

THE SYNOD OF QUEBEC AND EASTERN ONTARIO - SYNOD 2026

Friday & Saturday, October 16 & 17

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Sherbrooke, Québec



Conference Theme Abstract

Voices and Perspectives of the Global Church Speaker: Dr. Martin Bellerose



1. Hospitality: Biblical Fundamentals for the Rise of the Global Church

"...and its gates will never be shut." Revelation 21:25

The first presentation is divided into five parts:

- 1) First, we highlight the very fundamentals (characteristics) of Christian hospitality that we find in the narrative of the theophany of Mamre in Genesis 18:1-15.
- 2). Then we look at a practical example of radical hospitality found in the narratives of Rahab and Ruth.
- 3) Next, following the path of radical hospitality, we take a look at the pericope where Jesus meets the Syrophenician woman and explore the "shift" that happens in this text. From then on, faith in the One True God cannot be limited to one "genetically homogeneous" people. These verses illustrate the clash between what we call Ezra's and Jonas' perspectives.
- 4) Once hospitality is put into practice and the "newcomers" are living among those born in the country, it is time to think about "integration" or "inclusion" or anything else like that. But these processes are always understood as a minority *becoming part of* a majority. So, we go back once again to the Scriptures and notice that "Living together" in the New Testament doesn't mean to be integrated, included, or assimilated, but results in a series of multidirectional actions of hospitality. *Jesus on the road to Emmaus* (Luke 24:13-35); Jesus inviting himself to Zacchaeus' house (Luke 19:1-10); Jesus with Martha and Mary (Luke 10: 38-42); Jesus received by Simon the Pharisee, (Luke 7 : 36-50); The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37); The non-hospitality of a Samaritan village (Luke 9: 51-56); Jesus meeting a Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30); whom Jesus receives into his Kingdom (Matthew 25: 31-46); the book of Revelation 3: 20-22. (I will select examples according to the time still available).
- 5) We will conclude by linking sacramentality, commensality, and eschatology with hospitality.

The Panel

2. The "Africanization" of Reformed Churches in Canada

"It's the end of the Church as we know it"

In the second presentation, we notice an observable and observed reality, the social demographic changes of our Church communities, with the intention of having frank, courageous and respectful conversations on that theme. While this is happening, some communities are not changing at all and don't experiment the changes we notice here. Here, our starting point is the clash between a beautiful church building with seven attendees in the countryside vs an uncomfortably jam-packed basement full of "immigrants" in the city.

The presentation is divided into three parts:

1) Diversity in the Church: between cuteness and nightmare

We address this topic from four concrete experiences:

- 1) Meeting other cultures around a potluck or sharing of food,
- 2) Time management,
- 3) The importance of Christocentrism as a fundamental doctrine for Christians from Africa vs the fear of imposing Reformation Christocentrism in the manner of past colonialism
- 4) And the Canadian-born Church member's motto; "they ought to adapt themselves to their new reality."

2) The richness and challenges of the "Isocultural" and "Exocultural" Churches

Here we explain the meaning of these categories and how they are more useful than "intercultural" and "ethnocultural" in helping Churches discuss what we are collectively experimenting now. It is almost impossible to change our practices effectively if we don't name reality rightly.

3) Inter-hospitality in our pastoral praxis

Understanding the idea of inter-hospitality for the global Church as a plural church in constant change. This involves breaking with the idea of a "golden age" that (in our belief) usually happened just before us.