

The Jesuit Mission and Dialogue with Culture

John McDade SJ

Jesuit Higher Education 2000 (St Joseph's University, Philadelphia, 2000)

Think of two ways of knowing a city. The first is a *panoptic* view. Imagine looking down on New York, for example: from above, you see the grid of streets stretching to the horizon and skyscrapers, buses, cars, people, etc. The whole city can be encompassed in a single view. The second is how a *pedestrian* experiences the city: when you walk in the streets of New York, your grasp of things is worked out by encountering corners, traffic, street signs, shop-fronts, skyscrapers, voices, muggings and everything else New York has to offer. You're one pedestrian among others, and their views shape the way you experience the place. This is an experience *in* the city, shared with others and modified by them.¹

Michael Buckley has shown that contemporary atheism is tied to currents in early modern Christian apologetic which mounted proofs of the existence of God, independently of his action in Jesus and religious experience, as a hypothesis necessary to explain the existence of this kind of world. Atheism, it seems, flows from a neutral, religion-free theism, a flawed attempt to stand outside our actual (human and religious) situation and be panoptic in determining the character and relation of God and the world.² Christianity, which professes to be concerned with the mystery of God, gave the impression that God can be conceptually determined and pinned down: it is hardly surprising that there has been resistance to worshipping this metaphysical idol.³

Although Christian theology is sometimes deluded by a panoptic phantasy of omniscience, questions, partial insights, fragmentation, elusiveness, uncertainty are never left behind in Christian thought but remain part of our experience of God. What we have to say is said within the restriction of not having a steady fix on things. Think of the constant theme in theology of "learned ignorance" and the way in which the *via negativa* always subverts claims that our mind grasps the divine mystery: *si comprehendis, non est Deus*.

Instead, our knowledge of God and the human city is framed in conversation with others on the same streets, within the same co-ordinates and the contradictions of human experience, on the same Areopagus: like St Paul in Athens, we may be revolted by number of idols around us, but in the account in Acts Paul's sense of desolation in the city gives way to a serious conversation on the Areopagus with Epicureans and Stoics and a consideration of elements in their culture that point to the 'unknown God' (Acts 17.16-33). This conversation throws light, I think, on the strange assertion in the Culture document of GC34 of Jesuits' being 'equal partners' with unbelievers:

A genuine attempt to work from within the shared experience of Christians and unbelievers in a secular and critical culture, built upon respect and

friendship, is the only successful starting point. Our ministry towards atheists and agnostics will either be a meeting of equal partners in dialogue, addressing common questions, or it will be hollow. (GC34, “Our Mission and Culture”, 23)

We should be surprised by the emphasis on *equality* with unbelievers in dialogue because in this conversation, what Christians know is privileged: how could it not be? The only God there is is the God who speaks his divine Word into the mortal flesh of Jesus of Nazareth and raises him from the dead, and we bear witness that this is the supreme interpretative sign of the reality and character of God. Significantly, Paul’s speech on the Areopagus on ‘the unknown God’ culminates in his assertion that this unknown God, glimpsed in Greek poetry and religious imagination, raised Jesus from death. But this prophetic proclamation of the resurrection follows upon a conversation with intellectuals on how to diagnose the features of Athenian religion and culture.

So there are three features in this scene: the sense of desolation as a Christian gauges how far a culture is from knowing God; a conversation with others about how a particular culture defines itself with regard to religious transcendence; and a prophetic witness to what can be known only at the centre of faith in Christ: fulfilment in the resurrection. I will leave aside the first of these, because too great a preoccupation with human lostness is a sin against hope, and I will focus on the relationship of the two other aspects: on the one hand, a dialogue with others about our common experience and, on the other hand, a distinctive Christian witness that cannot be dissolved into anything else. Each is needed – dialogue and proclamation – and the tension between them is part of the modern Church’s mission.

The tension is indicated in GC34’s “Our Mission and Culture” which uses two Christological images to describe the relation of Gospel and culture: the first is Incarnational in which inculturation is seen as a dimension of the indwelling of the Word of God in all the diversity of human experience. *The Word comes to dwell in human cultures and shape them.* The second is Paschal and dialectical: cultures, under the liberating power of the Gospel are freed from their negative features by being confronted with the counter-challenge of the Kingdom.⁴ *The Word confronts and challenges human cultures by refusing to be assimilated by them.*

The strategy proper to the first, Incarnational, model looks for correlations between what human beings know (explicitly, implicitly, partially or inadequately) and what Christians, under the action of divine love, come to see. Being a Christian is taken to be the paradigm of human life and what Christ is the fulfilment of culture.⁵ What is found in the *humanum* under the action of the indwelling Word is articulated and amplified most properly and fully in the *Christianum* in which the full effect of the Word is achieved.

In this approach, Christian belief and practice are the *enactment* of the constitutive features of what it is to be human. The truth of Christian faith resonates with the impulses God plants in our nature and which he completes by his redemptive and divinising action in Christ. This is not to reduce theology to a function of

anthropology, but it is to say that Christian truth is simultaneously the truth about us. Let me quote from a poem by Wallace Stevens to illustrate this:

To say more than human things with human voice,
That cannot be; to say human things with more
Than human voice, that, also, cannot be;
To speak humanly from the height or from the depth
Of human things, that is acutest speech.⁶

Christian knowledge might be acutest speech “from the height or from the depth of human things”, an act of truth-telling about what it means to be human, at the same time as it conveys God’s truth.⁷ How apt in this context to remember Bernard Lonergan’s cryptic description of revelation:

revelation is God’s entry into man’s making of man...It is God’s claim to have a say in the aims and purposes, the direction and development of human lives, human societies, human cultures, human history.⁸

God reveals himself, we might say, as a way of making us whole, complete, fully creaturely and human by God’s becoming integral to the processes of humanity’s making of itself. In its brief, but incomplete, treatment of critical postmodern culture, GC34’s decree “Our Mission and Culture” (21) draws attention to currents within fragmented Western culture which correlate to God’s revelation of himself as a richly generative triune mystery:

- First of all, post-Christian culture witnesses to a reverence for the God who cannot be imaged by human beings without destroying the divine mystery: *the Spirituality of the Father* connects with the truth of atheism that there cannot be a God who is measured by human words and images. Human words cannot encompass the fullness of *ens et verum* and so silence is appropriate before the mystery. The Christian apophatic tradition has strangely surfaced within post-Christian culture, in part as a reaction to the over-conceptualised, deistic God of Enlightenment theism who can be *proved* from the existence of the world. (If you look in the dictionary, by the way, you’ll find that “theism” means both belief in God and, strangely, caffeine poisoning.)
- Secondly, post-Christian culture tries to find meaning within the structure of human, embodied experience: if truth is known anywhere, it will have a bearing on the *humanum*. The rest of the world is mute: humanity is the point at which the world begins to understand itself, and therefore “what is true” can only be established by focusing on “what is human”. Most commonly, this gives rise to a humanism with no further term of transcendence. This is related to *a Spirituality of the Incarnate Son*, in which the divine Logos is a human, tangible person within the structures of human life. Remember that GC34 is the first General Congregation after the collapse of the Marxist project. Marxism, with its drive towards a teleological goal within history, is no longer plausible as a way of bestowing purpose and finality to human affairs, so the personal and the human become the focus of attention. In a post-Marxist world, salvation is found not in

the processes of history, but in the processes of therapy, self-actualisation and techniques of well-being.

- Thirdly, there is a desire to connect to the natural order as a place of transcendent and immanent holiness. This is *a Spirituality of the Holy Spirit*. With the decline of religious practice, there is a return to an unstructured cosmic religion in which the natural environment is to be revered as a holy place. Various pre-modern cultures are raided for insights to counter the sense of fragmentation in our post-Enlightenment world. Commentaries on pre-modern spiritualities (Native American, Celtic and the usual Eastern suspects) fill the shelves of bookshops alongside eclectic New Age gnosticism, because the modern heart is desperate to connect with something deeper and older, something that was made before the Fall that produced critical modern consciousness at the Enlightenment.

This brief scheme delineates features of a broad and indeterminate religiosity in post-Christian culture in relation to a Trinitarian account of God.⁹ This section of the decree relates a fragmented pattern from contemporary culture and the integrating paradigm of the Christian experience of God. It suggests a connection between the kind of thing expressed, either implicitly or explicitly, in some parts of contemporary culture and the kind of thing said by Christians about God. It is inquiring into the possibility of a connection between a diffused, unstable, modern sensibility and what Christians experience and say specifically about the richness of God. *What, in fragmented ways, we look for, God is.*

Let me point briefly to three sources which feed into this idea. First of all, when Aquinas formulated his “Five Ways” of showing the existence of God, what was he doing? Possibly giving a formal proof of the existence of God, but it is more likely that he was pointing out to his students that the God whose revelation they were to proclaim had some connection with what students of other disciplines -- cosmology, physics -- were talking about. And so when he was able to say, “et hoc omnes intelligunt Deum” or “quam omnes Deum nominant”, he was pointing to the meaning of the word ‘God’ in non-biblical sources of knowledge. He was reassuring “timorous Augustinian theologians that the philosophers who had not the faith were not really the menace to their Christian acquaintances they were held to be, for they knew *something* about the existence and nature of God”.¹⁰

Secondly, that fascinating theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher, who, while holding that dogmatics pertains solely to the Christian Church, tries to show that the affirmations of Christian faith draw upon experiential data or possibilities outside the Church’s life. God is the correlate of the religious consciousness. In the *Speeches*, for example, he tries to identify the ‘sense of the infinite’ which he believes even the “cultured despisers of religion” would recognise as part of their experience.¹¹ In *The Christian Faith*, he identifies the (universal) feeling of absolute dependence with the (particular) knowledge Christians have of their redeemer, thus combining the *external* cultural experience and the *internal* Christian experience within one conceptual framework.¹²

Schleiermacher seeks to link each particular concept in his exposition of Christian faith to a general notion or conceptuality not unique to Christianity. His instinct is

that if Christian faith is to engage the culture, it must find points of contact between paradigms which are *internal* to Christian faith experience and true to it, and paradigms which are *external*, within culture, proper to humanity's wider sense of itself and the world.¹³ And here, I think, the project which, in the wake of Kant's treatment of God, Schleiermacher undertook of re-establishing the elements of Christian faith in relation to constitutive features of human existence seems to be right (although ultimately not adequate as a properly *Christian* theology).¹⁴

This correlative approach is echoed in recent Catholic theology. It is central to Rahner's theological anthropology, of course, but I want to draw particular attention to Bernard Lonergan because of his influence on how GC34 interpreted the Jesuit mission. Paragraphs 11-13 of *Servants of Christ's mission* are drawn directly from Lonergan's *Method in Theology* without any acknowledgement because the tradition is that the only references permitted in Decrees of a General Congregation are Sacred Scripture, the writings of Popes and Jesuit Generals.¹⁵ The Congregation used Lonergan's writings to reinterpret the connection between faith and justice, and to provide it with a stronger, less overtly political foundation, of particular significance to cultures which are experiencing cultural and moral disintegration, what Lonergan calls "decline", a culture's disruption by "conflicting ideologies", "the vast pressures of social decay".¹⁶

For Lonergan, the instinct of *faith* is inseparable from the instinct for *human progress*, and these are the resources which alone can counter "decline". These two impulses arise from the same root which God plants in our nature: on the one hand, the instinct of faith, the movement of the human heart towards a truth that is free from, and stronger than, the moral evil that threatens to dehumanise us. Secondly, there is also the desire to live morally and constructively in a way that counters this evil: a desire to ground life in a purposeful framework so that, in the end, life *matters* and the efforts of human life are not lost in time or in death.

It looks for a condition of existence which is for the good of all, since the human good must be *social* in character. It is the desire that life should be purposeful, not wasted; it is the desire to shape life in a way that the most comprehensive good of human beings is brought about; it is, in short, the desire for the total good of the world. This is the desire for "justice," a condition of life which is not defined by aggression, violence, abuse and exploitation, in which healing and human flourishing replace moral evil. If this hope is the completion of "man's making of man", then God's action is integral to the process. And the resurrection of Christ is God's prophetic act, showing that the creation is not a closed system of decay and frustration.

Lonergan called the second of these impulses the instinct for "human progress". In the redaction of this decree at the Congregation, we judged that this was an unfortunate phrase with overtones of Enlightenment optimism and the totalitarian experiments of our century which sprang from it. We interpreted it, and paraphrased it, in the text in two formulas which are part of the on-going clarification about what is meant by the justice to which the Society has committed itself. We spoke of an

impulse within human beings towards *a shared, lasting human good and the human social good found in God's Kingdom.*

If, in the 1970s and 1980s, Liberation Theology's focus on structural inequality was a major influence on how the Society's considered the promotion of justice, here the horizon of discussion is closer to a rich Thomist anthropology, the Aristotelian moral tradition, the perspective of René Girard on violence and society,¹⁷ Pope John Paul's insistence that religious values are at the heart of culture, and greater importance placed on religious faith in countering evil and decline than on the remedies offered by promises of political transformation.

In "Servants of Christ's Mission", the root meaning of that polyvalent word "justice" is *the human good*, life directed towards, and embodying, the wholeness and consummation of the resurrection of Christ. To reprise my earlier description of Schleiermacher: "a shared, lasting human good" is a paradigm which is both *internal* to Christian faith experience and true to it, and *external* to the Church, within a range of cultures and proper to humanity's wider sense of itself and the world. It is a theme at the heart of Christian faith, with an interpretation based upon the Kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus and his resurrection. At the same time, it is a cultural paradigm accessible to everyone, independent of their beliefs. It is a way of designating the orientation of all human beings because of the action of grace in the human mind and heart. It is, to use a deliberately banal phrase, *what every man and every woman wants* when they are fully in touch with the best of themselves.

From that point of view, it is a correlative symbol which bridges Christian faith and extra-Christian and post-Christian cultures. It designates the horizon of human life, in a way which speaks both to Christians, non-Christians and post-Christians, in the light of which conversation and dialogue may be conducted. It touches on *moral values*, on *our account of human nature*, on *how we live together*, on *hope, purpose and fulfilment*. It brings together a concern for social justice, dialogue with other religious and moral traditions and a sensitivity to cultural factors as the three inseparable elements of our service of faith. It may be, through its symbolic power, the kind of idea which can be a significant point of contact between Christians and an increasingly disparate culture.

This approach seems to me to add new dimensions to the Society's commitment to justice particularly suited to the central problematic of faith today. The vacuum at the heart of developed capitalist societies is an uncertainty about what constitutes "a shared lasting human good" and an agnosticism about the possibility of such a goal towards which human life might be directed. A culture must be able to say to itself *why* it exists and *to what purpose*, since only that fundamental assessment will enable it to formulate the constructive values each society needs.¹⁸

I have been focusing on the question of correlations between what is proper to Christian experience and what can be found in extra-Christian experience, but another aspect of their relationship should be considered. Let me quote a passing remark from an English Jesuit, Peter Hackett: "Christianity lacks an anthropology of its own, and always has to learn from other sources what it means to be human".

Not an opinion to be defended without qualification, of course, but an intriguing suggestion because it points to an empty chamber at the heart of Christian faith which is always being filled from elsewhere. (European Christian sensibility, for example, has been profoundly shaped by a Stoicism which, until Coca-Cola arrived, was the natural religion of Europe.)

If Peter Hackett is right, then what we Christians know comes from what non-Christians teach us and Christian thought depends for its account of the *humanum* from what comes to light in extra-Christian experiences. The inculturated Gospel sheds light on a culture, but it also draws from the culture *what it needs* and what it does not already have within its own resources. And what it needs is a richer account of humanness than it has at the moment, an account developed outside its boundaries in extra-Christian contexts; and it approaches it with a sense that the truthfulness that comes to expression there is shaped by God's antecedent action as Creator and Inspirer. Now, if this is right, then Christian truth cannot eliminate what is outside its territory without undermining itself: the non-Christian other to which we relate is the other that we need in order to be ourselves.

You will see here an extension of the argument put forward by the Jewish writer, and friend of Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig: for him, Judaism and Christianity form the "Star of Redemption" (the title of his most important book). He thinks of Judaism as the core of the star, the radiant centre of experience which simply has to be itself in covenantal faithfulness. From that core come the rays which extend into the pagan, Gentile world, rays which are the Christian mission, flowing from the core of Jewish faith to illuminate the darkness of a world ignorant of God. The rays of the star (Christianity) need there to be a core of foundational experience located in the Jewish experience of God so that the light that comes to the Gentile world may be a true mediation of what Jewish faith knows of God.

So there must be, for the sake of the Christian mission, a living Jewish people with its living Jewish life. Hence, for Rosenzweig, who on the point of becoming a Christian decided to remain a Jew, but a Jew who saw a divine significance in the Church, the tie with Judaism is a living part of Christian identity, and without it Christianity will lose its bearings. So, the condition of there being a genuine Christian mission is that there be a living Jewish faith which refuses to be assimilated into cosmic religions and spiritualities, which maintains its distinct commitment to the God of Israel. If this is so, then Christianity cannot overcome Judaism without destroying itself: it needs the core of star to be there. And so we Christians cannot regard Judaism as superseded by a single Christian dispensation without undermining our identity and mission.

Rosenzweig points to the ways in which mutuality and difference are not threats to the identity of Jews and Christians, but the very conditions of their identity. From being the "other" that we blindly reject, Jews might be the "other" to whom we need to relate in order to be ourselves and witness to God.¹⁹ Rosenzweig, of course, speaks as a Jew, but from a Christian perspective could his model of mutuality and difference as the condition of identity also apply to Christianity's relation to the range of other traditions and religions it has to deal with? Christianity is set between

a Jewish root – never left behind, of course – and extra-Christian experiences (moral, spiritual, cultural) which it must engage and which will come to nourish it. Christian identity is formed from a positive relationship to extra-Christian sources because it depends upon them for what it needs to know about the *humanum* and the range of God's action within our nature. We cannot assume a unitary Christian source of cultural and social values: when was that ever true?

If these approaches are right, Christians can never be totalising or panoptic in how we deal with otherness because we depend upon there being *others* who contribute to what we need to hear and know. I can be myself only because others are different and, by being themselves in their distinctiveness, give me permission not to be like them: so with Christianity and the traditions it deals with in the conversations in the human city. In these conversations, we listen and speak in response to what we hear; consolation in this ministry is inseparable from humble attentiveness to different voices. GC34 has a sentence that is rich in its implications for fundamental theology:

In the conceptions of the mind, in the habits of the heart, in the root-metaphors and values of all cultures – even, we might say, in the very processes by which our physical bodies become capable of intense spiritual experience – God is preparing the conditions in his creatures for the loving acknowledgement of his truth, making them ready for the transformation promised in Christ”.²⁰

GC34's general orientation towards these other traditions is, of course, positive: we are asked to put ourselves humbly in touch with what God and the Risen Christ are doing in the otherness of religions and cultures (GC34, *Our Mission and Culture*, 14-18). But as soon as you acknowledge the positive value of difference and otherness, you raise the question of the need for Christianity to retain its own sense of difference in order to witness effectively.

The programme of correlations which I outlined earlier will collapse into a cultural assimilation between Gospel and culture – an accommodationism – unless there is sufficient distance and difference between Church and world. If the boundaries are indistinguishable between Christians and culture, between Christians and others, what good are we to anyone because we will simply repeat what they already know from within their own resources? You will see here an echo of the argument put forward by Avery Dulles on the need for countercultural, orthodox believers.²¹ This is where the second, Paschal, model of the relation between Gospel and culture shows its value: *the Word confronts and challenges human cultures by refusing to be assimilated by them.*

Let me approach this issue, again through listening to a Jewish voice, the Chief Rabbi in Britain, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.²² In his view, the assumptions on which human cultures depend are transmitted through what we can call “moral communities”: free associations of men and women which bear messages about human life and how it is to be lived. Meaning and purpose are not generated by the isolated individual, but they exist through shared communities of meaning, through communities which convey purpose, value, meaning to successive generations.

He argues that while our contemporary secular culture extends a tolerance to every religion, it also so modifies each religion in a way that removes from it every distinctive feature and weakens its internal source of energy. There takes place, he argues, the secular assimilation and absorption of disparate religious communities under pressure from the culture in which they live. Consequently, the religious faith of each community is modified by the liberal assumptions of secular culture: scepticism about distinguishing between 'right' and 'wrong' beliefs; the privatisation of belief; a tolerance of all perspectives, all of which are treated as valid; the maximum freedom for individual choice; marginalisation of faith from public life, etc. Secular society, in short, shapes religious communities more they shape society.

Sacks says that when society becomes aware of the breakdown of moral and spiritual values in its life, it then looks to the religious traditions to provide a basis of the moral and spiritual cohesion which society needs. But the religious communities have been rendered so weak that they cannot provide strong enough sources of religious and moral energy to provide the cohesion and inspiration which would serve society effectively.²³

A liberal culture, he argues, depends upon meanings borne by moral communities that bear messages about how to live and be, but it cannot draw upon the energies of these communities because it constantly weakens them in order to tame them. Hence the *aporia* or vacuum at the moment in which moral and cognitive relativism flourishes and in which religions become marginal and socially ineffective. For Sacks, only internally strong and distinct communities, who maintain their sense of difference, can act as the generative heart of cultural values.

You may agree or disagree with Jonathan Sacks' argument, and its possible application to the identity of the Christian community -- you may think, with good reason, that it is more Jewish than Christian, or that it is more suitable to a model of the Church as *sect*, rather than to the Church as a school of sinners -- but his analysis of the pressures in modern societies to dissolve the religiously and distinctively different seems to me right.²⁴ He offers, I think, an alternative vision of *a community of religious communities* which, precisely by being different from one another and from the dominant consensus, can be generative towards the wider culture.

In my view, the central question which GC34 raises for the Jesuit mission is the question of how we deal positively with the phenomenon of *otherness* in its different forms: atheistic, agnostic, post-Christian sensibility, non-Christian religious traditions, fragmented societies in spiritual and cultural decline, narratives of secularity and the range of culturally privatised alternatives that have emerged in the Western world. Implied in this question is how we Christians configure our own *otherness* as a contribution to the shared, lasting human good. It is perhaps only by developing our understanding of the human and religious aspects of *otherness as a condition of witnessing to the shared, lasting human good* that we will be able to foster a deeper evangelical engagement with the cultures taking shape in the human city.

¹ I draw this image from Michel de Certeau. Cf., F.C.Bauerschmidt, 'The Abrahamic Voyage: Michel de Certeau and Theology', *Modern Theology*, Vol 12 (1996), pp.1-26.

² M.J.Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). I use Fergus Kerr's summary: "Theology, itself, since the Enlightenment, has striven to construct an interpretation of Christianity acceptable to the exigencies of reason alone – as if human reason were somehow outside of the history of fallen and redeemed humanity – independently, then of moral and religious presuppositions... The 'death of God', as one might have expected, was an inside job, the result of two or three centuries of 'natural theology'. By shifting to supposedly neutral religion-free ground to mount proofs of the existence of God, these theologians inaugurated a whole tradition of philosophical theology which dialectically generated its own negation. Historically, atheism would thus be the product of a certain kind of theism." (Fergus Kerr, OP, "Aquinas After Marion," *New Blackfriars* Vol 76, no. 895) (1995), 354-64)

³ Pascal diagnosed the problem of Cartesian theism at its inception: "I cannot forgive Descartes: in his whole philosophy he would like to do without God; but he could not help allowing him a flick of the fingers to set the world in motion; after that he had no more use for God". (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J.Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1995), 330.

⁴ GC34, "Our Mission and Culture", 3.

⁵ Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951) still offers a helpful taxonomy: "[Niebuhr] significantly reinterpreted Ernst Troeltsch's typology of 'church' and 'sect', expanding it into a typology of five types. Over against the 'sect' type that withdraws from the world and situates itself 'against culture', he proposed an opposite 'of culture' type that completely accommodates culture. Troeltsch's 'church' type he then divided into the three forms of the 'church of the center': the 'above culture' types or 'synthesists' (Thomas Aquinas and Roman Catholicism), the 'paradox' types or 'dualists' (Martin Luther and Reinhold Niebuhr), and the 'transformationists' (Augustine, Calvin and F.D.Maurice). It was the transformationist perspective to which Niebuhr himself aspired." W.S.Johnson, (ed.), *H.Richard Niebuhr: Theology, History and Culture: Major Unpublished Writings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), xviii.

⁶ "Chocorua to Its Neighbour", *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 300.

⁷ "[T]he question of the truth of Christianity cannot be enquired into without also enquiring into the question of the truth of all areas of human experience... theology must go beyond Christianity in its description and interpretation of Christianity. It must go beyond Christianity as a religion among and beside other non-religious areas of culture and also beyond Christianity as a revealed religion in contrast to natural human life. As soon as Christianity's appeal to God's revelation is taken seriously, then the subject of theology cannot be confined to a particular subject side by side with other subjects of other disciplines. Theology must then broach many other subjects as well as its particular concern with religious experience and Christianity." (W.Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), 264.

⁸ *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. M.D.Morelli & E.A. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 414.

⁹ Raimundo Panikkar is the distant source of GC34's treatment of the correlation between the doctrine of the Trinity and contemporary spiritual currents: *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man* (Orbis/London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), 77-82. A more immediate influence on Paragraph 21 is J.McDade, "George Eliot's Religion", *The Month* (April, 1994), 161-2.

¹⁰ E.Sillem, *Ways of Thinking about God: Thomas Aquinas and Some Recent Problems* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd), 99.

¹¹ “For Schleiermacher, it is precisely the world of ‘normal’ experience which mediates the ‘religious experience’. The sense of being utterly dependent is given in and with this experienced world of relatedness. It is a world in which we feel partly, but never wholly, free as personal agents. It is a world, in which we feel partly dependent in relation to many objects (other persons, family, nation, nature and so on). But further, in and with all this, is our openness to what is other to us, we have a sense of ourselves and all else being *utterly* dependent on – what? There is no item in the finite world to which such feeling is appropriate. It can only refer to the Infinite. God is the correlate of this religious consciousness.” (K.W.Clements, *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Pioneer of Modern Theology* (London: Collins, 1987) at 38)

¹² The subtlety of Schleiermacher’s analysis of the feeling of absolute dependence, God and the self is well discussed in H.R.Niebuhr, *Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion* (London: SCM, 1965), 181-96.

¹³ Philip Clayton, *Explanation from Physics to Theology: an Essay in Rationality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 163ff.

¹⁴ In this same vein, Karl Rahner tried to frame a ‘searching Christology’ beginning from the implicit existential understanding, available to everyone, of an orientation towards brotherly love, hope for the future, acceptance of death, a desire not to be defined by evil, a desire for unlimited peace, fulfilled in Christ.

¹⁵ The relevant Lonergan sources come from his treatment of faith in *Method in Theology* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), 117f; reprinted in *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. M.D.Morelli & E.A. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 479.

¹⁶ *The Lonergan Reader*, p.479. “Faith is linked with human progress and it has to meet the challenge of human decline. For faith and progress have a common root in man’s congenial and moral self-transcendence. To promote either is to promote the other indirectly.”

¹⁷ “.possessiveness, chauvinism and the manipulation of power have to be challenged by communities grounded in religious charity, the charity of the Suffering Servant, the self-sacrificing love shown by the Saviour.” (GC34, “Servants of Christ’s Mission”, 13)

¹⁸ Langdon Gilkey identifies a secular “salvation history” of unrestricted progress spawned by the post-enlightenment West: “It is, I would suggest, the disintegration of this *secular* myth – not that of the traditional Christian mythos – that constitutes the present religious crisis of American society. For now our questions about the meaning of our work and our lives, of the significance and insignificance of what we are and do, of good and evil and the ultimate result of their encounter, that is, of the victory of the good and the conquest of the evil in history, have no framework in which to find an answer. Above all, our confidence in our own history and so ourselves as a community have been badly shaken: that confidence was based on the assurance that our science and technology were establishing the grounds for a fuller humanity everywhere. Of this hope in the future we are now much less sure. Science and technology seem to be capable of making the world demonic, inhuman, soulless; and freedom seems ever anew subject to some mode of historical fatedness and possibly in the end, helpless”. (Langdon Gilkey, *Society and the Sacred: Toward a Theology of Culture in Decline* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 24.

¹⁹ “Before God, then, Jew and Christian labour at the same task. He cannot dispense with either. He has set enmity between the two for all time and withal has most intimately bound each to each... The truth, the whole truth thus belongs neither of them nor to us... And thus we both have but a part of the whole truth. But we know that it is in the nature of truth to be imparted [*zu teil zu sein*], and that a truth in which no one had a part would be no truth... The ‘whole’ truth is truth only because it is God’s part [*Gottes Teil*]. Thus both of us, they as much

as we, we as much as they, are creatures precisely for the reason that we do not see the whole truth. Just for this we remain within the boundaries of mortality. Just for this – we remain [bleiben wir]”. (Quoted in D.Novak, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970) at 100-1)

²⁰ GC34, “Our Mission and Culture”, 18.

²¹ Avery Dulles SJ, “Orthodoxy and Social Change”, *America*, Vol. 178, No.21 (June 20-29, 1998), pp.8-17. “The world has no need of a religious body that simply mirrors the dominant values of the society...A religion that firmly adheres to its sacred heritage can make itself a sign of hope and beacon of truth to the multitudes who are repelled by the easy relativism and cheap hedonism of popular culture. For these reasons I am convinced that orthodoxy rather than accommodationism offers greater promise for the future”.

²² Jonathan Sacks, *The Persistence of Faith: Religion, Morality and Society in a Secular Age* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1991).

²³ If I may refer specifically to Europe for a moment: the European experience is characterised primarily by a diminishment of the sense of God, the disintegration of values and a lack of purpose towards the future: we are no longer clear about *how* we should live and *why*, except to consume and compete. The narrative of secularity -- the dominant narrative in our culture -- cannot tell us why we are and how we should be.

²⁴ Sacks’ argument is close to that of Pope John Paul II: Christianity must resist assimilation to Western capitalist mores, and clear boundary lines must be drawn between what is Christian and what is secular if the Church is to have anything to say to societies which assume they have gone beyond Christian faith. *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae* are deliberately counter-cultural, assuming that only an internally strong religion can be the generative heart of cultural values and present a moral counter-challenge to the disarray of modern life. The theme of “convicting the world of sin” is strong in the Pope’s treatment of the Holy Spirit (*Dominum et Vivificantem*), but he also sees it as part of the role of the Church and the Petrine Ministry.