

## Listening as the Foundation for Spirituality

Each morning he wakes me to hear,  
to listen like a disciple.  
The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear.

*Isaiah 50:4-5*

**H**ave you ever noticed how little *explicit* emphasis there is on listening in the Rules of communities, in the standard manuals on the spiritual life, and even in the classics? One searches in vain for a chapter on listening in the writings of St. Benedict or St. Ignatius or even in the writings of very practical, concretely oriented saints like Francis de Sales and Vincent de Paul. One comes up empty too in Luis de Granada and Rodriguez and in later widely used treatises on spirituality like Tanqueray. Listening, of course, enters these writings implicitly under many headings. But if one considers listening the foundation for spirituality, one might have expected it to stand out in greater relief.

This article proposes some reflections on listening as the foundation of spirituality. It will examine, in a preliminary way: (1) listening in the New Testament; (2) listening as the foundation for all spirituality; (3) some echoes of the theme in the history of spirituality; (4) the contrast between an implicit and an explicit theme; (5) some ramifications today.

Christian listening begins, of course, with the Old Testament,

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where listening plays a vital role, especially in the Deuteronomic and prophetic traditions. Yahweh often complains that, when he speaks, his people “do not listen.” Conversely, the prophets are preeminent listeners; they hear what Yahweh has to say and then speak in his name. “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening,” says the boy Samuel as he begins his prophetic career. Listening recurs again and again in the New Testament, where a study of Johannine literature, for instance, would reveal listening as the key to eternal life. “Whoever is of God listens to every word God speaks. The reason you do not hear is that you are not of God. . . . If someone is true to my word he shall never see death” (Jn 8:47, 51).

### Listening in Luke’s Gospel

In Luke’s Gospel the listening theme is quite explicit. For Luke, as for the entire New Testament, God takes the initiative through his word, which breaks into the world as good news calling for human attention and response.

*Mary the model listener.* As with almost all the important themes in Lukan theology, the listening theme is introduced in the infancy narratives. These narratives provide a summary of the theology that Luke will weave through his Gospel. The listening theme is among the most prominent Lukan motifs (parenthetically, one might add that in Luke’s Gospel another theme is at work in many of the listening stories; contrary to the expected cultural patterns of the writer’s time, a *woman* is the model listener presented to the reader).

Mary is evangelized in Luke’s first two chapters. She is the first to hear the good news. She is the ideal disciple, the model for all believers. Mary listens reflectively to Gabriel, who announces the good news of God’s presence and tells her of the extraordinary child whom she is to bear; to Elizabeth, who proclaims her blessed among women because she has believed that the word of the Lord would be fulfilled in her; to shepherds, who tell her and others the message which has been revealed to them about the child, the good news that a Savior is born; to Simeon, who proclaims a song of praise for the salvation that has come to all nations and a prophecy that ominously forebodes the cross; to Anna, who praises God in Mary’s presence and keeps speaking to all who are ready to hear; to Jesus himself, who tells her about his relationship with his heavenly Father, which must take precedence over everything.

Luke pictures Mary as listening to the Angel Gabriel with wonderment, questioning what it might mean, deciding to act on it, and afterwards meditating on the mystery of God’s ways, reflecting on them in her heart.

*The theme of listening later in Luke’s Gospel.* Luke uses three brief stories to illustrate this theme of listening discipleship, namely, that those who listen to the word of God and act on it are the true followers of Jesus.

(1) His mother and brothers came to be with him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. He was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside and they wish to see you.” He told them in reply, “My mother and my brothers are those who listen to the word of God and act upon it” (8:19-21).

In this story Luke changes the Markan emphasis (cf. Mk 3:31-35) radically. While Mark depreciates the role of Jesus’ mother and relatives, Luke extols it, echoing his first two chapters and showing that Mary is the ideal disciple, who listens to God’s word and acts on it.

(2) On their journey Jesus entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him to her home. She had a sister named Mary, who seated herself at the Lord’s feet and listened to his words. Martha, who was busy with all the details of hospitality, came to him and said, “Lord are you not concerned that my sister has left me to do the household tasks all alone? Tell her to help me.” The Lord in reply said to her: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset about many things; one thing only is required. Mary has chosen the better portion and she shall not be deprived of it” (10:38-42).

Even though Jesus’ statement about the one thing necessary has been subject to innumerable interpretations, there is little doubt about the point of this story in the context of Luke’s Gospel. Mary has chosen the better part because she is sitting at Jesus’s feet and listening to his words, just as any true disciple does. While there are many other themes in the story (such as the role of women and the role of the home-church in early Christianity, which is reinforced here through a Lukan addition), Luke emphasizes the basis of discipleship: listening to the word of God. That is the better part (see Lk 8:4-21).

(3) While he was saying this a woman from the crowd called out “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that

nursed you!" "Rather," he replied, "blest are they who listen to the word of God and keep it."

This passage interrupts, rather puzzlingly, a series of controversies that Jesus is involved in during the journey to Jerusalem. But Luke inserts it to clarify the meaning of discipleship once more: real happiness does not lie in physical closeness to Jesus, nor in blood relationship with him, but in listening to the word of God and acting on it.

### Listening as the Basis for Spirituality

All spirituality revolves around self-transcendence. As a working definition for spirituality, we might use one proposed by Sandra Schneiders: "The experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives."<sup>1</sup>

For Christians spirituality involves "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rm 13:14), "giving away one's life rather than saving it up" (Mk 8:35, Mt 16:25, Lk 9:24, Jn 12:25), and other phrases that imply self-transcendence. The self is not obliterated through self-transcendence; rather, it becomes fully actualized.<sup>2</sup> That is the Christian paradox: in giving oneself, one finds one's true self. In that sense authentic love of God, of the neighbor, and of self come together.

Authors put this in different ways. For Bernard Lonergan self-transcendence occurs in the radical drive of the human spirit, which yearns for meaning, truth, value, and love. Authenticity, then, "results from long-sustained exercise of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility."<sup>3</sup> For Karl Rahner the human person is the event of the absolute self-communication of God. In his foundational works Rahner describes the human person as essentially a listener, one who is always awaiting a possible word of revelation. Only in Jesus, the self-communication of God, is the human person ultimately fulfilled. At the core of the historical human person is a gnawing hunger for the other, for absolute value. A particular spirituality is a way in which this longing for the absolute is expressed.<sup>4</sup>

But this inner yearning for truth and love, this "reaching out," as Henri Nouwen expresses it, can only be satisfied by a word from without—spoken or enfolded—that reveals what true

humanity really is. In the human person the fundamental disposition for receiving that word or Word is listening.

It is worth noting here that Genesis, the wisdom books, and the Johannine tradition all seize on the concept of the Word as the way in which God initiates and breaks into human history. The creating word bears within it its own immediate response: "Let there be light, and there was light." But the word spoken to the human person, who in God's image and likeness rules with freedom over all creation, must be listened to and responded to freely.

Of course, listening here is used in the broadest sense. It includes seeing, hearing, sensing, feeling, perceiving. "Attentiveness" might serve as the term for the various ways in which the human person is ready to grasp what comes from without. Listening in this sense is the indispensable precondition for self-transcendence. Without it the word that comes from without goes unheard, the truth that draws the human mind to a vision beyond itself goes unperceived, the love that seeks to capture the heart goes unrequited.

Is this why the saints have so stressed the importance of listening in prayer? Is this why obedience has played such an influential role in the tradition of religious communities? Is this why the seeking of counsel has always been regarded as one of the signs of true wisdom? Is this why the Word made flesh and the word of God in the Scriptures are at the center of all Christian spirituality? Is this why the reading of the Scriptures in the liturgy and communion with the Word himself in his self-giving, sacrificial love are "the source and summit" of genuine Christian living?

### Listening in Vincent de Paul

One can find echoes of the listening theme in many traditions. Ignatian discernment, which has exerted such a forceful influence on the countless people who have made the Spiritual Exercises since the sixteenth century, is a means of listening attentively to what God is saying and allowing God's word to work conversion within us. Francis de Sales, whose *Introduction to the Devout Life* has been read by millions since its first publication in 1609, spoke of the need to "be devoted to the word of God whether you hear it in familiar conversation with spiritual friends or in sermons." He urged his readers, "Always listen to it with attention."<sup>5</sup>

Here, however, I will focus briefly on another seventeenth-century figure, Vincent de Paul, whose writings are less well known, but whose charism has influenced enormous numbers of men and women, not only in the two communities he founded (the Vincentians and the Daughters of Charity), but in other communities that have sprung up under his inspiration, and also in the hundreds of thousands of Ladies of Charity and St. Vincent de Paul Society members throughout the world.

The central place of listening in spirituality is not explicit in the conferences and writings of St. Vincent. But the spirituality he proposes includes several key themes in which the importance of listening is evident.

### Humility the Foundation of Evangelical Perfection

Vincent calls humility “the foundation of all evangelical perfection and the core of the spiritual life.”<sup>6</sup> For him truly humble people see everything as gift. The humble recognize that God is seeking to enter their lives again and again so that he may speak to them. They are alert, they listen for God’s word, they are eager to receive God’s saving love. The humble know that the truth which sets them free comes from without: through God’s word, through the cries of the poor, through the church, through the community in which they live.

There is probably no theme that St. Vincent emphasized more. He described humility as the origin of all the good that we do.<sup>7</sup> He told the Daughters of Charity: “If you establish yourselves in it, what will happen? You will make this company a paradise, and people will rightly say that it is a group of the happiest people on earth. . . .”<sup>8</sup>

Humility and listening are closely allied in that listening is the basic attitude of those who know that fullness of life, salvation, wisdom, truth, and love come from without. Brother Robineau, Vincent’s secretary, whose reflections about the saint have just been published, notes that this attitude was especially evident in Vincent’s conversations with the poor, with whom he would sit and converse with great friendliness and humility.<sup>9</sup>

St. Vincent loved to call the poor the real “lords and masters”<sup>10</sup> in the church. It is they especially who must be listened to and obeyed. In the reign of God, the world of faith, they are the kings and queens; we are the servants. Recognizing the special

place of the poor in the new order established by Jesus, Vincent was eager not only that his followers would serve and evangelize the poor, but also that they would hear God speaking in those they served or, as we would put it today, that they would allow themselves to be evangelized.<sup>11</sup>

### Reading Sacred Scripture

St. Vincent was convinced that the word of God never fails. It is like “a house built upon rock.”<sup>12</sup> He therefore begins each chapter of his rule and many individual paragraphs with a citation from Scripture. He asks the members of the Congregation of the Mission to read a chapter of the New Testament every day. He wants them to listen to the word of God and to make it the foundation of all they do: “Let each of us accept the truth of the following statement and try to make it our most fundamental principle: Christ’s teaching will never let us down, while worldly wisdom always will.”<sup>13</sup>

Abelly, Vincent’s first biographer, notes, in a colorful passage, how devoted the saint was to listening to the word of God: “He seemed to suck meaning from passages of the Scriptures as a baby sucks milk from its mother, and he extracted the core and substance from the Scriptures so as to be strengthened and have his soul nourished by them—and he did this in such a way that in all his words and actions he appeared to be filled with Jesus Christ.”<sup>14</sup>

### “Obeying” Everyone

The word “obedience” (*ob* + *audire* = to listen thoroughly) is related etymologically to the word “listen” (*audire*). For St. Vincent the role of obedience in community was clearly very important. But he also extended obedience beyond its usual meaning, that all are to obey the legitimate commands of superiors. Using a broadened notion of obedience, he encouraged his followers to listen to and obey *everyone*, so that they might hear more fully what God is saying and act on it:

Our obedience ought not limit itself only to those who have the right to command us, but ought to strive to move beyond that. . . . Let us therefore consider everyone as our superior and so place ourselves beneath them and, even more, beneath the least of them, outdoing them in deference, agreeableness, and service.<sup>15</sup>

Obedience moreover, is not the duty of subjects alone, but of superiors too. In fact, superiors should be the first to obey, by listening to the members well and by seeking counsel: "There would be nothing more beautiful in the world, my daughter, than the Company of the Daughters of Charity if . . . obedience flourished everywhere, with the sister servant the first to obey, to seek counsel, and to submit herself."<sup>16</sup>

### **An Implicit Theme vs. an Explicit One**

It is clear that listening plays a significant, even if unaccented, role in each of the themes described above. The importance of listening is not, therefore, a "forgotten truth" (to use Karl Rahner's phrase) in the writings of Ignatius Loyola, or Francis de Sales, or Vincent de Paul, or in the overall spiritual tradition; neither, however, is it a central one. Therein lie two dangers.

First, truths that remain secondary or merely implicit run the risk of being underemphasized or distorted. For example, reading a chapter of the word of God daily can degenerate into fulfilling an obligation or studying a text unless listening attentively retains its preeminent place. Likewise, the practice of humility, when distorted, can result in subservience to the voices without and deafness to the voices within, where God also speaks. In such a circumstance, "humility" might mask lack of courage in speaking up, deficient self-confidence, or a negative self-image. A distorted emphasis on obedience can cause subjects to listen exclusively to superiors, no matter what other voices might say, even voices that conscience demands that we listen to. Conversely, it could cause a superior to insist loudly that he only has to "listen" to the advice of others, not follow it (whereas in such instances he may usually listen to almost no one but himself). But when listening retains a place at the center, the danger of distortion is lessened. Reading the word of God, practicing humility, and obeying are seen as means for hearing what God is saying. The accent remains on attentiveness.

Second, when the importance of listening is underemphasized, there is a subtle tendency to focus on particular practices to the detriment of others or to be attentive to certain voices while disregarding others. For instance, a member of a community might pray mightily, seeking to discern what God is saying, but pay little attention to what a superior or spiritual director who

knows the person well is trying to say. He or she may listen "transcendentally" or "vertically," so to speak, but show little concern for listening "horizontally." Along similar lines, a superior might be very confident that, because of the grace of his office, God lets him know what his will is, while other persons, by the grace of their office, are desperately trying to signify to the same superior that God is saying something quite different. The simple truth is that we must listen to many voices since God speaks to us in many ways. Some of these ways are obviously privileged, but none has an exclusive hold on the truth.

### **Some Ramifications**

In his wonderful book on community, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote:

The first service that one owes to others in the community consists in listening to them. Just as love of God begins by listening to his Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them. It is because of God's love for us that he not only gives us his Word but also lends us his ear. So it is his work that we do for our brother when we learn to listen to him. Christians, especially ministers, so often think they must always contribute something when they are in the company of others, that this is the one service they have to render. They forget that listening can be a greater service than speaking. Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because these Christians are talking where they should be listening. But he who can no longer listen to his brother will soon be no longer listening to God either, he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too. This is the beginning of the death of the spiritual life.<sup>17</sup>

If listening is so crucial to healthy spirituality, then how might members of communities grow in it, both as individuals and in common?

### **Listening as Individuals**

From reflection on the church's long spiritual tradition, one might glean a number of qualities that characterize good listeners. Here I will touch briefly on four, which seem to me crucial for better listening.

The first indispensable quality for good listening is humility.

It is “the foundation of all evangelical perfection, the core of the spiritual life,” as Vincent de Paul put it.<sup>18</sup> Humble people sense their incompleteness, their need for God and other human persons. So they listen.

Humility acknowledges that everything is gift; it sees clearly that all good things come from God. St. Vincent writes to a priest of the Mission: “Because we recognize that this abundant grace comes from God, a grace which he keeps on giving only to the humble who realize that all the good done through them comes from God, I beg him with all my heart to give you more and more the spirit of humility. . . .”<sup>19</sup>

But consciousness of one’s incompleteness has a further dimension. It is not only “vertical,” so to speak, but “horizontal”; we depend not only on God directly, but on God’s creation around us. Truth, then, comes from listening not only to God himself, but to other human persons, through whom God’s presence and words are mediated to us. The hunger for truth and love that lie at the heart of the mystery of the human person is satisfied only from without. We are inherently social, living within a complex network of relationships with individuals and with society.

It is only when what is heard is pondered that its full meaning is revealed. The second quality necessary for better listening, then, is prayerful reflectiveness. While at times one can hear God speak even in a noisy crowd, it is often only in silence that one hears the deepest voices, that one plumbs the depth of meaning. The Psalmist urges us: “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10).

The Gospels, particularly Luke’s, attest that Jesus turns to his Father again and again in prayer to listen to him and to seek his will. Prayer is then surely one of the privileged ways of listening. But it must always be validated by life. One who listens to “what God is telling me” in prayer, but who pays little heed to what others are saying in daily life, is surely suspect. Prayer must be in continual contact with people and events, since God speaks not only in the silence of our hearts, but also (and often first of all) in the people around us.

Because prayer is a meeting with God himself, what *we* say in prayer is much less important than what God says to us. When there is too much emphasis on what *we* say or do during prayer, it can easily become a “good work,” an “achievement,” a “speech,” rather than a “grace,” a “gift,” a “gratuitous word” from God.

Naturally, prayer, like all human activities, involves structures, personal discipline, persevering effort. But the emphasis must always be on the presence of the personal God, to whose word we must listen attentively as he speaks to us the good news of his love for us and for others.

In an era when there is much noise, where the media, if we so choose, speak to us all day long, one must surely ask: Are we able to distinguish the voice of God among the many voices that are speaking? Is God’s word able to say “new things” to us? Are we still capable of wonder? As may be evident to the reader, the word *wonder* has an etymological kinship, through German, with *wound*. Is the word of God able to wound us, to penetrate the membrane that seals us off, that encloses us within ourselves? Can it break into our consciousness and change us?

The third necessary quality is respect for the words of human persons. It is here perhaps that the tradition was weakest. It did emphasize humility. It did accent the need to hear what God is saying and to discern his will. But it rarely focused explicitly, in the context of spirituality, on the central place of listening to other people.

Many contemporary documents put great emphasis on the dignity of human persons and on the importance of hearing the cries that come from their hearts. Vatican II’s *Gaudium et Spes* and the encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* see the human person as the center of creation.<sup>20</sup> Centesimus Annus puts it strikingly: “Today the church’s social doctrine focuses especially on *man*...”<sup>21</sup>

Respect for human persons acknowledges that God lives in them and that he reveals himself in and through them. It acknowledges that words of life come from the lowly as well as the powerful. In fact, St. Vincent became gradually convinced that “the poor have the true religion” and that we must be evangelized by them.<sup>22</sup>

Many of the recently published texts of Brother Louis Robineau, which relate his personal experience of Vincent de Paul, attest to the saint’s deep respect for persons of all types.

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Robineau notes how well Vincent listened to them: poor and rich, lay and clerical, peasant and royal.<sup>23</sup> In this context, the process of questioning persons that is involved in the quest for truth takes on a new light. When there is deep respect for all human persons, questioning involves a genuine search for enlightenment, rather than being, in some hidden way, refutation or accusation. Questioning is a tool for delving deeper, for unpeeling layers of meaning, for knowing the other person better, for digging toward the core of the truth.

*Attentiveness is  
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authentic communities.*

As we attempt to develop increasing respect for human persons, surely we must ask some challenging questions. Are we really able to hear the cries of the poor, of the most oppressed: the women and children, who are often the poorest members of society; those discriminated against because of race, color, nationality, religion; the AIDS victims, who are often shunned by their families and by the physically healthy; those on the “edges of life,” the helpless infants and the helpless aged, who are unable to speak for themselves? Are we able to hear the counsel given to us by others: by spiritual directors, by members of our own communities, by the documents of the church and our own religious congregations? Are we sensitive to the contributions that come from other sources of human wisdom (like economics, sociology, the audiovisual media, the massive data now available in computerized form) that often speak concretely about the needs of the poor, that can help us find and combat the causes of poverty or that can assist us in the new evangelization called for by the church? Are we alert, “listening,” to the “signs of the times”: the increasing gap between the rich and the poor and the repeated call for justice made by the church; the movement toward unity within global society, which is now accompanied by an opposite movement toward separatism and nationalism; the growth of the church in the southern hemisphere, which contrasts with its diminishment in many places in the northern hemisphere.

The fourth quality needed is attentiveness, one of the most important signs of respect for the human person. It is the first step in all evangelization, the prerequisite for serving Christ in the poor. It is only when the servant is attentive to the needs of the master (in this case, the poor person) that he really knows what to

bring him. It is only when the evangelizer is alert to the needs of the listener that she is able to communicate genuinely good news.

Attentiveness is an indispensable means for creating authentic communities. If community members do not pay close attention to the opinions and needs of those they live with, each person becomes isolated even if still physically present to others. Those living in community must therefore continually seek renewed ways of listening to each other and of sharing their prayer, their apostolic experience, their struggles in community, their successes and failures, their joys and sorrows.

Attentiveness is also of the greatest importance as one seeks counsel. Robineau relates how often St. Vincent asked others their opinion about matters at hand, “even the least in the house.” He often heard him say that “four eyes are better than two, and six better than four.”<sup>24</sup> Robineau relates an interesting incident in this regard:

One day he did me the honor of telling me that it was necessary to make it our practice, when consulting someone about some matter, always to recount everything that would be to the advantage of the opposing party without omitting anything, just as if it were the opposing party itself that was there to give its reasons and defend itself, and that it was thus that consultations should be carried out.<sup>25</sup>

### Listening in Community

Meetings, along with consultations and questionnaires of various sorts, are among the primary means of listening in community. Like most realities, meetings are “for better or for worse.” Almost all of us have experienced some that we find very fruitful and others that we would be happy to forget about. To put it in another way, meetings can be a time of grace or a time when sin threatens grace.

Communities, like individuals, can become caught up in themselves. A healthy self-concern can gradually slip into an unhealthy self-preoccupation. Outgoing zeal can be replaced by self-centered security seeking. Communities can be rescued from this state, in a way analogous to that of individuals, only through corporate humility,<sup>26</sup> a communal effort to listen to God and communal attentiveness to the words of others.

Meetings can be a time when sin threatens grace. When there is no listening, they create strife and division. They disrupt rather than unify. They deepen the darkness rather than focus the light. Among the signs that sin is at work in meetings is *fighting*. When participants do not listen, there is inevitable strife, bad feelings, disillusionment, bitterness. Such meetings result in *fleeing*. The group backs away from major decisions, especially those that demand some conversion; it refuses to listen to the prophets; it seeks refuge in the status quo. A further consequence is *fracturing*. When participants do not listen, badly divided splinter groups form; the "important" conversations take place in the corridors rather than in the meeting hall; politics, in the worst sense, takes the place of discernment.

Meetings can be an opportunity for grace. They provide us with a wonderful opportunity for listening and discernment. They enable communities to work toward decisions together, as a community. In order for this to happen, those who meet must be committed to sharing their common heritage, creating a climate of freedom for discussion, and planning courageously for the future.

In meetings where God is at work, we recall our heritage in order to renew it. We listen to and retell "our story." We recount and rehear the deeds of the Lord in our history. We celebrate our gratitude in the Eucharist and let thanksgiving fill our hearts, for we have heard the wonderful works of the Lord. We share communal prayer and reflection because the faith of others strengthens us.

The atmosphere will be grace-filled if all are eager to listen to each other. If all arrive without hardened positions and prejudices, convinced that the group must seek the truth together, then the groundwork for the emergence of truth has already been laid.

The content, no matter how concrete or seemingly pedestrian, will be grace-filled if all hear the word of God together, listen to each other's reflections on that word, and make decisions on that basis. The decisions of a listening community will flow from its heritage while developing the heritage in the light of contemporary circumstances.<sup>27</sup>

Meetings play an important role within God's providence. God provides for the growth of communities through wise decisions that govern their future, especially the training of the young, the ongoing formation of all members, and care for the aging. But such decisions can be made only if the members of the com-

munity are willing to listen to the data that describes its present situation and projects its future needs. Communal decision making, based on realistic projections, is one of the ways in which providence operates in community life. Failure to listen to the data—difficult though it may sometimes be to "hear" it honestly—results in calamitous "blindness" and "deafness."

The listening individual and the listening community will surely grow, for listening is the foundation of all spirituality. To the listener come truth, wisdom, the assurance of being loved. To those who fail to listen comes increasing isolation.

Jesus, like the prophets, knew that listening made demands and consequently was often lacking. He lamented its absence: "Sluggish indeed is this people's heart. They have scarcely heard with their ears, they have firmly closed their eyes; otherwise they might see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn back to me, and I should heal them" (Mt 13:15). He also rejoiced in its presence: "But . . . blessed are your ears because they hear" (Mt 13:16).

In recent years many congregations have attempted to assist individuals, local communities, and assemblies to listen better. In workshops much effort has been put into fostering practical listening skills. But are there ways in which communities, particularly during initial formation, can better communicate the importance of listening as foundational for growth? If listening is the foundation of all spirituality, as this article has tried to show, then it is crucial for personal growth and for the vitality of all communities.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sandra Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989): 684.

<sup>2</sup> See Ga 2:19-21: "I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I live now is not my own: Christ is living in me. Of course, I still live my human life, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." The Greek text identifies Jesus as the self-giving one. It also makes it clear that self-transcendence does not wipe out true humanity, but fulfills it.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick Crowe (New York: Paulist, 1985), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> See K. Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens* (Freiburg: Herder, 1984), pp. 35f, 42f.



Biblia fue traducida a la lengua miskita por la Iglesia Morava, y el segundo esfuerzo de traducción se hizo ya a nivel ecuménico: los obispos moravos y católicos, condujeron los equipos de traducción de la Biblia. Por ejemplo, los nuevos testamentos que hoy circulan en la Costa en miskito, cuya primera página está firmada por los obispos moravos y católicos es una prueba de estos esfuerzos conjuntos; de manera que el texto bíblico se conoce a principios de siglo en la lengua del pueblo gracias a este trabajo ecuménico.

Toda la reflexión bíblica se encuentra formando parte de la tradición oral de las comunidades, no hay nada escrito de esta reflexión. Son muy escasos los pastores y sacerdotes que escriben sus reflexiones, y muy poco se ha recuperado de la reflexión bíblica que las comunidades han hecho en todo su itinerario. Claves de lectura bíblicas, sin embargo, son muy evidentes en la vida de las comunidades. El tema de la tierra: la tierra como la casa, la casa de todos para convivir, para compartir la vida, la tierra como fuente nutricional, es una clave que está presente en las distintas comunidades, en la predicación y en la reflexión bíblica pastoral. La otra clave de lectura que me parece a mí muy importante y que es una cuestión común es el concepto de pueblo: el pueblo miskito es uno, tiene su propia identidad, su propia historia, sus propios modos de vida, de convivencia, y hay una búsqueda de entender este pueblo en el camino, así como Israel, hacia una vida mejor! Uno de los cantos de la Misa Campesina está en miskito, viene de la comunidad de Awastara.

En ese canto se ve al pueblo miskito caminando hacia el futuro; apropiado de la tierra, apropiado de sí mismo, caminando hacia el sol, caminando hacia el más allá. Entonces hay un sentido de movimiento, que está presente en la congregación del pueblo de Dios. Estos serían los primeros aspectos que me parecen muy esenciales en la vida ecuménica de las comunidades eclesiales: bautismo, eucaristía, Biblia o predicación, elementos comunes de la Gracia.

La segunda cuestión es sobre la diaconía social. Haciendo un análisis de los programas de las iglesias católica, morava y anglicana se percibe una preocupación por la formación de una cultura para la paz. Hay que afirmar aquí que la Iglesia Morava en la historia moderna no solamente es una de las iglesias promotoras del ecumenismo, sino también una de las iglesias que ha hecho contribuciones importantes a la paz en algunas regiones del mundo. Entonces, como parte de la pedagogía de la fe se puede percibir esta preocupación de construir, fundamentar una cultura de paz. ¿Cómo se entiende esto entonces en el conflicto que vivimos de 1980 a 1985? Todavía es un conflicto que está latente, que no ha sido satisfactoriamente resuelto.

El otro aspecto es la consolidación de los modos tradicionales de organización comunitaria. Las iglesias, aún cuando hablamos de iglesias de carácter episcopal, han tratado de consolidar los procesos de organización comunal. De manera que en las comunidades miskitas el casiquismo, por ejemplo, no es un fenómeno relevante. Hay en una comunidad miskita, así como negra, el sentido de participación, autogestión comunal amplia y un espíritu dialógico. Se celebra una reunión en una comunidad miskita y se tiene a toda la gente en la reunión, los jóvenes, los adultos, las mujeres, los ancianos, los niños, todos están presentes formando la asamblea, presentes para el debate y la acción. Entonces estos procesos han sido consolidados por las iglesias y a mí me parece que aquí estamos

hablando de un ecumenismo más real, más profundo que toca ya el sentido de la vida y la participación de la ecumenicidad comunal, en donde nadie puede ser marginado, todos tienen una palabra que decir y una disposición para actuar a partir del consenso.

La cuarta cuestión que quisiera compartir es en torno a la fe en relación con la cultura, la fe en la cultura miskita.

La Mosquitia es la única región de nuestro país donde existe una cultura prehispánica viva, lenguas indígenas, y modos de organización social de la cultura indígena precolombina. Volviendo al sentido de la tierra, hay un buen número de comunidades que tienen una historia de 350 años de no haberse movido de su propio lugar como Karatá, Yulu y Tuapí. Son comunidades ancestrales. Hasta donde los testimonios y documentos históricos nos lo revelan, son comunidades que existen desde hace más de 300, 350 años. Entonces hay en estas comunidades un sentido muy profundo en torno a la tierra, como la casa de todos. En la cristología miskita hay una reflexión muy interesante sobre el *Dawan*, que es el mesías Jesús, Dios hombre, Señor Salvador.

Hay toda una reflexión antropológica sobre este *Dawan* en la reflexión teológica miskita. En la religión antigua del miskito está el concepto del *Wan Aisa* el espíritu de vida, espíritu creador. Este espíritu es un espíritu que está presente en el río, en la tierra, en las lagunas, en el agua, en las montañas. Es porque *Wan Aisa*, espíritu de vida, nutre y da crecimiento al pueblo y hace florecer la existencia. Está reflexión uno la puede sentir en las comunidades. He investigado acerca de esto, y me parecen muy lindas estas dos concepciones de la cristología miskita. Este espíritu presente da fuerza al mundo del miskito y el uno sin el otro no pueden ser. La comunidad no puede prescindir del *Dawan*, del Mesías Jesús, pero tampoco del *Wan Aisa*, porque ambos son necesarios como divinidad. En la espiritualidad, miskita la tierra como el agua, aparecen como mediaciones.

En la cultura católica, se presentan tantas mediaciones y mediadores. En el racionalismo protestante la revelación es fundamental; Cristo como mediador entre Dios y los hombres. Pero en la comunidad miskita de mayoría protestante, es interesante que la tierra y el agua son identificados con formas de mediación y de vida, sin lo cuál no es posible la existencia, elementos presentes en la cultura, en la filosofía del miskito, que es a la vez espacio de lo ecuménico.

Hablando de las lenguas, es importante señalar la contribución etnográfica que las iglesias han hecho al desarrollo de las lenguas indígenas, además de la educación formal que han logrado las iglesias desarrollar en la Costa, por medio de los prestigiosos colegios moravos, católicos y anglicanos, etc. Me estoy refiriendo a estos aspectos de la parte interna de la cultura, como la lengua, una lengua que se estanca tiende a desaparecer y un pueblo sin lengua propia tendrá que buscar otras formas de expresión. Me parece por lo tanto importante el aporte de las iglesias en este nivel de la cultura, gramáticas, diccionarios desde finales del siglo pasado. En cuanto a organización, es importante destacar que una buena parte de los pastores moravos, diáconos católicos miskitos antiguamente fueron *sukias*, curanderos de las comunidades.

El *sukia* en la historia indígena ha sido muy central en la vida del pueblo porque ha sido el que tiene que ver con el cultivo de la vida, el que trata los cuerpos. Ciertamente tanto la Iglesia Morava, como la Iglesia Católica tuvieron prejuicios contra el *sukia*, pero

como todos los predicadores y pastores moravos del siglo pasado venían de las comunidades indígenas, pues, detrás de cada predicador estaba el *sukia*. Era una forma también de protegerse, una forma de preservarse, de hacer vivir y prolongar la tradición. Estos servicios del *sukia* continúan en otros sentidos hoy a través de líderes espirituales en las comunidades indígenas, en unos más acentuados que otros. Por esa razón es que en el conflicto, o en tiempos de paz el pastor como el diácono son importantes para guiar al pueblo, porque él reúne no solamente el poder de la predicación, reúne otros poderes de la comunidad y de la tradición, por lo tanto la comunidad le reconoce como guía.

Durante la revolución creo que el ecumenismo fue afectado negativamente a todos los niveles. Cuando estalló el conflicto político-militar el 40 % de la población indígena fue desplazada de sus comunidades de origen. Durante la guerra se dispersaron por el Río Coco, una parte de la población se refugió en Honduras, otra parte en Tasba Pri, y en el pacífico nicaragüense. Unas 80 comunidades a lo largo del Río fueron prácticamente desarticuladas, destruidas. La dirigencia de las iglesias moravas, católicas y anglicanas hicieron esfuerzos importantes por detener ese proceso y buscar una solución al conflicto; hubo reuniones conjuntas y unilaterales, aunque por supuesto, la iglesia más implicada en el conflicto era la Iglesia Morava. La impresión que yo tuve es que el gobierno revolucionario buscó como resolver el conflicto tratando el asunto de una manera sectorial y bilateral con los moravos, católicos, y anglicanos, y no en forma conjunta. Entonces se trataron los problemas por iglesias.

Esto afectó el ecumenismo eclesial; no se abordó el conflicto de una manera común de parte de las iglesias, y el gobierno no estaba dispuesto a abordar el problema con los obispos moravos, católicos y anglicanos juntos para darle un tratamiento global a la situación. Esa metodología no se siguió y por lo tanto una participación ecuménica fuerte alrededor del conflicto no se pudo trabajar a nivel de las bases. La Iglesia Morava emitió varias cartas pastorales durante el conflicto, cartas proféticas formulando solución al conflicto. Los obispos moravos y otros dirigentes, como yo mismo, estuvimos en el campo de la mediación para buscar una salida al problema. Hasta 1983 la autonomía era para la revolución un concepto no comprendido, la propuesta de una autonomía política para la Mosquitia fue vista como un intento de separación, de ruptura de la soberanía nacional, propuesta que surge en la lucha, en el conflicto. Es Misurasata quien plantea esta propuesta desde la lucha, y por lo tanto la propuesta fue rechazada por el gobierno revolucionario. Las iglesias no se pronunciaron en aquel momento sobre la propuesta de autonomía. Además, hablar de autonomía en 1983 era «delito» en la Mosquitia. Sin embargo, a nivel de las bases este concepto de autonomía comenzó a socializarse pero sin una profundización jurídica clara de qué sería la autonomía. Por lo tanto, poco se entendía a nivel de las bases lo que era el proyecto. La autonomía era más manejada a nivel de las dirigencias miskitas en la lucha.

A partir de 1985 el FSLN comienza a estudiar la propuesta de Misurasata, y después de realizar una consulta a nivel de la base, llegó a la conclusión de que estas propuestas debían de ser consideradas e implementadas. En 1987 se formuló la ley de autonomía, y se presentó a la Asamblea Legislativa, la cual fue aprobada. Con esta ley, el Frente comenzó a trabajar a fondo para comenzar a

legislar algunos asuntos tales como tenencia de tierra, demarcación de territorios, administración de recursos naturales, organización comunal, derechos de pesca, derechos de movilización etc., y prepararse para las elecciones regionales y nacionales en donde la propuesta de autonomía entraría en vigencia para elegir las autoridades de la región y organizar los consejos regionales y los gobiernos autónomos.

Entre las propuestas de autonomía del FSLN y de Misurasata, no hay diferenciaciones serias, sino convergencia. Sin embargo, el pueblo miskito y negro no tenía la suficiente confianza en la propuesta de autonomía del FSLN, perdiendo el proyecto fuerza popular. Hoy el proyecto de autonomía a nivel de las bases en la Costa ha perdido interés, hoy la gente no está preocupada por la autonomía sino por los problemas de la sobrevivencia. Ellos dicen que la autonomía no se come, no sirve para nada, sin una base material. Además consideran que no participan en el poder político real, en los procesos de planificación de la economía, y aún cuando las iglesias como la Iglesia Morava en última carta dirigida al gobierno exige cumplimiento de la ley autonómica, el gobierno nacional no responde a este respecto. Tenemos un gobierno excesivamente colonialista, centralista, un gobierno no interesado en compartir el poder con los gobiernos autónomos de la Mosquitia.

La autonomía es ejercitar y compartir del poder popular, porque el pueblo es sujeto de ella, sujeto de la economía y de la política. Además, tanto para la revolución sandinista, como antiguamente para Somoza, y hoy para los nuevos dirigentes del gobierno, la Costa Atlántica sigue siendo una de las regiones con reservas estratégicas importantes. Las reservas de madera, las reservas mineras y los grandes recursos del mar están en la Mosquitia. Y la Mosquitia es nuestra puerta de salida y de entrada a EE UU, Europa y el Caribe. De manera que una valoración de lo que en términos políticos, económicos y estratégicos, esto significa para un estado capitalista una valoración que choca con los intereses populares de una autonomía, tal como la que tenemos planteada aún con sus defectos y limitaciones. Es interesante notar los resultados de las elecciones en la Costa Atlántica. En las elecciones, participé todo el pueblo: miskitos, sumus, negros y ramas, hubo una participación plena.

La Mosquitia es una de las partes de Nicaragua donde el Frente obtuvo mejores resultados. Allí donde muchos pensaban que el Frente Sandinista, la revolución iba a ser completamente aplastada, de acuerdo a los resultados el FSLN obtuvo una participación importante. ¿Qué es lo que tenemos? La Mosquitia, escenario de un conflicto, una confrontación de dos procesos históricos, con resultados dramáticos, los resultados electorales fueron positivos para el Frente. Hay algo allí que examinar, hay una parte del pueblo que entiende o entendía el proyecto del Frente Sandinista y otra que estaba en alianza con el proyecto de la burguesía. Pero toda la situación del conflicto fue suficiente como para justificar el rechazo de la revolución, especialmente en las comunidades miskitas y sumus, sin embargo no ha sido así. Ciertamente la revolución creó divisiones, pero también unidad.

La reconciliación inter-ética es un desafío social, y esto está presente en todos los planos de vida miskita. La reconciliación es un tema central en la predicación morava. Las obras escritas son limitadas. Sin embargo, en la tradición oral y en la memoria de las comunidades, existe una reflexión de paz y reconciliación. La tierra

# EVANGELIZATION AND CULTURES

ANTONIO GALLO, S.J.

[5-7 hrs]

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"While working with Jews, I live like a Jew. In the same way, when with Gentiles, I live like a Gentile. This does not mean that I don't obey God's laws." (I Cor. 9:20-21)

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## INTRODUCTION

*Is the Inculturation of Faith a Necessary Issue?*

The presence of many different human groups bearing a multiplicity of cultures in the <sup>process</sup> dynamic of the contemporary life at the national and the international level is a fact that we can experiment and about which <sup>we</sup> ~~can be~~ <sup>being</sup> ~~acquainted~~ <sup>informed by</sup> through the daily communication media. ~~We would only refer to some newspaper as the Miami Herald, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and Magazines as Time, Newsweek, Businessweek, as the most representative for our actual shell, in this second half of the year of 1992 and in the turmoil of the electoral campaign.~~

<sup>we reflect upon these on</sup> With the occasion of the ethnic war in Yugoslavia, <sup>such as</sup> the recent independence of many nations <sup>such as</sup> Tchechoslovaquia, Georgia, Armenia, <sup>the Ukraine,</sup> <sup>PLO</sup> and other; or the struggles in the Near East, <sup>also</sup> Beirut, <sup>and</sup> the Jews, the Kurds of Iraq, and many others. <sup>also</sup> This periodical Press makes constant reference to the Haitians, <sup>and</sup> the cubans, the blacks, <sup>and</sup> spanics in general, <sup>current</sup> as a problems <sup>in need of</sup> which <sup>present themselves to us, calling us to find</sup> permanently presents among us and searching a solution.

<sup>in</sup> Amid this growing and amazing interference of the ethnicity in <sup>a sea</sup> the picture of the crowd of immigrants, <sup>there arises issues of</sup> with the economical <sup>need,</sup> necessity, politics, <sup>at</sup> relations, jobs, <sup>and</sup> marketing, <sup>at</sup> does have a <sup>phenomenon</sup> <sup>has</sup>

note →

Robert L Steinbock, Miami Herald (June 28, 1992).

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religious component ~~that~~ we <sup>MUST NOT</sup> ~~don't can~~ forget ~~yet~~.

The reality of so many ethnic groups and cultures, which <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>is a real problem</sup> ~~repel~~ <sup>by</sup> forsaking the risk of losing their identity, and <sup>to be</sup> ~~to be~~ fused in a more general style of life, <sup>are new for</sup> ~~poses~~ <sup>to</sup> the Church a ~~new as an~~ old challenge of <sup>being</sup> ~~assuming so many different ways of life for the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~one and revealed gospel~~, and ~~the~~ one faith ~~as~~ <sup>being</sup> communicated and perpetuated for centuries.

My question is not about the opportunity, or <sup>fittingness</sup> ~~the convenience~~ of transmitting the ~~old~~ traditional faith <sup>such</sup> ~~through these so~~ different cultures, but about the unavoidable necessity <sup>of doing so.</sup> ~~of it.~~

~~This~~ <sup>And</sup> ~~the~~ necessity <sup>raising</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>way to discerning</sup> ~~refers~~ only to <sup>but</sup> ~~putting~~ the question as <sup>to</sup> ~~to find convenient~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~an~~ practical answers, ~~And my point is about~~ seeing ~~the~~ evangelization as a communication of faith. <sup>In this</sup> ~~In this~~ <sup>way</sup> ~~case~~, we restrict the "communication act" to ~~a~~ special situation of ~~the~~ communication from one culture to another, or from ~~an~~ <sup>one</sup> ethnic group to another; we ~~do~~ <sup>are</sup> not refer to the people who give or receive the knowledge and ~~the~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~customs~~ of the faith <sup>within</sup> ~~inside~~ the same group ~~and the same culture~~ ( <sup>e.g.</sup> ~~as if~~ the Parents <sup>who</sup> ~~want~~ to communicate the faith to their sons, or a Pastor to the ~~71~~ <sup>members of his own or culture</sup> ~~community of the same culture as he is~~ ).

~~We think that~~ <sup>in these last cases</sup> ~~the problem~~ in certain measure <sup>does</sup> ~~exists~~, <sup>to</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>is</sup> not so evident and ~~so~~ complex as in the circumstance of different cultures. <sup>To some extent</sup> ~~To some extent~~, the task of introducing the faith to other persons, or better, <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>introducing</sup> ~~introducing~~ other persons to the faith, <sup>entangles</sup> ~~entangles~~ the problem of <sup>a</sup> ~~his~~ very special act of communication.

How can ~~the~~ parents communicate faith to their children? How can ~~one~~ a generation transmit this same faith to other age? Always there is a linguistic <sup>medium</sup> ~~mean~~ and a problem of semantics. <sup>on this case</sup> The common linguistic ground is involved <sup>as well</sup> in this case too.

But <sup>it</sup> it will be more evident if we study the communication of faith in the ~~neat~~ situation of two different cultures, one of the preacher <sup>or</sup> the missionary, ~~and~~ the other of the people who ~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> supposed to be evangelized.

I. <sup>A bold/ says</sup> The Evangelization as a special type of communication.

~~At the~~ <sup>Primarily,</sup> In his ~~first~~ <sup>in an attempt</sup> moment, the "evangelization" is a contact with ~~persons~~ men, trying to give them the content of the christian faith, ~~the~~ faith traditionally founded on the Gospel. ~~And~~ this contact is almost universally entrusted to language. Through ~~the~~ language, the gift offered to the other person is intended to change their lives, ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> orient their will ~~for~~ <sup>to</sup> acting as believers.

This double aspect <sup>has</sup> or double dimension, bears a specific and unique character <sup>of</sup> the communication of faith. It is not like the transmission of some science <sup>which can be verified through experimentation,</sup> (with experimental verifiability, ~~an verification of something through the experiments,~~ nor is <sup>if the</sup> a simple communication of a doctrine, <sup>as</sup> a whole of knowledges, <sup>as</sup> a ~~system of concepts~~ (theoretically coherent and convincing).

The communication of faith brings <sup>w/ it</sup> there a historical aspect, a speculative and systematic <sup>ally</sup> ordered whole of truth, <sup>body</sup> and a complex of values, <sup>or</sup> an horizon of life, <sup>as well as</sup> in which the human person <sup>can</sup> finds the

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expression of himself and a life of action for his individual and social behavior.

The conjunction of the two: knowledge and behavior, makes the communication of faith a deeper and more intense act of

communication than any other kind. Therefore, it needs some more careful analyses to ensure the effective realization of this

contact, and the gist of the transmission. Consequently, I will focus my analysis upon the act of "communicating something as a

complex and existential act" as is the transmission of faith. But I do not will consider the faith in his particular "content"

suppose we know it. (or that it will be the subject of a special study)

My attention involves faith only in his special character of "principle of moral and spiritual action" as described before, a

principle of human conduct, very similar to the ethical principles, or aesthetic, but more open, as a metaphysical, transcendental, and divine one.

Then we consider this very special acts of communication, as a contact with men, so thick that allow to these men to open their minds and hearts, to the weight of spiritual significance of the Gospel.

Usually the preachers say: "my job is simply to show you the catholic faith. What you do with it after that is out of my control"-- This utterance may not be really true. In my opinion, the true realization of the contact essentially depends from the act of allowing the gift of the gospel. And said in other form:

the God's grace <sup>cannot</sup> ~~can not~~, (generally speaking), <sup>its</sup> perform ~~his~~ role of conversion and ~~sanctification~~ <sup>sanctification</sup> if we do not ~~accomplish~~ <sup>bring about</sup> with a suitable and adequate act of communication.

II Communication of faith as a transcendental act.

Now we consider the act of communicating faith in the context we ~~have~~ <sup>about</sup> explained before, limited to an <sup>exchange</sup> intercourse between two different cultures; the one of the <sup>that of</sup> emissary, and the <sup>the other that of</sup> second of the receiving <sup>ers</sup> term. We shall describe how this act is a necessary channel to effectively <sup>send</sup> transmit the living gift of the faith, which will become an <sup>for</sup> resource of the spiritual evolution of the receiver.

Generally we are tempted to reduce the communication of faith to the abstract structure of a linguistic performance:



However, the communication of faith is <sup>ai</sup> ~~certainly~~ <sup>also</sup> a linguistic act ~~to~~, and can be reduced to this abstract and general scheme. But in our case, <sup>however,</sup> this scheme is not only abstract, but inadequate; it does not fit ~~to~~ the complex act of sharing with other men this <sup>+</sup> very special material we call faith.

From the side of the "emissary" <sup>there is the</sup> we ~~find~~ a subject: I am speaking, <sup>I am</sup> acting, <sup>and</sup> expressing myself, but not only speaking, I am remembering, <sup>I am</sup> enjoying, <sup>and</sup> reasoning, <sup>and</sup> appreciating the value of the Gospel, and <sup>I am</sup> ~~have~~ a deep concern <sup>ad</sup> about sharing the same faith.

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I am not only a subject, <sup>who am involved in the act</sup> ~~I am~~ a complex reality, <sup>but</sup> involved in this act, with my own history, <sup>life</sup> and living being and spiritual attitude. To define all these is not enough appealing to the illocutionary act or a perlocutionary as Searle and Austin explained at the linguistic level. I am a living subject but <sup>also an</sup> ~~an~~ objective reality a "subject-object", <sup>shares</sup> who <sup>life</sup> gives his living experience <sup>with</sup> to the other. <sup>and</sup> my living experience is communicated through my own cultural media: <sup>this is done within</sup> images, words, references, <sup>and</sup> customs, and inside of an intellectual and familiar mood, a frame of significative elements.

From <sup>the</sup> ~~de~~ side of the "receiver", <sup>or even</sup> ~~the~~ reality is just as complex, <sup>so</sup> and more. In the linguistic scheme the receiver is only a term, an object, <sup>like</sup> that I have to reach <sup>as</sup> some material to be printed; <sup>it is</sup> passive. In ~~the~~ reality this subject is a person, <sup>who</sup> he must listen, hear, <sup>may</sup> put attention, decipher the words, find a meaning and be transformed by this. In ~~the~~ experience we encounter a true subject. The receiver is an object-subject, <sup>full</sup> plenty of initiative, <sup>and</sup> of a radiant power. <sup>over</sup> And <sup>is</sup> more, he <sup>is</sup> moving himself in a different horizon of thinking, <sup>of</sup> sensations, traditions, stresses and interests.

And <sup>these</sup> all that are more or less <sup>distinct,</sup> far and sometimes opposite to that of the emissary. I, the emissary, <sup>am</sup> at the same time <sup>am</sup> receiving the impact, <sup>ad by</sup> of the culture of the object, from his words, <sup>and</sup> from the body language, <sup>from their</sup> reference, logical structure, emotions, <sup>of clothes,</sup> clothes, social organization, <sup>and</sup> environment. I am an object for his questions, and answers as an subject-object, <sup>just</sup> as he



done

is an object-subject.

And, ~~the~~ <sup>it</sup> most important of all, <sup>#</sup> I am offering a ~~set of~~ informations and ~~of~~ values <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ were not produced by a particular culture, <sup>such as</sup> ~~by~~ my own, because they <sup>were</sup> ~~are~~ revealed, <sup>and hence</sup> ~~were~~ born from an independent source.

I will try to enlightening this very complex situation in what ~~is~~ <sup>it</sup> two subjects-objects are dealing with a very strong "content", <sup>not</sup> ~~not~~ scientific, <sup>not</sup> ~~not~~ literary, <sup>not</sup> ~~not~~ verifiable, <sup>but</sup> metaphysical, <sup>and</sup> ~~at~~ transcendental, <sup>as</sup> ~~is~~ spiritual as the faith <sup>is</sup>.

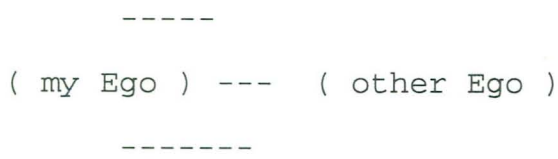
I will take a phenomenological approach to reach what the Dr. McLean in his introduction says: "such phenomenological analysis enables us to look more deeply into the origin of our own subjectivity and thereby to expand <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ focus <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ our awarness from mankind to the divine as the objectively transcendent source in relation to which our conscious life stands as gift  manifesting the intimate devine life of love". We wish to put ~~all~~ <sup>while</sup> this problem in the context of <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ fifth of ~~the~~ Cartesian Meditations <sup>of</sup> Edmund Husserl's

The phenomenological point of view always <sup>begins</sup> starts from an act of experience <sup>in which it</sup> and is set, <sup>namely,</sup> in ~~it~~ my particular <sup>life</sup> and living experience here and now. <sup>on</sup> All ~~the~~ speculation, reflexion, or reduction <sup>concern</sup> are made over this immediate, ~~and~~ lasting, ~~and~~ changing act, <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ lives, <sup>and perdures,</sup> endures, is dep and unique. <sup>#</sup> In the fifth Meditation Husserl explores my experience as an Ego <sup>before</sup> in front of another <sup>person</sup> ~~man~~ (another Ego) and <sup>the</sup> other men as "an others".

My experience ~~is~~ <sup>s</sup> revealing the presence and the action of

8 Evangelization and Cultures

the other <sup>upon</sup> ~~on~~ me. <sup>#</sup> Of the two Egos <sup>mine</sup> my ~~Ego~~ is a subject and the other Ego an object. The two terms are interchangeable because they <sup>begin</sup> start from ~~the~~ experience itself. At the same time this "other Ego" as object is revealing <sup>it</sup> himself as a subject, <sup>#</sup> acting with me, knowing me, speaking to me. ~~If I am trying to speak to him then I~~ <sup>the other Ego</sup> ~~have~~ the following scheme <sup>obtains</sup>:



see above

I am the subject (emissary) = active;

The other Ego ~~the~~ (receiving) = passive, is a subject too.

But between the two (persons) the message which is communicated <sup>must</sup> ~~has to~~ be transferred through two cultures: the culture of the emissary and <sup>that</sup> ~~the~~ culture of the receiver. <sup>#</sup> My Ego has his own culture that I understand, <sup>and</sup> the other Ego has his own culture that I don't understand. I <sup>must</sup> ~~have to~~ summarize the culture of the other to my own because he is asking <sup>and</sup> ~~me, is~~ challenging me, in my own experience.

How can the emissary Ego be acquainted with the truth he communicates if this is not received through the same <sup>medium?</sup> ~~mean~~? This is the general problem of ~~the~~ all ~~the~~ acts of communication with other <sup>which</sup> ~~men, that~~ we <sup>must bring into</sup> ~~have to~~ focus from the point of view of the faith.

For ~~the~~ phenomenology this simple act of communication is not without solution when we put it in the immediate frame of the living experience. ~~It is not important~~ <sup>for it know</sup> ~~how complex it could be.~~ <sup>no matter</sup> ~~An~~ <sup>it is not</sup> ~~experiencie~~ <sup>can</sup> ~~be~~ always described and analyzed. But in this special case of the faith (as the content of the divine revelation) the message ~~has to~~ <sup>must</sup> be translated from the first culture to the second, ~~from one subject to the other,~~ <sup>#</sup> as a whole that transcends both cultures and ~~that doesent~~ <sup>is not</sup> ~~be~~ properly signified ~~by none of them.~~ <sup>either</sup>

At this point some ~~person~~ <sup>recall</sup> would suggest to remember of Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, ~~or~~ Derrida or Richard Rorty. From the theory of the super man of Nietzsche, ~~or~~ from the private language of Wittgenstein, ~~or~~ <sup>or from</sup> the particular language of Rorty is not really possible to give a good explication of the possibility of sharing a truth, common to these different languages. <sup>Frederick Schlegel</sup> <sup>in "Liberty, Equality, Social Research"</sup> <sup>(Hammes, 1992), p. 247,</sup> <sup>it</sup> ~~attempts to overcome~~ ~~superate de~~ this apparent impossibility and the incommunicability <sup>between the</sup> among subjective meanings <sup>of (Rorty)</sup> of languages and to build a bridge between two strange spheres of meaning and incompatible horizons.

From the phenomenological perspective the two languages and the ~~communication acts~~ <sup>acts of</sup> are themselves objects of experience, and they allow a progressive advancement <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ mutual understanding in similar form as we progressively and coherently ~~make true~~ <sup>achieve true</sup> the physical or <sup>psychological</sup> perception.)

~~And~~ the experience is ~~always~~ <sup>ongoing</sup> acting and present in our

note

opposition.

Husserl uses some times<sup>s</sup> the term "polar", and Paul Ricoeur, too. But maybe they did not attend<sup>as does</sup> put directly their attention to the phenomenon of polar opposition, which<sup>is</sup> that for us es<sup>is</sup> essential to differentiate the levels of meanings in the communication act.

If we take the statement: John is working there, as opposite to "John is not working there" not as logical opposition but as polar opposition, we find that the two proposition<sup>s</sup> are not contradictory at all. we have the following scheme:

contradiction

"John is working there"  $\leftarrow$ ----- $\rightarrow$  "John is not working there".

(logical)

$\leftarrow$ ----- $\rightarrow$

difference

(polarity)

"God exists, <sup>Re</sup> is good"  $\leftarrow$ ----- $\rightarrow$  God does not exist, <sup>he</sup> is not good.

We could not call them contraries or subcontraries, because all these terms are situated<sup>d</sup> in the logical point of view. Let's go<sup>no step</sup> out of the logical point <sup>in order</sup> and to penetrate to more deeply into the signification of the terms.

The terms "polar" and "polarity" refer originally to the real poles. The north is opposite to the south, but their opposition is correlative, one depends <sup>upon</sup> from the other as magnetic reality. One could not exist without the other. We can use them abstractly to indicate the direction on a map as if they were independent, but

their true life is magnetical and the magnetism is not a point <sup>but</sup> ~~is~~ a force spread <sup>throughout</sup> all over the earth to produce the poles.

In <sup>a</sup> the polarity we must make a continue <sup>d</sup> relation among the terms and <sup>yes modes</sup> the reality to understand <sup>are many</sup> their meaning. One pole is supported by other <sup>many</sup> and there <sup>are many</sup> is a lot of intermediate positions among them, and a lot of relations around them <sup>which constitute</sup> that make the context of their signification. *Note that in*

Observin the example, of "John is working there", we can find that john was hired but he ~~is~~ not really working actually; Or that he ~~is~~ generally working, but <sup>not</sup> today he ~~is out~~. Or that he was fired <sup>recently</sup> lately but he is <sup>x</sup> really there to fix something.

In <sup>many</sup> all these different situations how would we <sup>understand</sup> put the opposition with "John is not working there"? How <sup>is possible</sup> do you understand <sup>this</sup> it?

With the propositions of faith <sup>is</sup> the kind of polar opposition would be more complex and difficult, because the elements that compose the horizon are far from <sup>our</sup> physical experience. The logical point of view ( <sup>which</sup> that in the evangelization was used <sup>for</sup> ~~more~~ or less consciously <sup>for</sup> for centuries) is not the most interesting in the communication of faith, because in <sup>evangelization</sup> it we try to reach the true essence of faith, and <sup>to</sup> get in touch with the content of the information.

<sup>It will</sup> Then we compare a man with something that is not a man, <sup>will</sup> a man to a woman, the good with the evil, the <sup>safe</sup> right <sup>with</sup> to the dangerous, All ~~they~~ are polar oppositions, if ~~we~~ set them in the context of a true experience. <sup>along</sup> And the true experience is ~~the~~ only capable <sup>to</sup> of

communicate <sup>my</sup> faith.)

The complexity is more evident if ~~we put~~ <sup>m</sup> the case of comparing the human ~~being~~ <sup>being</sup> with the divine ~~one~~, the earthly horizon with the eternal ~~one~~. In these cases the influence of ~~everyone's~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~every one's~~ cultures is more radical, and the opposition from one culture to the other is stronger.

¶ For all <sup>such</sup> ~~these~~ informations and oppositions <sup>one</sup> the most suited to ~~the~~ life is not the logical perspective but the semantic. <sup>because of</sup> Why? The semantic view is closer to the experience and refers ~~itself~~ to ~~the~~ life.

In two cultures :

---

my concept of man---is opposed---against your concept of man  
my idea of holy-----is opposed---against your system of holy things.

my relation to the world-----against the relation ya have .

---

The statement: "God is a thing" against ~~"God is not a thing"~~ is only a polar opposition that admits some common understanding between two cultures if we establish the semantic context and the polar terms that generate <sup>to</sup> the metaphysical understanding of it.

For it will be necessary to <sup>deepen</sup> ~~put down~~ our point of view at ~~lower level~~ from <sup>my</sup> the logical ~~one~~ to the metaphysical <sup>level</sup> or ~~more~~ to the psychological ~~one~~ or <sup>the</sup> ~~to be~~ experimental one, which is the level of life.

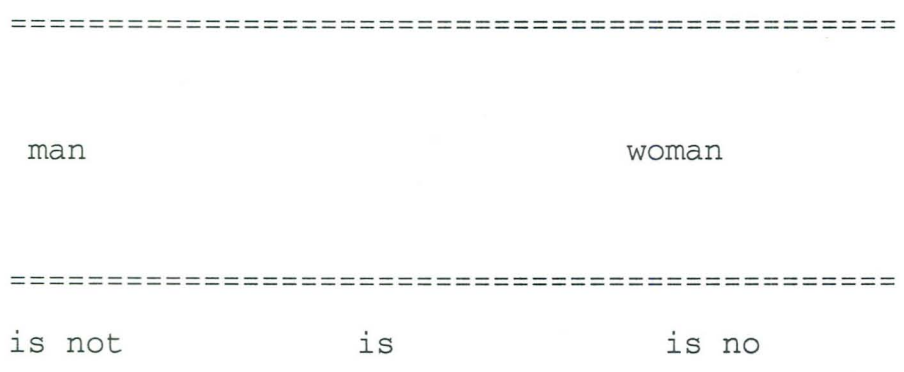
From the semantic point of view, the opposition <sup>is</sup> never ~~is~~ absolute and complete, because the polarity between these extremes allows <sup>for many</sup> ~~to grant~~ a lot of related and overlapping meanings.

For example : "God is not a man." <sup>whereas in</sup>

~~In the~~ logical opposition there is a simple contradiction, ~~in the~~ polar opposition we can encounter more similarities than differences. To understand the polar opposition then we must relate the meaning of the words to the general background of the culture, <sup>which</sup> ~~And the~~ culture must be <sup>comprehended deeply enough to reach the</sup> ~~seen until the far-reaching level~~ of <sup>its</sup> ~~significance and of~~ life (the lebens-welt).

If we <sup>take</sup> ~~put~~ the example: "A man is not a woman", <sup>in the logic</sup> ~~consideration~~ it is only a negation. <sup>however,</sup> In the semiological view, <sup>which in</sup> we have two different images and nouns <sup>and</sup> ~~with a~~ part common and <sup>in</sup> ~~a~~ part different. In the semantic perspective the <sup>weight</sup> ~~heaviness~~ of the common substance and problems can overcome the dissimilarities.

We can represent this fact in the following scheme:



If we <sup>in</sup> ~~are~~ preaching to the Ki'che' people in Guatemala <sup>we ~~are~~ say</sup> ~~and we say~~ to them: "This mountain is not God," <sup>we must</sup> ~~we had to~~ consider the same

scheme. "The mountain is not --is -- is not God." Because in their culture there is not a clear division between the man, the world and God. At the level of life the communication among them is ~~a fact that~~ involves their whole existence, personal and social.

This is not a dialectic<sup>e</sup> ~~syntheses~~<sup>but</sup>, ~~only~~ a polar whole. The polarity is not simply linear or ~~among~~<sup>between</sup> two, It can be among three, ~~among~~<sup>#</sup> four or more. We can speak of bi-polarity, three-polarity, or multi-polarity.)

In this form we understand<sup>can</sup> ~~that~~<sup>d how</sup> this view opens our living experience to ~~the~~<sup>out</sup> culture, from ~~the~~<sup>out</sup> our own culture to ~~the~~<sup>those of</sup> other<sup>s</sup>.

To generalize<sup>it</sup>, <sup>a</sup> is easy to contemplate a line, a segment A--B.



If we point out that A is not B we only see the logical aspect of the opposition. If we consider A as a point <sup>in</sup> of ~~the~~ space with <sup>a</sup> ~~some~~ reference, we only find that: A depends on B, A is a function of B. In the same form: B<sub>2</sub> is a function of A. The polarity is evident if we want to set the value of this line A--B. We can add a series of points from A to B, : a1, a2, a3, a4, /././ and other series from B to A : b1, b2, b3, b4, /././.)

We can always use the logical view and say: A is not a1, A is not b1, or b2, and so on. ~~It~~<sup>thus</sup> could be a good exercise, ~~but~~<sup>u</sup> not a communication of content and ~~then~~<sup>so therefore is</sup> not practical for transmitting<sup>s</sup> the faith.



This distinction <sup>leads</sup> ~~drives~~ us directly to the encounter of the two cultures in ~~the~~ evangelization.)

Two "idioms" are logically opposit ( English=A, Spanish=B,) but they have a semiological and semantical dimension and are ~~are~~ living with the <sup>life of the</sup> people life.)

Two "idioms are two different experiences of the world and ~~they~~ are expressed in <sup>m</sup> ~~may~~ <sup>the</sup> languages. The experience is actual and the starting point of all <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>follows</sup> ~~could be afterwards~~. When they stretch a contact it becomes part of the experience.

I have the experience of my own idiom.

I have the experience of the idiom of the other.

I have the experience of the contact between the two.

# From the experimental ~~and~~ living consciousness I ~~have to~~ <sup>must</sup> establish a process <sup>a</sup> ~~tht~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~approximate~~ <sup>draws us together</sup> us until leading to a coincidence of meanings <sup>it</sup> ~~from~~ <sup>s</sup> ~~bi-polar~~ or ~~pluri-polar~~ ~~oppositions~~.

In this experimental <sup>Begin</sup> framework we can ~~start~~ the task of evangelization <sup>as</sup> in the search <sup>for</sup> of ~~the~~ common meaning.

Very different ~~is~~ the approach of the logical positivism, whose ~~the~~ first reality is ~~the~~ language. One of the ~~more~~ ~~actully~~ significant is Richard Rorty <sup>is a prominent</sup> ~~is~~ ~~a~~ ~~good~~ ~~example~~.

For him the idiomatic substance is a property of the subject and become<sup>s</sup> a subjective reality that can not be shared with neighbours. We can briefly <sup>summarize this</sup> ~~resume~~ it as follows.

~~my~~ <sup>S</sup> Ego have  
my language

~~The~~ Other Ego has  
his language

it

it

has <sup>his</sup> ~~its~~  
meaning

has <sup>his</sup> ~~its~~  
meaning

E

F

-----

-----

=====

The individual as member of a particular culture shares the meaning with persons having the same idiom and language, <sup>there</sup> and can ~~not~~ <sup>be no</sup> be dialog between cultures. Very similar is the intellectual mood of the "New Age", <sup>as a</sup> ~~this~~ very dangerous. (in some aspects) ~~mentality of our time.~~ It leads to <sup>a lack of ability?</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>between</sup> ~~incommunication~~ among small different communities. Some time they explore a more general <sup>and</sup> ~~mean~~ <sup>s</sup> of communication patially common, to inquiry and ~~discover~~ <sup>discover</sup> ~~find out~~ a solution to ~~a~~ real interchange between men. But that escape only translates the problem from a more restricted field to a bigger one without <sup>providing</sup> ~~give~~ a true solution. Our ~~foudation~~ <sup>m</sup> is always <sup>w</sup> ~~the~~ experience and trough the experience the human <sup>m</sup> cotact, the dialog, the spiritual interchange <sup>deeply</sup> ~~far~~ downward in the life.

~~C.~~ The contact at the emotional and sensible level.

At the lower level <sup>is</sup> the polar opposition goes ~~to~~ the intimate perception of being ~~but~~ as first and immediate <sup>im</sup> experience, the emotional, axiological, aesthetical and practical.

And we find some contrast between these: good, bad, right, wrong, evil, beautiful, etc., or better, <sup>worst</sup> worst, best, etc. The polar opposition at this level is more rich and intense; It is not only an opposition <sup>between</sup> of words as we found among concepts, <sup>but</sup> is opposition of sensibility <sup>and</sup> phantasy, <sup>it is</sup> historical, emotional, and more.

At this level is not enough a speculative translation of terms; a living relation and an emotional <sup>en</sup> involvement are needed. At the emotional level men are proud of their own cultures and they feel the identity of their group and culture as the realization of a human value and an expression of the true essence of the world.

At this level the dialog ~~to~~ is deficient because the abstract concepts do not <sup>share</sup> move the compact power of the cultural environment. The screen that separates the two cultures at this level is the ~~most~~ <sup>strong</sup> strong. But from other side there a constant process of actions and reaction among the cultures. The forms of acculturation and transculturation are a phenomenon particularly active. What could be lost in the theoretical efficacy can be gained in the action of practical transferences.

linguistic ground is involved in this case too.

But it will be more evident if we study the communication of faith in the neat situation of two different cultures, one of the preacher, the missionary, and the other of the people who is supposed to be evangelized.

### I. The evangelization as a special type of communication.

In ~~his~~ first moment the "evangelization" is a contact with men, trying to give them the content of the christian faith, the faith traditionally founded on the Gospel. And this contact is almost universally entrusted to language. Through the language the gift offered to the other person is intended to change their lives, to orient their will for acting as believers.

This double aspect, or double dimension, bears a specific and unique character of the communication of faith. It is not like the transmission of some science (with experimental verifiability, an verification of something through the experiments), nor is a simple communication of a doctrine, a whole of knowledges, as a system of concept (theoretically coherent and convincing).

The communication of faith brings there a historical aspect, a speculative and systematic ordered whole of truth, and a complex of values, an horizon of life, in which the human person find the expression of himself and a life of action for his individual and social behavior.

The conjunction of the two: knowledge and behavior, makes the communication of faith a deeper and more intense act of communication than any other kind. Therefore it needs some more heefal analyses, to ensure the effective realization of this contact, and the gist of the transmission. Consequently I will focus my analysis on the act of "communicating - something" as a complex and existential act as is the transmission of faith. But I do not will consider the faith in his particular "content". I suppose we know it. (or that it will <sup>be</sup> ~~be~~ the subject of a special study).  
like a

My attention involves faith only in his special character of "principle of moral and spiritual action" as described before, a principle of human conduct, very similar to the ethic principles, or aesthetic, but ~~more~~ open, as a metaphysical, transcendental and divine one.

Then we consider this very special acts of communication as a contact with men, so thick that allow to these men to open their mind and hearth, to the weight of spiritual significance of the Gospel.

Usually the preachers say: "my job is simply to show you the catholic faith. What you do with it after that is out of my control"-- This utterance may not be really true. In my opinion, the true realization of the contact essentially depends from the act of allowing the gift of the gospel. And said in other form: the God's grace can not, generally speaking, perform his role of conversion and stanctification if we do not accomplish with a suitable and adequate act of communication.

II. Communication of faith as a transcendental act.

Now we consider the act of communicating faith in the context we have explained before, limited to an intercourse between two different cultures; the one of the emissary and the second of the receiving term. We shall describe how this act is a necessary channel to effectively transmit the living gift of the faith, which will become an resource of the spiritual evolution of the receiver.

Generally we are tempted to reduce the communication of faith to the abstract structure of a linguistic performance:

the emissary ---> (the message ) --> the receiver.

However, the communication of faith is, certainly, a linguistic act to, and can be reduced to this abstract and general scheme. But in our case this scheme is not only abstract, but inadequate, it does not fit to the complex act of sharing with other men this very special material we call faith.

From the side of the "emissary" we find a subject: I am speaking, acting, expressing myself, but not only speaking, I am remembering, am enjoying, reasoning, appreciating the value of the Gospel, and have a deep concern about sharing the same faith.

I am not only a subject, I am a complex reality involved in this act, with my own history and living being and spiritual attitude.

To define all these is not enough appealing to the illocutionary act or a perlocutionary as Searle and Austin explained at the linguistic level. I am a living subject but a objective reality a "subject-object", who gives his living experience to the other. An my living experience is communicated through my own cultural media: images, words, references, customs, and inside of an intellectual and familiar mood, a frame of significative elements.

From the side of the "receiver", the reality is just as complex and more. In the linguistic scheme the receiver is only a term, an object, that I have to reach as some material to be printed, passive. In the reality this subject is a person, he must hear, put attention, decipher the words, find a meaning and be transformed by this. In the experience we encounter a true subject. The receiver is an object-subject, plenty of initiative, of a radiant power. And more: he is moving himself in a different horizon of thinking, of sensations, traditions, stresses and interests.

And all that are more or less far, and sometimes opposite to that of the emissary. I, the emissary, am at the same time receiving the impact of the culture of the object, from his words, from the body language, from their reference, logical structure, emotions, clutches, social organization, environment. I am "object" for these questions, and answers, as an "subject-object", as he is an object-subject.

And, the most important of all, I am offering a set of

informations and of values that were not produced by a particular culture, by my own, because they are revealed; were born from an independent source.

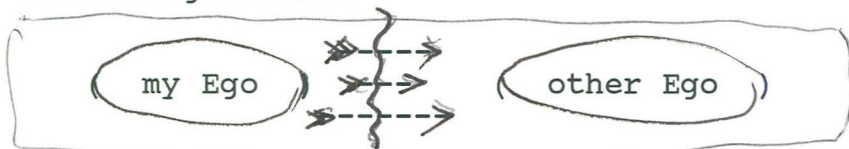
I will try to enlightening this very complex situation in what, two subjects-objects are dealing with a very strong "content", not scientific, not literary, not verifiable, but metaphysical, transcendent, at spiritual as the faith is.

I will take a phenomenological approach to reach what the Dr. McLean in his introduction says: "such phenomenological analysis enables us to look more deeply into the origin of our own subjectivity and thereby to expand, to focus to our awareness from mankind to the divine as the objectively transcendent source in relation to which our conscious life stands as gift manifesting the intimate divine life of love".\*

We wish to put all this problem in the context of the fifth of the Cartesian Meditations of Edmund Husserl.

The phenomenological point of view always starts from an act of experience and is set in it; my particular and living experience here and now. All the speculation, reflexion, or reduction are made over this immediate, and lasting, and changing act, that lives, endures, is deep and unique. In the fifth Meditation Husserl explores my experience as an Ego in front of another man (another Ego) and the other men as "an others".

My experience is revealing the presence and the action of the other on me. Of the two Egos my Ego is a subject and the other Ego an object. The two terms are interchangeable because they start from the experience itself. At the same time this "other Ego" as object is revealing himself as a subject, acting with me, knowing me speaking to me. If I am trying to speak to him then I have the following scheme:



I am the subject (emissary) = active;  
The other Ego, the (receiving), = passive, is a subject too.

But between the two (persons) the message which is communicated has to be transferred through two cultures: the culture of the emissary and the culture of the receiver. My Ego has his own culture that I understand, and the other Ego has his own culture that I don't understand. I have to summarize the culture of the other to my own because he is asking me, is challenging me, in my own experience.

How can the emissary Ego be acquainted with the truth he communicates if this is not received through the same mean? This is the general problem of all the acts of communication with other men, that we have to focus from the point of view of the faith. For the phenomenology this simple act of communication is not without solution when we put it in the immediate frame of the living experience. It is not important how complex it could be. An experience can be always described and analyzed. But in this

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Frederick K Schick. (in: Liberty, Equality.) ~~...~~ of Rorty attempts to superate ~~de~~ this apparent impossibility) and the incommunicability among subjective meaning of languages) and to build a bridge between two strange spheres of meaning and incompatible horizons.

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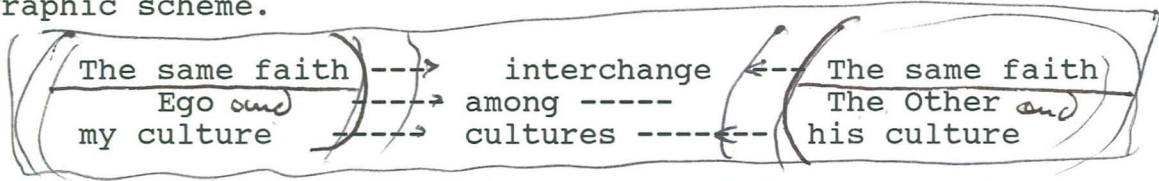
And the experience is always acting and present in our intellectual activity and reflexion as it is in its permanent foudation. Then the process of understanding the other man, is always an open process that we can improve with new actions ,with the dialog among the two,or three,or more,until we reach some agreement and the common consciousness of sharing the truth.The dialog,the interchange with other men ,new approaches are ,in the conception of the fifth meditation of Husserl, possibilities that the human experience can explore,perform and complete from the fondamental ground of the lebens-welt.

But this reduction of a speculative problem to the experience deserves an essential aspect for our theme of communication of faith ,which we must enlighten.

This is truly the central point of the whole question: where we find the means to establish a contact that let us have a living,conceptual , emotional and practical "apropriation" of the faith.

That is what we call the "transcendental" dimension of action of communicating faith.If we can reach a clear understanding of it , we will be able to transpass the limits of our own culture and of the culture of the other subject.In this specific occasion we will be sharing the faith not only with our neighbour but with the universal and divine knowledge and,with the faith, the power of the divine life.

Then we can represent the situation with a more complex graphic scheme.



The content of a message is transmitted by a mean given to me.My

mean is <sup>also</sup> my culture, and deserves for sending the message. And the mean for receiving a message from other men is ~~the same my~~ culture. In the case of two different cultures there are two different means, or intellectual instrument for offering <sup>one</sup> significance, <sup>one</sup> meaning. The most important in the act is not the mean but to reach the same signification or the same meaning.

In the communication of faith, the goal is to produce in the contact the realization of a sign that in two different means produces the same meaning. And this is precisely the point I wanted to reach. Is it possible? Is it real at all the levels of communication? Can two or more person read in different means the same meaning?

At some abstract consideration it seems to me that there isn't any theoretical or practical incompatibility. The problem grows up in the real world, specially if we are conscious of the dynamical aspect of the faith.

The mean, as we saw is in the first time a linguistic one. But generally it is not exclusively linguistic. There are sounds, a mood, symbols, material objects produced by the culture, all the kits of multiple kinds we call "culture".

We have to transpass the fence of the culture which bound us, our Ego, our most intimate essence: as personality, identity, spiritual conception, intellectual world and to put the message there in the other Egos.

<sup>Now</sup> At this point it could be clear that the culture is not only a mean that allow us to communicate faith in some circumstances, but that it is the necessary context which bears influences, and modifies, and maybe could in some circumstances manipulate the content of the revelation that we intend translate to the other. At the same time can become a hard obstacle which forbid us any true and objective, or faithful production of meaning.

This danger is impelling us to take a close examination of the epistemological aspect of the process of understanding that connect the human persons in their continual and interwoven dealing for meeting each other.

In the introduction we made reference to the ethnic groups not merely because it is a fact universally spread in the contemporary world, and because the consciousness of their diversity, the right of the pluralism and of the small community to have their own cultural expression, is almost officially established; but because the phenomenon of the small groups strongly alive, of the small communities born recently becomes a daily object of discussion and seems to be a character of the "new age". And because is wonderful to find in Husserl of the thirties the vision of the thick substance of culture that create among the members of the group a net of relations very similar to a new collective personality.

\* Michel Werner. Humanism in the postmodern age (in: "Religious Humanism" 1992 Spring)



III. The epistemological problem of the culture in the communication of faith.

If we attempt to describe the culture as a <sup>boundary</sup> ~~middle~~ around myself, of me as subject, in the communication of faith (which is a first step for a phenomenological reflexion) we will find that this culture in itself (seen experimentally) is not at all homogeneous, it presents a lot of levels, with different definition, sharpness, or consistency from the epistemological point of view. We find in the culture, external objects, material or intellectual products, traditions, behaviors, routines pictorial representations, art fictions, myths, social relations, practical skills, words, rules, concepts and ideological systems. Many of them are very general and common to other cultures, other general in a specific culture, other exceptionally unique. All together are essential or not essential parts of the act of communication of faith.

It is necessary to put some order in this estherogeneous material to make clear how does the understandig work with each class of them.

For that we can speak about "levels" of knowledge establishing a scale of abstraccion from the lowest level to the heighest. We speak of levels in the understanding that the lower step is the closest to the phisical experience of something, the most sensible, the most particular, the most limited by the conditions of the space and the time. Over this we put the psychological knowledges and their objects, as superior level, and so on, until we reach ideas and concepto as the mos generals an abstract, and finally the pure logical structures void of any concrete content.

If going up, step by step we can affirm that the superior level ys better than the inferior, from a certain point of view, maybe from other point the inferior levels are more close to the real life, to the lebens-welt. And for the communication of the faith this is an essential point.

When the experiens reveals an opposition of cultures ,opposition of words ,opposition of symbols will be necessary a consideration of different opposition but in conjuntion with the difference of th levels.

We deal then with two parameters as two cartesian coordinates: the peculiarity of the levels, and the quality of the oppositions. The two maybe can bring to us a more complete horizon of the problem and a new vision of the experience as a whole, giving us new dimansion of the things an the persons.

I attempt to give an idea of these levels an of these oppositions only to build a general frame and to open new vays to aproximate to the "core" of the effective communication of the very important an exranous content what is the faith.

The opposition in cultural expressions is a very phenomenological one. In the contact of two cultures my word is nos your word, your emotional reaction is not the mine, my cultural context of words, concepts, reasoning, relating are not yours. Consequently our first question is about the nature of these oppositions: cultural opposition ,conceptual opposition, sensible opposition. We take the opposition at each level of knowledge in the cultural experience. and then in the communication's experience.

We don't think about a dialectical opposition in the sense of Fichte ,Hegel, Marx see it, in a process of antitesis among two terms becomeng a new in the generation of a syntesis. This

form of opposition is understandable only in the dialectical identification of the rationale with the real, the metaphysics with the logic, as Hegel did, and in the case of being a philosopher involved in the dialectical method.

Then will be essential to go on to situate every opposition in his proper environment to strengthen sharply his particular value and significance.

In the following simplification can be seen some of the levels of oppositions found in our former approximation to an act of communication among two different cultures. The elements of the superior level are understood as more abstract and general, for example the elements of a statement. The lower level is more deeply implicated in immediate and physical experiences as an originary act of life. Then we separate five levels of possible kinds of oppositions in the communication:

- =====
1. LOGICAL = general structures of the intellectual activity. Logic, mathematics, relations, etc
  2. CONCEPTUAL = essences, mental representations, ideas, every content of intellectual knowledge.
  3. EMOTIONAL = values, praises, axiological dimension.
  4. PSYCHOLOGICAL = personal, selfishness, tendencies, interests. Attitudes.
  5. PRACTICAL = intuition of many forms, activity, works.
- =====

Let's make some short commentary to the three principal steps of the whole. They will be enough to clarify some of the big problems of the act communicating faith.

#### A. The opposition at the logical level.

Is the most universal and easy to affirm if not easy to understand. His signification is very sharp and his sense very definite. If we say  $2=2$  apparently there is not opposition they are the same. The sameness is a total identification and absolutely general. And if we write  $2\neq 3$  we consider only one aspect the diversity. The opposition is as absolute as the sameness. In whole words we say: "two is not three." "God is not man". Logical opposition show the universality and the openness of the human mind. We can put at this level all the mathematical and logical structures. Are exact values, they lack of any variations in time and space. They can be communicated to every man in every time. But not everybody understand they; because are abstract and at the highest level.

In general we admit they as the transcendental level, absolutely human. They are leading us to the universal mind, to the laws of the earth and the space. How much do they to communicate the faith? The great mathematicians are skeptical as Bertrand Russell or faithful as Leibnitz but their faith or atheism was not related to these structures.

We put in this series all the symbols as:  $=, \neq, >, <, \rightarrow, \leftrightarrow, \infty, \sqrt{\quad}, S, \sim$  etc. or the expression of relations as: "more, less, equal, different, contrary, superior, inferior, bigger, et" All they show their logical opposition in the use of negative utterances. The consonant (K) can mean "constant", and we suppose that their negative opposition is a constant and then unlimited.

These mean that it could not apparently be an opposition between cultures at the logical and transcendental level, and the communication could not find obstacles. All the logical structure

do exist in every man and make easy an understanding at this level. But the human being generally do not live at logical level, nor make the love with de multiplication table. Why? Maybe because these divine structures are void of any descriptive or conceptual content. How much universal, as les living. But some difficult exist to at this level if we analyze for example the "sameness" of  $(2=2)$ ,  $(100=100)$  and  $(5+3 =8)$  or  $(-5 = -2 + -3)$ . Are really all the "sameness" truly the same? Are these two samenes the same? -- " a table is not a chair " -- " John is not a rok "

Is there any common opposition in the two statements? Is "K" there?

If a logical negation is sharply and purely a negation (or a logical opposition. Why could we feel hangry is anybody says: "

You are not a good citizen" ? Is this opposition different from the former ones.?

But this problem will be evident at the following level.

B. Opposition between concepts.

At the level of knowledge, the concept or ideas or the other cognitive structures that carry a meaning, a content of information are not simply logical structures, that could be reduced to an unique analytical point of view. Their references depict some object, some things, or situations of all type of reality: material, intellectual, social, personal or collective.

We understand a concept in a general sense as a mental expression, that correspond to some notion of things. They find a linguistic formulation through a statement.

For example: "Is John working there?" And the answer is: "There is." The information is: "John is working there". Shorter we reduces the concepts to a noun. For example: "The sea.

book, mind, body, soul, spirit, God"... or: "politics, ethics, the work, liberation theology, idea of salvation"... Simple or complex these concepts involve a lot of informations, that we are supposed able to communicate to the other.

Of course we can focus them only as logical entities and say: John is working there is a statement opposite to "John is not working there". This is a logical opposition in some form general an absolute as the mathematical statements. And we are at the logical point of view, analyzing concepts. All men can understand them. I can say to: God is the creator, as logically opposed to :God is not the creator. And the statement would have an absolute and general value. The opposition is only a logical opposition, an the understanding is only a logical understanding.

But this logical consideration is not very useful when we wish to give an information about the creation. Evidently in the current mentality all similar example of oppositions are not logical oppositions. They structures are not logical structures but they refer to a meaning or to a real fact. We do not affirm that it is an illogical opposition; in some aspect it is logical to, but it is not only logical, is some more. Than we have to change from a logical point of view to a semantic one, or psychological or metaphysical. All they are involved in the communication acts.

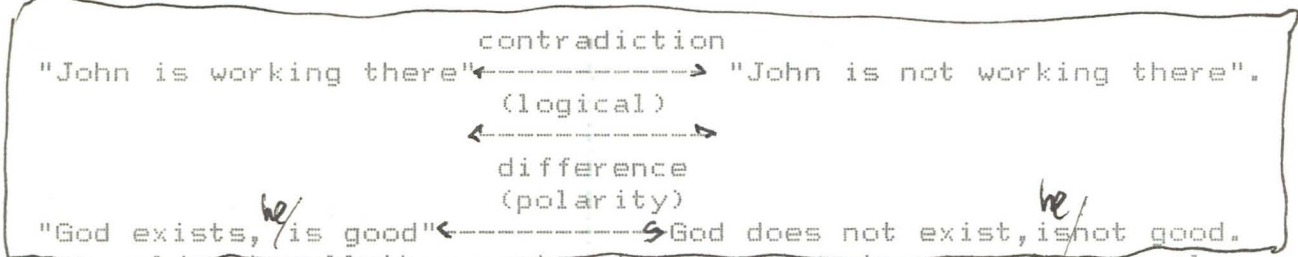
Changing the point of view it changes the measure of information we get, and changes the nature of opposition from logical or dialectical to opposition of meaning and of content.

To this new type of opposition, no logical we will call

better "polar" opposition. Then we have to introduce the term "polarity." The opposition between "God exists" and "God does not exist" could be seen as logical opposition, but to as a polar opposition.

Husserl uses some time the term "polar" and Paul Ricoeur too. But maybe they did not put directly their attention to the phenomenon of polar opposition, that for us is essential to differentiate the levels of meanings in the communication act.

If we take the statement: John is working there, as opposite to "John is not working there" not as logical opposition but as polar opposition, we find that the two propositions are not contradictory at all. We have the following scheme:



We could not call them contraries or subcontraries, because all these terms are situated in the logical point of view. Let's go out of the logical point and to penetrate to more deep signification of the terms.

Term polar and polarity refer originally to the real poles. The north is opposite to the south, but their opposition is correlative, one depends from the other as magnetic reality. One could not exist without the other. We can use them abstractly to indicate the direction on a map as they were independent, but their true life is magnetical and the magnetism is not a point, is a force spread all over the earth to produce the poles.

In the polarity we must make a continuous relation among the terms and the reality to understand their meaning. One pole is supported by other, and there is a lot of intermediate positions among them, and a lot of relations around them that make the context of their signification.

Observing the example of "John is working there" we can find that John was hired but he is not really working actually. Or that he is generally working, but today he is out. Or that he was fired lately but he is really there to do something.

In all these different situations how would we put the opposition with "John is not working there"? How do you understand it?

With the propositions of faith the kind of polar opposition would be more complex and difficult, because the elements that compose the horizon are far from our physical experience. The logical point of view (that in the evangelization was used more or less consciously, for centuries) is not the most interesting in the communication of faith, because in it we try to reach the true essence of faith, and to get in touch with the content of the information.

Then we compare a man with something that is not a man, a man to a woman, the good with the evil, the right to the dangerous. All they are polar oppositions, if we set them in the context of a true experience. And the true experience is the only capable to communicate faith.

The complexity is more evident if we put the case of comparing the human being with the divine one, the earthly horizon with the eternal one. In these cases the influence of every culture is more radical, and the opposition from one culture to

the other is stronger.

For all these informations and oppositions the most suited to the life is not the logical perspective but the semantic. Why? The semantic view is closer to the experience and refers itself to the life.

In two cultures :

my concept of man ←--is opposed--> against your concept of man  
my idea of holy ←---is opposed--> against your system of holy things.  
my relation to the world ←----> against the relation ya have .

The statement: "God is a thing" against "God is not a thing" is only a polar opposition that admits some common understanding between two cultures if we establish the semantic context and the polar terms that generate the metaphysical understanding of it.

For it will be necessary to put down our point of view at lower level from the logical one to the metaphysical or more to the psychological one or to de experimental one, which is the level of life.

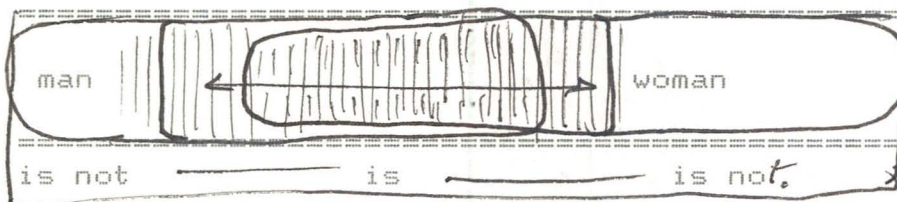
From the semantic point of view, the opposition never is absolute and complete, because the polarity between these extremes allows to grant a lot of related and overlapping meanings.

For example : "God is not a man."

In the logical opposition there is a simple contradiction. In the polar opposition we can encounter more similarities than differences. To understand the polar opposition then we must relate the meaning of the words to the general background of the culture. And the culture must be seen until the far-reaching level of significance and of life (the lebens-welt).

If we put the example: "A man is not a woman". In the logic consideration it is only a negation. In the semiological view we have two different images and nouns, with a part common and a part different. In the semantic perspective the heaviness of the common substance and problems can overcome the dissimilarities.

We can represent this fact in the following scheme:



If we are preaching to the Ki'che's people in Guatemala and we say to them: "This mountain is not God." We had to consider the same scheme. "The mountain is not ←--is --> is not God." Because in their culture there is not a clear division between the man the world and God. At the level of life the communication among them is a fact that involves their whole existence, personal and social.

This is not a dialectic syntheses only a polar whole. The polarity is not simply linear or among two. It can be among three among four or more. We can speak of bi-polarity, three-polarity, or multi-polarity.

In this form we understand that this view opens our living experience to the culture, from the our own culture to the other.

To generalize is easy to contemplate a line, a segment A--B.



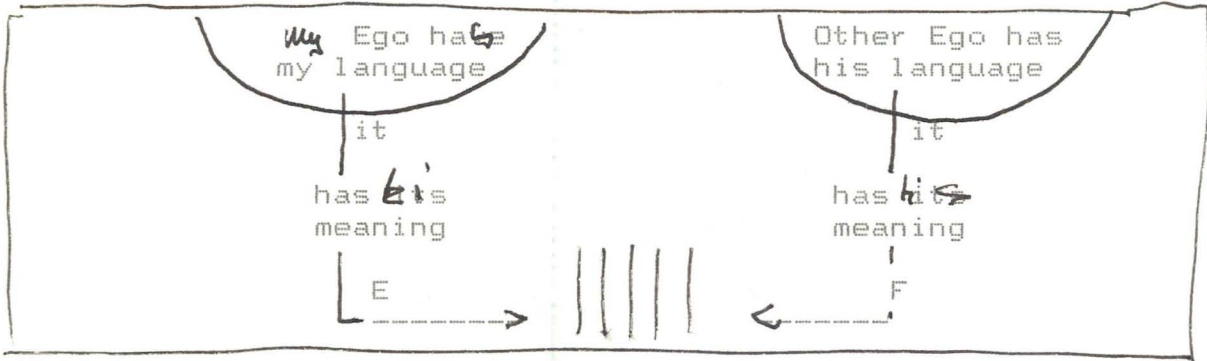
If we point out that A is not B we only see the logical aspect of the opposition. If we consider A as a point of the space with some reference, we only find that A depends on B. A is a function of B. In the same form B is a function of A. The polarity is evident if we want to set the value of this line A--B. We can add a series of points from A to B, : a1, a2, a3, a4, ... and other series from B to A : b1, b2, b3, b4, .... We can always use the logical view and say: A is not a1, A is not b1, or b2, and so on. It could be a good exercise but not a communication of content and then not practical for transmitting the faith.

This distinction drives us directly to the encounter of the two cultures in the evangelization. Two "idioms" are logically opposite ( English=A Spanish=B.) but they have a semiological and semantical dimension and are living with the people life. Two "idioms" are two different experiences of the world and they are expressed in many languages. The experience is actual and the starting point of all considerations that could be afterwards. When they stretch a contact it becomes part of the experience.

I have the experience of my own idiom.  
I have the experience of the idiom of the other.  
I have the experience of the contact between the two.  
From the experimental and living consciousness I have to establish a process that approximate us until leading to a coincidence of meanings from bi-polar or pluri-polar oppositions.

In this experimental framework we can start the task of evangelization in the search of the common meaning.

Very different is the approach of the logical positivism, whose the first reality is the language. One of the more actually significant is Richard Rorty.\* For him the idiomatic substance is a property of the subject and become a subjective reality that can not be shared with neighbours. We can briefly resume it as follows.



The individual as member of a particular culture shares the meaning with persons having the same idiom and language; and can not be dialog between cultures. Very similar is the intellectual mood of the "New Age", this very dangerous (in some aspect) mentality of our time. It leads to the incommunication among small different communities. Some time they explore a more general mean of communication partially common, to inquiry and find out a solution to a real interchange between men. But that

*there*

\* Philosophy and the mirror of nature - Princeton 1979

escape only translates the problem from a more restricted field to a bigger one without give a true solution. Our foudation is always the experience and trough the experience the human cotact the dialog, the spiritual interchange far downward in the life.

C. The contact at the emocional and sensible level.

At the lower level ,the polar opposition goes to the intimate perception of being but as first and immediate experience, the emocional, axiological, aestetical and practical.

And we find some contrast between these: good, bad, right, wrong, evil, beautiful, etc. or better, wrost, ,best, etc.. The polar opposition at this level is more rich and intense. It is not only an opposition of words as we found among concepts, is opposition of sensibility, phantasy, historical, emotional, and more.

At this level is not enough a speculative translation of terms; a living relation and an emocional envolvemnt are needed. At the emocional level men are proud of their own cultures and they feel the identity of their group and culture as the realization of a human value and an expression of the true essence of the world.

At this level the dialog to is deficient because the abstract concepts do not move the compact power of the cultural enviroment. The screen that separe the two cultures at this level is the most strong. But from other side there a constant process of actions and reaccion among the cultures. The forms of acculturation and transculturation are a phenomenon particularly activ. Wat could be lost in the theoretical efficacy can be gained in the action of practical transferences.

IV. A stimulant consequence.

If our analysis is not completly wrong the communication of faith has to be planned at the different level of the experimental knowledge, what we have simplified by the three levels exposed here. We find some complementary character amog them. The most high (logical and conceptual) offer more credibility and security on behalf of the systematic kenowledge of the spitiual conceptions. Are the most universal as human structures and expressions. They were largely employed through the history of the church.

But they are the less significativ for the other cultures in oder to penetrate de mysteries of the faith and the real nature of the divine gospel.

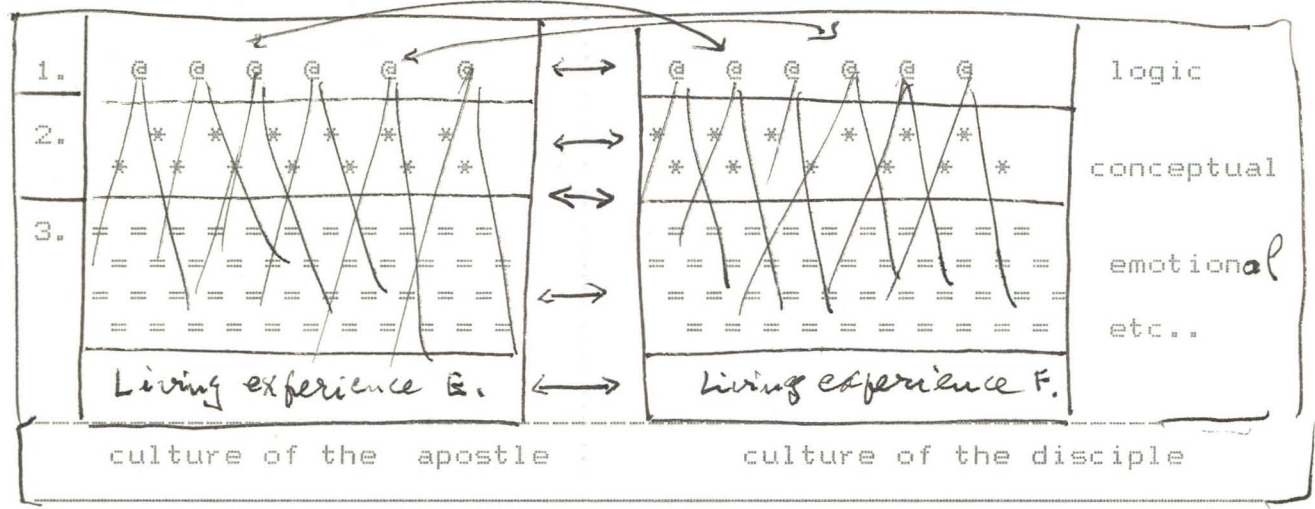
The more we are going down to the deeper levels the substance of the communication blows up, the understanding grows and the power on the spiritual change and the efficiency in the application of the principles becomes more evident.

The lowest level is also the most capable , (and speculatively the poorest), it ownsthe force of the life that communicate trough mysterious and less evident media. We can resume in the following graphics the draft of the situation of an evangelization fron one culture to another.

In this scheme we put the stress on the differences to conserve the perspective we practiced in this pages. This let us observe that the polarity is becoming more complex as the analysis is focusing the lower levels.

facing

The two cultures have approximately the same general structure:



The deeper zone is the life zone. The lebens-welt does not only allude to the lowest level, it implicate all the levels where takes place an experience. But here we focus the zones of the immediate experience that is more visible and far from the abstract speculation.

As we noted in the first point the common ground of the faith is not the common ground of the ordinary knowledge. This last is a natural one and generally admit a verification with some experiment, but that is not possible in the faith. For this reason the discussion about the true general concept is mere speculative and less highly flavored by content. Then will be necessary (at this level too) an entrusting on the meaning given by the other culture to the terms of the faith we are transmitting.

Bunzel Ruth in his book about Chichicastenango, famous town of the Ki'che's, collected a big number of pagans prayers (aprox. the year of 1930). To our modern sensibility these prayers own the sense of God that the Christian faith has proclaimed for centuries, in a different cultural context. By them our conception of God not only is confirmed but also improved.

If at the first level we can use directly the structures in different cultures, in the second level we can't, we have to translate the content and in some measure change it, finally at the lower levels we have to share the life to make a common experience of the divine. The third level is an existential one which blends in the life the limits of the rationality. But the evangelization of the cultures is actually the evangelization of the men by living with them and by sharing our complete spiritual experience with them.







Chapter 10  
COUNCIL FOR

# RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

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George F. McLean, Sec.-Treas.

October 20, 1992

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From: George F. McLean *G.F. McLean*

To: Working group

Subject: Outline for the volume on inculturation to be discussed Oct. 20, at 6.30 p.m.

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This is development of last week's schema in view of the suggestions which we made at that time.

Could we discuss this after dinner this evening?

Please review the schema with a view to suggesting additional ideas in the light of our discussion last week, as well as other considerations which may have come to your mind regarding points to be added, relocated or differently developed.

Our aim tonight will be to achieve a working schema in relation to which each of us can go to work to realize a basic draft on his section for discussion in the subsequent gatherings.

Culture is a "glue menon"; old by id. too the ~~one~~   
 (1)

our "object of my own"

Culture is something we can see, count, and describe. It is an object of my own

experience when we analyze a culture & report from what we do to make it visible, sound

known, high key and low key of ~~an~~ culture. In this moment of life, as a philosopher

one or looking the act of a sociologist or an anthropologist. We see it do that, but

Don't, low flowers, see low and we have earth. We see what you do but not

anthropologists: social anthropology, physical anthropology and linguistic anthropology

(in short and fit). But we have the right to write our own experience as that

showed. The former words are elements of our large experience. But the

primary experience of the world of color, forms, days, people, drinking, which culture

is that? The world of women working thing on the earth, carrying

conditions. We see the color, the shape of women working thing on the earth, carrying

And you can't see their shadows, or feeling from other the better in as important

to all the differences a culture says nothing. We see the color, the shape, the pattern

the color, form, something we understand. The color, form, something we understand. The color, form,

we can agree or disagree with it, generally we disagree. We can agree or disagree with it, generally we disagree.

# HERMENEUTICS AND INCULTURATION

10/20/92

Inculturation will be taken more broadly in terms of an idea (such as democracy) which might be accepted at the official level of a state constitution, but not yet be integral to the groups and cultures of the people. The work will focus on this broader sense and then add chapters to focus on democracy, faith, economics and education.

Introduction: the pluralism of cultures between nations and between groups within a nation

## I. Culture

- a. Person and Culture (McLean): the ontology roots of culture in personal being expressed in a new phenomenological sensitivity to human subjectivity and its free creativity in relation to the form of life
- b. Culture as a "phenomenon" created by a people  
(a theoretical explanation of a culture is essential to the life and expression of a people)

## III. Language

- a. Language and the Form of Life (Shang Zhiying): beyond private language, the medium of communication, language games and the form of life.
- b. Language as a common ground for understanding the culture and truth, i.e. the wisdom, of a people regarding life

## IV. The Other (Echavarria)

- a. The other as similar, inferior or properly other
- b. Semiotic shift from signs of things to signs of sense developed between persons.
- c. Levels of communication: axiological, praxeological and epistemic
- d. Recognition of the proper otherness of a culture.

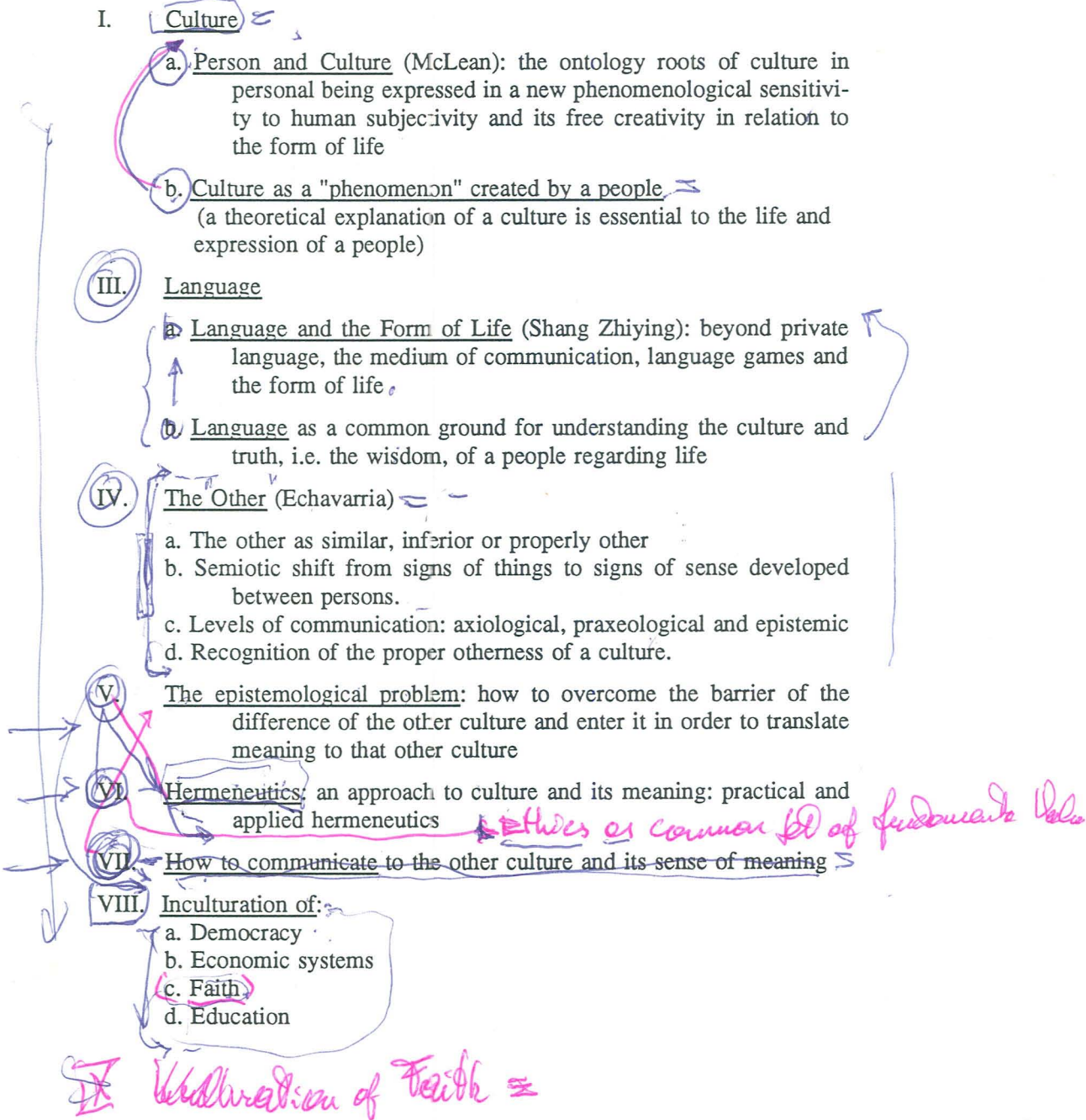
The epistemological problem: how to overcome the barrier of the difference of the other culture and enter it in order to translate meaning to that other culture

Hermeneutics: an approach to culture and its meaning: practical and applied hermeneutics

How to communicate to the other culture and its sense of meaning

## VIII. Inculturation of:

- a. Democracy
- b. Economic systems
- c. Faith
- d. Education



Inculturation of Faith

2) What is new in Paradise of everyday?

Cap I: 20

1) Qualification analysis of the notion of culture for a new vision? practical in place -

2) Problem of the possibility of approach of the idea in culture - We think the most important in Herminetics.

We can experience a culture because is a collection of objects: material and their effect or, beyond their practical function they have a meaning are unrealized they are every object a door, a chair, a book on the wall, with they refer to the man or make sense indifferent. But the human community talk about and put them in the history use them, reject them, criticize them

Every object becomes a link between persons, attains a weight in the common place in the world, captures a lot of references, and reflect a light over the members of the group. is a witness the objects start to speak to them. Their meaning is public and shared around an historicity they acquire some sacredness as Maria Medeiros or the witnesses of a battle in the woods, or the fathers of a solitary faith. - The pros of the world, that, frightened but, live with it.

Indeed, this is only the most static and superficial level of the culture but it is enough to introduce us to understand the importance of the culture of the group with the construction of every space which introduced has been built in the group and become man and culture in the group. To proceed into a more for-realizing level of culture we have to observe beyond the words language of objects the voices of things the words and uses but in the most complex and meaningful. It is subtle too, through the sound noise, its produces, rhythm, vocalicity, periods; there were its potentiality of significance occupy many regions of the human soul and mind. Nevertheless all the linguistic dimensions are intertwined in the spoken language, introduced into the very "material" human being thereby with the partners for the construction of a civilization, and an individual or moral environment. We will propose three examples of communities one more old, other more



Cap II  
**Catholic**  
**Campus Ministry**

(3)

**St. Agatha Catholic Church**

The Parish Serving Florida International University

completely submerged in a modern world and fighting for a high level of life in our technological, and technological, and technological world. The history of an emergency situation in a suburb of Washington DC. of an Hispanic conglomerate of about 100,000 families, in main part from Central America, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and other from Venezuela, Peru and Colombia. The first <sup>over 100,000</sup> community, there are almost twenty different ethnic groups, in actual possession of their historical land, language and <sup>take their habits and traditions</sup> The second is an authentic ethnic groups as we conceive in the modern sense <sup>a culture</sup> as the effects of Basque and Catalans in Spain, Sicilians in Italy and Bretons in France.

of many thousands. concentrated in a territory for a total of 4 million of people. The last case is not really an ethnic group, neither is a human group with a strong cohesion possible for a common understanding as to spirit and a very common background. There are similarities in racial level, <sup>opposition</sup> ~~opposition~~ <sup>year</sup> ~~year~~ <sup>economic</sup> ~~economic~~, Spanish tradition of law and college, <sup>immigration</sup> ~~immigration~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>immigrants</sup> ~~immigrants~~ are much more diverse than difference, usually supported by a collective spiritual consciousness.

The first case bring us to the inland of Guatemala, where Indian people are concentrated on a big region commonly called "the central <sup>high-plate</sup> ~~high-plate~~". They occupy the not high level of the territory, the shore of a great lake of Guatemala, the valleys of Guatemala, the hills of Coban y San Marcos spread in the south coast. They do not constitute a national unity. The only common element they lately adopted to feel themselves a big block is the name of Maya - They now call themselves a Maya population. But this is no more than a historical fiction of the scattered present villages to a dark historical past to find a point of encounter outside a ideal image. Truly there are many different ethnic groups who from each other communicate thru the official Spanish language.

When necessary mention a 64% of ill-education. (80% among women) If we read that this population mention a 64% of ill-education. (80% among women) and that the conditions to the state school is very poor and the FEB is less

1111 SW 107 Ave, Miami, Fl. 33174 - Office phone number (305) 220-2382  
 Parish phone number (305) 223-5982

How far labor for workers - we have a classical case of ethnic layers.

If we all the western... of the western people... ready eyes on army of force-own members... we have

...in a very known place. This market place... the two opposite temples... and the people become good persons. ... this will

...the central body... with these in the same mode of religious teachers... the common other, science, thought and words

...that took with the sense of policy and of the... we had a day to the interior of this nation to find

...a human consciousness of the other... the subject of world, the development of all these

...and freedom, as... their square world... from the four cardinal points... then in order to

...of the history and of the present... the present and the future are made here with the

...a for-back people who forgot... a country mind of the countries

...The... the history of the world... the history of the world

...they mentioned the laws of the... they mentioned an analogy the four flows of the four winds



6) Distinctive has been brought to our attention, as you can see the cultural objects, the material of the official history, which they the most simple tests of the

The table would be no more than one of the many books of the Indian people of the world. The

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history of conquest, which has been analysed by specialists, as

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the collected evidence of their history, the latter and the high the centers

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SURVEY OF ADULT EDUCATION PREFERENCES

DIRECTIONS: Please place an X in front of as many as you are interested in. In the same cases, please place a double XX to show a strong preference for a topic. Your written in preferences will also be greatly appreciated. Thank You.

\* \* \* \* \*

1. I am interested in attending a session about the following THEOLOGICAL topics:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Catholic Church                | <input type="checkbox"/> Blessed Mother          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History of the Church              | <input type="checkbox"/> The Bible Old Testament |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vatican II and Church Changes      | <input type="checkbox"/> The Bible New Testament |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer (different types of prayer) | <input type="checkbox"/> Jesus                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Role of the Catholic Church today  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacraments              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church Ministries                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Worship and the Mass    |

\* \* \* \* \*

2. I am interested in learning more about the following GENERAL topics:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with Guilt | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Concerns, welfare etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with Anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Issues in Ethics              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coping with Stress | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Morals Today           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death and Dying    | <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs, Alcohol                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cults              | <input type="checkbox"/> Racism                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LIST OTHERS _____  |  |

\* \* \* \* \*

3. I am interested in learning more about the following FAMILY LIFE topics:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Abuse                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage Relationships              | <input type="checkbox"/> Annulments       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Sexuality                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Parenting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bereavement (Loss of spouse, child) | <input type="checkbox"/> The Single Life  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Child relationships          |   |

LIST OTHERS \_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \* \* \*

4. I am interested in the following forms of PRAYER and SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One day retreat         | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Week end retreat        | <input type="checkbox"/> Liturgy of the Hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twilight Retreat        | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3 hrs. in the evening) |   |

\* \* \* \* \*

5. The general TYPES of learning programs I would prefer are:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly Scheduled Courses (single topics) | <input type="checkbox"/> Study/Discussion in the home                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture-Discussion Series (variable topics) | <input type="checkbox"/> Seminars and Workshops (several hours or day long) |





THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

*School of Philosophy*  
Washington, D.C. 20064  
202-319-5636  
CUA-FAX 202-319-5579

November 3, 1992

TO: Seminar Participants

FROM: George F. McLean, Secretary *gm Jean*

SUBJECT:

Seminar, "Evangelization and Culture"  
Thursday, Nov. 5, 3:10-5:00 P.M.  
St. Bonaventure Hall, 300, Monroe and Michigan  
Avenues, N.E.

The eighth session of the seminar will be held on Thursday, Nov. 5 as specified above.

The earlier sessions located the dimension of meaning and awareness at which cultures are encountered and introduced the issue of the relation of faith and culture along with its historical nature. The last session, raised the issue of the extent of differences in cultures and hence of inculturation, with implications for evaluating actual past practice and opening more radically to future possibilities.

In order to look into the character of this diversity and to gather a sense of the degree of inculturation at work, not only in historical meetings of cultures, but in the cultural interchange at work in urban neighborhoods today, papers in this session will be presented by:

Jorge Echavarria, Dept. of Literature and Philosophy, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Medellin, Colombia, "The Hermeneutics of Signs and the Quest of Otherness in Latin America", and

John Kromkowski, Politics Department, CUA: "The Intersection of Ecclesial, Political and Ethnic Cultures".

Your ideas will be greatly appreciated.



Prof Antonio G



REFLECTIONS AT THE INTERSECTION  
OF  
ECCLESIAL, POLITICAL AND ETHNIC CULTURES

AN INVITATION TO  
THE EXEGESIS OF TEXTS FROM  
THE POLISH AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

That this seminar on evangelization and culture was organized in part because of the 500 anniversary of the Columbian voyage illustrates one of the central problematics of these very topics: Christian evangelization and the large scale political form called empire, which essentially draws and/or forces the pluriformity of pre-existing, smaller scale human forms of organization, i.e., ethnic groups, into new relationships that constitute the political order, have been historically intertwined. Thus analysis of the relationships between evangelization as a specific form of cultural action and non-evangelized cultures requires a prior analysis and understanding the sources of power and the mechanism of control and order that govern/rule/dominate, i.e. are the regime within which the drama of evangelization and ethnic cultural takes place. This complex of the culture of a regime, the culture of evangelization and the variety of ethnic cultures raises a host of interpretative problems because each with various degrees of intensity claims to be authoritative deposits of historical experience that include perduring insights into the truth about primordial realities, i.e., the gods, the cosmos, society and its members. The traditions of each of these claimants are existentially perpetuated through a variety of formal and informal processes which include efforts that attempt to commemorate, memorialize, extend and revitalize their central narratives, i.e. the theodicies, cosmologies and anthropologies, which articulates the substance of their tradition as well as the shared and infinitely devisable objects that are their legacies and constitutive of the world of meaning and identity.

Case analysis of this process in antiquity, in the Judaic-Christian orbit and in modern ideological secular-religious enthusiasms would yield a variety of accounts of order and disorder, successes and failures, conflicts and cooperation, expectations achieved as well as denied. From the widest historical horizon, the interactions of political, ecclesial and ethnic cultures during earlier epochs appears to be an uncertain and directionless ongoing process. The messianic expectations, apocalyptic expectations and gnostic expectations of the utter transformation of reality appear to be fallaciously grounded eschatological hopes. The interaction of evangelized culture, the political economic order and ethnicities are part of an ongoing process that constitutes the Mystery of existence within which each of us has been invited to live. The critical clarification of these dynamics of cultures within the range and context of my ecclesial, political and ethnic biography and academic curiosity provoked by the Questions: Who am I and Who we as America Catholics prompts me

to invite you to examine and reflect on the meaning of the following existential expressions of this problematic.

The historical processes of peopling the Americans has been a complex experiment in some respect designed to minimize the incidents of conflict caused by the impossibility of compromise among exclusive and exclusionary cultures, the willingness to use military power and the inability to see tolerance of diversity as a personal and social virtue. Stunning exceptions to this claim have been voiced the conquered, but the porousness of the sort of regime and its development suggest that this still young experiment in pluralism is bent on pursuing liberty and justice for all.

However the very porousness that the regimes nurtures suggests that the breakdown of community and atomization of society may have consequences that are destructive of political, ecclesial and ethnic culture. Thus the following invitation to address your attention to a specific case of Polish American Catholics and three articulations and expressions of their reality at the intersections of change which has altered their modes of being.

- A. The Future of the Neighborhood
- B. An Uphill Fight to Reopen 2 Churches
- C. Babcia: An Easter Recollection
- D. Resolution Committee Report PAC1992



## The Future of the Neighborhood

I. In the last 100 years four types of Polish Neighborhoods have evolved in most of the urban areas of the Northern United States:

1. Immigrant settlement area 1870-1900.
2. Areas of second settlement involving later immigrants and those moving out of original settlement areas 1890-1920.
3. Polish ethnic neighborhoods 1910-1940.
4. Suburban settlement 1945.

Although the types overlap in time and geography each has evolved distinct characteristics.

II. In Post World War II period all Polish neighborhoods began to face massive changes caused by:

1. Movement of young people out to suburbs.
2. Desire by cities to remake their central areas according to new plans and to make the city more accessible to suburban dwellers. (Urban Renewal, Expressways).
3. Enormous pressure for assimilation abetted by a growing material prosperity.
4. Change in scale of the city.
5. Pressure of new migrants seeking housing and their inability to find it outside the city because of discrimination.

III. Development of a new Ideology of Community and Neighborhood began in the sixties and seventies characterized by:

- a. Search for new forms of community by a growing middle class counter culture;
- b. defensive neighborhood ideology in the old neighborhoods against urban planners, the counter culture's definitions of community and the critics of localism and ethnicity.

IV. New Treats to Reviving Neighborhoods from Reindustrialization of American Industry.

- a. Poletown in Detroit, as an example.

V. Preservation of the Polish and other Ethnic Neighborhoods is necessary to:

- 1) Continue to provide a place in which to maintain certain ethnic traditions as living entities;
- 2) preserve monuments and institutions for posterity;
- 3) give basis for a prophetic rather than nostalgic view of society;
- 4) save people that cannot be reproduced elsewhere.

# An Uphill Fight to Reopen 2 Churches

Lisa W. Foderaro

Special to *The New York Times*

HUDSON, N.Y.—When the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany merged this town's three parishes into one in February, closing two of the churches, officials knew the decision would be taken hard. How hard, they couldn't have imagined.

Anna Konopski, baptized here in 1916, cried for three days. Thomas Fisher, a social worker, undertook 14-hour daily prayer vigils. Helen Grobowski decided that from now on she would worship by parking her Subaru in front of her old church on Sunday and praying behind the wheel.

The two churches in this faded river city were put to rest, as others have been in the diocese and across the nation in recent years, because of shrinking congregations and a declining number of priests. What made the outcry here so passionate was that the closings struck at the parishioners' cultural heritage.

The two closed churches were among the ethnic, or national, churches that make up one-fifth of the diocese's

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## *Italian and Polish Catholics fear the end of traditions.*

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198 parishes. Our Lady of Mount Carmel was founded by Italian immigrants in 1909. Sacred Heart of Jesus/Our Lady of Perpetual Help was started by Poles in 1915; at Christmas they still sang the Kolenda, a collection of Polish

carols, and on Easter they still served babka, a traditional bread.

"Since the day I came to this country, I realized the way the Italian people sacrificed to build this church," said Rocky Romana, a 63-year-old barber whose shop boasts two large maps of Italy on the back wall. "It was the only support the Italian people had."

Kazimiera Jakiela, who left Poland for the United States when she was 32 and now, almost 30 years later, still speaks Polish with her children, said: "We passed on the Polish traditions from generation to generation. The other church doesn't have that."

The third church, St. Mary's, while always considered the Irish parish, was not established as an ethnic church and kept few cultural traditions. Now renamed the Hudson Catholic Community, the church, at the corner of East Allen and East Court Streets, was chosen as home to the merged congregation because it has almost three times the capacity of the other two churches combined.

Members of the three churches have sparred often in the past, with the conflicts rooted in ethnic differences. But in their current quest, the Polish and Italian congregations have worked together, insisting that one church not be reopened without the other. In a show of solidarity, they will celebrate their churches' feast days together in July in a parking lot.

The two parishes have unrelentingly pressured Bishop Howard J. Hubbard to change his mind. Carrying the Vatican, American, Polish and Italian flags, parishioners have demonstrated quietly, singing hymns and holding candles,

outside a handful of churches where the Bishop has spoken.

Lawyers were hired in Florence and Rome to argue their case before the Apostolic Signatura, the supreme court of the Vatican. Last month three church members went to Rome, bearing photographs of their churches and tape recordings of interviews with anguished parishioners.

"There's no justification," said Joseph Holodook, a 25-year-old architect who went to Rome. "People feel spiritually raped. They've been alienated from God."

Many of those who do attend the newly merged church drop what they call "prayer dollars," and what the priests call "funny money," in the collection baskets. The pink and yellow slips, in the shape of dollar bills, ask the Bishop to open his heart to their appeals.

In turn, real money is sent to an opposition group, Concerned Catholics of Hudson, which sends some directly to the Pope and keeps some to pay the lawyers.

"This has been a very emotional issue, but they're not the only ones who have emotions," said the Rev. Michael A. Farano, the diocese's chancellor and spokesman for the Bishop. "This is painful for the Bishop, too, but it seems that no matter what we do to respond to their needs, it's never enough."

Bishop Hubbard decided this year to merge the parishes after a four-year planning process that involved members of the three parishes, diocesan officials, consultants and architects.

Father Farano said the decision was made after taking into account the

needs of the entire diocese. It expects to lose 70 of its 250 priests by the year 2000, threatening a crisis for its 198 parishes, plus programs in hospitals and prisons and on college campuses. Officials say consolidation is the only solution.

#### Allocating 'Priest Resources'

Moreover, the number of practicing Catholics has dropped in the diocese's cities while rising in the suburbs. In the last 30 years Hudson, which since its founding in 1785 has gone from whaling port to declining industrial center—has shrunk to 8,000 people from 15,000.

The three parishes had 800 active households. "We have parishes with 2,000 families and one priest," Father Farano said. "It's a question of how we best allocate our priest resources."

The Albany diocese has merged parishes in several cities since 1970, including Albany and Schenectady. "They've all been emotional, but some of the vilifications that have surrounded this have not surrounded the others," Father Farano said.

#### 'Different if Your Mother Dies'

But the parishioners here, who reject each of the diocese's reasons for the closings, say they will move forward only after their churches are resurrected. They argue that the parishes were financially sound and well-attended and could stay open, with fewer services, by sharing St. Mary's priest. The Bishop has rejected that.

"They tell us to forget our pain and come together as a community," said Josephine Konow, a 52-year-old Italian-

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*Parishioners are appealing  
to the supreme court of  
the Vatican.*

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American teacher who made the trip to the Vatican. "But it's different if your mother dies, and you want to get on with your life. The way I feel, my

mother's in a coma, and I'm trying to save her life."

The parishes already appealed the closings to the Congregation of the Clergy in Rome, which upheld the Bishop's decision. Now, they are appealing to the highest level, the Apostolic Signatura, which should rule by the end of the year.

In the meantime, the parishioners say they are trying to find their bearings, both spiritually and culturally. Mrs. Konow and her husband, Ed, a retired state trooper, no longer worship together. He goes to the new church, but she refuses. Instead, she attends Mass at a Ukrainian church.

Healing the fractures and coaxing the people back to church will be the task of the Rev. Winston L. Bath, the new pastor at the merged church, Hudson Catholic Community.

"We're in the process of ordering Italian and Polish hymns," said Father Bath, a soft-spoken man who seems challenged, not daunted, by the situation. "Their heritages are going to dissipate only if they let them. I want to respect and maintain, rather than eliminate and destroy."



# BABCIA

AN EASTER RECOLLECTION



PETER SKARGA

**B**ABCIA was a simple woman. She was born a peasant and she would die a peasant. She had married grandpa late in life, after grandpa had lived wifeless for some years. I remember her wedding. She had a special cake for the children. She loved children with the ache of a woman who had never had any of her own.

When she was a young girl, early teens, a rich Jewish doctor and his wife from America returned to their town in Poland and took her back to America as a servant. They were good to her. Then she married and lived in Brooklyn. Her husband died. She married grandpa.

She took care of grandpa lovingly, tenderly at first, until his cruelty and brutality wore her smile off her face, and she would quietly put the plate of soup down in front of him and turn around to wipe the tears from her eyes with her immaculate apron. It would be easy to say grandpa had been brutalized by immigrant life. His cruelty was deep, deep in his black eyes. Maybe it went back all the way to Cain.

The harder it was to live with grandpa, the more she lavished her affections on his children and grandchildren. They were all the family she had, and they were hers. She would give you a glass of tea, and then unable to control herself, grab you from behind and smother your neck and head with kisses, tears falling on your hair while she prayed God would bless you.

Once she had a heart attack. It was unbelievable; she was stronger, more robust than anyone I knew. Every Sunday she would walk ten miles, across the Kosciuszko Bridge, to visit the cemetery in Queens. That was her way to get to the country.

PETER SKARGA is a pseudonym.

She recovered from her heart attack in time to visit her grandchildren in distant New Jersey, riding by bus, climbing through a window when they weren't yet home from shopping, and then, as if to prove to all the world that nothing would get her down, grabbing the shovel and mixing cement while the men were taking a break.

Nothing seemed to get her down for long. She seemed oblivious to the ugliness of her surroundings. She called the burning oil refinery her "Christmas Tree," lighting up the night with its ominous flame. She must have washed the windows in the house every day, because they were always sparkling.

Then grandpa died. I remember walking into the kitchen, which was also the bathroom, as it housed the bathtub, and the dining room. I found her just sitting in a chair, her blue print dress, her apron, her stiff kerchief across her unwrinkled head. She was clutching her handkerchief, patient, quiet, crying, resigned, somehow sad that the monster she had lived with and served had died. Perhaps she was afraid that with him gone, no one would visit her.

She was right.

It was hard to go back from the suburbs. The only ones left were the retarded cousin, the alcoholic uncle, all stories of sadness left behind in the move to the bright world. No one went back. It was as far from New Jersey as from California and her beloved family was scattered that far.

I myself hadn't been back in years. Of course, I had been too far to visit for most of that time, too busy with other things the rest of the time.

My parents and I had no desire to visit that Easter morning. It was a strained Holy Week. With my parents I had been attending the new liturgies at the suburban church. The last straw came when the Holy Saturday midnight Mass was held a

eight, the Easter Vigil over at ten. The liturgy was wordy, the people vaguely hungry for something they weren't getting, so many ideas, explanations of everything. "We do this because it means this, that because it means that." If you have to explain a symbol it's not a symbol.

Still, we were determined to have the post-Vigil feast. We ate and we drank, and we drank more than we should have, well into the morning, a fragment of a large family huddling in a suburban house, drinking for something missing. The idea to go to dawn Mass in Brooklyn came to us then, back to an old Polish church where my parents had been married, a different neighborhood from Babcia's.

For three hours we slept, and rose at five to drive through the tunnel, through the Midtown, into the sleek, black, rainy streets of Brooklyn, block after block, mile after mile of despair and ruin. The crocuses and daffodils of suburbia were mostly plastic here. It was eerie the way the ghetto can be in a rainy pre-dawn blackness. It was all like a strange dream.

I was uncomfortable in the church. It was naive, small, filled with statues, loaded with pots of lilacs. The priest came out of the sacristy. Oh God, I thought, a small foreigner, what will this be like?

The church was full of old people, mostly women, of every shape and size. They were all Polish, the old women who had been left behind when their children moved out to the Island or to Jersey or even further into the distant reaches of America. They huddled in tiny apartments, living in terror, amidst the boarded-up shops, the burned-out houses.

They began the procession. The silk canopy, the priest with glowing gold monstrance, incense burning, and the procession of the old women. It was unlike anything I had ever seen before. Old women with stockings like potato sacks, old women with ancient feet-bearing furs, old women with blue hats and white pearled pins, old women with shopping bags, all joined the procession, limping, ancient, stooped, following the monstrance, the priest around the church. The lame, the halt, the blind were seeing with faith, led forward in a march of faith. That was what was missing, this was what I had not seen, no, not in Hawaii, nor in Stockholm, not at Harvard nor any suburban mall — faith, simple, burning, abiding faith. And with faith, devotion.

The priest gave the sermon. The high baroque altar behind him became a wall of burning gold, his mouth the only opening, a holy opening, in an iconostasis. The holy word of God was being spoken here. The word was speaking, not being spoken about, not analyzed, just spoken. It was bread for the hungry.

We left the church dazed. An old parishioner took his umbrella out of his baby carriage and returned to the streets.

We drove off.

Suddenly, melted, reminded, we decided to stop in on Babcia.

We rang the front doorbell of the three-story frame building. Way down, through two lace curtained doors, her face peeped out. She rang the opening buzzer. We walked down to her kitchen.

She stood up against the window as if she had just seen a vision. She began jumping up and down, up and down, saying:

"Oh, thank God, thank God, I'm so happy, I'm so happy, thank God, thank God."

She excused herself and cried for a minute, just shaking her head, and then took our coats.

On the table was an Easter hyacinth and a full spread of kielbasa, eggs, ham, rye bread, babka. She had prepared the entire Easter feast, and set it out, knowing that no one would come, perhaps that no one cared, but she cared, and she was the grandmother of the family, blood or no blood, and if we all disappeared into America, she would still be there with food and the painting of our Lady of Czestochowa weeping with her.

We were overcome with joy.

I sat looking out her window, staring at a line of colorful clothes some neighbor had out that blustery morning. She asked:

"What makes you so pleased out there?"

"I see beauty in the line of clothes."

"Oh," she said, "I guess I can understand that." And she told us about the most beautiful thing she knew in this world. It was a tree which grew somewhere between her house and the dock where she had first gotten off the boat here sixty years before. It had been spring, and the tree was in bloom. Somehow every year, in the spring, she had managed to get back to her tree, even if she had to walk there. It was like a child, she said, the only thing she had in America, but thank God, she had something. Then she added her favorite saying — "*Czem hata, to bogata*" — "If you've got a roof, you're rich."

We stayed for hours, and decided that she should move out to the suburbs, to be with us. She was overjoyed. A miracle had happened to her that day.

As we left, she blessed us and said, "Your family has always been very good to me. I am eternally grateful."

A month later she was dead.

Every tree on the way to the cemetery in Queens was beautiful.

"Oh, my people. . . ."

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## RESOLUTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Conceived during a devastating war, the Polish American Congress was organized in 1944 to unite and solidify the patriotic, political and social conscience of Americans of Polish descent or birth.

Poland had already been victimized by Nazi German brutality and bondage. The potential of Soviet oppression in the post World War II era was evident. Poland's geographical, historical and very cultural identity was threatened with extinction.

The establishment of the Polish American Congress as a strong, central force in the United States created a platform upon which Polish Americans could defend and advance Poland's right to freedom and independence as a sovereign nation. The Congress provided a ray of hope and rejuvenation to Polish Americans, inspired a renewed awareness of their ethnic heritage and aroused in them a renewed desire to elevate their status in the American mosaic of pluralism.

The emergence of the Polish American Congress as a unifying umbrella laid a firm base for the defense of the interests of Poland. It created the avenue for Polish Americans and encouraged visions of positive achievements that would be the driving force following the Second World War serving to elevate the good name and prestige of Poland, the Polish people and Americans of Polish heritage.

More than 2,600 delegates representing organizations from 26 states

participated in our founding convention. Negative world events that ensued after World War II led to the eventual absorption of Poland into the Soviet Union orbit with Allied consent and the threat of Soviet inspired Communist domination of the world, including the United States. This development made the cause of Poland and struggle against fascism and communism the dominant issues on the Polish American Congress agenda.

Its people's tragic fate under Soviet domination caused the Congress to focus its energies on the work to free Poland.

As the years passed, generations of Americans of Polish descent lost interest in the Polish American Congress because of the lack of programs about their concerns. They became the invisible Polonia of largely assimilated citizens with Polish surnames, who knew little if anything about their ancestral roots.

We recognize the complexities of the dilemma that confronts and hurts Americans who trace their heritage to Poland. We are also aware that 383 years of Polish presence in America has fostered and evolved with a redefined heritage - the Polish American Heritage. The unfortunate fact is that Americans of Polish ancestry, especially the present younger generations, have had and continue to have very limited exposure to learning and knowing about the great accomplishments of Poles who immigrated here and Americans of Polish descent who have made contributions at the highest levels to the progress of the United States. Curriculums in schools do not focus on Poland and the Polish American heritage. Our many once Polish oriented parochial schools no

longer emphasize any curriculum on Polish heritage, arts, music, etc. The Polish language in most cases was eliminated decades ago. There are very few qualified texts on Polish American heritage for primary and secondary schools.

We continue to have a very deep affinity and sympathy for Poland, her struggle and needs. Poland is free, but not totally secure. The latter has been a problem over centuries. The collapse of the Soviet Union, disintegration of Communist governments in Eastern Europe and the emergence of new free republics in the former Soviet Union may have led to overstated optimism. Former Soviet republics, whose politics are unpredictable, have access to or control of nuclear and conventional weapons. There is a rise in right-wing extremist attacks on ethnic immigrants in Germany. Most notable are the recent reports and investigation of "ethnic cleansing" and genocide in the former Yugoslavia, a grim reminder of the Nazi rise to power in the 1930's. Nonetheless, the Polish American Congress has attained one of its primary goals. Poland is free. The Polish American Congress Charitable Foundation is continuing its outstanding assistance. That effort is ongoing and highly successful. It should be encouraged and supported.

This is a historic convention because it is the first Polish American Congress convention held in a time of elation over a free Poland. It is a critical convention because Poland's emergence as a free nation places the Polish American Congress at the crossroads. The Congress played a lead role in the struggle for Poland's freedom and defeat of Communism in Europe. Ironically, it has yet to focus equivalent vigor



and resources in meeting the challenges of domestic Polish American problems. During the years of actions for Poland's freedom, the issues affecting the esteem and quality of status of Polish Americans may have become the inadvertent casualties of that commitment and dedication.

A generation of Americans of Polish ancestry has been virtually left, unwittingly, to the assimilative structure of the melting pot, without any knowledge about their heritage, and, perhaps, feeling left out of its own ethnicity and regarded as second class.

There are very few Polish Americans in the highest levels of political, business, educational and governmental hierarchies. Polish Americans are out of the inner circle of power and influence. Compared to other ethnic groups, there are very few Polish Americans ascending to those lofty positions. Our successes have been unnoticed or, to be blunt, almost non-existent or very short termed.

Over the years, the Polish American Congress has built an effective lobby for Poland at the highest levels of influence. However, that influence has not translated into effective programs to help Americans of Polish ancestry to advance in politics, government, business, and other endeavors.

We have often heard the phrase: "Let Poland be Poland". Now is the time to put this into practice. Poland is a free and independent sovereignty. It has a duly elected government. Neither the Polish American Congress or any other private group is the government of

Poland. Our current responsibility is to respect that sovereign status which the Polish American Congress helped attain, continue the caring humanitarian work of the Charitable Foundation, offer counsel when requested and encourage American government aid. Above all, we must place faith in the resolve and capability of the Polish people to succeed in their newly discovered free enterprise and remain vigilant to all ill-intended obstacles.

It is imperative that the Polish American Congress broaden its priorities toward a vigorous program that addresses and pursues solutions to the domestic concerns of Polish Americans. Dedicated people have given years of devotion to Poland's freedom. The same type of concerted energies must now be exercised in creating and implementing positive actions for the benefit of Americans of Polish ancestry.

Consequently, having considered and thoroughly reviewed the record of the Polish American Congress and looking to the future, we, the delegates to the Polish American Congress Convention, assembled in Washington, D.C., do hereby recommend and resolve, with firm conviction, the following proposals for consideration by the National Council of Directors:

1. We recommend that the conduct of Polish American Congress affairs be pursued from a broad domestic concept which includes all efforts of Polish Americans or permanent residents of the United States in acting on behalf of our own ethnic community and Poland.

2. Our Polish American fraternal organizations, mainly the Polish National Alliance, the Polish Roman Catholic Union, the Polish Women's Alliance; and the Polish Falcons of America have been the resource lifelines of the Polish American Congress. Considering their financial and human resource commitments to maintain the work of the Polish American Congress on the national and international levels, we express our appreciation and commend their contributions.
  
3. One of the very serious and chronic problems facing the organization is its lack of sufficient funding. It is amazing that so much has been accomplished, almost unnoticed, on a very frugal budget. We recommend with urgency that the executive leadership and National Council of Directors appoint a qualified committee of individuals to address the PAC funding needs. We also recommend that this special committee include a review and consideration of suggestions made at the American Agenda Workshop on October 13, 1992, prior to the convention sessions.
  
4. We recognize the absence of Polish Americans in the hierarchy of political parties and actions. We recommend the establishment of a national political network to develop and enhance the progress of Polish Americans toward the highest levels of all major parties and government. The network should include all Polish American elected federal, state and local officials, regardless of political party affiliation.

5. We need effective initiatives and organized efforts to respond quickly and accurately to defamation and bigotry against Poland, the Polish people and Polish Americans. An organized network throughout the Polish American Congress districts should provide a united effort to respond and prevent such attacks.
  
6. One of the major problems in building an effective organization is communication. We urge the National Council of Directors to appoint a qualified editor for the Polish American Congress Newsletter and ensure regular issuance of the publication on a quarterly basis. The newsletter costs can be covered by adding a publication fee to membership dues. The final responsibility for content would rest with the leadership of the Polish American Congress, the publisher.
  
7. Today, many Polish Americans have only a limited knowledge of their heritage. To help deal with this problem we recommend to the National Council of Directors that we consider pursuing the following course:
  - A. A close alliance is needed between the Polish American Congress and educators, and educational, historical and cultural organizations. We call upon the Polish American Congress state divisions to work with colleges and universities in their areas to create and promote workshops, courses and lectures on the Polish experience.
  
  - B. Establish a national network to promote and promulgate the inclusion of a Polish and East Central European studies curriculum either

independently or as part of existing courses, in social studies, American history and multi-cultural studies at the public and parochial schools, so that children of Polish and other backgrounds are not "educated away" from their respective ethnic values, customs and heritage and can build esteem and pride from the accomplishments of their forefathers.

- C. Organize national and regional conferences of primary and secondary educators to develop appropriate materials for a Polish and East Central Europe curriculum.
- D. Encourage Polish American authors by promoting their publications among publishers and other communication outlets.
- E. Utilize the capabilities and expertise of Polish Americans who are involved in higher education at the college and university level through existing qualified organizations such as the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences and Polish American Historical Association. These resources, including the Kosciuszko Foundation and similar established groups, can be very productive and positive sources for addressing the problems Polish Americans face in getting a college or university education. Regarding higher education, we recommend creation of a national scholarship resource information bank utilizing appropriate professional expertise to help Polish American students attain grants and scholarships. The resource bank could be effectively organized with assistance of some well known groups already operating in our community.

- F. We appreciate and commend the educational work of Polish Language Schools. We recognize the effort to teach immigrants English. Given today's societal structure and economic needs, we encourage bilingualism on the part of our people.
8. We encourage the creation of Polish American Centers for Culture and Heritage in local communities, and development of a cooperative spirit that assures their survival and growth. Such centers can be vital arms to the Polish American Congress in matters dealing with heritage, folklore, music, history and arts. They can be a very influential force in putting the younger generation in practical touch with the Polish American Heritage.
9. We recommend that the National Council of Directors utilize the spiritual leadership of the Polish American clergy to develop a program for strengthening the Polish American family. In these times of various concepts of family life, it is important that the traditional units of the Polish American Family be focused toward the values of unity and understanding.
10. On the occasion of the 14th anniversary of his elevation to the Papacy, we recommend that a communication be sent to Pope John Paul II wishing him well and expressing our happiness that he has recovered from his recent illness and continues his spiritual crusade for world peace and for the less fortunate who live in poverty and starvation conditions.

11. We commend and appreciate the President of the United States, the Congress, all other government agencies, and the private sector for their assistance to Poland during her ordeal under Communism and after her emergence as a free nation, and we urge its continuance in the future.
  
12. We are grateful to the United States Government for the revered care and respect provided for a half century to the memory of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Polish Statesman, and for the honors bestowed during the ceremonies transferring his remains to Poland.
  
13. We acknowledge, with appreciation, that a delegation of Polish Americans participated in the historic Conference of World Polonias, the first held since prior to World War II. The conclave, sponsored by "Spolnota Polska", was held in Krakow, Poland, August 13-23, 1992.

We honor those who contributed toward the eventual freedom of Poland and the demise of Communist domination in Eastern Europe. We especially pay tribute to the memory of those who gave their lives on the battlefields, leaders and activists of the Polish American Congress who dedicated their lives to Poland's cause and who did not live to experience the joys of triumph.

We congratulate and appreciate the organizers of this convention for their hospitality and excellent arrangements.

This had been a crossroads meeting of diverse groups and individuals; the representation spans different ideas and concepts based on generational experience. It is evident that the Polish American Congress needs a healing process to bring itself together and a deeper understanding of its own diversity and organizational personality; and the broad generational constituency it represents. This convention can be the body that creates the moving force for a united community. Let us begin.

Long live the United State of America

Long live a fully Free Poland

Long live the ideals of the Polish American Congress.

Resolutions Committee

Hilary Czaplicki, Chairman

Donald Pienkos, Vice Chairman and Secretary

Frank Milewski

John Olko

Ewa Gierat