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Towards A More Indigenous African Catholicism: Insights from Lonergan's Notion of Culture

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Towards a More Indigenous African Catholicism: Insights from Lonergan's Notion of Culture

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Drawing from examples from sub-Saharan Africa and especially from Christian missionary enterprises there, this paper suggests ways and means of developing a more indigenous Catholicism in the light of Bernard Lonergan's notion of culture. Religion becomes relevant to the development of a people by adapting to their environment. This is true for indigenous religions as well as for transnational religions like Christianity, to which people are converted through various forms of cultural contact. Evangelization of peoples begins by openness to and respect for cultures as the seedbed of human dignity, meaning, and purpose. Just as Christianity emerges in a Hellenic and Jewish context and develops according to the circumstances of non-Jewish converts, so too today it is always autochthonous wherever it is found.

This conscious effort of Christianity to dialogue with cultures is not without its challenges, especially as Western Christianity both adopted Eurocentric cultural forms and has spread to various parts of the world. I argue that Lonergan's notion of culture, through its emphasis of the transition from classical to an empirical (that is, concrete as opposed to abstract or ideal) notion of culture, explains not only the imperative of cultural pluralism as constitutive of humanity but also presents the appreciation of diverse cultures as the way of being church. Unlike the classical notion of culture, which ignores differences among people and expects everyone to think alike, the empirical notion of culture acknowledges the fact that people (and nations) with different histories cannot think and act the same way or adapt to environment the same way. This way the richness of Lonergan's notion of culture has the potential to solve the recurring problems of cultural identity in the world church.

Approaches to Culture

The various approaches to the study of culture prior to Vatican II could be narrowed down to an idea of culture with a capital 'C', used often with regard to so-called high cultures, and an idea of culture with a small 'c', referring to supposedly less reflective, sophisticated,

or successful cultures. The former were considered civilized, while the latter, often associated with popular traditional lifestyles, were considered savage. In this approach, indigenous cultures that differed from the high culture of empires were understood as nothing but an early stage in the process of civilization, a process controlled and spread by people of the high culture. This conception of culture, especially western European culture, as civilization justified several imperialist missions in which Christian missionary activities played a collaborative role.

Appraisal of Missionary Enterprise in Africa

One must begin any appraisal of missionary activities in Africa by appreciating the heroism of the missionaries who responded to God's call "with ardent apostolic zeal, [and] came to share the joy of revelation."¹ The fruit of their work is evident: millions of Africans have converted and are converting to Christianity. However, the nineteenth-century missionaries' classical conception of culture as European civilization became the Achilles' heel of African Christianity. Their paternalism bred dependency and attached Africans to the apron strings of Western Christianity. Their condemnation of indigenous African cultures as savage and heathen continues to negatively impact Christianity in Africa today.

For example, Bede Jago, a Dominican priest working in Nigeria in the 1960s, mentions that prior to Vatican II, it was not customary for missionaries to learn anything about traditional practices, which were condemned as evil and as coming from the devil. He gives examples of how "some former missionaries forbade a festival to give thanks to God for the harvest of yams since there was no blessing for this in the Roman Ritual."² Not only has such condemnation of African cultures given rise to syncretism, with Africans having a dual allegiance to Christianity and their traditional religions, the lack of integration of Christian faith with African cultural and religious values has given rise to Africans regarding Christianity as strange. The result has been the emergence of homegrown African Independent Churches on the one hand and the African anthropological crisis, that

is, the new experience of domination by external cultural forces—including religious forces—when compelled to be Christians in a manner defined by foreign cultures.

Another example, drawn from Fr. Alex Chima's experience in Malawi, equally corroborates the anthropological crisis among African Christians, one often manifested in the tensions and contradictions in their spiritual lives. Although the people attended the Mass over which he presided, they also rushed away to participate, at the behest of their chief, in a rain sacrifice at the foot of a hill about 4 miles away. This practice, which is all too common in Africa, testifies to the need to make Christian faith and worship relevant to the people by responding to their real needs rather than on faithfulness to liturgical laws.³

Examples of how this might be done can be grasped from other missionary experiences, such as Ronald Allen's short experience as a missionary in China (1895 to 1900 and later in 1902) and Vincent Donovan's unique missionary experience in the Masai Kingdom, East Africa (1955 to 1973). Their practices, methods, and suggestions offer positive insight into measures toward new evangelization in Africa and other contexts and also highlight the flaws of traditional missionary enterprises. Allen realized that indigenizing Christianity was functionally efficient for the spread of the faith. He suggests that evangelization accompany the establishment of self-propagating, self-supporting, self-governing churches able to evangelize their neighbours without depending on foreign missionaries for leadership or financial support. Allen asserts:

If the Church is to be indigenous it must spring up in the soil from the very first seeds planted. One or two little groups of Christians organized as Churches, with their bishops and priests, could spread all over an empire. They would be obviously and without question Native Churches. But if we establish Missions rather than Churches, two evil consequences, which we now see in greater or less degree everywhere, sterility and antagonism, inevitably arise.⁴

Spontaneous expansion of the church was hindered also by the missionary insistence on Christian morals, which of course meant the European customs they accepted as civilized and believed must be inculcated to the new converts to Christianity.⁵ Such demands not only disrupted the social order of most communities, they exposed converts to Christianity to ridicule and at times to

rejection by their families. Civilizing the natives, taking them away from their ways of life and cutting them off from their kith and kin, was the standard procedure for evangelization in situations where to be Christian meant to be like the missionaries. Instead of seeking to make Europeans of African converts, Allen suggests spontaneous expansion of the church whereby African converts to Christianity freely share the Christian faith with their neighbours, thus becoming missionaries to one another. This of course presupposes respect for the culture and the patterns of life of the indigenous peoples.

Vincent Donovan, a missionary priest to the Masai, was very much influenced by Allen's work. Writing several decades later about the limitations of missionary work, he urges starting afresh:

There is no mistaking the fact that missionary work is in shambles. Born in slavery, disoriented by the school system, startled by independence, and smothered in nation building—mission in East Africa has never had the chance to be true to itself. To make any sense out of mission, out of the meaning and purpose of missionary work, one has to start all over again—at the beginning.⁶

Starting afresh for Donovan is starting evangelization with deep respect for the cultures of peoples and appreciating that people have a culture from which their lives derive meaning. Recognizing a people's culture implies that missionaries must not substitute that culture with any other.

Donovan found that the very concept of mission has to change. Missionaries, he says, are not sent to plant a church or to preach the church but to tell the good news of God's universal salvation in Christ. The Eurocentric response to the good news is not the only response to the Gospel, and each community must respond in accordance with its own culture. Thus the new evangelization, characterized by the preaching of the Gospel to the poor and a dialogue with the cultures of peoples informed by profound respect for these cultures as vehicles for the Good News, is one of the most important achievements of the Second Vatican Council.

The Vatican II Stance on Culture

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*) links culture to human dignity, calls for human freedom to realize the dignity of the human person, and recognizes the plurality of cultures.⁷ It delves into the problems of continuity and change, that is, the preservation of traditional cultures arising from

“the increased exchanges between cultures,” especially those caused by modernization. The relationship of faith and cultures is expected to promote integral salvation, that is, the Gospel instruction to Christians to be agents of social transformation by participation in the humanization of their world through culture. *Gaudium et Spes* recognizes the cultural and hence contextual nature of divine revelation “where God’s progressive self-communication adapted itself to the culture of different ages.”⁸

Vatican II’s stance is very significant for the church’s relationship to culture. First, culture is seen as fundamental to what it means to be human. To disregard, deny, or disparage a people’s culture is to dehumanize and insult them. Each people must be free to live by the intendments of its culture, to express its unique identity. Culture, however, is not static but dynamic; it develops and is amenable to various forms of influences both internal and external. Africans have distinct cultures that integrally harmonize their lives religiously, socio-politically, economically, etc. Evangelization must have such cultures as its starting point. Second, the recognition of plurality of cultural forms and the equality of all cultures is a paradigm shift from the classicist idea of culture to one conscious of history and the importance of particular cultures for evangelization. It reflects the Council fathers’ rejection of the rigid traditionalism of the preparatory documents and their option for genuine *aggiornamento*.⁹ Third, that Jesus was born and raised a Jew implies that the divine revelation took flesh in a particular human culture. His mission and ministry took place within the linguistic, historical, and cultural ambient of the Hellenistic Jews of his time influenced by Hellenistic philosophy. In fact, Jesus’ Jewishness is of an entirely different order from the post-Temple Judaism of most Jewish communities today. When Christianity eventually spread to the Greeks, it formally adopted the Greek and Hellenistic philosophy and religious cultural superstructure. As is evident from the influence of Western-oriented Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa, the Gospel equally became westernized when it spread to the West. Susan Ross writes, “As Christianity spread across Europe, and especially as it spread into the lands that we now call England, Scotland, and Ireland, it developed its own unique regional characteristics, as it did everywhere it took root.”¹⁰ The Western Christian missionaries, mostly from some of the countries listed above, bequeathed to the Africans their own interpretation of the Gospel in the light of their cultures.

Meanwhile, it is more important to note that Christianity spread first to what is now considered North Africa and the Middle East. St. Augustine, for example, was a Romanized African.¹¹ His mother, Monica, practised indigenous local African traditions. As the Gospel spreads to Asia, the Americas, and sub-Saharan Africa, it must take unto itself the Asian as well as indigenous American and African cultural, religious, and philosophical superstructures. As transcultural, the Good News must become African in Africa as it did in the case of the North African churches of the early period. This becomes the foundation for the incarnation or inculturation of Christian faith in African cultures.

Church and Culture after Vatican II

The post-Vatican II church obviously supports the appropriation of the Christian faith in the light of the cultures of each people. Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) acknowledges this to be the case in the first two millennia of Christian faith as people have accepted the Christian faith, allowed it to grow in their own lives, and passed it on in the language of their own culture.¹² Pope Paul VI first used the term “African Christianity” while addressing the first Pan-African meeting of Roman Catholic Bishops at Gaba, Uganda, in 1969. Paul VI reminded the African bishops of the role of their cultures in evangelization with words that reflect Vatican II’s acknowledgement of the plurality of cultural forms for the expression of Christian faith:

The expression, that is, the language and mode of manifesting this one Faith may be manifold, hence it may be original, suited to the tongue, the style, the character, the genius and the culture of the one who professes this one Faith. From this point of view, a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable.¹³

Similarly, Pope John Paul II reiterated the church’s respect for cultures during his apostolic visit to Nigeria in 1982: “The Church comes to bring Christ; she does not come to bring the culture of another race. Evangelization aims at penetrating and elevating culture by the power of the Gospel.”¹⁴ John Paul II founded the Pontifical Council for Culture to promote the study of Gospel and culture as well as the relation of Christianity to non-Christian religions.¹⁵

Lonergan’s Notion of Culture

Culture, for Lonergan, emanates within the meaning-making process constitutive of each community that

commonly experiences, understands, judges, and decides.¹⁶ Lonergan recognizes the shift from the classical control of meaning to the modern, empirical notion of culture based on appreciation of experience and history. He argues that the classicist concept of culture is static, universalistic, monolithic, univocal, restrictive, exclusive, nature-oriented, and totalistic. The empirical notion of culture, on the contrary, is dynamic, particular and local, concrete, pluralistic, polymorphic, inclusive, other-focused, and historically minded. Among his many attempts to explain the differences between these two notions of culture, I find his distinction in the paper titled "The Future of Christianity" the most explicit:

While classicist culture conceived itself normatively and abstractly, modern culture conceives itself empirically and concretely. It is the culture that recognizes cultural variation, difference, development, breakdown, that investigates each of the many cultures of mankind, that studies their histories, that seeks to understand what the classicist would tend to write off as strange or uncultivated or barbaric. Instead of thinking of man in terms of a nature common to all men, whether awake or asleep, geniuses or morons, saints or sinners, it attends to men in their concrete living. If it can discern common and invariant structures in human operations, it refuses to take flight from the particular to the universal, and it endeavors to meet the challenge of knowing people in all their diversity and mutability.¹⁷

Obviously, therefore, the European missionaries' attitude to indigenous cultures is explained by the classicist culture under which they were raised and trained. Their condemnation of cultures they knew nothing about, their dismissal of those whom they had come to evangelize as uncultured "savages," and hence their mission to give "barbarians" culture can be understood as a result of the ignorance embedded in the classicist notion of culture.¹⁸

Lonergan's most significant contribution lies in the recognition of the shift from classicist to empirical notion of culture as well as its implications that it demands a methodological shift of attitude for religion and theology's engagement with cultures. Lonergan asserts:

Just as theology has to enter into the context of modern philosophy and science, so religion has to retain its identity yet penetrate into the cultures of mankind, into the manifold fabric of everyday meaning and feeling that directs and propels the

lives of men. It has to know the uses of symbol and story, the resources of its arts and of literature, the potentialities of the old and the new media of communications, the various motivations on which in any given area it can rely, the themes that in a given culture and class provide a carrying wave for the message.¹⁹

The modern notion of culture's appreciation of the place of history and the diversity of cultural ambient is threatening to the status quo of traditional ecclesiological and theological approaches to culture that generally tend to be classicist. The change in attitude that the shift to the empirical notion of culture demands is akin to the great epochal changes in history and culture like Vatican II (1962–65). For example, the concept of theology is shifting from the one universal theology that is methodologically deductive to a notion of plurality of theologies that is inductive and respectful of the differences varying historical circumstances bring about in the lives of human beings in various cultural settings.²⁰ In the modern notion of culture, the church is concerned not only with ecumenism but also with its relation to other non-Christian religions and variants of atheism that negate religion altogether. While such shifts have been ongoing for over a century, according to Lonergan, "the massive breakthrough took place at the Second Vatican Council."²¹ Concerted efforts at implementing the shift from the classicist to the modern (empirical) notion of culture in both church and theology officially achieved at the Second Vatican Council lead to the emergence of truly indigenous Catholicism brewed in African cultures.

African Catholicism and Inculturation After Vatican II

The post-conciliar ecclesiology emphasizes the inculturation of Christian faith in indigenous cultures. In the period following the African march to political independence from colonialism up to the gradual appreciation and maturity of African theology, inculturation theology has been making inroads into African Christianity and changing the perception of Christianity as foreign. Many aspects of the faith are now understood and communicated in the light of African cultures. For example, Eugene Uzukwu's research work in some West African countries specifies how people of the West African region understand the Trinitarian doctrine through their traditional cultural religions. Earlier, Vincent Mulago, Charles Nyamiti, and Efoé Julien Pénoukou laboured

at developing a comprehensive inculturated systematic theological treatise using primarily some variation of African metaphysics based on the theory of life as vital participation.²² Not only have there been changes in forms of worship, liturgical vestments, and liturgical language, there have been efforts in various parts of Africa to adapt and inculturate the liturgy in various aspects of African socio-religious celebrations. For instance, specific rites like the Zairean rite have received official approval from the Vatican.²³ A field research conducted simultaneously in 2002 in three east African countries—Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda—organized by Laurenti Magesa offer more clues to the practice of inculturation in Africa. In Kenya, respondents point to elements like singing, clapping, dancing, using of drums, etc., as evidence of the incorporation of aspects of African custom and spirituality into liturgical celebration. They note that the shape of such Christian symbols like the crucifix, altars, and tabernacles are taking a much more African cultural outlook. In Tanzania and Uganda, respondents understand inculturation as taking popular spirituality seriously: that is, living the message of Jesus Christ or the Gospel using specific cultural elements like the drums, proverbs in liturgy, and moral teaching.²⁴

The Challenges to Inculturation

Amidst the achievements, myriad problems beset the inculturation of Christian faith in African cultures. Primarily, the challenges have been attitudinal, that is, the suspicion that inculturation represents a paganization of Christianity and the inability at times to link inculturation to the African quest for integral development as it responds to the challenges of modern nationhood. These concerns are not totally without merit. Uncritical adoption of African cultural values really can lead to the ‘paganization’ of Christianity, with the risk of Christianity being substituted with African traditional religions. No human culture is perfect, and so inculturation is a give-and-take process between Christian faith and cultures that encourages critical study of African cultures so as to avoid the danger of culturalism. At the same time, this critical study of Christian faith must be in tandem with the ‘de-Westernization’ of the African Christian mindset. Although advances have been made in this regard, the info-technological globalization has opened up multiple vistas of meaning often dominated by Western cultures, which appears to be reversing the gains. Many African peoples are attached to the Western products, lifestyles, and values spread through these

modern means of communication. African cultural values are increasingly seen as too traditional and as impediments to progress and development. Various African governments are also not helping matters by neglecting rural areas; this neglect fuels urban migration, which promotes individualistic and consumerist mentalities drawn from the Western mindset. At the other extreme are educated Africans who throw away the Christian faith as foreign because the form of Christianity they are familiar with is Western. Consequently, the practice of inculturation remains critical for the future of Christianity in Africa.

The grounding of Christian faith in the culture of a people and in the authentic national identity and patriotic spirit it creates indirectly promotes the human good. Inculturation removes the dichotomy between faith and life. Thus it contributes to the emergence of authentic human beings able to hold in tension the limitation and transcendence of culture and Christian faith, of inherited constitutive meanings and the Gospel values updating and refining one’s cultural values. It also has the potential to reconcile theologians who argue for liberation theology without engaging inculturation theology and those who argue for inculturation without liberation. Theological differences arise in Africa when theologians engaged in the various issues of culture, class, racial exploitation, oppression, and poverty reduce theology to their own specialization without relating the various issues of culture together.²⁵ Thus inculturation theology, African liberation theology, African women’s theology, and Black theology often seem to be engaged in an unnecessary and unproductive tug of war.²⁶

Understanding the intrinsic connection between inculturation and development or liberation correctly places inculturation where it can heal the “anthropological poverty”—that is, the crisis of identity arising from being mentally uprooted from their cultures that disorients Africans. Caught between two cultures, neither of which they recognize as fully theirs, African Christians become involved in syncretism religiously and fail to commit to national or social development. However, if inculturation succeeds in making Christianity part of ordinary life, the Christian faith will no longer be seen as foreign. Simultaneously, the liberation and salvation in Christ will cease to be merely spiritual but will have social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions as well. Not only will the crisis of identity of African Christians be healed by appreciation of their cultural values, Christian love will bring about changes in the

peoples' relationship with one another and to their cultures and communities in such a way that they will become willing to promote social justice, demand good governance, participate in national development, and effect social transformation.

The Way Forward

Africans need to adopt an attitudinal change toward their cultures and the Christian faith. The liberation of African Christianity from unnecessary foreign elements will focus on Christ as the Good News and not on its foreign garment as modelled by the missionaries. Thus Christianity will be seen for what it is: a transcultural movement that inaugurates the kingdom of God.

A fundamental reorientation is required to disabuse Africans of the negative attitude toward African traditional religions, which many still consider evil and devilish. The first step is to study African traditional religion. This study will be difficult, as people suspect anyone, especially a Christian, associated with traditional religion. The awkward situation here can be traced back to the ambivalent attitude that African Christians have towards traditional religion. They fear, respect, and consult it in private but disparage it in public as evil. One needs a lot of courage to begin such a study from a disinterested perspective, especially because the study of African traditional religions is most often done from a Christian perspective to point out how the religion is the *preparatio evangelica*, that is, the nurturing ground for Christianity. Such study does not allow the traditional religions to emerge and to speak for themselves.

One way to divest the African mind from its phobia toward African traditional religions is to de-Westernize the African clergy, both Catholic priests and ministers of the Reformed tradition, especially Pentecostals. Most Catholic priests are trained in seminaries that offer a Western-based curriculum with only a very limited place for African traditional religions and values. For this reason, most African Catholic priests are not predisposed to positive attitudes toward their cultures. While some Protestant clergy are more positively disposed toward African traditional religions and have actually undertaken foundational scholarship on them,²⁷ a good number of their clergy, notably Pentecostal ministers, dismiss African traditional religion as evil.²⁸ They are averse towards inculturation or any form of indigenization, which they interpret as the attempt of the devil to destroy the work of the missionaries and return Africa to the enemy of humankind. Pentecostalism, which is very influential

in Africa today, is not able to distinguish the Christian faith from the Western garb in which it is clothed. Most Pentecostal ministers reject traditional music, dances, festivities, etc., as pagan, sinful, and devilish. Thus the African cultures, religions, and spiritualities to which the people are accustomed are jettisoned in favour of what is considered Christian, dressed as it is in Western cultural forms. This continues to make Christianity a foreign religion in the consciousness of Africans, although often accepted because it makes one look "civilized." The consequence is the dual allegiance Africans pay to Christianity and to their traditional African religious spiritualities.

The changes in outlook toward inculturation must begin with changes to the curriculum in seminaries, houses of formation, schools, and colleges. If and where the church is unable to effect wholesale changes, it must at least change the curricula of seminaries and houses of religious formation to reflect and appreciate African religions and cultures. When this is done, the positive values of African traditional religions and cultures will enrich the Christian faith, and the Christian faith will enrich the African religions and cultures. Africans can then express their Christian faith using African images, symbols, arts, etc., without the guilt of worshipping idols. This would be an authentic incarnation of the Christian faith. Thus will Africans be truly and fully African and Christian at the same time.

Conclusion

Although it now seems obvious, the recognition of cultural pluralism and the respect expected for the integrity of world cultures is a great moral achievement emanating from the shift from the classicist to the empirical notion of culture. Our awareness of the mistakes of Christian missionary activities arising from the classicist notion of culture and the attendant anthropological crisis they engendered allows us to appreciate the significance of this shift for the success of mission and the mutual coexistence of peoples. However, this shift presents us with two challenges. First, we must promote widespread awareness of this shift and protect it against backsliding to the classicist mentality that inspires people to live in the modern world with a superannuated ideal of cultural superiority. Second, we must overcome fears of the implications of the historical mindedness inherent in empirical notions of culture and become open to possible changes in horizon. The promotion of a more indigenous Catholicism demands perseverance in

the implementation of the Vatican II notion of culture, which not only recognizes cultural pluralism but also, through other post-conciliar documents and institutions, teaches the benefits of the empirical notion of culture.

The dialogue of faith and culture stands to benefit from creative appropriation of the giant strides made at Vatican II. Local churches need to embrace the shift from classicist to modern notions of culture and look at their cultures, which have been demonized, in new ways as God's gifts containing unfathomable spiritual wealth that they may use to respond to the Gospel. Local churches should not only critically study their cultures in order to promote inculturation of the Good News into all aspects of their lives, but should also advance these cultures in the light of Gospel values. African theology cannot but mediate, to use Lonergan's words, "between [African] cultural matrix and the significance and role of [Christianity] in that matrix."²⁹

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1 Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* n. 113, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus_en.html.

2 Bede Jagoe, "Vatican II Comes to Africa," *Worship*, (2005) 79.6: 544-554: 550.

3 Alex B. Chima, "Africanizing the Liturgy – Where Are We Twenty Years after Vatican II?" *AFER*, 25 (1983): 280–292 at 282.

4 Ronald Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And the Causes that Hinder It* (Kindle Edition, Jawbone Digital, 2012), loc. 30.

5 Augustine S.O. Okwu, "The Weak Foundations of Missionary Evangelization in Precolonial Africa: The Case of the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria 1857–1900," *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. VIII, No. I, January, 1980, 31–50 at 32.

6 Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered: An Epistle from the Massai* (London: SCM Press, 1982), Kindle Edition, Loc. 477–485.

7 Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966). *Gaudium et Spes* n. 52-62 is devoted to culture as well as its relationship to the faith, revelation, and the Gospel.

8 Michael Paul Gallagher, SJ, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), 46.

9 Donald R. Campion, "The Church Today," in Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II*, 183–198.

10 Susan A. Ross, *Anthropology: Seeking Light and Beauty* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 32.

11 Philip Jenkins' book *The Lost History of Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008) chronicles the thousand-year golden age of the church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and how it died.

12 Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 116. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. Karl

Rahner interpreted such appropriation as the condition for the existence of a World Church. Cf. Karl Rahner, "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies*, 40, 4 (December 1979): 718, 724.

13 Paul VI, "Eucharistic Celebration at the Conclusion of the Symposium Organized by the Bishops of Africa," n. 2. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/homilies/1969/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19690731_en.html. See also *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 20 on the distinctness of the Gospel and culture and the imperative of the Gospel not being incompatible with culture of each people.

14 John Paul II, "Address of John Paul II to the Bishops of Nigeria. Lagos, Monday, 15 February, 1982, n. 3. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1982/february/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19820215_vescovi-nigeria_en.html.

15 The Pontifical Council for Culture, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_pro_06061999_en.html.

16 Bernard Lonergan, "Dimensions of Meaning," Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, eds., *Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 234.

17 Bernard Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," William F. J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J., eds., *A Second Collection: Papers by J. F. Lonergan, S.J.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 161. Writing in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lonergan used exclusivist language in the original.

18 Lonergan, in another article, "Theology and Man's Future," observes that classicist culture "set[s] up its own [culture] as the ideal and generously offered to instruct others in its own ways." Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Man's Future," William F. J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J., eds., *A Second Collection: Papers by J. F. Lonergan, S.J.*, 141.

19 Lonergan, "Theology and Man's Future," 141.

20 Lonergan, "Theology and Man's Future," 138–139.

21 Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," 160.

22 The theory of vital participation holds that God is the vital principle of life, and that human beings and the cosmos derive their force from communion of life and being with God. See James C. Okoye, CSSP, "Inculturation and Theology in Africa," *Mission Studies*, Vol. XIV, No. 1 (1997): 74–75.

23 Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, "Inculturation and the Liturgy (Eucharist)," in Rosino Gibellini, ed., *Paths of African Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 99.

24 Laurenti Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 5–76.

25 See Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, *African Narrative Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 21.

26 See Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

27 Examples include John S. Mbiti, an Anglican clergy from Kenya, whose foundational works were *African Religions and Philosophy* (Heinemann, 2nd revised and enlarged edition, 1990) and *Introduction to African Religion* (Heinemann, 2nd edition, 1991), as well as Bolaji Idowu, a Nigerian Methodist pastor who was the third indigenous leader of the Methodist Church Nigeria from 1972 to 1984. His pioneering work in African traditional religion includes *African Traditional Religion* (Norwich: SCM-Canterbury Press Ltd., 1974) and *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (New York: Frederick A. Preager, First Edition 1963; Ibadan: Wazobia, 1994).

28 See Kwabena J. Darkwa Amanor's article "Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Ghana and the African Culture: Confrontation or Compromise?" *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18 (2009), 123–140.

29 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, loc. 146.