

In-culturalational Model of Relation among Cultures in the Symphony of Religions of the choir Pontanima

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Just after the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1996 were members of all religions and believes invited to sing in the choir Pontanima a symphony of religious and cultural paradigms and so using art and spirituality to heal and reconcile Bosnian deeply wounded people. The goal was not only to meet and to initiate a dialogue with other religions or cultures, but to go deeper into other religions and cultures, in-acclurate in others, to take dress of others, to pray their prayers, to sing their songs, not to make any syncretism, not to be lost or assimilated in another identity, but to remove fear of communication and enable a more essential dialogue and interaction. The project was recognized as a unique model opening inspirational direction for interreligious and intercultural relations. Symptomatic is that Pontanima for its mission was awarded 2011 by Catholic Pax Christi, 2016 by Islamic Doha International Center for Interreligious Dialogue, and for Culture of Peace by Chirac Foundation and similar numerous recognitions all over the world.

Pontanima, meaning the bridge with soul, is a very elaborated project using art and spirituality for social change, not only music, but also painting, architecture, film, sport etc. (Markovic, The Use of Art in Social Change: A Case Study of the Pontanima Choir in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in: Voices of Harmony and Dissent, Winnipeg 2015, 172–201). In the actual interreligious and intercultural processes, the in-culturalational method offers mutual enriching and growth in identity, moving intercultural dialogue from surface to deeper levels. Closed religious, cultural, national and tribal systems tend to isolation and therefore experience in-culturalation sometimes as endangerment and provocation. Power of art and spirituality, their highest achievements are a very opportune and effective tool penetrating such closed isolation and compelling them to be more open. Experiences of the choir Pontanima with some 500 concerts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the wounds and hatred were deepest, are a model of intercultural cooperation which can be exported from Bosnia-Herzegovina and applied in Europe and in other parts of the world.