

THEOLOGY IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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ORDERS AND MINISTRY

Leadership in the World Church

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Globalization

What Does It Mean?

What Does It Imply?

THE FOCUS AND PERSPECTIVE OF THIS VOLUME

THE FOCUS OF THIS BOOK is a consideration of the theologies of church order and of church ministry from a global perspective. Order and ministry in the Roman Catholic Church are, without doubt, two major realities of the church itself, and church leadership is found, in large measure, in the people who belong to a specific church order or to a specific church ministry. Whenever the realities of church leadership become the topic of discussion, there is a clear sense that we are focusing on a central, complicated, and very delicate issue of the church. In this series of books, a number of theological themes will be considered by various authors from the standpoint of a global perspective. The particular theme of this volume, order and ministry, is in many ways not simply another theological theme. Since church leadership is at the center of both order and ministry, this volume examines a fundamental church theme, not something peripheral or secondary in church life.

The centrality of leadership in both order and ministry indicates that whatever a global perspective brings to the discussion will have major implications for today's church. These major implications can be enormously enriching, and, at the same time, they can be enormously challenging. Changes in leadership never occur in an easy fashion; in the church, even slight changes are often seen as disturbing, alarming, or even threatening. On the other hand, changes in leadership have been seen as helpful, necessary, and even life-giving. In the contemporary Roman Catholic Church, one must honestly admit that there exists a leadership struggle—put simplistically, it is a struggle between those for a liberal Roman Catholic Church and those for a traditional Roman Catholic Church. Everyone, however, is liberal in some issues and traditional in other issues. No one is totally liberal, and no one is totally traditional. Thus, the designation of liberal versus traditional is sim-

plistic. Nonetheless, there exists today, as we shall see, some sort of struggle, a tug-of-war, between groups in the Roman Catholic Church who are vying for actual leadership. We find this at the parish level, the diocesan level, the national church level, and the Vatican curial level. This struggle over leadership today is simply a fact that we have to acknowledge and live with. The goal of the present volume is not to settle the issues behind today's struggles within the church's competing leadership groups. Rather, the goal is simply to lay the cards on the table, with the hope that an openness regarding this discussion on order and ministry will indeed offer some abatement to today's highly sensitive leadership debates.

In the course of these pages, then, the connection of the terms "order" and "ministry" with the New Testament will be noted. Then the ways in which order and ministry have been used in the history of the Roman Catholic Church will be presented in detail. Finally, the role of both order and ministry from the standpoint of the Second Vatican Council to the first years of the third millennium will indicate how in today's church they are both operative and valued.

Such a focus on order and ministry is important, for in the Roman Catholic Church a major share of church leadership is found precisely in those who are in a given church order and who service in a special and defined ministry. A study of ecclesial order and ministry is, as mentioned above, a study of church leadership, and leadership in any society indicates the health and strength of a given society.

This volume, however, is meant to focus on church leadership from a very defined perspective, namely, from a global perspective. Such a perspective has a contemporary ring about it, since today, the word "globalization" is an "in" word.¹ It is used with abandon in business, in banking and trade, and in politics. In 1943, the word "globalism" began to appear regularly in the political field. Slowly but surely, this word was accepted into the Webster dictionary system. In dictionaries today, "globalism" has received a definition. It denotes "a national policy of treating the whole world as a proper sphere for political influence." Some dictionaries offer a cross-reference so that the reader can flesh out the meaning of the term, and in the case of globalism, the cross-references are to "imperialism" and "internationalism."

1. Highly recommended books for the current understanding of globalization include Malcolm Waters, *Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Mike Featherstone, ed., *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1990); Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992); and Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity and Global Process* (London and Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1994). More recently, there is the four-volume series, *God and Globalization*, ed. Max Stackhouse et al. (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004).

The University of Pittsburgh sociologist Roland Robertson has become interested in the total picture of globalization and its effects, including its effects on religion. Globalization itself, he notes, is not so much a new phenomenon as it is

the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole. The processes and the actions to which the concept of globalization now refers have been proceeding, with some interruptions, for many centuries, but the main focus of the discussion of globalization is on relatively recent times.²

Robertson goes on to observe something that is extremely important for our own consideration, the link of globalization with modernity. Almost all discussion of globalization has become, in effect, a discussion of modernity and its positive and negative effects. Nations and regions that have led and undergone the process of modernization associated with industrialization and the European Enlightenment—which can be roughly thought of as movements beginning in the eighteenth century—tend to have one set of reactions to globalization in its current phase. Nations and regions of the global South, which are undergoing modernization with all the countervailing social change it entails at the same time as they are facing global economic pressures, tend to view it another way. Traditional societies are, for instance, being confronted in the span of a generation or two with pop culture and its violence and blatantly open portrayal of sex. At the same time, they become aware that their housing and treatment of women are looked down upon with disdain by the sorts of people who create the exciting, sexually titillating movies that, because of DVD players and portable generators, can now be viewed in isolated jungle villages. Young people look at traditional values in one place as unenlightened and something to be fled. Huge slums have grown up around Nairobi, Karachi, and Lima. Thousands of Muslims migrate to London and Amsterdam for jobs and find themselves on the lowest rung of society. And in twenty years a second generation looks at the parents who moved for better economic opportunities and accuses them of abandoning true Islam.

Modernization, as it is linked with globalization and portrayed as a process that necessitates the abandonment of traditional cultural and religious elements, has become highly controverted. And as globalization moves ahead with little visible benefit for sub-Saharan Africa or the Altiplano of Peru, it

2. Robertson, *Globalization*, 8.

becomes controverted, the symbol of yearning and desire, on the one hand, and the abandonment of everything good and holy, on the other. Thus, globalization is a highly ambiguous phenomenon.

In terms of the Catholic Church, we need to realize that globalization and modernization appear to be viewed by the late Pope John Paul II and the new elected Pope Benedict XVI as bearers of secularization and the lessening of moral sensitivities. A call for the ordination of women or married men, for instance, can be interpreted as a call to embrace a feminism that such leaders believe is hostile to the church and to abandon a tradition that has produced men who give their entire lives to the church and are loyal to that tradition. A call to change church structures to embrace traditional culture in, say, Kenya gets caught up in the question whether this would be embracing a past that many Kenyans are abandoning, despite idealistic attempts to preserve it. The issues we are discussing in terms of the church and globalization are, it must be said, not easy.

A second set of issues must be at least briefly touched upon. They revolve around “glocalization,” a term that was apparently invented in Japan to describe local reactions to attempts

to bring the global, in the sense of the macroscopic aspect of contemporary life, into conjunction with the local, in the sense of the microscopic side of life in the late twentieth century . . . Glocalize is a term which was developed in particular reference to marketing issues, as Japan became more concerned with and successful in the global economy.³

A global trend, product, force, idea, or ideal, in other words, needs to be adapted to the culture and outlook of the people to whom it is being sold, proposed, or explained. If this is not done, marketers discovered, it will not be successful. Becoming successful is the result of “glocalizing,” adapting marketing and making changes to a product. A glocalized product that answers needs better than traditional products makes more money for its seller. By successfully glocalizing, Toyota became one of the most trusted and admired autos in the United States. A second generation of American Buddhists following Tibetan or Burmese Buddhist traditions makes subtle adaptations and finds its study and meditation centers crowded with men and women who found life as Lutherans, Jews, and Catholics meaningless. A form of glocalized Buddhism attracts adherents.

In addition, attempts to glocalize trends, products, and ideas may meet

3. Robertson, *Globalization*, 173.

hostility among many instead of acceptance. Following a different dynamic, the United Nations may separate warring factions and then attempt to institute democracy with one vote for one person, only to have its peacekeeping operation in an area like the Balkans or the lake district of Africa collide with the entrenched interests of traditional leaders. Setting up a video store in a Saudi neighborhood makes the local mullah realize over time that his young people are adopting attitudes that he thinks are godless and destructive. Both democracy and the video store become identified with globalization and globalization becomes a catchall phrase useful to condemn any outside influences.

The phrase “from a global perspective in today’s milieu” includes the connotation that we are considering not merely something universal or all over the world. Rather, we are considering something that has an international impact with great varieties of local reactions, including reactions that result in social splits as one group embraces globalization and another feels threatened and opposes it. Economic globalization today without doubt carries an implication of influence from the global North, which is also judged dangerous and even imperial. All of this makes it necessary to begin our study with a few pages not on order and ministry as such but on the perspective from which these volumes are written. Our initial inquiry, then, is this: When applied to the two church terms, order and ministry, what does the phrase “global perspective” mean?

As we move through the pages on order and ministry from this contemporary global perspective, the reader cannot help but notice that two terms keep recurring, namely, “global” and “culture.” Each of these terms requires a detailed explanation.

Global is an adjective meaning worldwide. In current media of magazines, books, radio, and TV, “global” is used with frequency, but even more frequently we encounter the abstract noun “globalization.” Globalization has assumed, today, a multidimensional reference. First of all, it designates a world-encompassing process and thus has dynamic overtones. This dynamism reaches out to and deeply affects the economic, political, social, military, and religious dimensions of the entire globe. In many ways, the word “globalization” also includes today’s neocolonialism, called economic or cultural neocolonialism. This latter interpretation of globalization is felt more acutely in the global South than in Euro-American cultures. Euro-American and Japanese people, governments, and businesses do not, for example, usually include neocolonialism in their understanding of what happens when they build a plant in Guatemala. For them, the kind of globalization that goes with building a new plant is good for the Nike shoe company and for Cen-

tral America. The emphasis is different, however, in the places that experience the changes that occur when they are “globalized.” Neocolonialism is almost always one accusation that traditionalists use as part of their understanding of globalization. Globalization will be the keyword throughout the pages of this volume, and the second part of this chapter will return to it.

Culture is a term that carries with it a series of interrelated words: multicultural, acculturation, and inculturation. In the last hundred years, cultural anthropology and cultural sociology have developed in geometric proportions. Almost all the major human sciences have been strongly affected by this current interest in culture. A similar appearance of culture can be found in the fine arts. In the Western Christian churches, the presence of followers from many different cultures within the parish community has made the issue of a multicultural church one of the most intense issues of current Christian life. “Culture” is the second keyword used in the succeeding pages. The third section of this chapter provides a detailed interpretation of the term “culture.”

GLOBALIZATION

The term “globalization” is used by economists, religious leaders, and politicians. Not only is it used with frequency, but it is used in different, even contradictory ways. Max L. Stackhouse, in a lecture at the University of Santa Clara, described it as a complex reality calling for a “covenant” among the peoples of the world.

The current form of globalization is new, in part because of its magnitude and in part because of its character. It is not only expanding our sense of the public world, it is creating a material infrastructure on a scale that could eventuate in a world civilization with a common virtual world of images and information that is, in principle, accessible to all. To be sure, some people still think of the “public” only as having to do with politics, but globalization is not a government project, and no political regime can comprehend the public it engenders. Indeed, the emerging global institutions of regulation and development, such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, etc., transcend any government’s program. In fact it is a frequent accusation against them that they are unregulated by any political order and are too much influenced by the interests of multinational economic interests.⁴

4. Max L. Stackhouse, *Globalization, Public Theology, and New Means of Grace* (Santa Clara, Calif.: Santa Clara University, 2003).

Stackhouse then moves beyond a mere economic portrait of globalization and calls for some form of worldwide ethical covenant. This, he states, is needed so that the forces of human destruction in today's economic and transnational globalization might be countered by forces of justice and compassion.

Kim Yong-Bock, in an essay he wrote in 2003, presents a much more stark approach to globalization.

In the 21st century, the peoples of Asia are facing a grim reality, brought about by the age of globalization. In this age, not only people but all life on earth is groaning and suffering under death and destruction. Life is an interconnected reality, as we can understand from the perspectives of rural communities: people suffer from poverty and hunger, from destruction of their communities, and from the chemicals that are injected into agricultural production in massive doses. At the same time, lands and forests are being destroyed and turned into commodities, and the earth is violated in terms of its integrity and sustainability.

The life of plants and the genes of seeds, as well as human genes, are being destroyed and manipulated. Indeed, the whole ecological system is under threat of destruction, that is the death of all living things.

The primary agency driving this globalization process is the transnational corporate powers, together with their technocratic powers, which dominate the global regulators of the world economy (WTO, IMF, G-7) and the global market.⁵

In a way similar to Stackhouse, Kim develops in the remainder of his essay a spiritual foundation that, in his view, can come only from religion. For Kim, religion provides today the only viable worldwide institution—in all its different forms—that can offer an adequate stabilizing and just remedy for a globalization process, which today is running headlong into world destruction.

Robert J. Schreiter, in his book *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*, offers a carefully worded description of globalization.

There is no one accepted definition of globalization, nor is there consensus on its exact description. Nearly all would agree, however, that it is about the increasingly interconnected character of the political, economic and social life of the peoples on this planet. Depending again how one sees this interconnectedness, it is a phenomenon of the latter part of the twen-

5. Kim Yong-Bock, "An Asian Proposal for Future Directions of Theological Curricula in the Context of Globalization," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 20, no. 3 (2003): 278-79.

tieth century (the term “globalization” itself first appeared, in English, in 1959), or began with the European voyages of discovery in the late fifteenth century, or dates from the emergence of intercultural trade in the Late Bronze Age. I will be using the term here with the first description in mind—globalization as a phenomenon of the latter part of the twentieth century. Globalization certainly has its antecedent in the European colonizing process, but there are distinct differences in its late twentieth-century manifestation. To understand this, we must first note three processes that have shaped the globalization phenomenon in a special way. The first is political, the second is economic, and the third is technological.⁶

Schreiter then explains these three processes. The political process includes the demise of the bipolar political arrangement in 1989, when the collapse of the Russian state ended a bipolar political division. This collapse of the bipolar structure of superpowers, however, also resulted in the division of the world into first world, second world, and third world. The second world also collapsed, leaving the few rich nations and the majority of poor nations. Such an economic process was driven by market capitalism, which was already on the rise prior to 1989, but after 1989 was able to expand to many sectors across the globe. The spread of market capitalism also meant the diminishment of socialism. With the end of socialism, it became more difficult, if not impossible, to imagine an alternative social and economic form that could coexist with global capitalism. The third process, the technological process, came about with the Internet and computerized mass media. Schreiter notes that the convergence of these three phenomena has created a form of globalization that involves a compression of time and space around the entire world and is currently taking place with what one might call an identical global time.⁷

These are but three descriptions of globalization, but they seem to indicate a certain unity. First of all, we can say that there is, in some degree or another, a positive and affirmative side to globalization. It has provided major benefits to large areas of the world. On the other hand, in the words of the commentators quoted above, we clearly hear that there is also a shadow side of globalization. Globalization in the view of many authors produces serious negative effects, even serious destructive effects. Thus, globalization has a positive or sunny side and a shadow side:

6. Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1997), 4-5.

7. Schreiter, *New Catholicity*, 5-8.

- *Seen from the sunny-side perspective*, globalization unifies, brings disparate groups together, and provides a oneness in human life that historically has never before been so profoundly and extensively international.
- *Seen from the shadow-side perspective*, globalization destroys many individualized and intrinsically positive characteristics of various peoples and countries in the current world. Globalization has destroyed and is destroying valuable aspects of both local and regional cultures.

Unity and diversity are the underlying factors that globalization affects; however, globalization produces unity at the expense of diversity and creates an unbalanced diversity. One entity in the globalization process becomes richer, while other entities become geometrically poorer. When globalization begins to affect the Roman Catholic Church—and it is doing so at this very moment of time—then this double effect of globalization is willy-nilly brought into the structural dimensions of the Roman Catholic Church. When globalization affects the leadership roles of church order and ministry, we find the same reality of a sunny side and a shadow side. The positive effect is the unification of the church throughout the world. Because of globalization, the oneness of the church has begun to take shape throughout the various continents of human life in a unifying way never before experienced by the Roman Catholic Church. Similarly, globalization has given new meaning to catholicity—in the sense of all over the globe—since catholicity in virtue of a globalized society appears more sharply as an internationalized identity, even at times to the point of an internationalized cloning process.

There is, however, a negative effect, a shadow side to the globalization of the church. The globalized oneness and catholicity are diminishing the individuality and distinctness of many areas of church life at the expense of global unity. More often than not, the oneness of an ecclesiastical globalization has become the imposition of a central culture and a centralized cultural expression, which leaves local cultures and local cultural expressions meaningless. Unity and diversity play out both positively and negatively in a globalized church. From the beginnings of the Christian church, leadership has continually shared in this polarity of unity and diversity. When Christian church leadership became more organized and theologically defined, the technical terms “order” and “ministry” became prominent, but within this terminology, the polarity of unity and diversity continued to be operative.

Do church order and ministry need to be as tightly unified as possible? How extensively and intensively can unity and diversity coexist in the ecclesial services of order and ministry? Today these are neither hypothetical ques-

tions nor mere subtle academic issues. In the real life of the globalized Roman Catholic Church—that is, in the post-Vatican II and third-millennial Roman Catholic Church—this struggle over unity and diversity in the areas of order and ministry is an actual, ongoing, and pervasive struggle. There are at this very moment respected proponents for both sides as well as respected opponents of the others' positions. This is a struggle that one finds at the local level, the parish level, the diocesan level, the national church level, and the Vatican curial level. In many ways this struggle over church leadership, which focuses heavily on a leadership that includes diversity or a leadership that demands unity, is seriously affecting, both positively and negatively, the contemporary Roman Catholic Church. It is not simply an issue of struggle. It is, rather, an issue that, if not remedied soon, will be corrosive to church integrity. Ultimately, the question we need to face in today's "global milieu" is, What is the proper "glocalization" of local churches needed to create communities that will be able to minimize the negative effects of globalization, while helping both the members of such local churches and the wider church adapt to pressures that are unlikely to diminish?

Thus, the simple phrase "from a global perspective" calls attention to a minimizing of and even a destruction of local and regional cultural treasures. This is apparent in economic globalization, in political globalization, and unfortunately in ecclesiastical globalization. In all of these dimensions of current human life, culture and cultural identities, not simply globalization, are at the center of the struggle. Let us consider, then, the second issue: culture.

CULTURE

In the past one hundred years, there has been an enormous interest on the part of international scholars in the issue of culture. We find this in various academic disciplines: anthropology, which "inquires into the basic questions about who human beings are, how they came to be what they are, how they behave and why they behave."⁸ Its method, most often, is a comparative method, relating one anthropological example to a different anthropological one. Anthropology has developed two major subdisciplines: physical anthropology and cultural anthropology. Ethnologists, who constitute a division of

8. Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988), 23. Luzbetak provides a clear overview of this anthropological and cultural interest as it has developed academically during the past one hundred years (see pp. 12-63). Luzbetak also provides a lengthy bibliography on the theme of current anthropology and related subjects (pp. 411-52).

scholars of cultural anthropology, often restrict their focus to the earliest appearances of human societies and their cultural manifestations. Other cultural anthropologists focus on existing human societies and their respective cultural manifestations.

In a similar way, contemporary social scientists have become very interested in cultural issues. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) is one of the major leaders in this effort. He regarded human groups as fairly independent organisms, and as a consequence his specific interest was in comparative social anthropology. Durkheim has had many followers, including A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942). At first, there seems to have been a strong degree of functionalism in the methodology used by scholars who were influenced by Durkheim. This functionalism tended to interpret different cultural activities in a mechanistic way. Later social anthropologists have attributed far more flexibility and dynamism to cultures themselves.

The academic fields of psychology, political science, philosophy, and history have also included the study of culture in their respective research efforts. Perhaps the studies from applied anthropology are the studies that offer the most significance for our theme of globalization, culture, and church leadership in order and ministry. These applied anthropological studies have helped to indicate how cultural customs arise, develop, and endow human societies with profound values. Today it would be fruitless to study the effects of culture on the Roman Catholic Church without utilizing the contributions of applied anthropology and social anthropology. The abundant scholarly work in such social-cultural studies includes the efforts of many renowned writers, for example, Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Clyde Kluckhohn, Robert Park, William Partridge, and Clifford Geertz. Michael Omi and Howard Winant's book *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s* has also been a major guide for understanding the cultural mixture currently present in the American churches.⁹ Wang Ling-Chi has built on Omi and Winant's position, developing a paradigm for Chinese-American acculturation.¹⁰ Culture and the issue of religion have to some degree also been factors in the literature of social anthropology, especially after Will Herberg's volume *Protestant,*

9. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 1986).

10. Wang Ling-Chi, "The Structure of Dual Domination: Toward a Paradigm for the Study of the Chinese Diaspora in the U.S.," *Amerasia Journal* 21 (1955): 149-69.

Catholic, Jew, first published in 1955.¹¹ Herberg, however, understood the role of religion in this process of acculturation more as a conduit through which recent immigrants could more easily negotiate the process of transculturation or interculturation. As a conduit, religion plays only a subsidiary role or at best a private role. Herberg's approach has found a major response throughout Euro-American writings. Religion is generally, in these writings, placed at the sideline of social life. Religion in these studies is not given a public voice, and the dimension of religion is relegated to private and familial life. This has had enormous influence in the United States. The call for a separation of church and state is loudly echoed in the rejection of any religious voice in the public and political arenas. In the United States, decisions on such important issues as economics, environment, and human rights are all made in the political and economic arenas. Until the administration of George W. Bush, religious voices have not been welcome in these arenas, because it was believed that religion is a personal, individual, or family matter and therefore should stay in the arenas of the private individual and the family.

This is important for our current study, since a rejection of religion in the public sphere makes it almost impossible for the voices of church leaders to be heard and to have an effect in the decision-making processes of the United States. If a theology of order and ministry lacks a public aspect, then the leadership of various church groups, found primarily in the areas of church order and ministry, will likewise lack a public voice. On the other hand, if a public voice is theologically part of order and ministry, then the public voice of religious leadership itself cannot be determined by a centralizing and supernatural organization. Obviously, the centralizing and supernatural headquarters for the Roman Catholic Church would be the pope and the Vatican curia. In the recent efforts to elect a Roman Catholic as president of the United States, the issue of the candidate's loyalty to Rome and his loyalty to the United States has been very divisive. The church voice, whether that of the Vatican or the national episcopate, has been viewed as interference in the democratic processes of the United States. Similarly, in the recent instances of American involvement in war, the voice of the American bishops has been diplomatically heard and then diplomatically discarded by those in political power. The role of religion and culture remains a very sensitive issue, and a current theology of church leadership, including a theology of order and ministry, must take into consideration the current interface between religion, culture, and public life.

11. Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960).

Two words have been used in the above paragraphs that need some clarification: *acculturation* and *inculturation*. The word “acculturation” was first used in sociology around 1880. “Acculturation” addresses the modification of a specific group or people of one culture adapting traits from a different culture. Acculturation has also at times been used to describe the ways in which an infant learns how to adapt to the culture in which he/she finds himself/herself. In the first instance, which represents the more frequent application of the term “acculturation,” the focus is on a situation involving at least two differing cultures and on the ways in which one culture begins to be affected by the other. Fumitaka Matsuoka has recently revised the theory of this intercultural activity. He stresses that the study should not simply be focused on cultural unit A and cultural unit B. One should not concentrate on the traits, characteristics, and habits that are acculturated. Rather, the focus should be on the interstice between the two cultures. The interstice plays a major role in the process of acculturation. In the word “acculturation,” the initial letters *ac* are a grammatically nuanced form of the Latin word *ad*, which means “to” or “toward.” There is an “into” process in acculturation, which generally includes a reciprocal “into” process. In other words, there is a dynamic interfacing of two cultural units, and Matsuoka emphasizes that this interfacing or interstice is the dynamic area in which a bipolar acculturation process takes place. The term “acculturation” remains in current literature a strongly sociological technical term.

The word “inculturation” is a theological term, and it is rarely used outside the fields of missiology, theology, and religious studies. It is, moreover, a term of very recent use within the theological-religious field. There seems to have been a strong reluctance on the part of religious scholars to use the sociological term “acculturation.” In theological writings, the term “acculturation” is not used as a synonym, even a religious synonym, for “inculturation.” In other words, inculturation and acculturation are, in the mind-set of theologians and religious-studies scholars, two distinct words and do not mean the same thing. It is not totally clear why “acculturation” was unacceptable, but it is clear that “inculturation” is the word of choice for those who are in the field of theology and religious studies. In theological and religious discourse, inculturation is seen as the process of bringing a different religious message *into* a culture that up to that time had not been influenced by this particular religious message. Inculturation has become a major part of Christian evangelization, which means an infusion of gospel values into a non-Christian culture or into a culture that once was Christian but is no longer predominantly Christian (for example, much of Western Europe), or into a new-age culture. The word “inculturation” does not imply any reciprocity at all.

In the contemporary period, not all Catholic people see inculturation as a one-way street. The voices of non-Euro-American cultures have claimed the validity of their own cultures, and in no uncertain terms they have emphasized the need to de-accentuate the Euro-American aspects of the Roman Catholic Church, chiefly in areas of the world like Oceania, Latin America, Africa, and Asia, to allow for the expression of Christian faith and Catholic tradition in other cultural idioms. Were this to happen, the new forms of Catholic life would be expressed and lived out in and through the cultural forms, symbols, and celebrations of many different cultures. We will see that many bishops at Vatican II were open to such an interpretation of Catholic faith and life, at least in principle. We shall also see that, since Vatican II, inculturation has had an ambiguous reception—indeed, that those who believe it should be done fairly radically have felt restrained by the central leadership of the church, which has disallowed extensive and intensive inculturation. The two major areas of Roman Catholic Church life where tensions have been felt are in the matter of inculturating the liturgy and church law.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM THE HISTORY OF INCULTURATION

From the recent studies and research on cultural issues, certain factors regarding culture in general have become more and more evident. These factors must be taken into account when we begin to unite the message of the gospel to the peoples who live and form these cultures. Some of the major conclusions we can draw from this material are the following.

First, all cultures are always in a process of development and change. No existent culture is static and immovable. This applies to both sides of a globalization process. Even the aggressive forces promoting globalization are undergoing change. The imposition of a culture from the outside or the attempt to make a foreign culture the standard for social change is almost never successful. When cultures begin to struggle over which values should prevail, both cultures end up altered.

Second, all cultures have profound areas of impact on human life and they also have certain specific and more surface areas of influence. Not every cultural characteristic of a given society carries the same weight. The more profound the cultural dimension is, the more it affects the self-identity of the social unit, and therefore any compromising or forced change in these profound dimensions of cultural life impinges on the self-identity of the social unity.

Third, in their most profound dimensions, both culture and self-identity of a given society are intrinsically united. The attempted domination or destruction of a culture creates a crisis in the sense of self-identity in the culture being threatened. Consequently, to the extent that missionary activity aims at the destruction of major cultural elements—which in the minds of many missionaries were and are judged to be demonic, satanic, heretical, and pagan—evangelization suffers or is carried on with ambiguous results. It is clear that some Christian missionary practice aimed to destroy basic cultural symbols and practices in many places. Today, though, some of those same basic cultural symbols and practices are recognized as valid by Catholic and many other Christian bodies. For instance, the image of a dragon in Asian cultures, which formerly was disallowed, is now allowed in some churches. The practice of veneration of ancestors (often called “ancestor-worship”) has likewise been reinstated in some churches. In other churches, particularly fundamentalist ones, however, this is not the case. Many converts to such churches hurl charges at Catholics that their church does not follow the Bible. Thus, the question of what constitutes proper adaptation is not going away. If anything, it is intensifying. Caution, care, prudence, and dialogue are needed whenever one culture begins to erode another.¹²

Fourth, cultural residue endures in an operative way long after the processes of acculturation have taken place. Historically, there are indeed cultures that no longer exist. Even their languages are no longer considered living languages. A particular form of human social life can indeed come to an end, with the result that these dead cultures are known only from books of historical consideration. For the most part, such cultures no longer effectively guide a current social unit of human life. In actuality, all societies with all of their cultural dimensions can and could be eliminated. This fact indicates that there is no eternal cultural unit of men and women. Nor is there anything eternal about any finite human nature and finite cultural nature.

Many cultures today are reeling from the cultural impact of the process of globalization that began at the dawn of the modern era. First European and later North American cultural, military, and religious power undermined the self-confidence of many peoples. In Asia especially, while enormous amounts of power were applied to bring, for example, Indians and Chinese to accept Western values, silent resistance and outright rejection were common. And

12. Two books by Lamin Sanneh are especially important if one wishes to see that the process of evangelization is not a one-way street. In fact, local people creatively interpreted and translated the Gospel, finding in it elements of liberation and truth that they valued greatly. See Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989) and *Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

cultural resurgence everywhere in the face of globalization is remarkable. While the economic, technical, and military prowess of the West has brought about changes at one level, cultures that were once thought “defeated” are being rejuvenated. Symbols and practices once thought superseded begin to reappear, for example, among the first-nation peoples of Canada and among the Native Americans in the United States. This same reality is even more strongly present among the descendants of Mayan, Incan, and Aztec peoples in Mexico and in Central and South America. What becomes ever clearer is that peoples in the Americas who became Christian interpreted Christianity in their own cultural and linguistic way and today want to express their experience in liturgy and theology.

Fifth, cultural growth occurs when the people involved continue to have freedom of imagination. Whenever members of a society cannot imagine a future for their society, depression and even atrophy set in. In such situations, cultural identity remains a remembered treasure from the past but loses the dynamism to shape the future. Colonialism, in its darkest moments, stifled the creative cultural imagination of the colonized. Given the fact that the Catholic church is nowhere more vital than it is in the global South, it is clear that Christian mission was not just a chapter in a larger history of Western colonialism. Local peoples found something in both Protestant and Catholic presentations of the message and were quite capable of seeing the gospel pearl even when it was presented by missionaries who were often closely allied with colonial governments and foreign economic interests. For the health of the Catholic Church today, however, it is clear that the question of encouraging such cultural imagination is extremely important, since it is primarily in the area of imagination that liturgy expresses the faith of a people and contributes compelling images that enlist the desire of Christians to cooperate with divine grace to make Christ a vital force in daily life. Suppressing cultural imagination in the area of liturgy by insisting that imported laws and rubrics are followed, even when meaningless, defeats the purpose of liturgy and leads to serious disorder and dysfunction.

Sixth, in every vital culture religion is an expression of the sacred dimension at the core of a culture’s depth. Paul Tillich memorably coined the phrase, “Religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion.”¹³ Tillich knew well that until a religion takes on forms adequate to mediate the sacred meaningfully and touch the depths of the human heart, religion was going to be superficial. While, in the history of religions, priest-hoods have not traditionally been the instigators of new religious move-

13. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-63), 3:248ff.

ments—that is the role of the so-called charismatic founder—they are the guardians and interpreters of tradition. In the conserving, guardianship role, however, priesthoods are also prone to try to maintain traditions with which they are comfortable even when cultural change makes the outward forms of the tradition seem antiquated and uninspiring. In the case of world Catholicism today, three major forms of cultural challenge present themselves. (1) In “old” churches, particularly in the West, large segments of a nominally Catholic population complain that the ordained leadership has stifled necessary change, holding onto a celibate, male-only ordained leadership model that needs to give way to new societal realities that have changed perceptions of gender roles and sexual identities. Other segments believe that those calling for such changes have been seduced by modernity and the problem is the obscuring of the core of the tradition. (2) In “new” churches, particularly in Africa and Asia, Christianity thrives, but some believe the life of these churches will deepen if inculturation is allowed to use local languages, rituals, and traditions. Still others believe that the radical challenge of Christ will be lost, pointing to the ability of cultures like those of India, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan to adapt creatively to outside influences, such as those brought by Christianity, until their genius is lost. (3) In churches like those in Latin America, an even more complex reality faces Catholics. In five hundred years, both *mestizo* (mixed-race, bicultural) and “white” populations have created a hybrid religious mosaic. That Catholic mosaic is today challenged by evangelicals and Pentecostals who rigorously try to pare away elements that they call “Christo-pagan” and to bring Catholics back to what they call a strictly “biblical” faith. They have had enormous success in many parts of Latin America, to the point that it is likely such churches will count as much as 40 percent, perhaps even 50 percent, of the total population by the year 2025.

What we are getting at, then, is a process of inculturation in which both Christian “conservers” and “innovators” have to be heard. Both sides have real weight behind their arguments. Such issues must be faced in parts of the West where Catholicism seems unable to inspire allegiance any longer. They must be faced in different ways in parts of the world where the gospel has been imported in Western dress. The Euro-American world enjoys no advantage over the rest of the world. As Pope John Paul II has said in *Redemptoris Missio*, his encyclical on mission and evangelization:

Today we face a religious situation which is extremely varied and changing. People are on the move: social and religious realities which were once clear and well-defined are today increasingly complex. We need only think of certain phenomena such as urbanization, mass migration, the flood of

refugees, the dechristianization of countries with ancient Christian traditions, the increasing influence of the Gospel and its values in overwhelmingly non-Christian countries, and the proliferation of messianic cults and religious sects. Religious and social upheaval makes it difficult to apply in practice certain ecclesial distinctions and categories to which we have become accustomed. (RM 32)

Insofar as we are trying to understand how order and ministry need to be shaped for the contemporary era, then, we are face to face with the reality the late pope calls the difficulty of applying traditional Catholic distinctions and categories. Inculturation needs to occur in the North as well as in the global South. As we shall see below, however, despite statements like the one of Pope John Paul II quoted above, official documents from Rome often present the question of inculturation in ways that suggest that the gospel is above all cultures and therefore can penetrate to the very depths of any culture. In terms of Stephen Bevans's models of how the gospel-culture relationship is phrased, the default Catholic approach, as epitomized in the writings of John Paul II and the curia since the Second Vatican Council, is a "translation model."¹⁴ Inculturation of the church, in that model, involves relatively minor adjustments, and the question of orders and ministries can be controlled from the traditional Roman center.

The adequacy of that translation or "supracultural" model is questioned by many in the fields of missiology, cultural, and social studies. The challenge occurs at two levels. First can the gospel message be "above all cultures?" Does the metaphor of "over" (superior) and "inferior" (lower level) put the matter in the right categories? Even preaching the gospel involves language that is intrinsically cultural, and the Gospels were written in one cultural language (Greek) but are now expressed in other languages, all of which have cultural nuances that the original language did not have. Second, if religion itself is cultural to its core, then what does evangelization imply? If evangelization implies a transculturalization, namely, inserting the gospel into new places and using it to judge the value of other cultures because it is above all cultures, then evangelization is going to be perceived as a destructive rather than a constructive force. Given the perception that mission was intimately involved with and supportive of colonialism, this presents problems in the South. In Europe, where the church once fought for the role of guiding the whole of society and enforcing its guidance with the power of the state, such approaches appear to be trying to roll back the Enlightenment. In the United

14. Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. and expanded ed. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002), 37-53.

States and many other places, such approaches appear to violate the cultural norm of separating church and state. This delicate but key issue will be touched on in the following chapters.

Such issues as revealed by anthropological, social, and historical studies are necessary to keep in mind as we consider the theological issues of order and ministry from a global perspective. When Gustavo Gutiérrez crystallized the multifaceted movement that came to be called “liberation theology,” some parts of the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church were seriously concerned over his use of social analysis.¹⁵ In the view of these leaders, the gospel does not need the kind of social analysis provided by the liberationists, seeing their methods marred by Marxist theories of class warfare and economic determinism. We have moved a long way from this late-twentieth-century hesitation. There are, of course, leaders in the Catholic Church who still refuse social analysis as a base for discussing gospel life. Nevertheless, a majority of scholars find such analyses very helpful. Some have even noted that Pope John Paul’s own language when he talks about poverty and its alleviation, as well as matters of war and peace, seems to have borrowed from the analysis and language of the Latin Americans. The same is true for cultural-analysis anthropologists and sociologists on the interfacing of Christianity and culture in every part of the world. Not to study seriously the findings of the social-scientific world on the issues of culture would be myopic.

Some final words are needed, regarding another aspect of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in the West, and its relationship to culture. This aspect is found not in social analysis but in another academic discipline—history. The confrontation of culture and Christianity that is going on today is not the first such confrontation. I will consider historical data on the relationship of the church and Christianity to culture under four headings.

The Semitic Culture of Jesus and His First Followers: The Original Framework of Christian Ministry

The followers of Jesus have had a long history in which various cultures have played major roles. Indeed, from its very beginning the gospel message of Jesus and about Jesus was an inculturated message, spoken first to Palestinian peoples in the time of Jesus’ life and after his death. In terms of the message

15. The classic text by Gustavo Gutiérrez is *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, 15th anniversary ed. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988; orig. ed. in Spanish, 1971). The official church response is the document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith *Libertatis Nuntius*, “Instruction on Certain Aspects of the ‘Theology of Liberation’” (August 6, 1984).

of Jesus, he preached and taught in Aramaic within a Semitic culture that was under Roman political rule and had been touched by Hellenistic cultural encroachments. More precisely stated, Jesus' public ministry took place within a Roman-dominated Semitic culture. This meant that the people not only heard Jesus' message from a Semitic cultural standpoint but also factored the Roman standpoint into what they were hearing. The language Jesus used was Aramaic, a spoken form of Hebrew widespread in that period, and, of course, Aramaic, like all languages, was a cultural phenomenon. Jesus could presume that the people understood to some degree the history of the Jewish people and also the many efforts at romanization and hellenization that had been going on in Palestine for two hundred years prior to Jesus' own life. Jesus did not have to explain to his followers the Palestinian culture of his time; the people by and large were well aware of what this culture involved.

After the resurrection of Jesus, the followers of Jesus continued to meet as a "Jesus community." At that time, these followers of Jesus did not have a self-identity as a "Christian," nor did they consider themselves a "church." These men and women were Jewish, and their religion was Judaism. Their first conceptualizations of the message of Jesus took place within Semitic categories. In a similar way, as they began to formulate the message *about* Jesus and his relationship to God, they were bound by these same categories. They went to the temple and to the synagogues for prayer, and they continued to observe the Mosaic Law, the Torah. Although followers of Jesus, they maintained their Jewish self-identity. Today many authors designate these early Jesus communities as one of the many "sects" within the many Judaisms of that time.

The four Gospels give every indication of this Jewishness of the early Jesus communities. Naturally, the Hellenistic world and its culture played a role in the way these early followers of Jesus lived out their daily lives. The New Testament, however, was written in Greek, and this shows that the first records we have of Jesus' message and of the disciples understanding of Jesus were records that were, in effect, an example of translating the message of Jesus the teacher and about Jesus the Christ or Messiah into a new language. Inculturation as the crossing of cultural boundaries, then, is intrinsic to Christian identity from the earliest period. The writers of the New Testament did not use Hebrew, Aramaic, or Latin. They wrote their Letters, Gospels, and other writings in Greek, knowing full well that the members of the Jesus communities for whom they were writing in the Jewish Diaspora around the Mediterranean basin would understand them. Although written in Greek for Greek-speaking communities, the New Testament can only be truly interpreted if its Semitic background is understood, so much so that one of the

criteria of modern biblical scholarship for the antiquity of a given idea or doctrine is whether it can be translated from Greek back into Aramaic. If it cannot, then the scholar suspects that the text shows a subsequent generation's thought process. For many scholars, such later interpretations cannot be given the same weight as earlier ones, and around this principle have occurred some of the bitterest fights in biblical studies. The view taken in this book is that the primary lens of interpretation for the New Testament is Semitic—not exclusively Semitic but primarily Semitic.

During the period when the New Testament authors lived, the followers of Jesus were predominantly Jewish. Only little by little did non-Jewish men and women join the Jesus communities, and in their growing numbers they began to influence in a Hellenistic way the cultural interpretation of the Jesus-event.¹⁶

After the destruction of the Jewish temple in the year 70, there was a stronger process of separation between the leaders of the Jewish communities and the Jesus communities. Expulsion from synagogues had already taken place during the time of Paul's own career, and this continued into the last decade of the first century, 90-100. The separation of the Jewish establishment from the Jesus sect was a mutual decision, taken with such bitterness that it bore with it the seeds of later Christian anti-Jewish attitudes. The separation was not simply an action by the followers of Jesus leaving the Jewish framework. They did this, of course, but the Jewish leadership also acted. They expelled the followers of Jesus. One can clearly and historically say that by 90 C.E., there were two groups: one group followed the Jewish leadership with its new, post-temple base, not in Jerusalem but in Jamnia; the other group comprised the followers of Jesus, who, after 90 C.E. (roughly speaking), began to see themselves as a "different group" from the "Jewish group." The word "Christian" (first used in Acts 11:26) became common around this same time and the term "church" (*ekklēsia*) also became popular. Paul used *ekklēsia* to refer to the Christian "assembly" or community. Only at the end of the first century, then, can one begin to speak of a Jewish religion and a Christian religion. Even this way of speaking, however, has to be done with care, since the separation took place gradually and happened more quickly in some areas of

16. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder represent the views of many missiologists, however, who see the New Testament as an intrinsically missionary document and believe that it was only when events at Antioch (Acts 11:19-26) came to a head that the early church realized fully the meaning of the message of and about Jesus. On this view of the matter, it was the process of missionary inculturation that led to mature Christian self-understanding. It must be admitted that this interpretation is profoundly consonant with Catholicism's view that earliest Christian history needs to be interpreted "as-a-whole" (Greek *kath' holon*, whence "catholic"). See Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, American Society of Missiology 30 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2004), 1-31.

the world than in others. Too often writers bring into the historical development of the Jesus community the terms “Christian” and “church” at times when these two words really had no meaning. At best, the two terms are meaningful at the very end of the first century and at the start of the second century. Before this, the use of “Christian” and “church” can be and most often is anachronistic.

When the followers of Jesus began separating themselves from the Jewish leadership, it was clear that the Christian group did not depart empty-handed. The followers of Jesus made the following serious claims: Jesus was the Messiah foretold by the prophets; therefore, the writings of the prophets belonged to the followers of Jesus. Jesus fulfilled all that the Law of Moses, the Torah, had demanded; therefore, the Torah, likewise, belonged to the followers of Jesus. Jewish history from its beginnings onward led to Jesus, and therefore Jesus fulfilled the hopes and dreams of Jewish history. As a result, the Jewish “writings”—including the many historical Jewish writings—belonged to the followers of Jesus. The followers of Jesus took on a new identity: the New Covenant, the New Israel, and the new Chosen People. In many ways, as we find in the Christian literature from the New Testament to the beginning of the third century, the Christian community thought of itself as the “true Israel.”

Jesus and his followers lived out and understood their message in a cultural way, namely, in a Jewish or Semitic way. Today, we do not hear the gospel from and through a Semitic culture. We hear the gospel through our own culture.

*The Move of Christianity
into Hellenistic Culture, 100 to 600*

In the period from New Testament times to about the year 600, the first major inculturation process of the Christian church took place. In spite of the Jewish roots and foundations that the Christian communities claimed, the birth culture of Jesus’ followers in the West was more and more that of the Greek culture commonly called Hellenistic. The use of Latin in that Hellenistic world gradually became more frequent. Meanwhile, the separation from the Jewish cultural world grew ever deeper and more permanent. It is important to remember, however, that even though our own study centers on the Hellenistic world in this period, there is growing historical evidence that the majority of the world’s Christians even up to the fourteenth century lived farther east and south, where a parallel inculturation process was going on. In

this case it was a move from the categories of late Judaism into the liturgical and ecclesial traditions we today call the Syriac, Persian, and Coptic worlds of Eastern (*not* Greek) Orthodoxy.

In the West, though, the new Christians were basically Greek-speaking and Greek-thinking. They rethought the gospel into Hellenistic culture. Parallel with Eastern Orthodoxy, these were the first major inculturations of the gospel message. In the West, the gospel message, which in its origins was spoken, heard, and understood against a Semitic cultural background, became a gospel proclaimed, heard, and understood in Greco-Roman/Hellenistic culture.

Christological dogmas were cast and eventually defined by ecumenical councils in and through the categories of Hellenistic philosophical thought. Meanwhile, farther to the east, the same process was occurring in a different fashion in Syriac and other ancient languages. By the accidents of history, the West (increasingly in Latin) and the Byzantine center (remaining in Greek) at first did not accept these Eastern formulations and later—largely because of the rise of Islam in the seventh century—lost touch with them. In our own day, however, historians have realized that these formulas were orthodox and that these communities had kept faith with the core of gospel tradition. The Latin West and the Greek East are, in other words, not the only major Christian traditions.¹⁷

In the West, the development of the office of bishop (Greek *episkopos*) is understandable only when the Greek meaning of *episkopos* is taken into account. Why did the early communities use *episkopos* and not a different term? We shall see that the characteristic of service, which lies in the Greek etymology of the term *episkopos*, played a major role in its selection over the other possible terms. The term “priest” (Greek *hierous*) was rejected, whereas the term “presbyter” (Greek *presbyteros*) was deliberately chosen. Presbyter is often well translated as “elder,” and this is indeed its etymological meaning in Greek. The term “elder” also has a rich Semitic history, since in Jewish history as found in the Old Testament, elders often played a major role in Jewish political and social life. Thus, the eventual two main Greek names for leadership in the Christian church, *episkopos* and *presbyteros*, have deep cultural implications, and in their Greek format, deep Hellenic and Hellenistic implications. Etymologically, both terms originally entailed service to the community, not power over the community.

17. For more on Eastern Orthodoxy (once called “Nestorian and churches”), see Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *A History of the World Christian Movement*, vol. 1, *Earliest Christianity to 1453* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2001), 47-153; see also Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 79-136.

The effects of this first major inculturation process of the Christian church remain with us today. Much of Western Christian theology is expressed in terms that have both Hellenic and Hellenistic implications. For example, in our Christian faith we believe that Jesus has two natures, the divine and the human, and that these two natures are united in one person. An understanding of both “nature” and “person” requires some knowledge of the Greek philosophical basis of both terms. Similarly, the Christian belief in the Trinity includes the single nature of God and yet a trinity of persons. The use and interpretation of nature and person in trinitarian expression rely heavily on Greek philosophical thought. The listing could go on, but the inculturation of Greek thought by the Jesus communities of the first six centuries continues to be a major part of the Western and Eastern Christian faith and theology. An original Semitic Christianity was profoundly inculturated into a Greek-based culture.

*The Inculturation of Western Catholicism
in Germanic Cultures, 600–900*

A second major inculturation process of the gospel message took place during the immigration of the Germanic tribes into western Europe. These Germanic tribes have many names: Lombards, Goths, Burgundians, and other tribes. From the seventh century to the tenth century, these groups of people, generally referred to as Germanic cultures, arrived in present-day Europe and brought with them cultural elements. Once again, a process of inculturation began to take place in the Christian community, for the Greco-Roman culture of the Christian people in western Europe had to adapt to the various Germanic cultures that in wave after wave began inundating this European part of the earth. Two areas of the Christian life became the center of this particular process of major inculturation, namely, liturgy and law. Even today, we find example after example of liturgical and canonical issues that stem from this second major inculturation of the gospel message.¹⁸

The impact of Germanic culture on Christian life in the West remains a strong influence on Christian life and theology today. Contemporary Western Christian liturgy and canon law retain major influences from the Germanic world. In the liturgy, the simple posture of kneeling, which became part of Christian worship through Germanic cultural influences, has in

18. For a good treatment of this, see James C. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

today's post-Vatican II world created an issue of immense tension. Some contemporary Roman Catholics demand that people continue to kneel throughout the Eucharistic Prayers and for the reception of Holy Communion. Not to do so is interpreted as disrespect of the sacrament. Even when an explanation is given that kneeling came into Christian liturgical practice only through the influence of Germanic culture, many of these well-intended Roman Catholics dismiss such an interpretation. In their view, kneeling indicates the only true reverence for the Real Presence of Jesus in the eucharist. The fact that during the first eight hundred years of Christian history kneeling was seen—and this was the Greco-Roman view—as unworthy of Christians, since only slaves knelt, makes no impression at all. Other examples of Germanic cultural influence could be adduced, but the point at issue is this: there was a major inculturation process in Western Christianity from the Germanic peoples, and this cultural influence remains profoundly strong even in the ongoing third millennium of Christian life.

After the Germanic immigrations, there were some additional but still very important inculturation processes. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, cultural issues arose with the introduction into Western thought of the Latin translations of Aristotle and of the Latin translations of commentaries on Aristotle, written by major Islamic scholars. During this period, the great theologians such as Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, and John Duns Scotus were enriched by the writings of Aristotle and the commentaries of Islamic scholars such as Averroës and Avicenna. Theological thought in the Western Roman Catholic Church was inculturated in no small degree both by the newly discovered Greek philosophical thought of Aristotle and by the Islamic thought of Averroës and Avicenna. As a result, the philosophical theology of the Western church became in large measure Aristotelian from the twelfth century on. It retained its Platonic base, also Greek in origin, however, through the continued influence of Augustine in the Western church. Whether emphasizing Aristotle or Plato, or a combination of both, Western theology was inculturated in a Greek way, and Catholic theology remained this way until the twentieth century. In the twentieth century, modern and postmodern philosophical thinking began to change many areas of Roman Catholic theology. In the thirteenth century, some of the theologians mentioned above were openly referred to as "Islamic." In that century, people of major importance within the church noticed that there was an Islamic cultural influence at work. The condemnation of many theological positions at Paris in 1277 and at Oxford in 1284 was done by church prelates with a deliberate intent to nullify the effects of this Islamic inculturation of Christian thought. These condemna-

tions, however, did not succeed, and Islamic influences from the Middle Ages continue today in the ordinary theology of the Roman Catholic Church.

During the Renaissance period, all of Europe was inundated with the Greco-Roman classical culture. This inculturation is found in literature, art, architecture, and mathematics. When one looks at St. Peter's in Rome, one sees very clearly an architectural and mathematical inculturation in the basilica itself. The basilica of St. Peter by its very existence proclaims a Greco-Roman classical culture. When one considers the great masterpieces of Michelangelo and Da Vinci and realizes the influence these artists have had on Catholic thinking, the Greco-Roman culture is once again seen as highly influential. Consider one instance: the Last Supper. Since Leonardo Da Vinci painted his famous mural of the Last Supper, almost every holy card and major Western portrayal of the Last Supper have reflected what Da Vinci painted. Even in film and stage plays, visual presentations of the Last Supper have reflected the influence of Da Vinci. In many ways, generations of children first visualized the Last Supper from a Da Vinci standpoint: Jesus in the center of a long formal table with the disciples sitting at either side.

When Jesus ate for the last time with his disciples, all of them—if this was a Passover meal—were reclining, not sitting. There was no main table, nor were they all looking in one direction. Rather, they would have been more in a circle than in a U-shaped format. However, most Christians visualize the Last Supper in a Da Vinci framework, not in a Semitic-cultural framework. The Renaissance has also had a strong cultural influence on the ways in which Western Christians build churches, visualize images of Jesus, and even in the ways that liturgy itself is carried out. Both the twelfth-century Aristotelian revival and the later Renaissance revival of Greco-Roman culture were indeed strong cultural influences on the western Roman Catholic Church. In many ways, however, they were not as overarching an inculturation process as the Hellenistic process of the early centuries and the Germanic cultural process of the Middle Ages, nor, as we shall presently see, as intensively and extensively overwhelming as the contemporary process of inculturation.

*The Inculturation of Western Catholicism,
1900 to the Present*

In the contemporary era, the Christian church is going through a third major inculturation challenge, involving all the countervailing tendencies we noted above in discussing globalization. The modern period includes the revolutions brought about by rise and development of a scientific view of the world

and a technological remaking of economic life. It also includes all that the word “postmodern” implies. One needs to realize that today’s entire Christian church—Anglican, Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic—is undergoing a third major process of inculturation. In many ways, this third process of inculturation is far more intensive and extensive than the first major inculturation (the Greco-Roman inculturation) and the second major inculturation (the Germanic-tribes inculturation). It is more intense, first, because the process is global. Second, it is more intense because a new issue for the Christian churches that is presently taking place is the officially sanctioned dialogues between Christian churches and non-Christian major religions. This interfacing of various religions, however, is not merely a matter of official dialogues. There are many local and regional dialogues going on today between Christian people and people of other major world religions. These other major religions are primarily parts of non-Euro-American culture, and thus there is not only a religious dimension to these dialogues but also a cultural dimension.¹⁹

It is obvious that at this moment we are involved in a transcultural and transreligious process that has never before occurred in the Christian era of history. The complexity of this megacultural process must be taken into account. To expect immediate results is out of the question. The issues are far too complex for any quick fix. The prospects are generous, since in this intricate time of dialogue all religions are searching for a clearer and more universal understanding of the transcendent. For too long, even Christianity has been tempted to remain satisfied with its own domesticated household gods—its own *lares et penates*. Today, dialogue, migration, and study have created an interstice in which the household gods of every religion are coming face to face. It is not a comfortable time for those who are charged with looking out for the identity and integrity of the single religions, because their followers are increasingly put into daily contact with followers of other ways in the dialogue of life. Guardians of orthodoxy in all religions fear syncretism and the weakening of communal boundaries. Viewed from another perspective, however, this new world of religious interchange is one of the most interesting periods in human history. Anyone who presumes to know how things will sort themselves out over the next century is either a genius or a fool. What should be clear for Catholics is that theirs is a church that developed organically within the confines of Western culture from the ninth through the nineteenth century. The process was one in which Hellenic and Roman cul-

19. It should be noted that Eastern churches have engaged in cultural exchange far more than the Western Roman Catholic Church. From earliest times, the Eastern churches opened the door to vernacular languages in an extensive way, and, with the introduction of languages other than Greek or Syriac, these churches became deeply multicultural.

tures first shaped it, followed by the encounter with Germanic cultures (though one should not forget that Catholicism also encountered and was influenced by cultures as different as the Slavic and the Celtic). The shape of the church's institutions, styles of worship, and spirituality—its very self-understanding—was heavily influenced by a multitude of cultures, but most importantly by adapting Mediterranean Catholicism to fit within Frankish and Germanic cultures in the north. It is almost as true to say that the Catholic Church is a *German* Catholic Church as it is to call it *Roman*, if one is careful to realize that it is called “Roman” not only for cultural reasons but also because of the growing theological conviction that the see of Rome was the see of Peter and that Rome rightly exercised a unique position over all other churches. The theological *legitimacy* of this claim is a matter of no little controversy, but the *fact* that this claim was generally accepted in the West is not.

Since leadership in any human society plays a major role in the self-identity of such a society, an imposed pattern of leadership can hinder the process of cultural adaptation. It is precisely on raising the question of what forms of leadership are culturally appropriate that this volume focuses itself. The challenge of developing culturally appropriate forms of order and ministry in our globalizing world is significant.

By now the reader understands the complexity of the attempt to understand ministry as a part of doing “theology in global perspective.” This global perspective must be kept in mind as we move into the next chapters. Indeed, the entire volume is meant to be a reconsideration of order and ministry in the church from the viewpoint or perspective of globalization.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What are the main characteristics and issues involved in globalization? Can you offer your own evaluation of the beneficial effects and the harmful effects of globalization?
2. What are the main issues that you associate with the word “culture”? How does culture affect the shape of church order and ministry?
3. What does “inculturation” mean today in theological and religious discussions? Is the process of inculturation good or bad? What are the dangers of implementing inculturation in fast-moving times? What are the dangers of not inculturating in such times?
4. How do globalization and culture affect discussions of church leadership?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING AND STUDY

- Bellito, Christopher M. *Renewing Christianity: A History of Church Reform from Day One to Vatican II*. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2001. An accessible overview of church reforms and the crises that occasioned them from the earliest days to our own.
- John Paul II, Pope. *Redemptoris Missio*, Encyclical Letter on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate. Available in many editions; the one published by Orbis Books includes a commentary on the encyclical by Marcello Zago, O.M.I., one of its drafters, and the text of *Dialogue and Proclamation*, issued by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and a commentary on that document by Jacques Dupuis, S.J. See William R. Burrows, ed., *Redemption and Dialogue* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993).
- Lee, Jung Young. *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.
- Matsuoka, Fumitaka, and Eleazar Fernandez. *Realizing the America of Our Hearts*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003.
- Robertson, Roland. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1992. The classic work on the various ways in which globalization has an impact on religion and vice versa.
- Schreier, Robert J. *The New Catholicity*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: Norton, 2003. A study that seeks to show how globalization has many negative results and how they can be corrected.