

JESUIT THEOLOGIES OF MISSION

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IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD, the Church began to become truly global, universal, as opposed to being simply the Church of the West. This implied a new missionary awareness, which the Jesuit approach to mission did much to shape. The Jesuits' mobility was significant in this connection, as were the Spiritual Exercises. In the Contemplation on the Incarnation that opens the Second Week, Ignatius asks that we look on the world with God's eyes, so to speak, looking at its whole extent and at all its many peoples who are in need of salvation (Exx 101-109). But that is not all: the one making the Exercises is meant to ask themselves how they can contribute to the Church and to its missionary task.

This spiritual dynamic, this openness for 'being sent'—'missions'—by the Pope led the early Jesuits to a range of missionary enterprises. Even in Ignatius' lifetime these extended from Brazil to Japan. In 1549, Francis Xavier, the Society's first missionary, reached a Japan that impressed the Europeans with its high culture; in the same year, Manoel da Nóbrega landed in Brazil, the territory of Latin America assigned to Portugal, where the cannibalism of the Tupí, a nomad tribe, caused the Europeans no little consternation. Wherever the Jesuits worked, they developed forms of respectful encounter, moving beyond the ethnocentric conventions of the time. This strategy became known as 'accommodation'. It was controversial when it was first developed, both among the Jesuits themselves and in the Church at large. Matteo Ricci's innovations in China led to the Chinese Rites controversy; Roberto de Nobili's in India to the Indian Rites Controversy. Ultimately, in the eighteenth century, Rome decided against

accommodation.¹ But Jesuit creativity in the theology of mission was not confined to the period before the Society's suppression in 1773. There was also innovative thinking stimulated by the Second Vatican Council. This article attempts to survey some of this material.

On the Way to Inculturation

'Inculturation' is one of the ideas that has had a striking effect on how the post-Conciliar Church understands its mission. Both among theologians and in official documents, it has quickly become a standard term. Jesuit leadership has contributed significantly to this development: not only Jesuit General Superiors—notably Fr Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991)—but also Jesuit General Congregations, the highest legislative authority in the Society.

'Inculturation' was a neologism.² It covered the same sort of ground as older expressions such as 'accommodation' or 'adaptation', but it stressed how the encounter between Christianity and a particular culture could enrich both. It originated in Jesuit circles—not surprisingly given the Society's long tradition of intercultural experience. It was only after the Council that the idea fully developed.

As early as the 1950s, 'inculturation' was used by the Belgian Jesuit missiologist, Joseph Masson, and by others, to describe how the Christian message could take root in, or be grafted onto, non-Christian cultures. At that stage, the terminology was unstable, and there were oscillations between 'inculturation' and 'acculturation'. During the preparations for the Council, Masson spoke—admittedly in something of a throwaway line—of the need for 'a Catholicism inculturated in various different ways' (*catholicisme inculturé d'une façon polymorphe*).³

Vatican II itself did not use the word 'inculturation', but the idea is in line with the Council's central pastoral principle: the Church is related *positively* to today's world.⁴ For the Council the 'law of evangelization' is 'sensitive proclamation' (*accomodata praedicatio*); it

¹ See *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, edited by D. E. Mungello (Nettetal: Steyler, 1994); Ines G. Županov, *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

² See François Guillemette, 'L'apparition du concept d'inculturation: Une réception de Vatican II', *Mission*, 2 (1995), pp. 53-78.

³ Joseph Masson, 'L'Église ouverte sur le monde', *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 84 (1962), pp. 1032-1043, here p. 1038.

⁴ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 1 and its important footnote. The reference text for Vatican II quotations is *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, edited by Norman P. Tanner (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990).

recognises that each race has ‘the capacity to express Christ’s message in its own fashion’.⁵ These statements provide a kind of foundation charter for the development of contextual theologies, and the point becomes quite explicit when the Council encourages theological reflection within every significant cultural area.⁶



Jesus Comforts the Women of Jerusalem
One of the Stations of the Cross in Lodwar Cathedral, Kenya

In the following decade, the 32nd General Congregation of the Jesuits was held (1974-1975). This gathering contributed much to the establishment of ‘inculturation’ in standard theological discourse. Though initially various terms were used, people were reluctant either to revert to older concepts such as ‘accommodation’, or to use more recent ones such as ‘indigenisation’. Instead, the Congregation drew on the English word ‘enculturation’, used by cultural anthropologists such as Melville J. Herskovits⁷ to designate how individuals break into a new culture and learn to express themselves within it. ‘Enculturation’ in

⁵ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 44.

⁶ *Ad gentes*, n. 22.

⁷ Melville J. Herskovits, *Man and his Works: The Science of Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Knopf, 1948).

Latin had to be *inculturatio*; and when the back-translation appeared in the Congregation's English texts, it had become 'inculturation'. Moreover, in 1974 the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences had already spoken in Taipei of how 'the local church is a church incarnate in a people, a church indigenous and inculturated'.⁸

The Congregation passed a final document on the general principle that proposed an 'inculturation', understood as the 'incarnation of the gospel' within the cultural values of the individual peoples. It had special application in Asia and Africa, but it also had relevance for the countries of the West, which could no longer be regarded as Christian, and for the Eastern bloc countries under atheistic ideologies. It was not just a matter of dialogue with the inheritors of the great non-Christian traditions; there was also need for inculturation regarding 'the new, more universal values' emerging from more intensive international exchange.⁹ At this General Congregation, inculturation was, of course, only one theme among many. It was in the shadow of other issues that at the time appeared more urgent, notably the relationship between faith and justice. Nevertheless, people were aware of its explosive potential, even if it could not be fully discussed. The Congregation therefore asked the then General Superior, Fr Pedro Arrupe, to take up the theme more deeply in a later letter or instruction to the whole Society.¹⁰

The letter was published on 14 May 1978. Arrupe drew on Ignatian spirituality and the Jesuit tradition of adaptation in order to express the fundamental principle as follows:

Inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation), but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about 'a new creation'.

⁸ *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 1970-1991*, edited by Gaudencio B. Rosales and C. G. Arévalo (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992), p. 14.

⁹ GC 32, d. 4, nn. 53-56. References to Jesuit General Congregation documents are taken from the editions produced by the Institute of Jesuit Sources in St Louis.

¹⁰ GC 32, d. 5, n. 2.

Arrupe was thus stressing how the need for inculturation was universal, something for the whole Church. If modern humanity was to be presented the message of the Gospel effectively, inculturation applied not only to the lands where Christianity had hardly spread at all, but also to the countries that were now becoming post-Christian. It would be a dangerous mistake to deny that these latter countries did not need the faith somehow to be reinculturated.

Besides this official letter, Arrupe also published a working paper that had been prepared in his office and under his authorisation. The stress was similar. Inculturation was defined as,

... that effort which the Church makes to present the message and values of the gospel by embodying them in expressions that are proper to each culture, in such a way that the faith and Christian experience of each local Church is embedded, as intimately and deeply as possible, in its own cultural context.¹¹

This text brings out the need for the gospel to be ‘embodied’ and ‘embedded’ in a culture, and the diversity of the ‘cultures’ in question: there is a ‘culture’ of distinctive ethnic groups, and there is also a ‘culture’ in, say, the academic world. Theologically, ‘inculturation’ was often derived from the incarnation, but mention was also made of Pentecost.

Inculturation in the Church at Large

Pedro Arrupe had been a missionary in Japan before becoming the Jesuit General, and had lived through the bombing of Hiroshima. He made many public statements on the theology of mission, beginning with an intervention on atheism during the debates about what became *Gaudium et spes* (22 September 1965) and continuing up to some thoughts on the inculturation of catechesis during the fourth Synod of Bishops (1977).¹² Pope John Paul II’s post-synodical exhortation, *Catechesi tradendae*, still talks both of ‘inculturation’ and ‘acculturation’,

¹¹ The letter can be found in Pedro Arrupe, *Other Apostolates Today*, edited by Jerome Aixela (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1981), pp. 171-181. The working paper (as well as the letter) can be found in English in *Acta Romana Societatis Iesu*, 17 (1977-1979), pp. 264-281.

¹² Pedro Arrupe, ‘Catechesis and Inculturation’, in *Other Apostolates Today*, pp. 163-167; Adolf Exeler, *Katechese in unserer Zeit: Themen und Ergebnisse der 4. Bischofssynode* (Munich: Kösel, 1979), pp. 149-151.

but it is quite explicitly concerned to point out how genuine catechesis “takes flesh” in the various cultures and milieux.¹³ Thus it was that the Church’s official teaching began to take up the idea. The trend was to be followed in the document following the 1985 Extraordinary Synod, in the document of the Latin American bishops at Santo Domingo (1992), ‘New Evangelization, Human Development, Christian Culture’, and in John Paul II’s encyclical on mission, *Redemptoris missio* (1995)—this latter document uses the term ‘inculturation’ quite unselfconsciously. The text speaks of inculturation as one of the ways of mission, alongside personal witness, the formation of local Churches, basic ecclesial communities, and interreligious dialogue. Inculturation ‘means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures’.¹⁴ The International Theological Commission also took up the theme,¹⁵ as did the continental Synods held in the 1990s in their attempts to set out the mission of the various local Churches.¹⁶ The concern was that the Church’s mission should engage new cultures in ways that honoured their distinctiveness and otherness. Vatican II had already stressed that the Church’s activity should affirm human culture, so that,

. . . the good seed that is found in people’s hearts and minds, or in their particular rites and cultures, is not only saved from destruction, but is made whole, raised up, and brought to completion.¹⁷

Beyond these references in official documents, there were also a number of publications exploring what inculturation might mean in different cultural contexts, or discussing theologically the meaning of the concept and the range of its legitimate application.¹⁸ Thus the Dutch theologian working in Rome, Arij Roest-Crollius, defined inculturation as follows:

¹³ *Catechesi tradendae*, n. 53.

¹⁴ *Redemptoris missio*, n. 52, citing the 1985 Extraordinary Assembly, *Final Report*, II D 4.

¹⁵ Commissio Theologica Internationalis, ‘Fides et inculturatio’, *Gregorianum*, 70 (1989), pp. 625-646.

¹⁶ *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995), nn. 59-64; *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999), nn. 21-23.

¹⁷ *Lumen gentium*, n. 17.

¹⁸ See Peter Schineller, *A Handbook of Inculturation* (New York: Paulist, 1990).

The inculturation of the Church is the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal.¹⁹

Here inculturation is seen as involving three phases: encounter, interaction, new synthesis. The Church receives, taking into itself elements from the new culture; at the same time it also changes that culture, actively shaping it.

The most frequently invoked theological basis for inculturation is the Johannine idea of the word becoming flesh in human nature and culture; similarly, the Church takes new flesh in a particular culture. However, attention to other religions has led to a different sort of argument, starting from the theology of creation: all human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, share the same nature, a nature which enables them to develop cultures (and religions). Of their nature, however, the different cultures are open to exchange with each other. Each represents a realisation of what it is to be human; each is endowed with distinctive, creative gifts. As they develop over time, they form together in their relatedness the history of the one human race. One can also argue for inculturation on the basis of a theology of the Holy Spirit: God's Spirit works in the cultures of the world and empowers inculturation.

Some more critical voices have also been raised. They point out that inculturation is always about the interaction of two cultures, not about religion and culture: no culture exists without a religion and no religion exists without a culture.²⁰ Nor is it a matter of putting an indigenous spin on a universally valid theology, but rather of generating a theology out of the situation of the Church in a particular place. Thus

¹⁹ See Arij Roest-Crollius, 'What Is So New About Inculturation?' *Gregorianum*, 59 (1978), pp. 721-738, here p. 735.

²⁰ See for example Paulo Suess, *Evangelizar a partir dos projectos históricos dos outros* (São Paulo: Edições Paulistas, 1995); Felix Wilfred, *From the Dusty Soil: Contextual Reinterpretation of Christianity* (Madras: University of Madras, 1995).

there is now talk both of ‘intercultural theologies’ and of ‘contextual theologies’.²¹

By introducing the idea of inculturation, the Society of Jesus has thus significantly contributed both to the theory and practice of Christian mission. This contribution is all the more relevant as Christianity in late modern Europe becomes—as it were—exculturated, and religious traditions are now sharing the same space in what is called ‘patchwork religiosity’. The idea still needs to be deepened—a process that will require still more intensive networking between various different contexts.

The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice

The question of inculturation was not the only one preoccupying the Jesuits at their 32nd General Congregation: there were also questions about social justice and its relationship to faith. Though the importance of inculturation was recognised in connection with evangelization in different situations, the principal theme was that of the commitment to faith and justice. The Congregation, reading the signs of the times, saw injustice as one of the major obstacles to the spread of faith. It could look back to the previous Congregation (1965-1966), which had taken up Paul VI’s call to engage with atheism, and which had regarded social injustices within the developing countries as a reason why atheistic teachings had spread. In continuity with all this, the 32nd Congregation, meeting almost ten years later, made its fundamental option to see engagement in the struggle for justice as what defined Jesuit identity for our time.²²

This option shaped a decree of the General Congregation that drew wide attention, a decree that described the Jesuit vocation today in terms of ‘the service of faith and the promotion of justice’. This fundamental option was grounded on the claim that love of God and love of neighbour were to be identified:

²¹ See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991); Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991); Clemens Sedmak, *Lokale Theologien und globale Kirche. Eine erkenntnistheoretische Arbeit in praktischer Absicht* (Freiburg: Herder, 2000).

²² Ildefonso Camacho, ‘La opción fe-justicia como clave de evangelización en la Compañía de Jesús y el generalato del Padre Arrupe’, *Manresa*, 62 (1990), pp. 219-246. See GC 31, d. 3, n. 3; GC 32, d.2, n. 3; d. 4, n. 36.

Since evangelization is proclamation of that faith which is made operative in love of others, the promotion of justice is indispensable to it.²³

It also affirmed the need to address structures:

In a world where the power of economic, social and political structures is now appreciated, and the mechanisms and laws governing them are now understood, service according to the Gospel cannot dispense with a carefully planned effort to exert influence on these structures.²⁴

Moreover, it drew on the rhetoric of liberation, which was being developed in this decade for Latin America by such figures as Gustavo Gutiérrez:²⁵

The struggle to transform . . . structures in the interest of the spiritual and material liberation of fellow human beings is intimately connected to the work of evangelization.²⁶

More generally, the decree even reformulated in terms of liberation theology the Society's initial inspiration: 'for the defence and propagation of the faith, and for the rendering of any service to the Church that may be for the glory of God and the common good'. To seek the salvation of our neighbours' souls is, in modern terms, equivalent to 'the total and integral liberation of humanity, leading to participation in the life of God's own self'.²⁷ It was in connection with this vision that the Congregation called for closer collaboration with others, both inside and outside Christianity, for social commitment, and for solidarity with the poor.

A whole range of influential Jesuit theologians in Latin America had addressed the question of the Church's mission within the framework of liberation theology. They had come up with a variety of answers, both reflecting and taking forward different trends current in

²³ GC 32, d. 4, n. 28.

²⁴ GC 32, d. 4, n. 31.

²⁵ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, translated by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (London: SCM, 2001 [1972]).

²⁶ GC 32, d. 4, n. 40.

²⁷ GC 32, d. 2, n. 11.

Latin America at the time. One of them was the Uruguayan, Juan Luis Segundo (1925-1996). His concern was for the liberation of theology—to quote the title of one of his books; he advocated an approach whereby intellectuals became advocates *on behalf of* the poor. Ignacio Ellacuría, the rector of the Jesuit university in El Salvador who was murdered with other Jesuits in 1989, drew on the philosophy of the Spaniard, Xavier Zubiri, and spoke of how the Church had a ‘historically liberating mission’. The Argentinian, Juan Carlos Scannone, insisted that mission needed to be directed towards popular piety: how was this to be understood and transformed in the face of the challenge to bring about a more just society, a culture open to the transcendent, and a movement beyond purely technical rationality? The Brazilian, Marcello de Carvalho Azevedo was also concerned with culture. Against the background of how Brazil was developing he describes the Church’s mission in terms of inculturated, liberating evangelization. All these positions were addressing, in different ways, the relationship between faith and justice; the latter two in particular were also connecting this question with that of culture, and therefore beginning to extend it.²⁸

When the 33rd General Congregation assembled in 1983, its main task was to accept the resignation of Pedro Arrupe, who by now had fallen seriously ill, and to elect a successor, the Dutchman, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach. However, the Congregation took the opportunity to reaffirm the double commitment to faith and justice, while criticizing some one-sided and unbalanced interpretations of it, and some of the conflicts that it had evoked. ‘Neither a disincarnate spiritualism (*sic*) nor a merely secular activism truly serves the integral Gospel message.’ The Congregation lamented

. . . that we have not always recognised that the social justice we are called to is part of that justice of the Gospel which is the embodiment of God’s love and saving mercy.²⁹

This statement pointed forwards to an idea that the next such gathering in 1995 was to take up and deepen: a closer connection

²⁸ Valentín Menéndez Martínez, *La misión de la iglesia: Un estudio sobre el debate teológico y eclesial en América Latina (1955-1992), con atención al aporte de algunos teólogos de la Compañía de Jesús* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 2002).

²⁹ GC 33, d. 1, nn. 33, 32.

between social justice and the justice of the Reign of God (Matthew 6: 33).

Before that meeting, however, the new General Superior, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, had given some clear leads towards a contemporary understanding of Jesuit mission and the double commitment to faith and justice. Addressing all the Provincials in Loyola in 1990, he spoke of evangelization as the Jesuits' major task—it being understood that the promotion of justice was an integral element in this evangelization.³⁰ This statement already contained the essential features of a richer vision of Jesuit identity.

Evangelization Through Justice, Inculturation and Dialogue

The main achievement of the 34th Jesuit General Congregation, which came together in Rome in 1995, was to integrate what had been said previously about inculturation with the idea of the service of faith and the promotion of justice. Moreover, it also brought all these ideas into relationship with the concept of interreligious dialogue. The result was a new understanding of Christian mission.³¹ First, the Congregation rooted the Jesuit missionary vocation theologically in the mission of Christ and of the Church, and connected all this with the Ignatian idea of being on pilgrimage. Secondly, it deepened previous teaching about the connections between faith and justice by drawing both inculturation and interreligious dialogue into the picture. These had, of course, often been mentioned in discussions of Jesuit mission, but had never before been given a central systematic role.³²

It is the introductory decree, 'United with Christ on Mission', which establishes the connections just mentioned between mission, christology, ecclesiology and the Ignatian idea of being on pilgrimage. Later, we are told that the Society of Jesus sees itself

. . . at the crossroads of cultural conflict, social and economic struggles, religious revivalism, and new opportunities for bringing the Good News to peoples all over the world.

³⁰ *Documents of the First Congregation of Provincials* (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1991), pp. 31-33.

³¹ See Carl F. Starkloff, 'Pilgrimage Re-Envisioned: Mission and Culture in the Last Five General Congregations', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 32/5 (November 2000), pp. 1-30.

³² See, for example, GC 32, d. 4, nn. 37, 54.

Specific mention is made of different parts of the world: Africa, Asia and Oceania, Latin America, the post-Communist countries, Western Europe and North America. Mission is thus a complex reality, but its origin is always the same: the crucified and risen Jesus, who issues the call and whose power always accompanies and sustains anything undertaken in his name.

Then the different dimensions of mission are deepened in turn. We begin with a subtle, but significant, specification of the understanding of justice: this is to be understood biblically, in terms of the 'justice of the Kingdom'.³³ In 1975, the concern had been more with social justice as such, even though, following an intervention from Carlo Maria Martini, later to become Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, there was one mention of 'the justice of the gospel' as a fruit of the Spirit.³⁴ The 1995 Congregation took up this biblical hint, and corrected merely economic understandings of justice. The new idea of justice does not simply extend to 'structural changes in the socioeconomic and political orders'; it also 'transcends notions of justice derived from ideology, philosophy, or particular political movements'—notions 'which can never be an adequate expression of the justice of the Kingdom'.³⁵ New dimensions of justice have been discovered here. The most important of these is human rights. But others must also be mentioned: global interdependence; the need for a culture of life in face of such realities as AIDS, terrorism, and abortion; ecological balance; the development of participative forms of social life. A particularly urgent problem was explicitly named: the forced migration of indigenous groups and of refugees, especially in Africa.

Moreover, the connections made between faith and even this deepened version of justice were extended. The Congregation declared:

The aim of our mission (the service of faith) and its integrating principle (faith directed towards the justice of the Kingdom) are dynamically related to the inculturated proclamation of the Gospel and dialogue with other religious traditions as integral dimensions of evangelization.³⁶

³³ GC 34, d. 2, n. 14.

³⁴ GC 32, d. 4, n. 18.

³⁵ GC 34, d. 3, nn. 5, 4.

³⁶ GC 34, d. 2, n. 15.

The service of faith, evangelization, was thus explicitly linked to particular social, cultural and religious contexts. In considering the relationship between mission and culture, it was important to bear in mind not just the large cultures spread over whole continents, but also smaller indigenous cultures, postmodern culture, and—in continuity with Ignatius' preference for the urban³⁷—the kind of synthetic, eclectic cultures characteristic of today's cities. The decree on interreligious dialogue addresses today's rich social, cultural and religious pluralism, and lays particular stress on the different dimensions of dialogue (the dialogues of life, of action, of religious experience, of theological exchange), as well as on the great religions of the world and on religious fundamentalism.

This new account of mission is at one point summarised almost poetically:

No service of faith without
 promotion of justice
 entry into cultures
 openness to other religious experiences.

No promotion of justice without
 communicating faith
 transforming cultures
 collaboration with other traditions.

No inculturation without
 communicating faith with others
 dialogue with other traditions
 commitment to justice.

No dialogue without
 sharing faith with others
 evaluating cultures
 concern for justice.³⁸

Thus the polarity between faith and justice is finally incorporated into a wider understanding that draws the foundational service of faith into the social, cultural, and interreligious spheres. These formulations avoid presenting faith in isolation: on the contrary they insist on respect for

³⁷ Michael Sievernich, 'The Evangelization of the Great City: Ignatius Loyola's Urban Vision', *Review of Ignatian Spirituality*, 80 (1995), pp. 26-45.

³⁸ GC 34, d. 1, n. 19.

the different contexts in which, as 1 Peter puts it, an account of Christian hope is to be given.³⁹

This kind of inculturated account of Christian faith makes, just as it always did, significant personal and psychological demands. Francis Xavier had gone into Japan dressed in silk, even though he did not know the language. Roberto de Nobili had presented himself as a Christian *sanyasin*, following the life-style normal in the high-caste culture of South India. The missionaries of New France had to deal with the brutality of the Iroquois. Dominicus Mayer, from the Black Forest in Germany, had moved among the Mojos in the Peruvian Jesuit province as ‘mother, doctor and surgeon, teacher and farmer, cook and bridge-builder’, as he put it in a letter on July 20 1727.⁴⁰ Similar initiatives are required in our own day, when indeed all Christians have a vocation to spread the faith. Inculturation requires us to witness with our very lives, whether we are in the tribal cultures of Africa, in the postmodern societies of Europe, in post-communist China or in the religious pluralism of India. Then justice requires of our witness a preferential option for the poor; sensitivity to culture requires us selflessly to risk ourselves within worlds that are unfamiliar; respect for other religions requires us to be able to live and work together. Amid all this, witness to the gospel is always liable to call forth rejection, persecution and even martyrdom.

The present Jesuit General, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, has subsequently confirmed this new understanding of service to the gospel. And it is quite clear that this conception of mission is of relevance to a far wider circle than simply the Society of Jesus. It has enormous potential to stimulate new forms of spirituality and vocation, and to enrich theological discourse about the Church’s mission.

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³⁹ 1 Peter 3:15.

⁴⁰ Dominicus Mayer, *Neu aufgerichteter Mayerhof, das ist: Schwere Arbeiten und reife Seelen-Früchten, neuerdings gesammelt in neu aufgerichteten Missionen in America* (Augsburg: Bernhard Homodeus Mayer, 1747), p. 170.