

## CHAPTER 1

### THE NEED FOR PASTORAL AND CULTURAL STUDY CENTRES

#### The Unfolding of the Idea of Pastoral and Cultural Centres

There is always a difference between reality and human culturally conditioned understandings (models) of that reality. We assume that there is a reality “out there” but it is the mental constructs (models) of that reality inside our heads that are the most real to us. God, the author of reality, exists outside any culture. Human beings, on the other hand, are always bound by cultural, subcultural (including disciplinary), and psychological conditioning to perceive and interpret what they see of reality in ways appropriate to these conditionings. Neither the absolute God nor the reality [God] created is perceived absolutely by culture-bound human beings.”<sup>1</sup>

When the Christian message has come in contact with new cultures its messengers have been confronted with new horizons of understanding on the part of the listeners, which has at all times created a real challenge. “Though many gifted missionaries had made extensive linguistic and ethnographic studies, an in-depth dialogue between local and Christian religiosity had hardly begun.”<sup>2</sup> The need for pastoral and cultural centres must be set in relation to the lack of an in-depth dialogue between local and Christian religiosity. Their mission is to overcome the rift between culture and religion.<sup>3</sup> The mission of Pastoral and cultural Centres of the Church is always, with the help of their respective methods and aims, to evangelize. The cultural context and socio-economic situation matters in any Christian ministry of evangelization.

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. KRAFT, *Christianity in Culture*, Maryknoll, NY 1979, 300. Quoted in S. BEVANS, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Revised and Expanded Edition, Manila 2003, 4.

<sup>2</sup> H. JANSSEN, Vision and Foundation of the Melanesian Institute, in: E. MANTOVANI (ed.), *25 Years of the Service: The Melanesian Institute, Its History and Its Work*, Goroka 1994, 28-38, here 29.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. “The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures,” EN 20.

## ***1. The Significance of the Missionary Discourse on the Areopagus***

In the early Christian period one example of this is the Apostle Paul's Areopagus speech.<sup>4</sup> Paul wanted to make the message understandable to the Greeks, pointing to parallels with their religious experience and their culture. On the part of Paul the failure of his attempt to convert the Athenians is a classic example from which to draw a valuable lesson about the Christian message.

It indicates that the recipients of all missionary activity have their own cultural background and therefore a particular way of understanding which the preacher of the Christian message must take into account. The Pauline example indicates, however, that the success of this method depends not only on the announcer. The gap which exists between the two perspectives, the one of the Christian message and the one of the non-Christian cultural context, cannot easily be overcome.

The gospel, as the message of the saving will of God in Christ, brings with it something very different and new by various peoples. Paul, with his talk on the Areopagus, began only the first phase of a long missionary process, which aimed at confronting the non-believers with a message that was unknown to them.

The newness and uniqueness of the Christian message and the Jesus Christ event can in no way be changed, shortened or ignored.<sup>5</sup> In the discourse at the Areopagus the full power of the Hellenistic cultural world meets the original Christian message. It was, in fact, impossible that Paul's attempt would lead to immediate success.

For the systematic theologian Helmut Thielicke the Areopagus discourse is a typical example of the conduct of Christians towards other religions. According to Thielicke Luke first allows the Areopagus speaker to incorporate his message into the religious scheme of polytheism, he knows that the Athenians can understand the Christian message only in their own religious categories. But he is convinced that the *Exousia of Christ* will in time widen their understanding from within.<sup>6</sup> The knowledge and religious truth will prevail that he is the "only one."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Acts 17:22-34; cf. L. A. LOSIE, Paul's Speech on the Areopagus: A Model of Cross-cultural Evangelism. Acts 17:16-34, in: R. GALLAGHER/P. HERTIG (eds.), *Mission in Acts. Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, Maryknoll, NY 2004, 221-238. The author presents here a summary of contemporary research.

<sup>5</sup> More on the life context of evangelization, in: L. KILGER (ed.), *Die Neuheit des Lebens als Ziel und Frucht der Weltmission*, Missionsstudienwoche in Würzburg 21.-25. Mai 1956, Münster 1957.

<sup>6</sup> „Lukas läßt den Areopag-Redner seine Botschaft zunächst in das religiöse Schema des Polytheismus einbauen. Er tut das selbstverständlich nicht in der

The acceptance of the listeners goes so far that a scholar such as Martin Dibelius can say that the Areopagus discourse was a Hellenistic speech with a Christian conclusion.<sup>8</sup> For the German exegete M. Dibelius there is no room for doubt: “What we are facing is a Hellenistic discourse on the true knowledge of God.”<sup>9</sup> Here the effort of understanding the message from the perspective of the listener is addressed though it might be different and alien to us. The fundamental theological problem that lies therein should not be overlooked.

In this regard it is important to see the methodological problem, which will not be meaningless to missionaries in their dealings with other religions. In his talk the speaker encounters the religious context of the listener with an outstanding knowledge and mastery of the internal structures of thought and language, which allows a blending of the Christian message of salvation with the context and therefore the whole talk appears as an authentically hellenistic discourse. Up to our time Paul is a model of cultural sensitivity and creativity to all those who communicate biblical truth to non-Christians.<sup>10</sup>

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Meinung, als könnte seine Christusbotschaft in allgemeine religiöse und stoische Kategorien einbezogen werden. Sondern er tut das gleichsam in sokratischer Absicht. Er ist nämlich durch die Gewissheit bestimmt: Falls die Athener überhaupt – wenn auch nur mit den ihnen vorerst verfügbaren religiösen Kategorien – die Botschaft von Christus anzunehmen bereit sind, falls sie ihn zunächst in die Reihe ihrer Götter aufnehmen, dann wird die Exousia dieses Christus schon dieses Aufnahmeschema von innen her sprengen.“ In: H. THIELICKE, *Der Evangelische Glaube*, Band 3: *Theologie des Geistes. Der dritte Glaubensartikel. Die Manifestation des Heiligen Geistes im Wort, in der Kirche, in den Religionen und in den letzten Dingen*, Tübingen 1978, 467.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> „So ließ Lukas seinen Paulus an einer der vornehmsten Stätten Griechenlands so predigen, wie er meint, daß zu seiner Zeit den Griechen gepredigt werden sollte: mit philosophischen Beweisen, unter relativer Anerkennung des griechischen Polytheismus, mit Berufung auf die von griechischen Dichtern ausgesprochene Weisheit.“ In: M. DIBELIUS, *Paulus auf dem Areopag*, Heidelberg 1939, 56.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. M. DIBELIUS, Paul on the Areopagus, in: H. GREEVEN (ed.), *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, London 1956; cf. LOSIE, Paul’s Speech on the Areopagus, 221-238.

<sup>10</sup> “Paul’s ministry in Athens is a model of cultural sensitivity and creativity when presenting biblical truth to non-Christians ... At the same time, Paul refuses to syncretize his message or to compromise its theological integrity. He engages Athenian culture with the aim of its transformation,” D. FLEMMING, Contextualizing the Gospel in Athens: Paul’s Areopagus Address as a Paradigm for Missionary Communication: *Missiology* 30 (2002) 199-214.

## ***2. The Need to Have Centres for the Study of Language, Culture and Religion in the Second Christian Millennium***

### *2.1 Medieval Attempts*

The question of cultural and linguistic exchange became evident when European Christianity encountered Islam in its evangelization efforts in territories under Islamic control.

In the Middle Ages Catholic missionary monks, especially the Franciscans, had already got engaged in the study of Arabic and in the translation of Arabic texts. Dominicans made some sporadic attempts to train their missionaries. But continuous study centres were not created by those medieval missionaries of the mendicant orders in the 13<sup>th</sup> century who sent their missionaries to China and Persia.<sup>11</sup>

An important attempt for the organization of studies for missionaries was finally made by the Franciscan tertiary, Ramon Llull (Raymundus Lullus) who lived from 1232 to 1315 on his native island of Mallorca. Llull was very knowledgeable about the impact Islamic and Arabic culture and religion had in his county. For Llull, effective evangelization work in Islamic and Arabic countries needed first of all a sound study and knowledge of Arabic and Oriental languages and cultures. Although his formulations and arguments were not always correct, his intent and his point of view were legitimate and just. Llull fought for Christian evangelization work in Islamic countries so that European Christianity was better prepared to encounter Islam. To achieve these goals, Llull considered mastery of the language, culture and theology a basic condition. Therefore he himself started to study Oriental languages.

Shortly before his death, the Council of Vienne (1312) accepted his proposal and demanded the creation of two chairs for Oriental languages. Unfortunately, the decree of the Council of Vienne was not carried out. Llull wanted to open training centres and organise seminars for the preparation and formation of missionaries which would have dealt mainly with the study of Arabic, Islamic theology and Arabic culture.<sup>12</sup>

Even though the historical conditions prevented the promotion of his missionary vision, he founded the first missionary college in Miramar

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<sup>11</sup> B. ALTANER, Die fremdsprachliche Ausbildung der Dominikanermissionare während des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts: *ZMR* 23 (1933) 234-241.

<sup>12</sup> R. SUGRANYES DE FRANCH, *Raymond Lulle. Docteur des Missions*, Schöneck-Beckenried 1954; cf. B. ALTANER, Sprachstudien und Sprachkenntnisse im Dienste der Mission des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts: *ZMR* 21 (1931) 113-136.

(Mallorca) in 1276. Finally, Lull himself dedicated his life to missionary activity among Muslims in North Africa.<sup>13</sup> The attempts of the modern missionary movement prove that understanding the cultural-religious context of peoples is often only partially possible and not fully achieved.

## 2.2 Attempts since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century

Matteo Ricci SJ (1552-1610) is one of the most extraordinary figures in the field of this type of attempt, which he was able to put into practice in 16<sup>th</sup>-century China.<sup>14</sup> Ricci understood immediately that without the knowledge and study of the cultural background and religious traditions he would not be able to grasp the Chinese understanding of the Good News.

The tragic outcome of the great evangelization attempt in China is not exclusively found in the dispute about rites and the quarreling among competing missionary orders in China, but even more in the lack of understanding the Gospel preached to Chinese listeners despite the radical acculturation attempts the Jesuits made in China.

A Chinese scholar was quite puzzled about the intent of Fr. Ricci's stay in China:

Now he speaks our language fluently, writes our characters and knows how to use our behavior code. He is truly outstanding. In a noisy meeting with many people, where the arguments went back and forth, the discussions did not bear the slightest confusion for him. Of all the men I've known, there is no one to equal him ... But I do not understand why he ever came here. I have already met him three times and I still do not know what he wants to do here. I think that if his intention is to replace the teaching of the Duke of Tschou (Lao Tzu) and Kung-fu-tse with his own,

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<sup>13</sup> “Se entregó a la actividad misional, sobre todo en el Norte de África. De los escritos *Docteur des Missions* pueden extraerse toda una teología misional y un método misionero y resumirlos en tres puntos: predicar la fe, sobre todo, a los musulmanes; exponer la doctrina de la fe cristiana en libros y tratados y apuntalarla con pruebas comprensibles para los no cristianos; fundar colegios para la formación y preparación científica de los misioneros. Desarrolló un concepto de adecuada comunicación misionera respecto del Islam ...” H. RZEPKOWSKI, Lulio, Raimundo (Lull, Ramon), in: ID., *Diccionario de misionología*, Estella (Navarra) 1997, 334.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. G. ANDREOTTI, *Un gesuita in Cina 1552-1610. Matteo Ricci dall'India a Pekino*, Milano 2001.

this would be the height of stupidity. Certainly this cannot be the case.<sup>15</sup>

The Italian Jesuit Alessandro Valignano<sup>16</sup> (1537-1606),<sup>17</sup> one of the greatest strategists of the Catholic mission in Japan in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, refers in his letter of 1604 to a study centre in Nagasaki, where intensive studies of the history, culture and religion of Japan, especially Buddhism, were carried out.<sup>18</sup> In the modern missionary era, this centre was one of the first places to study the culture and religion of a people in the proper place that enabled the development of a thoroughly contextualized study approach.<sup>19</sup> For missionaries it was important to know the local context and to develop an effective evangelization approach built on such knowledge. This made it

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<sup>15</sup> J. GERNET, *Christus kam bis nach China. Eine erste Begegnung und ihr Scheitern*, Zürich-München 1984, 30. – “Ricci cerca di dimostrare che la dottrina cristiana non è una ‘nuova dottrina’, ma il vero compimento delle migliori tradizioni della Cina, che il cristianesimo deve essere ritenuto come la restaurazione del vero confucianesimo.” H. RZEPKOWSKI, Ricci, Matteo, in: ID., *Lessico di Missiologia*, Città del Vaticano 2000, 537. – It would be interesting to investigate the influence the Areopagus speech of Paul had on the speech of Matteo Ricci with Confucian Chinese intellectuals; W. KUBIN, The Importance of Misunderstanding: Reconstructing the Encounter of the East and West: *Monumenta Serica* 53 (2005) 249-260.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. A. LUCA, Alessandro Valignano. La missione come dialogo con i popoli e le culture, Bologna 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. J. F. SCHÜTTE, *Valignanos Missionsgrundsätze für Japan*, 2 vol., *Storia e Letteratura*, Roma 1951, 1958. – The website of the Jesuits gives a clear assessment of Valignano’s work: “occupò diverse cariche nella Compagnia fino all’estate del 1572, quando fu nominato visitatore delle missioni delle ‘Indie Orientali.’ Partì da Roma nel settembre 1573 per il Portogallo, da dove salpò per Goa nel marzo 1574. Visitò le missioni dei gesuiti in India, Malaysia, Molucche e Macao. Finalmente si prese cura personalmente dello sviluppo delle missioni in Cina e Giappone, dove insistette sul rispetto della cultura locale, rivoluzionando così i metodi di evangelizzazione. Però, si dovette aspettare fino al Concilio Vaticano II perché tutta la Chiesa si rendesse conto dell’importanza dell’inculturazione e perciò i suoi metodi dovettero in seguito essere abbandonati per altri che non diedero molti frutti nell’Asia. Morì in Macao il 20 gennaio 1606.” <http://www.gesuiti.it/storia/24/27/139/140/schedapersonaggio.asp>; H. RZEPKOWSKI wrote on Valignano: “Incoraggiò Matteo Ricci (1552-1619) a una trasposizione del messaggio cristiano in cinese,” in: Valignano, Alessandro, in: ID., *Lessico di Missiologia*, 634.

<sup>18</sup> J. J. SPAE, *Christian Corridors to Japan*, Tokyo 1965, 255; cf. also J. F. SCHÜTTE, *Introductio ad Historiam Societatis Jesu in Japonia 1549-1650*, Romae 1968, probably refers to the letter from 1601 and not 1604. Valignano left Japan already in 1603.

<sup>19</sup> SPAE, *Christian Corridors to Japan*, 255-257; A. BROU, Le clergé japonais au XVIIe siècle: *Revue d’Histoire des Missions* 9 (1932) 457-498.

possible to construct effective ways to communicate the Good News to the Japanese people.<sup>20</sup>

Valignano proved not only to be an effective organizer who faithfully followed his vision, but also a man full of love and understanding for the Japanese:

We have to treat them with great charity, with kindness and respect ... We should not enjoy their misfortunes, nor insult them or speak ill of them ... We must rather try to become their friends, especially with those in authority.<sup>21</sup>

### *2.3 Attempts in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*

In the missionary history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many plans and efforts to create learning centres for missionaries were made. All those plans and efforts aimed at achieving a better understanding and a deeper appreciation of the local cultures.

The enthusiastic apostle of Africa and founder of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Verona, Daniel Comboni (1831-1881), developed a mission plan for the African continent. He also envisioned universities with a missionary scope to inculturate Christianity in Africa.<sup>22</sup> The White Fathers, for some time, had opened training centres in North Africa, where their new recruits from Europe were introduced to missionary spirituality and the charisma of the Missionaries of Africa.

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<sup>20</sup> According to B. Mondin “la penetrazione cristiana in Giappone, iniziata da San Francesco Saverio, trovò nel gesuita italiano Alessandro Valignano il suo ‘ideologo’, il suo sapiente animatore e il suo efficace realizzatore.” “Si prospettarono subito come indispensabile i seguenti provvedimenti: adattamento integrale (nelle cose lecite) agli usi e costumi giapponesi; studio approfondito della lingua; formazione del clero locale. Queste tre decisioni costituiscono tre pietre miliari nella storia delle missioni e della metodologia missionaria.” In: B. MONDIN, *Storia della Teologia*, vol. 3, Bologna 1996, 412-414, quoted in: LUCA, *Alessandro Valignano*, 308.

<sup>21</sup> “I giapponesi sono così dotati che è sperabile che essi stessi, dopo una preparazione spirituale e di studio, si dimostrino capaci di divenire religiosi, chierici e vescovi, come nelle nazioni d’Europa.” Both citations are found in: LUCA, *Alessandro Valignano*, 188.

<sup>22</sup> D. COMBONI, *Piano per la Rigenerazione dell’Africa*, Torino 1864; ID., *Piano per la Rigenerazione dell’Africa*, ed. by Studium Combonianum, Roma 1970, Introduzione, 15-31, Testo, 39-55; F. BORNEMANN, *Combonis Afrika-Plan 1864: Verbum SVD* 12 (1971) 168-169. A recent work explains clearly the context, the influence and the development of the plan of Comboni, cf. Il Piano di Comboni, in: G. ROMANATO, *L’Africa Nera fra Cristianesimo e Islam. L’esperienza di Daniele Comboni (1831-1881)*, Milano 2003, 233-248; cf. L. FRANCESCHINI/J. TROY, *The Writings of St. Daniel Comboni, Correspondence and Reports (1850-1881) of the Founder of the Comboni Missionaries*, London 2005.

In Tunis and later in La Manouba they ran a school for the teaching of Arabic literature. In 1926, during their General Chapter, it was decided to establish a training centre for missionaries.

First, the “Foyer Arabe” was opened in Tunis. Ten years later a proper institute grew from this beginning. In addition to Arabic language studies, courses were held on the Qur’an and Islamic theology, literature and Arabic philosophy.<sup>23</sup>

Arnold Janssen (1837-1909), the founder of the Missionary Society of the Divine Word, can also be considered as one of the founders of Catholic Mission Studies. Since the beginning of his foundation in Steyl/Netherlands Janssen promoted the teaching of mission studies, especially a course called *missiographia* (Missionskunde) and missionary geography as part of the syllabus taught in the minor seminary and in the major seminary for missionary candidates.<sup>24</sup> Mission history received a lot of space in the SVD missionary training. Janssen insisted on the study of other cultures and languages as part of the curriculum in the SVD high school and seminary training. He sent gifted students for further academic studies, especially in those disciplines that served the improvement of missionary work.

For that reason Fr. Janssen sent the young SVD priests Friedrich Schwager (1876-1929) and Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954) for scientific studies to state universities. Schwager taught various courses with missiological content from 1889 to 1893, first in the SVD high school in Steyl and later in the SVD seminary St. Gabriel’s near Vienna. This became the foundation of the profound missiological competence he developed in his life. Janssen appointed the young priest for the teaching of missionary science (Missionskunde) and made him editor of the “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) magazine. Janssen supported Schwager’s work to convert the popular religious journal he had already founded himself in 1874 into a specific SVD missionary magazine with the new title “Steyleyler Missionsbote” (Steyleyler Missionary Messenger). In 1921 Fr. Schwager was made a lecturer for Mission Studies in the SVD formation house of St. Augustine near Bonn. In 1924 he was sent to attend the Missionary Congress of the United States. In the same year he was appointed Professor of Missiology at the SVD Seminary in Techny near Chicago, where he taught missiology for a year. Karl Müller has rightly called him a “pio-

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<sup>23</sup> H. RZEPKOWSKI, Die Bedeutung der Kultur- und Pastoralinstitute für die missionarische Verkündigung: *Verbum SVD* 13 (1972) 131-139.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. F. BORNEMANN, *Arnold Janssen: Founder of Three Missionary Congregations, 1837-1909: A Biography*, Rome 1975; J. ALT, *Journey of Faith. The Missionary Life of Arnold Janssen*, Nettetal 2002.

neer of Catholic Missiology.”<sup>25</sup> Wilhelm Schmidt shaped the education and training of future missionaries in the SVD seminary St. Gabriel with a profound ethnological and linguistic study program, which was, up to then, unknown in such institutions.

From his review “Anthropos – Journal of Ethnology and Linguistics,” which he founded in 1905 in St. Gabriel’s, “impulses for the development of linguistics and the history of civilizations and religions developed.”<sup>26</sup>

He dedicated himself to the recognition of primitive peoples, for their true and full human dignity, although this was denied by many ethnologists and experts ... of his time. Respect for others religions had in him an unknown and hardly mentioned pioneer. He helped to lay the foundations for a universal thought that has found in the mission theology of the Church at the Second Vatican Council its full confirmation in decrees on non-Christian religions.<sup>27</sup>

Rzepkowski affirms that “the re-evaluation of religions has grown up in missionary circles,” especially in the circles sensitized by professors such as Schmidt and his student Paul Schebesta (1887-1967).<sup>28</sup> For the German missiologist Horst Rzepkowski Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt was the foremost and most important promoter of this development.

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<sup>25</sup> K. MÜLLER, *Friedrich Schwager (1876-1929). Pionier katholischer Missionswissenschaft*, Nettetal 1984.

<sup>26</sup> “El abogó siempre por la plena personalidad de los pueblos primitivos, por su auténtica y plena dignidad humana, aunque muchos etnólogos y científicos de la cultura se la denegaban. La estima de las religiones extranjeras tuvo en él a su pionero, muchas veces desconocido y casi nunca nombrado. El contribuyó a poner el fundamento para un pensamiento universal que encontró su confirmación plena en la teología misionera de la Iglesia en el concilio Vaticano II en las exposiciones sobre las religiones no cristianas. La nueva valoración de las religiones ha surgido precisamente de los círculos misionales.” In: H. RZEPKOWSKI, Schmidt, Wilhelm, in: ID., *Diccionario de misionología*, 496.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Schebesta SVD studied besides philosophy and theology also linguistics, ethnology and history of religions under his moderator and professor Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt. Immediately after his ordination in 1911 he was sent as missionary to Mozambique. In 1916 together with his fellow German missionaries he was interned by the Portuguese. Schebesta could undertake various extensive field studies among pygmy tribes in the Congo and Malaysia. In his work he stressed the cultural richness of the indigenous peoples. As a professor of ethnology and linguistics he influenced the future missionary generation with his deep understanding and empathy for indigenous peoples. Cf. P. SCHEBESTA, *Portugals Konquistamission in Südost-Afrika*, St. Augustin 1966 (*Portugal – a Missão da Conquista no Sudeste de África*, Lisboa 2011); ID., *Les Pygmées du Congo Belges inconnus, les chevaliers des aventures*, Namur 1957.

And here Schmidt has to be mentioned as a great and important stimulator, who in the international journal “Anthropos,” founded by him, offered not only to the missionaries the opportunity to publish their ethnological and religious studies but also in effort and unremitting struggle ... pushed for a positive assessment of non-Christian religions. He did this by not only the condemning and denouncing of negative attitudes of devaluation and contempt of the non-Christian religions, but also through lovingly praising and highlighting positive values. If there has been a big change in attitude to non-Christian religions, some of the credit for this lies in the collaboration between research and mission organized by him.<sup>29</sup>

During the initial stage of the new Catholic Mission in mainland New Guinea, its founder, Fr. Eberhard Limbrock SVD (1859-1931), drew up a document to ensure that the missionaries would receive a sound preparation appropriate to their task.

In 1883 Limbrock as a deacon began to work in the SVD mission in Shandong, China, where he was ordained priest three years later. In 1896 Rome appointed him the first Prefect Apostolic of Wilhelmsland in mainland New Guinea, part of German New Guinea.<sup>30</sup> In 1897-1898

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<sup>29</sup> “Y aquí hay que nombrar a Schmidt como gran e importante impulsor, que en la revista internacional ‘Anthropos,’ fundada por él, no solo ofreció a los misioneros la posibilidad de publicar sus estudios etnológico-religiosos monográficos, sino que además, en esfuerzo y lucha incansables, en cientos de indicaciones, empujó a una valoración positiva de las religiones no cristianas. Lo hizo condenando y reprobando actitudes negativas de devaluación y desprecio, pero también alabando y destacando amorosamente valores positivos. Si se ha producido un cambio tan grande en el juicio sobre las religiones no cristianas, una parte del mérito de ello está en la colaboración entre investigación y misión, propiciada por él.” H. RZEPKOWSKI, Schmidt, Wilhelm, in: ID., *Diccionario de misionología*, 496; cf. L. LUZBETAK, Wilhelm Schmidt SVD 1868-1954. Priest, Linguist, Ethnologist, in: G. ANDERSON ET ALII (eds.), *Mission Legacies. Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement*, New York 1994, 475-485.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. P. STEFFEN, *Missionsbeginn in Neuguinea. Die Anfänge der Rheinischen, Neuendettelsauer und Steyler Missionsarbeit in Neuguinea*, Nettetal 1995; J. ALT, *Arnold Janssen SVD. Letters to New Guinea and Australia*, Nettetal 2001; P. STEFFEN, Die katholischen Missionen in Deutsch-Neuguinea, in: H. HIERY, *Die deutsche Südsee. Ein Handbuch*, Paderborn, 2002, 343-383; P. STEFFEN, From Mission to Church. Assessment and Perspectives of the Catholic Church in Mainland New Guinea after Its First Hundred Years, in: STEYLER MISSIONSWISSENSCHAFTLICHES INSTITUT, *Divine Word Missionaries in Papua New Guinea 1896-1996*, Nettetal 1996, 231-258; simultaneously in: *Verbum SVD* 37 (1996) 231-258.

and in 1909-1910 he took part in the third and fourth General Chapters of the Divine Word Missionaries in Steyl (Netherlands).

After the Third General Chapter Limbrock wrote a “Memorandum on the preparation for and care of the missions.”<sup>31</sup> In his memorandum he called for the establishment of a practical-pastoral journal for missionaries, written by missionaries and qualified priests. He justified his plan because of his conviction that the new missionaries lacked the basic knowledge of how to deal with Christians and non-Christians. He felt it was necessary, in fact, for them to adapt themselves to the customs and manner of life of the locality and the people. To do this, however, the older missionaries lacked literature. Limbrock also saw the missionaries as envoys who were able to gather information about the language, the customs, the religion, as well as geography, botany and zoology of foreign countries and peoples. Unlike the colonial officials and traders they lived in the midst of the common people. In announcing his message, the missionary must connect himself to the religious sentiments in the manner in which they manifest themselves in non-Christian forms. So some traditional festivals, customs and habits are not to be eradicated, but rather to be christianized. They should behave like Paul in Athens, who made reference to the “unknown God.”<sup>32</sup> In his suggestions Limbrock shows a lot of pastoral wisdom and missionary empathy. Although his ideas were not put into practice, they exerted a positive influence on the training of missionaries and inspired reflections on the need for a more intensive study of linguistics and ethnology by the Divine Word Missionaries.<sup>33</sup>

At a time when the missionary societies became increasingly aware of the need for missionary formation in Germany, the German government in Berlin promoted the founding of a Chair of Mission Studies at the Catholic Theological Faculty at the state University of Münster.

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<sup>31</sup> Generalate Archives SVD (GA), Rome. – The memorandum was published in the article by K. MÜLLER, Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der ZMR: *ZMR* 67 (1983) 137-144. See also: Memorandum von Eberhard Limbrock, in: K. J. RIVINIUS, *Im Dienst der Mission und der Wissenschaft. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Zeitschrift Anthropos*, Roma 2005, 109-116.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. F. BORNEMANN, *P. Wilhelm Schmidt SVD: 1868-1954*, Roma 1982, 30-31.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53; according to F. Bornemann, Limbrock also influenced the foundation of the “Anthropos” journal, which was started in 1906 by Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954). Pope Pius XI asked Schmidt to organize the ethnological section of the great missionary exhibition in Rome in 1925 with the aim of showing the cultures and religious traditions of the people that the Catholic missionaries encountered. Everything was displayed in the Lateran and this marked the beginning of a new missionary-ethnological museum, founded in 1927 under the influence of its first director, Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt.

In 1898 Limbrock had already proposed in his memorandum<sup>34</sup> to Fr. Arnold Janssen the foundation of a journal for missionary methodology (Missionsmethodik). Wilhelm Schmidt knew about this request when in 1906 he founded the *Anthropos*, the international magazine for ethnology and linguistics. Later Fr. Friedrich Schwager (1876-1929), a pioneer of Catholic missiology, also promoted the founding of a missiological journal.<sup>35</sup> Schwager, as editor, developed the popular and more devotional magazine “Kleiner Herz-Jesu-Bote” (Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart) into a mission magazine with the new name “Steyler Missionsbote” (Mission Messenger from Steyl), which reached out to a more educated readership. Schwager fought all his life for better training for missionaries. He was convinced that better intellectual training makes one “intellectually robust.”<sup>36</sup> K. Müller, Schwager’s biographer, writes: “By 1908 Schwager was contemplating a Catholic missiological review, somewhat like the Protestant *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* published by Gustav Warneck.”<sup>37</sup>

The birth of Catholic missiology received, among other things, an additional stimulus by the fact that the Protestant side had already begun to focus on missiological issues.<sup>38</sup>

Schmidlin began his academic career as a professor of Church History at the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Strasbourg. In 1907 he was transferred to the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Münster. From sum-

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Memorandum of Fr. Eberhard Limbrock, in: RIVINIUS, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> K. MÜLLER, Friedrich Schwager 1876-1929. Trailblazing for Catholic Missions and Mission Education, in: ANDERSON, op. cit., 102-109, here 102; cf. K. MÜLLER, The Legacy of Friedrich Schwager: *IBMR* 18 (1994) 125-130; ID., *Friedrich Schwager*, 31-37, 178; ID., *Josef Schmidlin (1876-1944), Papsthistoriker und Begründer der katholischen Missionswissenschaft*, Nettetal 1989, 67-88.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. MÜLLER, The Legacy of Friedrich Schwager, 125-130.

<sup>37</sup> MÜLLER, Friedrich Schwager, Trailblazing, 103. – When the first number of the *Catholic Missiological Journal* came off the press on March 1, 1891, Schwager, as member of the editing and managing committees, was listed among the coeditors. Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> E. NUNNENMACHER, Missiologia, in: *Dizionario di Missiologia*, Bologna 1992, 352. Nunnenmacher continues saying, “ad esempio con la prima cattedra a Edimburgo (1867) e poi con l’opera decisiva di Gustav Warneck in materia storica e dottrinale.” *Ibid.* – Rzepkowski explains the history in more detail: “In ambito tedesco, nel 1896 la disciplina venne proposta per la prima volta come campo autonomo di ricerca e d’insegnamento da Gustav Warneck (1834-1910), presso l’università di Halle. Egli sostenne la disciplina dal 1896 al 1908 e tenne nel 1897 la sua lezione introduttiva sul diritto di cittadinanza della missione nell’insieme della teologia. Egli produsse la prima esposizione generale missiologica della missione, con un chiaro orientamento verso la funzione dell’evangelizzazione come compito fondamentale della Chiesa.” ID., *Missiologia*, in: ID., *Lessico di Missiologia*, Roma 2000, 420.

mer semester of 1910 Schmidlin gave lectures in Catholic mission studies. The German missiologist E. Nunnenmacher SVD is convinced that

from the Catholic side some precursors should be mentioned (including Robert Streit, OMI and Friedrich Schwager, SVD) who declared the need for similar publications; they made several concrete proposals in this regard. But the real founder of Catholic missiology is without doubt Josef Schmidlin (1876-1944), who gave courses on missionary matters at the University of Münster and finally received the first chair of Catholic missiology. The year 1911 can be considered as a decisive date, with the creation of the International Institute of Missiological Research and the appearance of the first issue of a missiological journal that was published under the title “Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft” (journal for mission science).<sup>39</sup>

### **3. The Lack of an Introductory Course for New Missionaries**

In 1954, Fr. Albert Aufinger SVD (1901-1960), from 1927 a missionary in New Guinea, wrote a memorandum entitled “Impediments and damage to the missionary work in New Guinea since the war.”<sup>40</sup> In this memorandum he laments the discontinuity in the evangelizing approach in New Guinea. In fact, the new missionaries did not continue the method developed by the missionaries in New Guinea in the decades before the Second World War. At the end of his document Aufinger lamented the lack of a specific course for the introduction of new missionaries, which he considered as a handicap for the mission:

No newcomer should be dispensed from this introductory course. The Regional Superior or a very experienced confrere should conduct this course, with about three hours a day of introduction and one hour of mutual exchange of views on the following themes: General information about the country and people – the government (composition and work) – our opinion on particular officials – the other mis-

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<sup>39</sup> NUNNENMACHER, op. cit., 352; among the best known works of Schmidlin on Catholic missiology are: *Catholic Mission Theory*, Techny, Ill., 1931; *Catholic Mission History*, Techny, Ill., 1933; *Katholische Missionsgeschichte*, Steyl 1924; *Einführung in die Missionswissenschaft*, Münster 1925; *Katholische Missionslehre im Grundriss*, Münster 1919; cf. MÜLLER, *Josef Schmidlin*.

<sup>40</sup> A. AUFINGER, Memorandum: Hemmnisse und Schäden des Missionsbetriebes in Neuguinea seit dem Kriege, in: GA; cf. P. STEFFEN, Aufinger, Albert SVD (1901-1960): *BBKL* 35 (2014) 38-42.

sionary societies (first the Catholic, then the most important non-Catholic ones) and their methods – learning Pidgin-English (improvement of English where necessary). Main contents of the Ethnology and Anthropology of the local people (the main tribes, special customs and traditions: youth initiation, engagement, marriage, death, and burial) – our behavior towards the natives – the most important elements of the mission method – churches and confessional – home visits, etc. (pastoral) – the main diseases and their treatment – who and what do I need for a bush tour and how the tour is done – cooking, bread baking – practical exercises in catechesis before natives, Bible lessons, singing – etc.<sup>41</sup>

According to Fr. Aufinger such orientation courses should last at least six weeks, preferably three months. Aufinger was convinced of the need to have well-organized training courses for new missionaries. Only with such courses would the mission get effective pastors (Seelsorger) and bush missionaries. The New Guinea missionary Albert Aufinger produced a document before the Second Vatican Council that describes the shortcomings of introduction and training of missionaries and the vision to overcome the lack of training with orientation courses conducted in mission countries.

Everyone who has had intercultural missionary experience will well understand what Aufinger's memorandum talks about since he too suffered from similar deficiencies in his own pastoral and missionary work among people with different cultural behavior patterns and with a different mentality. Encountering different people is definitely the most significant experience in the life of a missionary. Missionary formation

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<sup>41</sup> „Von diesem Einführungskurs dürfte kein Neuling dispensiert werden. Dieser Kurs müsste vom P. Regional oder von einem sehr erfahrenen Mitbruder gehalten, täglich etwa drei Stunden der Einführung und eine der gegenseitigen Aussprache umschließen, über folgende Themata: Allgemeines über Land und Leute – die Regierung (ihre Zusammensetzung und Arbeiten) – unsere Stellungnahme zu den Offizialen – die anderen Missionsgesellschaften (zunächst die katholischen, dann auch die wichtigsten akatholischen) und deren Methoden – Erlernung des Pijin-Englisch (Verbesserung des Englischen, wo nötig). Das Wichtigste aus der Ethnologie und Anthropologie der Kanaken (die wichtigsten Volksstämme, besondere Sitten und Gebräuche: Jugendweihe, Verlobung, Hochzeit, Tod und Begräbnis) – unser Verhalten den Eingeborenen gegenüber – das Wichtigste aus der Missionsmethode – Kirchen- und Beichtpraxis – Hausbesuche etc. (Pastoral) – die wichtigsten Krankheiten und deren Behandlung – Wen und was brauche Ich für eine Buschtour und wie wird sie gemacht? – Kochen, Brotbacken – praktische Übung vor Eingeborenen in Katechese, Bibelunterricht, Gesang – etc.“ Cf. AUFINGER, Memorandum.

in the country where the missionary carries out his missionary activity will always be of irreplaceable importance.

#### ***4. The Need to Create Places of Contextual Mission Studies***

David Bosch suggests with Martin Hengel “that the history and theology of early Christianity are, first of all, ‘mission history’ and ‘mission theology’.” Heinrich Kasting even states: “Mission was, in the early stages, more than a mere function, it was a fundamental expression of the early life of the church. The beginnings of a missionary theology are therefore also the beginning of Christian theology as such.”<sup>42</sup> Living the evangelizing mission of the Church therefore always needed theological reflection which explains this mission activity. As we have seen in our brief historical *excursus*, in every period of church history theologians and missionaries arose who were able to promote the cultural, linguistic and religious studies of the peoples the Church had come across. Out of this encounter between the various cultures and the Christian experience a theology of mission was developed.

The Alsatian church historian Joseph Schmidlin (1876-1944), a priest of the Diocese of Strasbourg, in 1911 founded the “International Institute for Missiological Studies”<sup>43</sup> at the University of Münster and soon after initiated the “*Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*,” the official organ of the missiological institute and the very first Catholic missiological journal.<sup>44</sup>

In 1919 the second chair of mission studies was erected at the Ate-neo Urbano di Propaganda Fide in Rome by Pope Benedict XV. Fr. Giovanni Battista Tragella (1885-1968) from the Pontifical Society of Foreign Missions at Milan became the first Professor of Missiology, followed in 1922 by Fr. Laurenz Kilger OSB (1890-1964), and in 1925 by Fr. Cyril Rudolf Jarre OFM (1878-1952), in 1928 by Fr. Vitalis Lange

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in D. BOSCH, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll, NY 1991, 15-16. – Martin Kähler said in 1908 that “mission is the mother of theology.” *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>43</sup> Internationales Institut für missionswissenschaftliche Forschungen e. V. (IIMF); Schmidlin, the founder of Catholic missiology, knew how to combine organizational skills with the ability to search for possibilities to found this university discipline. At the same time he worked without preserving its resources for the mission of the Church. In the winter of 1913-14, and in May 1930 he made study trips to the missions in China and New Guinea. This shows his interest not only for archival sources, but also for the concrete missionary life. Cf. MÜLLER, *Josef Schmidlin*.

<sup>44</sup> J. SCHMIDLIN, *Wie unsere Missionswissenschaft entstand. Zu ihrem 20jährigen Bestand: ZMR 21 (1931) 1-18.*

OFM (1880-1934), and then in 1930 by Fr. Ugo Bertini (1887-1972), a priest of the Diocese of Lucca.<sup>45</sup> Tragella and Bertini were Italians, Kilger, Jarre and Lange were Germans. Only the two Franciscans Jarre and Lange had mission experience in China. The increasing academic missionary movement led to the foundation of several chairs of missiology in Europe and North America, e.g. in Munich and Würzburg in Germany, Nijmegen in the Netherlands, Fribourg in Switzerland, Louvain in Belgium, Burgos in Spain and Ottawa in Canada. Since 1927 the Flemish Jesuit Fr. Theodor Monnens (1891-1956) from the Catholic University of Louvain gave a missiological course at the Gregorian University in Rome, where in 1932 the first Faculty of Missiology was founded.<sup>46</sup>

In the same year an Institute for Mission Studies was founded at the Ateneo Urbano di Propaganda Fide.<sup>47</sup> While these chairs of mission studies with their academic studies contributed to the academic formation of missionaries, the mission seminaries of the religious orders and mission societies engaged in missionary work were doing their best to prepare their own future missionaries. Nevertheless, the Western missionary training remained too generic and did not answer the questions which arose in the concrete missionary situation in various cultural and socio-economic contexts. Therefore, it is not surprising that this system did not satisfy the expectations and needs of missionaries who worked in the field. The archives of the various Generalates of missionary congregations are full of visitation reports which mention the deficiencies in missionary training and the lack of sufficient ongoing formation for missionaries in their respective missions. All the people responsible for the training of missionaries, e.g. the superiors, professors, church leaders and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples gradually realized the lack of adequate training in the context of the concrete missionary situation. The lack of appropriate institu-

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. P. STEFFEN, Jarre, Cyrillus Rudolf OFM, Bischof (1878-1952): *BBKL* 34 (2013) 603-620; ID., Kilger, Laurenz Ferdinand OSB (1890-1964): *BBKL* 34 (2013) 673-683; ID., Lange, Hermann Vitalis OFM (1880-1934): *BBKL* 34 (2013) 787-790; ID., Bertini, Ugo (1887-1972): *BBKL* 34 (2013) 87-92.

<sup>46</sup> J. LOPEZ-GAY, Historia de la Facultad de Misionología, in: M. DHAVAMONY, *Prospettive di missiologia, oggi*, Documenta missionalia – 16, Roma 1982, 9-32.

<sup>47</sup> P. Michael Schulien SVD (1888-1968) taught “Historia comparata religionum et Ethnologia” (1932-1933), “Lingue africane” (1932-1933) and the Austrian diocesan priest Albert Drexel “Lingue africane” (1933-1936); cf. P. ROHRBACHER, Albert Drexel (18.6.1889-9.3.1977) Priester, Sprachwissenschaftler und Völkerkundler – Eine gesamtbiografische Würdigung: *Anthropos* 105 (2010) 555-566.

tions to bridge the gap between theory and practice became more and more obvious.<sup>48</sup>

### ***5. On the Way towards Pastoral Institutes***

The call to found catechetical centres influenced also the call to found cultural and pastoral institutes.<sup>49</sup> Already in 1935, the decree *Provido sane Consilio*<sup>50</sup> of the *Congregazione del Concilio* [nowadays called the Congregation for the Clergy], asked for the creation of “catechetical offices,” which would organize the entire catechetical work of the diocese. This idea was further developed during the International Catechetical Congress of 1950 in Rome, called by Pope Pius XII (1876-/1939-/1958).<sup>51</sup>

After this document of 1935, which explicitly suggested conferences and refresher courses, a conference in 1950 went a step further and called for the establishment of national or regional catechetical centres.<sup>52</sup> The Roman Congress of 1950 interprets this question in a larger and more positive context. The task of the catechetical centres was described as “to organize, supervise, promote, and improve the whole organization of catechetics and religious instruction.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Writing to his superior general, an SVD missionary describes the shortcomings and mistakes committed by him and his fellow missionaries in China. He complains of the inadequacy of the study of the Chinese language, especially because of the shortage of time, strength and money, all of which, if properly explored, would have made the study of language more effective. According to this witness, the new missionaries did not have the opportunity to preach in their first three years in the mission. On the one hand, in fact, they did not know enough about the language and on the other hand they did not have the opportunity to practice and to make enough use of the language. Cf. Letter from Ichowfu, October 10, 1935 from Fr. Josef Kaufhold to the superior general SVD, in: GA. – Another missionary wrote from Flores, Indonesia in 1956 to the SVD Generalate criticizing the lack of time available to anthropological research that could ensure the future generation the cultural heritage of the many mountain tribes. Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. RZEPKOWSKI, Die Bedeutung der Kultur- und Pastoralinstitute, 131-139, esp. 134.

<sup>50</sup> 12.1.1935; AAS 27 (1935) 145-152; cf. H. RZEPKOWSKI, Pastoral, Istituti, in: ID., *Lessico di Missiologia*, 489.

<sup>51</sup> *Acta congressus catechist. internat. MCML*, Città del Vaticano 1953; A. KNAUBER, Bericht über den Kongreß: *Katechetische Blätter* 76 (1951) 49-54.

<sup>52</sup> J. M. GOPU, Centres of Catechetical Apostolate, in: J. HOFINGER/C. HOWARD (eds.), *Teaching All Nations*, Freiburg-London 1961, 330-331.

<sup>53</sup> *Acta congressus*, 171; see also GOPU, op. cit., 331.

Catechetics in general and religious culture were seen as the scope of such institutes. The International Mission-catechetical Congress, held in Eichstätt in 1960, developed these thoughts further.<sup>54</sup> The Archbishop of Hyderabad, Mark Gopu, strove during this congress for the establishment of catechetical centres.

The national and regional centres had to complement each other through their research work. The regional institutes with similar themes had to collaborate globally and have sufficient exchange among themselves.<sup>55</sup> This international conference, held shortly before the Second Vatican Council, was never truly appreciated for the contribution it had made. What *Ad Gentes* in numbers 31 and 34 expressed, had been, in large part, already discussed during the congress of Eichstätt. This is true in particular with regard to the national and regional institutes for the renewal of the announcement of the faith in mission countries.

On the eve of the Second Vatican Council, the Tyrolian Jesuit Fr. Johannes Hofinger, the great promoter of catechetical renewal in mission countries, published his manifesto of missionary renewal, entitled "The unity of the Church from the perspective of the mission."<sup>56</sup>

The fact that the Magisterium of the Church tends to propose the same faith for everyone could lead to consider the unity of faith as adherence to a monotonous and stereotyped faith practice, where believers with their particular ritual, ethnic and personal beliefs would not find an appropriate place. These details cannot be left out in the proclamation of faith. Ignoring them would be a fatal mistake, which would have devastating consequences, especially in mission areas. It is true that the same Good News is proclaimed to all nations, and all will accept this

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<sup>54</sup> J. HOFINGER (ed.), *Katechetik heute. Grundsätze und Anregungen zur Erneuerung der Katechese in Mission und Heimat*. Referate und Ereignisse der internationalen Studienwoche über Missionskatechese in Eichstätt, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1961; GREGORIUS OFM Cap, Eine kritische Betrachtung der internationalen Studienwoche über Missionskatechese: *NZM* 16 (1960) 300-303; cf. International Study Week on Mission Catechetics Eichstaett, 21-28 July 1960: *AFER* 2 (1960) 295-301; K. MÜLLER, Die missionskatechetische Studienwoche in Eichstätt: *ZMR* 44 (1960) 64-65; J. SPAE, Catechetics at Eichstaett: *Japan Missionary Bulletin* 14 (1960) 506-511; L. WIEDENMANN, International Study Week on Catechetics (Eichstaett): *Asia* 12 (1960) 812-823; M. C. EZEOKOLI, *Missionary Catechesis. 1. A Turning Point: J. Hofinger's Writings in China and in Philippines (1940-1960). 2. J. Hofinger and the International Study Weeks on Mission Catechetics (1960-1967)*, Roma 1985; cf. M. WARREN (ed.), *Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics*, Winona, MN, 1983. The first part contains the documentation and interpretation of the "International Catechetical Study Weeks," 23-109.

<sup>55</sup> GOPU, op. cit., 329-330.

<sup>56</sup> J. HOFINGER, Die Einheit der Kirche von der Mission her gesehen: *Katechetische Blätter* 86 (1961) 451-460.

Good News in its entirety and in a spirit of faith. It is God's call, which reaches out to all people and invites all people to give a free answer to God's call. And yet, this Good News can be welcomed by all in their own way, which should be announced to all people with an empathetic adaptation to the cultural characteristics of the receivers. It is similar to a German or African artist who will express their image of Christ in a different way, while immersing themselves in the contemplation of the same Gospel, so even people of different races and cultures have a sacred right, and even more the task of receiving and expressing the Good News of Christ in their own way.<sup>57</sup> At the end of his article Hofinger expresses the desire that the Council treat these issues seriously and find a solution consistent with the needs of today. It requires a thorough study of the missionary situation; a work that still needs to be done in many cases: a work which cannot be done by the missionary who is busy with his pastoral and missionary work. To do this work specialized institutes are needed. In fact, according to J. Hofinger there was no more urgent need presented during the study weeks of Nijmegen and Eichstätt than to have a highly developed Pastoral Institute for the mission.<sup>58</sup>

In international conferences organized by Hofinger the bishops from the so-called mission countries, the periphery of the Catholic Church, were able to overcome their state of being at the margins of the Church by developing a new vision of the mission of the Church, suggesting appropriate approaches to the evangelizing mission of the Church by renewing their pastoral and catechetical methods. So the Congresses of Hofinger paved the way for the needed contextualization of the pastoral ministry and catechetics. This enabled them to proclaim the Good News to the peoples in accordance with the cultural characteristics and spiritual riches of the peoples they served. Hofinger knew that the so-called mission countries, or better, the new local Churches outside the Western world, were in need of pastoral institutes which would help them to carry out the needed process of adaptation and contextualization as the first step towards a healthy inculturation of the Christian message into the cultures and mentalities of non-Western societies and peoples.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 453. – „Zusammenfassend kann man sagen, die Einheit christlichen Kultes folge ganz ähnlichen Gesetzen wie die recht verstandene Einheit christlichen Glaubens. So wie es in der Glaubensverkündigung nicht genügt, die christliche Lehre überall mit denselben stereotypen Formeln westlicher Ausprägung zu verkünden, so genügt es wohl auch im Gottesdienst nicht, ihn überall in genau derselben und darum tatsächlich westlichen Gestaltung zu feiern.“ Ibid., 459.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 460.

## ***6. Horst Rzepkowski's Vision on the Need and Significance of Cultural and Pastoral Institutes***

The German missiologist Horst Rzepkowski was the first theologian who reflected on the mission and significance of pastoral and cultural institutes. In his article "The Importance of Cultural and Pastoral Institutes for Missionary Proclamation," published in 1972, he wrote: "When we speak about pastoral and cultural institutes, we are referring here not to the school or university institutions of the mission, but to special foundations that deal with pastoral issues, local cultures and the transmission of the Christian message."<sup>59</sup>

For him

the institutes are meant for planning and research work with the goal of becoming a local Church. They should offer initiatives for liturgical practice, scientifically study the social structures of the peoples and ethnic groups so that an appropriate pastoral approach can be developed. Therein lies the paramount importance of pastoral and cultural institutes.<sup>60</sup>

What is amazing is that Rzepkowski already saw the need to link those institutes with a university or other international scientific institution. It has to be said that the possibility to integrate the institutes into a Catholic University did not exist in the 1960s and 1970s. The Catholic Universities in Kenya and Papua New Guinea were founded years after the pastoral institutes:

A real knowledge of and anchoring in the local culture must be guaranteed, but also links with international developments must be assured. Close contact with international research needs to be striven for. This last goal can be achieved by being associated with a university or an international scientific institute.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> RZEPKOWSKI, *Die Bedeutung der Kultur- und Pastoralinstitute*, 133.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 137. – "For this reason it is necessary that the members of these institutes be composed of expatriate and local personnel and be qualified experts in their fields." *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* – "This presupposes that top experts can be consulted for particular research. Apart from the composition of the team and the make-up of the institute, the aim of internationalization can be most easily attained through publications. Beside an informative publication for the pastoral and catechetical fields, a more scientific publication is necessary, either a magazine or a series of studies. By means of such publications one gains contact with other scientific fields and will be recognized and assessed internationally." *Ibid.*, 139.

For Rzepkowski the pastoral and cultural institutes are required because, according to the mission decree, only missionary activity that is adapted to the situation can be considered real evangelization. Furthermore, their specific function is to complete the stage of being a mission church and to assist in founding a mature local church.<sup>62</sup>

The further historical development shows how farsighted Rzepkowski's thoughts have been.

### ***7. The Guidelines of the Supreme Magisterium of Vatican II***

The missionary encyclical *Princeps Pastorum* (1959) of Pope John XXIII (1881-/1958-/1963)<sup>63</sup> advocated the establishment of study centres with a direct missionary orientation, where foreign and local priests could use their knowledge and experience for the good of the nation from which they came or to which they were sent.<sup>64</sup> The encyclical considered as a distinctive feature of these centres the importance of publications and the dissemination of Christian literature in such a way that the Church can, through these centres, have an influence on public opinion. The encyclical also recognized and highlighted collaboration among local and foreign clergy as an essential task of pastoral and cultural institutes.<sup>65</sup>

In the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad Gentes* the idea to have “centres for pastoral care, catechetics, liturgy and publications”<sup>66</sup> is fully developed. Especially in numbers 31 and 34 thoughts and suggestions related to such centres are treated in detail.<sup>67</sup> For economic and practical reasons interregional collaboration is suggested, so that forces and means can be shared.<sup>68</sup>

In number 33 a strong recommendation is made:

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> AAS 51 (1959) 833-864.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. V. GRACIAS, Modern Catechetical Renewal and the Missions, in: HOFINGER (ed.), *Katechetik heute*, 23.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Herder Korrespondenz* 14 (1959/60) 170-180. – Rzepkowski writes: “La collaborazione tra clero indigeno e clero straniero viene sottolineata come un compito essenziale degli istituti culturali e pastorali.” ID., *Pastorali, Istituti*, 489.

<sup>66</sup> AG 3; cf. H. BETTSCHIEDER, The Contribution of the Society of the Divine Word to the Elaboration of Ad Gentes: *Verbum SVD* 46 (2005) 371-391.

<sup>67</sup> AG 31 and 34, AAS 58 (1966) 981-983.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. AG 31.

The institutes engaged in missionary activity in the same territory should find ways and means of coordinating their work. Therefore, it will be very useful to have conferences of Religious men and unions of Religious women, in which institutes of the same country or region should take part. These conferences should ask what things can be done by combined efforts, and they should be in close touch with the episcopal conferences.

Number 34 is a kind of basic rule for these institutes and it is worthwhile quoting it at length:

Since the right and methodical exercise of missionary activity requires that those who labour for the Gospel should be scientifically prepared for their task, and especially for dialogue with non-Christian religions and cultures, and also that they should be effectively assisted in the carrying out of this task, it is desired that, for the sake of the missions, there should be fraternal and generous collaboration on the part of scientific institutes which specialize in missiology and in other arts and disciplines useful for the missions, such as ethnology and linguistics, the history and science of religions, sociology, pastoral skills and the like.

In number 26 of the same Decree thoughts and requests often made by missionaries are reflected. The preparation of missionaries requires a thorough scientific training

that they may have a general knowledge of the peoples, cultures, and religions; not only a knowledge that looks to the past, but one that considers the present time. For anyone who is going to encounter another people should have a great esteem for their patrimony and their language and their customs. It is very necessary for the future missionary to devote himself to missiological studies ...

Number 26 makes clear that missionary formation

should be completed in the lands to which they are sent, so that the missionaries may have a more thorough knowledge of the history, social structures, and customs of the people; that they may have an insight into their moral order and their religious precepts, and into the secret notions which, according to their sacred tradition, they have formed concerning God, the world and man. Furthermore, they would be properly introduced into special pastoral problems.

Much emphasis is given to the training of specialists in scientific mission institutes and to other scientific fields for the support of mis-

sionary work. We must not forget that the promotion of these ideas continued even after the closure of the Second Vatican Council as this study is going to prove. We can already note that here the Council “clearly demanded that missionaries, through exposure and study in the countries of their mission, should gain deeper knowledge of the life of the people so that they might be better equipped for their pastoral work.”<sup>69</sup> Based on the concrete suggestions from Vatican II documents (SC 44, CD 17, OT 22, AG 31) many cultural and pastoral institutes were founded in the post-conciliar period in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania.

According to anthropologist Hermann Janssen they can be divided into three basic types:

- Biblical pastoral, catechetical and liturgical institutes;
- Institutes of the science of religions or of pastoral anthropology;
- Centres of interreligious dialogue.<sup>70</sup>

Though the Pontifical Council for Culture naturally focuses on the cultural aspect of such study centres, even the separation lines between cultural and pastoral centres are often very difficult to make out. And in many cases they might be overlapping and complementary to each other and part of the same institute, as is the case in the Melanesian Institute. “These [cultural] centres, institutes, training houses and other institutions of the Church are involved at the local or regional level in the dialogue between faith and culture and the promotion of Christian culture.” The Pontifical Council for Culture describes these centres as follows:

Catholic Cultural Centres are public forums, meeting places for reflection, study and information, exchange of ideas and deepening of faith and culture. They offer to Catholics, as to every person interested in a cultural meeting, opportunities for contact and fruitful exchange on the world and history, religion and art, culture and science, and help to discern

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<sup>69</sup> JANSSEN, *Vision and Foundation of the Melanesian Institute*, 30.

<sup>70</sup> RZEPKOWSKI, *Pastorali, Istituti*, 488: “Si possono menzionare i seguenti istituti: *East Asian Pastoral Institute* (Manila 1953, riorganizzato nel 1965); *National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre* (Bangalore 1967); *AMECEA Pastoral Institute* (Eldoret, Kenia aperto nel 1968 a Gaba, Uganda); *Lumko Missiological Institute* (Sudafrica 1968); *Istituto Pastorale del CELAM* (Medellin 1974); *Oriens Institute for Religious Research* (Tokyo 1963); *Melanesian Institute for Pastoral and Socio-Economic Service* (Goroka 1968); *Institute of Indian Culture* (Bombay); *Centre d'études ethnologiques* (Bandundu, Congo); *Snehasadan* (Pune), *Aikiya Alayam* (Chennai), *Tulana* (Kelaniya, Sri Lanka); *Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* (Nagoya).”

the values that can illuminate existence and give meaning to life (cf. *Ecclesia in Africa*, 103).<sup>71</sup>

What can be concluded is that the Pontifical Council for Culture sees these centres as important frontiers, which have the mission “to inculturate the Gospel and evangelize the cultures, in order to overcome the split between faith and culture, between the Gospel and daily life ...”<sup>72</sup>

### ***8. Post-conciliar Documents and the New Code of Canon Law of 1983***

The “General Catechetical Directory” of 1971, for instance, declares in number 109 that:

Higher institutes for training in pastoral catechetics should be promoted or founded, so that catechists capable of directing catechesis at the diocesan level, or within the area of activities to which religious congregations are dedicated, may be prepared. These higher institutes can be national or even international.

Also the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979) by John Paul II emphasizes the organization of appropriate centres and institutes for accurate formation of catechists which would have a great importance in the Church (CT 71).

Their preparation calls on us to organize special centres and institutes, which are to be given assiduous attention by the Bishops.<sup>73</sup>

This post-conciliar promotion is more specifically directed towards the formation of catechists, but it should not be forgotten that the catechesis and the formation of catechists is to be done in a renewed overall pastoral plan for evangelization.

In the view of the new challenges posed for today’s catechesis, it is indeed important to situate catechesis within the

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<sup>71</sup> <http://www.cultura.va/content/cultura/en/strumenti/ccc.html> (31-01-2014)

<sup>72</sup> “In order to inculturate the Gospel and evangelize the cultures, in order to overcome the split between faith and culture, between the Gospel and daily life, and to proclaim the Message in a time of indifference and practical atheism today, we require, in addition to the teachings of the Magisterium of the Pastors, a capillary action, articulated at the local level, and the promotion of local cultural traditions responding to the needs and expectations of a given community. Hence the importance of the ‘frontiers’ which are the Catholic cultural centres.” Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> RZEPKOWSKI, *Pastorali, Istituti*, 489.

context of a pastoral project that is open, courageous and is viewed from the perspective of evangelization and in dialogue with culture and life.<sup>74</sup>

The new Canon Law of 1983 promotes exactly the adaptation and openness of the Church that Fr. Hofinger expressed in his article of 1961. The preaching of the gospel to non-Christian peoples is required to be done “with the procedure suited to their talent and culture,” so that they have full access to the Gospel (cf. CIC, can. 787 § 1).<sup>75</sup>

### ***9. The Latest Recommendation from the Papal Magisterium***

The results of two synods on Africa held in Rome in 1994 and in 2009 were reflected on by the respective popes. Pope John Paul II wrote the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (EA) in 1995 and Pope Benedict XVI the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae munus* in 2011. It is important to notice that EA 62 refers to the difficult and delicate task of inculturation and therefore the importance of cultural study centres is recognised. Pope John Paul II states:

Inculturation is a movement towards full evangelization ... that ... includes the whole life of the Church and the whole process of evangelization. It includes theology, liturgy, the Church's life and structures. All this underlines the need for research in the field of African cultures in all their complexity. Precisely for this reason the Synod invited Pastors “to exploit to the maximum the numerous possibilities which the Church's present discipline provides in this matter” (EA 62).

Paragraph 64 has a section that is a clear support for the need and task of pastoral and cultural centres, which are actually doing what the Pope is recommending.

The Synod expressed the hope that the Episcopal Conferences, in cooperation with Universities and Catholic Institutes, would set up study commissions, especially for matters concerning marriage, the veneration of ancestors,

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<sup>74</sup> E. ALBERICH/J. VALLABARAJ, *Communicating a Faith that Transforms*, Bangalore 2004, 33. – “We do this in order to avoid isolating catechesis from the pastoral action as a whole, and to underline the urgency of a holistic programmed action at the service of a well-conceived pastoral plan or project. Only in this manner can catechesis offer a valid contribution to the work of evangelization.”

<sup>75</sup> Cf. D. SALACHAS, *Fede e cultura nell'azione missionaria della Chiesa secondo le norme del diritto canonico: Euntes Docete* 51 (1998) 107-117, here 108.

and the spirit world, in order to examine in depth all the cultural aspects of problems from the theological, sacramental, liturgical and canonical points of view (EA 64).<sup>76</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI refers to what his predecessor Pope John Paul II had said in *Ecclesia in Africa* No. 103 on the role of Higher Institutes. For him having “Catholic institutions of higher education is as pertinent as ever” (AM 136). He underlined even more the importance of such institutes by quoting from *Ecclesia in Africa* (103) his predecessor’s most significant statement on Catholic cultural centres:

Catholic cultural centres offer to the Church the possibility of presence and action in the field of cultural exchange. They constitute in effect public forums which allow the Church to make widely known, in creative dialogue, Christian convictions about man, woman, family, work, economy, society, politics, international life, the environment. Thus they are places of listening, respect and tolerance (AM 136, cf. EA 103).<sup>77</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Summarizing the proposals of *Ad Gentes* it can be said that the missionary activity of the Church needs the scientific preparation of personnel, so that especially the dialogue with non-Christian religions and cultures can be carried out and this can happen by applying specific missiological, sociological, ecumenical, ethnological, linguistic and pastoral knowledge. Cultural and pastoral institutes are seen as essential means in the process of becoming an authentic local Church. Such institutes can make use of the experience and knowledge of those serving the evangelizing mission of the church. They can serve as bridge builders between local and expatriate Church workers and missionaries.

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<sup>76</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa: AAS* 88 (1996) 40-41.

<sup>77</sup> “The Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes in Africa have a prominent role to play in the proclamation of the salvific Word of God. They are a sign of the growth of the Church insofar as their research integrates the truths and experiences of the faith and helps to internalize them. They serve the Church by providing trained personnel, by studying important theological and social questions for the benefit of the Church, by developing an African theology, by promoting the work of inculturation, by publishing books and publicizing Catholic truth, by undertaking assignments given by the bishops and by contributing to the scientific study of cultures” Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*, No. 136; cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa: AAS* 88 (1996) 62-63.

The Missionary Decree *Ad Gentes* directed and inspired the worldwide renewal of missionary pastoral activities with fundamental consequences for the young churches of Africa, Asia and Oceania. At the same time *Ad Gentes* summarized historical experience that could be of help in the concrete undertakings of local Churches.

Fr. John Schütte SVD (1913-1971), who led the commission “De Missionibus” to a successful conclusion, had with this commission a significant influence on the Conciliar Decree *Ad Gentes*.<sup>78</sup>

In the commentary on *Ad Gentes*, which he published in 1967, he shared his ideas on how to put the missionary vision of Vatican II into praxis in the post-conciliar period. Those observations are valid even today, nearly half a century after the closure of the Council. The bishops of the traditionally Catholic countries have – in many cases – “discovered” the true nature of mission, which is not conducted on the margins of the Church and entrusted exclusively to missionary institutes, but which is the essential task of the whole Church and, therefore, their responsibility. The Church of the future will surely be a missionary Church, fully aware of her missionary commitment and missionary orientation. But at the same time she will be perfectly aware that Vatican II gave her only the first impulse for her mission. The Council has shown new ways and perspectives, new ways of thinking about the mission, but this is only a beginning: the realization of this vision has to be put into practice by the generations after the Council.<sup>79</sup>

The purpose of this chapter was to show the reasons which have led local Churches and missionary societies to launch new cultural and pastoral institutes with a missionary perspective in Africa, Asia, Oceania and Latin America.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Fr. John Schütte, the superior general of the SVD missionaries, presented three times a proposal to the Council Fathers: first the “*Relatio super schema decreti de activitate missionari ecclesiali*” on October 7, 1965, then “*relatio generalis*” on November 10, 1965; and finally the third and final edition of the “*relatio generalis*” on November 30, 1965. Cf. F. BORNEMANN, *In Memoriam: Fr. John Schuette. 6<sup>th</sup> Superior General SVD*. Rome 1972; H. BETTSCHIEDER, *The Legacy of John Schütte, S.V.D.: IBMR 27* (2003) 29-33; ID., *The Contribution of the Society of the Divine Word to the Elaboration of Ad Gentes*, 371-391; S. PAVENTI, *Iter dello schema “De activitate missionari ecclesiae”*: *Euntes Docete* 49 (1966) 98-126.

<sup>79</sup> J. SCHÜTTE, *Prefazione*, in J. SCHÜTTE (ed.), *Il destino delle missioni*, Roma-Brescia 1969, 7; cf. ID., *I problemi posti dalla missione al Concilio*, in: ID., op. cit., 9-24; German original: *Fragen der Mission an das Konzil*, in: ID., *Mission nach dem Konzil*, Mainz 1967, 9-20; in French: *Ce que la mission attendait du Concile*, in: ID., *L'activité missionnaire de l'Eglise*, Paris 1967, 107-120.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. P. STEFFEN, *Places and Models of Formation for Mission and Ministry. Pastoral Institutes in Africa and Asia: Verbum SVD* 51 (2010) 423-438.