I had the privilege of attending the *International Meeting of Kairos for Christian Unity and Reconciliation* hosted by the Alleluia Community, Augusta, Georgia on the weekend of July 15-17, 2016. This gathering drew speakers and participants from North America, South America, and Europe. There were over 300 people in attendance - Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, brothers and sisters from new charismatic churches, and Messianic Jews. About one hundred of the out-of-town participants stayed as guests in the homes of members of Alleluia Community in the Faith Village neighborhood. Participation in the International Meeting of Kairos was an opportunity to experience firsthand the Holy Spirit moving the Body of Christ toward the realization of Jesus’ prayer in John 17:21 “that all may be one so that the world may believe”.

The *International Meeting of Kairos* is a project of spiritual ecumenism that was begun in 2000 (the Great Jubilee) by the Community of Jesus (Bari, Italy). The Community of Jesus was founded by Matteo and Giovanna Calisi in 1983. It carries a three-fold ministry focus: worship of God, reconciliation of Christians, and evangelism. The city of Bari is known for its ecumenism. For centuries Orthodox Christians and members of the Eastern Catholic Churches have visited Bari because of its Basilica dedicated to St Nicholas.

This year’s meeting was the first time the *International Meeting of Kairos* was held outside of Italy. The theme was “Revival and Unity”. Throughout the weekend we heard this expression used: “unity in the midst of diversity”. Diversity is a good thing; the Holy Spirit creates diversity and from this diversity He graces us with unity.

Matteo Calisi and Bruno Ierullo (founders of United in Christ ministries in USA and Canada) moderated panel presentations and discussions Friday morning on “Unity and Diversity” and “Common Mission – Evangelize Together”. It was wonderful to hear the perspective each speaker brought for the benefit of all. In addition to hearing wonderful talks we had plenty of time for praise and worship, fellowship, and prayer ministry. And each day of the conference there were opportunities to receive prayers for healing.

Evangelical pastor Gary Kinnaman spoke on Saturday morning. He is involved in the John 17 movement ([www.john17movement.com](http://www.john17movement.com)) that has transformed ecumenical relations in Phoenix, Arizona and he recently met with Pope Francis. His talk on Saturday helped many Catholics to understand the difficulties Evangelicals and Catholics face while learning to relate to one another. For instance, he said that Evangelicals who are charismatic are more open to Catholics than are other Evangelicals; he admitted that Evangelicals don’t know what they don’t know about Catholics; he said that differences in language - how we express Christian truth -complicates how we relate to one another; he also told Catholics that the term “ecumenism” is not a good word to use around Evangelicals. Rather, it is more helpful to speak of unity in the body of Christ.

Bishop Eduardo Nevares, Auxillary Bishop of Phoenix, spoke next, sharing how the Lord led him to work with other Christians to make Jesus known and to serve the poor, and how when he came to serve the people of Phoenix he was eager to pray with pastors of other Christian churches and ecclesial communities. He reminded us that division in the body of Christ openly conflicts with the expressed will of Christ. Bishop Gregory Hartmayer, Bishop of Savannah, was the main celebrant at the Vigil Mass on Saturday afternoon and brought an apostolic blessing from our Holy Father.

Sunday morning we attended an Evangelical ecumenical church service led by Pastor Joe Tosini and Pastor (and worship leader) Mike Herron, and we heard from Pastor Giovanni Traettino of Caserta, Italy who has been instrumental in bringing Evangelicals and Catholic charismatics together. Pastor Traettino is a personal friend of Pope Francis; in fact the pope visited his church in 2014. Listening to him it was very clear that God is moving in power in these days to bring about reconciliation within the body of Christ. We must follow where the Holy Spirit leads.

In the afternoon we heard the amazing testimony of Messianic Jewish rabbi Boris Grisenko. He shared how praying at the site of our Lord’s crucifixion led him to accept a call from the Lord to establish a Messianic Jewish congregation in Kiev, Ukraine. At the time he knew only 6 Messianic believers in the city; yet, this congregation is now the largest Messianic Jewish congregation in the world. Dr. Kevin Ranaghan ended the day with a message that gave us much to take home to our families, ecclesial communities, and ministries: moving into unity is a process and we are in it (we have begun, let’s continue onward in the power of the Holy Spirit); baptism in the Spirit is not a doctrine but rather it is an experience (let’s not press to define it theologically as much as live the grace and spread it to others); we must maintain the ecumenical character of the gift of baptism in the Spirit in all that we do (let’s transform the world together for Christ!).

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