

Inculturation and Internationalization

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BOTH INCULTURATION AND internationalization are important themes in mission today, particularly in Japan. No realistic Christian can ignore the fact that Christianity comes to Japan as a foreign religion, embedded in the mores, thought patterns and world view of a foreign culture, and that it must be reformulated, rethought and even re-felt if it is really to speak to the Japanese people. No caring Christian in Japan can be indifferent to the struggle of these people to find their way in what has become a global village, nor ignore the tremendous impact of Japan on other countries and on the peoples of other countries, particularly those who reside in Japan. Both inculturation and internationalization are therefore central themes for Japanese Christians today, so a discussion of the relationship between the two must be at the heart of what it means to be a Christian in Japan at this time.

Both words, *inculturation* and *internationalization*, are taken to have good overtones. It is true that there are still some people who are critical of inculturation. I was recently told by a missionary who was arguing against inculturation that "our job is to adapt people to Christ, not Christ to people." But such attitudes are a rarity today. All but a few would probably respond to that statement with the question: "Whose understanding of Christ?" For all practical purposes, the affirmation of the need for inculturation is unanimous. This has been

variously evidenced by conferences of missionaries and missiologists, such as those held by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) in Tagaytay in the Philippines in 1988 (proceedings and statement published in Mercado and Knight 1989) and in Bali in 1993 (proceedings to be published this year), by the Maryknoll Missioners' series of weekly meetings (as reported in Kroeger 1993) as well as by statements of the World Council of Churches, papal documents and other written materials. There is a widespread awareness that inculturation must go beyond mere adaptation of forms to a rethinking of faith and a re-theologizing in the context of the new culture.

On this point my own stand coincides with what I perceive to be the majority view. I believe that all people understand everything that they understand, think everything that they think and feel everything that they feel according to a thought framework and meaning structure that has been formed within their own particular culture. They also express themselves within and feel most at home with the forms, structures, mores and patterns of thought and expression of that culture. I do not wish to suggest any kind of cultural determinism; I am convinced that all people are individuals who are to some extent independent of and able to transcend their own culture. If this were not the case, culture would be static and cultural exchange and cross-

cultural influence would be impossible. But while culture is not determinist, it never becomes irrelevant, even when it is transcended. The very forms in which people maintain their individuality and transcend culture are themselves culturally influenced. Consequently, if people are to believe, worship, form community and live out their faith, they can only do so within their own culture.

Obviously, cross-cultural experiences are widespread in our world today, and this does have implications for inculturation. Cross-cultural experiences are interpreted here in the broadest possible sense, including learning a second language, studying different cultures, getting to know people from different cultures, traveling to or living permanently or temporarily in other cultures. In fact, just reading a newspaper today is a cross-cultural experience. All such experiences give people an opportunity to achieve a broader perspective and to see their own culture as relative. That is why inculturation is a much more complex and ambiguous process than the above affirmation of inculturation might indicate.

The same applies to internationalization, which is widely recognized as a crucial issue for Japan today. If it is true that since the opening of its borders in 1854, Japan has sought to acquire Western technology and catch up with the West in order to ultimately resist the pressures of the West and retain its independence and even isolation, then it must be said that Japan has achieved its goal but not its purpose. It has caught up with the West, but in a way that makes it more interdependent and less able to isolate itself than at any other time in its history. For better or worse, Japan's lot, at least for the foreseeable future, is to be cast with other countries and peoples in an increasingly complex and multidimensional web of international, multiethnic and multicultural relationships.

Internationalization has become a popular term. Having an internationality of their own, Christian denominations in Japan have a particular contribution to make, but this area is also complex and ambiguous, and value judgments are far from simple and straightforward.

INCULTURATION

A Praxis-oriented Appraisal of Inculturation

The main objection, or the primary recognized limitation, to inculturation seems to be the demand for fidelity to the essentials of Christian faith. This is true of that first instance of inculturation, the decision of the Council of Jerusalem not to demand that Gentile Christians submit to circumcision and other requirements of the Jewish law but to require only that they "abstain from anything polluted by idols, from illicit marriages, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood" (Acts 15:20; *New Jerusalem Bible*).

Even if it cannot be taken as a total endorsement of inculturation as it is understood today, the oft-quoted statement issued in 1659 by the Vatican office Propaganda Fidei likewise calls for a serious respect for cultures while maintaining fidelity to "religion and morality":

Do not attempt in any way to persuade these people to change their customs, their habits and their behavior, as long as they are not evidently contrary to religion and morality. What could be more absurd, indeed, than to transport France, Spain, or Italy, or some other European country to the Chinese? Do not bring them our countries but the Faith, which does not reject or harm the customs or habits of any people, so long as they are not perverse; but, on the contrary, wishes to see them preserved in their entirety (Quoted in Ross 1994, 185).

The same applies to affirmations of inculturation today. Benigno Beltran (1987), for example, gives a definition of inculturation that incorporates the demand for both inculturation and fidelity to the Gospel:

The process of rooting the faith in various historical situations by integrating what is good in the culture and judging the negative elements in the light of the truths of the Gospel is what is meant by inculturation. For instance, when one proclaims the Good News to head-hunting tribes in the Philippines, what is good in their songs and dances, their customs and traditions, can be integrated into the Christian religion. The practice, however, of head-hunting, no matter how meaningful to their culture, has to be judged as contrary to Christian belief.

All three of these examples affirm the need for inculturation (or at least cultural adaptation) as well as the need for discernment, so that in the process of adaptation nothing essential to Christianity is lost. Yet there is a difference. While the following categories are a little forced, the conclusion of the Council of Jerusalem and the statement of Propaganda Fidei may be considered either theocentric or ecclesiocentric. Even when the issues they examine are ethical ones, the concern is fidelity to an established moral code, understood primarily in terms of obedience to God. I do not suggest that Beltran's selection of head-hunting as an example ignores the issue of obedience to God; it clearly does not. The focus is the impact that a specific form of behavior has on people. It may therefore be considered soteriocentric, or kingdom-centered, or simply praxis-oriented. This is, of course, compatible with the prevalence of the soteriocentric paradigm in missiology today. I suggest that a soteriocentric, or praxis-oriented, appraisal helps bring out the complexity and ambiguity inherent in inculturation. It goes beyond simply requiring that

inculturated forms be compatible with essential Christian tenets, to focusing on the real impact that all our mission activity has on the culture and society in which we work. One of the participants at the SVD missiology conference in 1993 summed up the problem succinctly: "How can we inculturate without becoming collaborators?"

This aspect of inculturation was brought to my awareness two years ago in England. I was surprised, at the time, to hear an Indian Christian arguing vehemently against inculturation. His explanation made his reasons clear. He was a Dalit, an Untouchable; for him, inculturation meant that Christian churches approve of and even adopt a culture that had oppressed him and his people for centuries. It is this kind of issue that would be brought to the fore in a praxis-oriented appraisal of inculturation. The relationship between the task of inculturation and the prophetic role of the missionary is an issue that is complicated by all the difficulties involved in cross-cultural value judgments.

In a sense, Beltran's example of head-hunting is not a good one, at least for the point I am trying to make here. Situations where the practices of a particular culture are so obviously and unambiguously in conflict with Christian teaching are the exception rather than the rule, and the example makes the decision about what aspects of a culture are to be accepted and what rejected look too simple. The kind of praxis-oriented appraisal of inculturation that I am suggesting is not simply a matter of checking off cultural practices against Christian doctrinal and moral tenets. Rather, what must be assessed is the whole impact that mission practices have on the lives of people.

One example of this might be the involvement of Christian mission schools in competitive education in Japan. Is this to be considered inculturation or complicity? There were presumably very good cultural reasons why Christian missionaries chose

education as a vehicle of mission in Japan. One outcome of this involvement, however, has been the meshing of Christian mission into a social and cultural pattern that is widely recognized as being oppressive of school children and discordant with human dignity. Many other examples may be cited. In the prewar years, the participation of Christians in emperor veneration, the offering of a "Christian *norito* (a Shinto prayer)" by a group of prominent Christians in 1937 (Kitagawa 1990, 246) and other forms of Christian participation in Shinto rites should be considered as directed towards survival rather than inculturation, but these examples indicate the difficulty of trying to draw a distinct line between inculturation and collaboration. In many Third World countries, the involvement of missionaries in various development projects must be regarded in the same light: How do such projects contribute to the lives of the people? Do programs of education in Third World rural areas simply promote Western attitudes and values, making people unsuited to rural life and promoting the influx of rural peoples into the slums of the cities?

It is important to remember that culture affects every aspect of mission; therefore, inculturation is a task for every dimension of mission. In a sense, inculturation can simply be defined as being responsible in and for the cultural impact we have, for everything we do, even our very presence, has a cultural impact. Failure to think in terms of inculturation in our schools or in any other aspect of our mission, shows that we have not come to terms with what it means to witness in a cross-cultural context. I have the impression that when we speak of inculturation, we think mainly of conscious efforts and positive actions taken to express Christianity within the specific culture. Our real cultural impact is much more subtle, unconscious and pervasive than this.

A further problem emerges with simply arguing that we should adapt to all those

forms that are compatible with Christianity but not to those forms that are in contradiction to it. To attempt to settle the question in this way overlooks the role that culture plays in influencing the decisions about what is and what is not compatible with Christianity. It fails to deal with the question of who is to make the decision on whether a particular aspect of a culture is or is not compatible with Christian faith. It also fails to recognize that a culture is a synthetic whole that cannot be neatly divided into aspects compatible with and incompatible with Christianity. The different aspects of a culture do not exist in a manner that makes them separable from one another.

Problems of inculturation can be addressed in two fairly effective ways. One is to treat inculturation as a process of dialogue, and the other is to make indigenous Christians the primary agents of inculturation. One implication of the notion that inculturation must be a process of dialogue is that it is always in an experimental stage, always open to revision; therefore, there is a need for constant reappraisal, which should be carried out in dialogue. This does not fully solve the problem, however, for it leaves unanswered the question "Dialogue with whom?" Who is to represent and interpret the culture?

The role of indigenous Christians, whether as partners in dialogue or as the principal agents of inculturation, is so crucial that it barely warrants mention. However, it brings to light another problem that is inherent in a praxis-oriented critique of inculturation and certainly does need to be identified: the indigenous Christians who have such an important role in inculturation often represent only a small portion, and often a privileged portion, of the indigenous society. Kroeger (1993, 304) points out, for example, that "the Catholics in Bangladesh are usually financially better off than the average Bangladeshi citizen." This kind of situation exists in several

countries in the Asia/Pacific area. In such situations the tension between the tasks of inculturation and prophetic witness deserve all the more attention on the grounds that inculturation, left up to these people, is likely to be carried out in a way that does not disturb their privileges.

While there may be no explicit solution to this tension, suggestions given at the SVD conference in 1993 included dialogue with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized in each cultural context. This provides at least a partial answer to the question of "Dialogue with whom?" An important step for inculturation is, then, to assess the place that Christians and the church already occupy within the culture, and in conjunction with this, to identify the victims—the poor and the marginalized—in a particular culture; for these people will be indispensable partners in dialogue.

Inculturation and General Confusion

Two questions raised repeatedly at the SVD conference of Asian missiologists in 1993 were how to achieve inculturation with a culture that has lost its sense of identity and how to achieve this with a culture undergoing rapid change. This is certainly an issue in every non-European country in which the church is active and probably in European countries as well. "Western" influence has spread to every part of the globe and, almost without exception, every part of the world is in the process of being absorbed into a global web of political and economic interests that is drastically changing the social, cultural and even religious mores, attitudes and values of peoples throughout the world. I put "Western" in quotation marks because, while the roots of this emerging global monoculture are in the West, many aspects of it are as new to the West as they are to the rest of the world. It would be a mistake simply to describe it as Western culture or to overlook the fact that many people in the

West are also trying to take a stand against consumerism as well as other aspects of this culture. Missionaries, accused of spreading Western culture in the past, are now more likely to try to prevent its spread. Kroeger (1993), for example, speaks of missionaries who see their role as combating "the pervasive influence that 'West is best'" (304).

It is so easy to take the world in which we live for granted. We need to step back and take a look at what is happening if only to get an idea of the enormity of the cultural change that is taking place, both in terms of its global extent and its pervasive intensity, impinging on every aspect of life, thought and feeling. Kroeger (1993, 304) speaks of a "deculturation" process in which traditional values are being lost because of Western influence and the media." Haardawiryana, in his presentation to the SVD conference in 1993, spoke of the Western world view "imposing itself and conquering all aspects of life in every nation of the world."

Political and economic developments affect countries like Japan that have adopted and excelled in Western-style education and technology as well as the cities that serve as the main centers of cultural interaction. The most damaging consequences, however, occur in remote areas. In many parts of the world, indigenous peoples are being uprooted from their traditional cultures and often even from their traditional lands. In some cases, their culture is so associated with the land on which they have traditionally lived that the very movement from that land creates a sense of cultural confusion. A friend from the Philippines told me about an indigenous people who have been forced by the loss of traditional lands to live in an area that is sacred to them, where they formerly would have entered with fear and dread and only for the purposes of religious ritual. At the 1993 conference, a missiologist from Papua New Guinea mentioned that just the possibility of moving out of the traditional village to a

city changes the relationship of a young person with his family and with the village. People are less constrained by traditional customs if they no longer live in a traditional environment.

When culture is in such a fluid state, into what do we inculturate? The question of inculturation in the context of rapid cultural change is as relevant in Japan as in any other place. A number of years ago I was involved in preparing volunteers for work overseas. Believing that people who are in touch with their own culture will be more responsive to other cultures, we asked the volunteers to participate in a Japanese-style religious experience, under the direction of a Japanese priest who is noted for including Japanese practices and spirituality into his method. The volunteers described the experience as a culture shock. Just sitting traditional Japanese style for long periods was painful to them. In a situation like this, into what do we inculturate?

The discussion on the church's involvement in competitive education calls to mind another aspect of inculturation: the failure to make cultural adaptations despite decades of talking. Most of our efforts involve liturgical forms or explicitly religious practices and formulations. For the most part, we have not even raised the question of inculturation with regard to many of our education, welfare and development activities. A more extensive study of the overall impact of our presence, including all our activities, would indicate that good intentions notwithstanding, our main function remains the spread of European forms of culture, society, thought and values. It may not be an exaggeration to say that the overall cultural impact of the presence of Christian missionaries in most countries is not the inculturation of Christianity but what can only be described as the development of an emerging global monoculture. Perhaps our mission itself is helping to

bring about the cultural confusion that hinders inculturation.

This possibility points to a further problem with regard to inculturation: Christianity cannot be inculturated without changing the culture into which it has been introduced. A Christian missionary might ask "Is not the goal of Christianity to change culture?" Such a dismissal of the problem ignores other factors; for example, it ignores the very basis of the need for inculturation, namely, that the judgment as to what changes are desirable is itself culturally biased. It also assumes that we can plan the consequences of our own actions. In other words, it assumes that the missionary can determine the changes that will result in a particular culture as a result of that missionary's own activities; such is not the case. We can neither predict nor control the sequences that will arise from our actions, even in our own cultures, much less in a cross-cultural context. That is why it is important to understand inculturation not only in terms of expressing and re-theologizing Christianity in the context of a new culture but also of being responsible for the overall impact that our activities, and even our very presence, have on that culture.

Obviously, I have already been talking about internationalization. The two topics which form the title of this article are not two themes but different aspects of the same theme. The question of inculturation only arises because a certain amount of internationalization has already taken place; in other words, different cultures have been brought into contact with one another. Consequently, just as the issue of internationalization appeared in the discussion of inculturation, the issue of culture will feature strongly in the discussion of internationalization.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

With regard to culture, perhaps the two most significant features of the closing decades of the twentieth century are the widespread cultural confusion and the emerging global monoculture previously discussed. These two are, in fact, different sides of the same coin. The situation is one that has evolved over the last five hundred years, and it is probably not inaccurate to describe it as beginning with Columbus's voyage, even if its roots go back much further. It is essentially a globalization of European cultural and sociopolitical structures and an involvement of the whole human race in an international economic system that has now absorbed every part of the globe. This is the situation of internationalization today, so before we talk about internationalization as a global community or dress it up in language that makes it look desirable, we need to reflect on this reality. To go into this issue with the detail that it warrants will be impossible in this article. A simple overview will have to suffice.

Centering on Japan will bring into focus issues that are valid in any other area of the globe. Internationalization in Japan today takes many forms, such as sending members of the Self-Defense Forces on peace-keeping missions, opening up the market to foreign goods, trying to redress the imbalance of trade, taking measures to make life simpler for foreigners in Japan, participating in overseas development projects, investing overseas and promoting language learning. It would be naive and even self-deceptive to think that the primary goal of this orientation toward internationalization is anything but the economic well-being of Japan. Consequently, all of the above-mentioned forms of internationalization are apt to be oriented towards economic purposes. A friend who formerly worked at the Tokyo embassy of a Latin American country related an observation of the ambassador there: Japan and

Latin America have *rigai kankei* (a relationship of economic interests) but lack *rikai kankei* (a relationship of mutual understanding). The fact is that economics is a major definitive factor in internationalization.

The consequences of economic internationalization are well-illustrated by the following examples. A friend who was traveling in Ethiopia at the height of the famine there saw crates of tomatoes stacked at the port. Thinking this was aid for the refugee camps, he suggested that a food higher in protein would be a better form of aid. He was informed that the tomatoes were not aid but export goods. If Ethiopia could provide agricultural products for export, he asked, why was it not providing for the people in the refugee camps? The answer was that the people in the refugee camps could not afford to buy the products, but the people of developed countries could. This phenomenon is apparent throughout the Third World: local people lack daily necessities while local production is being oriented to a foreign market. The situation of the Negros in the Philippines is a well-known example. There laborers suffer malnutrition while they are producing sugar cane for the markets of developed countries.

In a village deep in the hills of northern Luzon, in the Philippines, the relationship is more indirect but equally devastating. The indigenous Tinggian tribe lives by slash-and-burn farming, and the hills around its village are becoming depleted at an incredible rate. They have been practicing slash-and-burn farming for hundreds of years, at least, but it is only in the last twenty years that this has come to be environmentally destructive. Traditionally, after an area had been burned for farming and depleted, the land was given more than adequate time to recover before it was burned again. Now the villagers have too little land to do this, so they return to the same plot before it has had a chance to recover. The reason is that most of the lands

they formerly had access to have been taken over for logging purposes. The logging is for export to Japan, a pertinent example of the internationalization of economics.

A story told by a man in this village in 1989 highlights one of the cultural aspects of internationalization. According to village custom, the first person to come upon a mountain stream would gather stones and place them at strategic intervals so that people who came there later would be able to cross without having to wade through the water. But fifteen years prior to our conversation, a logging company came to the area and began to employ the local people. From the time the people were regularly paid in cash for their work, the practice of placing stones in streams in consideration of other people ceased. The damaging consequences of the globalization of a money economy are most readily recognizable in such villages. The example of this village shows that the damage is cultural, social, economic and ecological.

The Principle of Subsidiarity

One way to clarify the issues involved in internationalization is to discuss them in terms of the principle of subsidiarity, a formulation of one of the most essential Christian principles that is at the heart of Catholic social teaching. The principle was first formulated in 1931 in the papal encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno* (Pius XI, 1931):

It is indeed true, as history proves, that owing to the change in social conditions, much that was formerly done by small bodies can nowadays be accomplished only by large corporations. None the less, just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself func-

tions that can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable, and it retains its full truth today. Of its nature, the true aim of all social activity should be to help individual members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them (79).

It would be helpful to consider the implications of this principle, which states that when an individual belongs to a group, or a smaller group belongs to a larger group, the role of the group with regard to the individual, or the role of the larger group with regard to the smaller group, is to assist in those matters that the individual or the smaller group cannot adequately handle on its own. The first implication is that the group should never take over those things that individuals can adequately do for themselves, nor should a larger group take over the things that smaller groups can do for themselves.

This principle is grounded in the Christian understanding of human dignity, whereby individuals are respected to the extent that they can take responsibility for their own lives. When people are deprived of their autonomy, they are somehow enslaved or reduced to the level of a machine.

This description may give the impression that the principle advocates individualism. On the contrary, recognizing that human beings always exists as part of a community, it describes the relationship of the individual to the group. The group exists to support and enable, not to absorb or diminish, the individual. The principle recognizes that there are things that individuals cannot do for themselves. It does not see human society as merely an aggregate of individuals but as an interacting and organic whole. At the same time, it never reduces the individual or the local community to being merely a part of the whole.

While acknowledging the truth that the whole is more than the sum of the parts, it also affirms that the individual is more than a part of the whole.

Although Paul Steidl-Meyer and others say that the principle advocates “the maximum feasible decentralization” (1984, 259-60), it actually calls for optimal decentralization and sets respect for the autonomy of individuals and local communities as the criterion for determining what would constitute optimal decentralization. Thus it does not advocate a weak central government. The kind of weak central government that is suggested by the phrase “maximum decentralization” is not likely to result in a real implementation of the principle of subsidiarity but rather in the domination of the smaller communities by powerful interests unchecked by the weakened central government. The principle of subsidiarity requires a strong central authority, but the purpose of this central authority is to support the autonomy of individuals and smaller scale communities. This role for the central government in protecting individuals and smaller groups from powerful interests is revealed in much civil rights, labor and welfare legislation. The central government has a responsibility to intervene when the principle of subsidiarity is not being implemented at lower levels in the society.

The principle is implicitly applied in the area of church teaching on land ownership. This teaching is based on the principle that all people have a right to seek their nourishment from the earth on a permanent and planned basis. It follows that no one has the right to such extensive ownership of land as to infringe on the rights of other people to access the earth’s nourishment. The church therefore advocates widespread and localized structures of land ownership. The implication is that individual autonomy is threatened when a person is denied access to the earth’s nourishment and is made dependent on the benevolence of others.

It is obvious that this is the predicament of tenant farmers and agricultural laborers in many parts of the world. The anomaly of widespread malnutrition among the food producing nations demonstrates the damage to human dignity and the loss of autonomy caused by the loss of the capacity to take charge of one’s own sustenance. When the teaching on land ownership is understood as an application of the principle of subsidiarity, it becomes evident that the civil authorities do have a responsibility to see that land ownership is fairly and equitably distributed and to enforce such a distribution when necessary.

Economics and the Principle of Subsidiarity

There has not been a lot of discussion of the principle of subsidiarity with regard to economics (Steidl-Meyer is one of the few instances), but there can be little doubt that of all structures of human society, it is the economic structures—the structures that determine how people achieve material well-being—that impinge most on the autonomy of the individual. It is also apparent, even from what has been said above, that it is the international economic structures of present-day society that most deprive people and communities of autonomy. Therefore, it is in the application to economics that the principle of subsidiarity has its greatest significance.

In fact, the application of the principle of subsidiarity to economics is consistent with the ideas of many contemporary thinkers. Gandhi’s advocacy of village-based development is a case in point (Jesudasan 1984, 124–6). E. F. Schumacher explicitly applies the principle to economics (1975, 244), and it is clearly implied in his advocacy of a small-scale, regional approach to development. There are also a large number of ecological thinkers who advocate small-scale, localized structures of production and consumption.

That the present structures of society and economics go in the opposite direction is plain to everyone. We live in what one might call a distanced society. We get our resources from one distant place and dispose of our garbage in another. We own property in faraway places and invest in enterprises that we will never see. The adage "out of sight, out of mind" applies to the sources of the material goods we use, to the lives of the people who produce them, to the waste they become when we dispose of them and to the consequences of almost everything we do. Even when we are concerned about the impact our society is having on humanity and on the environment, the structures of production, consumption and waste disposal make it all but impossible for us to be aware of the consequences of our own behavior and life style for the poor and for the environment.

What has been the involvement of the church in this? Future generations of Christians will perhaps look on the church of our day in much the same way as we look back on the collaboration of missionaries in colonialism. Surely, as the price that is being paid for the globalization of European social and economic structures becomes more indisputable, the complicity of the church in this spread will be more regretted and more criticized. In our attempts to spread the Word, we have used avenues of approach such as education, development and social welfare activities that have contributed to this kind of internationalization, to the loss of autonomy of local communities and indigenous peoples and to the spread of Western ideas of development and economics. Sometimes we have undertaken these projects in the firm belief that people would benefit from them, and at other times we have done so simply to gain an avenue of contact for proclamation. In the latter case, we have been little different from the missionaries who, in time of famine, distributed rice to Christians only,

encouraging the phenomenon of "rice Christians." True, we have been more subtle and sophisticated, but not essentially different.

Christians have been naive in accepting the logic of development and education and have played a major part in spreading Western education in Japan as well as in many Third World countries. We have done this with little consideration for the fact that the cultures among which we work already had their own educational systems. They may not have had a school system, which is not the same thing, but they certainly had a method of education that had proved adequate for generations and even for centuries in passing on the wisdom and knowledge necessary to sustain their societies. We have participated in replacing these with an educational system that for at least one-third of the waking part of their childhood segregates people from ordinary society, from people belonging to age groups other than their own and from nature. We have implanted in them the preconception that knowledge will enable them to achieve results, that the way to go about doing something is to first learn how to do it and then to implement that knowledge. This preconception is, of course, at the very basis of the contemporary Western approach to education. The trouble is that it applies only to technical matters. It does not help us with the more human tasks of learning to walk or speak, much less to love, raise children, or deal with bereavement and aging. Nor does it help us develop an appreciation for the workings of nature, which we first experience then come to understand through reflection. The fact is that by its involvement in education, the church has contributed greatly to the segregation of children from their own culture, all arguments for inculturation and respect for indigenous cultures notwithstanding.

We have reached a stage in history at which the Western paradigm, now the pre-

dominant one throughout the world, is breaking down. We have begun to look for new ways of thinking and doing things, and many of us are turning to the peoples of other cultures to find different perspectives. Often enough, what we find is people who have been imbued with the Western paradigm themselves and are sometimes even more narrowly Western than ourselves. While this encounter does demonstrate the extent to which other cultures have been overwhelmed by the West, the very attempt points to a different kind of internationalization, what I will call an internationalization of dialogue.

An Internationalization of Dialogue

The above discussion presents a fairly negative view of internationalization. This critique of internationalization, however, is a result of cross-cultural encounters: living and traveling in various countries; visiting the sugarcane workers in Negros and other indigenous peoples in the northern part of the Philippines and in refugee camps in Thailand; and meeting with people working in mission, development and education in various parts of the world, particularly in Asia and Africa. In other words, this critique is based on experiences of internationalization. The implication is that there are many forms of internationalization and that there is much to be gained from many of these forms.

Obvious benefits can be expected from the sharing of knowledge and wisdom. This is true in many areas, including medicinal knowledge (the use of herbs) and agricultural techniques. (One example of the latter is the practice among South American indigenous peoples of planting a bean, a squash seed and a kernel of corn in the same hole. The three plants do not compete with one another, and the bean provides nitrogen to fertilize the other two.)

Cross-cultural encounter does more than this. Confronting a different world view and meaning structure, we are given the opportunity to see our own culture as a culture: relative, transient and imperfect, with built-in biases and prejudices as well as resources of wisdom and care. The cross-cultural experience can be an experience of growth and cross-fertilization for both the persons and the cultures involved.

But these benefits can only be achieved when cultural diversity is respected and maintained. There will always be instances of one culture absorbing other cultures, but when the whole world is being absorbed into a global monoculture, this can only be seen as an impoverishment. It is not an internationalization but a “de-nationalization” or a “deculturation” where the uniqueness of different peoples is continuously diminished.

In speaking of an emerging global life style, I do not mean that all people come to the same world view and life style. Amaladoss (1990) points out that “every culture is really a complex of sub-cultures. The elite, the middle class, the poor, the workers, the urban proletariat and the youth all have their subcultures” (64). Western education and the world economy already have more influence on people’s view of life today than traditional culture. Tenant farmers around the world probably have more in common with each other than with the land owners and educated elites of their own home territories. To borrow Amaladoss’s phrasing, the emerging global monoculture is a complex of global subcultures, each subculture being determined primarily by the place of the people in the global economy. (Reactions to this cultural change, of course, are frequent, often taking the form of fundamentalist movements—and perhaps even these movements have more in common with each other than with the cultures and religions they are trying to preserve.)

Everyone understands that the way forward can only be forward. We cannot go back. In spite of my critique of the spread of Western schooling above, it would be impossible to abandon such a system and tell people to go back to their traditional ways because most of the people would not want this and, in many cases, too much of the traditional culture has already been lost. Besides, Western education is one of the main resources for dealing with the problems that the world is currently facing. It is necessary that we go ahead but with an honest and thoroughgoing appraisal of the effect of our activities and in dialogue with the peoples among whom we work and who are affected by our work.

In Japan, this is likely to mean promoting awareness of all the implications of the changes taking place in Japanese society, including the impact on other countries, on other peoples and on the environment. It would also mean promoting a positive valuation of "Japanese-ness" and of many traditional values and customs of Japanese society. In rural villages in the Third World, it would certainly not mean abandoning attempts to educate people. Given the conditions of the world today, education is a precondition for coping with the ever-impinging presence of the technico-economic world view and social structure. But an honest evaluation of past efforts might result in the inclusion of a significant degree of education in such fields as rural community development, rural economics and traditional skills—skills and knowledge that would encourage people to stay in their home areas rather than going to cities looking for work.

INCULTURATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Just how are inculturation and internationalization related? The internationalization that is bringing about a global monoculture

is the diametric opposite of inculturation. It is, as Kroeger said, a "deculturation" (1993, 304).

But if we are to seek an internationalization that is congruent with the principle of subsidiarity and not only tolerates but also fosters the autonomy of individuals and of smaller social units, local cultures and peoples, then internationalization and inculturation are far from being antithetical. Inculturation and internationalization are correlates if we are seeking an internationalization of unity among diversity where *rikai kankei* (relationships of understanding) are sought more than *rigai kankei* (relationships of economic interests), where isolation is overcome by communication and not by sacrificing independence and self-reliance and where social change is achieved by each culture learning from other cultures without being absorbed into them. Each implies the other. If Gandhi, Schumacher and so many other ecological and social justice thinkers are right, then the desirable kind of internationalization fosters the cross-fertilization of self-reliant and autonomous communities in an organic but non-absorbing way.

We need to look at inculturation in a broader way than we have up to the present, not simply examining ways to adopt indigenous forms and practices into our liturgy or even to theologize within the given culture. We need to consider the cultural impact of all our activities and to recognize the ramifications these have for trends within the societies in which we live and work. And whether we judge it best in each particular case to seek new forms of apostolate or to continue with the programs, projects and institutions we already have, we need to deal with the aspects of our activities that orient societies toward a loss of autonomy and absorption into a global monoculture.

This applies to Japan in two respects. First, although the extent of Japan's

Westernization is debatable, many Japanese, and young Japanese in particular, see their society as being more in continuity with the West than with their country's past. While this process of Westernization may seem to make Japan more amenable to Christianity and to many of the ideas and practices that Christian churches seek to promote, it is also true that much of traditional Japanese culture is in danger of being lost. Pragmatism may never fully replace the sense of aesthetics in Japan, but it is certainly in the process of compromising it. And many of the traditional pre-industrial skills of Japan are in the process of being relegated to the past. Many of these skills involve the use of bamboo, a resource readily available in many Third World countries.

Too little has been done to tap traditional Japanese skills as a resource for appropriate technology in Third World countries. Christian churches may applaud the internationalization of Japan. But if we applaud the fact that internationalization makes Japan more amenable to Christian churches without reflecting on all that we ourselves could learn from traditional Japanese culture, we lack respect for both Japanese culture as well as for the principles and values of inculturation.

Second, as Japan is absorbed into the global monoculture, we must critique the impact that Japan has on other countries. Much of the activity of Christian missionaries in Japan is oriented toward imparting the very skills that make this impact possible. If language studies provide a major point of contact with people, then the language itself becomes a major tool of economic expansionism. We may well decide that it remains appropriate to continue with language programs. After all, there are many other sources of the same skills. But a reflection on the principles of internationalization and inculturation should influ-

ence the orientation with which we carry out these programs.

Actually, the gradual but steady evolution of Japan into a multiethnic and multicultural society is the result of one kind of internationalization and a resource for the other. The fact that so many people are provoked by economic necessity to leave their home countries and seek employment elsewhere is a travesty of justice; the relation of this to the depletion of rural communities is undeniable. Even when the people who come to Japan are from urban areas in their home countries, it is the enormous influx of people from the rural villages into those cities that keeps the wages there so low. As Schumacher pointed out more than twenty years ago: "Rural unemployment becomes urban unemployment" (1975, 173). Dealing with this aspect of the problem means doing something about the structures of society that drain people, funds and natural resources from rural areas to urban areas and from Third World countries to developed countries.

At the same time, the increasing number of non-Japanese living in Japan provides a resource both for cultivating a sensitivity to the impact Japan is having on other countries and for the kind of cultural cross-fertilization I mentioned above. Inculturation does not mean keeping a culture intact. It is always an interaction between two cultures that brings about cultural change. That is to say, cultural change takes place by cross-fertilization and not by imposition or absorption. In this way, dialogue and mutual learning are the main means of inculturation, and the agents are primarily the people of the particular culture, particularly the disadvantaged within the culture or at least those in dialogue with such people.

This kind of inculturation could be considered an issue not only for Christian mission but also for all cross-cultural interaction, particularly in areas related to education, development and economics. The experi-

ence of Christian missionaries with inculturation can then be considered a resource for all forms of cross-cultural interaction.

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