

## **INCULTURATION (definition, attributes, motives, theological bases)**

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**“The Church must embrace all the peoples’ traditions that are reconcilable with the Gospel, so that the Church can bestow on them the richness of Christ and, at the same time, enrich herself with the multiform wisdom of the Earth’s nations. All of you know that *inculturation* places the Church on a difficult, but necessary path...”** (JOHN PAUL II, *To the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture*, 17-I-1987, 5: AAS 79 (1987) 1204-1205).

In a previous essay, we concisely studied the chronological development of the magisterial teachings regarding *inculturation*. There, we left behind the idea of adapting the cultures and embraced the *inculturation* definition. A definition endowed with an exact theological content, which anthropology of the culture helped coin in the beginning.

Now, we will continue elaborating the necessary framework to better understand this definition. Not a simple task, since *inculturation* is a neologism in the Church and there is still much work to be done. The following annotated magisterial texts give more a description than a definition of *inculturation*; however we fill that they can help us in our essay. Other theological works in this document offer both. By using all of this material, we have endeavored to precise, to the best of our abilities, a definition of *inculturation* and its content.

## **1. Towards a definition of Inculturation**

Here we will address the matter of the *inculturation* definition and provide, on the one hand, a few magisterial teachings and, on the other, some definitions -in chronological order- of a good many theologians.

### **1.1 John Paul II**

We begin with several texts of John Paul II in which the Pontiff describes *inculturation*.

Most of them are speeches given during the Pontiff's many apostolic voyages. Although many of those speeches have a predominantly pastoral purpose, we believe that they define *inculturation* with a language which the people of faith can easily understand. Other texts, such as the *Slavorum apostoli* Encyclical, have a diverse value. The following texts are in chronological order:

### 1.1.1 In Nairobi (7-V-1980)

“The ‘acculturation’ or ‘inculturation’ which you rightly promote will truly be a reflection of the Incarnation of the Word when a culture, transformed and regenerated by the Gospel, brings forth from its own living tradition original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought. By respecting, preserving and fostering the particular values and riches of your people’s cultural heritage, you will be in a position to lead them to a better understanding of the mystery of Christ, which is to be lived in the noble, concrete and daily experiences of African life. There is no question of adulterating the word of God, or of emptying the Cross of this power, but rather of bringing Christ into every center of African life and of lifting up all African life to Christ. Thus not only is Christianity relevant to Africa, but Christ, in the members of his Body, is himself African”<sup>1</sup>.

### 1.1.2 In Kumasi (9-V-1980)

“...the Bishops must carry on the task of inculturating the Gospel for the good of each people, precisely so that Christ may be communicated to every man, woman and child. In this process, cultures themselves must be uplifted, transformed and permeated by Christ’s original message of divine truth, without harming what is noble in them. Hence worthy African traditions are to be preserved. Moreover, in accordance with the full truth of the Gospels and in harmony with the Magisterium of the Church, living and dynamic African traditions are to be consolidated”<sup>2</sup>.

### 1.1.3 *Slavorum apostoli* (2-VI-1985)

“Inculturation is the incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures and also the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church.”<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1.4 In Kinshasa (15-VIII-1985)

“Inculturation, if properly understood, is the growth of the Church in this land, is the concrete form of the Covenant between God and men in this place and time. Is the embrace of universal

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\* “Al entrar en contacto con las culturas, la Iglesia debe acoger todo lo que en las tradiciones de los pueblos es conciliable con el Evangelio para aportarles las riquezas de Cristo y para enriquecerse ella misma con la sabiduría multiforme de las naciones de la tierra. Vosotros lo sabéis: la inculturación coloca a la Iglesia en un camino difícil, pero necesario...” JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso al Pontificio Consejo para la Cultura*, 17-I-1987, 5: AAS 79 (1987) 1204-1205.

<sup>1</sup> JUAN PABLO II, *Speech to the Episcopal Conference of Kenya, Nairobi*, 7-V-1980, 6: AAS 72 (1980) 497.

<sup>2</sup> ID., *Address to the Bishops of Ghana, Kumasi*, 9-V-1980, 3: AAS 72 (1980) 515. In this address, John Paul II indicates two aspects or dimensions of the Episcopal responsibility within the inculturation process: 1) preserve unchangeably the content of the catholic faith and maintain the ecclesial unity in the whole world; 2) generate original, cultural, and Christian expressions of life, celebration and thought.

<sup>3</sup> ID., *Encyclical *Slavorum apostoli** (2-VI-1985), 21a: AAS 77 (1985) 802.

truth by a human community who has a particular sensibility that has been formed by their search of life's meaning."<sup>4</sup>

### 1.1.5 *In Delhi (1-II-1986)*

"This must done with due regard for the great challenge of 'inculturation'. God's Revelation took place in a specific culture, but from the very beginning it was destined for all cultures. It is the Church's task to bring the Good News of salvation to all cultures and to translate this treasure of the faith, the originality of its content, into legitimate forms of expression that each and every people of this world can understand."<sup>5</sup>

### 1.1.6 *In Cartagena (6-VII-1986)*

"This is the true process of 'inculturation', when the cultural language of each people is able to express and proclaim to the world that Christ is the Son of God, the Savior, who has risen from the dead and is the center of creation and the history of mankind. Thus, the faith planted in each person's heart and people lives and is communicated permanently in the culture when she (the faith) has been permeated by the spirit of the gospel, which is the spirit of the beatitudes and commandment of love."<sup>6</sup>

### 1.1.7 *Al Pontificio Consejo para la Cultura (13-I-1989)*

"To inculturate the Gospel is not to bring it back to the ephemeral, and to reduce it to the superficial which influences the changing current situation. On the contrary, it is with full spiritual courage that we insert the force of the Gospel leaven, and its newness, which is younger than anything modern, into the very heart of the profound disturbances of our time, to give life to new modes of thinking, acting and living. It is fidelity to the covenant with eternal wisdom which

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<sup>4</sup> ID., *With the diocesan community of Kinshasa*, in the Cathedral; 15-VIII-1985, 4: IGP2 VIII/2 1985 417-418: "L'inculturation, si on l'entend bien, est la croissance de l'Eglise sur ce sol, c'est la forme concrète de l'Alliance entre Dieu et les hommes, en ce lieu et en ce temps. C'est l'accueil de la vérité universelle par une communauté humaine douée de sa sensibilité particulière, formée par sa longue recherche du sens de la vie".

<sup>5</sup> ID., *Speech to the Bishops of India*, Delhi, 1-II-1986, 5: AAS 78 (1986) 748.

<sup>6</sup> ID., *Discurso en el encuentro 500 años de evangelización en América Latina*, Cartagena, Colombia, 6-VII-1986, 7: AAS 79 (1987) 105: "Este es el verdadero proceso de «inculturación», mediante el cual la palabra de la cultura de cada pueblo se vuelve apta para manifestar y pregonar a los cuatro vientos que Cristo es el Hijo de Dios, el Salvador, que ha resucitado y es el centro de la creación y de la historia humana. Así pues, la fe, recibida en el corazón de cada persona y de cada pueblo, se expresa y vive de modo permanente en la propia cultura cuando ésta ha sido impregnada por el espíritu evangélico, que es el espíritu de las bienaventuranzas y del mandamiento del amor".

is the ceaselessly self-renewing source of new cultures. Individuals who have received the newness of the Gospel appropriate and interiorize it in such a way as to re-express it in their daily lives, in accordance with their particular genius. In this way, the inculturation of the Gospel goes hand in hand with the renewal of cultures and thus promotes them in the Church as well as in the State.”<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1.8 In Salvador (20-X-1991)

“On the other hand, the cultures must understand the Gospel and, at the same time, the Gospel must speak their language, must question them and be questioned by them if it wishes to efficiently and respectfully infuse them. The Gospel must get to know the cultures’ origins, identify and discern their authentic values so it may assume them, if they are compatible with the Gospel, or to purify the false values or anti-values. This is the inculturation of the Gospel; it is not a timely adaptation more or less to the cultural values of an environment, it is a true incarnation in the culture in order to purify and redeem it.”<sup>8</sup>

## 1.2 Synod of Bishops (1985), final report

Even though it is only a reference, we believe these few words help us in our essay:

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<sup>7</sup> ID., *Speech to the Pontifical Council of the Culture*, 13-I-1989, 6: AAS 81 (1989) 859-860: “Inculturer l’Evangile, ce n’est pas le ramener à l’éphémère et le réduire au superficiel qui agitent la mouvante actualité. C’est au contraire, avec une audace toute spirituelle, insérer la force du levain de l’Evangile et sa nouveauté plus jeune que toute modernité, au cœur même des ébranlements de notre temps, en gestation de nouveaux modes de penser, d’agir et de vivre. C’est la fidélité à l’alliance avec la sagesse éternelle qui est la source sans cesse renaissante de nouvelles cultures. Les personnes qui ont reçu la nouveauté de l’Evangile se l’approprient et l’intériorisent de manière à le réexprimer dans leur vécu quotidien, selon leur génie propre. Ainsi l’inculturation de l’Evangile dans les cultures va-t-elle de pair avec leur renouvellement et entraîne-t-elle leur authentique promotion dans l’Eglise comme dans la Cité”.

<sup>8</sup> ID., *Speech to the representatives of the world of culture*, Brazil, 20-X-1991, 4: IGP2 XIV/2 (1991) 960: “Por outro lado, para que o Evangelho possa penetrar de modo eficaz e respeitoso nas culturas, deve ser por elas compreendido, deve falar sua linguagem, deve questioná-las e se deixar por elas questionar. Deve, pois, conhecer suas raízes, saber indentificá-las, discernir os valores autênticos para assumi-los, na medida em que sejam compatíveis com a mensagem evangélica ou para purificar os valores falsos ou os antivalores. Esta é a inculturação do Evangelho, não uma adaptação mais o menos oportuna aos valores da cultura ambiente, mas uma verdadeira encarnação nesta cultura para purificá-la e redimi-la”.

“...the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity in the various human cultures.”<sup>9</sup>

### 1.3 Other definitions

We offer here a collection of definitions from different theological documents on culture and *inculturation*:

#### 1.3.1 Card. Paul Zoungrana (1975)

“Inculturation, called also indigenization, is the effort of incarnating Christ’s message in a specific culture. Christianity does not identify itself with any specific culture; however its intrinsic vitality is expressed through the richness of the diverse cultures. In this sense, inculturation is necessary to Christianity’s life. It is a constant and universal process since all culture changes.”<sup>10</sup>

#### 1.3.2 Samuel Rayan, S. J. (1976)

“It is with the insertion of the faith into the life-stream of peoples, and the expression of faith-life in terms of their concrete historical existence, as well as the insertion of the people’s life into the faith at levels deeper than any particular expressions.”<sup>11</sup>

#### 1.3.3 Kurien Kunnumpuram, S. J. (1976)

“By inculturation we mean the process by which the gospel’s message and the Christian way of life are inserted into the culture of a particular people.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> SYNOD OF BISHOPS (1985), Second Extraordinary General Assembly, Final report *Ecclesia sub verbo Dei mysteria Christi celebrans pro salute mundi*, 7-XII-1985, II, D, 4: EV 9/1813. For the latin text, see footnote n.

<sup>10</sup> Taken from: CAPRILE, GIOVANNI, *Problemi dell’Evangelizzazione in Africa. Il Simposio dell’episcopato africano a Roma*, o. c., pág. 484: “L’inculturazione, detta pure indigenizzazione è lo sforzo di incarnare il messaggio di Cristo in una determinata cultura. Il cristianesimo non si identifica con nessuna cultura determinata, ma la sua intima vitalità si esprime attraverso le ricchezze delle diverse culture. In tal senso l’inculturazione è necessaria alla vita del cristianesimo. Dev’essere un processo costante e universale perché ogni cultura si evolve”.

<sup>11</sup> RAYAN, SAMUEL, S. J., *Flesh of India’s Flesh*, en «Jeevadhara»VI (1976) 267.

<sup>12</sup> KUNNUMPURAM, KURIEN, S. J., *Inculturation in Vatican II*, en «Jeevadhara»VI (1976) 283.

#### 1.3.4 Alfredo Marranzini, S. J. (1976)

“... the effort into incarnating the Gospel’s message in every culture, into integrating the Church in a particular history, in a community’s own way of life, without betraying the transcendent and universal character of Christ, of his Word and his Church.”<sup>13</sup>

#### 1.3.5 Robert Rweyemamu (1977)

“This process (of *inculturation*) of the missionary Church tries to infuse the content and the object of the gospel’s message in the cultural terms, at a real “world” level, of which the addressee is part of in life.”<sup>14</sup>

#### 1.3.6 Pedro Arrupe, S. J. (1977)

“It is to infuse the faith in the meandrous inner depths of man’s life, reaching his way of thinking, feeling, and acting under the Spirit of God’s inspiration. It is an opportunity to offer all cultural values the possibility to serve the Gospel. It is an uninterrupted dialogue between the Word of God and the countless ways that man uses to express himself.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> MARRANZINI, ALFREDO, S. J., *Evangelizzazione e inculturazione*, en «Rassegna di Teologia» XVII (1976) 347: “inculturazione della fede, intesa come sforzo d’incarnare il messaggio evangelico in ogni cultura, di concretizzazione della Chiesa nella storia particolare, nelle condizioni proprie di ogni comunità umana, senza tradire il carattere trascendente e universale di Cristo, della sua Parola e della sua Chiesa”.

<sup>14</sup> RWEYEMAMU, ROBERT, *Il linguaggio della Chiesa missionaria*, en AA. VV., *L’Annuncio del Vangelo Oggi. Commento all’Esortazione Apostolica di Paolo VI Evangelii nuntiandi*, Roma, Pontificia Università Urbaniana, 1977, pág. 211: “La funzione culturale del linguaggio inizia e interpreta un processo di profondo adattamento –l’inculturazione. Questo processo della Chiesa missionaria tenta di inserire il contenuto e l’oggetto del messaggio evangelico in termini culturali al livello del «mondo» reale di cui il destinatario è parte nella vita”.

<sup>15</sup> ARRUPE, PEDRO, S. J., *Catechesi e Inculturazione*, in «Aggiornamenti sociali» 28 (1977) 666: “È il corollario pratico di quel principio teologico che afferma che Cristo è l’unico Salvatore e che niente si salva fuori di Lui. Da qui la conseguenza che Cristo deve assumere nel corpo –che è la Chiesa- tutte le culture, purificandole, ed è scontato, da tutto ciò che in queste è contrario al suo Spirito, e salvandole, così, senza distruggerle. È la penetrazione della fede nei meandri più profondi della vita dell’uomo, arrivando fino a colpire la sua maniera di pensare, di sentire e di agire sotto l’ispirazione dello Spirito di Dio. È offrire a tutti i valori culturali una stessa possibilità di mettersi al servizio del Vangelo. È un dialogo continuo tra la Parola di Dio e le innumerevoli maniere che ha l’uomo di esprimersi”.

We have given beforehand this definition of F. Arrupe since it was pronounced earlier than his better known definition that is included in the *Letter on Inculturation* addressed to the whole Society as

### 1.3.7 Arij A. Roest Crollius, S. J. (1978)

“The inculturation of the Church is the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, guides and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the universal Church.”<sup>16</sup>

### 1.3.8 Eduardo Cárdenas, S. J. (1978)

“It is the process by which the Church embraces the identity of diverse peoples and cultures, as well as their aspirations toward their own humanization and intelligence of the Christian mystery in accordance with their traditions and history.”<sup>17</sup>

### 1.3.9 Catalino G. Arevalo, S. J. (1979)

“Re-reading the Gospel and the Christian tradition from within the total human situation, as interpreted by the (best) analytical methods or by given paradigms of interpretation at our disposal, from the standpoint of the real human experience, and from within a given cultural/historical collocation in the light of the felt or implicit questions and concerns, of the projects of men and woman of our time. Towards discerning, within the Christian community

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Father General: “Inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a “new creation”.”; in ID., *Letter on Inculturation* (14-V-1978, in «Acta Romana Societatis Iesu» XVII (1978) 230). And in the working paper that accompanies the aforementioned letter, there is another definition: “the effort that the Church does to present the Gospel’s message and values incarnated in the ways and terms that belong to each culture; thus faith and Christian experience of each local church is introduced more intimately and profoundly in the cultural framework.”, ID., *Working paper on inculturation* (14-V-1978), 1: en «Acta Romana Societatis Iesu» XVII (1978) 240.

<sup>16</sup> ROEST CROLLIUS, ARIJ A., S. J., *What is so new about inculturation?*, in «Gregorianum» 59 (1978) 735; years later the same author gives the same definition in: ID., *Inculturazione della fede: la problematica attuale*, in GENERO, BARTOLOMEO, S. J. (a cura di), *Inculturazione della fede. Saggi Interdisciplinari*, Edizioni Dehoniane-Napoli, 1981, págs. 31-32.

<sup>17</sup> CÁRDENAS, EDUARDO, S. J., *La Primera Evangelización y la Evangelización en el presente y en el futuro de América Latina*, en «Theologica Xaveriana» XXVIII (1978) 196: “Es el proceso por el que la Iglesia asume la identidad de los diversos pueblos y culturas y sus aspiraciones a la propia humanización y a la inteligencia del misterio cristiano en forma concorde con sus tradiciones y su historia”.



and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the shape of 'the Christian vision' that speaks most deeply and most urgently to us, where we are, at this moment of history, and towards discerning also the imperatives, decisions, commitment and action, which Christian faith and worship and Christian responsibility point to, with a view to our ongoing present and the future of the societies we are committed to help to build in obedience to God's designs for mankind and in relation to the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God."<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3.10 Jesús Ángel Barreda, O. P. (1979)

"By *inculturation* we understand the process that leads to the insertion of the Gospel in a specific culture, so that the Good News may be fully lived in the culture... It is the dynamic process that leads to the incarnation of the Gospel in a new cultural environment."<sup>19</sup>

### 1.3.11 L. Monsengwo Pasinya (1979)

"*Inculturation* is a new formulation, a re-expression of a message, not in the sense of an adaptation –of which it is difficult to see its object– but in the sense of a new synthesis (cfr. AG n. 15 and 22). *Inculturation* gives life to a new message, not in its principle which is Christ, but in its expressive manifestation."<sup>20</sup>

### 1.3.12 Michel Sales, S. J. (1979)

"*Inculturation* is the insertion of the faith and Christian life in the culture and human cultures, or the evangelization, theoretical or practical, of the culture and cultures."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> ARÉVALO, CATALINO G., S. J., *Prenotes to the Contextualization of Theology*, en «Philippiniana Sacra» XIV (1979) 23.

<sup>19</sup> BARREDA, JESÚS ÁNGEL, O. P., *La Inculturación, tarea prioritaria para la evangelización*, in «Studium» 19 (1979) 232-233: "Por *inculturación* entendemos el proceso que conduce a la inserción del Evangelio en una determinada cultura, de modo que la Buena Nueva llegue a ser vivida en toda plenitud en dicha cultura... Es el proceso dinámico que conduce a la encarnación evangélica en un nuevo ambiente cultural".

<sup>20</sup> PASINYA, L. MONSENGWO, *Inculturation du Message à l'exemple du Zaïre*, in «Spiritus» XX (1979) 95-96: "L'*inculturation* est une formulation nouvelle, una ré-expression du message, non pas au sens d'une adaptation –dont on verrait d'ailleurs mal l'objet– mais au sens d'une synthèse nouvelle (cfr. AG n. 15 y 22). L'*inculturation* est une génération nouvelle du message, non pas dans son principe qui est le Christ, mais dans sa manifestation expressive".

<sup>21</sup> SALES, MICHEL, S. J., *Le Christianisme, la culture et les cultures*; in «Axes» XIII (1980/1-2) 18: "L'*inculturation*, c'est l'insertion de la foi et de la vie chrétienne, dans la culture et les cultures humaines, ou encore l'«*évangélisation*», théorique et pratique, de la culture et des cultures".

### 1.3.13 Marcello Zago, O. M. I. (1980)

“*Inculturation* is the global process that makes a particular church a sign and sacrament of Christ and of his salvation in the living culture where it finds itself. It is accomplished by deeply inserting Christ in ecclesiastical life, in a specific context, in such a way that adequate expressions emerge. It is not in any way a technique, but rather a life in Christ that pierces more profoundly and concretely and it consequently manifests itself. It is not about unrelated aspects such as the integration of Christians, the adaptation of books, the *inculturation* of liturgy or catechism, etc. *Inculturation* is all that and more; it is the incarnation of a community experience in a specific cultural context, which can be expressed in a new comprehensive and questioning manner to all men of good will.”<sup>22</sup>

### 1.3.14 Angelo Amato, S. D. B. (1980)

“*Inculturation* means the reconceptualization and theoretic reformulation and practical re-expression of the Christian faith in a sociocultural area, so that said experience and essential testimony can become the inspiring normative and unifying principle that transforms and recreates a specific culture and subsequently giving birth to a new and authentic creation.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> ZAGO, MARCELLO, O. M. I., *Catechesi in Ambiente Buddhista*, in AA. VV., *Andate e Insegnate. Commento all'Esortazione Apostolica Catechesi Tradendae*, Editrice Missionaria Italiana, Bologna 1980, pág. 577: “L’inculturazione è il processo globale che rende una chiesa particolare segno e sacramento di Cristo e della sua salvezza nella cultura viva in cui se trova. Si attua attraverso un approfondimento della vita ecclesiale nel Cristo in un contesto determinato, tale da far sorgere espressioni adeguate. Non si tratta solo e innanzitutto di una tecnica, ma di una vita nel Cristo che si approfondisce concretamente e si manifesta conseguentemente. Non si tratta di aspetti particolari disarticolati come l’integrazione dei cristiani, l’adattamento delle opere, l’inculturazione della liturgia e della catechesi ecc. L’inculturazione è tutto questo e più ancora è l’incarnazione della esperienza comunitaria in un determinato contesto culturale, sì da potersi esprimere in modo nuovo, comprensivo e interpellante per tutti gli uomini di buona volontà”.

<sup>23</sup> AMATO, ANGELO, S. D. B., *Mariologia in Contesto*, I. 2, in «Marianum» XLII (1980) 427: “Inculturazione significa riconcettualizzazione e riformulazione teorica e riespressione pratica della fede cristiana in una data area socioculturale, sì che tale esperienza e testimonianza fontale possa diventare il principio ispiratore normativo e unificante, che trasforma e ricrea una determinata cultura dando origine a una autentica «nuova creazione»”. Several years later, this same author wrote: “L’inculturazione pertanto può definirsi come un processo ecclesiale di incarnazione e di riespressione vitale del vangelo mediante i valori propri di una cultura nella purificazione e nella rimozione di quelle realtà culturali antievangeliche”, cfr. ID., “«Verbi Revelati 'Accommodata Praedicatio' Lex Omnis Evangelizationis» (GS n. 44) Riflessioni storico-theologiche sull’inculturazione”, in «Ricerche Teologiche» 2 (1991) 121.

### 1.3.15 Michael Amaladoss, S. J. (1981)

“*Inculturation* implies an incarnational process by which the Gospel becomes the animating principle of the culture it encounters, its system of values, its world-view, its socio-economic and political structures, etc.”<sup>24</sup>

### 1.3.16 Ma. José Tresch, Ssno (1981)

“...the effort that the Church carries out so as to present the Gospel’s message and values through the own expressions of each culture, therefore the faith and experience of each local church will be intimately and profoundly permeated by its cultural context.”<sup>25</sup>

### 1.3.17 John Mutiso-Mbinda (1982)

“...the effort (that the local African church is making) to proclaim Christ and the values He defended, as we find them in the Gospel’s message, and incarnating them in the expression and symbols that have been taken from the people’s life experience.”<sup>26</sup>

### 1.3.18 Bruno Secondin (1982)

“...the vital relation between the Christian message and the cultures, when they both flourish in a vital and progressive line of insertion and deep fertilization.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> AMALADOSS, MICHAEL, S. J., *Inculturation in India*, in «East Asian Pastoral Review» 18 (1981) 320.

<sup>25</sup> TRESCH, MA. JOSÉ, Ssno, *La Inculturación: razones, modalidades y contenidos*, in «Omnis Terra» XIII (1981) 304: “el esfuerzo que la Iglesia lleva a cabo por presentar el mensaje y los valores del Evangelio a través de las expresiones que son propias de cada cultura, de manera que la fe y la experiencia de cada Iglesia local esté íntima y profundamente embebida de su mismo contexto cultural”.

<sup>26</sup> MUTISO-MBINDA, JOHN, *Inculturación e Iglesia local Africana*, in «Misiones Extranjeras» 70-71 (1982) 333: “el esfuerzo [que la Iglesia local en África está haciendo en su intento] por proclamar a Cristo y los valores que él defendió, como los encontramos en el mensaje evangélico, encarnándolos en expresiones y símbolos tomados de las experiencias de vida de la gente”.

<sup>27</sup> SECONDIN, BRUNO, *Messaggio evangelico e culture. Problemi e dinamiche della mediazione culturale*, Edizioni Paoline, Roma 1982, pág. 62: “...il rapporto vitale fra messaggio cristiano e culture, quando esso si sviluppa nella linea di un vitale e progressivo inserimento e di profonda fecondazione”.

### 1.3.19 Karl Müller, S. D. V. (1983)

“Inculturation is a kind of encounter. It makes the message of Christ, which is already concretized in a definite culture, meet with another culture which is not yet conscious of Christ but which is permeated with rays of the Logos. In this encounter both opportunity and risk go hand in hand. An opportunity is provided since, due to our common origin and our common calling, the preliminary conditions for mutual understanding are present. But a risk is also involved, as there are differences which could make understanding difficult or even give rise to opposition”<sup>28</sup>.

### 1.3.20 Jacques Scheuer, S. J. (1984)

“*Inculturation* is the process by which life and the Christian message are inserted in a specific culture, that is to say they incarnate themselves in a cultural community, in a particular society; and there they become so rooted that they produce new riches, unprecedented forms of thought, of action, and of rite...”<sup>29</sup>

### 1.3.21 Pierfilippo M. Guglielminetti, S. J. (1984)

“*Inculturation* is the original process of incarnation of the Gospel and Christian life in a given sociocultural context, beginning from the “kerigmatic” announcement of Christ’s event (completely cleansed of all former *inculturation* done in another context), so that the structure of theological reflection and ecclesiastic institutions may be materialized by the Christian natives of a certain place and in accordance with the categories and models of their own culture.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> MÜLLER, KARL, *Accommodation and Inculturation in the Papal Documents*, in «Verbum SVD» 24 (1983) 358. Several years later, this same author wrote: “Essa significa una trasformazione interiore, nel senso che la cultura precristiana e il fermento del messaggio cristiano crescono insieme dall’interno, dando luogo a qualcosa di nuovo, di vivo, e nel senso che questo nuovo diventa un arricchimento per tutta la Chiesa, facendone un segno più comprensibile y un strumento più adatto della missione”, cfr. ID., *Teologia della Missione. Un’Introduzione*, Editrice Missionaria Italiana, Bologna 1991, pág. 212.

<sup>29</sup> SCHEUER, JACQUES, S. J., *L’Inculturation. Présentation du thème*, in «Lumen Vitae» 39 (1984) 253: “L’inculturation est le processus par lequel la vie et le message chrétiens s’insèrent dans une culture particulière, s’incarnent pour ainsi dire dans une communauté culturelle, une société donnée, et y prennent si bien racine qu’ils produisent de nouvelles richesses, des formes inédites de pensée, d’action, de célébration...”

<sup>30</sup> GUGLIELMINETTI, PIERFILIPPO M., S. J., *Dall’inculturazione alla transculturazione. Rapporti tra evangelizzazione e cultura alla luce del Decreto conciliare «Ad Gentes»*, in «Rassegna di Teologia» XXV (1984) 224: “L’inculturazione è un processo originale di incarnazione del Vangelo e della vita cristiana in un dato contesto socio-culturale, partendo dall’annuncio «kerigmatico» dell’evento di Cristo (deculturizzato da ogni precedente inculturazione compiuta in un altro contesto), in modo tale che la struttura della

### 1.3.22 René Jaouen, O. M. I. (1984)

“Inculturation may be defined as the unprecedented answer of a particular culture to the first announcement of the Gospel, after a continual evangelization.”<sup>31</sup>

### 1.3.23 Sebastian Karotemprel, S. D. B. (1984)

“...the process by which Jesus Christ’s revelation is incarnated in a concrete culture, a process that loses nothing of what is essential of the Revelation and the culture. It is a process that makes Revelation understandable, conceivable, expressible through rite, divisible in propositions, assimilated, lived, proclaimed and evidenced in a specific way and emphatic variants.”<sup>32</sup>

### 1.3.24 Sabino A. Vengco (1984)

“*Inculturation* is a process that integrates the Christian faith and life in a given culture, and also integrates a new cultural experience in the life of the universal Church. *Inculturation* is not primarily a matter of theory, still less of legislation, but a process of growth towards maturity and fullness of the Christian experience in the specific cultural setting of a local Church.”<sup>33</sup>

### 1.3.25 Duilio Bonifazi (1984)

“The process by which the Church and Faith, as seeds, are implanted in a specific culture, blossoming and flourishing there, expressing themselves in the ways and mental structures of the

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riflessione teologica e le istituzioni ecclesiali possano essere materializzate dai cristiani nativi del luogo, secondo le categorie e i modelli della loro propria cultura”. We believe that what the author states about removing all former inculturation varies from what is said in CT53.

<sup>31</sup> JAOUEN, RENE, O. M. I., *Les conditions d’une inculturation fiable. Observations d’un missionnaire au Cameroun*, in «Lumière et Vie» XXXIII (1984/3) 33: “Cela dit, l’inculturation pourrait se définir comme *la réponse inédite d’une culture donnée à la première annonce de l’Evangile, puis à l’évangélisation continue*”.

<sup>32</sup> KAROTEMPREL, SEBASTIAN, SDB, *Inculturazione e Formazione Missionaria*, in AMATO, ANGELO - STRUS, ANDRZEJ (a cura di), *Inculturazione e formazione salesiana*, Editrice S. D. B., Roma 1984, págs. 379: “Per inculturazione intendo il processo mediante il quale la rivelazione di Gesù Cristo è incarnata in una cultura concreta, un processo nel quale niente va perduto di ciò che è essenziale alla rivelazione e alla cultura nella quale è portato. È un processo mediante il quale la rivelazione è compresa, concepita, espressa in culto, formulata in proposizioni, assimilata, vissuta, proclamata e testimoniata in una maniera specifica e con enfasi varianti”.

<sup>33</sup> VENGCO, SABINO A., *Another Look at inculturation*, in «Philippine Studies» 32 (1984) 195.

culture, and also in its praxis whether through the experience of the local Church and Faith or in liturgical celebration whether through the creation of locally placed theology.”<sup>34</sup>

### 1.3.26 *Mariasusai Dhavamony, S. J. (1985)*

“*Inculturation* is the process of preaching the Gospel’s message to the soul of a culture in such a way that the Christian message and life are not only expressed with the culture’s own elements, but also is evangelized and, at the same time, its Christian life and experience are enriched.”<sup>35</sup>

### 1.3.27 *José Saraiva Martins (1986)*

“...the deep insertions of the Christian message in the heart of a culture, so that the seed of faith may sprout, develop, flourish, and fructify according to its virtuality and specific nature.”<sup>36</sup>

### 1.3.28 *Jaime Vélez Correa, S. J. (1987)*

“To *inculturate* is to Incarnate the Gospel in the culture, it is a complex process that allows the message to insert itself in a sociocultural medium and to develop those cultural values that do not oppose the message, process that some theologians call ‘naturalizing the Church’”.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> BONIFAZI, DUILIO, *La Chiesa Locale Soggetto della Inculturazione*, in «Lateranum» L (1984) 243: “...il processo mediante il quale la Fede e la Chiesa, come un seme, vengono inserite in una certa cultura, germinano e si sviluppano in essa, si esprimono nelle sue forme, nei suoi schemi mentali, nella sua prassi sia nell’esperienza di Fede e di Chiesa locale, sia nella celebrazione liturgica, sia nell’elaborazione di una teologia localmente situata”.

<sup>35</sup> DHAVAMONY, MARIASUSAI, S. J., *Problematica dell’inculturazione del vangelo oggi*, in «Stromata» XLI (1985) 269: “Inculturazione significa il processo di infondere il messaggio evangelico nell’anima di una cultura in modo tale che il messaggio e vita cristiana è non solamente espresso con gli elementi propri di questa cultura ma anche la cultura stessa è evangelizzata e diventa un arricchimento della esperienza e vita cristiana”. The same definition wrote in ID., *Problemática actual de la inculturación del Evangelio*, in AA. VV., *Evangelización de la cultura e inculturación del Evangelio*, Buenos Aires, Guadalupe, 1988, pág. 143.

<sup>36</sup> SARAIVA MARTINS, JOSÉ, *Missione e Cultura*, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, Studia Urbaniana/28, Roma 1986, pág. 26: “...il profondo inserimento del messaggio cristiano nel cuore stesso di una cultura, perché il seme della fede germini, si sviluppi, fiorisca e fruttifichi secondo le virtualità e l’indole specifica della medesima”.

<sup>37</sup> VÉLEZ CORREA, JAIME, S. J., *Para una Evangelización de la cultura (Historia de los términos y de la problemática)*, in «Vida y Espiritualidad» 3 (1987/3) 35: “*Inculturar* es Encarnar el Evangelio en la cultura, proceso complejo que hace que el mensaje penetre en el medio socio-cultural y desarrolle aquellos valores culturales que no contrarían el mensaje, lo que algunos teólogos llaman ‘naturalizar a la Iglesia’”.

### 1.3.29 Paolo Giglione (1987)

*"Inculturation* is the insertion of the Church in the culture of a people, it is a process by which the Gospel's message is inserted in a human culture; it is the expression of the Gospel's unchanging doctrine through the new models taken from the people's culture."<sup>38</sup>

### 1.3.30 Louis J. Luzbetak, S. D. V. (1988)

"The penetration of the Gospel's message into, and its integration with, the community's culture as a single system of belief, values, and behavior; making the Gospel message generative and creative with the culture."<sup>39</sup>

### 1.3.31 Achiel Peelman (1988)

*"Inculturation* of the Gospel is none other than the mysterious and intimate encounter of the Gospel with the peoples and human groups that embrace it."<sup>40</sup>

### 1.3.32 Hans Waldenfels (1988)

*"Inculturation*, at a Christian-missiological level, must indicate the process by which the announcement or reality of Jesus Christ's Gospel takes root in the diverse cultures and religions of the Earth."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> GIGLIONI, PAOLO, *Inculturazione e Missione*, in AA. VV., *Chiesa Locale e Inculturazione nella Missione*, Editrice Missionaria Italiana, Bologna 1987, pág. 83: "Inculturazione: è l'inserimento della Chiesa nella cultura di un popolo, il processo con cui il messaggio evangelico si inserisce in una cultura umana; è l'espressione della dottrina immutabile del Vangelo attraverso modelli nuovi presi dalle culture di un popolo".

<sup>39</sup> LUZBETAK, LOUIS J., S. V. D., *The Church and Cultures. New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, Maryknoll, Orbis Book, Maryknoll, New York 1988, pág. 82.

<sup>40</sup> PEELMAN, ACHIEL., *L'inculturazione. La Chiesa e le culture*, Queriniana, Brescia 1993, pág. 6: "Inculturazione del Vangelo, non è altro che il mistero dell'incontro intimo del Vangelo con i popoli e i gruppi umani che lo accolgono".

<sup>41</sup> WALDENFELS, HANS, (a cura di), *Inculturazione*, in «Nuovo Dizionario delle Religioni» Edizioni San Paolo, Minalo 1988, pág.: 449: "Rispetto a questi, l'inculturazione, a livello cristiano-missologico, deve indicare il processo nel quale l'annuncio, oppure la realtà, del vangelo di Gesù Cristo mette radici nelle diverse culture e religioni della terra".

### 1.3.33 Romano Penna (1988)

“It is an ecclesial praxis starting from the knowledge and acceptance of the differentiated cultures. It recognizes the possibility to insert the Gospel’s seeds in the cultures, so that, based on a mutual fertilization, not only an authentic incarnation of the same Gospel is done but also a fruitful regeneration of the particular culture.”<sup>42</sup>

### 1.3.34 Mons. Antonio do Carmo Cheuiche, O. C. D. (1989)

“...it is a reciprocal annex between the Gospel and the cultures. The Church makes her own the cultural elements of a specific social group and, on the other hand, the culture takes possession of the ultimate sense of the Gospel’s reality and fundamental values, so that a culture begins to reorient its route in the dynamic search of human self-realization.”<sup>43</sup>

### 1.3.35 Battista Mondin (1989)

“It is that process by which a new thought, a philosophical or religious system adjust itself to the different components of a specific culture by assuming the language, costumes, laws, institutions, values, etc.”<sup>44</sup>

### 1.3.36 Paulo Suess (1989)

“*Inculturation* is a process that brings closer the cultural universe of one to another, surrounding the messenger and message; that is, the messenger does not wish to identify with the other since this would remove any alterity and liberty. *Inculturation* has a communication modal that does not confuse the *sender* with the *receiver*, both of which are parts of any dialogue. This

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<sup>42</sup> PENNA, ROMANO, *Cultura/Acculturazione*, in «Nuovo Dizionario di Teologia Biblica», Edizione Paoline 1988, pág. 346: “Si intende allora una prassi ecclesiale che, partendo dalla conoscenza e dall’accettazione di culture differenziate, riconosce la possibilità di innestare in esse il germe del vangelo, così che, sulla base di una mutua fecondazione, si realizzi tanto una autentica incarnazione del vangelo stesso quanto una fruttuosa rigenerazione della rispettiva cultura”.

<sup>43</sup> CHEUICHE, MONS. ANTONIO DO CARMO, O. C. D., *Marco de referencia actual sobre la problemática de la inculturación*, in «Medellín» 15 (1989) 445: “recíproca apropiación entre Evangelio y culturas. Apropiación por parte de la Iglesia, de los elementos culturales de un determinado grupo social; apropiación por parte de la cultura del sentido último de la realidad, de los valores fundamentales del Evangelio, con lo cual una cultura pasa a reorientar su ruta en la búsqueda dinámica de la realización de la humanidad”.

<sup>44</sup> MONDIN, BATTISTA, art. *Inculturazione*, in «Dizionario Enciclopedico di Filosofia, Teologia e Morale», Massimo, Milano 1989, pág. 376: “quel processo per cui un movimento di pensiero, un sistema filosofico o religioso si adegua alle varie componenti di una determinata cultura assumendone la lingua, i costumi, la legislazione, le istituzioni, i valori, ecc.”.



does not exclude –and, it even suggests– that the evangelizer (*sender*) is above all a hearer (*receiver*); that is to say, the *good news* is already and always is the answer to any *bad news*. Inculturation builds a channel in which the waters of the Gospel flow and irrigate (not flood!) the cultural territory of different peoples and social groups, who build the channel in order to give an answer to their problems of *arid land*.”<sup>45</sup>

### 1.3.37 Jesús Emilio Osorno G., X. M. Y. (1990)

“*Inculturation* is: the progressive insertion of the Christian faith in a concrete culture, starting from the fundamental attributes of that same culture; it is the planting of the Gospel’s seed that sprouts, grows and fructifies according to the own “humus” or genius of the people that receive it; it is the integral assimilation of some religious and human values, which are compatible with the Gospel’s message; it is a unique incarnation of Jesus’s redeeming event in the diverse lifestyles of the peoples, thus accomplishing a Christian cultural configuration in singular multiple forms.”<sup>46</sup>

### 1.3.38 Marcello de C. Azevedo, S. J. (1990)

“*Inculturation* is the active process that occurs in the heart of a culture that receives the Revelation through evangelization; and then this same culture understands and translates it according to its own way of being, acting and communicating. Through this process of

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<sup>45</sup> SUESS, PE. DR. PAULO, *Inculturação. Desafios - Caminhos - Metas*, in «Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira» 49 (1989) 117: “A inculturação é um processo de aproximação ao universo cultural do outro que envolve o mensageiro e a mensagem. Nesta aproximação, o mensageiro não busca uma identificação com o outro que eliminaria a sua alteridade e liberdade. A inculturação visa um processo de comunicação que não confunde o ‘receptor’ com o ‘emissor’, que são partes constitutivas de qualquer diálogo. Isso não exclui –e, até um certo ponto, pressupõe– que o evangelizador (‘emissor’) é antes de tudo um ‘ouvidor’ (‘receptor’); quer dizer, a ‘boa notícia’ já é sempre resposta a uma ‘má notícia’ escutada. A inculturação constrói um canal pelo qual as águas do Evangelho podem irrigar (não inundar!) o território cultural dos diferentes povos e grupos sociais. A construção deste canal começa a partir de e com os povos/grupos para responder aos problemas da sua ‘terra árida’”.

<sup>46</sup> OSORNO G., JESÚS EMILIO, *Inculturación de la fe y Evangelización de la Cultura*, Obras Misionales Pontificias de Colombia, 1990, pág. 35: “La *inculturación* es: la inserción progresiva de la fe cristiana en una cultura concreta, a partir de los presupuestos fundamentales de esa misma cultura; es la siembra de la semilla evangélica que germina, que desarrolla y fructifica según el propio ‘humus’ o genio del pueblo particular que la recibe; es la asimilación integrativa de unos valores religiosos y humanos, compatibles con el mensaje evangélico; es una original encarnación del acontecimiento salvífico de Jesús en el estilo de vida de los diversos pueblos, logrando la configuración de una cultura cristiana en múltiples formas singulares”.

inculturated evangelization the Gospel's seed is planted in the field of culture. Faith's seed begins now to grow in the manner and nature of the culture that embraces it."<sup>47</sup>

### 1.3.39 Giovanni Colombo, O. M. I. (1990)

"*Inculturation* is the process by which the Gospel's message is progressively inserted in a culture, and then this culture expresses the Gospel through its own original characteristics until it is completely permeated and transformed."<sup>48</sup>

### 1.3.40 Juan Esquerda Bifet (1991)

"*Inculturation* would be more properly the insertion of the Gospel in a culture, assuming the cultural clothing of that culture."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> AZEVEDO, MARCELLO DE C., voce *Inculturazione, I. Problematica*, in «Dizionario di Teologia Fondamentale», diretto da René Latourelle - Rino Fisichella, Città della Editrice, Assisi, Novembre 1990, pág. 576: "Con *inculturazione* si indica il processo attivo a partire dall'interno stesso della cultura che riceve la rivelazione attraverso l'evangelizzazione e che la comprende e traduce secondo il proprio modo di essere, di agire e di comunicare. Mediante il processo di evangelizzazione inculturata viene gettato nel terreno della cultura il seme evangelico. Il germe della fede viene allora a svilupparsi nei termini e secondo l'indole peculiare della cultura che lo riceve". Year later this same author wrote: "the dynamic relation between the Christian message and culture or cultures; an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between them", cfr. ID., *Inculturation and the Challenge of Modernity*, Gregorian University, Rome, 1982, page. 11. Then he wrote: "Inculturation is the process by which the Christian message is progressively implanted in a given culture, according to the culture's characteristics. It is the planting of the Gospel's seed in a culture, so that Faith's seed can grow in the culture and express itself with the culture's own genius", cfr. ID., *Evangelización Inculturada*, in «Misiones Extranjeras» 87 (1985) 199.

<sup>48</sup> COLOMBO, GIOVANNI, O. M. I., *Per una Evangelizzazione Inculturata*, in «Chiesa e Missione», Studia Urbaniana 37, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, Roma 1990, pág. 484: "Inculturazione indica il processo attraverso il quale il messaggio evangelico si inserisce progressivamente in una cultura, che lo riesprime a partire dai propri presupposti originali, fino ad esserne impregnata e trasformata".

<sup>49</sup> ESQUERDA BIFET, JUAN, *Pastorale per una Chiesa Missionaria*, Pontificia Università Urbaniana, Roma 1991, pág. 161: "L'inculturazione sarebbe propriamente l'inserimento del vangelo in una cultura, assumendo la veste culturale di questa. Four years later, he wrote: "...inculturation is the process of inserting the Gospel's message in a specific sociocultural environment and, at the same time, respecting all of the culture's values that are reconcilable with the Gospel", cfr. ID., *Teología de la Evangelización. Curso de Misionología*, BAC, Madrid, 1995, pág. 286.

#### 1.3.41 Hervé Carrier, S. J. (1991)

“...*inculturation* is the effort of inserting Christ’s message in a sociocultural environment, which is compelled to promote all of its cultural values and reconcile them with the Gospel. Inculturation makes the Church participate in the nature of each region or sector, with the full right to have an impact on the character and genius of each human collectivity. This definition implies the idea of growth, mutual enrichment of the people and committed groups in the encounter between the Gospel and the social environment.”<sup>50</sup>

#### 1.3.42 Miguel López D. (1991)

“The aim is to make the Gospel the transforming force of the faithful’s life so it may infuse all of his or her activities, which would mean the *inculturation* of the Gospel.”<sup>51</sup>

#### 1.3.43 Horst Rzepkowski (1992)

“*Inculturation* leans more toward the entering of the value system of a society, which is where contextualization takes more into account the historical modeling and diachrony of a culture.”<sup>52</sup>

#### 1.3.44 José María Arnaiz, S. M. (1992)

“*Inculturation* is the process that ingrains the Christian message in a specific culture, starting from the culture’s own characteristics.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> CARRIER, HERVÉ, *Evangelio y Culturas. De León XIII a Juan Pablo II*, CELAM, Colección Autores N° 1, Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1991, pág. 148: “la *inculturación* designa el esfuerzo por hacer penetrar el mensaje de Cristo en el ambiente socio-cultural, que está llamado a crecer en todos sus valores propios, con tal que esos valores sean conciliables con el Evangelio. La *inculturación* tiende a que la Iglesia tenga carta de naturaleza en cada región o sector social, con pleno derecho del carácter y del genio de cada colectividad humana. Este término implica la idea de crecimiento, de enriquecimiento mutuo de las personas y de los grupos comprometidos en el encuentro del Evangelio con un ambiente social”.

<sup>51</sup> LÓPEZ D., MIGUEL, *La Antropología Cultural y el Derecho en la Iglesia a partir del Concilio Vaticano II*, in «Efemérides Mexicana» 9/27 (1991) 342: “El objetivo es que el Evangelio se transforme en vida del creyente y que imbuya todos los campos de la actividad de éste, lo cual no significa otra cosa que la *inculturación* del Evangelio”.

<sup>52</sup> RZEPKOWSKI, HORST, *Lexikon Der Mission. Geschichte. Theologie. Ethnologie*, Verlag Styria, Austria 1992, pág. 209: “Inkulturation meint mehr das Eingehen auf das Wertsystem einer Gesellschaft, wobei Kontextualisierung eher die geschichtliche Ausformung und den zeitlichen Ablauf Kultur berücksichtigt”.

<sup>53</sup> ARNAIZ, JOSÉ MARÍA, S. M., *La Espiritualidad de la Nueva Evangelización*, in AA. VV., *Hacia la Cuarta Conferencia*, Auxiliar N° 4, CELAM, Santa Fe de Bogotá 1992, pág. 457.: “La *inculturación* es un proceso por

### 1.3.45 Frei Gregorio Smutko, *OfmCap* (1992)

“*Inculturation* means the incarnation of Christ’s *message* and *Christian life* in a specific culture, in such a way that they are tightly woven with the values, attitudes and cultural patterns of the culture and appear not as outside impositions or in conflict with the culture. Therefore, *Inculturation* takes care of, affirms and strengthens everything that is good in the culture and, at the same time, purifies that which is not compatible with the Gospel.”<sup>54</sup>

### 1.3.46 Stafford Poole, *C. M.* (1992)

“...it is an adaptation of the Christian message to the mentalities and attitudes of the aboriginal people in order to facilitate the preaching of the Gospel and making more intelligible the message in a foreign culture.”<sup>55</sup>

### 1.3.47 Card. Paul Poupard (1992)

“Inculturing the Gospel is to engage oneself in a long and brave process that has the mission of transforming the typical behavioral modals of an environment, its criteria of judgment, its predominant values, its customs and habits in everyday work, leisure and amusement, praxis of family, social, economic and political life.”<sup>56</sup>

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el cual todo mensaje cristiano se arraiga en una determinada cultura y a partir de los presupuestos de esa cultura”.

<sup>54</sup> SMUTKO, F. GREGORIO, *OfmCap*, A “cultura” nos documentos preparatórios para a IV Conferencia Geral do Celam, in «Revista Ecclesiastica Brasileira» 52 (1992) 689: “Inculturação quer dizer a encarnação da mensagem de Cristo e toda a *vida cristã* em uma determinada cultura, de sorte que “se encaixem” bem com os valores, atitudes e padrões culturais da cultura e não pareçam imposições da fora nem *conflitantes* com a cultura. Assim, a inculturação guarda, afirma e fortalece tudo o que há de bom em uma cultura e ao mesmo tempo purifica aquilo que não se compatibilizar com o Evangelho”.

<sup>55</sup> POOLE, STAFFORD, C. M., *Inculturation of the Gospel in the New World: Beginnings and Challenges in New Spain in the Sixteenth Century*, in PONTIFICIA COMISIÓN PARA AMÉRICA LATINA, *Historia de la Evangelización de América*, Actas del Simposio Internacional, Ciudad del Vaticano, 11-14 de mayo de 1992, Librería Editrice Vaticana, 1992, pág. 526: “...una adaptación del mensaje cristiano a las mentalidades y actitudes del pueblo nativo en orden a facilitar la evangelización y hacer el mensaje inteligible en una cultura extranjera”.

<sup>56</sup> POUPARD, CARD. PAUL, *Culture et inculturation: essai de définition*, in «Seminarium» XXXII (1992/1) 30: “Inculturer l’Évangile, c’est s’engager dans un long et courageux processus qui a pour vocation de transformer les modèles de comportements typiques d’un milieu, les critères de jugement, les valeurs dominantes, les habitudes et coutumes qui marquent la vie de travail, les loisirs, la pratique de la vie familiale, sociale, économique et politique”. In another paper, the same author says: “Inculturing the

### 1.3.48 John Egbulefu (1992)

“Is ‘Inculturation’ the one word to express the Church’s missionary act of making Christianity become the culture of the people, namely the Church’s pastoral act of getting Christianity irrevocably united to the native culture of the people through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and take roots among the people in the persons of the Christians”<sup>57</sup>.

### 1.3.49 Adam Wolanin, S. J. (1992)

“Inculturation is the fundamental process by which the Gospel, announced by the ‘missionaries’ and later expressed by the Christian community in a culturally adequate language, becomes a creating and transforming force of the peoples’ culture, which has been in contact with the Gospel.”<sup>58</sup>

### 1.3.50 Fernando Miguens Dedyne (1992)

“The inculturation definition, from a theological viewpoint, has two different and complementary dimensions: a) the explanation of the faith, according to the culture’s own parameters and particular historical situation (which we could call “pastoral dimension”), b) the evangelization of the culture, its absorption of the Gospel’s values, its healing by the action of grace. Both dimensions are important and both ultimately derive from the mystery of the Incarnation. However, the first is instrument for the second, to which it is ordained.”<sup>59</sup>

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Gospel is not appeasement: it is rather the willingness to clearly and progressively discern, leaving out the elements that are furthest from the Gospel and cannot be assimilated as Christian values. To this, the Fathers of the Church also teach us a lesson... They apprehended everything that they found good and dismissed everything that could not be in harmony with the message of Jesus, God and man. Inculturating is not assimilation, but rather the action of analyzing to assume or reject so that only the good remains.”, cfr. ID., *Los Padres de la Iglesia: Actualidad de una Inculturación de la Fe*, in DOMINGO RAMOS-LISSÓN, MARCELO MERINO Y ALBERT VICIANO (EDITORES), *El Diálogo Fe-Cultura en la Antigüedad Cristiana*, o. c., pág. 36.

<sup>57</sup> EGBULEFU, JOHN, *Successful Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*, in «Seminarium» XXXII (1992/1) 119.

<sup>58</sup> WOLANIN, ADAM, S. J., *L’inculturazione nel pensiero di Giovanni Paolo II*, in «Seminarium» XXXII (1992/1) 159: “L’inculturazione è fondamentalemente un processo mediante il quale il Vangelo, annunciato dai «missionari» e in seguito espresso nella vita delle comunità cristiane in un linguaggio «culturalmente adeguato», diventa a sua volta forza creatrice e trasformatrice della cultura dei popoli, che con questo Vangelo sono venuti a contatto”.

<sup>59</sup> MIGUENS DEDYN, FERNANDO, *Latinoamérica ante la Nueva Evangelización*, in «Scripta Theologica» 24 (1992) 142: “El término *inculturación*, desde el punto de vista teológico, hace referencia a dos dimensiones

### 1.3.51 Juan Carlos Scannone, S. J. (1993)

“The other side of the coin of evangelizing the culture is *Inculturation*, and they are inseparable: the movement of inculturating takes the Gospel to the heart and soul (even the structural body) of the cultures. At the same time, *inculturation* welcomes, starting from the Gospel, the cultures to the life, company, celebration and knowledge of the Church, beginning with the ethical and cultural values and also reaching the symbolic expressions, as well as the customs and institutions that express them, but purifying them all in Christ.”<sup>60</sup>

### 1.3.52 Germán Neira, S. J. (1993)

“*Inculturation* is the process of incarnating the Gospel to the different cultures, taking up everything that is good in them and renovating them with the Gospel’s own values. In this manner, the different cultures are also introduced to the Christian community. It is a process of discovering and inserting the culture’s authentic values; and a process of purifying everything that is unauthentic with the clarity of the Gospel”<sup>61</sup>.

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distintas y complementarias: a) la explicitación de la fe, según los parámetros propios de una cultura y una situación histórica particular (a la que podríamos llamar «dimensión pastoral»), pero también y más radicalmente, b) la evangelización de la cultura, su impregnación de valores evangélicos, su saneamiento a partir de la acción de la gracia. Ambas dimensiones son importantes y ambas derivan, en último término del misterio de la Encarnación. Sin embargo, la primera es instrumento para la segunda, a la cual se ordena”.

<sup>60</sup> SCANNONE, JUAN CARLOS, S. J., *La inculturación en el Documento de Santo Domingo (DSD)*, 1.1, in «Stromata» 49 (1993) 30: “La *inculturación* es como la otra cara de la evangelización de la cultura e inseparable de ella: el movimiento de ésta lleva el Evangelio al alma y corazón -y aún a la corporalidad estructural- de las culturas y, a su vez, la *inculturación* acoge desde el Evangelio las culturas en la vida, convivencia, celebración y pensamiento de la Iglesia, partiendo de los valores éticos-culturales y abarcando también las expresiones simbólicas, las costumbres e instituciones que los expresan, pero purificándolos a todos ellos en Cristo”.

<sup>61</sup> NEIRA F., GERMÁN, S. J., *Una dimensión de encarnación: la evangelización inculturada*, 2.2, in «Theologica Xaveriana» 43 (1993) 71: “La *inculturación* es un proceso de *encarnación del Evangelio* en las diversas culturas, asumiendo lo que hay de bueno en ellas y renovándolas con los propios valores del Evangelio. En esta forma se introduce también a las diferentes culturas *dentro* de la comunidad cristiana. Es un proceso de descubrimiento e inserción en los valores auténticos de esa cultura; y un proceso de purificar lo no auténtico a la luz del Evangelio”.

### 1.3.53 Card. Dom Lucas Moreira Neves (1993)

“*Inculturation*, whether of the Gospel, the faith or Church doctrine or theology, consists of appreciating and taking up the positive and valid factors, that are truly human, of our cultures so that through them the Gospel, faith, liturgy, theological formulations may be expressed; and also they serve to correct, rectify or regenerate the negative factors that manifest themselves in our culture.”<sup>62</sup>

### 1.3.54 Ángel Salvatierra (1993)

“The process of *inculturation* could be reduced to a double and reciprocal possession between the Gospel and culture. In one hand, the culture takes hold of the values and ultimate meaning of the reality that the Gospel proposes, as well as the suitable media for them. On the other hand, the Gospel and the Church retain the cultural elements such as the language and structures that do not oppose the faith, in order to assure the communication of the Gospel’s message.”<sup>63</sup>

### 1.3.55 Gustavo Baena, S. J. (1993)

“*Inculturation* is not only about preaching the Gospel to non-Christians or to different cultures, nor trying to deliver God or Jesus Christ to them; but also the discovery and discernment of the authentic, human, and Christian values that are already in them, so that they can be integrated in Christianity. In other words, it is about discovering and discerning God and Jesus Christ living in each man, starting from his culture and values; so that man can become aware of this unique

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<sup>62</sup> GARCÍA QUESADA, ALFREDO, *En torno a Santo Domingo* (Entrevista al Cardenal Dom Lucas Moreira Neves), in «Vida y Espiritualidad» 9 (1993/3) 43: “La *inculturación*, ya sea del Evangelio, de la fe o de la doctrina o de la teología, consiste pues en valorar y asumir los factores positivos y válidos, verdaderamente humanos, de nuestras culturas para que a través de ellos se pueda expresar el Evangelio, la fe, la liturgia, las formulaciones teológicas, siendo que estos últimos deben corregir, rectificar o regenerar los factores negativos que se manifiesten en nuestra cultura”.

<sup>63</sup> SALVATIERRA, ÁNGEL, *Inculturación y Teología*, in «Lumen» XLII (1993) 510: “Podría resumirse el proceso de *inculturación* como una doble y recíproca apropiación entre Evangelio y cultura. Apropiación por parte de la cultura de los valores y del sentido último de la realidad que propone el Evangelio, así como de los medios adecuados para ello. Apropiación por parte del Evangelio y de la Iglesia de elementos culturales, tales como lenguaje y estructuras que no se oponen a la fe, a fin de asegurar la comunicación del Mensaje evangélico”. In another document, the same author states: “*Inculturation* is the process by which Christ’s saving message inserts itself in the fundamental core values of a specific culture. This effort must also be accompanied by the careful conservation of every value, expression and social structure that does not oppose the truth of the Gospel nor the Church’s identity.”, cfr. ID., *Problemas y Perspectivas de la Misionología Actual*, in «Medellín» 20 (1994) 27.

saving truth, make coherent his behavior and every kind of social structure, and plant roots, from within, of a true Christian culture.”<sup>64</sup>

## 2. Attributes of Inculturation

We now proceed to list a series of attributes that we believe enlighten the remaining chapters of this work. In some cases, we have made references to John Paul II's *Redemptoris misio* Encyclical (RM) –where this subject matter applies– or given explanatory comments. These attributes are:

- a) it is a slow process (RM 52);
- b) it is a process that not only involves and makes responsible all the People of God, but also the experts (RM 45);
- c) it is a profound and global process (RM 52);
- d) it is a process that allows the better understanding and expression of Christ's mystery (RM 53);
- e) it is a process that must be guided and encouraged but not forced: it must express in itself the life of the community;
- f) it is a gradual and differentiable process (RM 54), law of gradualness;
- g) it is a process that requires discerning and profound balancing (RM 54);

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<sup>64</sup> BAENA, GUSTAVO, S. J., *Fundamentos Bíblicos de la Inculturación del Evangelio*, in «Theologica Xaveriana» 43 (1993) 132: “En la *Inculturación* no se trata solamente de predicar el Evangelio entre los no cristianos o en las diferentes culturas, ni de llevar allí a Dios o a Jesucristo, sino de descubrir y discernir los valores auténticamente humanos y cristianos que allí ya se encuentran e integrarlos, a los largo de un proceso, en el cristianismo. O en otros términos, se trata de descubrir y discernir a Dios y a Jesucristo vivos en cada hombre partiendo de su cultura y sus valores, para hacerlo consciente de esta única verdad salvadora a fin de que sus comportamientos humanos y sus estructuras sociales de todo orden, se vuelvan coherentes con la misma y se vaya creando por sus raíces y desde dentro, una verdadera cultura cristiana”.



h) it is a process that makes faith grow toward the culture that receives it. And this process of growing inwards can never be deemed done because the culture changes;

i) it is the insertion of the Gospel in an indigenous culture and the introduction of said culture in the life of the Church:

- ad extra: the Gospel to the cultures, it incarnates itself in the cultures so as to purify and elevate them, it is the tender transformation of the cultural values
- ad intra: the culture begins to be a part of the universal Church in the expressions and life of the Church;

j) two unrefusable criteria:

- the compatibility between the Gospel and the assumed cultures .
- the communion between the recent Christian communities and the new cultures and the universal Church;

k) dangers to avoid:

- relativizing the importance of *inculturation* by the community when proclaiming and spreading the Gospel;
- unilateral over-appreciation of *inculturation* by the evangelized community (RM 54)
- *instrumentalization* of the culture, without showing a true love for the cultural expression;
- the *cultural radicalization* that leads to obsessing with oneself and rendering culture or its expressions as an absolute; <sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Cfr. RATZINGER, CARD. JOSEPH, *La fe cristiana ante el desafío de las culturas*, in «Ecclesia» VII (1993/4) 372: "...the purpose of inculturation will only make sense if a culture suffers no grievances due to the common orientation of man's truth and his subsequent openness and development toward the new cultural force. And the part of the culture that excludes this openness and exchange is precisely its insufficient part since the exclusion of the other is incompatible with man. The standing of a culture is determined by its openness, its capacity to give and receive, and be purified, and, thus, tailoring itself to the measure of man and truth."

- the syncretism that leads to not respecting the integrity of the Gospel's message<sup>66</sup>;
- the confusion between faith and culture; above all, faith must be recognized as a radically different reality from any other culture;
- the confusion between unity and plurality, i.e., unity must not be identified as uniformity<sup>67</sup>;

l) the subject of *inculturation*<sup>68</sup>:

The secondary subject of *inculturation* is the evangelizer and the first one is the community or local church who receives the Message. The evangelizer must be deeply planted in the community and his lifestyle must be evangelical and unifying toward the people. (RM 43).

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<sup>66</sup> Cfr. CONGAR, YVES, O. P., *Christianisme comme Foi et comme Culture*, in AA. VV., *Evangelizzazione e cultura*, Atti del Congresso Internazionale Scientifico di Missiologia (Roma, 5-12 ottobre 1975), Pontificia Università Urbaniana, Roma 1976, Volume I, pág. 96: "combining the authentic notions and realities of the revealed faith with the realities of other spiritual worlds, in such a way, that the result is a diverse reality, in which Christian elements neither possess their whole truth nor their absolute religious roll."

<sup>67</sup> Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Audiencia general*, 2-I-1991, 4: IGP2 XIV/1 (1991) 10: This universality, born from the Holy Spirit's action, is already accompanied, since the first day of Pentecost, by an *insistent reference to what is "particular"*, not only within each person but also in each and every peoples and nation. We can notice this by the fact that Luke in Acts writes that the Holy Spirit's power manifested itself in the gift of languages which the Apostles spoke, so that the "*devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, (...), and each one was bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language*" (Acts 2, 4-6). We can observe here that the Holy Spirit is Love, and love means to respect all that the loved person holds in high regard. This is especially true concerning the peoples' language, because it is something in which we are generally very sensitive and demanding, but it is also true with respect to culture, spirituality, and customs. The Pentecostal event takes place respecting this demand and is the manifestation of the Church's unity in the multiplicity of the peoples and plurality of the cultures. The Catholicism of the Church includes the respect of all values. We could say that the "particular" is not overridden by the universal. One dimension contains and demands the other.

<sup>68</sup> Cfr. ODORICO, FR. LUCIANO, S. D. B., *Evangelization and culture in 'Redemptoris missio'*, 3. 3, in «Omnis Terra» 28 (1994) 349. WOLANIN, ADAM, S. J., *L'inculturazione nel pensiero di Giovanni Paolo II*, in «Seminarium» XXXII (1992/1) 155.

### 3. Motives of Inculturation

Now that we have thoroughly gotten to know the magisterial texts about *inculturation* as well as the definitions and stipulations of theologians, we offer a synthesis of the most relevant criteria regarding *inculturation*:

#### 3.1 Respecting the cultures and cultural differences

Although the Gospel's message identifies with no culture, it necessarily incarnates itself in the cultures<sup>69</sup>, which it respects and favors their growth, development, and autonomy. The Church considers everything that is authentically human, that is to say everything that can be reconcilable with the Gospel, as respectable, noble, and worthy (Phillip. 4, 8).

When the Church delivers the Gospel's message, she does not try to destroy or disregard what is good or beautiful in the cultures. Furthermore, she does not belittle the peoples' more authentic and profound manifestations that derive from their own

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<sup>69</sup> Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso en el Uhuru Park de Nairobi*, Kenia, 7-V-1980, 1: AAS 72 (1980) 490-491. ID., *Discurso a los obispos japoneses en visita ad limina*, Roma, 20-V-1980, 5: AAS 72 (1980) 400-401. ID., *Discurso a los obispos filipinos*, Manila, 17-II-1981, 9: AAS 73 (1981) 324. ID., *Discurso a los obispos de Zimbabwe en visita ad limina*, Roma, 18-VI-82: AAS 74 (1982) 861. ID., *Discurso a los obispos de Mozambique en visita ad limina*, Roma, 23-IX-1982, 5: AAS 74 (1982) 1230-1231. ID., *A los Indígenas*, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, 7-III-1983, 3: AAS 75 (1983) 741-742. ID., *A los indígenas de la Amazonia*, Iquitos, Perú, 5-II-1985, 9: AAS 77 (1985) 901-902. ID., *Discurso a los obispos de Japón en visita ad limina*, 2-IX-85, 2: IGP2 VIII/2 (1985) 556. ID., *Homilía en Shillong*, India, 4-II-1986, 6: IGP2 IX/1 (1986) 309. ID., *Discurso a los intelectuales y al mundo universitario*, Medellín, Colombia, 5-VII-1986, 5: AAS 79 (1987) 100. ID., *Discurso en el encuentro 500 años de evangelización en América Latina*, Cartagena, Colombia, 6-VII-1986, 8: AAS 79 (1987) 105-106. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Kenia en visita ad limina*, Roma, 20-II-1988, 6: AAS 80 (1988) 1224. ID., *Discurso en Jakarta*, Indonesia, 10-X-1989: AAS 82 (1990) 167-168. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Indonesia en visita ad limina*, Roma, 20-V-1989, 2: AAS 81 (1989) 1307. ID., *Discurso en el Arzobispado*, N'Djamena, Chad, 31-I-1990, 4: IGP2 XIII/1 (1990) 352-354. ID., *Discurso a los representantes del mundo de la cultura en Salvador*, Brasil, 20-X-1991, 3: IGP2 XIV/2 (1991) 958-959. ID., *Discurso al VIII Congreso Internacional para la Catequesis (COINCAT)*, Castel Gandolfo, 26-IX-1992, 2: IGP2 XV/2 (1992) 188-189.

way of being<sup>70</sup>. She well knows that, when evangelizing, what she wants is to deliver Christ, not a specific culture. When the Gospel's message incarnates itself in the cultures, the universal Church's heritage is enriched with all those new cultural manifestations.

### 3.2 Urgency and reach of the evangelization of the cultures

In our lifetime, it is a fact that the rupture between faith and culture is evident. On one side, we can easily see that the cultures of countries with great Christian traditions have been flooded with ideologies, facts, actions, legislation, customs, attitudes, lifestyles, etc. that are clearly opposite to the Christian values that, for

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<sup>70</sup> Cfr. ID., *Discurso al presidente de la República Dominicana*, Santo Domingo, 25-I-1979: AAS 71 (1979) 152-154. ID., *Discurso a los indígenas en Cuilapán*, México, 29-I-1979, 2-3: AAS 71 (1979) 207-208. ID., *Mensaje a la jornada mundial por las misiones*, 14-VI-1979: IGP2 II/1 (1979) 1550-1551. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos del Zaire*, Kinshasa, 3-V-1980, 4: AAS 72 (1980) 432-433. ID., *Discurso a la Conferencia Episcopal de Kenia*, Nairobi, 7-V-1980, 6: AAS 72 (1980) 497. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Nigeria*, Lagos, 15-II-1982, 3: AAS 74 (1982) 614-616. ID., *Discurso a los profesores, universitarios y hombres de cultura en la Universidad de Coimbra*, Portugal, 15-V-1982, 5: IGP2 V/2 (1982) 1694-1696. ID., *A los Indígenas*, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, 7-III-1983, 3: AAS 75 (1983) 741-742. ID., *A los Obispos del Pacífico en visita ad limina*, 13-II-1984: IGP2 VII/1 (1984) 387. ID., *A los intelectuales y artistas*, en la Universidad de «Sogang» de Seúl, Corea, 5-V-1984, 4: AAS 76 (1984) 986. ID., *Discurso al mundo de la cultura*, Quito, Ecuador, 30-I-1985, 4: AAS 77 (1985) 854. ID., *Encuentro con los indígenas*, Latacunga, Ecuador, 31-I-1985, I-II: AAS 77 (1985) 859-862. ID., *Homilía en Cuzco*, Perú, 3-II-1985, 7: AAS 77 (1985) 879-880. ID., *A los indígenas de la Amazonia*, Iquitos, Perú, 5-II-1985, 9: AAS 77 (1985) 901-902. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de la India*, Delhi, 1-II-1986, 5: AAS 78 (1986) 748-749. ID., *Discurso a los aborígenes*, Alice Springs, Australia, 29-XI-86, 3: AAS 79 (1987) 974. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 17-I-87, 5: AAS 79 (1987) 1204-1205. CONGREGACIÓN PARA LA EVANGELIZACIÓN DE LOS PUEBLOS, *Guía pastoral para los Sacerdotes Diocesanos de las Iglesias que dependen de la Congregación para la Evangelización de los Pueblos*, 1-X-1989, 11: EV 11/2554. JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso a un grupo de funcionarios en el estadio de Nyamirambo*, Kigali, Rwanda, 8-IX-1990, 2: IGP2 XIII/2 (1990) 529. ID., *Discurso a la Conferencia Episcopal de Rwanda*, Kigali, 9-IX-1990, 3: AAS 83 (1991) 219-220. ID., *Discurso a la Conferencia Episcopal de Gambia, Liberia y Sierra Leone en visita ad limina*, Roma, 9-VII-1992, 5: IGP2 XV/2 (1992) 50-51. ID., *Discurso a los participantes de la VIII sesión del Consejo Internacional para la Catequesis (COINCAT)*, Castel Gandolfo, 26-IX-1992, 4: IGP2 XV/2 (1992) 189-190. ID., *Mensaje a los Indígenas de América*, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 12-X-1992, 3-4: AAS 85 (1993) 833-835.

centuries, had been their solid basis. On the other hand, the issue that needs to be resolved in countries where Christianity is only beginning is how to move forward and, at the same time, respect the indigenous cultures<sup>71</sup>.

It is necessary again to establish in a firm and determined manner and through a truthful dialogue with the cultures, the bond between faith and culture so that the cultural expressions, ways of thinking, reflections, etc. may be permeated with the Christian spirit<sup>72</sup>. In order to achieve this, we must act with the energy and potentiality of the first apostles; in consequence the originality of the Gospel's message in the heart of the current mentality will be restored<sup>73</sup>. This is the new evangelization –new in its

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<sup>71</sup> Cfr. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 18-I-1983, 2: AAS 75 (1983) 383. ID., *Discurso en la Conclusión del Jubileo cirilo-metodiano*, Roma, 12-X-85, 4: AAS 78 (1986) 276. ID., *Discurso a los obispos brasileños en visita ad limina*, Roma, 31-V-1990, 5: AAS 83 (1991) 67-68.

<sup>72</sup> Cfr. ID., *Constitución apostólica Sapientia christiana*, 15-IV-1979, Proemio, I: AAS 71 (1979) 469-470. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 15-I-1985, 3: AAS 77 (1985) 741-742. ID., *Discurso al mundo de la cultura*, Quito, Ecuador, 30-I-1985, 4: AAS 77 (1985) 854. ID., *Discurso a los obispos de Birmania en visita ad limina*, Roma, 7-VI-1985, 5: AAS 77 (1985) 1070-1071. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 13-I-1986, 1: AAS 78 (1986) 655-656. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Madagascar en visita ad limina*, Roma, 21-V-1987, 3-4: AAS 79 (1987) 1473-1475. ID., *Encuentro con los Hombres de la Cultura y Empresarios*, Lima, Perú, 15-V-1988, 5: IGP2 XI/2 (1988) 1452-1453. ID., *Encuentro en el Parque Quiteria*, Encarnación, Paraguay, 18-V-1988, 4: IGP2 XI/2 (1988) 1538. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 10-I-92, 6: AAS 85 (1992) 59-60.

<sup>73</sup> Cfr. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos del Zaire*, Kinshasa, 3-V-1980, 4: AAS 72 (1980) 432-433. ID., *Constitución apostólica Sapientia christiana*, 15-IV-1979, Proemio, I: AAS 71 (1979) 469-470. ID., *Discurso en la Universidad Pontificia Urbaniana*, Roma, 19-X-1980, 4: AAS 72 (1980) 1114-1115. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 18-I-1983, 3-5: AAS 75 (1983) 383-385. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Uruguay*, Roma, 14-I-1985, 2: AAS 77 (1985) 657-658. ID., *Discurso al mundo de la cultura*, Quito, 30-I-1985, 3: AAS 77 (1985) 853-854. ID., *Discurso en el aeropuerto de Piura*, Perú, 4-II-1985, 6-7: IGP2 VIII/1 (1985) 411-412. ID., *Discurso en el encuentro 500 años de evangelización en América Latina*, Cartagena, Colombia, 6-VII-1986, 7-10: AAS 79 (1987) 105-107. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 17-I-1987; 5: AAS 79 (1987) 1204-1205. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Madagascar en visita ad limina*, Roma, 21-V-1987, 7: AAS 79 (1987) 1477. ID., *Homilía en el Estadio Patria*, Sucre, Bolivia, 12-V-1988, 5: IGP2 XI/2 1988 1328-1329. ID., *Discurso a la I Reunión Plenaria de la Pontificia Comisión para la América Latina*, 7-XII-1989, 5:

methods, ardor, and expressions<sup>74</sup>- which is no longer a novelty in the Church, although it does present some novelty in the way that problems originate from it. For example, knowing that evangelizing implies getting into the cultures, into their inner identities, and from there opening them to the universal values of Christianity; this will lead to the incarnation of the Gospel in the peoples' mentalities and affective environment; in a world, as we well know, characterized by pluralism, clash of ideologies, and profound mental changes<sup>75</sup>.

### 3.3 The culture must be purified

The Gospel has a regenerating force, in a rectifying degree, when the cultural elements are not compatible with it, many can be regenerated. We must remember that the culture is a product of man, and as such, is exposed to sin and its consequences. As we can see, the Church, by undertaking the cultures, purifies, strengthens, and elevates them<sup>76</sup>. The same Gospel is the culture's ferment since it is this Gospel that questions

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AAS 82 (1990) 763-764. ID., Carta apostólica *Los Caminos del Evangelio*, 29-VI-1990, 28: AAS 83 (1991) 42-43. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 10-I-1992, 9: AAS 85 (1993) 61.

<sup>74</sup> Cfr. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea del CELAM*, Port au Prince, Haití, 9-III-1983, III: AAS 75 (1983) 777-779.

<sup>75</sup> Cfr. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 18-I-1983, 5: AAS 75 (1983) 385. ID., *A los intelectuales y artistas coreanos*, en la Universidad de «Sogang» de Seúl, Corea, 5-V-1984, 2: AAS 76 (1984) 986. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 15-I-1985, 3: AAS 77 (1985) 741-742. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 12-I-1990, 7: AAS 82 (1990) 859.

<sup>76</sup> Cfr. CONCILIO VATICANO II, Constitución *Lumen gentium*, n. 13, 2 y 3: AAS 57 (1965) 17. PONTIFICIO CONSEJO PARA LOS LAICOS, Documento *La Formation des Laïcs*, 3-X-1978, III: EV 6/1048. JUAN PABLO II, Constitución apostólica *Sapientia christiana*, 15-IV-1979, Proemio, I: AAS 71 (1979) 469-470. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos del Zaire*. Kinshasa, 3-V-1980, 4: AAS 72 (1980) 432-433. ID., *Alocución a los Obispos de Ghana*, 9-V-1980, 3: AAS 72 (1980) 515. ID., *Homilía en Salvador da Bahia*, 7-VII-1980, Brasil, 2-3: IGP2 III/2 (1980) 171-173. ID., *Discurso en el Estado de Cotonou*, Benín, 17-II-1982, 4: AAS 74 (1982) 628. ID., *A los Obispos de Uruguay*, Roma, 14-I-1985, 2: AAS 77 (1985) 657-658. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 15-I-1985, 3: AAS 77 (1985) 741-742. ID., *Encuentro con los intelectuales y universitarios*, Palacio de los Congresos de Yaundé, Camerún, 13-VIII-1985, 8: AAS 78 (1986) 58-59. ID., *Inauguración del Instituto*

man's being and acting.<sup>77</sup>: the Church, when proclaiming the mystery of Christ that reveals the profound truth of man, has the firm conviction that the encounter of the Gospel with man and society creates an authentic culture; a human and humanizing culture capable of reaching the inner depths of the heart and illuminating every area of society, fields of thought, art, technology... everything that makes up a true culture<sup>78</sup>.

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*Católico Superior del África Oriental*, Nairobi, 18-VIII-85, 7: IGP2 VIII/2 (1985) 475-476. ID., *Discurso a los aborígenes*, Alice Springs, Australia, 29-XI-1986, 12: AAS 79 (1987) 977-978. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Kenia en visita ad limina*, Roma, 20-II-1988, 6: AAS 80 (1988) 1224. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Zaire en visita ad limina*, Roma, 23-IV-1988, 5: AAS 80 (1988) 1451-1452. ID., *Encuentro con los Sacerdotes, Religiosos y Seminaristas*, Cochabamba, Bolivia, 11-V-1988, 4: IGP2 XI/2 (1988) 1307. ID., *Encuentro con los Hombres de la Cultura y Empresarios*, Lima, Perú, 15-V-1988, 5-6: IGP2 XI/2 (1988) 1452-1453. ID., *Discurso a los obispos bolivianos en visita ad limina*, Roma, 8-IX-1990, 9: AAS 83 (1991) 596. ID., *Discurso en Jakarta*, Indonesia, 10-X-1989: AAS 82 (1990) 168. ID., Carta apostólica *Los Caminos del Evangelio*, 29-VI-1990, 28: AAS 83 (1991) 42-43. ID., Encíclica *Centesimus annus*, 50: AAS 83 (1991) 856. ID., *Mensaje a los Indígenas de América*, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 12-X-1992, 4: AAS 85 (1993) 834-835. COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, Documento *La Fe y la Inculturación* (1987), I, 7 y 10, in COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, *Documentos 1969-1996, Veinticinco años de servicio a la teología de la Iglesia*, o. c., págs. 397-398.

<sup>77</sup> Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso en la sede de la UNESCO*, París, 2-VI-1980: AAS 72 (1980) 735-752. ID. *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 18-I-1983, 10: AAS 75 (1983) 387-388. ID., *A los seglares educadores en la Universidad de León*, Nicaragua, 4-III-1983, 3: AAS 75 (1983) 715. ID., *Alocución a los intelectuales y artistas coreanos*, en la Universidad de «Sogang» de Seúl, Corea, 5-V-1984, 5: AAS 76 (1984) 985-986. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos del CELAM*, Santo Domingo, 12-X-1984, 4: IGP2 VII/2 (1984) 890-892. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 17-I-1987, 4: AAS 79 (1987) 1203-1204. ID. *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 13-I-1989, 6: AAS 81 (1989) 859-860. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 12-I-1990, 7: AAS 82 (1990) 859. ID. Carta apostólica *Los Caminos del Evangelio*, 29-VI-1990, 28: AAS 83 (1991) 42-43.

<sup>78</sup> Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso al mundo de la cultura*, Quito, Ecuador, 30-I-1985, 4: AAS 77 (1985) 854. ID., *Encuentro con los Hombres de la Cultura y Empresarios*, Lima, Perú, 15-V-1988, 5-6: IGP2 XI/2 (1988) 1452-1453. ID., *Discurso en Jakarta*, Indonesia, 10-X-1989: AAS 82 (1990) 168. ID., *Discurso a los participantes de la VIII sesión del Consejo Internacional para la Catequesis (COINCAT)*, Castel Gandolfo, 26-IX-1992, 2: IGP2 XV/2 (1992) 188-189.

### 3.4 The process of inculturation and its risks

*Inculturation* is genuine when it is guided by two principles: firstly, *inculturation* is based on the Word of God, contained in the Holy Scripture; and secondly, it moves faithfully within the Church's Tradition and Magisterial directives, and contradicts nothing of the unity that the Lord wants<sup>79</sup>. When we *inculturate* the Gospel, we are not making it ephemeral, superficial or contingent; on the contrary, we are delivering its strength to the culture's core and ways of thought, action, and life. People who have received the Gospel make it their own and embrace it; and, in return, they express it in their daily life, and so they contribute to the culture's renovation. This is a delicate and long process since two very important things are at risk: on one hand, the exact content of the faith and, on the other hand, the best expression of that faith. As it is well understood by now, we must respect and safeguard the identity of the Church, without distorting her. We must learn how to distinguish between proper unity and healthy pluralism, and never resort to any kind of syncretism. Furthermore, we must avoid two dangers: 1) humanizing or relativizing the mystery of God that has been revealed by Christ, and 2) deifying or making absolute man, culture, or a specific historical experience<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup> Cfr. ID., *Discurso a la Conferencia Episcopal de Kenia*, Nairobi, 7-V-1980, 6: AAS 72 (1980) 496-497. ID., *Alocución a los Obispos de Ghana*, Kumasi, 9-V-1980, 3: AAS 72 (1980) 515. ID., *Discurso a los obispos de Mozambique en visita ad limina*, Roma, 23-IX-1982, 5: AAS 74 (1982) 1230-1231. ID., *A los intelectuales y artistas coreanos*, en la Universidad de «Sogang» de Seúl, Corea, 5-V-1984, 2: AAS 76 (1984) 986. ID., *Discurso a los obispos de Birmania en visita ad limina*, Roma, 7-VI-1985, 5: AAS 77 (1985) 1070-1071. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 13-I-1989, 6: AAS 81 (1989) 859-860. ID., *Encuentro con las nuevas generaciones*, Antananarivo, Madagascar, 24-IV-1989, 7: IGP2 XII/1 (1989) 989-990. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Madagascar*, Antananarivo, 29-IV-1989, 3: IGP2 XII/1 (1989) 995-1001. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 10-I-1992, 5: AAS 85 (1993) 59.

<sup>80</sup> Cfr. ID., *Discurso a la Conferencia Episcopal de Kenia*, Nairobi, 7-V-1980, 6: AAS 72 (1980) 496-497. ID., *Alocución a los Obispos de Ghana*, Kumasi, 9-V-1980, 3: AAS 72 (1980) 514-515. ID., *Discurso en la Universidad Pontificia Urbaniana*, Roma, 19-X-1980, 4: AAS 72 (1980) 1114-1115. ID., *Discurso en el encuentro 500 años de evangelización en América Latina*, Cartagena, Colombia, 6-VII-1986, 7: AAS 79 (1987) 105. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 17-I-1987, 5: AAS 79 (1987) 1204-1205. ID., *Discurso en la*



When reflecting about the *inculturation* process, a few theologians have proposed a configuration with different stages. For example: translation, assimilation, and transformation<sup>81</sup>, or: announcement, assimilation, and re-expression. Concerning this last stage, they explained that: when ‘announcing,’ we must do it in accord with the mental categories of the culture to which the Christian message is being delivered; when ‘assimilating,’ we must process it according to the own nature of that culture; and when ‘re-expressing’ the assimilated truth, we must translate it in their own language<sup>82</sup>. Another possibility offered by them is the three-stage process: insertion, re-conceptualization and theoretical reformulation, and, finally, creativity and objectification<sup>83</sup>. The last proposal distinguishes three steps: positive (availability and openness to the message), negative (self-criticism and purification of the culture), and sublimity (exaltation of the culture by the Holy Spirit’s embrace and His grace)<sup>84</sup>.

### 3.5 Who carries out *inculturation*?

The bishops, together with the universal Church and the Holy See, are in charge of the promotion and coordination of the advancements in this field. This work requires maturity in faith, prayer, theological study and clarity, clear discernment, wisdom and prudence, and, as previously stated, sufficient time<sup>85</sup>.

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*ceremonia de despedida*, Cabo Verde, 27-I-1990, 4: IGP2 XIII/1 (1990) 216. LEGASPI, MSGR. LEONARDO Z., *Evangelization and Culture*, VI, in «Seminarium» XXV (1985/2-3) 111. PITTAU, GIUSEPPE, S. J., *Evangelizzazione e culture*, 3, in «Rassegna di Teologia» XXVI (1985) 8-9.

<sup>81</sup> Cfr. ROEST CROLLIUS, ARIJ A., S. J., *What is so new about inculturation?*, in «Gregorianum» 59 (1978) 733-734.

<sup>82</sup> Cfr. CHEUICHE, MONS. ANTONIO DO CARMO, O. C. D., *Cultura y Evangelización*, CELAM, Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1992, pág. 87.

<sup>83</sup> Cfr. ALSZEGHY, ZOLTÁN, *Il problema teologico dell’inculturazione del cristianesimo*, in AMATO, ANGELO - STRUS, ANDRZEJ (a cura di), *Inculturazione e formazione salesiana*, Editrice S. D. B., Roma 1984, págs. 37-38.

<sup>84</sup> Cfr. MONDIN, BATTISTA, *Principi generali sull’inculturazione della Chiesa e dell’Evangelo*, 6, in «Euntes Docete» XLVI (1993) 246.

<sup>85</sup> Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso a los Obispos del Zaire*, Kinshasa, 3-V-1980, 5: AAS 72 (1980) 433-435. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Ghana*, Kumasi, 9-V-1980, 3: AAS 72 (1980) 515. ID., *Homilía en la Plaza 2 de*

The laity have here a very important collaborating role since they are present and active in all the places –privileged cultural positions, the new areopagus- where cultures hatch: it is up to them to guarantee that the Gospel fulfills its purpose of ferment<sup>86</sup>, they must become aware of their mission and discover the transforming force of the Gospel in the mentalities, customs, attitudes, values and opinions that inspire the cultures. The areas of importance are: the family, businesses, schools, universities, mass media, and especially everything that influences the regard for the respect of life. The laity must learn everything concerning these fields of study so that they can clearly state how the

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febrero, Lomé, Togo, 8-VIII-1985, 10: IGP2 VIII/2 (1985) 244. ID. *Discurso a los Obispos de la India*, Delhi, 1-II-1986, 5: AAS 78 (1986) 748-749. ID. *Discurso a los Obispos de Zimbabwe en visita ad limina*, Roma, 2-VII-1988, 7: IGP2 XI/3 (1988) 18-19. ID., *Homilía en Largo de Goto*, Beira, Mozambique, 17-IX-1988, 9: IGP2 XI/3 (1988) 830-831. ID., *Discurso a los sacerdotes y religiosos*, Antananarivo, Madagascar, 30-IV-1989, 5 y 8: IGP2 XII/1 (1989) 1024-1025 y 1027. ID., *Discurso a los representantes del sínodo diocesano*, Dakar, Senegal, 19-II-1992, 4: IGP2 XV/1 (1992) 339-340. ID., *Discurso a los participantes de la VIII sesión del Consejo Internacional para la Catequesis (COINCAT)*, Castel Gandolfo, 26-IX-1992, 5: IGP2 XV/2 (1992) 191. AMATO, ANGELO, S. D. B., *Mariologia in Contesto*, I. 2, in «Marianum» XLII (1980) 427. LEGASPI, MSGR. LEONARDO Z., *Evangelization and Culture*, VIII, in «Seminarium» XXV (1985/2-3) 114. PITTAU, GIUSEPPE, S. J., *Evangelizzazione e culture*, 4, in «Rassegna di Teologia» XXVI (1985) 10. MONDIN, BATTISTA, *Principi generali sull'inculturazione della Chiesa e dell'Evangelo*, 6, in «Euntes Docete» XLVI (1993) 246. BLANCO C., JORGE M., *Proceso de Inculturación: Principios Básicos y Dinámica Pastoral*, in «Efemérides Mexicana» 2/6 (1984) 110-111.

<sup>86</sup> Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 17-I-1987, 6: AAS 79 (1987) 1205. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 15-I-1988, 2: AAS 80 (1988) 1155. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Kenia en visita ad limina*, Roma, 20-II-1988, 6: AAS 80 (1988) 1224-1225. ID., *Exhortación apostólica Postsinodal Christifideles laici* (30-XII-1988), 44: AAS 81 (1989) 478-481. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 13-I-1989, 2: AAS 81 (1989) 857-858. ID., *Discurso a los responsables y animadores parroquiales de la Acción Católica Italiana*, 7-I-1985, 4: AAS 81 (1989) 854. ID., *Discurso en el aeropuerto de Kigali*, Rwanda, 7-IX-1990, 5: IGP2 XIII/2 (1990) 506-507. ID., *Discurso a la Asamblea Plenaria del Consejo Pontificio de la Cultura*, 10-I-1992, 10: AAS 85 (1993) 61-62. ID., *Discurso a la Conferencia Episcopal de Gambia, Liberia y Sierra Leone en visita ad limina*, 9-VII-1992, Roma, 7: IGP2 XV/2 (1992) 52-53. ID., *Mensaje a los Indígenas de América*, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 12-X-1992, 6: AAS 85 (1993) 836.

Gospel is the ferment that can purify and elevate the ways of thinking, judging, and acting of a specific culture<sup>87</sup>.

### 3.6 Areas or environments of *inculturation*

The influence of inculturation can be placed in two great areas.

The first area is the cultural area, which includes each person's culture as well as the peoples' culture. This area must encompass the whole life of the Christian community since it cannot be partial or broken up. It includes: doctrine concerning the meaning of life and the beliefs about transcendence and the Absolute; the customs and the ethical ways of acting; the disciplinary rules of life and cultural expressions; artistic expressions and sacred art, etc.

The second is the area regarding the ecclesiastical community. Here *inculturation* encompasses all the environments of the Church's life and evangelization. It will comprise an "adaptation" and even an improvement of the theological and moral doctrinal expressions. This will be done by reflecting theologically on life, community discipline, liturgical expressions, evangelization and catechism, pastoral methods and structure of the Church<sup>88</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup> Cfr. SARAIVA MARTINS, JOSÉ, *Ruolo Missionario e Formazione Apostolica dei Laici*, 5, 1, in «Euntes Docete» XL (1987) 661-662.

<sup>88</sup> Cfr. CONCILIO VATICANO II, Decreto *Ad gentes*, 22: AAS 58 (1966) 973-974. ID., *Constitución Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 37: AAS 56 (1964) 110. PABLO VI, *Discurso en la conclusión del Simposio de las Conferencias Episcopales de África y Madagascar*, Kampala, Uganda, 31-VII-1969, 2: AAS 61 (1969) 576-577. JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso a los Obispos del Zaire*, Kinshasa, 3-V-1980, 4: AAS 72 (1980) 432-433. ID., *Discurso a la Conferencia Episcopal de Kenia*, Nairobi, 7-V-1980, 6: AAS 72 (1980) 497. ID., *Inauguración del Instituto Católico Superior del África Oriental*, Nairobi, 18-VIII-85, 7: IGP2 VIII/2 (1985) 475-476 ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de la India*, Delhi, 1-II-1986, 5: AAS 78 (1986) 748-749. ID., *Discurso a los Obispos de Zaire en visita ad limina*, Roma, 23-IV-1988, 6: AAS 80 (1988) 1452-1453. SARAIVA MARTINS, JOSÉ, *Missione e Cultura*, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, Roma 1986. *Studia Urbaniana*/28, págs. 111-120. COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, *La interpretación de los dogmas* (1987), II, 1, in COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, *Documentos 1969-1996, Veinticinco años de servicio a la teología de la Iglesia*, o. c., págs. 424-425.

*For obvious reasons, the doctrinal and moral areas will be the more difficult, because, as it was previously said, these areas must leave the revealed facts intact but, at the same time, they must continually improve their cultural expressions that, although valid, are never perfect<sup>89</sup>.*

#### **4. Theological bases of Inculturation**

*Inculturation* believes for certain in the universal aspect of God's plan of salvation and in the potential capacity of all mankind in answering to that plan, starting from the social cultural diversity in which we all live.

*Inculturation* is a consequence of the incarnation of the Verb. It is a demand of the Catholicism and unity of the Church: the particularities will be included in the universal so that said Catholicism may communicate the particular and not the other way around.

It is also a demand of the Gospel's transcendent message, thus demonstrating that the unfathomable richness of the mystery of Christ (cfr. Ef 3, 8) transcends all possible expressions of bygone and existing cultures; and that this message is governed by no cultural manifestation.

It is also a demand of *Revelation*. From a hermeneutic viewpoint, it is an essential property of this message so that the facts that explain the same Revelation may be

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CONGREGACIÓN PARA LA EVANGELIZACIÓN DE LOS PUEBLOS, *Guía pastoral para los Sacerdotes Diocesanos de las Iglesias que dependan de la Congregación para la Evangelización de los Pueblos*, 1-X-1989, II, 8: EV 11/2540. BYRNE, ANDREW, *Some ins and outs of Inculturation*, 8, in «Annales Theologici» 4 (1990) 134-138. ESQUERDA BIFET, JUAN, *Teología de la Evangelización. Curso de Misionología*, BAC, Madrid 1995, pág. 288. MÜLLER, KARL, SDV, *Inculturation*, in AA. VV., *Dictionary of Mission. Theology. History. Perspectives*, American Society of Missiology Series N° 24, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 10545, 1997, n. 4, pág. 200.

<sup>89</sup> ESQUERDA BIFET, JUAN, *Teología de la Evangelización. Curso de Misionología*, BAC, Madrid 1995, pág. 288: *Lógicamente el campo más difícil será el doctrinal y moral, puesto que, como ya se ha dicho, han de quedar intactos los datos revelados, a la par que se trata de que mejoren continuamente sus expresiones culturales, que, siendo válidas, nunca son perfectas.*

understood without any limitation of time and space; in this manner, they will always be the path of salvation to any people and culture, thus isolating no one in a specific historical event.

It is a *demand of the eschatological character* of the Gospel's message. The explicitness and intelligence of the message is joined with the Church's pilgrimage. The Holy Spirit helps show the vast richness of the mystery of Christ. The eschatological character of the message, as well as its transcendence, allows the cultures to contribute to the explanation, intelligence and full understanding of this mystery.

It is a *demand of the Church's mission*; which is to deliver the message to all peoples, all cultures, all mentalities, in all corners of the earth without any exception.

We will briefly explain the principle points that relate the theological bases of *inculturation*.

#### **4.1 Christological Basis**

The paradigm of the incarnation, which is constantly used in inculturation, makes us understand that the principal theological basis for *inculturation* is the mystery of the Incarnation<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>90</sup> Cfr. ROEST CROLLIUS, ARIJ A., S. J., *Inculturation and Incarnation. On speaking of the Christian Faith and the Cultures of Humanity*, en «Bulletin Secr. pro non christianis» 13 (1978) 134-140. PASINYA, L. MONSENGWO, *Inculturation du Message à l'exemple du Zaïre*, en «Spiritus» XX (1979) 96. SCARIN, ANTONIO, *Chiesa Locale, Incarnazione e Missione*, Editrice Missionaria Italiana, Bologna 1981, pag. 138. VANHOYE, ALBERT, S. J., *Nuovo Testamento e Inculturazione*, en «La Civiltà Cattolica» 135 (1984/IV) 119-136. COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, *Temas selectos de Eclesiología* (1984), 4.2, en COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, *Documentos 1969-1996, Veinticinco años de servicio a la teología de la Iglesia*, o. c., págs. 344-345. POUPARD, CARD. PAUL, *Teologia dell'evangelizzazione delle culture*, en «Il Regno - Documenti» 5 (1986) 152-153. ID., *Fede e Cultura nel Concilio Vaticano II*, en «Rivista di Scienza Religiose» VI (1992/2) 385. ID., *Cultura e Cristianesimo*, en *Grande Dizionario delle Religioni*, II edizione ampliata, Piemme, Casale Monferrato 1990, pag. 452-456. JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso a los participantes de la VIII sesión del Consejo Internacional para la Catequesis (COINCAT)*, Castel Gandolfo, 26-IX-1992, 4: IGP2 XV/2 (1992) 190. MONDIN, BATTISTA, *Principi generali sull'inculturazione della Chiesa e dell'Evangelo*, 4, en «Euntes Docete»

Christ's incarnation is the fundamental salvation of man's nature (broken by sin) and his culture (including his religious culture) through grace: *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ* (Jn 1, 17). Christ's incarnation is the free restitution of God's original plan concerning man: *From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another* (Jn 1, 16).

The process of *inculturation* is like making this analogy: it is a truthful and appropriate incarnation of Christ and his Gospel in a specific culture, which implies birth, growth, death, and resurrection. With the incarnation, the Son of God comes to have everything that is human, except sin, acquires human nature (Jn 1, 1-14; Fil 2, 5-8) and all the creations in men's minds that try to give fulfillment to all created things, in accord with the order of the Creator which governs his own masterpiece (cfr. Gen 1, 26-28). This process comes to own everything human, including the cultures of all men<sup>91</sup>.

It is the practical corollary of the theological principle that Christ is the only Savior and He saves everything that he comes to have: *quod non asumptum non sanatum*, according to Saint Irene. Thus, He has to take in his body, that is his Church, every culture, purifying them naturally of everything contrary to his Spirit and, therefore, saving them without destroying them.

*Inculturation* believes for certain in the universal aspect of God's plan of salvation and in the potential capacity of all mankind in answering to that plan, regardless of the

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XLVI (1993) 241-243. COTTIER, GEORGES, O. P., *La Foi dans le Verbe Incarné, Unique Sauveur, et le Pluralisme des Cultures*, en «Euntes Docete» XLVI (1993) 319. TABORDA, FRANCISCO, S. J., *Vida religiosa e inculturación: reflexiones teológicas*, 1, en «Theologica Xaveriana» 44 (1994) 183-190.

<sup>91</sup> Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Discurso en el Arzobispado*, N'Djamena, Chad, 31-I-1990, 4: IGP2 XIII/1 (1990) 353-354: "Inculturation or the process by which the Christian faith incarnates itself in the cultures is inherent to the announcement of the Gospel. The Son of Man, by his incarnation, has united himself in some way with every man (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, 22); because of that we can say that no authentic human value is alien to Christ, nor is it excluded from inculturation. It will be necessary a rigorous and structural theological reflection (a) to appreciate the customs, traditions, knowledge, science, arts, and disciplines of the peoples and (b) to incorporate everything that is truthful, beautiful, and good of this cultural richness in the "remarkable exchange" of Christ's Incarnation."

sociocultural diversity in which people live: *There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Gal 3, 28).

We can neither affirm that a culture is perfect nor exclude its potential to express in some way God's revelation, moreover we cannot privileged any culture and assign it as the preferential medium of revelation.

In the *Incarnation*, the Verb takes the human nature that all mankind has. The Verb becomes man, just like us, within an ever changing cultural reality and society: the Jewish people in the times of Jesus. Historically, the Verb has been made in Jesus *like and at the same time as any human being* (on nature's side) and *man but not like every man* (on culture's side)<sup>92</sup>.

Jesus, although strongly residing in his culture, as we read in the Gospel, is fundamentally free from it: He comes to have and confirms everything that is valid according to the Gospel, and corrects and guides everything that has suffered some kind of deviation or depravation in a new manner of dynamic conversion and transformation. Thus, He fulfills God's plan of salvation.

In this sense, the Gospel continually judges the limits and errors of the culture where it lives. Embracing the Gospel, assessing the richness of the cultures, and, at the same time, purifying or rejecting the cultural values, elevate and make grow Christianity in a specific culture. The incarnation of at the Gospel in a culture implies that said culture has completely embraced the Gospel and has been thoroughly purified.

But although incarnation encompasses birth, growth and death, it also includes resurrection. Inculturation, in the same way as Christ, after a period of growth, trial, and purification, emerges as a participant of the Spirit-filled life, thus achieving the resurrection of the culture as a new creation in the Spirit<sup>93</sup>.

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<sup>92</sup> SARAIVA MARTINS, JOSÉ, *Ruolo Missionario e Formazione Apostolica dei Laici*, en «Euntes Docete» XL (1987) 662: "Gesù di Nazareth rimane l'insuperabile modello dell'inculturazione".

<sup>93</sup> We believe that the following text of John Paul II summarizes very well the theological basis of inculturation: The model for this task (inculturation) is the incarnation of the Verb of God, the salvational and historical event on which the Christian faith is based. In Christ, the Verb became man (cf. Jn 1, 14) and

## 4.2 Pneumatological basis

The Holy Spirit is the start of the particular and universal within the Church. The Spirit, whose shadow covered Mary in the Incarnation of the Son, shelters now the Church so that Christ can incarnate in the lives of the peoples and cultures. The Holy Spirit is the architect of *inculturation* (cfr. RM 29, 3).

Just like in the Incarnation, the Son came to have human nature, now the Spirit expresses Christ in every particularity of men, thus showing the richness of the Mystical Body of Christ. It is in the Spirit that these particularities become important or universally relevant<sup>94</sup>.

In other words, it is the Spirit who universalizes and embraces; He makes possible the salvation done by Christ in all peoples and in the whole cosmos: "...it is the

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took as his own everything that belongs to man, except sin (cf. Hb 4, 15). Announcing Christ to all men cannot but follow the same dynamic. The revealed message must be proposed in a way that every culture can feel it as it truly is, valuable, enriching, and current in any time and in every generation.

4. Thus, an authentic theology of the incarnation will indicate the coordinates of inculturation, pointing out its limits and going further than a simple translation that in the end would mean a betrayal to the real inculturation. Announcing the Incarnation as a unique and unparalleled historical event is the cornerstone of every inculturating process of the faith. The Son of God incarnated himself, once and for all, in a specific place and time. Each culture that embraces Christ cannot but establish a permanent bond with the concrete history of the Incarnation, with the biblical Word that reveals this event to us, with the ecclesiastical traditions that communicate it to us, and with the sacramental signs in which it still continues to act in us. Furthermore, the Incarnation is intimately connected with the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. Our acceptance of this event supposes the awareness of sin, which defines the history of man and makes us strongly feel the need of redemption. When we announce Christ, we cannot afford to forget, even if moved by an erroneous reconciliatory feeling, that the *mysterium iniquitatis* exists, and that this mystery has deeply disturbed the original goodness of creation. The *good seed* and the *weed* (cf. Mt 13, 39) grow together, not only in the heart of men but also in the cultures and society. That is why not everything can be reconciled with the Christian message. Many things can be reassessed, but others have to be rejected, and all have to be purified and improved.", cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Carta al Card. José T. Sánchez con ocasión de la IX sesión plenaria del Consejo Internacional de Catequesis*, 21-IX-1994, 3-4: IGP2 XVII/2 (1994) 362-363.

<sup>94</sup> GS 38 y también cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Audiencia general*, Roma, 2-I-1991, 4: IGP2 XIV/1 (1991) 10.



*Spirit who gives us the impulse to go further; beyond our own geography and ethnical and religious barriers so that our mission can truly be universal” (RM 25).*

The Spirit not only guarantees the universal importance of each particularity but also makes possible the *unity in the diversity*<sup>95</sup> of the Church: since de Pentecostal event, the Holy Spirit has descended over each person of every time and place so that men may be astonished and overjoyed, listen and understand the one and only Good News.

In Pentecost, the people, who lived under the sign of uncommunicativeness and division that occurred in Babel, received the gift of the Spirit, which made them participate in communion without destroying the clearest sign of division: their own languages. If Babel was man’s effort of trying to uplift unity without universality, Pentecost is the gift of universality in unity<sup>96</sup>.

In the Old Testament, we read that the Spirit of the Lord filled everything since the Creation, when the *Spirit of the Lord swept over the face of the waters*. Since the creation of all things was done through the Eternal Verb, *the seeds of the Verb* are already inside the cultures and religious traditions of the peoples. The reason why the Spirit is active in these cultures and traditions is because these *seeds of the Verb* are acting inside and through them<sup>97</sup>. Consequently, it is the Spirit who assists the Church during the inculturating process by discerning the Seeds of the Verb and unfolding the richness of

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<sup>95</sup> Cfr. CONGREGACIÓN PARA LA DOCTRINA DE LA FE, Carta *Communio notio* (28-V-1992), IV: AAS 85 (1993) 847-848.

<sup>96</sup> Cfr. COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, Documento *El Cristianismo y las Religiones* (1996), n. 57, en COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, *Documentos 1969-1996, Veinticinco años de servicio a la teología de la Iglesia*, o. c. , pág. 579. JUAN PABLO II, *Catequesis en la audiencia general*, Castel Gandolfo, 29-IX-1989, 7: IGP2 XII/2 (1989) 554.

<sup>97</sup> Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, Encíclica *Redemptoris Missio*, nn. 28-29 y 55-56: AAS 83 (1991) 273-275 y 302-305. PONTIFICIO CONSEJO PARA EL DIÁLOGO INTERRELIGIOSO Y CONGREGACIÓN PARA LA EVANGELIZACIÓN DE LOS PUEBLOS, Instrucción *Diálogo y Anuncio* (19-V-1991), nn. 16-17, 40: AAS 84 (1992) 420, 427. COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, Documento *El Cristianismo y las Religiones* (1996), nn. 81-82, en COMISIÓN TEOLÓGICA INTERNACIONAL, *Documentos 1969-1996, Veinticinco años de servicio a la teología de la Iglesia*, o. c. , pág. 588-589.

the mystery of Christ. That is why some theologians call the Holy Spirit the *agent of inculturation*<sup>98</sup>.

### 4.3 Ecclesiological Basis

Just as Christ lived in a specific time and place, so does the Church live in a specific time, place, society and culture. And like her Founder, She too announces the Gospel to the cultures: “*Repent and believe the good news!*” (Mc 1, 15).

As *body of Christ* (LG 7) and *sacrament of salvation* (LG 1), the universal and particular Church has been throughout history the place, the agent, and guarantee of *inculturation*. The Church effectively is the theological place to understand the Word of God under the action of the Spirit of Truth, which is in truth the real progress in history (Cfr. DV 8-13).

For indeed, it is in this concrete reality of ecclesiastical experience that inculturation is embraced, lived, thought of, valued, purified, fulfilled, and done. For this reason, the Church has been throughout history the place of experience, the agent and criterion of validity and legitimization of all inculturation. Theologically and Christologically founded on the mystery of the Incarnation, inculturation projects itself on evangelization as an expression the Church’s mission.

The ecclesiastical mission of inculturation has been inaugurated in Pentecost. In the first speeches of Saint Peter, for example, we can see how the Hebrew religious traditions were embraced and exceeded at the same time. We have continually been reading, living, and announcing, together with the Old Testament (in fulfillment of the promises and prophecies Acts 2, 16-21.25-28.30.34-35; 3, 22), the mystery of Christ; however we cannot leave out the qualities of originality and novelty.

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<sup>98</sup> Cfr. LOZANO BARRAGÁN, JAVIER, *La Inculturación en la Encíclica Redemptoris missio*, 1.5, en «Vida y Espiritualidad» 7 (1991) 13-14. DHAVAMONY, MARIASUSAI, S. J., *The Christian Theology of Inculturation*, 4, en «Studia Missionalia» 44 (1995) 38-42. ANTHONY, FRANCIS-VINCENT, *Ecclesial Praxis of Inculturation, Toward an Empirical-theological Theory of Inculturizing Praxis*, Biblioteca di Scienze Religiose 136, LAS-Roma, 1997, pág. 77-79.

The primitive Christian community received and purified simultaneously the religious Hebrew culture: *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things* (Fil 4, 8).

The incarnation of Christ demands in itself the *inculturation* of the faith in every human environment, and if the Church has the mission to perpetuate *inculturation* in the world, then the Church must embrace the entire human family: every people and nation; there we can see the universality of the Church and her mission (cfr. Mt 28, 19), and also why inculturation is an ecclesiastical action of discernment in the Holy Spirit<sup>99</sup>.

#### **4.4 Anthropological basis**

We well know that the purpose of evangelizing is an authentic Christian anthropology and also the salvation of the people, not only their nature but also their culture, by the holy grace.

As we have said many times before, converting to Christ does not imply that we must repudiate cultural and religious human values, unless they contradict in themselves the Gospel. We can clearly learn this from the passage of the centurion Cornelius' conversion in Caesarea: *“a devout man and one who feared God with his entire household, and gave much alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually”* (Acts 10, 2 y 22). Although a pagan and uncircumcised, he and his family were baptized and received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10, 44-48), to which Saint Peter claims: *“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right...”* (Acts 10, 34-36).

Since a person is an individual and a member of the ecclesiastical and human society, *inculturation*, which is the goal of evangelization, must become a service of promotion, illumination, and human global liberation from the effects caused by sin,

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<sup>99</sup> Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, *Audiencia general*, Roma, 2-I-1991: IGP2 XIV/1 (1991) 8-18.

death, injustice, violence, and poverty: *The ferment of the Gospel too has aroused and continues to arouse in man's heart the irresistible requirements of his dignity* (GS n. 26).

*Inculturation* of the faith is an experience of redemption, which is lived by a Christian community in a specific place and time, as a preannouncement of the definitive salvation. The consequences, which we could describe as anthropological, are:

- *Inculturation* influences the mentality of the people, guiding it toward symbols and expressions of faith that are coherent with the Gospel, an example of this would be a just assessment and re-evangelization of peoples' religious expressions, this would be a challenge of *inculturation* of the faith.
- *Inculturation* gives guidance to the real and concrete life of the people of God, pointing out precise forms of Christian demeanor and social actions inspired and encouraged by justice, liberty, fraternity, equality, participation and communion. An example in this field would be the understanding and study of the practical and liberatory dimension of the Christian message.
- *Inculturation* influences the religious expressions of the people, making them discern the universal and unique value of having faith in Christ.

*Inculturation* implies converting continually in such a way that the people are in the best condition to face Christianly the challenges of the new times without making concessions or withdrawing from the world. Examples would be the role of the mass media, the advancements of the scientific community, and the new cultural trends.

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