

ON INTERCULTURALITY

The Divine Word Missionaries have placed interculturality rather high on their agenda for community life and missionary engagement. The relationship between missionaries is supposed to benefit from their different cultural backgrounds. To live in communities and work in teams as well as engaging in evangelisation will improve if the rich heritages of cultural backgrounds can be introduced.

This, of course, is not entirely new to the SVD. However, in the last couple of years an extra effort has been put into advancing the capacities to deal creatively with issues of interculturality. One such initiative is a series of workshops to promote intercultural relations.¹

Recently, a two-volume collection of articles has been published by the Missiological Institute in Sankt Augustin to provide further material and reflection for this vast field of SVD engagement:

Lazar T. Stanislaus SVD and Martin Ueffing SVD (eds.)

- *Intercultural Living*, Sankt Augustin/Delhi, Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches Institut/ISPCK, 2015, xxvi+367 pp. (ISBN: 978-81-8465-483-7);
- *Intercultural Mission*, Sankt Augustin/Delhi, Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches Institut/ISPCK, 2015, xxx+446 pp. (ISBN: 978-81-8465-491-2).²

As the editors write:

The topic interculturality is being studied for many years, but it has gained its value more in the last few years because of the importance of analyzing society today with cultural traits and this has led to the value of recognizing the multicultural communities in a society. Due to globalization, the global world is becoming one city or one village; various cultural communities live, communicate, and interact with one another for smooth functioning of society. It does not mean, that this is evolving with a smooth process, or people are living peacefully understanding all the implications connected with cultures, religions and nationalities.³

The two books have been organised mainly through the SVD Generalate's Mission Secretary Lazar Stanislaus and edited jointly with the Missiological

¹ For a first information see Dariusz Piwowarczyk SVD, SVD/SSpS Workshop on Interculturality in Nemi, January 18–31: *Verbum SVD* 56 (2015) 215-216.

² For more details on the two books see: <http://www.missionswissenschaft.eu> and there the actual publications, with further links. Note that the ISBN number occasionally is used without hyphens (e.g.: 9788184654837).

³ Page ix in both volumes.

Institute. The authors are mostly Divine Word Missionaries from all over the world. The 19 articles in Volume 1 deal with aspects of community, the 25 contributions in Volume 2 refer more explicitly to mission.

Volume 1 – The Inner Perspective

The SVD General Chapter in 2006 organised its reflection around five themes of community life. These are also the headings of the sections in the first volume.

The first part is dedicated to *Spirituality*: Philip Gibbs SVD writes on the need of *Conversion from Ethnocentrism*, Paulus Budi Kleden SVD lays out the foundation for interculturality in a *Trinitarian spirituality*. Other more concrete aspects are analysed by Adriana Carla Milmanda SSpS in the horizon of *Inserted Life*.

Under the heading of *Community*, the second part spells out practical tools for intercultural living: Some *anthropological and theological implications* (Anthony J. Gittins CSSp), *psycho-spiritual* elements of community life (Dudley Mendonça SJ) and interculturality in the new *context of globalisation and internationalisation* (Frans Dokman). This section contains also two rather practical and hands-on contributions about intercultural competence (Barbara Hufner-Kemper and Thomas Kemper as well as Jon P. Kirby SVD).

The third part is dedicated to *Leadership*: Leadership is shown as a *service for a purpose and mission* by María Pilar Benavente Serrano MSOLA, Timothy Norton SVD reports on the process in the Australian SVD province and its *intercultural dynamics*. This has consequences for a *prophetic* stance and capacity for *peace building*, reflects Maria Cimperman RSCJ. All of that must be embedded in a correct understanding of *obedience in times of autonomy* (Márcio Fabri dos Anjos).

The section on *Finance* deals with a wide range of reflections: There is a report on experiences of *self-reliance and solidarity* from Bangladesh (Benedict Alo D'Rozario), the presentation of a bank owned by the SVD in Germany and its *ethical perspective on investment* (Jutta Hinrichs) and, finally, an essay on a *theology of the righteous rich* (by Jonathan J. Bonk).

The last part is dedicated to *Formation*: Mark Weber SVD, the Generalate's Secretary for Formation, spells out some challenges of *Formation for intercultural mission*. Nowadays, this formation takes place in the context of *technology and postmodern culture* (Bede Ukwuije CSSp). Most young missionaries get the chance to experiment with different cultures in *cross-cultural formation programmes* (Martin Ueffing SVD). However, formation for *intercultural life and mission* is an on-going task, Tom Ascheman SVD writes.

Volume 2 — Reaching Out in Mission

The 25 articles in the second volume on interculturality start with first looking at some *Challenges to Intercultural Mission*: They have to do with *ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism* (Robert Kisala SVD), with *fundamentalism* (S. M. Michael SVD) and with the *challenges of postmodern culture and mission* (John C. Sivalon MM). Jung Mo Sung presents a critical view on *corruption, poverty and mission*, while Franz Gassner SVD lists several *challenges for global consumer cultures to achieve a more sustainable lifestyle*.

The second part relates to biblical and theological foundations: Walter Vogels MAfr reflects on intercultural characteristics in the *composition and reading of the Old Testament*, while Shigeyuke Nakanose SVD presents examples for *Bible, life and mission*, particularly through an analysis of the Syro-Phoenician woman in the gospel of Mark. Franz Gmainer-Pranzl offers an essay in mission theology on the paths *from inculturation to interculturalization*.

More specifically with regard to mission theology, the third section on *Mission Trends* discusses *interculturality as a paradigm of mission* (Roger Schroeder SVD) and the task of *evangelisation from the perspective of Asia's multicultural context* (James H. Kroeger MM). Jonathan Tan offers his views on *mission inter gentes* and Stephen Bevans SVD relates *prophetic dialogue and intercultural mission*. Finally, Spanish missiologist Eloy Bueno de la Fuente looks at Europe and the *integration and interaction of missionaries* from all over the world.

The fourth section offers several more practical *Pathways of Intercultural Mission*: They have to do with an *experience from Zambia* (Marc Nsanzurwimo MAfr), with the *pastoral solicitude for migrants* (Alfredo José Gonçalves CS) and with the importance of *witness and presence in the context of the secular society* (John M. Prior SVD). Wolfgang M. Böhm's report on *development work and culture* stems from an engagement in a development agency over many years. Toni Harris OP reflects on the *image of the divine* and the implications for gender justice. Paulo Suess discusses the relation of *interculturality, inculturation and interculturalization* in the horizon of postcolonial mission. To get engaged in an intercultural mission may take a rather long and hard effort, describes José Fernando Díaz SVD in his article on the pastoral work *together with the Mapuche people* of Chile. Due to the deep relations of culture and religion, interculturality soon feeds into *interreligious relations* (Noel Seth SJ). Mary Motte FMM takes an *ecological look at mission*, laying out wider relationships for evangelisation. Intercultural relationships and sharing should also offer *resources for reconciliation in African spirituality*, writes Laurenti Magesa. The last two contributions in the second volume take a closer look at the digital world: *Intercultural communication*

in a digital world (Franz-Josef Eilers SVD) and the *challenges of connectivity for postmodern youth* (Isabelle Jonveaux).

Both volumes set out with an introduction which presents key concepts of culture to help readers find their way through the complex field of cultural theories and their application for community life and missionary engagement. Each volume also has indexes for names, Bible quotes and for the key concepts and matters treated in the articles.

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