearer of values and every culture saw itself, in some way, as pursuing philosophy.

The Council offered resources; it reached out, beyond what seemed (and still seems) to many to be the Euro-American centre of philosophical discussion, to invite further participation in the philosophical enterprise. In a first instance, the Council co-sponsored workshops and seminars in Latin America, in Africa, and in Eastern Europe. George's insight was that the Council could help groups or teams of local philosophers develop the philosophical traditions of their own culture, not by having the Council 'organize' anything, but simply by helping to facilitate – and, usually, by bringing in a few philosophers from the outside. Still, the workshops or seminars were set up to assist local philosophers in participating and in doing philosophy as they saw it. And to help to consolidate this participation, George found ways to publish volumes arising out of the workshops and seminars. He set up a printing shop and bindery in the basement of the then-philosophy building at the Catholic University of America and, then, proceeded to distribute the books – initially gratis – to some 350 libraries around the world. (Today, the books are available in print at a very modest cost, but also free of charge on the internet.) The opportunity to be published in English was both an incentive to scholars 'on the margins' to participate in the conferences, but also a way of making the philosophical work of these scholars available to an international audience.

For most of his career, George served as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Council (just as he had been the Secretary-Treasurer of other groups with which he was involved). He took care of financial and organisational matters, contacting philosophers from across the globe, helping to set up meetings, ensuring that manuscripts were reviewed, assessed, and copy-edited, and supervising the printing and distribution of the books. He had no interest in being a President, however. Moreover, he wanted the work of the Council to be beholden to no one except those it served. He was generally very hesitant about seeking grants from large foundations, and much of the Council's work was financed by his salary and pension funds as well as donations from family members and friends – with the Catholic University of America providing physical space for offices and meeting rooms. He attracted supporters from many countries, not the least of which was Ms. Hu Yeping, who had come to Washington, DC to study, but who soon assisted George in his work. Hu not only greatly assisted George in office work, but allowed George to help develop the work of the Council, particularly in building relations with Chinese philosophers.

In many ways, George's work was very 'low key.' Yet, one thing that struck me was how many 'mainstream,' internationally-known phi-

losophers publicly supported George's initiatives. Presidents and Board members of the Council included H.D. Lewis, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Jean Ladrière, Carlo Giacon, Venant Cauchy, Sé mou Pathé Guèye, Tomonobu Imamichi, and Tang Yijie, and Council members today include Charles Taylor, Tu Weiming, Tomáš Halík, William McBride, and José Casanova. George eschewed the limelight; his primary interest was to find ways of allowing other philosophers to have the stage and to share their ideas.

For George, philosophy was a product of culture, but the work of George and the Council – or the RVP, as many call it – was to help to show both that different cultures had much to ‘bring to the table’ in philosophy, and that it was important to hear philosophers from many cultures in doing philosophy. The biggest challenge was how to carry this out effectively.

Initially, as noted above, international outreach took the form of organising of a series of conferences – such as those he started, beginning in 1976, with the International Society for Metaphysics. But while encouraging and co-sponsoring workshops and conferences around the world provided an opportunity for local scholars to work together on a common theme, George believed that there also needed to be an opportunity for international scholars to ‘cross boundaries,’ and to meet other international scholars in order to carry out more intensive work on common themes. Thus, George developed the idea of bringing a small number of international philosophers to the U.S. each year for an extended period, and to put them in contact with a select number of North American scholars. The RVP would take care of all local costs. As a Professor of Philosophy, George had access to classroom space and, being well connected in the local community in DC, he found a way to provide accommodation and meals through rooms in local convents, seminaries, and private houses. Thus, the project of annual, intensive, interdisciplinary seminars became a reality. Beginning in the mid-1980s, George and the RVP organised semester-long seminars, from September to November, where the participants would meet weekly in order to discuss one another's research, but also would work on their own projects.

Initially, the focus of these seminars was on issues related to a particular region of the world, such as Central America, and so scholars discussed themes on the social context of values and on culture, human rights, and peace. But, very soon, the seminars embraced larger themes, such as “Relations between Cultures” and “Urbanization and Values,” and the participants came from Africa, Europe, Asia, Latin America, and North America.

This international, interdisciplinary (though primarily philosophical) enterprise attracted many scholars from abroad. As participants in the seminar, they had access to the resources of the Catholic University of

America, where George was a professor. Participants were designated as CUA Visiting Research Scholars (which made it possible for them to use the university libraries in the Washington area, as well as the Library of Congress).

Moreover, since the scholars would live together, they also established strong and lasting relationships with one another. This was a concrete way of encouraging not only different philosophical cultures, but philosophizing across cultures.

While the annual seminar was central to the work of the RVP, it also continued its international activity, collaborating sometimes in some 20 or 30 conferences each year. Initially, these were primarily in central Europe and Africa.

In the 1980s, George's interests started to turn to the philosophies of East Asia, and he travelled to the Philippines, Thailand, and Taiwan, initially through contacts with Christian philosophers there. But as world events were changing, as the Eastern block was beginning to feel the effects of Gorbachov-style reforms, and as other countries began opening up, George saw that the new 'frontier' was China. By the end of the 1980s, closer contacts with mainland China were established; some Chinese scholars came to Washington, DC to participate in the annual seminar, and co-sponsoring workshops in China became possible. The first Chinese joint colloquium was held at Peking University in 1987. Contacts accelerated and, soon, eight colloquia were held across China over the course of a single year. In 1999, the Council co-organised the visit of a Chinese team of Buddhist scholars, who visited six university centers in India, on the theme of the Hindu roots of Chinese Buddhism. Today, it is still common to have about a half dozen RVP co-sponsored conferences in China each year.

Presciently – before the events of 9/11 – George saw that dialogue with the Islamic world was going to become increasingly important. George also began to think about contacts with the Islamic world and, in 1991 and 1992, went to Cairo and Alexandria to study some of the Islamic classics. As an illustration of where this work led, by 2001, in addition to co-organizing annual conferences and academic courses in Tehran and Qom (the academic center of Shiite Islam), George was giving lectures in a number of Muslim-dominant countries: Egypt, Mali, Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia, as well as several Central Asian countries where Islam is a powerful force.

Throughout, George's emphasis was to work 'kenotically' – that is, efficiently but in a spirit of simplicity. This simplicity, and George's self-effacing manner, undoubtedly had a powerful effect on those he met, and contributed to promoting the idea of philosophising across cultures. And, again, throughout, George – and, more broadly, the RVP – were present, not to dominate, but to facilitate. Local scholars responded.

The deep respect for him and his work by those international scholars who came to know him were evident in the presentation, on his birthday, of festschrifts – one, co-edited by Hu Yeping and me – but also others, coming from Central Europe, China, Russia, and Thailand. Five years later, on his 80th birthday, more festschrifts (from the Middle East, Vietnam, Iran, Lebanon, Bulgaria, and China) were also published and presented to him.

At least from the time of his 75th birthday, in 2004, George was thinking about how to pass on the torch, and to ensure the continuation of the work of the Council in supporting philosophizing across cultures. While the ‘centre office’ of the RVP would remain in Washington, DC, under the direction of Dr. Hu Yeping, a number of regional centres were established in order to coordinate work in the respective parts of the world. There are now ‘regional centres’ in Lebanon (Notre Dame University-Louaize), Russia (Russian People’s Friendship University), Romania (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași), India (Andhra University and the University of Delhi), at several universities in China, and at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Other scholars have come to take on the facilitation of the annual seminar, and the RVP’s publication series, “Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change,” has published some 400 volumes – and continues to release about a dozen titles each year. Throughout, however, is the vision that the research being done should acknowledge the contribution of culture(s) to larger philosophical questions and, so far as possible, help to bridge (at least, *prima facie*) cultural divides.

I have collaborated for more than 20 years with the RVP and with George, Hu, and the almost innumerable fellow members of the Council from across the globe. George’s vision of philosophizing across cultures gradually came to influence me, and it led me to reorient some of my own research. In recent years, I have served as a Vice President of the RVP, and I was one of the 15 scholars who gathered in Tewkesbury, Massachusetts, in December 2015 – the last public event prior to George’s death – to discuss together, with George and other figures such as Phil Rossi, Bill Barbieri, Hu Yeping, Charles Taylor, José Casanova, Tony Carroll, Peter Jonkers, Bob Neville, and a few others, the direction of research for the RVP for the coming years. Partly through helping to edit a number of the RVP volumes, but also through participating in RVP co-organised events in probably a dozen countries, I have learned much about the situation and challenges of philosophers worldwide, about ways of conceiving philosophy – embedded, as it is, in culture and, yet, transcending it –, about the phenomenon of what I call ‘migrating texts and traditions,’ and about the possibility of intercultural philosophies. It has influenced my style – eschewing the overly technical and otiose – and the engagement in ‘philosophy across cultures’ has, I believe, made me a better philosopher.

One might well wonder what, ultimately, lay at the root of George's work and his interest in bringing together philosophers from a diversity of cultures. There are, undoubtedly, many things, but let me hazard a guess.

As a young seminarian at the Gregorian University in Rome in the early 1950s, George lived for seven years in a scholasticate where there were over 100 seminarians, from around the world, reflecting many different cultural backgrounds. To live together required an openness and a willingness to engage others from where they come. Later, in the 1960s, George was asked by the School of Philosophy at Catholic University of America to organize a summer philosophy workshop, where he helped to bring together faculty and students from many countries. Later still, as Secretary of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, he included in its journal a 'chronicle' of philosophical events from around the world.

Undoubtedly, one of the seminal moments occurred in 1969-70. George had a sabbatical year, and he decided to spend it in India, in Madras, where he could learn more about the Hindu traditions, and where he met the Indian philosopher, the late R.B. Balasubramanian. No doubt this introduced him in a very rich way to the philosophical traditions of South Asia, and, indeed, he returned to India for a semester on his next sabbatical in 1977.

But I think that there is an even deeper reason for George's interests in philosophy across cultures.

George McLean was an Oblate, and he was a faithful Oblate throughout his life – though many of those he met may never have known that he was a priest or even a Catholic. The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) are, as their name indicates, a missionary order, founded in the early 19th century, to renew the Catholic Church in France after the French Revolution, and, eventually, to go wherever were needed. Their members were, for a very long time, particularly strong in Canada and the United States. George once said to me that, as a young Oblate in Massachusetts, he imagined being sent as a missionary to the vast north of Canada, where the Oblate missions had long played a seminal role in the life and faith of the peoples who lived there.

As we know, George's life took a different turn. After his studies in Rome, he returned to the U.S. to complete a doctorate at Catholic University of America and, in 1956, became a professor there. But his early years as an Oblate and as an academic intersected, of course, with the Second Vatican Council, where the Catholic Church came to recognise that missionary work was not so much a matter of bringing the truth to communities on the margins, but of helping people to find that truth – a truth inculturated within their own culture and traditions – and of reminding them that the discovery of any truth led, ultimately, to higher truth. The Catholic Church today will claim – and George clearly believed

– that this is because one finds traces of the truth everywhere, and that, throughout creation, truth is present. God is, as his Jesuit teachers at the Gregorian University would have reminded him, in all things.

As I came to know him better, I saw that, in his own way, George was a missionary – a philosophical missionary. His vocation was, I believe, one where he sought, and wanted to help to make better known, the truth and insights of other cultures. Just as with the Christian faith, one can find that truth everywhere, and the discovery of that truth led, ultimately to higher truth. George undoubtedly believed that the spirit of the Divine was present and working in every culture, and (as his obituary reads) “he spent his life helping people identify and engage that spirit and announce it in a way that they could understand and share.”

One of George’s favourite sayings was that he saw all philosophers – all searchers for wisdom and truth – as exemplifying an image from the book of Isaiah (2: 1-5) in the Hebrew Scriptures: that all are coming from various directions and following various routes to converge at the Holy Mountain. As Hu Yeping and I once wrote: for George McLean, each tradition and, indeed, each person “brings its own special contribution to the whole, shines with its own beauty, and manifests the goodness of the Absolute.”¹ This not only captures well the enduring presupposition of philosophizing across cultures, but has been, through the example of George McLean’s life and work, a major contribution to my own philosophical itinerary.

¹ “George Francis McLean: A Philosopher at the Service of Humanity,” in eds. William Sweet and Hu Yeping, *To the Mountain: Essays in Honour of Professor George F. McLean* (Taipei: Fu Jen Catholic University Press, 2004), 1-20, at 14.

George F. McLean: A Remembrance

Sebastian Velassery

On May 23, 1996, after getting leave from Panjab University, Chandigarh, India where I was teaching as Assistant Professor of Philosophy, I had the privilege and pleasure to join The Catholic University of America (CUA) as a visiting research professor. After arriving at CUA, and spending a week or so there, I went to New York where my cousin sister leaves. Precisely on June 9, 1996, I got a call from a soft-spoken person who introduced himself as McLean from CUA, and he invited me to join a program that he conducted every year in August and September – one where ten scholars from different countries and an equal number of participants from the Washington, DC area joined together and a particular philosophical theme was discussed. I was very delighted to have an invitation from him to join this group. That was the starting point of my association with George F. McLean.

When I think about McLean, what comes to my mind is a tale from the Panchatantra. The Panchatantra tales of India are famous, not only culturally but philosophically, in the social and cultural setting of India. The story that comes to mind is the following: Three scholars from a particular village left for the city, thinking that their small village existence was too uneventful. Passing through the forest, these scholars came across a dis-membered lion. The scholars thought of drawing on their learning and scholarship in dealing with the dismembered lion. The first scholar put together the bones and sinews of the lion; the second made the blood flow in its veins, and the third, with his specialization and expertise, prepared to breathe life into it. At this point, there came a layman who advised them to put aside this experimentation and warned them that if their experiment succeeds, and the lion is restored to life, it will eat all three of them. Unfortunately, these scholars paid no attention to the warning of the layman, and the third scholar went ahead and breathed life into the lion.

What is the connection of this Panchatantra story with G. F. McLean? McLean, to my thinking, provided the breath of life to scholars from underprivileged countries. His way of doing philosophy provided a new arena for scholars from disadvantaged groups, and made them think about philosophical themes with multi-dimensional perspectives. In fact, his way of doing philosophy was neither merely an academic exercise, nor a contractual deal with a particular University or for a particular set of people. His doing philosophy was not centered on the narrowly intel-

lectual dimension, nor was he concerned with the utilitarian conception of philosophy.

The philosophy that McLean did had more to do with the person he was, the person he had been struggling to become, than his being in the service of the CUA. I cannot imagine McLean apart from the symposia and conferences that he had been conducting with the assistance of Ms. Hu in different universities of the entire world, especially in African, Latin American, Eastern European, and south Asian countries, and in China and India. I can recall this soft-spoken person putting forward his arguments and ideas in a particular style or method, which made the participants re-think and re-locate their positions on the theme under discussion. As I had the opportunity and pleasure to have been associated with McLean in three Council conferences, I can unhesitatingly state that his doing philosophy was a quest for the universal without ignoring its particulars. What I want to underscore here is that the emphasis on universals that McLean thought about, had its bearing and comportment in the particulars. Perhaps, such a philosophical approach may be the reason that he sought equal possibilities to locate and thereby to establish that philosophy is not solely the gift of Anglo-American societies.

As an Indian and also as a student of Indian philosophy, I found that McLean's soul could not rest without having recourse to Indian metaphysics and philosophy. Undoubtedly, he had a special passion for India and its philosophy, about which he had talked to me many times. He told me a number of times about the Upanishads, and the profound philosophical message in those texts. In fact, doing philosophy for him was a personal affair, though it was pointed toward an impersonal quest. His particular sensitivity towards Indian philosophy and its specificities always impressed me. McLean's grip on Indian metaphysics from the Vedas and Upanishads to the thinkers of the 20th century made me realize that his conceptual schemas and philosophical thirst were rooted firmly on universal principles that had its ground in particulars. His insight into the Upanishads and Advaita provided a socio-spiritualistic approach in his thought, which had its base in the Vedanta conception of solidarity in the universe and that, thus, created the feeling of oneness that leads to social commitment. McLean was exceedingly sensitive about the erudite language of these texts and the mythical manner in which the authors often developed their themes, despite the fact that these texts tend to cloak the essence of the underlying thought and do not permit easy logical analysis and development.

In a way, McLean was not a philosopher; rather he was, first and foremost, a student of philosophy. He was a student who was constantly and relentlessly aware of the possibilities and problems in defining self, society, culture and religion, as well as the cognitive and affective patterns and structures of their interrelations. How the search for self-identity turns

into an exercise in appropriating and appreciating different communities and cultures in the world, was one of his recurring themes. In his numerous writings and talks, McLean was at pains to delineate the dangerous forms of bad faith and their damaging impact on culture, society and self. The pluralistic character of religions and styles – the regional, the tribal or the marginalized – were at the center of his critical attention. Thus, the themes for the yearly conferences in Washington, DC epitomized his central concern to take philosophy to the people and their everyday life. Thus, we see philosophical themes such as culture and values, culture and religion, cultural heritage and the foundation of social life, foundations of moral education and character development throughout his many conferences in Washington, DC.

I have many personal memories of McLean, but I would like to mention two of them here. He was attending a conference in Panjab University in Lahore, Pakistan, where I too was an invitee. Given the India-Pakistan problem, I did not get a visa on time and, hence, could not attend the conference in Lahore. Through email, I let McLean know about the situation, and my inability to participate. In another email, I requested McLean to visit my University – Panjab University in Chandigarh, India – and he promptly gave me a positive reply. He was supposed to come from Lahore via the Samjota Express train, and get off at Ambala railway station. Unfortunately, the train was very late, almost 11 hours late, and reached Ambala station at 5.30 morning. He was very tired and weary as he could not sleep the whole night. On behalf of the Indian railways, I tendered my apologies to McLean, but his response was something unexpected. He was more apologetic than I, and he said to me: “Sebastian, I feel sorry that I made you wait for me for these long hours.” This humility and meekness were not mere virtues. In fact, McLean could touch a chord with anyone, even with those whose mental chemistry was different from his own. He had a flame that burned inside his own human frame, and always longed to be for the service of others.

Another incident that I recall about McLean concerns a book written by me, *Death and Transcendence: A Cross Cultural Journey* that was dedicated to him. I had requested the Indian publisher – Overseas Press, New Delhi, 2008 – to send two copies of the book to McLean. Upon receiving the books, McLean called me and said the following words to me in a very soft way, which was uniquely characteristic to him: “Thanks Sebastian; you are reminding me of my death.” In his personal odyssey, one can ostensibly discern the struggles and insurmountable difficulties that he had in making better known the cultural traditions of developing countries. McLean was equally sensitive to the cultural traditions of various developing nations – which reminds me of his often-repeated Aristotelian concepts of “participation and subsidiarity.” Perhaps, this “participatory subsidiarity” was at the center for world philosophy for

him, and that he sought to express through his numerous articles and books.

Despite having a thorough grounding in the Roman Catholic Church, cemented by becoming a Catholic priest in the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.), McLean was not a traditionalist in any sense of the term. In his affection towards other faiths and peoples, McLean walked miles and miles with them. Indeed, he had a missionary zeal in his academics. McLean was a missionary of philosophy. When I call him as a missionary of philosophy, I have certain unforgettable memories in mind. For example, I recall the days I spent at the residence of the Oblates. I used to go to sleep at about 12:30 at night, and when I got up in the early morning around 6 a.m., I found one or two books and some photocopies left for my reading. Such a missionary zeal in inculcating a spirit of philosophy was central to his character. It is true that, today, a majority of philosophy students and faculty live in a desacralized world of phenomena, and the meaning in their lives is based simply on their quantitative relationships with their universities and colleges. McLean taught me about a world of meanings that went beyond this phenomenality of “things.” What I am trying to emphasize may be summarized in the following way: The phenomenality of things should be integrated into the personal dimension in a way that can have spiritual significance to the person. For McLean, this mission can only be accomplished by rediscovering the meaning of philosophy in one’s personal life – and, thus, McLean was a missionary of philosophy.

Finally when I think about McLean, I am reminded of his polyvalent sensibility to things and events, as well as his encyclopedic range of learning. How much he knew about so much in detail, diversity and depth is not merely amazing; it is incredible. McLean was perfectly aware of the ideal of life, and the core of this ideal was a missionary zeal coupled with a spiritual search. Spiritual search in Indian traditions and cultures may be understood as self-integration rather than cosmic or social integration. The Indian concept of spirituality undergirds an eternal cosmic order that pervades all of existence, which can be found in the concept of Rta in the Vedas – and this was very dear to McLean. The implication is that, in the Hindu tradition, there is no absolute barrier between the natural and the supernatural, the sentient and the insentient, the physical and the psychic, the sexual and the spiritual, and, indeed, between God and man. It may be best described as the concomitant relation between reason and being – so to say, a philosophy and a worldview that emphasizes the metaphysical dimension of human existence. Such a life, when lived, may be called a sustainable life. Like all other Oriental traditions, Indian philosophy emphasizes deliverance from the cosmos which is Maya. Maya is not merely an illusion, nor is it an epistemological category of nescience; rather it is the divine play or art. It is not only capable of concealing the

Divine Self, but is also gifted to reveal the same Self. Thus, George F. McLean. Such a thought brings me back to the Panchatantra tale. After the lion was brought back to life, the lion ate the scholars up. In the meantime, the layman – who was much wiser than the scholars – had got away by climbing up a tree.

In Memory of Professor G.F. McLean

Gerald J. Wanjohi

I first came across the name ‘George McLean’ in 1977, when he sent me a circular to participate in the conference of The International Society for Metaphysics in Jerusalem that year. I did not make it to the conference, but my two colleagues, the late Professors Raphael Njoroge and Joseph Nyasani from the University of Nairobi, did so. The two professors must have made such a good impression on Professor McLean so that, in 1981, the Society’s conference was held at Nairobi. It was then that I met Professor McLean in person, and we became friends. In the December of that year, he invited me, along with others, to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, to work on a project. The group came up with a draft, “Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change,” which would constitute one of the themes for The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, of which Professor McLean was one of the founders.

My next encounter with Professor McLean was in 1983, in Montreal, during the FISP World Congress of Philosophy. During the conference, McLean organized a special meeting with scholars from Africa, with a view to getting them to form groups for research, and he would be behind them. Unfortunately, this suggestion was flatly rejected, especially by the senior members of the group. (I came to learn later that McLean invited one of those who opposed him as a visiting professor at the Catholic University of America that same year. This is how big-hearted he was.)

While visiting Kenya once again in 1985, McLean invited me to visit the Catholic University to attend a three-month seminar on the theme “Relations between Cultures.” I accepted the offer, and I saw myself in Washington, DC in January 1986. I paid for my travel expenses, but McLean made arrangements for my room and board. There were about ten or twelve in the seminar, coming from different countries – Peru, Poland, China, United States, and me, from Kenya. McLean was a good host: besides inviting us to dine with the members of his religious community (O.M.I.), he took us to an opera theatre one evening. The seminar sessions were very lively and informative. My article on the “Ethics of Gikũyũ Proverbs” was the result of that seminar. The article was later published by McLean in a volume on *Relations between Cultures*.¹

¹ See George F. McLean and John Kromkowski, eds., *Relations between Cultures* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991).

In 2002, McLean visited Kenya again at the invitation of the Department of Philosophy, University of Nairobi, from where I had retired in 1993, after serving the previous four years as chair. My former students invited me to that meeting, which I attended. By that time, I had already published my book *The Kĩhooto Worldview: The Wisdom and Philosophy of Gikũyũ Proverbs*.² I spoke briefly about the book. After learning about McLean's schedule, I decided to invite him for supper at my Nairobi residence. He readily accepted. He came accompanied by his secretary, Yeping Hu. We had a very good time. Shortly after getting back to Washington, I received a message from McLean to the effect that The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) could publish some articles of "Wajibu: A Journal of Social and Religious Concern," which my wife and I had been publishing since 1985. This was in order, as he said, to bridge the gap between the very abstract and low caliber publications by the Council. I jumped on the idea immediately. After consulting the editorial board, I was sanctioned to go through the issues of "Wajibu" from the beginning until then, in view of choosing the best articles. This I did, and sent the articles to McLean for editing, design and publication. The outcome of this was "Social and Religious Concerns of East Africa: A Wajibu Anthology," to which McLean wrote a two-page preface. This was a double publication by "Wajibu Magazine" and The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. For us, we launched this book in 2005, the twentieth year of publishing "Wajibu." (Within the Council, this publication appears under "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change," Series II. Africa, Volume 10.) [For the sake of the would-be interested readers, all the "Wajibu" articles are on line at the *African Journal Archive*.]

There were other interactions and encounters I had with Professor McLean, but the ones I have narrated are the most prominent. I am sure that the way he treated me is the way he treated all others with whom he came into contact. As a scholar, he had a passion to make others be like him – i.e., not subject to some "publish or perish" syndrome, but for self-actualization and to contribute to the whole of humanity. The demise of Professor McLean at a not-very-old age, is doubtless a great loss not only to the world of academia, but to the common man and woman for whom the professor had devoted much of his energies.

² (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997).

Postscript (2017): An Ordinary Man with an Exceptional Ideal for Our Time

Yu Xuanmeng

Some fifteen years ago, I wrote a paper, “An Ordinary Man with an Exceptional Ideal for Our Time: An Appreciation,” published in the book, *To the Mountain: Essays in Honour of Professor George F. McLean*,¹ to celebrate Professor McLean’s 75th birthday in 2004. I clearly remember that, on June 29, 2004, after a day-long discussion on academic issues that took place at a conference sponsored by the Institute of Philosophy, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and the Department of Philosophy of Shanghai University, we held a party in the evening. Professor McLean was surprised when he saw that there was a big cake with candles lighted and, soon, he realized that the day was his birthday. The book, prepared without his knowing of it, was dedicated to him as a present for his birthday.

After that, I had a few more opportunities to meet him. The last time I saw him was in Athens, August 2013, at the 23rd World Congress of Philosophy. Though in declining health, he attended, as usual, the pre-Congress conference organized by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP). He was not, however, able to attend the meetings of The International Society of Metaphysics (ISM), for which he had long been the General Secretary, starting in 1974. Besides the RVP, the ISM was one of the societies for which he cared for so much. In 2008, the ISM held a conference in Seoul, during the 22nd World Congress of Philosophy; he attended the discussions from beginning to end. It was at this time that Professor Tomonobu Imamichi resigned from the position of President of the ISM because of age. Professor McLean went to the meeting together with Professor Blanchette, who was going to be the successor of Imamichi. Five years later, the position of Presidency of the ISM was to pass on to a new person, but Professor McLean couldn’t come. His health did not allow him to take part in too much activity, I thought.

A remarkable event at the 2013 World Congress of Philosophy was that, on the Opening Day, on behalf of the RVP, Professor McLean was awarded the “Global Dialogue Prize.” The citation read: “The Award Committee of the Global Dialogue Prize has decided to bestow the 2013 award on The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), in

¹ William Sweet and Hu Yeping, eds., *To the Mountain: Essays in Honour of Professor George F. McLean* (Taipei: Fu Jen Catholic University Press, 2004), 21-28.

particular recognition of the Council's longstanding efforts in addressing sensitive issues of cultural heritage and contemporary change. Over the course of four decades the Council has grown to become the currently largest network for intercultural value research, with over 400 associated members from 65 countries. Since 1998 the Council has produced over 150 academic events and published 300 volumes of scholarly monographs and anthologies on values from a cross-culturally comparative or intercultural perspective. The Council's President, Professor George F. McLean and its Executive Director, Dr. Hu Yeping, who have built and directed the Council throughout four decades, will accept the award on behalf of the organization."²

These days, philosophers become famous usually because of some theory that they have come up with. People don't care about their personal behavior, even if their academic area is in morality or axiology. Professor McLean, however, though he has written many brilliant books, is known to the world mainly by his unremitting efforts to promote communication among different nations and cultures, as well as by his moral actions shown in daily life.

McLean was a man who made a resolution to be a good person all his life. I recall that the first time that I met him I was attracted by his behavior and appearance, I asked him "Do you want to be a saint?" By the word "saint," I was not thinking of a Christian saint but, rather, of a sage, as in ancient China. To put this kind of question to someone may seem somewhat ridiculous. For we live in a secular society, particularly in China, and no one dares to say that becoming a sage or saint is his life's aim. Perhaps, sage is too high to aim at. It is too far from our everyday world.

But McLean answered the question earnestly: "I will try," he said. This shocked me greatly. Today, however, we can agree that he has kept his promise. This was not easy, I believe, because we live in a legalistic society, where everything is judged by law and regulations, and almost nothing else is valued in itself. To comport oneself "correctly" in such a society, not much wisdom is needed. But to comport oneself morally is another thing. One needs to act not only normally, but beyond the average level. McLean fulfilled his ideal perfectly: he did his best to value the people around him. He was respectful, considerate, humble and generous; he was also frugal and diligent.

We should not think of him simply as a moral example. He did more: he dedicated his life to the cause of communication among peoples around

² Professor McLeran's acceptance remarks appear as the conclusion to Johanna Seibt and Jesper Garsdal, eds., *How is Global Dialogue Possible?: Foundational Research on Values, Conflicts, and Intercultural Thought* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 551-556.

the world. I never asked him about his motivation in doing so. Only after reading and reflection, I gradually realized that what he was doing was trying to promote human civilization in our era, just like the saints or sages did in ancient times.

About this idea of civilization: some books would say that the idea of civilization arose with the establishment of the city. This definition of civilization, perhaps derived from the term “civic,” pertaining to the city, puts the stress on the material wellbeing of a people. So, yes, we can say that the city, with its architecture, its arts and science, and so on, shows civilization. But, to think philosophically, it is only when human beings have been civilized that material scientific and artistic civilization is possible. But what does it mean to be “civilized”? We have to contrast this with human beings in a primitive condition. We do not know much about primitive societies, however; no completely reliable trail can be traced. Still, some legends from ancient times might tell us something of the conditions of ancient peoples. It says in the Bible, for instance, that Adam and Eve’s son Cain killed his brother Abel for no good reason, simply out of jealousy of Cain’s accomplishments. Again, in Greek mythology, from the very beginning of the world, the gods were always in conflict with one another. Such conflicts happened even between fathers and sons. We can say only that there seems to have been savagery. In China, there is a saying: “In the Spring and Autumn Period of ancient China, there were no righteous wars.”

The conflicts among people and wars might be caused by the lack of enough supplies. Everyone has to fight for his own survival. So conflict might be unavoidable and, hence, natural. Obviously, on this understanding, the nature of human being is to be harmful. In such circumstances, individuals could be killers or could be victims, and live in vulgarity or fear. If certain practices are not forbidden, a clan, a nation, even all of mankind would vanish. Yet human beings continue to this day, and are the strongest species in the world. Why? It is because another aspect of the nature of human beings is at work. It is love. It is innate in human nature for parents to love their children. And, in turn, as children grow up, they are taught to respect or show piety to their parents. The love that occurs among family members extends on a larger scale.

The main aim of prophets throughout history was to advocate love among human beings, while seeking to restrain hatred and conflict. Jesus Christ did this, Buddha also did this. In China, we have Confucius. The theme of all his work could be summarized in one word: benevolence. In *Analects* there is a saying: “To have friends from far away come to visit, is this not happiness?” Of course, people who come from far away must be strangers. So the message must be: Don’t treat strangers with suspicion as if they were potential rivals or enemies. Perhaps this idea is somewhat common today. But if we think of the conditions and the struggle for

survival in which ancient peoples lived, we can say that civilization began when people began to be the kind of person that those prophets advocated.

Today, in our “civilizations,” we all know that human beings should not kill one another; rather, we should love and care for each other. Obviously, the birth of civilization is the foundational historical experience of humanity; otherwise, families, clans, nations, even the whole human species might not have survived.

Granted that the value of civilization is accepted by most people, and that it leads to prosperity today, we still face great dangers, because civilization is not something achieved once and for all. Human beings have both good and evil in their nature. Today, on the one hand, some have immense riches but, on the other hand, people face challenges or risks that more serious than ever before, even though the form of challenges have changed. As we all know, the biggest risks are, briefly, two: ecological degradation and nuclear war. We have already seen many species vanish because of the increasingly polluted environment. We are experiencing natural disasters due to climate change. All of these are the results of human action. To reduce greenhouse gases emissions requires reducing industrial production and the consumption of oil and gas. This affects the interests of different countries differently. There is ongoing debate among countries over who has the greatest responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while these emission simply continue. This quarrel involves different countries, but it boils down to individual interests – and leads to nationalism. Individuals have different interests, not only on the issue of reducing greenhouse gas emission, but also on how to lead their lives. And it is dangerous to increase these differences to the level of international conflict at a time when we have nuclear weapons. For nuclear weapons allow human beings to destroy all of humanity.

In such a situation, it is important to coordinate efforts among nations and peoples. People should be more aware that all people on the planet are a community with a common destiny – and not just about the current situation, but also, as a presupposition, each other’s ideology and interests. What Professor McLean did during the past 40 years was to help to facilitate genuine communication among peoples. Through his efforts, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy came to contact numerous universities of some 60 countries, and published over 300 volumes of scholarly work. This was the kind of communication that reflected and responded to the needs of those in many countries. Professor McLean accomplished all this mainly through his efforts alone, and many from all over the world benefitted.

McLean influenced people not by teaching, for people can judge by themselves if they have enough information. He touched people, but not by miracles, for we are in a time of science. What he did, however, was

profoundly just – simply let people communicate among themselves. He believed that people have wisdom. This is what is needed to draw on, in order maintain and develop civilization in the present era.

As I mentioned just above, civilization is not something human beings achieve once and for all. Since situations are constantly changing, human beings need to act out of the good aspects of their nature to maintain and develop civilization. At the present time, it is a critical task to promote communication among peoples. For this reason, saints or sages, whether they be from Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam, or Judaism, are needed more than ever. Professor McLean was one of them.

Last Days...

Hu Yeping

On August 20, 2016, I flew to Boston via Jetblue, and took a shuttle bus to Tewksbury, Massachusetts, and the Oblate Infirmary and Retirement Home where Fr. McLean was living. One of the Oblate Fathers came to the bus station and picked me up. As soon as we arrived at the residence I went to McLean's room. He was sitting on a chair in front of the desk with his laptop computer. He was happy to see me when I walked into his room and said, "It is good you came."

He was quite weak and in poor health. I insisted that the Oblates send him to the hospital to see whether it would be possible to reduce the bad symptoms. The Oblates called an ambulance. I went with him on the ambulance to the Lowell General Hospital. He was admitted immediately. After things settled down at the hospital, I flew back to Washington, DC on August 24, 2016. I called him everyday – most of the time, through the nurses' station at the hospital, to check things with him. One day he said to me that he had talked to his doctor, and wanted to go back home to be on hospice care. He asked me to come to Tewksbury as soon as possible to discuss issues related to the future work of the RVP.

I flew back to Boston on September 3, 2016, was picked up at the airport, and then drove to Tewksbury. This time McLean was staying upstairs in the nursing section of the building. He was quite weak and became tired quickly. On and off we talked about different things related to The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) and the CUA Center for the Study of Culture and Values. I video-recorded some moments with my iPad, and took some photos.

That Saturday (September 3, 2016), I thought he might leave us at any time. I spent most of the time in his room. He was concerned about my mood and wanted me to take it easy. As soon as he gained some strength, he asked me "What should we think about?" I asked him "What is your hope and wish for the RVP?" He said, "The RVP is ok as it is. You are developing it in your own way, in your own genius." I told him that we would keep the RVP going in the same direction and continue its mission. He asked me not to make a big announcement about his passing. He wanted the RVP to continue as usual without any disruption due to his passing. I said to him "But I need your help." Even "your help in Heaven."

I asked him whether he was happy and satisfied with his life. He said "Yeah, yeah, very happy. We have done so much." I asked him "Are you ready to go?" He said, "I am in the process of passing away. I am waiting

to go.” I asked him, “Where are you going?” He said, “Going to God.” I asked him, “Are you going to heaven?” He said “Yeah, to Heaven.”

I asked him, “What do you want me to do?” He said, “To live a fulfilling life. I want you to be in charge.” I said to him again, “I need your help.”

On Sunday (September 4, 2016), I asked him again whether he was ready to go and where he would go. As usual, he said quietly and firmly “Going to God.” He wanted to express his gratitude to all his friends and colleagues and said the following words: “Goodbye and many, many thanks. God’s blessing upon everyone.”

On Monday (September 5, 2016) everything went quietly, as most of time he was resting. We did not talk too much. One time he asked me “What time is it?” I told him “It is 11 o’clock in the morning. It is Labor Day.” Agnes, Fr. McLean’s younger sister, spent some time with him, and her children came to pay a visit. Other family members also came to visit him. His Oblate colleagues came to his room a few times to pray for him. He had a big bowl of coffee ice cream in the afternoon and a good night’s sleep.

On Tuesday (September 6, 2016) in the morning he was given medications again. I left Tewksbury before 7.00 pm, going to Boston Logan airport, and flying back to Washington, DC. Before I left the residence, I asked him whether he could wait for me to come back after the seminar. But if he wanted to go, just go ahead with freedom and peace. Unfortunately, he was not able to respond at that time. Upon arrival at Baltimore airport – it was nearly midnight – Edward, Agnes’s elder son, sent me a text asking me to give him a call. Immediately, I knew George Francis McLean had left...

Time flies. It is already 2020. Some time ago, I complained to McLean: “You have worked so hard and so much. Can you really save the world?” He did not respond to me right away. A few days later, he looked at me and said, “I heard a story from someone. It is about a little bird. One day a fisherman passes by and sees a little bird lying on the ground. The fisherman is curious and says to the bird ‘Hi, little guy. What are you doing there?’ The bird answers: ‘I heard that the sky is going to fall. I am getting ready to hold it up.’ The fisherman laughs and mocks the bird: ‘What? You, a little bird? What can do you do to keep the sky from falling?’ The bird responds to the fisherman ‘I do what I can.’”

Perhaps, this is the true spirit of George Francis McLean, which I learned over the years.

Conclusion: Stewarding the Legacy of the Philosophy of Culture¹

John M. Staak, O.M.I.

Personal Experience of McLean

Fr. George McLean was my brother Oblate of Mary Immaculate, my teacher, my mentor. Fr. McLean did not teach only philosophy; by his example, he also taught us what it means to be human. He taught graciousness in listening to others. He taught understanding of people's search for meaning and respect for the journey in which they found themselves. He taught hospitality and patience and ingenuity.

Fr. George stretched us. As he engaged both people and cultures, he listened attentively, respected viewpoints and horizons of meaning, and guided all to a greater freedom in the development of those values that define the great dignity of simply being human. He and his many philosopher-friends from all over the world helped to shape my own missionary heart. I miss him and I shall always remember him.

The New McLean Center and Challenges

In 2017, the Catholic University of America designated the existing Center for the Study of Culture and Values to be the *McLean* Center for the Study of Culture and Values (MCSCV). This renaming was undoubtedly appropriate, though admittedly something from which Fr. McLean would have, in his humility, demurred. The Centre had existed for over a decade, but in taking up Fr. McLean's name and the legacy he bequeathed to us, it will necessarily face many challenges. I will mention only a few.

Through a period of philosophical deconstructionism and modern skepticism, Fr. George remained unusually, one might say unfashionably, positive. He maintained the ontology of metaphysics as a framework, allowing being or reality to speak for itself, rather than succumbing to the hubris of the notion of reality as some sort of positing of the human mind. He filled out this metaphysical framework with the more phenomenological, hermeneutic insights, thus wedding two philosophical systems for

¹ Remarks read at the Inauguration of the McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values, November 13, 2017.

their mutual enhancement. Fr. George stayed above the deconstructionist frenzy and worked creatively to engage people regardless of their philosophical system or approach, gently guiding them to build a philosophy that supported the dignity of human freedom. This Center, then, will face the challenge of engaging the various philosophies around the world in a similar manner of creative development.

Central to this mission of creative engagement resides the task of investigating the dynamics of growth in human freedom. Culture and values are not static concepts, but dynamic forces born from the wisdom of experience learned by a people over long periods of history. Pulsating from the human heart and its search for meaning, culture and values also shape the human heart, serving as a reference for our own creative search in the present for truth, goodness, beauty, unity. With the creative insight from philosophers all over the globe, this center will identify the critical elements that cultivate or impede those dynamics of growth in human freedom.

Following Fr. McLean's example, this Center will seek to present the fullest notion of the human person and the most positive elements of culture, with the goal of guiding us to those human values that lead not only to deeper freedom but also to consideration of the transcendent. Philosophy cannot afford to neglect the human person's radical openness to infinity, to the infinite, to transcendence. The insatiable human appetite for learning, for searching far beyond itself for mysterious communion with life, love, and meaning, must be explored with all the resources and tools at our disposal.

The Hubble telescope has afforded us a multitude of new insights into our universe; it is a tool that has served us well. In 2021, we shall launch the James Webb Space Telescope, a new tool optimized for the longer infra-red wavelength that will probe the outer reaches of space and time with far greater sensitivity. Similarly, this Center will help to guide philosophy's own development of new approaches, new tools, new telescopes for our period of human history, to probe with greater sensitivity the deepest reaches of the human spirit and its openness to transcendence.

Some Questions for the Center

Can, then, this new McLean Center for the Study of Culture and Values carry on Fr. George McLean's philosophical legacy, which would include:

- An active listening to the insights of philosophers from all over the world to develop new approaches of exploring human sensibilities?
- The creative development of wedding together seemingly disparate philosophical systems for their mutual enhancement?

- The investigation of the dynamics of how human freedom grows?
- The presentation of the fullest notion of what it means to be human?

I pray it can do all these.

Will those who oversee and lead the Catholic University of America have the diligence and patience to nurture the vast global network of philosophers pieced together by Fr. McLean over decades of relationship-building, and will they have the wisdom to sustain such an important intellectual mission that cultivates the values of the Kingdom of God in peoples all over the world?

I pray they will.

A Plea for Fr. George's Intercession

Fr. George McLean, you who find yourself now in the loving embrace of God,

- intercede for us to carry on what you began under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit;
- intercede for us to continue to develop new insights:
 - o into the dynamics of culture,
 - o into the values that promote and cultivate human freedom,
 - o into the dispositions and mechanisms of communication that will allow peoples of all cultures to listen to, collaborate with, and learn from one another;
- intercede for us to embrace the reality of the gift to be open to transcendent mystery, the deeply personal God of love who invites us into communion.

Amen.

Contributors

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Appendices

The Making of a Holy Priest:

Rev. Edward J. McLean

George F. McLean, O.M.I.

Father Ed's high school colleagues were convinced that he could never be a priest; he was just too much fun. This was confirmed by one of his teachers who assured my father only that Ed had a great sense of humor. But Dad wanted more – an infantry officer in the First World War – and gave Ed his marching order: he was not being sent to High School in order to be the class clown. He had to find a way to join serious work with his light hearted spirit. Ed always kept this in mind and referred to it often.

As a result when in the seminary in Boston, while others might use their free afternoon for some rest and relaxation, Ed went often to the Paulist Center on Arch Street to learn how best to communicate the faith. So when in time he entered the ministry in Hartford he was soon having 50 adult baptisms every Palm Sunday and another 50 during the year.

Before long he was made Information Officer for the Archdiocese and sent to the Second Vatican Council to follow closely the developments of the Church. There he picked up much of what Pope Francis is urging today: namely to begin from the mind and heart of the people.

But Father Ed still had a problem: while he had an information Center he no longer had a parish and hence he lacked a prayer community. This however was supplied by the Cursillo movement which provided an hour of prayer one morning each week. Typically Father Ed joined three such groups in order to begin every other day with an hour of prayer.

Shortly after that we travelled together with Father O'Keefe to Latin America where we visited a series of missions. What surprised me was that each meal with the missionaries turned into a seminar on prayer.

Moreover, in Salvador de Bahia we were taken to the favella just behind and below the parish. There we saw children with the extended bellies which betrayed their malnutrition and fetid drinking water. While I attended a meeting Ed and Bill crossed over to Bolivia where they met a classmate, Father John Doyle, in Boston's St. James Society who was living with the poor.

So, when Father Ed returned to Hartford he convened a team of his priestly colleagues and they moved together into the poorest parish in the city to work on food in the morning and housing in the evening. Indeed Ed's was the smallest room in the rectory where one could hardly stand between the bed and the bureau. All but the most essential he packed into his car to bring up to Massachusetts to leave with the family on Christmas day. But Santa and his helpers had another gift – not to leave something but to empty out that car. It was the gift of freedom from all encumbrances. When Ed drove north

that Christmas day he was free of all possessions and truly ready to begin his new life with the poor.

This he deepened by month-long intensive retreats. These in turn showed up in his 12 week lecture series which moved steadily more deeply into the subject of prayer.

Ministry for him was truly a work of art. Once I went with him to a wake where he spent a half hour or more with the family leaning about Joe, the deceased. His goal, as he explained later, was to give Joe back to the family the person whose funeral would be held on the following day and to do so not in the weakened condition of his last years but in the full vibrancy of his life. So he asked his wife, Maria, what Joe was like – “Joe was WONDERFUL” she said – who had helped and how the family held together through his final years of sickness – all of which he celebrated in words, and even in song – “Oh Marie” – during the funeral mass. Truly he brought the dead to life in this world and the next.

Someone told me that as soon as you talked to Father Ed you felt that he loved you. Yesterday as people filed past Father Ed’s coffin, a woman stopped to tell me about her little four year old who, after they had talked with Father Ed for a while, asked: “Mama, was that Jesus?”

November 18, 2015

Catholic University Philosopher Builds Bridges

Jerry Filteau / Jan. 7, 2010

WASHINGTON – In 40 years of quiet work, Oblate Fr. George F. McLean has traveled the globe – China, India, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America – promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding on basic human and social issues among thinkers in scores of countries.

“We had 10 meetings behind the Iron Curtain before the [Berlin] Wall came down in 1989,” McLean said, referring to seminars he arranged during the Cold War years involving Western philosophers and leaders of academies of science in communist countries.

The collapse of communism left “a real vacuum in those academies of science. They were all dialectical materialists,” he said. But the relations that were built up through the previous years offered an opening.

“They were at sea. I went around to all the academies and said, ‘You have a new job now. Write about your own philosophical heritage. Retrieve your past beyond that 40 years’” of communist rule, he said.

The result in the next couple of years were international philosophical and interdisciplinary meetings that led to eight books recovering the pre-communist philosophical and cultural heritage of countries like Poland, Lithuania, Georgia and the Czech Republic.

“Now they are trying to become democratic societies,” and seminars on those issues led to the next eight volumes in that series, he said. Additional topics like human values, ethics, pluralism and globalism in post-communist societies have led to at least 12 other volumes so far.

And then there’s China. Before its opening to the West in the 1980s, McLean said, he would often meet scholars from China at other international gatherings, especially in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. But after they returned to China he would not hear from them again.

Now, he said, China is working on issues of its modernization and what face as an economic power it will present to the world – that of a feared competitor or a humane society. He said he helped organize numerous international conferences in China in recent years on a variety of social and philosophical issues.

On a visit to Asia last June and July McLean attended gatherings organized by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, which he founded in 1983 and continues to direct. A conference in Cambodia examined the role of philosophy in the development in Southeast Asia, and a series of conferences in China covered various topics, including a meeting July 6-8 in Xian on “Ethics in Public Administration and Citizen Participation.”

The next and last conference in the series was scheduled to take place on the same topic a couple of days later in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang

Uighur Autonomous Region of Western China, but severe antigovernment rioting there by Uighur protesters forced cancellation of the meeting.

Some 400 people were killed as police suppressed the riots, described as the worst in China since Tiananmen Square 20 years earlier.

McLean said ruefully that the riots demonstrated how on-target the conference's topic was. "This is really important: How can a territory be administered in such a way that it takes account of the people?"

The Uighurs, who are ethnically Turkic and religiously Muslim, object to China's severe restrictions on their religious practice, and many of them want Xinjiang to become an independent nation, East Turkestan.

McLean said addressing such issues is "a philosophical project" – not in the way philosophy is usually treated in academic courses, but in the more fundamental sense of "philosophy as an effort at self-understanding, with attention to subjectivity," looking at people in the context of their cultural heritage, how they address contemporary change and their struggles over "how to understand themselves"

Philosophy in that sense is "transformative" and a participation in "the existential effort of humankind," he said.

NCR interviewed McLean a few days before a November forum on "Faith in a Secular Culture," which he organized at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. The event was the kickoff for a 15-month study by two teams of scholars to assess changes in the way faith and culture interact in the United States. The forum featured as main speakers Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago and Canadian Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor, a professor at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., and the 2007 winner of the prestigious Templeton Prize in Religion.

"When you talk about culture from the eyes of [Christian] faith," McLean said, it's a question of trying to discern in each culture "the initiative of the Holy Spirit and the response of mankind."

A modest, self-effacing scholar, the 80-year-old Oblate priest spent his entire academic career as a professor of philosophy at Catholic University.

He retired early from that post in 1993 to devote full time to his growing workload of activities promoting global philosophical collaboration and dialogue through The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Although scarcely noticed in public circles, even within the church, in his early years at Catholic University, McLean soon became a well-known figure among U.S. Catholic philosophers, then among world philosophers, Catholic and not.

[Full disclosure: This reporter took two graduate seminars in philosophy under McLean in 1966-67 and admired his intellectual acumen but had no clue then about his future role in international, intercultural dialogue and collaboration.]

After McLean joined the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, he was sent to Rome for seven years of study, three in philosophy and four in theology. Courses at the pontifical universities he attended were in Latin, French was

the language of the international Oblate seminary where he lived, and Italian was the local language for everything else.

After his ordination in 1955, he returned to the United States, earned a doctorate in philosophy at Catholic University and began teaching there in 1958.

In 1960 Msgr. John K. Ryan, then dean of the university's School of Philosophy, asked McLean to organize a series of annual professional updating workshops for Catholic philosophy teachers and graduate students, and that led to the American Catholic Philosophical Association asking him to serve as its secretary. McLean did so from 1965 to 1980, editing and publishing its annual proceedings and playing a significant role in advancing the association's work and service to its members.

His participation in the 1968 World Congress of Philosophy in Vienna, Austria, marked the start of his involvement with the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, including service on its board from 1978 to 1988. From 1974 to 1998 he was secretary of both the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies and the International Society for Metaphysics.

Although retired from teaching for 16 years now, McLean continues to have a small suite of offices and meeting rooms in the basement of Gibbons Hall on the Catholic University campus, headquarters of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. At the turn of the century, the council's work was incorporated into Catholic University's research activities by the formation of the university's Center for the Study of Culture and Values as an adjunct to the council.

One of the council's annual activities is a seminar, usually 10 weeks long, attended by a select group of about 12 to 15 scholars from around the world. This year's seminar, "The Sacred and the Secular: Complementary and/or Conflictual?" was drawing to an end when *NCR* interviewed McLean in late October.

The featured speaker at that day's session was Islamic scholar Abdul Karim Souroush of Iran, whom McLean described as "a key liberal thinker" in his country.

Several of the participants were Muslims or from Asian countries where Islam is a significant force.

McLean told *NCR* that contemporary issues of globalization and secularity "are not just an Islamic problem, they're a problem for Christianity as well." The problem for all believers is "how to live faithfully" in the face of change, he said.

Lining one wall of his office is a bookshelf filled with the 225 or so books produced by the Council from the seminars and conferences it has sponsored around the world. McLean wandered over to the bookshelf often as he spoke, pulling out examples of the collaborative work done over the years by teams of scholars he helped organize around the world.

From Africa there were titles like *Identity and Change in Nigeria*; *Social Reconstruction in Africa*; *Ethics, Human Rights and Development in Africa*; and *The Idea of an African University: The Nigerian Experience*.

The first volume in the series from Eastern and Central Europe comes from a 1977 meeting of World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies in Krakow, Poland, on the theme, “The Human Person in the Contemporary World.” The meeting’s chief local organizer was Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, who a year later became Pope John Paul II. In addition to being archbishop of Krakow, Wojtyla was on the philosophy faculty of the University of Lublin, where he had first begun teaching as a young priest.

The Council published the work in English under the title *The Philosophy of Person: Solidarity and Cultural Creativity* in 1994. But in his introduction McLean notes that soon after the meeting, its proceedings “were published in samizdat form by the legally nonexistent Academy of Theology in Krakow.” Samizdat was the term for the illegally published, secretly circulated writings by dissidents that flourished in the Soviet bloc during the Cold War.

“The impact of the ideas in the volume were dramatic indeed,” McLean said. “Solidarity [the independent Polish labor union and later political party] was soon founded upon the principles of the primacy of the person, which had been elaborated through the long quiet work of the Polish philosophers and tested in this international meeting with philosophers from many countries.”

Speaking of the seminar, joint study and team approach he takes, he said, “I’m less interested in a book by a single author working in isolation” – a philosophical tradition he described as modelled after 17th-century French philosopher René Descartes.

“The difficulty in a global context,” he said, is that no one thinker is “as big as the issues are.” He said he tries to get his collaborators around the world “to develop the habit of working as teams, complementing and stimulating each other. I say to a group, if you can get a team together and produce a book, that’s gold.”

One problem for scholars in Africa and other parts of the developing world is that they do not have access to publishers for their work, he said. He said he guarantees participants in Council seminars and conferences that if they put their work together in a book, he’ll publish it.

In some cases the printing run may only be around 600 to 1,000 copies, he said, but every volume published by the Council is sent to the libraries of about 350 key universities around the world, including at least 50 each in Africa, South America and Asia.

And they are all available electronically on the Internet. McLean said Google has scanned the entire set. This past May, Internet users looked at 500,000 pages in the series through Google, he said.

On the council’s own Web site – www.cryp.org – they can be downloaded for free. “There’s nothing like that for distribution around the world,” he said.

McLean said that now that he is 80 he is looking to transfer the work of the Council to other hands. He remains president but just recently resigned as general secretary and was succeeded by Edward J. Alam, a professor of

philosophy at Notre Dame University in Louaize, Lebanon. Alam, born and educated in the United States, has taught at the Lebanese Catholic University since 1996 and has been engaged in council-organized conferences around the world for the past four years.

When McLean turned 80 June 29, he was at an international conference he helped organize at Fudan University in Shanghai. The participants, including several scholars he has worked with from around the world, threw him a birthday party, he said, and took the occasion to present him with not one, but three festschrifts celebrating his life and work.

A festschrift (from the German words for feast or festival, and writing) is a collection of essays by colleagues or former students to honor a noted teacher or scholar, usually on his or her 75th or 80th birthday.

“I knew they [the scholars] were coming, but I didn’t know they were bringing books,” he said.

One of the festschrifts, *Asian Philosophy in the Making*, was published in Vietnam and another, *Islam, Cultural Transformation and the Re-emergence of Falsafah [Philosophy]*, was done in Iran. It was a pleasant surprise to him, he said, that publications honoring an American would come out of either of those countries.

The third, out of Lebanon and edited by Alam, was on the challenges facing Christianity and culture today.

McLean’s longtime assistant, Hu Yeping, said McLean had received five other festschrifts on his 75th birthday – one internationally based and the others from China, Thailand, Romania, and Eastern and Central Europe.

For most professors, even a single festschrift is an honor; eight is almost unimaginable.

During his years as a professor, McLean – an avid student of Indian culture and Hinduism – spent his sabbaticals in India, except for his last one, two years before his retirement.

He spent his 1991 sabbatical in Cairo, Egypt, studying Islam in order to be able to work more extensively on intercultural collaboration throughout the Muslim world. “That’s been a major effort” of Council activities since then, resulting so far in 18 books from Islamic sources, he said.

In today’s world of ideas, it’s truly hard to assess what impact any single person has had, but it’s at least arguable that McLean may have had more influence on world events over the past 40 years than many far more public figures of that era.

[Jerry Filteau is *NCR* Washington correspondent.]

George Francis McLean: A Philosopher in the Service of Humanity¹

Hu Yeping & William Sweet

George Francis McLean is a philosopher in the service of humanity. At present is Professor Emeritus at the School of Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Culture and Values at The Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington, DC. Yet anyone who knows him knows that this says only a small part of who he is. Over the years, McLean has been a scholar and a teacher, but most importantly he has worked to democratize philosophy – promoting the research of philosophers coming from many different cultural traditions, and publishing the academic work of teams of scholars from countries and regions around the globe.

Since 1993, when McLean took early retirement from his teaching position, he has worked full-time promoting global philosophical dialogue and cooperation. He has lectured in many of the countries of the world, traveling to places where important philosophical and cultural issues are debated. He has helped to bring together professors from many countries and regions in order to create opportunities for dialogue, communication, and cooperation, and to assist in building teams which, through their scholarly work, contribute to addressing the vital questions of the day. In addition, each year, McLean invites professors from around the globe to come to Washington, DC to participate in a 10 week seminar on such philosophical issues as “The Relation between Cultures,” “Freedom and Choice in a Democracy,” “Diversity in Unity,” “Civil Society and Social Reconstruction,” and “Globalization and Identity.”

But McLean serves philosophy and philosophers in other ways as well. As the general editor of the publication series “Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change,” sponsored by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), he helps to bring the work of philosophers from the farthest reaches of the planet into the public eye. Much of this work is published in edited volumes, the result of regional teams working together on themes of common interest. McLean carefully edits each paper in every volume as he prepares them for publication. Over 100 volumes have been published to date; in addition to marketing them through regular channels, they are distributed free of charge to 350 university libraries throughout the world, particularly to institutions in developing countries. The full text of most of these volumes is also made available on the internet (at

¹ From *To the Mountain: Essays in Honour of Professor George F. McLean*, eds. William Sweet and Hu Yeping (Taipei: Fu Jen Catholic University Press, 2004), 1-20.

www.crvp.org). For McLean, the dividends from the dissemination of ideas is of far greater interest than the dividends from sales.

George McLean has devoted not only his mind, heart, and hands but his energy, his financial resources, and virtually every waking hour to this philosophical endeavor. For McLean, philosophy is a vocation, and his support for global dialogue stems from a deep sense of faith, hope, and love.

There are, McLean believes, many philosophical traditions, cultures, and schools that seek the truth. His metaphor for this is that there are many roads that lead “to the holy mountain.” The present volume of essays – and other volumes like it, now appearing in several languages and in several countries – are tokens of the respect and deep appreciation for all that George McLean has done for the cause of philosophy and to help philosophers of different cultures, languages, and traditions to come “to the mountain.”

1. A Strong Sense of Faith

George McLean has a faith that holds that communication and cooperation are possible for philosophers from all philosophical traditions – and that it is important to enable those of different traditions to bring their contributions “to the table” and thereby (to use another metaphor) to build bridges among the very different world views.

Some may ask how he came to have such a “faith.”

George Francis McLean was born on June 29, 1929 to a Scottish-Irish Catholic family. His great-great grand parents on both sides of his family came to the United States from Ireland 150 years ago. McLean grew up in Lowell, Massachusetts, the earliest developed industrial community in the United States. His grandparents were shopkeepers. His father, Arthur McLean, served as a Lieutenant during the First World War, and afterwards was a clerk at the city post office. His mother, Agnes McLean, was a grammar school teacher.

George McLean was the second youngest of five children (three boys and two girls). His sisters say that, when he was young, he was quiet and timid but fond of reading. At the age of 11, at St. Margaret Church in Lowell, where he was baptized, McLean made up his mind to dedicate his life to what he refers to as his “family” – the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a Catholic missionary community founded by Eugène de Mazenod, a French priest. The Oblates’ chief mission is to help the poor, the neglected and the abandoned across the world. And so, after high school, McLean went to Newburgh, New York, for study at Our Lady of Hope Seminary.

In 1949, McLean was sent to Rome, for further studies at the Gregorian University. He remained there for seven years: three years in philosophy and four years in theology. For a young student, it was a mind-opening experience. At the scholasticate where he lived there were over 100 seminarians from many different countries. Living together with such a large group of people with varied cultural backgrounds provided him with a special opportunity to learn how to live with others in a harmonious and friendly way.

The experience was unique because French was spoken at the residence, Latin was used in the classes, and Italian was the local language. In 1955, McLean was ordained an Oblate priest and, in 1956, he was called back to the United States to pursue a doctorate in philosophy at The Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington, DC.

In 1958, McLean finished his doctorate with a dissertation on Paul Tillich (1886-1965), and began teaching at CUA as well as at the Oblate College. Tillich was an influential Protestant theologian, who broadened the understanding of religion by defining it as a person's "ultimate concern" – insisting that everyone has some religious commitment and that the mythic qualities of religious narratives play an important role in people's lives. Tillich's writings provided McLean with an intellectual bridge from the Catholic tradition to the broader Christian horizon.

In 1960, McLean was asked by the School of Philosophy at CUA to organize a summer philosophy workshop; he continued this every year until 1968. The 1960s were a period of great change and instability. In Africa, anti-colonial movements fought for national independence from foreign domination; in Asia, the two major communist powers – the Soviet Union and China – periodically engaged in hostilities with each other; in Europe and North America – particularly in the United States – people sought equal civil rights and demanded more freedoms. Protest marches and demonstrations took place everywhere, and new movements emerged that challenged existing institutions and traditional life styles.

As this turmoil and these changes continued, many questions arose. What should people do? What means should they use? Could philosophy play an active role in social and cultural change? In order to answer these questions and to help sort out these puzzles, McLean organized the summer workshops thematically, choosing such topics as philosophy and technology, reason and belief, and the value of the study of classical philosophy and ethics. He invited many of the most influential philosophers of the time to lecture in the mornings and opened the discussion to all participants in the afternoons. More than 100 philosophy professors and students, as well as others who were searching for answers, came to Washington, DC to attend the workshop each summer. This work gave McLean experience that later enabled him to play significant roles in a number of professional philosophical organizations.

Because of the success of the workshops, McLean was asked by Professor James A. Weisheipl, O.P., the President of the American Catholic Philosophical Association (ACPA), to be its Secretary, a position he held for 15 years (1965-1980). During these years, McLean enhanced the work of the ACPA by including in its publications a "chronicle" of philosophical events happening around the world, by organizing membership drives, by establishing a placement service for graduating students seeking employment in philosophy, and by organizing the annual meetings of the ACPA and editing and publishing the proceedings.

In 1968, McLean went to Vienna to attend the World Congress of Philosophy. There began his involvement with the work of International

Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP). From 1978 to 1988, McLean served on its Board of Directors, developing policies for future World Congresses of Philosophy and other philosophical meetings sponsored by FISP. McLean's contributions to philosophy at the international level increased when, in 1974, Professor H.D. Lewis of King's College (London) and President of the International Society for Metaphysics (ISM), appointed McLean Secretary of that organization. In the same year, McLean began his service as the Secretary of the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies (WUCPS) (with Professor Carlo Giacon of Italy, the Director of the *Enciclopedia Filosofica* and the then-President of the World Union). McLean held these positions until 1998. In the following year, in 1975, McLean participated in the founding, and served as the first Secretary for, The Inter-university Committee on Research and Policy Studies (ICR) and The Joint-Committee of Catholic Learned Societies and Scholars (CLS).

One of the first fruits of McLean's international activity was his initiation of a series of conferences, beginning in 1976, sponsored by the International Society for Metaphysics. These conferences took place in major centers around the world – in Santiniketan (India), New York, Jerusalem, Bogota (Columbia), Nairobi, and in other locales – on the themes of the human person, society, and culture. Some of the papers presented at these meetings were later published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in volumes titled, *Person and Nature*, *Person and Society*, *Person and God*, and *The Nature of Metaphysical Knowledge*. Following each subsequent major conference of the ISM, collections of papers were published; volumes in preparation include: *Society and Unity*, *Society, Truth and Human Rights*, *Society and the Good*, *The Metaphysics of Culture*, *Metaphysics, Culture and Symbols*, *Metaphysics, Culture and Nature*, *Metaphysics, Culture and Values*, and *Metaphysics, Culture and Morality*.

In the early 1970s, McLean began to work with philosophers in Latin America, especially in the countries along the Andes. A series of colloquia on moral education was held in Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, and Brazil. Within a few years, McLean had lectured in virtually all the countries of Central and South America. Then, beginning in 1977, McLean participated in the organization of conferences and workshops, in association with the Academies of Sciences of several countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The aim of these meetings was to build bridges for joint philosophical reflection and to promote exchange among philosophers from Western and Eastern Europe. Since 1987, similar series of colloquia with the Academies of Social Sciences in Beijing and Shanghai, and with Peking, Fudan, and other universities in China have been held. A number of corresponding volumes have been published: 25 from Central and Eastern Europe and 20 from China.

In 1983, McLean founded The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) as an extension of the two specialized philosophical organizations – The International Society for Metaphysics and The World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies. The objective of the Council is to

break through ideologies in order to engage deep human concerns, to bridge traditions and cultures, and to seek new horizons for social transformation. It aims to mobilize research teams to study the nature, interpretation, and development of cultures; to bring their work to bear on the challenges of contemporary change; to publish and distribute the results of these efforts; and to organize both extended seminars for deeper exploration of these issues and regional conferences for the coordination of this work.

Starting in the early 1980s, through visits, lectures, and regional conferences, McLean has been involved with the work of philosophers at a number of African universities. His initial trip to Africa brought him to some 12 universities. McLean has since made subsequent visits – to a dozen universities in 1996 and to several more in 2000 – for a total of 22 different universities.

As dialogue with the Islamic world has become more pressing, McLean has also focused on work with Islamic scholars. In addition to organizing conferences, McLean has given lectures in countries where Islam is a powerful force: Egypt, Mali, Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and including several Central Asian countries.

Throughout all this it is McLean's sense of faith that underlies his work. The initiatives undertaken by the World Union and by the ISM – and, more recently, the special work of the RVP – are tangible results of the faith that underpins McLean's efforts. As McLean describes it, the goals of the RVP are to assist scholars in understanding and appreciating their own culture and the values that shape national aspirations and motivate actions; to help philosophers to understand other cultures and to develop a positive yet critical appreciation thereof; and to build cooperation among peoples by overcoming tensions and promoting peace and cooperation on a global scale.

McLean believes that culture is the foundation of human life, and that it is necessary for spiritual cultivation and social progress. A community develops its distinctive character through its history by formulating its values and virtues, and it is through its patterns of social life that freedom is developed and exercised. By culture, then, McLean means the capacity of the spirit of a people and its ability to act creatively in shaping all dimensions of life – material and spiritual, economic and political, artistic and scientific. It involves one's whole being, and is characterized by unity, truth, goodness and beauty. It shares deeply in the meanings and values of life. "Culture is a renewal, a reliving of origins in an attitude of profound appreciation. This leads us beyond self and other, beyond identity and diversity, in order to comprehend both." In all of this, a sense of faith is necessary. The role of philosophy, then, is to help people carry on "the living faith of those who have passed away" and bring their respective cultural heritages forward to face and respond to change.

2. A Positive Sense of Hope

The last century witnessed enormous human tragedies and spectacular human achievements: world wars – cold and hot – the Holocaust, the confrontations of ideologies, dramatic social changes, the astonishing development of science and technology and the communications revolution that has accompanied it, and so on. These have affected virtually every aspect of everyday life. Philosophy – understood as the way of searching for universal truth – has also undergone change. The Cold War split the world into antagonistic camps; for a long time there was no real dialogue, communication, or exchange, but only isolation or confrontation between philosophers of East and West. In some nations, philosophy was employed merely as a tool to serve certain ideologies; in some places it was reduced to a narrow and specialized subject; and for some philosophers, philosophy was merely a pragmatic and analytical tool that had nothing to do with the search for meaning.

Despite these challenges and divisions, McLean's work has long exhibited a sense of hope, for he recognizes the universality of the search for meaning in all cultures and traditions. This is what McLean sees as evidence of an underlying, general metaphysical aspiration.

McLean insists that metaphysics – and philosophy in general – should not separate themselves from life experience, and that philosophers should actively engage what is going on in the world. Once when he was in Bogota, Columbia, for a conference of the International Society for Metaphysics, a professor told him that people there were not interested in metaphysics but rather just wanted some meaning in their lives. McLean immediately replied that that was exactly what metaphysics was about.

McLean, then, is a metaphysician. His philosophy is based on his Christian understanding of the loving relations of the Trinity and its extension to the transcendental principles of the true, the good, and the beautiful. He believes that the meaning of life is to look for the true, to act for the good, and to enjoy the beautiful. Of course, these are far from uniquely Christian values. For example, McLean found in the Hindu concepts of *sat* (existence), *cit* (consciousness), and *ananda* (bliss), a corresponding understanding of how particular actions and persons are seen through the One or as the manifestations of Brahman and, hence, contribute to living in a way that is truly just, good, and meaningful.

In 1999, on the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, McLean published a series of lectures he had given in Lahore, Pakistan, entitled *Ways to God: Personal and Social at the Turn of Millennia*. In this book, he systematically traces metaphysical being from totemic myth and ritual, to the Greek and Judeo-Christian traditions, to systematic Christian philosophy, through to Islamic mystical and existential understanding. In *Persons, Peoples and Cultures in a Global Age: Metaphysical Bases for Peace between Civilizations* (published by the RVP in 2004), McLean goes

deeper into being (*esse*), looking for the metaphysical foundations of ‘person’ through culture, relation, and gift.

McLean’s sense of hope in overcoming division and in promoting exchange can be seen in his efforts to build bridges among philosophers, particularly including those from the “East.” After meeting Professor Janusz Kuczynski of Poland, the founder of the journal *Dialogue and Universalism*, at the World Congress of Philosophy held in Varna, Bulgaria in 1973, McLean was invited to come to Warsaw in 1977, in order to explore the possibility of exchange and dialogue with Polish philosophers. After a year’s planning, the first meeting was held in Munich in 1978 with 8 philosophers from Poland and 8 philosophers from West Europe and North America – a very rare encounter between philosophers from both the East and the West. A second meeting was held the following year in Bellagio, Italy.

During his 1977 visit to Poland, McLean also went to Krakow to take part in a meeting of Polish Catholic philosophers organized by then-Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (now Pope John Paul II), and spent a week with him in Krakow. In 1978, McLean, as the Secretary of the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies, returned to Krakow to work with Cardinal Wojtyla to convoke a meeting of 60 Catholic philosophers from Poland together with an equal number of philosophers from other countries.

In 1977, McLean also went to Moscow and met Professor Vadim S. Semenov, Editor of *Philosophy*, the journal of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This led to contacts with other Russian philosophers and, later, to colloquia with philosophers from other Academies of Sciences – of Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Georgia, and Lithuania.

In 1978, McLean visited Romania. Professor Ion Bansoiu recalls that one day he saw a foreigner who seemed lost, sitting on the curb along the street near the University of Bucharest. Bansoiu went over and asked the foreigner what was he looking for. The foreigner (McLean) told him that he was looking for the Philosophy Department of the University. Since Bansoiu was a philosophy professor at the University, he took him to the Department office. It was in this way that cooperation with philosophers in Romania began.

Work with philosophers in Central and Eastern Europe – like the work that McLean (through the RVP and related groups) has supported throughout the world – has gone through three stages: (1) retrospective: retrieving insights from the rich resources of the tradition of the region; (2) prospective: developing concepts concerned with values and rights, based on the resources discovered in the first stage; and (3) international: enabling scholars to address the many challenges involved in moving into closer relations with the European Union and with the international community in general. This retrospective activity has resulted in the publication of eight volumes of essays, on such issues as the philosophy of the person; solidarity and cultural creativity; tradition and the challenge of Czech political culture; language, values and the Slovak nation; national identity as an issue of knowledge and morality; and personal freedom and national resurgence. (These volumes

were published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in cooperation with the Paideia Publishers in Bucharest.) A further 14 volumes have appeared, which discuss such issues as: national, cultural and ethnic identities; harmony beyond conflict; models of identity in post-communist societies; interests and values: the spirit of venture in a time of change; values in Islamic culture and the experience of history; values and education in Romania today; Lithuanian philosophy: persons and ideas; Islamic and Christian cultures: conflict or dialogue, and so on.

The building of relations that McLean has been involved in in Central and Eastern Europe has also been repeated in China. McLean had wished to visit the People's Republic of China from the early 1970s. Then, however, the country was in the middle of the Cultural Revolution and had cut off connection with the outside world. Only in the early 1980s, after the Chinese government initiated economic reforms and an open-door policy, were there possibilities for Chinese to visit other countries and for foreigners to enter. In 1986 in Hawaii, McLean met Professor Tang Yijie of Peking University, and together they planned meetings which would be held every other year in China. In 1987, a first colloquium with Chinese philosophers, on the theme of "Man and Nature," was held at the Peking University in Beijing. In 1988, at the World Congress of Philosophy held in Brighton, England, McLean met Professor Wang MiaoYang of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and invited him to another meeting in Leuven, Belgium, following the World Congress. Since then, there has been continuous cooperation with the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. In 1991, while in Shanghai, McLean visited Fudan University and met Professors Liu Fangtong, Yu Wujin and other professors, and thus began cooperative work with philosophers at Fudan University.

In 1999, McLean organized a series of small conferences in which he invited 11 Chinese philosophers to visit six universities in India, in order to come to know better the Hindu roots of Chinese Buddhism. And, in 2001, McLean invited 7 foreign professors to come to China to participate in twelve colloquia held at universities and Academies across China. There, the focus of the discussion was: How can philosophy contribute to the process of social transformation? What role should philosophers play in helping people face the many challenges of the modern and postmodern world? These and subsequent colloquia have involved understanding and examining the Chinese traditions and discussing ways of responding to contemporary change, particularly concerning: the human person and society; Chinese cultural traditions and modernization; the humanization of technology and Chinese culture; beyond modernization: Chinese roots for global awareness; economic ethics and Chinese culture; civil society in a Chinese context; and the cultural impact of international relations.

To honour his efforts in bringing Chinese philosophy into closer contact with the outside world, McLean was made an Advisory Professor by Fudan University, Shanghai, in 1994, an Advisory Researcher by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences in 1998, and an Advisory Professor by the

Jiaotong University, Xian, in 2000. The Chinese philosophers who know McLean refer to him as a “sage,” a term reserved in China for those deserving the highest respect.

3. An Open Sense of Love

Kant says that to love is to do good; love also involves an openness to and a respect for others that requires a willingness to listen to them and to hear them on their own terms. Love reflects faith and hope. It requires us to look closely at reality – at what is hidden and what is open to all – and to be willing to share both the joys and struggles of life. This unity of love, hope, and faith is characteristic of religion, and McLean believes that a religious element lies at the root of all cultures. In fact, as he writes in *Faith, Reason, and Philosophy: lectures at the al-Azhar, Qum, Tehran, Lahore and Beijing*, “reason in its first and basic philosophical articulations was religious.”

Philosophy as an intellectual discipline helps us to look at reality from a critical distance, to provide a rational analysis, and to express what we see in conceptual terms. But love for others requires us to read between the lines – to see the shift of human awareness from the vertical to horizontal, from object to subject, from the material to the spiritual, and from the quantitative to the qualitative. This shift provides an opportunity for all peoples and all cultures to pursue self-realization, self-consciousness and self-perfection actively. Philosophy, as reason, implies theory, rationality, and abstraction; the love that is reflected in religion draws on lived experience, shows openness, and allows intimacy. The two complement and enhance each other, rather than contradict and weaken one another.

McLean often uses the image from the book of *Isaias* [Isaiah] (2: 1-5) in the Hebrew Scriptures, which describes the peoples of the world coming from all directions to converge at the Holy Mountain. Each brings its own special contribution to the whole, shines with its own beauty, and manifests the goodness of the Absolute.

McLean’s sense of love is evident in his efforts to reach out from his own cultural tradition and background. Inspired, as we have seen, by the insights of Paul Tillich, during his first sabbatical (in 1969), he went to the Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, at the University of Madras, India. There, he studied the Hindu classics with T.M.P. Mahadevan (1911-1983) and R. Balasubramanian. At that time, the research of the Institute was especially focused on the Advaita philosophy of Sankara. McLean attended classes in the University and was fascinated by the richness of Hindu philosophy and religion – a richness which enabled him to understand his own philosophy in a deeper and clearer way. Because he came to love Indian intellectual life, McLean returned there for his second sabbatical in 1977, when he spent three months in Darjiling, reading through all the commentaries he had collected on the Indian classics. Since then, McLean has gone back to India often, to organize colloquia and to give lectures. To honor his contribution to Indian philosophical life, the Indian Council for

Philosophical Research designated him as their Annual Lecturer for 2004, and invited him to give a set of lectures in 6 universities across the subcontinent.

This sense of love, which seeks to bring people together, has led McLean to engage in a wide range of activities. During part of his first sabbatical, McLean spent six months in Paris with Paul Riceour, who arranged for him to use the facilities and libraries of the universities and to attend whichever classes he was interested in. These experiences in Madras and Paris led McLean to establish, beginning in 1984, a program that mirrored his own intellectual opportunities – the annual 10 week seminars held at the Catholic University in Washington, DC. As noted above, McLean invites some 10 professors from 10 different countries, provides basic room and board for the participants, and designates them as CUA Visiting Research Scholars (which makes it possible for them to use the university libraries in the Washington, DC area as well as the Library of Congress). McLean also encourages seminar participants to attend courses related to their research interests. In order to promote the involvement of local university faculty in these activities, McLean founded The Center for the Study of Culture and Values at the Catholic University of America in 2000.

McLean's work in Asia has extended beyond India and the mainland of China; he has been a frequent visitor to Taiwan where, together with Professors Tran Van Doan and Vincent Shen, he has promoted work on the interface between traditional Chinese and Christian philosophy. He has participated in conferences in Japan (in connection with the work of Professors Tomonobu Imamichi and Noriko Hashimoto) and in the Philippines (with Professor Manny Dy). More recently, McLean has developed contacts with scholars in a number of other countries, such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

McLean believes that Islamic philosophy and religion have much to contribute to the dialogue and the pursuit of truth in the present world. In order to understand better the dynamic of Islam, in 1991 and 1992, he went to Cairo, Egypt, to study Islamic philosophy and religion at The Institute for Oriental Studies under Professor G. Anawati; he also gave lectures at the al-Azhar University (the world's oldest university).

In 1998, one of McLean's students from Iran invited him to participate in a conference in Tehran on the issue of security and cooperation. In the following year, he went back to Tehran to attend the first international conference on Mulla Sadra, during which time he was invited to give a public lecture at Mofid University in Qom, the holy city for Shiite Muslims and the major center in Iran for training Muslim clerics. An Iranian scholar (Professor Musa S. Dibadj) said later that McLean was probably the first non-Muslim – and the first Christian – to give a public lecture in Qom. In 2000, McLean spent a month at Mofid University, lecturing and helping to organize the international meeting on human rights that was held in Tehran the next year.

After the former Soviet Republics in Central Asia established their independence in 1991, McLean began to work with philosophers from that region as well. In 1994, with the help of Professor Vadim S. Semenov,

McLean visited Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to give a series of lectures at the University of Tashkent and to discuss plans for future cooperation with Professor Said Shermukhamedov. Later, McLean returned to Tashkent to teach at a summer school – which led to his invitation to Professor Victoriya Levinskaya to participate in the annual seminar in Washington, DC. Subsequent visits to Uzbekistan (in 1999 and 2002) led to the publication of one of the first volumes in English written by Uzbek philosophers.

McLean has traveled through the other former Soviet Republics – to Turkmenistan (in 1997) where he spent two and half months investigating possibilities of working with philosophers there; to Kazakhstan (in 1997, 1998, and 2002), to Georgia (in 1999 and 2001), to Kyrgyzstan (in 1998 and 2002), and to the Ukraine (in 1997, 1999, and 2001) – giving lectures, participating in colloquia, and organizing meetings. In 2003, to honor his contributions to philosophical development in Central Asia, McLean was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan.

If Kant is right in saying that to love is to do good, then McLean has shown a love that complements his intellectual commitments to help philosophers throughout the world to engage in their own philosophical work. The author of over a dozen books, and editor of some 70 others, McLean has strong philosophical views. Characteristically, however, he lets others speak first – and this reflects the influence of various traditions and cultures on his own work. These influences are many: the Thomistic philosophy and Catholic tradition in which he was first educated; the work of Paul Tillich which provided intellectual tools to engage other traditions constructively; the critique of modernity found in Martin Heidegger; the study of the philosophies and religions of India and Asia, and, of course, the contacts with philosophers from different regions and cultures. But, most of all, it is hermeneutics – which seeks to uncover what is hidden, yet which also requires humility from the enquirer, an openness to the existence of different interpretations of texts, and the recognition that no interpretation is final – that underlies not only McLean’s approach to his work, but his concern to bring scholars into dialogue, and his optimism for the future.

As we might expect, then, among his recent publications are volumes on *Hermeneutics, Tradition and Contemporary Change (lectures in Chennai/Madras, India)*; *Hermeneutics, Faith, and Relations between Cultures (lectures in Qom, Iran)*; and *Hermeneutics for a Global Age (lectures in Shanghai and Hanoi)*. In these volumes, McLean traces “the nature of hermeneutics and the history of its development from a science to a life process,” argues “how an hermeneutic perspective can enable us better to understand the nature and formation of the religious tradition in which we stand and the role of that tradition in the reading of our sacred texts,” and reflects on “how such an understanding can be transformative in contemporary social life and engage in faithful dialogue with the many cultures and civilizations of the world.” The hermeneutical method, then, provides an intellectual tool to pursue what McLean also knows through his sense of love

– that doing philosophy requires listening to others and letting their voices be heard.

Conclusion

Someone once asked McLean what his motives were for traveling to places where philosophy was considered by many in the West to be less developed, and where the social and intellectual situation was difficult. McLean's response was that philosophy is not a "top down" activity; it is not something to be done in isolation or by a single individual. It comes from the grassroots, from people's everyday lives, and from the culture in which they live. Each people has its own way of living and searching for the meaning of life. Yet it also needs a window to let in new light and new air, and to let its unique character be seen by those outside. In the *Republic*, Plato gives us the allegory of the cave. Only those who climb out of the cave – painstakingly, passionately, and consistently – will come to see the light, the truth, and the Absolute. Philosophy, then, is the exercise of freedom.

Like McLean, Dr. Martin Luther King, the great leader of the American civil rights movement of the 1960s, wrote his doctoral dissertation on Paul Tillich. McLean loves to quote King's famous speech: *I Have a Dream*. Let us end this brief Introduction with the very last part of that speech. These words capture McLean's global commitments and his philosophical vision:

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to go to jail together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning...

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.
 Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.
 Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado
 Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.
 But not only that.
 Let freedom ring from the Stone Mountain of Georgia.
 Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.
 Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and hamlet, from every state and city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children – black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants – will be able to join hands and to sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

Obituary

Rev. George F. McLean, O.M.I. Missionary Oblate Priest for 61 Years

Rev. George F. McLean, O.M.I., 87, died on September 6, 2016 at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Residence, Tewksbury, MA, after a period of declining health. He was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, a son of the late Arthur and Agnes (McHugh) McLean. He was one of six children and was predeceased by two brothers, James and Rev. Edward, and two sisters, Mary, and Sr. Agnes Mary, a Maryknoll Sister of St. Dominic, as well as one brother in law, Frank Carolan.

Fr. McLean was educated in Lowell through high school. He attended the Oblate minor seminary in Newburgh, NY, Gregorian University in Rome, Italy and Catholic University in Washington, DC. He earned a Doctorate in Philosophy and a Bachelor Degree and Licentiate in Sacred Theology. He later pursued advanced studies in Indian Philosophy, Phenomenology and Islamic Philosophy.

Fr. McLean entered the Missionary Oblate Novitiate in Ipswich, MA on September 7, 1948. He professed his first vows as a Missionary Oblate on September 8, 1949, followed by perpetual vows on September 8, 1952. The late Bishop Luigi Faveri of Roviano, Italy ordained him to the priesthood in Roviano on July 10, 1955.

From 1956 until 1993, Fr. McLean was a professor at the Oblate College and the Catholic University of America, both in Washington, DC. In 1983, he founded and was Director of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in Washington, DC. As a multilingual speaker, his four languages were advantageous, as the Council is comprised of prominent philosophers and social scientists from many countries. He coordinated seminars and workshops that sought to capture the gifts and values that Fr. McLean saw as inherent in the different cultures, traditions and faiths across the world and to encourage a multidisciplinary, collaborative and analytical approach to the discovery of how their unique threads of wisdom could be woven into a tapestry that would help us to relearn how to be human in global times.

He was an unofficial collaborator of Karol Wojtyla, having met him before he was elected pope, and shared his passion of the evangelization of culture. In the missionary spirit that was rekindled and directed by the Second Vatican Council, Fr. McLean taught that the Spirit of God was alive in every culture, and he spent his life helping people identify and engage that Spirit and announce it in a way that they could understand and share.

Due to declining health, early in 2010, Fr. McLean joined the community at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Residence in Tewksbury, MA where he remained until his death. Despite physical challenges, he remained very

involved in The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. From his residence in Tewksbury, he continued to have an impact on the world. He continued, in recent weeks, to guide the work of the Council and participate actively in its programs and editing its publications. In a conversation just days before his death, he spoke about how grateful he was for the dynamic missionary leadership that Pope Francis is awakening in the churches and told of how he would love to see the Holy Father address the 24th World Congress of Philosophy at Peking University in 2018. People around the world admired and respected him and his indefatigable spirit of inquiry, hospitality and generosity.

In addition to his Oblate family, Fr. McLean is survived by one sister, Agnes Carolan, of Lowell, MA.

Services and calling hours will be in the Chapel at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Residence, 486 Chandler Street, Tewksbury, Massachusetts. Calling hours will be on Monday, September 12, 2016 from 2-4 and 7-9 pm with a Prayer Service at 7:30 pm. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 am on Tuesday, September 13, 2016. Interment will take place in the cemetery at the Chandler Street residence.

Donations in memory of Fr. McLean may be made to the Oblate Infirmary Fund, 486 Chandler Street, Tewksbury, MA 01876-2849.

The McKenna-Ouellette Funeral Home, 327 Hildreth Street, Lowell, MA, is in charge of arrangements. For condolences or directions, please visit www.mckennaouellette.com.

Condolences

(in chronological order)

From: **Mathew C. Martin**
Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 12:30 PM

Hu,
I just heard that Fr. George passed away. I am so sorry to hear it and wanted to send you my deepest condolences. I hope that you are well.

-Mat

Mathew Martin, CA
Archivist and Curator of Old and Rare Books
Southwestern Oblate Historical Archives
Oblate School of Theology
285 Oblate Drive
San Antonio, TX 78216

From: **Hoang Thi Tho**
Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 12:47 PM

Dear Hu Yeping,
Mrs. Hanh has just informed us that in DC, Father McLean has passed away today!

It is a great shock for all of us who has admired Father McLean's virtue, knowledge and his great contributions for the development of the world philosophy in globalization age!

I am deeply grieved to his bereavement, and I want to express my sincere condolences in his passing away to the God!

Dear Hu, receive from me the deepest sympathy.

Yours,

Hoang Thi Tho
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

From: **Ron Rolheiser**

Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 3:42 PM

Dear Hu

I want to express my condolences to you on the death for Fr. MacLean. I know you worked closely with him for a lot of years and that you valued deeply both his person and his work. Know that you have my sympathies. I hope that we find the means to continue his work.

I remember you well, both from meeting you in Washington at a meeting and, especially, from your visit here when Fr. George received an honorary doctorate. I remember too your good sense of humor!

Peace

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, O.M.I.

President

Oblate School of Theology

San Antonio, Texas.

From: **Sophie Cloutier**

Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 3:57 PM

Hello Hu,

I just heard about the sad news. I know you were working very closely with Father McLean, so I wanted to express my deepest sympathies. I am thinking of you in this sad moment...

May he rest in peace and he will be missed, but his work and his person will continue to inspire us.

Best,

Sophie

Sophie Cloutier, Ph.D.

Professeure de philosophie

Directrice du Centre de recherche en éthique publique et

gouvernance/Director Research Centre in Public Ethics and Governance

Faculté de philosophie

Université Saint-Paul, 223 Main,

Ottawa, Ontario

From: **Lu Xiaowen** (卢晓雯)

Date: Wednesday, September 7, 2016 at 6:16 PM

We are saddened by the loss of a great man. When we saw him three weeks ago, we didn't realize that was the last. We will see if we can make it there next week.

Hu, be strong and let us know if there is anything we can help with.

Xiaowen

From: **Phong Tran Tuan**

Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 7:20 PM

Dear Dr. Hu,

It was with great sadness that I learnt about the death of Professor McLean. I feel a real loss in his passing and want to extend my sympathy to you and the relatives of Professor McLean.

Please accept my sincerest condolences.

Sincerely yours,

Tran Tuan Phong
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

From: **Pham Van Duc**

Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 7:58 PM

Dear Dr. Hu,

I am very sorry to hear of the death of Professor McLean. On behalf of myself, all scholars and students of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences I would like to offer our sincere and heart-felt condolences to you.

I will never forget his kindness. May God give him eternal rest and you the strength to bear the great pain.

With my deepest sympathy.

Pham Van Duc
Vice President
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

From: **João J. Vila-Chã**

Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 10:31 PM

Dear Hu,

I just wrote this:

Before the death, or the Passing, of a dear Master, of someone one admires most profoundly in the depths of one’s heart, indeed, of someone whom you met without knowing precisely why and yet knowing that for some very deep reason you were meeting, and certain that such a meeting was only possible because God so willed, yes, before the fact that a Man that gave you the honor of contributing to his fascinating Project of reaching out to the Cultures of the world in order to find in them the very best that so often is hidden and calls for an ever deeper understanding, for an hermeneutics of the Newness of the New, for a loving approach of the mystery of Being Human as transpiring in all the human works, consigned in the traditions, flourishing out of that creative tension that always exists between the order of Immanence and the infinite realm of Transcendence, one, and that is me in the present case, can only bow deeply before the humble Great Man that just departed, leaving this world amazingly richer because of the immense gift that his life and his many doings were for countless people around the world. Here below, please, find the Obituary that his Congregation just published and the video of his last major Conference, in this case a joint project with the Pontifical Gregorian University, in Rome. I miss Father George McLean dearly and trust that his most astonishing life-work will be able to continue. Farewell, dear Fr. George! Farewell, and Rest in Peace!

Prof. João J. Vila-Chã
Pontificia Università Gregoriana
Piazza della Pilotta, 4
00187 ROMA • ITALIA

From: **Luong Dinh Hai**

Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 11:07 PM

Dear leaders of the RVP,
Dear leaders of CUA,
Dear colleagues in the RVP and in CUA,

I am very sorry to hear of Prof. G. F. McLean’s passing. Although, the rule of life is that the getting old can bring senior health challenges, but I still feel that the Prof. G.F. McLean’s passing is very distressing. Prof. G.F. McLean has had great contributed to the development of the philosophy of international relationship between Vietnam and United State America. He is a wonderful example on the scientific spirit of passion, of great kindness and tolerance, of human values as well as the friendships among countries.

I would like to send my deepest condolences to all colleagues of the RPV and CUA to his family in this great loss. Please, Goodbye Prof. G.F. McLean. May his soul rest in perfect peace. With much love and prayers! Thanks and regards,

Luong Dinh Hai (Luong Viet Hai)
Assoc. Prof. Dc.Sc. in Philosophy
Director Institute of Human Studies.
Editor-in-Chief of Journal “Human Studies”
Hanoi, Vietnam

From: **Thomas Menampampil**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 2:21 AM

Dear Prof. Hu Yeping,

I am deeply grieved to learn of the departure of Fr. George McLean. We shall miss George a great deal. I had fondly been hoping that he would keep guiding us for a number of years more. I am glad I was able to meet him more than once and collaborate with him for a few years. May he rest in peace. And may the values he stood for continue to thrive.

Thank you for the mighty help you gave him over the years.

Thomas Menampampil, S.D.B.
Archbishop of Guwahati
The apostolic administrator of Diocese of Jowai

From: **Kuruvilla Pandikattu**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 2:54 AM

I miss his guiding and inspiring presence. Let us pray for him and hope that his mission will be continued with the same vigour and dedication. God bless him!

Kuruvilla, S.J.
Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Institute of Philosophy and Religion Pune
Maharashtra, India

From: **Sebastian Velassery**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 2:56 AM

Dear Ms. Hu,

Thanks for the mail informing me about the sad demise of my mentor and loving guide. I have been reminded of my days with him in the O.M.I. residence. In fact, he was especially good and kind to me in all my academic ventures. One of my books “Death and Transcendence: A Cross-Cultural Journey” was dedicated to him and at that time, he asked me: “Sebastian, you are making me aware of my death.” I remember fondly and pray for the noble soul of McLean.

With kind regards and prayers,

Sebastian Velassery
Punjab University
Chandigarh, India

From: **P.H.A.I. Jonkers**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 2:57 AM

Dear Hu and other friends of George,

Thanks for letting me the sad news that Father George McLean passed away yesterday. I have known George for several years and I admired the way in which he managed to unite people from very different geographical, cultural, and religious backgrounds on the intellectual reflection of values that are of vital importance in these times of major cultural changes. His intellectual open-mindedness, which is quite exceptional for a person of his age, and his generous personality are a great example for me. My prayers go to George’s sister, the Oblate family, and last but not least to you, Hu. You have collaborated with him so closely and assisted him when his health was declining, so that, especially for you, this loss must be tragic.

As far as the continuation of the precious work of the RVP is concerned, if I can be of any help, please let me know.

With every good wish,

Peter Jonkers
Tilburg University
The Netherlands

From: **Tony Carroll**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 3:18 AM

Dear Hu,

We are very sorry to hear of the death of George.

He was such an inspirational man and with a heart as big as the cosmos that I am sure his vision and kindness will live on in the RVP.

Be assured of our thoughts and prayers for him and you at this time. Love, and until India,

Tony and Gisela
Heythrop College
University of London

From: **Anthony Savari Raj**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 3:29 AM

Dear Hu Yeping,

Very tragic news indeed and it must be so particularly to you – the close collaborator of our beloved friend Fr. McLean.

Sincere condolences and prayers!

At a loss for words...

Raj
Manipal University Jaipur
Jaipur, India

From: **Indra Choudhuri**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 4:18 AM

Dear Hu,

When I was leaving Boston last year after the conference, Professor McLean knocked at my door in the morning and said, ‘let us have breakfast together.’ It was his way to say good bye to me but I was very much intrigued. There were many occasions in the past when he said good bye to me and others after the conference was over but never like this on the departure day.

Hu, you will have to believe me this small incident has bugged me all these seven-eight months. Why, why did he come to say good bye to me because he had had a premonition that it would be our last meeting. He loved Indian Philosophy and after my presentation at Boston, he remarked that listening to you, I was reminded of my Madras days.

In the Upanishads it is said, Yasya chaya amritam yasya mrittu: He, the Supreme Reality is the ambrosia and also death. His death is nothing but reaching the ultimate stage of Supreme Bliss.

Indra Nath Choudhuri
Administration and Cultural Diplomacy
Professor of Indian Studies and Comparative Literature
New Delhi, India

From: **Herta Nagl**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 4:23 AM

Dear Yeping,

With deep sorrow did we read the sad news Brigitte Buchhammer sent us. We have first met Father McLean in the early 1980s at a symposium of the International Society of Metaphysics in Nairobi, Kenya, and kept in touch with him since then. We always greatly admired his persistent efforts to promote philosophical dialogue, especially with, and in, regions on the globe that had not been adequately included in the more visible current debates. Personally, we are most grateful for the kind and understanding way in which he used to take up our concerns. We will miss him very much, indeed. We last talked to Father McLean in March 2015, when he gave a talk and received honours so well deserved at the Gregoriana in Rome.

Now our warmest sympathy goes out to you. Our thoughts are with you in these time of mourning – we know well what a big loss this is for you. Also we would like to express our very best thanks for your continuous commitment that made it possible for Father McLean to continue his work under increasingly painful circumstances.

Most cordially,

Herta and Ludwig
University of Vienna
Vienna, Austria

From: **Busy Graham**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 5:09 AM

Oh dear Hu.

This is such sad news.

We are so sorry to lose Father McLean.

Such a great man.

Such an incredible legacy.

Will there be a memorial gathering at some time in the DC area?

Sending you much love.

XO

Busy Graham

www.CarpeDiemArts.org

From: **Ouyang Kang**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 6:31 AM

Dear Ms. Hu and All:

I am very sad and surprise to know the bad news of Professor George McLean!

Professor George McLean is really a very kind, responsible, eminence and holy man!

We all got great benefit from his great contribution to the cross-culture communication and international academic exchange of the RVP!

I am sorry for that I do think my English is not good enough to express all of my respect and yearning to him!

On behalf of the Institute of Philosophy of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, and on the name of my wife and I myself, we deeply grieve Professor McLean!

Please help us to donate the flowers to him with our deepest sadness and most respective felling!

We do wish that the RVP will become more glorious and brilliant!

With best regards to all!

Ouyang Kang and Meng Xiaokang
from Wuhan, China

Prof. Dr. Ouyang, Kang
President of Institute of State Governance
Director of Institute of Philosophy
Huazhong University of Science and Technology
Wuhan, Hubei 430074, P. R. China

From: **Charles Taylor**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 7:55 AM

The news comes as something of a shock. Mutual condolences; it's a great loss for all of us. He will indeed, be in my prayers

charles

Charles Taylor
McGill University
Canada

From: **Juan Carlos Scannone**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 8:20 AM

Dra. Hu Yeping

Estimada Doctora, con gran dolor recibí la noticia del fallecimiento del P. McLean, pero espero que ya esté con Cristo y su Santísima Madre. Hoy voy a ofrecer la misa por su eterno descanso. Con mis más sinceras condolencias y en unión de oraciones, suyo en Cristo,

P. Juan Carlos Scannone, S.J.
Jesuit Seminary of San Miguel
Argentina

From: **William Sweet**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 9:11 AM

Dear Dr. Hu; Dear all

I share deeply in your sorrow and grief at this difficult time.

George was a man of prodigious energy and, even when his health obliged him to go to Tewkesbury, it seemed to slow him down only a little. He was always organising, planning, and writing. It is difficult to believe that we will not see him again in this life. He was a model of grace, humility, and dedication to others – and a model philosopher.

I first met George in 1974, though I came to know him well only in the late 1990s. Though we all know that all must pass, it is still a shock to me. I am going to need some time to digest this news.

Dr. Hu, I want you all to know that, if I can be of any service, please call on me. I will try to call you later today.

Yours

Will

Prof. Dr. William Sweet, FRAS, FRHistS
Professor of Philosophy
St Francis Xavier University
2329 Notre Dame Avenue
Antigonish, NS B2G 2W5 Canada

From: **Geeta Manaktala**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 9:18 AM

Dear Ms Hu,

Words seem inadequate to express the sadness I feel about the demise of our Professor McLean. We are all shocked. We all the members of the Council are here to support you in your grieving process with sincere sympathy.

yours

Geeta Manaktala
Punjab University
Chandigarh, India

From: **Robert Rehak**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 10:07 AM

Dear Mrs. Hu Yeping,

Please accept our sincere condolences. It is a very sad news for us. He was an exceptional person and did with your help extraordinary things.

From Prague,

Robert
Dr. Robert Rehak
Embassy of the Czech Republic

From: **龚群**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 11:06 AM

胡老师:

惊悉 Father McLean 驾鹤西去,不胜悲痛.我们失去了一位尊敬的长者,无比慈祥善良的长者,无比优秀,卓越的哲学家,全球哲学领导者,组织者,我敬爱的老师.遗憾的是我不在美国,不能给 Father McLean 送最后一程,如有可能给办理者说上敬上一个花圈,可以什么方式将款汇去,我一定办理.

尊敬的胡老师,我能理解您此时的悲痛心情,望节哀顺变,多保重.

原主护佑 Father McLean 的在天之灵,安息吧.

龚群
People's University of China
Beijing, China

From: **Yu Xuanmeng**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 11:15 AM

To Yeping Hu
To someone concerned

I was really shocked as I got to know that the revered Fr. McLean has gone. He is a great man of our era. I think he is a Saint I have ever touched personally. He made his merit not only in communicating cultures among the peoples of the world, but in fulfilling a perfect personhood. He has made a great influence on me and I will keep his memory in my mind forever.
May he rest in peace!

Yu Xuanmeng (professor)
Philosophy Department
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
Shanghai, China

From: **John Abbarno**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 11:20 AM

Dear Hu Yeping,
I heard from the Oblate seminarians I teach here in Buffalo about Fr. McLean's passing away. The world will miss his giant spirit and passion for Culture and Philosophy.
But especially for you, please accept my deep sympathy on your loss. If you have time please let me know what is planned for a service.
Take care.

John
D'Youville College
Buffalo, NY

From: **Vensus George**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 10:29 AM

Dear Miss Hu,
Greetings from Vensus!
I am sorry to hear about the demise of Fr. George McLean. My hearty condolences!
His death is a great loss for the academic community and particularly for the RVP. I have known him from the early 1980's when I was a graduate student at the Catholic University. I have learned much from his academic

spirit by doing my graduate research under his guidance. He has instilled in me a desire for research. We need to continue his academic legacy.

I will continue to assist the institute, as my other commitments permit, as I have done in the past, to promote his academic legacy.

With kind regards

Vensus George, SAC

From: **G.A.F. Hellemans**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 11:39 AM

Dear Hu,

Though not totally unexpected, the news of the passing of George has affected me deeply. Normally, I don't really know how to conduct myself in front of someone whom I admire. That's the case when I meet, for example, Charles Taylor or Jose Casanova. But with George, I felt at ease from our first encounter. I experienced him as a gentle father, curious about what one is doing, having the gift of appreciating almost every utterance a person is making as a worthwhile contribution. He was living the dialogue he was propagating.

I prayed today with George in mind and I will do this also in the days and weeks to come. My thoughts are also with you, Hu. You knew him so well as you worked with him for so many years. I offer you my condolences and my support.

May God bless both George and you.

Staf

Tilburg University

The Netherlands

From: **Oliva Blanchette**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 1:50 PM

Dear Yeping,

My sincerest condolences to you especially, George's closest collaborator and inspiration for so many years in the work of the RVP, and to the O.M.I. who stood behind him in Tewksbury in this work to the very end, and to those of his family who remain to grieve his loss.

Thank you for appraising me of George's death, which I suspected was coming these past few years, ever since he moved back to the infirmary in Tewksbury, but which he never let on was coming as he continued to work behind the scene for the greater glory of the World Spirit, the ideal of his life's work, in which you had so much to do.

I will not be able to attend the calling hours on Mon., but I shall try to make it to the funeral mass on Tues., and hope to see you there and then. Maybe we can talk about carrying on with the great work of open mindfulness that George was so good at fostering on a worldwide scale, even into the most remote communities and cultures.

Let us hope and pray that this great work will continue to spread wherever the human spirit breathes.

Oliva Blanchette
Boston College

From: **Wamala Edward**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 3:05 PM

Dear Dr. Hu,

We have received with great sadness the passing on of our friend, mentor and indefatigable leader who has steered the affairs of RSVP from its infancy to an international organization that it is today. On behalf of the Makerere University Philosophy fraternity, please accept and pass on our condolences to the entire RSVP fraternity.

May the almighty grant the soul of the deceased eternal peace.
Sincerely,

Wamala Edward
Makerere University
Kampala, Uganda

From: **Arthur Pingolt**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 3:28 PM

Hu,

My sympathies at this loss of your good friend George. He was/is a giant for goodness and the spread of the Spirit.

Artie

Arthur A. Pingolt, Jr.
President
Missionary Oblate Partnership
Co-Director, Mission Project Service
2109 Beckenham Dr. Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466 U.S.A.

From: **Yaroslav Pasko**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 3:59 PM

My heart is in a state of convulsion and I grieve with you

Donetsk University of Management
Donetsk, Ukraine

From: **Husain Heriyanto**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 4:11 PM

It is so pitiful to receive this information. Though knowing Father McLean's health has long declined, I remain was devastated knowing this sad news.

“...To God Almighty we belong, and to Him is our return...”
(*Inna lilLahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un*)

Father McLean is a very good man, a wise scholar, a humble clergyman, a tireless advocate for dialog of cultures for the sake of mutual understanding, wisdom, and humanity.

I strongly believe that God is always and will be always with him. May God's grace and blessings always devoted to him.

My deep mourning over the passing of Father McLean...!
Yours

Husain Heriyanto
University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

From: **Mamuka Dolidze**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 4:13 PM

Dear Ms. Hu

I and my wife and all my family express deep condolences on the death of our beloved person Father George McLean, He was certainly good man, nice and very kind, His life was full of love and good deeds. We are sure that everyone who knew him has the same feeling of sorrow. As a philosopher, theologian and public figure he was the remarkable person of our times. We will bear his memory in our hearts.

Mamuka, Tamara, Givi, Levan, Nino
Tbilisi State University
Tbilisi, Georgia

From: **David Kaulem**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 5:11 PM

Dear Hu, Yeping,

It is indeed with deep shock and sorry that I learn of the passing of Prof. Fr, George McLean. He was a good man. He was a fine human person. He mentored me and many people especially those who cared about human development and culture. He understood what it meant to bring cultures together. He had such a wide social imaginary that he challenged many to see how cultures could engage, dialogue and speak and listen to each other. I am grateful to have met him. May his soul rest in the comfort of his creator.

I know that you worked closely with him. You came to understand his vision and supported his journey. Thank you for all the work you have been doing. My prayers are for you to accept what has happened with grace and peace. It will be difficult, but I pray for your continued support for the work of our dear academic professor, spiritual Father, cultural friend and social companion.

May his soul rest in peace.

My best wishes

David

Regional Coordinator for Eastern and Southern Africa of the African Forum
Harare, Zimbabwe

From: **Dariusz Dobrzański**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 5:28 PM

Dear Hu,

I do not know, how to begin me email, but I think that only simple words are correctly. Dear Prof. McLean was form me, unique type of person. His uniqueness, was for me special kind of feeling, emotion, always, after even small talk with him I felt a little better person. Maybe is only coincidence, maybe not but I'm happy that he leave us before meeting in Poznan. We will thinking about him, about his work and about you.

All the Best

We are in touch.

Dariusz

Adam Mickiewicz University
Poznan, Poland

From: **Tomas Halik**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 5:34 PM

Dear Hu,

I am just reading with great regret the sad news of Father George's death. I will keep alive the memory of the great man, distinguished scholar and wonderful priest, bridges-builder, one of those people we need so much just now in our hard times. I am very thankful that I had the pleasure and honour to know him.

We will do our best to continue in his noble activities at the RVP. I pray for him and I am sure he will help us from heaven.

I spent the fall semester at Notre Dame last year, now I am back in Prague and I hope to return to Notre Dame for the fall semester next year.

I will remember George at the altar of the Lord and also you, dear Hu, are in my prayers.

Tomas
Charles University
Prague, the Czech Republic

From: **Kiki Papanicolas**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 5:54 PM

Dear Hu,

Your message concerning the death of our beloved Father McLean filled me and my family with great sorrow. We are really shocked! For me Father McLean was a great intellectual and one of the best persons I have ever met. I will never forget his kindness to me and his love for all the human beings. He was indeed the personification of Christian love!

Please accept our deepest condolences.

Kiki, Nikos, Antigoni, the rest of our family and Helen Karabatzaki
University of Ioannina
Ioannina, Greece

From: **Gadis Arivia**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 7:45 PM

Dear Hu,

I just saw Pak Husain's email, my deepest condolences for the passing of Prof. McLean. I will never forget his kindness and warmth. The Department of Philosophy, University of Indonesia was so fortunate to host an event with Prof. McLean in 2005.

I will be in the U.S. this winter, I hope we can meet up.
Best,

Gadis Arivia
University of Indonesia
Jakarta, Indonesia

From: **Dermot Moran**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 8:18 PM

Dear Dr. Hu Yeping,

Thank you for your email which I received this morning while I am in Wuhan, China.

I am deeply saddened to learn the news of the death of our beloved friend Rev. Professor George McLean. I had corresponded with him during the summer but had not heard from him lately.

Prof. McLean was a great friend and supporter of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP), of which I am President.

On behalf of FISP, I would like to convey our deep condolences to you, to his colleagues, to his family, and to the members of his religious order, the Oblate Fathers.

If you have the address of members of his surviving family, I would like to write to them personally.

Thank you and condolences

Dermot

Professor Dermot Moran MRIA,
President, FISP (www.fisp.org)
Full Professor of Philosophy (Metaphysics and Logic),
School of Philosophy,
University College Dublin,
Dublin 4, Ireland
Founding Editor: International Journal of Philosophical Studies

From: **Golam Dastagir**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 9:51 PM

Dear Friends,

I am deeply shocked and saddened at the demise of Father George McLean. He was a great scholar in philosophy, theology, and inter-religious dialogue. He was also a well-organizer. In association with local scholars, he has organized numerous conferences, seminars, and workshops across the globe on cultural values and global peace through inter-cultural and inter-religious

dialogues. I remember the month-long seminar on “Faith and Reason” in 2008 which I participated in with some fine scholars around the world. He organized this event and invited us in a bid to give us an opportunity to exchange views and opinions with scholars in philosophy, especially Islamic philosophy, and I can candidly claim that I learned a great deal from it. I am indebted to Fr. McLean. His death is an irreparable loss to the world.

I pray to God for the salvation of his departed soul. May He rest his soul in eternal peace.

Golam

Dr. Golam Dastagir
Visiting Scholar
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada

From: 贾丽民
Date: 2016-09-08 22:00 GMT-04:00

胡老师:

您好!收到您的来信,得知 Father 已经去世,我夫妻二人心情十分低落.一下子就想起跟随他学习的点点滴滴,他对学问和对人的态度,让我感到他是一位大师,一位仁者,一位具有大爱的学者,我非常荣幸能够在生命中有过跟随他学习的经历.他对世界各民族之间的文化交流做出了巨大的贡献,在未来的人类社会发展中他的影响将不断地展现出来.对 Father 的去世,我内心深处感到遗憾的是去年没有能够去拜访他.

愿 Father 在天堂中幸福!我记得我曾经问过他,您去了世界上这么多的地方,您最喜欢哪里?他说 maybe heaven,所以我希望他能在天堂中快乐!

胡老师,我们深知您与 Father 的感情挚深,请您节哀!希望有机会在国内与您相聚.

丽民 and 唐卓
Yangzhou University
China

From: Gerardette Philips
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 10:02 PM

Dear Friends,

We thank God for Father George McLean’s life. His spirit lives on in all of us who received a great deal from him.

May he now enjoy eternal rest and eternal life as he meets his God to whom he gave his life as a priest.

Regards,

Sr. Gerardette, rscj

From: **Sayed Hassan Akhlaq**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 10:09 PM

Dear All,

I was shocked to learn about the death of Father McLean. We know he will be greatly missed out not only in our lives, particularly Hu’s one, but in the entire philosophical community. Humanity, for sure, missed a great wise who was exemplifying the great wise of human history in all civilizations. I want to extend my condolences to you and to the religious philosophers. Also, I hope scholars of Inter-religious and inter-cultural study follow Father McLean’s path and illustrate how long and depth he went and how further we have to go.

I would like to end this message mentioning a short text of the Quran. Almighty God calls a sacred and peaceful person to His heaven as follows, “O soul that are in certainty, return to your Lord while you are well-pleased (with Him) and He is well-pleased (with you). So enter among My servants. And enter into My garden.” (Quran, 89:27-30)

Sincerely,

Sayed-Hassan
Iran/Afghanistan

From: **Asha Mukherjee**

Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 10:48 PM

Dear Friends,

I am shocked, grieved and saddened by knowing that Fr. McLean is not with us as embodied soul but he will always remain with each one of us with the love, affection he showered on us always.

He brought the whole philosophy world together by the highest academic exchanges and extended piece, love, brotherhood and friendship across all borders. May his soul rest in peace in heavenly abode!

He lives and always live in his lifelong work and dedication through the meetings, publications and dialogues. Our biggest task is to continue the work through the path he showed us.

My deepest regards are always with Fr. McLean.

Asha

Professor, Department of Philosophy & Religion
and Former Director, Women’s Studies Centre
Visva-Bharati University
Santiniketan (WB), India

From: **Gripaldo Rolando**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 11:10 PM

Dear Hu:

I grieves me to hear that my mentor and friend in philosophy has passed away. My heartfelt condolences to his loved ones and relatives. May he rest in peace.

I would like to dedicate a page in the January 2017 issue of *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy* by quoting extensively from your letter, if you will permit.

Best regards,

Rolando Gripaldo
De La Salle University
Manila, Philippines

From: **Warayuth Sriwarakuel**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 11:25 PM

Dear Hu,

I am highly shocked and saddened with the demise of Fr. McLean. I intend to meet him in the 24th World Congress of Philosophy in Peking in the next two years. Last time we met in Athens, and he still looked healthy then. May God welcome and receive him in Heaven and stay with Him for good. Thanks a lot for the information about his life. I will post it in the bulletin board. Hope you are doing all right.

Best regards,

Yuth
Assumption University
Bangkok, Thailand

From: **S.R. Bhatt**
Date: Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 11:38 PM

Dear Dr. Hu

I am extremely pained to learn about the sad demise of our Reverend Father G. McLean.

He was a wonderful person and a great erudite scholar.
In India we shall have a seminar in his honour and memory.

S.R. Bhatt
Indian Council for Philosophical Research (ICPR)
New Delhi, India

From: **Jurate Baranova**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 12:15 AM

Deeply, deeply sorry. Wonderful person. Holy. It seems that I still hear his voice, his wisdom.

Rest in Peace our Dear Professor, we'll never forget You.

Jūratė Baranova
Vilnius University
Vilnius, Lithuania

From: **Wang Xincheng**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 1:43 AM

小胡好!

惊闻 Father McLean 辞世,痛苦不已.在华盛顿的一幕一幕,在国内交流的场场景景,浮现在脑际,一切就像在昨天一样.这事我同诗鹏沟通了一下,准备发一个正式的唁函,由你转给相关委员会.Father 的勤勉工作的精神和带着慈悲之心宽容一切的垂范令人终身难忘.

王新生
Fudan University
Shanghai, China

From: **Brena Gian Luigi**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 1:39 AM

Dear Hu Yeping,

I remember with affection Fr. George and pray for him and for you too! I pray also for the continuation of his Council and his work, which I greatly appreciate!

Your sincerely

Fr. Gian Luigi Brena, S.J.
Fondazione Centro Studi Filosofici di Gallarate, Italy

From: **Tina Bochorishvili**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 2:27 AM

Dear Hu,

Please accept my heartfelt sorrow and condolences; Father McLean will be terribly missed. He was a man of distinguished humanity. All of us loved him and he will be cherished in our memories forever. For everything he has done for us in life, we owe him our eternal love and the promise we will never forget him. May God grant him peace and the well-deserved rest.

Tina from Georgia

Prof. Dr. Tinatin Bochorishvili
Deputy Director General
Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation
Tbilisi, Georgia

From: **Balaganapathi Devarakonda**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 3:05 AM

Dear Ms Hu,

I am sorry to note the sad demise of Fr. McLean who has been inspiring scholars all around the world. I remember my interactions at Catholic University of America, DC. I fondly remember him for his love for Indian knowledge system.

I pray the God in his memory.
May his soul rest in Peace.

I am sure your able leadership would take RSVP forward in cherishing and realising the goals and ideals of Fr. McLean.

Regards

Professor Balaganapathi Devarakonda
Department of Philosophy
University of Delhi, Delhi, India

From: **Anatolij Karas**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 4:08 AM

Dear Hu Yeping

This is very grieving news came to us.
I am very sad to know that our dignified Professor is no longer among us.

Professor George McLean has done very much to create an international platform for cooperation and joint benevolent dialogue between people of different philosophical schools and from different cultures and countries.

Eternal memory for this great man.

I hope that his sacrificial work will find a worthy sequel.

I am so deeply grieved...

My deep mourning over the passing of Father McLean...!

Sincerely yours

Anatolij Karas
Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy
The Chairperson of Philosophy Department
Lviv Franko National University, Ukraine

From: **Basia Nikiforova**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 4:43 AM

Dearest Hu,

The death of Father McLean is a huge loss for all us and for me personally. I met him around 30 years ago and all this time he was mentor, researcher and best manager who organize highest level of theological and philosophical life and activity around the world.

Father McLean was lover of tolerance, democracy, cultural and religious pluralism what is so important for Eastern and Central Europe and Lithuania. I am sure that you and your colleges will develop his great tradition and activity. Sorry so much.

Dr. Basia Nikiforova
Lithuanian Culture Research Institute
Vilnius, Lithuania

From: **Plamen Makariev**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 4:59 AM

Dear friends,

Let me share with you a suggestion. Why not give the Center for the Study of Culture and Values the name “George F. McLean”? I do hope that the Center will continue its precious activities and bearing the name of its founder, the great visionary and missionary, George McLean, these activities will remind all people of his admirable deeds.

Plamen

Prof. Plamen Makariev
Sofia University
Sofia, Bulgaria

From: **Mihaela Pop**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 5:26 AM

It is a very grieving news. I met Fr. McLean for the first time in Lviv in 1997. He looked as a very kind and understanding person and later on I got convinced that he really was. I do hope that the RVP will find the right path to continue his projects. God bless his memory.

Mihaela Pop
University of Bucharest
Bucharest, Romania

From: **Warayuth Sriwarakuel**
Sent: Friday, September 9, 2016 6:07 AM

The world has lost one of the greatest scholars in interfaith dialogue, mutual understanding, and harmony. Rest in peace forever, father. Your dedication, self-sacrifice, kind-heartedness, broad-mindedness, and hard work will be always impressed in our hearts. We will carry on your mission.

With the greatest condolences,

Warayuth Sriwarakuel
Assumption University
Bangkok, Thailand

From: **J.C Achike Agbakoba**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 6:48 AM

We have lost a great friend and mentor. Fr. McLean touched my life deeply and unforgettably. May his soul rest in peace.

Adieu Fr.

Joseph C. A. Agbakoba
University of Nigeria
Nsukka, Nigeria

From: **Tadeusz Buksiński**
Sent: Friday, September 9, 2016 7:04 AM

Dear Hu Yeping

My condolences because of the Rev. George F. McLean death. Father McLean was the man of dignity and love, open to everybody and ready to help everybody. All people felt happy being together with Him. Rev George McLean was the essential part of my professional and personal life. Thanks to Him I have create the team of researchers in Poland which has cooperated with the people from all over the world. He did much for my country influencing the independent philosophical activity during the communist period and after collapse of communism.

He will be missed.

Professor Tadeusz Buksinski
Adam Mickiewicz University
Poznan, Poland

From: **Pulat Shozimov**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 8:27 AM

We lost one of the greatest person whom I ever saw in the life. He included so many spiritual and intellectual abilities that their light allowed many people to become much better.

Today the world needs such people who creates bridges of communication between cultures, the people, religions and intellectual traditions.

I will always remember You and to support all your ideas in my social and intellectual actions.

Prof. Pulat Shozimov
University of Central Asia
Dushanbe, Tajikistan

From: **Manuel Jr. B. Dy**
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2016 9:24 AM

Rest in our Father's bosom, Fr. George. Thank you for the gift of your work and your life, of yourself. I will always hold you dear in my life.

Manny Dy
Ateneo de Manila University
Manila, Philippines

From: **Umut Asanova**

Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 9:46 AM

Dear Hu!

Yesterday night I got your letter with the sad information...

We have lost our Father McLean... We will never hear his calm voice, listen to his wise, deeply outlined words, enjoy his profound thoughts, witness his simplicity and at the same time humane greatness, admire his incredible creativity in bringing us, representatives of different cultures, together and making us understand each other...

What a unique Man he was, our Father McLean! How masterly and lovingly he tried to bring close all the religions of the world through making us unearthen that hidden unity beyond the seemingly borders, crucial differences.

What a great Goal he had, our Father! To empower Peace through broadening our consciousness, purifying our hearts, thus developing clear understanding of ourselves and of others.

This very short period of life gifted by God to you, dear Father, was so meaningful, so enriched with divine tasks been clearly aware since your early youth. You have indeed completed your human Mission in serving Humanity, thus serving God! You are now back to your Owner!

Dear Father McLean, thank you for all your kindness, generosity, untiring activities to process real dialogue between cultures, to reveal their true values, to invoke the most substantial, the most eternal, the most wonderful – Love!

Rest in peace, dear Father! We will follow your spiritual Way! Your life will be a beautiful example for us and future generation!

With Love,

Umut Asanova

from Kyrgyzstan

Honorable Professor of the Bishkek University of Humanities

Member of the Academic Board of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, DC, CUA

at present from Lesotho, Africa

From: **Yang Fenggang**

Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 10:49 AM

Yeping and Xiaowen,

No words can express my sorrow for the loss of Fr. McLean, a godly man who changed my life dramatically, a great mentor who helped to guide my life and career.

I have just purchased plane tickets. Joanne and I will arrive in Boston 8:16 am on Tuesday September 13, and return at 9:00 pm the same day (we have too many things going on here at Purdue at this time, so have to get back

quickly). This should allow us to go to the funeral mass at 11 am and the burial in the afternoon.

May the Holy Spirit be with you all and sustain all of us during this difficult time.

Fenggang
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN

From: **Yuriy Pochta**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 10:50 AM

Dear Hu, Colleagues,

Please accept our condolences. We have lost a great friend, colleague, and philosopher. He was at the same time professor and Father. Really he was a person of distinguished humanity. We have done a lot with his advice, guidance, participation – conferences, seminars, publications.

Nur Kirabaev, Yuriy Pochta
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia
Moscow, Russia

From: **Zou Shipeng**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 11:07 AM

胡老师:

惊悉麦克林先生仙逝,十分哀痛!先生慈悲宽厚,哲识卓越,人格高尚,其所从事的跨文化交流事业及其贡献必将永载史册,先生此去,自国际价值与文化研究与交流事业的巨大损失.

今天中午同王新生一起,缅怀先生之恩情,悲恸不已,也觉不能前来华府为先生送行,颇为遗憾.我们也决定分头撰写中英文唁信,即发给您.

邹诗鹏
Fudan University
Shanghai, China

From: **Rahim Nobahar**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 11:17 AM

Dear Dr. Hu,

Please accept my sincere condolences on the death of Father McLean. Many from different parts of the world, would, certainly, miss him terribly. For me, personally, he was a light in the darkness of the world and a spirit in the corpus of the material life. May Allah shower him with his great mercy. I think a large number of distinguished people must come together to be able to continue his sacred path and do a part of what he was doing sincerely and persistently.

With all best wishes,

Rahim

Rahim Nobahar (Ph.D.)
Associate Professor, Faculty of Law
Shahid Beheshti University
Tehran, Iran

From: **Anna Krasteva**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 12:18 PM

Tragic news! Professor McLean has always been an inspiring model of spirituality and intercultural dialogue.

I'll keep dear memories of the interesting debates and stimulating exchanges with Father McLean.

My sincere condolences!

Prof. Anna Krasteva
Director of Cermes (Centre for Refugees, Migration and Ethnic Studies)
The New Bulgarian University
Sofia, Bulgaria

From: **Angelli Tugado**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 12:35 PM

Dear Hu,

I was so saddened to hear of the passing away of such a gentle, generous, and great person. He worked tirelessly in bringing people from different parts of the world to dialogue over things that truly mattered to humankind. I will never forget him who was a mentor to many.

My deepest condolences. Eternal rest grant unto him and let perpetual light shine upon him.

Angelli
Ateneo de Manila University
Manila, Philippines

From: **Cholpon Alieva**

Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 12:45 PM

Dear Hu, Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that father McLean left our world...

I am deeply mourning with you.

Father McLean found a way to the heart of each of us.

Thanks to his dedicated work, philosophical dialogue develops over the world, including in Central Asia, in Kyrgyzstan.

Thank God that we were lucky to meet with true scholar, philosopher and humanist.

Father McLean – the great Teacher of the Dialogue in the modern world. His personal example, his works and ideas inspire us every time.

Father McLean is always with us, in our minds, in our efforts to promote dialogue.

My low hearty bow and eternal memory about great Teacher – Father McLean.

Eternally grateful

With love,

Cholpon Alieva

International University of Kyrgyzstan

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

From: **Dalia Stanciene**

Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 1:59 PM

Dear Hu,

My sincere condolences on the passing of Professor Rev. George F. McLean. It is a great loss to me personally and everybody who knew him.

Professor George F. McLean considerably contributed to the development of Lithuanian philosophers. He used to invite them to international seminars and conferences covering the costs of their visits. He also published their research works in international publications. Many young Lithuanian philosophers received recognition and became renowned scientists and teachers because of his help and belief in their achievements.

I remember when prof. Basia Nikiforova, prof. Rita Serpitytė, prof. Jurate Morkuniene and me were invited to participate at the international conference in Bulgaria. It was a restless historical period. Several years had passed from the collapse of the Soviet Union and there still were different political and military conflicts in the Eastern and Central parts of Europe. Lithuania at that time was already an independent country, but the economic situation in the country was very difficult. Because of that we decided to go to Bulgaria by train as that was the cheaper travelling way. We arrived at the Budapest and

had to change trains and via Serbia go to Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. But it turned out that when we crossed Serbian border we found ourselves in the military zone. The train was stopped and we were made to get out and were detained. The authorities wanted to imprison us because we illegally crossed the Serbian border but after long negotiations we were allowed to return back to Budapest. We had to buy other tickets via Romania and then in Romania again had difficulties on the border as we did not have Romanian visa. However, the frontier officers took into account that we were going to the international conference in Bulgaria and let us go. We were late at the conference.

Prof. George F. McLean responded sincerely to our travel experience. He decided that safety was of primary importance and therefore bought plane tickets Sofia – Vilnius for us to have a safe journey home.

Prof. George F. McLean had a sensitive soul. He always extended a helping hand and was a talented educator who managed to develop in others personal moral values and who fostered the communication between different cultures and beliefs in the pursue of universal goodness.

I believe that the pursuit of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy which was started by Prof. George F. McLean will continue and we, his followers, will aid and forward his aspirations.

Professor Dalia Marija Stanciene
Klaipeda University
Klaipeda, Lithuania

From: **Robert Badillo**
Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 2:43 PM

Dear Hu,

Thank you for informing of the passing into eternal life of our most dearly beloved and venerable servant of God Fr. George McLean. I am leaving to Tewksbury on Monday on an afternoon flight (itinerary below) and will concelebrate the Mass on Tuesday before returning to New York. Maybe you will come as well.

We give thanks to God for creating such a beautiful and gentle human being who has done so much good for so many. We also give thanks to God for you and your dedication to forwarding the work he started.

Receive fraternal greetings,

Fr. Robert Badillo, M.Id
Provincial Superior of the Idente Missionaries, U.S.
Pastor, Parish of Our Lady of Solace-St. Dominic
Adjunct Associate Professor of Philosophy, St. John’s University

From: **Daniel Dei**

Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 3:02 PM

Dear Hu,

I am extremely sorry for this great loss. I will always remember this wonderful person who was like a mentor to me. May his soul rest in peace and my prayers be with him.

Yours,

H. Daniel Dei

National University of Lanús

Buenos Aires, Argentina

From: **Rosemary Winslow**

Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 8:54 PM

Dear Hu Yeping,

The University has sent notice that Father McLean has made his transition. What a gracious and loving man, a beautiful soul, wonderful and important he work he did in the world, for the world. I know you are continuing his legacy. I know your visit with him was perfectly what both you and he needed at this time. My prayers and thoughts are with you: "let peace come."

And see you very soon,
with peace and love,

Rosemary

Catholic University of America

From: **Sirajul Islam**

Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2016 at 11:07 PM

Dear Hu

I was not ready at all to hear this news that father McLean left us. It is a fatal shock to me to know that our Father McLean is no more with us. He left this mundane world for heavenly abode on 6th. He was one of my guardians, occasionally I received his meticulous counsels and suggestions for various academic matters. His friendly gesture, amiable disposition and rich scholarship in subject attracted me lot.

Still I am not able to believe that he is not with us. I express my deep mourning for his sudden demise. May God grant him perfect peace and tranquility for his departed soul.

With regards

Dr. Md Sirajul Islam
Dept. of Philosophy & Religion
Visva Bharati University
Santiniketan, India

From: **Fudan University**
Date: 2016-09-10 2:48 GMT-04:00

Condolences to the Oblate Family through Ms. Hu Yeping:

Being shocked to learn of the passing away of beloved Father George McLean, a famous philosopher, a master of cross-culture dialogue, and our old friend, we all on the part of School of Philosophy at Fudan University are distressed to the most. Father McLean, in this way we used to call him, devoted himself to the study of values and the cause of cross-culture exchange and explanation, being entirely worn out in performing his duties, with his sincere and prospect-pursuing practices making far-reaching influences. We believe Father McLean will be remembered in the annals of history for his marvellous achievements.

The initial and ongoing international academic exchange programs of the School of Philosophy at Fudan University benefits a lot from the cause and example of Father McLean, who has a noble character with kindness and mercy to which Pope Francis attaches great importance to. Here at the School of Philosophy many students and scholars of different generations have got the cherished guidance, help, support and sponsor from Father McLean. Now Father McLean peacefully returned to the eternal home of God, leaving vivid impressions of those wonderful moments on us. With Pope John Paul II, Father McLean really was crossing the threshold of hope. At least we can keep hope alive, just as Father told some of us.

May Father rest in peace!

School of Philosophy
Fudan University
Shanghai, China

唁信

胡业评女士:

惊悉著名哲学家,国际文化交流大师麦克林先生辞世,至为悲恸.先生致力于价值论研究与跨文化阐释与交流事业,敦行致远,鞠躬尽瘁,先生所做的杰出贡献,必将永载史册!

改革开放以来,复旦大学哲学学院最初的国际学术交流,特别得益于麦克林先生及其事业,先生人格高尚,仁慈宽厚,这里数代学人得到先生的提携与帮助.今先生驾鹤西归,过往恩情与友谊,历历在目,愿先生安息!

复旦大学哲学学院 2016年9月9日

From: **Wilhelm Danca**

Date: Sat, Sep 10, 2016 at 4:28 AM

Dear Hu,

Thank you for informing me about the last hours on earth of Father George. My spontaneously reply is that I am thankful to God for I met this great man. Requiescat in pace!

For him, I remain open to continue his inspiration, collaborating with the RVP.

God bless him!

See you soon,

Wilhelm Danca
University of Bucharest
Bucharest, Romania

From: **Vincent Shen**

Date: Sat, Sep 10, 2016 at 9:34 AM

Dear Yeping,

Just now return to Toronto from Leuven Belgium, I learn this very sad news of Father George McLean's passing away. Indeed, Father George McLean is a great man, a deep and far-vision philosopher, a marvelous leader and guide for the RVP and all philosophy community. His great ideas, his generosity towards many others, and his perfection in self-cultivation will for sure continue to inspire all of us. I learn his passing away with a great sorrow and sadness.

I understand how difficult it is for you now. Please be brave and strong. The RVP still have long years to rely on your good work.

I am willing to continue my tiny service to the RVP

Sincerely yours,

Vincent
University of Toronto

From: **Edward Alam**

Date: Sat, Sep 10, 2016 at 10:07 AM

Dear Hu,

Just heard the news! What can I say? My deepest condolences to you before anyone else. Please let me know the details of the final hours when you have a chance. Praying for you...feeling with you...we had a group here in Nigeria

these last few weeks, and I just told them all about Fr. McLean. God rest his dear soul in peace!

Edward
Notre Dame University
Beirut, Lebanon

From: **Gail Presbey**
Date: Sat, Sep 10, 2016 at 11:46 AM

Dear Hu Yeping, hello!

I am so sorry to hear of Fr. McLean's death. Thank you so much for letting us know. I will send a card/donation. We will surely miss him. So good that he was honored at the last WCP.

Sincerely,

Gail
University of Detroit, Mercy

From: **Katia Lenehan**
Date: Sat, Sep 10, 2016 at 7:36 PM

Dear Hu,

I am very sorry to hear the bad news!

I knew this day would finally come, but I still feel shocked and saddened when I heard about it. Losing important people in our life is never a easy thing to endure. Continuing what he dedicated his life to is the best thing, I believe, we can do and we should do just remember my prayers are with you and the Oblate family.

love,

Katia
Fujen Catholic University
Taipei

From: **S. Panneerselvam**
Date: Sat, Sep 10, 2016 at 10:23 PM

We heard the sudden demise of Professor Fr. McLean, (87) President of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), Washington, DC, through our friends from India and abroad. A committed academician, a close associate of senior Philosophers of India like Professor T.M.P. Mahadevan, Prof. R. Balsubramanian, Prof. S.R. Bhatt and many others, McLean's love

for Indian Philosophy something remarkable and fascinating. He was a student of Prof. T.M.P. Mahadevan and R. Balabramanian in the Centre for Philosophy at Chennai for sometime and learnt the Advaita with great interest and love. He lectures on Gadamer, Ricoeur and Tillich at the Madras University is always remembered both by the faculty and students. He used to be a foreign examiner for many of the Ph.D. theses in spite of his declining health. The academic community has lost a lovable person who has dedicated his entire life for philosophy, values and Intercultural understanding. He once said: "It is that of the many people, each proceeding along its own way marked out by its own culture, but all converging toward the Holy Mountain in which God will become All in all." He has brought out 200 volumes on various themes of philosophy and inter-cultural and cross-cultural understanding under the theme, "Cultural Heritage and the Foundations of Social Life." The themes he has chosen for the month-long Annual seminars during August-September every year were directly connected to social problems. The ICPR, New Delhi has honoured him by inviting him as the Visiting Professor (foreign) in the year 2004. He is a symbol of love, dedication and simplicity. Scholars from different regions of the world – Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and Central and South America were influenced by his writings and philosophical understanding.

Dear McLean, we remember you with gratitude because of your love for philosophy is something which one never can forget. Scholars throughout the globe pay their homage to him and the philosophers in India are also sending their heartfelt condolences to the members and well-wishers of the RVP, especially to Dr. Hu Yeping who had been assisting Professor McLean as Executive Director.

Dr. S. Panneerselvam,
National Fellow, ICPR
Former Head, Department of Philosophy
University of Madras
Chennai, India

From: **Jim Loiacono**

Date: Sun, Sep 11, 2016 at 11:21 AM

Hu,

I've tried to reach you by phone since the news which has brought so many of us to such deep sorrow. I told John that this must be very hard for you. My sense of loss is deep, and reading the e-mails has been emotional, even in my sense of gladness that fills me when I read the impact that George has had in so many dimensions, personal, national and international, but never losing sight of the individual and his/her critical reality and importance as person. But, I recall the crushing grief of 孔夫子 when his most beloved student, 顏回, died. Now, my own mentor and friend has passed beyond sight and

grasp. Not only did he mentor me as a student of philosophy and theology, he mentored me spiritually.

We're it not for this phenomenal human being, I would never have known the greatness of the Chinese people, their astounding genius and profound goodness of heart which I've experienced in the most personal way in each of my trips to China and here with the Chinese in the U.S.A. I can't put into words what that has meant to me. I remember our month together in China, Laos and Vietnam, and my getting together with Dr. Bo Wang and his young daughter for dinner. The warmth of the time together. And, even when we had the tour through Beijing with the students that participated, especially a young man from 滿洲 who sat with me on the bus. He told me of his wife and family, making me feel like his uncle.

This is because of George – and you, Hu, for all the indefatigable and difficult work you've done with and for him, beginning with taking me and my mother, “the great socialist lady,” around Beijing, Badaling and the Ming Tombs in 1991. You are also a very special person, and George must have seen that when he gave you such responsibilities as his equal. It was always a true and extraordinary quality and gift of George to scope out the qualities of a person, even the most subtle and hidden, then mentoring us to bring out the real potential that others might never see or even ignore.

George was truly a phenomenon of history, like Mateo Ricci, but also, like Ricci, of his faith. He shared with me his sense of Providence and his deepest desire to cooperate with it in uniting the human family in mutual understanding, appreciation, respect, justice, love and peace – those wonderful qualities that Confucius saw as the building blocks of true harmony among the members of a community, between peoples and between the human family and nature. While George had a will as firm of steel, he had a heart that was gentle and ever so kind with which he instructed and led others – the ideal Chinese sage. His total self-giving to his work and to others. He was and lived the dynamic 11th hexagram of the I Ching, T'ai, the robust catalyst of positive imagination and change. It was the work of a heart open to the Holy Spirit and divine inspiration which he cherished in the depths of his heart and completely informed his vocation – that personal expression and incarnation of divine love.

He now rests with the Great Ones, accompanied by his sister whom he loved dearly and left us the very same day. I and Louie Lougen knew her personally, and our affection and admiration for her. Another self-giving soul of deep spirituality and faith, she gave fully of herself which cheerfulness, such kindness and gentleness. The brother and sister were like two peas in a pod, and I know her prayers accompanied George to the end.

Please know you have remain especially in my thoughts and prayers since we met in 1991 in Beijing – a full twenty-five years. I just moved to Buffalo, New York to work with the young men entering the Oblates and the three communities that we take care of. I've been told that this was also to facilitate in a more unencumbered way any way I can assist you in the continuation of this great work of humanity and history. The many e-mails from all over the

world of academia and governments show the unequivocal importance and scope of this magnificent human being who had to overcome great obstacles and even resistance, but that steel will and certitude in the importance of the enterprise allowed him to trust what he knew he was called to do as a divine mandate, and he prevailed. You have played such a critical role in your dedication and hard work along side George. I will do anything whatever to be of assistance that you might see in the future continuance of this work. Bishop Thomas Menampampil has ask if I am going to continue and be available. The answer is yes, as you see fit.

I thank you for all you've done and for your friendship.

God bless.

Jim Loiacono, O.M.I.

From: **Yasien Mohamed**

Date: Sun, Sep 11, 2016 at 11:49 AM

It is with great sadness that we hear of the demise of a great philosopher of our time. Professor George McLean, a living philosopher, who taught us to value philosophy as a way of life, and not as a mere intellectual exercise. He exemplified this in his simplicity, humanity, and humility. His death is a great loss to the philosophical and religious world. I was privileged to have spent time with him in Washington, with a group of other Islamic philosophy academics from all parts of the world. I also had the privilege of traveling with Professor McLean to Indonesia, where we delivered papers at ten conferences in five cities. It is through his encouragement that we established the International Society of Islamic Philosophy, with Professor Goolam Reza Aavani as its president, and the International Journal of Islamic Philosophy, of which I was the co-editor. God has granted Father McLean a long active life in the service of humanity. May his soul rest in peace.

Yasien Mohamed

Professor of Arabic Studies and Islamic Philosophy

University of the Western Cape

Representative of the International Society of Islamic Philosophy

Cape Town, South Africa

From: **John A Kromkowski**

Date: Sun, Sep 11, 2016 at 12:49 PM

Hu,

I plan to leave Chicago for arrival in Boston on Monday afternoon.

Know that our prayers are with you during this time of sadness. Father is at peace. His inspiration to all of us will move his love of wisdom onward to

another generation of practitioner. His pioneer extension of philosophy as a way of living and researching has deepened the understanding of the many ways wisdom is embedded in traditional cultures as well as the ways these insights into the mystery of the really human and the divine are made fresh in our time.

Best,

Dr. John Kromkowski
Catholic University of America

From: **Rossi, Philip**
Date: Sun, Sep 11, 2016 at 4:29 PM

Dear Hu and Colleagues,

It has been with great sadness that I received the news of Fr. George McLean's passing from this life. His gifts and skills for fostering productive conversations and research among scholars from many cultures and from many disciplines has been a profound blessing to all who have been privileged to participate in the projects he has inspired and guided. May he now be welcomed into the fullness of a new life in the presence of the God he served so faithfully and so well for all these years.

His passing now leaves it incumbent on us to find ways to continue, foster, and develop the work of the RVP in the years to come. I am ready and willing to do what my time, skills (and the faculty responsibilities I continue to have the next two years) permit in order to be a part of this extraordinarily valuable work.

During its celebration of the Eucharist on Tuesday, September 13, the Arrupe House Jesuit Community in Milwaukee will pray for his eternal rest, for the consolation of all who mourn his passing, in gratitude for all the good that his life and work has brought about, and in hope for the successful continuation of his work.

Peace and blessings,

Philip J. Rossi, S.J.
Department of Theology
Marquette University
PO Box 1881
Milwaukee WI 53201-1881

From: **T.K. Parthasarathy**
Date: Sun, Sep 11, 2016 at 8:58 PM

It is a shocking news that Prof McLean passed away all of a sudden. A committed philosopher of International repute, Professor McLean believed

that many philosophical traditions, cultures, and schools seek the truths but his metaphor for this is that these are many roads that converge in “the holy mountain.” A firm believer in Humanism he all along tried to build cooperation among peoples of different cultures and beliefs by attempting to heal the tensions between them and promoting peace and harmony on a global scale. The topics he chose for various Seminars and Conferences since he became the President of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), itself are proof to show his commitment to Inter-religious harmony and tranquility amongst nations.

The world of Philosophy has lost a father figure and let us all pray, his soul not to rest in peace but as in the condolence words of Sarojini Naidu on the death of our Father of the Nation “My father, do not rest. Do not allow us to rest. Keep us to our pledge. Give us strength to fulfill our promises” – to humanity about which you had a lot of dreams!

Our heartfelt condolences to all the members of the RVP particularly to Dr. Hu Yeping.

Dr. T K Parthasarathy
Chennai, India

From: 陳文團

Date: Sun, Sep 11, 2016 at 10:04 PM

Dear Yeping and Vincent,

I got the sad news today upon my return from Leuven. In Leuven, Prof. Florival, Vincent and me, we have still talked about the intellectual greatness and benevolence of Fr. McLean without knowing anything about his last day.

In deep sorrow I want to share with you the feeling of “being lost” after the passaway of George. His person is too great that perhaps no one could be rival, but his generosity is what we can learn from.

I am sure that George is now resting in peace of God. He will bless the RVP and you in particular in this moment of difficulty.

Tell me what I could do for the RVP. I am thinking about a special session devoted to Fr. McLean, Prof. Imamichi and Prof. Ladriere in the next Peking World Congress.

God bless to you all

Tran
National Taiwan University, Taipei

From: **Abdul Rashid**

Date: Mon, Sep 12, 2016 at 4:54 AM

Dear Hu,

Peace be upon all of you.

I received a very shocking email from Vietnam regarding the demise of our mentor – Prof. George F. McLean.

This is a great loss of our World of knowledge.

Indeed, Father McLean was a member of my family. He visited my home, blessed my kids and addressed many times our faculty members in University of Karachi. In an International conference our university presented him souvenir to recognized his valuable lectures at our Alma meter. I am confident that his soul will be in quite rest as he devoted his life for human being and reformed many societies by the promotion of values.

I salute Father George McLean and assure you that we will continue his mission. Please convey my words of sorrow to all RVP's family.

Abdul Rashid
University of Karachi
Karachi, Pakistan

From: **He Xirong**

Date: 2016-09-12 7:21 GMT-04:00

Hi, Hu, 听俞说 McLean 走了.我前些天在河北开会,今天刚回来.感觉非常悲伤,虽然知道他身体不好,离开我们也是早晚的事,但真正成为事实,还是挺震惊的.

McLean 是我们的好长者,好学者,好朋友.几十年来,他带领的价值与哲学研究会为世界范围内为推进文化交流和继承做出了杰出的贡献,对我个人和哲学所的帮助和扶持都是巨大的.可以说,哲学所虽然人员不断更新,但大家都知道 McLean,都知道以他为首的 RVP 所做的工作.大家为能参加 RVP 的会议和 seminar 为荣.

McLean 虽然不在了,但他的精神已经浸润到 RVP 机构中,也浸润到与 RVP 有工作关系的各个学术团体中,相信 RVP 能够继续他的事业,坚持开展文化交流和融合,为和平和谐世界做出努力.我虽然即将卸任,但相信我们哲学所会继续关注和支持并参与 RVP 的活动,我也会尽力做好应做的工作.

愿 McLean 安息,请你节哀.

何锡蓉
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
Shanghai, China

From: **Denys Kiryukhin**
Date: Mon, Sep 12, 2016 at 1:40 PM

Dear Hu,
I learned Father McLean have left us. Please accept my condolences. It was the great scholar with the great heart.

Denys
The Skovoroda's Institute of Philosophy
Social Philosophy Department
Kiev, Ukraine

From: **Alois A. Nugroho**
Date: Mon, Sep 12, 2016 at 8:06 PM

We have been praying for Prof. George F. McLean. To express our gratitude, it is better for us to support the proposal of Prof. Plamen Makariev.

Alois A. Nugroho
Universitas Katolik Atma Jaya Jakarta
Jakarta, Indonesia

From: **Valerie Voorhies**
Date: Mon, Sep 12, 2016 at 9:54 PM

My life has been so much impacted by him and I will never forget.
Many thanks.

Valerie

From: **Jeffrey D. Wilson**
Date: Monday, September 12, 2016
To: John A. Kromkowski

Dear John,
You have lost a dear friend and collaborator. I have thought and prayed for you ever since I learned of Fr. McLean's death.
Attached is my own small tribute.
In my daily devotions, I pray the Beatitudes, when I come to "Blessed are they that mourn," I think of you. May God grant you his comfort!
In deepest sympathy,

Jeffrey

Jeffrey Dirk Wilson, Ph.D.
Clinical Associate Professor
School of Philosophy
The Catholic University of America
Washington, DC 20064
Office: 103 Aquinas Hall

[Attachment]

In the developed world, the international reputation of the School of Philosophy of The Catholic University of America arises from generations of world-class philosophical work produced by our faculty. In the developing world, however, that reputation is owed in no small part to our late colleague, Father George McLean. He carried the mission of our University as he travelled to gatherings of scholars around the world, and he gathered scholars from around the world here at CUA. He was a walking intersection of a thousand roads, a network of astonishing breadth and depth intellectually and culturally.

From my own experience of him, I can say that one of his greatest gifts was the charism of presence which he cultivated assiduously in advancing the cause of lived Christian evangelism and human understanding. When I was with him, I knew that I had his full attention. He was listening to me, not merely to my words but to me as a human person for whom Christ had died. As I was to discover, he was always making mental notes not only of who the person is, but also of the person's interests and gifts.

I write this as if I knew him well, but I did not. I probably met him fewer than a dozen times. But he knew me. A visiting scholar – from Russia, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka – would ask to visit my classroom. A journal in Taiwan wrote asking me to peer-review an article. If I traced back the event to its origin, it was Father McLean and his network that had provided my name and suggested that they be in touch with me directly. If he did this for me, someone on the fringe of his network, then how many of others was he connecting with each other around the world?

His was a global enterprise, not financial, military, or political, but a fully human and fully Christian global enterprise in which the gospel of Christ was advanced through his generosity and kindness and rooted in his confidence that truth is one and emanates from the living God. At points of cultural, political, economic, religious, and intellectual discontinuity where others formed battle lines, Father McLean built bridges. If Father McLean did not convince people to become Christians, at very least he persuaded them to think well of Christianity because in him they had personally met a Christian whom they greatly admired.

In Father McLean's death, our School and University have lost an important presence in the world, and I – among thousands of others – have lost a friend.

As the light of Father McLean's life burns brightly in those who knew him, may God's perpetual light shine upon him!

From: **Burhan Tatar**

Date: Tue, Sep 13, 2016 at 1:04 AM

Dear Hu,

I just learned the sad news from the emails in my yahoo account, which I visit very rarely. I have been always an admirer of dear Father McLean because of his representing high values of humanity in his mind and actions. I met him for the first time to discuss my project of doctoral dissertation. I send my condolence to you with my sorrow and wish you a very successful and nice future. You were helping him and doing your best. If Father McLean has been a great name among people, I am sure, you played a nice constitutive role in his having this name worldwide.

Take care Hu,
all the best,

Burhan
Samsun University
Samsun, Turkey

From: **Florival Ghislaine**

Date: 2016-09-13 15:56 GMT-04:00

Chère HuYeping,

Je suis très émue de lire votre message, très triste d'apprendre la nouvelle. Je ne savais pas que Father McLean était malade depuis si longtemps. Hier encore, avec Vincent Shen et Jean Tran van Doan, en visite chez moi à Nivelles. nous parlions de lui avec émerveillement,

Je crois aujourd'hui, que Father McLean 'est' en paix, vraiment. Et je pense tout particulièrement à vous, qui durant toutes ces années vous êtes consacrée totalement à le seconder, dans la poursuite de son admirable engagement.

Il portait en lui une vision spirituelle de la mondialisation qui marquait tous ceux qui ont eu le bonheur de l'approcher.

Comment dire toute ma reconnaissance à son égard depuis les premières fois, je crois en 1976 ou 77, au Congrès de Jérusalem. Lors de chaque rencontre j' éprouvais ce moment de contact personnel, marqué de discrétion et de bonté. On découvrait son engagement, à travers tous ses colloques, cet immense espoir de rencontres, au sens universel: une action concentrée, – philosophique, culturelle, spirituelle-, ouverte à toutes les cultures, comme à toute l'humanité.

J'aimerais le remercier pour tout ce qu'il m'a apporté par sa générosité intellectuelle, mais aujourd'hui, tout spécialement, pour son dévouement à

faire traduire et rassembler ce recueil d'articles "Phenomenon of Affectivity," grâce à la compétence du Prof. Vensus George, que je remercie de tout coeur pour son énorme travail d'Editeur.

Chère Hu Yeping, je suis bien triste pour vous ce soir, en pensant que c'est peut-être aussi l'heure des funérailles-, et je prie avec vous, pour lui qui a tant travaillé pour les autres, mais aussi pour vous qui l'avez tellement aidé dans son parcours. Il vit maintenant d'une présence plus profonde: qu'elle puisse vous apporter sa véritable paix.

Vous savez que vous êtes toujours la bienvenue à Nivelles, ainsi que Vensus George, si vous passez en Europe. Je serais vraiment heureuse de vous revoir. Je vous embrasse, chère Hu, très cordialement,

Ghislaine Florival
Université catholique de Louvain
Louvain, Belgium

From: **Zsuzsanna Bögre**
Date: Wed, Sep 14, 2016 at 6:29 AM

Dear Hu,

I am so sorry about prof. McLean. He was one of my determining person in my life. I got so much from He when I was in Washington, DC, and after when I got an opportunity to organize a group for the Church and People project.

I never forgot his memory.

Please, let me know, if you need any help in this difficult time. I know I am far away from Washington, DC, in this case I am doing what I can, I am praying for Prof. McLean and for You as well.

However if you think I can help in any way, I am ready to do that.

All the best Hu!

Zsuzsanna
Pázmány Péter Catholic University
Budapest, Hungary

From: **Warren Brown**
Date: Wed, Sep 14, 2016 at 9:18 AM

Dear Hu,

I join with so many who have sent their condolences on the passing of Fr. George McLean, O.M.I. As coordinator for the executive of the AOIHL, I wanted to say that our Oblate Association of Oblate Institutes of Higher Learning and the many Oblate priests and brothers around the world involved in higher learning have always taken an interest in Fr. George's work with

you and The Council for Research and Values in Philosophy and some have been able to participate in the various seminars. His death is a loss to our Oblate Congregation and to the academic world which he loved and nurtured. May he rest in peace. I pray that you may find some peace and gratitude at this time of grieving despite the sorrow you must feel.

Sincerely,

Warren A. Brown, O.M.I.
General Councilor for Canada-U.S.
Casa Generalizia
via Aurelia, 290
Roma, Italia 00165

From: **Jeffrey Bloechl**
Date: Wed, Sep 14, 2016 at 9:48 AM

Dear Yeping,

I was very sorry to hear that Fr. McLean passed away some days ago. I cannot think of anyone who has done nearly as much as he did for philosophy around the world. We all owe him a great debt of gratitude, to be repaid especially by carrying on with his work to bring people together. He had a unique charisma, and remarkable range of special talents – not least of which being tolerance and warmth even in his most concentrated thinking.

Please accept my condolences. I know that you and George were very close, and am sure that it will be difficult for you to begin life without him.

Sincerely,

Jeff

Jeffrey Bloechl
Department of Philosophy
Boston College
Co-Director, Joint MA Program in Philosophy and Theology
Australian Catholic University (Honorary)

From: **Alex Palma**
Date: Thu, Sep 15, 2016 at 5:28 AM

Dear Hu

I was trying to find the time and the words to express the privilege it was working with George and getting to know him. I was always impressed by his exceptional ability to bring people together and to empower them. Even at a more personal level, this is what I always found in George. He was always trying to stimulate me/us to go further. I even recall a brief conversation we

had, in which he tried to tell that younger people would have to carry on this work. The RVP is, perhaps (to my knowledge), the best evidence of this wonderful attitude towards others and towards academic life. I'm certain that it will carry on his legacy, continuing to promote research and dialogue among scholars from different contexts and with different backgrounds. Let me assure you my support for the RVP's project and my willing to cooperate with it (although it might not be always possible).

I can only imagine that this might not be an easy time for you. Let me assure you of my friendship.

Yours truly

A. Palma
Catholic University of Portugal
Liston, Portugal

From: **Ho Manh Tung**
Date: Thu, Sep 15, 2016 at 4:06 AM

Dear Prof. Hu,

I am Tung, the young researcher from Institute of Philosophy, who met you in December 2015 in Catholic University. I have received the news regarding Prof. McLean's death from my uncle, Prof. Ho Sy Quy. I would like to express my sincere condolences toward you and The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. I admire Prof. McLean's persistent efforts to create a growing intellectual community around the study of values and philosophy, to help people think deeper about the issues of our time. And I believe his legacy will leave on and he will be greatly missed by friends and colleagues.

With deepest sympathy,

Ho Manh Tung
Department of Scientific Management and International Cooperation
Institute of Philosophy
Hanoi City, Vietnam

From: **John Ozolins**
Date: Thu, Sep 15, 2016 at 6:41 PM

Dear Hu Yeping,

I have just heard from Joao Vila-Cha that Father George F. McLean has passed away. He was a wonderful inspiration to us all and it was a privilege to have known him. I am sure he has been welcomed in to everlasting life with the words, "well done, good and faithful servant."

I will pray for the repose of his soul and for his family and those closest to him. We have lost a great man and good friend. We must make sure his work continues.

May he rest in peace.

John

Professor Jānis (John) Tāivaldis Ozoliņš FHERDSA FPESA FACE
Foreign Member, Latvian Academy of Sciences
Professor of Philosophy, Australian Catholic University
Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia

From: **Tran Haiminh**

Date: Thu, Sep 15, 2016 at 11:27 PM

Dear Prof. Hu Yeping,

I am sorry to hear that Prof. McLean has passed away.

May I send him a heartfelt prayer.

Prof. Truong Ngoc Nam also wants me to send his prayer to Prof. McLean.

We hope you and the Center will overcome this suffering.

Wishing you all the best!

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Tran Hai Minh
Deputy Dean, Faculty of Philosophy
Academy of Journalism and Communication
Hanoi, Vietnam

From: **Remi Rajani**

Date: Fri, Sep 16, 2016 at 1:30 AM

Oh Hu,

I'm sorry to hear this news. But as we believe he is with God. However it's a great loss to us and to the entire humanity. He is such a humane. A gentleman at his best. I pay my heartfelt respects to Prof McLean.

Regards,

Remi Rajani
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam
Andhra Pradesh, India

From: **Christine Gichure**
Date: Fri, Sep 16, 2016 at 7:47 AM

... May God rest his soul in eternal peace. He was a good man, an excellent scholar and mentor. We shall all miss him. I imagine that Hu Yeping especially will miss him very much. I knew he was advanced in age, I knew anything could happen to him, the news I never got was that he was gone. Thank you for letting me know.

Kind regards

Christine
Strathmore University
Nairobi, Kenya

From: **Anthony Savari Raj**
Date: Fri, Sep 16, 2016 at 10:43 PM

Dear Hu,

Please accept again my feelings towards late Fr. McLean and my sincere appreciation for your long collaborative work with him. The spirit that he has kindled in all of us will be kept alive in different parts of the world.

Love

Raj
Manipal University Jaipur
Jaipur, India

From: **Sebastian Velassery**
Date: Sat, Sep 17, 2016 at 12:01 AM

Dear Ms. Hu,

We had conducted an official condolence meeting in the Department on the 14th of September at 11 a.m. All faculty members, students and some others participated and observed a 2 minute silence for the departed soul of Prof. McLean. Certainly we shall be doing something and will let you know after a week or so.

With kind regards,

Sebastian Velassery
Punjab University
Chandigarh, India

From: **Edward Wamala**

Date: Sat, Sep 17, 2016 at 8:54 AM

Dear Dr. Hu,

1. I am glad to receive your mail coming soon after this very sad and grieving time. For us in Makerere, the year has also seen the passing away of Professor A.T. Dalfovo, whom you must have met sometime and who was a great friend to McLean. It was A.T. Dalfovo who introduced all of us to the RVP

2. Considering that the Council programs worked well even when he was sick, with the experience you have accumulated under his guidance, I think we should be able to continue with the Council programs.

3. We shall definitely be able to organize a conference, perhaps in memory of McLean. Or perhaps in memory of both A.T. Dalfovo and Professor McLean. We shall discuss this in our meetings. Whatever the case, we are going to organize that conference.

Once again I am very glad to hear from you, and promise to remain an active member and to keep the spirit of the RVP alive especially among the young members here.

Are there any possibilities of getting the images of the interment ceremony of the professor? I shall be very glad to receive them in case they are available.

Sincerely,

Wamala Edward
Makerere University
Kampala, Uganda

From: **Dursun Ali Aykit**

Date: Sat, Sep 17, 2016 at 1:20 PM

Dear Hu,

I do very sorry about the passing away of Prof. Dr. McLean. He was really a good person and I will remember him always in my life. He was very sincere and honest person. While he was sick, he keep on pursuing good relations with people.

Dear Hu, I will remember you, too. Since you were very helpful in his life. I am sure without you he would had difficulties about his all activities. Thanks to you and McLean...

Please accept my condolences and prayers...

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dursun Ali Aykit
Cumhuriyet University
Faculty of Theology, Sivas, Turkey

From: **P.H.A.I. Jonkers**
Date: Mon, Sep 19, 2016 at 3:40 AM

Dear Hu,

Thank you for your mail. You must have received a lot of warm condolences for George from all over the world. Indeed, he was a very special person, well ahead of his time in many respects. With hindsight, the conference in Rome was a kind of tribute to all his accomplishments, and I am very glad that, while in Rome, he was in relatively good health, so that he could enjoy all the praise he received. Anyway, it was well deserved.

I wish you all the best in these difficult times,
Love,

Peter
Tilburg University
The Netherlands

From: **G.A.F. Hellemans**
Date: Mon, Sep 19, 2016 at 5:07 AM

Dear Hu,

My wife and I just returned from Rome, where I attended a small conference. It was my first time back in Rome since the big Congress on Renewing the Church last year in March. My wife and I have lit a candlelight in his beloved Rome in the Church St. Mary in Cosmedim in memory of George.

Best,

Staf
Tilburg University
The Netherlands

From: **Joanne Yang**
Date: 2016-09-19 10:48 GMT-04:00

Subject: 纪念麦克林神父

I wrote this on the next day after coming back from Boston. I couldn't stop thinking of him. I share this with you, we'll remember him in forever.

他，一位将生命奉献给上帝的神父
他，一位将知识传讲给学生的教授

他，一位将身心交与东西方文化交流的使者
他，一位当代的利玛窦

他，广纳八方学者，搭沟通桥梁
他，足遍万邦异土，寻共识同章

他，八六高龄，依然站在罗马讲台
他，垂危之际，坦然平安面对死亡
视死如归，一个有信仰人的生命诠释

因着他，我们来到这个神奇的国度
因着他，我们认识了真理的源头
因着他，我们的生命改变了轨迹

为他，我们继续做文化交流的使者
为他，我们继续做上帝之爱的播种机

愿人与人平等相处
愿族与族不再纷争
他的终身愿望，我们的行动指南

他，尊敬的智者，恩师，朋友
乔治麦克林神父
平安与他同在

Purdue University

From: **Kiki Papanicolos**

Date: Mon, Sep 19, 2016 at 1:51 PM

Dear Hu

Father McLean's spirit as well as his legacy must be kept alive.

I strongly believe, that you are now the soul of the Council. I wish you to have the inner strength and health which is required, so you can keep the Council progressing and flourishing.

My future projects include an Obituary dedicated to Father McLean, which is going to be published to the Year Book of our Department.

Yours Sincerely

Kiki

University of Ioannina
Ioannina, Greece

From: **Hossein Sadeghi**
Date: Tue, Sep 20, 2016 at 10:11 AM

I was deeply saddened when I heard the passing away of Father McLean. We are living an era when the need for such people, who regard their mission as serving humanity as a whole without making distinctions between various sects, races, religions etc. is increasing. Thus we all miss this great man a lot. I offer my condolences to his family, colleagues and friends and wish God's blessings for his soul.

Prof. Dr. Hossein M M Sadeghi
Shahid Beheshti University
Tehran, Iran

From: **Rahim Nobahar**
Date: Wed, Sep 21, 2016 at 1:26 PM

Hello Hu,
I know that it is hard for you to work without Father McLean after years cooperation. Last night my wife dreamed Father and that she's giving him some watermelon.
With all best wishes,

Rahim

Rahim Nobahar (Ph.D.)
Associate Professor, Faculty of Law
Shahid Beheshti University
Tehran, Iran.

From: **S. Panneerselvam**
Date: Thu, Sep 22, 2016 at 1:21 PM

Dear Dr. Hu Yeping,
Greetings. Hope you have recovered from the sorrow of the sudden demise of our Dear Professor McLean. There were many people in India who have conveyed their condolences once I put the information in WhatsApp and email. Many scholars have spoken to me and conveyed their grief and sorrow. This simply shows the love and affection all of us have towards Professor McLean. It is a personal shock to me and still I am unable to accept it, though the reality has to be accepted and digested.
I feel that we have to do something academically in memory of Professor McLean. I am thinking of editing a volume in memory of Professor McLean.

I feel that this would be a fitting tribute to him. I will edit the volume and I would be extremely happy if you could also be the co-editor of this work. I am planning to write to scholars known to him to contribute a paper and I will be pleased to edit it. I seek your valuable suggestion on this.

Also I feel, a three-day seminar on his contribution to Philosophy, Culture, values and Inter-cultural Understanding must be organized in future. Though we do not have funds to do this in Chennai, some attempt should be made in future so that his contribution should be discussed and evaluated for the benefit of the academic community....

The world cannot see such a humble and simple person like him. I find a vacuum in his absence. A person like you who has been close to him alone can give a proper guidance and direction. I look forward for the same.

With warm regards

Dr. S. Panneerselvam
National Fellow, ICPR
Former Head, Department of Philosophy
University of Madras
Chennai, India

From: **Dan Chitoiu**
Date: Thu, Sep 29, 2016 at 5:00 AM

Hello Hu,

I heard the very sad news that Father George MacLean passed away. A great loss for all of us. His place can be newer replaced, but his inheritance is a living spirit that inspires us in continuing and further promoting his vision on the role of values and philosophy in the world of today. For my part, I will do my best in supporting and developing the Council's mission in my area and around the world. If my help is required in any way, I will gladly contribute. I believe that the RVP's understanding of what is the very active role of philosophy in a globalized and very fast changing today's world is the most concrete and practical use of the philosophizing act....

My sincerely condolences,

Dan
Al. I. Cuza University
Iasi, Romania

From: **Gholamreza Aavani**
Date: Sun, Oct 2, 2016 at 1:13 PM

Dear Friends,

Please accept my heartfelt condolences for the passing of the late reverent father George McLean, who was a living epitome of spirituality humanity sanctity and wisdom. By holding about three hundred international symposiums, seminars, and congresses in different parts of the world and in various countries he became the symbol of dialogue among civilizations especially interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

About one week before his demise, I happened to be in Washington, DC and knowing that he was ill, I went CUA to inquire about his health from Dr. Hu Yeping. It happened to be the last day of the one month of the annual conference sponsored by the RVP every year and participated by scholars from multifarious countries. A week later, I heard the sad news about Father McLean’s passing from this transient world to his eternal abode of bliss and I managed to attend his funeral service which was held in a chapel in his hometown about 40 miles away from Boston, accompanied by my daughter.

We had some joint conferences in Tehran at the Iranian Institute of philosophy and elsewhere. I also participated in several conferences held by Father McLean at CUA and in other universities in the United States, in Moscow, Shanghai, Beijing, and some other Chinese universities and also in the pre-congresses of the World Congress of Philosophy in Seoul and in Athens.

When the International Society of Islamic Philosophy (ISIP) was founded under the auspices of FISP, the late Professor together with Husayn Heriyanto, Yasein Mohammad, Karim Crow, and I participated and delivered lectures in ten different universities in Indonesia celebrating the occasion, an event that I will never forget. Father McLean helped a lot to promote the mutual intellectual and spiritual understanding and inter-cultural dialogue between Islam and Christianity.

Gholamreza Aavani
Iranian Institute of Philosophy
Tehran, Iran

From: **Jafar Morvarid**
Date: Mon, Oct 3, 2016 at 6:09 AM

Dear Prof. Yeping Hu,
I hope this email finds you well.

Please accept my condolences on the loss of Great Professor McLean. He was a man of great accomplishments and contributed a great deal to Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue....

Kind regards,

Jafar Morvarid, Ph.D.
Assistant Prof. of Philosophy and Theology, Faculty of Theology
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran

From: **Francis Mabiri**

Date: Tue, Oct 4, 2016 at 5:22 AM

Hello Dr. Hu.

We are all the poorer with the passing of Prof McLean. Please accept condolences from my colleagues and I. We have to soldier on in his honor.

The tentative date for next year’s meeting is 12 May. Hopefully it fits in with your itinerary if you are coming. The tentative sub-theme is “Philosophy and Multiculturalism in Southern Africa.” The sub-theme is yet to be refined.

Greetings and God bless!

Francis
University of Zimbabwe
Harare, Zimbabwe

From: **Mustafa Malik**

Date: Fri, Oct 7, 2016 at 12:19 AM

Yeping Hu,

I just received your e-mail about your seminars in India and noted that you’re at the helm of the RVP. I was shocked and distressed to learn that Father McLean had left us! I had sent him an e-mail a while ago. Having had no response, I thought that he had been somehow disappointed by me and had better things to do than spend time with me. I wanted to call you after reading his obituary in the Washington Post, but didn’t know that you would be available at his phone number. In any case, please accept my heartfelt condolences. Father McLean not only mentored me but also touched me deeply with his kindnesses, humanity and scholarship.

If you have any seminar in Washington, please let me know. I’d like to learn from you about his last days.

All the best to you.

Mustafa Malik

From: **Ramesh Chandra Sinha**

Date: Fri, Oct 7, 2016 at 1:16 AM

Dear Dr. Hu Yeping

I last met Prof. McLean in Boston College. I am greatly pained to learn the sad news.

With regards
Sincerely

R.C. Sinha
Former Prof. & Head
Patna University
Presently Member of Indian Council of Philosophical Research
New Delhi, India

From: **Golfo Maggini**
Date: Fri, Oct 7, 2016 at 3:24 AM

Dear Hu,

I meant to write to you this e-mail a long time now, but I was expecting a calm moment to do it. So here you are: you have my condolences for the loss of Father McLean. I know that he has been a sort of spiritual father for you. I haven't known him in person, but from what I have seen and heard, not only from Kiki and Eleni, he was a great man, a humanist, and a philosopher. I am sure that with you, and other members of the Council, his heritage will keep going into the future.

Warmest regards,

Golfo

Golfo Maggini
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy, Psychology & Pedagogy
School of Philosophy, University of Ioannina
University Campus Ioannina 45 110, Greece

From: **Karim Douglas Crow**
Date: Fri, Oct 7, 2016 at 12:09 PM

A Moving breath passed by – the *Sigh* of a deep being and spirit of true wisdom – He is in the peace of Being, He is in us all.

Receive your reward which you laboured for and earned so well.

Karim Douglas Crow
Kuala Lumpur – Malaysia

From: **Asna Husin**
Date: Mon, Oct 10, 2016 at 9:07 AM

Dear Hu,

I am sorry for the belated response. We have been out of touch with the computer and the world. Both Karim and I are really saddened by the demise

of Father George. He was a very special individual and I am sure he is now in Heaven with his Lord.

Our condolences to you and his beloved family and community.

Yours,

Asna Husin
Fakultas Tarbiyah, UIN Ar-Raniry
Darussalam – Banda Aceh, Indonesia

From: **Weiming Tu**

Date: Fri, Oct 14, 2016 at 6:36 AM

Dear Dr. Hu,

With great sadness, we send this email to express our deep condolences. Professor McLean was a great contemporary thinker with profound contribution to philosophical, theological, and religious inquiries. His service leadership will be greatly missed by philosophers all over the world. His generous and inspiring effort to bring the Chinese philosophical community in touch with the rest of the academic world will be appreciated for years to come.

With best wishes,

Tu Weiming
Director, Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies
Peking University
Beijing, China

From: **赵司空**

Date: Fri, Oct 14, 2016 at 6:53 AM

Dear Hu,

We've just heard about the tragic news confirmed by Joao, and we would like to express our deep feelings for Father McLean. We know that he will always be with all the people associated with the RVP. We express our gratitude that Father McLean brought us together. We know that there will always be feelings of peace and love in the hearts of those that keep his memory as something very precious. We never met him in person, but what he did for us cannot be expressed by words.

Warm hugs,

Sikong, Ionut
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
Shanghai, China

From: **Luca Maria Scarantino**
Date: Fri, Oct 14, 2016 at 3:57 AM

Dear Yeping,

Many thanks indeed for this precious information. We at Fisp have been saddened and deeply affected by Father McLean’s passing away. It is a huge loss for international scholarship in philosophy and religious studies; and we will miss his natural kindness and open-mindedness.

It is important that his flame be carried ahead by his team, and that the activities of the RVP remain as visible and influential as ever. Please rely on my commitment to this effect, and on the support of FISP as a whole. We are on your side.

We will try to pursue his wish. It would be the best way to honor his memory. I have already spoken to our colleague Tu Weiming to this effect.

With warmest regards,

luca

Prof. Dr. Luca M. Scarantino
Chair of the Executive Committee
24th World Congress of Philosophy
&
Secretary-general of FISP
General Editor, Diogenes
Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione – IULM
Milano, Italy

From: **Nicholas Lombardo**
Date: Mon, Oct 17, 2016 at 8:31 PM

Dear Hu yeping,

Good morning and greetings from Beijing! I hope this email finds you well. I’m writing to inquire about next year’s upcoming conferences.....

Last but not least, I wanted to express my condolences after the death of George McLean. I met him only once with you, but I really enjoyed meeting him, and I really marvel at the network of scholars he helped build up over the years. You knew him well, so it must have been a great loss for you personally. Please accept my sincere condolences.

Best

Nicholas
Catholic University of America

From: **黄其洪**

Date: 2016-10-31 19:55 GMT-04:00

胡老师:

最近一切可好?不好意思,我今天才得知麦克林先生去世的消息,听到这个消息,我十分震惊,因为在我离开华盛顿的时候,老麦身体还很好,没有想到,老麦走得如此突然.我想,过去的两个多月里,你一定很悲痛,作为朋友,让你一个人承受这种悲痛,很过意不去.你还是节哀吧,一方面生老病死是每一个人都不可逃脱的命运,老麦还算高寿,他这一生也是硕果累累的一生;另一方面,像老麦这样将自己一生都奉献给主的人,一生都荣耀主的人,死后也一定会来到主的身边,享受主的恩赐.只要我们活着的人继承老麦的精神,将他的事业发扬光大,就是对他最好的怀念.我准备最近写一篇纪念老麦的文章,让更多的中国人铭记老麦为多元文化的交流与沟通所做的杰出贡献.

胡老师,保重身体,RVP中心和许多热爱真理和和平的人都需要你.

黄其洪
Xinan University
Chongqing, China

From: **Andrew Blasko**

Date: Wed, Nov 2, 2016 at 8:09 AM

Hello Hu,

...

I'm saddened to hear about Fr. McLean. His inspiration and example meant a great deal to me, and will be missed. I will endeavor to continue the legacy that he began, which you and your colleagues have nurtured.

Andrew
European Polytechnical University
Sofia, Bulgaria

From: **Paolo Janni**

Date: Tue, Nov 8, 2016 at 2:46 AM

Dear Hu,

I did not know and I deeply regret Father McLean departure. I will always remember him as my Friend and my Maestro. His friendship honored me and made me a better person. Please send this mail to one of his brother or sister.

Please keep me informed, as always, of the Council's activities My warmest regards and many wishes to you.

Paolo Janni
Ambassador of Italy (Ret.)
Italy

From: **Magdalena Dumitrana**
Date: Tue, Nov 8, 2016 at 4:55 AM

Dear Yeping,

I've just found out that Father McLean lives now in another world. It is true, I had some feelings, I was looking over the RVP site and I did not find anything, so I thought that what I was feeling had another cause (another person). I was happy looking at his pictures in Italy, last year, seeing the cross, very visible, on his chest. It was a very good sign for me.

Usually, I do not look at the conferences pages because I know that I am not able to take part in any of them. But not this time. This time I have received the RVP newsletter and I looked carefully over the conferences schedule. And this is how I found what happened, at the Nigerian call. And I understood the source of my strange feelings.

I shall not try to comfort you – it would be useless and not right...Then you will see him again. Don't worry, in Heavens there is no separation between Christians and Buddhists. Please smile, he just smiled.

If you decide to do some volumes about him, I would like if possible, to write something. Anyway, I shall write to Nigerian people asking them if I can join their future volume on Father, even if I cannot join their conference.

Just ask....

Magdalena
The Adventist Theological Institute
Bucharest, Romania

From: **Robert A Destro**
Date: Tue, Nov 29, 2016 at 12:24 AM

Dear Hu,

I hope this message finds you well! I was hoping to arrange for a memorial Mass and reception for our mutual friend, Fr. McLean. Do you have a mailing list that we can use to ensure that people are properly notified?

Many thanks in advance!

Bob

Robert A. Destro
Professor of Law & Director
Interdisciplinary Program in Law & Religion
Columbus School of Law
The Catholic University of America

Festschrifts

Books Dedicated to Professor George F. McLean for his 75th Birthday

To the Mountain: Essays in Honour of Professor George F. McLean; edited by William Sweet and Hu Yeping; Fu Jen Catholic University Press, Taipei, Taiwan; 2004.

Diversity and Dialogue: Culture and Values in the Age of Globalization: Essays in Honour of Prof. George F. McLean; edited by Andrew Blasco and Plamen Makariev; Minerva, Sofia, Bulgaria; 2004.

Philosophical Traditions and Contemporary World: Russia-West-East; edited by Nur S. Kirabaev and Yuriy M. Pochta; People's Friendship University of Russia, Moscow, Russia; 2004.

Prajna Vihara: Journal of Philosophy and Religion (Vol. 5 No. 1, January-June 2004); Assumption University of Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand; 2004.

Cultural Heritage and the Future of China, edited by Gan Chensong, Zou Shipeng and Hu Yeping; Jiangxi People's Press, Nanchang, China; 2004.

Books Dedicated to Professor George F. McLean for his 80th Birthday

Asian Philosophy in the Making: Essays in Honor of George Francis McLean; edited by Tran Van Doan; Encyclopedia Publishing House, Hanoi, Vietnam; 2009.

Islam, Cultural Transformation and the Re-emergence of Falsafah: Studies Honoring Professor George Francis McLean on His Eightieth Birthday; edited with an Introduction by Karim Douglas Crow; Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Tehran, Iran; 2009.

Philosophy in Times of Social Crisis: Integrity and Dialogue: Essays in Honor of George F. McLean; edited by Plamen Makariev, Andrew Blasko and Dariusz Dobrzanski; Minerva, Sofia, Bulgaria; 2009.

Christianity, Culture and the Contemporary World: Challenges and New Paradigms: Reflections of International Catholic Thinkers in Honor of George Francis McLean on the Occasion of His 80th Birthday; edited by Edward J. Alam; Notre Dame University, Louaize, Lebanon, 2009.

Brief Biographical Note

George Francis McLean, O.M.I.
(June 29, 1929 – September 6, 2016)

Academic Positions:

Professor of Philosophy, 1958-1993; Professor Emeritus, 1993-2016
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
Advisory Professor, 1994-2016
Fudan University, Shanghai, China
Advisory Researcher, 1998-2016
The Institute of Philosophy, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
Advisory Researcher, 2001-2016
The Department of Philosophy, Jiaotong University, Xian, China
Director, Center for the Study of Culture and Values
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

Education:

Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, 1949-1956
Ph.B., Ph.L., S.T.B., S.T.L.
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, 1956-1958
Ph.D.
The University of Madras, 1969; 1977
Visiting Research Scholar
The University of Paris, 1970
Visiting Research Scholar
Institute for Oriental Studies, Cairo, Egypt 1991; 1992
Visiting Research Scholar
Honorary Doctorate, 2003
Kazak Academy of Sciences, Kazakhstan
Honorary Doctorate, 2010
Oblate School of Theology

Professional Activities:

General Secretary
The American Catholic Philosophical Societies (ACPA) 1965-1980
The International Society for Metaphysics (ISM) 1974-1998
The World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies (WUCPS) 1974-1998
The Inter-university Committee on Research and Policy Studies (ICR) 1975-1977 (founder)

The Joint-Committee of Catholic Learned Societies and Scholars (CLS)
1974-1977 (founder)

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) 1983-2016
(founder)

President

The World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies (WUCPS) 1998-2003

Director

Center for the Study of Culture and Values 2000-2016 (founder)

Board of Directors:

The International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) 1977-1987

Founder:

Inter-University Committee on Research and Policy Studies (ICR)

Joint Committee of Catholic Learned Societies (CLS)

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP)

The Center for the Study of Culture and Values (CSCV)

Bibliography of the Books of George Francis McLean¹

Books:

As Author

- Man's Knowledge of God According to Paul Tillich: A Thomistic Critique.* Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1958.
- Plenitude and Participation: The Unity of Man in God.* Madras: University of Madras Press, 1978.
- Foundations of Moral Education in China.* Taipei: Fu Jen Catholic University, 1985.
- Tradition and Contemporary Life: Hermeneutics of Perennial Wisdom and Contemporary Change.* Madras: University of Madras Press, 1986.
- Tradition, Harmony and Transcendence. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series III. Vol. 5.* Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994.
- Ways to God, Personal and Social at the Turn of Millennia: The Iqbal Lecture, Lahore.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series IIA. Islam, Vol. 6. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1999.
- Religion and the Relation between Civilizations: Lectures on Cooperation between Islamic and Christian Culture in a Global Horizon.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I. Culture and Values, Vol. 21. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000.
- Freedom, Cultural Traditions and Progress: Philosophy in Civil Society and Nation Building: Tashkent Lectures.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I. Culture and Values, Vol. 22. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000.
- Faith, Reason and Philosophy: Lectures at the Al-Azhar, Qom, Tehran, Lahore and Beijing.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I. Culture and Values, Vol. 20. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000.
- Hermeneutics, Tradition and Contemporary Change: Lectures in Chennai/Madras, India.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I. Culture and Values, Vol. 30. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2003.

¹ We have listed only the books authored or edited by George F. McLean; most of his articles and lectures appear in these volumes, and do not necessitate a separate entry.

- Hermeneutics, Faith, and Relations between Cultures: Lectures in Qom, Iran.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series IIA. Islam, Vol. 17. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2003.
- Hermeneutics for a Global Age: Lectures in Shanghai and Hanoi.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series IIID. South Asia, Vol. 2. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2003.
- God and the Discovery of Man: Classical and Contemporary Approaches: Lectures in Wuhan, China.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series III. Asia, Vol. 19. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2003.
- Persons, Peoples and Cultures in a Global Age: Metaphysical Bases for Peace between Civilizations.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I. Culture and Values, Vol. 29. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004.
- Beyond Modernity: The Recovery of Person and Community in Global Times: Lectures in China and Vietnam.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I. Culture and Values, Vol. 37. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2010.
- Religion and Culture.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I. Culture and Values, Vol. 38. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2010.
- Unity and Harmony, Compassion and Love in Global Times.* Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I. Culture and Values, Vol. 40. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2011.

As Editor

- Philosophy and the Integration of Contemporary Catholic Education.* Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962.
- Teaching Thomism Today.* Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963.
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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

Purpose

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

Projects

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week cross-cultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as a 501 C3 non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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