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# Director's Desk

The Spring issue of the *Bulletin* offers our readers two conferences that look at the various models of mission that have existed since the beginning of the spread of the Gospel. In 2010 we will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910. In many respects this conference introduced us to the beginnings of the modern ecumenical movement and the concern for the spread of the Gospel to all peoples. Just as then, so now the churches are confronted with the serious handicap that the disunity of Christians poses to the ministry of the Proclamation of the Good News to all peoples in all cultures.

Two extraordinary conferences were given by the Jesuit, James Duncan. The first deals with an ancient model of mission used by the Ancient Church of the East, sometimes referred to as the Nestorian church. What is interesting for our reflection is the method that this church used in evangelizing China, the sub continent of India and the far reaches of the extreme Orient.

The second lecture that Prof. Duncan offered dealt with the Chinese rites question and the controversy surrounding Matteo Ricci. The fact that the solution arrived at then, has not really helped us in the issues that the churches face today in the vast territories of the Orient and the spread of the Gospel in this area of the world. The issues raised are also relevant to doing mission in other parts of the world since there are not only theological questions posed but also the very delicate anthropological and cultural ones as well.

In addition to these lectures we will publish in the next *Bulletin* the texts of Dr. Jane Williams entitled "Leading Women. Some Reflections on Women, Leadership and the Anglican Communion" and the text given at this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity celebration by Dom Mark Sheridan entitled "The Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches 2004-2008".

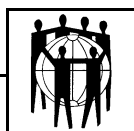
The Spring 2009 cycle of conferences includes the following: "Catholic-Lutheran Dialogues 1965-2005: An Extraordinary Historical Process with Significant Results and Still Remaining Challenges" by Dr. Gü nther Gassmann; "The Hebrew Bible, Human Rights and Interreligious Understanding" by Rabbi Jack Bemporad and "Dialogue and Proclamation. Reflection and Orientations on Inter-religious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" by James Duncan. In addition the **Centro Pro Unione** hosted the launch of the book edited by William Rusch entitled *The Pontificate of Benedict XVI: Its Premises and Promises*.

Lastly, the latest up-date of the Bibliography of theological dialogues is printed in this issue of the *Bulletin* which concludes with a cumulative index of articles published from 1999-2008.

Check our web site for up to date information on the Centro's activities and realtime information on the theological dialogues.

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James F. Puglisi, sa  
Director





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Centro Conferences

## **The Nestorian Missions The Spread of the Gospel in Asia from the V to the XV Centuries**

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(Conference given at the **Centro Pro Unione**, Thursday, 6 November 2008)

### ***The Assyrian Missions***<sup>1</sup>

The Assyrian Church, or the Church of the East, as it is usually referred to by its members, is often called the Nestorian Church by those who do not belong to it, but, in fact, Nestorius, who was the Archbishop of Constantinople for a short time in the middle of the V century, had nothing to do with its establishment as an independent body and was never a member of it. A Church struggling for survival today, it has the distinction of being one of the most successful missionary churches in history. The Assyrian Patriarchate guided and directed this extraordinary effort for over nine centuries, which saw the Church spread from the Red Sea to the Pacific Ocean and from Siberia to Indonesia. It never used force or constraint to propagate itself. It simply moved along the trade routes, over land and sea, from the Middle East to East Asia, serving small Assyrian communities established by traders at various point along the way, and when it moved into new territory, its policy was to establish a monastery and open a school

and a dispensary to serve the local population, thus contributing to the cultural and economic advancement of the whole area as well as serving the health care needs of the people.

### ***The Independence of the Assyrian Church***

It is a common misconception that the Assyrian Church was excommunicated for heresy and thus severed from the rest of the Church at the Council of Ephesus, the third Ecumenical Council, in 431 AD. This is completely false. It was for purely political, not theological, reasons that the Assyrian Church voluntarily severed its ties with the See of Antioch, the third of the original three Patriarchates, Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, the very city where Jesus' followers were first called 'Christians.'

The separation was decided as a means of defense. We commonly think of the Church spreading throughout the Roman Empire, giving rise to two forms of Church life, the Roman and the Greek. What is lacking in this picture is the extraordinary spread of the Gospel outside the Roman Empire, beyond its eastern border, an evangelisation effort directed by the See of Antioch. Antioch was a multi-lingual city. Latin was the language of the bureaucracy, Greek the language of culture, Syriac, or Aramaic, was the language of commerce. The communities of the Faithful were generally formed according to the language their language preference, either Greek or Syriac. In the cities one found both types of communities, but in the rural areas the communities were generally Syriac speaking, and, as one

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<sup>1</sup> The information presented in this article was taken from the following sources: A. ATIYA, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1968); C. BAUMER, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006); J.C. ENGLAND, "The Earliest Christian Communities in South East and North East Asia," *East Asian Pastoral Revue*, 1988/2; D. HICKLEY, *The First Christians in China: An Outline History and Some Considerations concerning the Nestorians in China during the Tang Dynasty* (London: China Study Project, 1980); J.N.D. KELLY, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York /Hagerstown San Francisco /London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978). Material in the public domain from various internet sources.

moved further East, Greek speaking communities became a rarity and finally disappeared altogether.

The Church had moved rapidly beyond the eastern borders of the Roman Empire. By the II c. at the latest, there were Christian communities solidly established on the south western shore of the southern tip of India, in what is today the State of Kerala. These communities used Syriac in their Liturgy for many centuries until it was finally replaced by the local language, Malayalam, and even today clerical studies there include Syriac in their curricula. It is not at all strange that the Gospel should have arrived so far so quickly. We know that the Apostles and the first missionaries directed themselves first of all to the Jewish communities of the Diaspora, and there were Jewish communities established in the region already in the III c. BC. There was a simple reason for this. The conquest of Israel by the Babylonians in 486 BC created waves of emigrants fleeing the conquering army, as the Babylonians were to carry off into exile in Babylonia much of the upper and middle classes of the population. Many felt that if they were to submit to exile, it would be in a place of their own choosing. Some fled south into Arabia and on into Ethiopia, and this gave origin to the Falashas, the Jews of Ethiopia who have created serious problems of integration in the State of Israel because their form of Judaism has little evolved beyond what it was at the time they left the Promised Land, and the later Rabbinical Judaism is totally foreign to them. In their flight from the forces of Babylonia, others simply followed the sea trade route to the East, which passed the southern coast of India and lead on to China. Landing on the south western coast of India, many decided to stay and built there new lives for themselves and their children. They were to remain an important presence and economic force in India for centuries, well into the XX c. In fact, shortly after the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, an entire village in Kerala, composed only of Jews, emigrated to Israel, thus reversing a movement that had taken place some twenty-four centuries earlier.

Syriac Christians moved along the land trade routes as well, and, as we shall see, by the V c. they had already established communities in what is now Afghanistan, and even further east in Central Asia. These Christians, who lived to the east of the Roman Empire, were citizens of the Persian Empire, and as such they had to face two serious problems. First, the religion of the Persian Empire was Zoroastrianism, for which Christianity was a serious competitor, so Christians therefore had to deal with not only the enmity of the majority of the populace, but also with varying degrees and intensity of persecution as non-conformists, that is

to say as non-Zoroastrians. Secondly, the Persian and Roman Empires were constantly waging war on each other, and as Christians, the Assyrians professed a major religion of the Roman Empire, which in itself made them suspect, identified them so to speak with the enemy. Matters became significantly worse when, on 27 February, 380, by a decree of the Roman Emperor, Theodosius I, Christianity was elevated to the status of the official state religion of the Empire. Thus, with a stroke of the pen, Christians in the Persian Empire were now looked upon as subversive agents of a foreign power against which the Persian government was frequently engaged in military campaigns. Christians thus became practically enemies of the state. Suspicion and surveillance, often combined with persecution, made life difficult and hazardous.

Throughout the III and IV c., in the Sassanian Empire persecution of Christians was a common occurrence, and at times it was particularly intense. Ten of thousands of Christians paid for their Faith with their lives, and the Acts of the Persian Martyrs makes it plain that many even actively sought martyrdom as the best means of imitating Jesus and offering their lives in sacrifice as He had done. It is also clear that the intention of the executioners was not simply to dispatch the victims to the other world, but to prolong their suffering by making their deaths as slow and as painful as possible. But because of a number of factors, towards the end of the IV c. the persecutions tended to taper off and at times cease entirely. But one could never know when they might start up again at the whim of the authorities. It is in the light of this burdensome and dangerous situation that the following events are to be seen.

In the year 424 AD, Dadisho, the Metropolitan of Ctesiphon, presided over a synod that would change forever the history of the Church of the East. The bishops decided to sever their ties with the Patriarchate of Antioch, from which they had depended and to which they had looked since the very beginning, and to run their own affairs. They thus effectively declared their independence not only from the See of Antioch, but, far more importantly, from the Roman Empire. This decision brought them two advantages. First, they no longer had to obtain the approval of Antioch for the decisions they took, which greatly expedited the governance of the Church in the whole area east of the Euphrates. Secondly, they could no longer be looked upon as agents of the Roman Empire, an accusation that had often been used against them in the past. Now finally free of the tutelage of Antioch, they would deploy their remarkable evangelizing talent to the lands of the East, right up to the Pacific Ocean.

### ***The Theology of the Church of the East***

One final point needs to be clarified before we turn to the missionary efforts of this remarkable Church. Already independent for seven years before the Council of Ephesus in 431, it sent no representatives to that council, held inside the Roman Empire. Nestorius, a theologian of the Antiochean school was condemned by the council for heresy because he preferred the title Χριστοτόκος, Mother of Christ, to Θεοτόκος, Mother of God. As the newly appointed Archbishop of the Byzantine capital, he was intent on eradicating heresy from Constantinople. In so doing, he wished only to stress the duality of nature in the one person Jesus Christ, fully God and yet fully, completely human as well. His condemnation was the result of powerful manipulation of the royal court and certain council fathers by Cyril of Alexandria, who stoutly defended the point of view of the Alexandrian school, which emphasized the unity of person in Christ rather than the duality of nature. In 486, the Church of the East officially accepted the theology of Nestorius as their own, by which they simply confirmed their own Christological tradition of Antioch, the most well known representatives of which, besides Nestorius, are Theodore of Mopsuestia, probably one of Nestorius' own teachers, Theodoret of Cyrhus, and Ibas of Edessa. We cannot concern ourselves here with the niceties of the positions which distinguish these two schools in demonstrating the orthodoxy of Nestorius, who was unjustly condemned as a heretic at Ephesus. Suffice it to note, that in Rome on 11.XI.1994, there took place an official meeting at the highest level of the Church of Rome, in the person of Pope John-Paul II, and the Church of the East, represented by its Patriarch/Catholicos, Mar Denha IV. That August encounter produced a solemn official declaration, confirming the identity of the Faith of the two Churches. In other words, in the authoritative opinion of the Roman Church, the Church of the East is not heretical and is thus an integral part of the one Church of Christ. And this confirms the orthodoxy and the rehabilitation of the much – and unjustly – maligned Nestorius, whose theology has been that of the Church of the East for over fifteen centuries.

### ***The Development and the Expansion of the Church of the East***

#### **ARABIA**

We know that in 225 AD there was already a bishop in Qatar. After the independence of the Church of the East, in 424, it was able to organize its apostolate there more efficiently. At the beginning of the V c., there were already six bishops in the peninsula, and in the VI

c., the Christian King of Yemen constructed a cathedral church in the capital, Sana'a, for the bishop of the city. A synod was held in the peninsula in 676 AD, during the reign of the Catholicos Georgius, 660-680 AD, but after that we hear of no more there. In 779 and 823 AD there are still traces of Christian Bedouins, but their life was difficult before the advancing wave of Islam. We recall that at the death of Muhammad in 632 AD, Islam was already solidly entrenched in the central part of the peninsula, and he is supposed to have said that in Arabia, there should be no religion other than Islam. His followers saw to it that his wish was carried out, and by the end of the IX c., Christianity had disappeared from the region.

#### **IN THE MESOPOTAMIAN HEARTLAND**

In the Empire itself, which in the V c. included all of what is now Iraq as well the north eastern part of today's Syria, the Church of the East was well organized. As of 410 AD, there were six metropolitan Sees: Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the Patriarchal See, Beit Lapat (Gondeshapur), Nisibis, Prat de Maishan (Basra), Arbela, and Karka of Beit Selok (Kirkuk). Each of these metropolitan Sees was responsible for from six to twelve separate dioceses, so by the beginning of the V c., the Church had already attained significant development. Even if we take the low figure for the number of dioceses in a Metropolitan See, it would have had at least 36 dioceses when it declared itself independent of the "Western Fathers," i.e. the See of Antioch, as well as the clergy necessary to staff the parishes of each diocese.

Prior to the independence of the Church in Persia, there existed two important centres of theological study, Nisibis, today Nusaybin in southern Turkey, and, further to the west, Edessa, today Urfa, also in Turkey. When, in 363 AD, the Persians gained control of Nisibis, the school was transferred to Edessa, where it was known as the school of the Persians and, under the leadership of Ephrem the Syrian, soon became well-known far and wide. With the independence of the Church of the East, however, and in particular after the condemnation of Antiochian theology at the Council of Chalcedon, the Assyrian theologians returned to Nisibis, where the school, organised along monastic lines, continued to prosper and to provide the Church with the clergy and the monks it needed to serve it at home and to animate the missionary effort that carried the Gospel eastward to the Pacific Ocean.

#### **SOCOTRA**

We are fortunate in that not only were Assyrian merchants great voyagers, but so were the monks. Most of them, of course, followed the land trade routes and served the communities that were scattered the length of them. Some, however, took to the sea, and it is to one of them that we owe precious information regarding the Church not only in Socotra, but also in lands farther to the east such as Sri Lanka. This famous traveller is known to history as Cosmos Indicopleustes, which simply means Cosmos, who sailed to the Indies. He made a long voyage lasting five years, from 520 to 525 AD, and it is he who, coming ashore on this island some 350 km. due south of Yemen and about 200 km. due east of the Horn of Africa, provided us with our first information regarding the existence of Assyrian communities on that island. Further, patriarchal records speak of the consecration of a bishop for Socotra by the Catholicos Enos, or Annush, 873-884 AD, in 877 AD, and again in 1057 AD by the Catholicos Sabar Ishu, or Soreshu, III, who reigned from 1057 till 1072 AD. Finally, we have the report of the presence of Kyriakos, Bishop of Socotra, at the election and consecration in 1281 AD of the Turkish-Mongol Catholicos Yahballaha, or Yoalaha, III, 1281-1317 AD. Thus we have firm evidence of the presence of Assyrian communities in Socotra from the beginning of the VI to the end of the XIII c. These communities were obviously there for some time before the traveller Cosmas found them, and they no doubt remained there well after the return of Mar Kyriakos after the consecration of Yahballaha III.

#### CENTRAL ASIA

The Church of the East had early carried the Gospel to Central Asia. The Synod of Marktadt in 424, indeed, was attended by bishops from as far away as Merv, in today's Turkmenistan, and Herat, located in western Afghanistan, which means that the Church had already established itself in the area in the IV c. at the latest. Both cities quickly became metropolitan sees, and Merv, in fact, was right on the famed Silk Road itself, that vital lifeline of commerce that linked the lands of the Mediterranean, passing through Central Asia, with China in the Far East. And it was precisely this highway of commerce that was travelled by countless Christian merchants who carried not only their merchandise but also their Faith to Central Asia, China, and even, as we shall see, to Japan. At the same time, monastic life flourished in the Church of the East, and it was, in fact, largely monk-priests that travelled the Silk Road eastward to carry the Gospel to the lands of Central Asia, China and the surrounding countries. Whole groups of

monks were sent off, often accompanied as well by lay persons, to establish in the settlements along the route to the East communities which, in addition to a church, offered as well a school and a dispensary for the needs of the local people, and the establishment of these monastic communities attracted and favoured the settlement of varied civil populations consisting of merchants, artisans, farmers, teachers, doctors, etc. These settlements, in turn, served as bases for bringing the Gospel further into the surrounding regions. Thus, the missionaries brought the Gospel not only to the Assyrians living in the various settlements, but by their good works they revealed it in a practical way by serving all, Christian and non-Christian alike, thereby contributing to raise and enhance the quality of life of the surrounding populations.

To give a few examples of this extraordinary effort, towards the end of the V c. an Assyrian delegation, consisting of a bishop, four priests, and two laymen set off for Turkestan where they subsequently worked with considerable success among the local population. In 781 AD, a king of the Turkish tribes requested that the Catholicos Timothy, 778-820, send him a bishop since he and all his subjects had become Christians. In response, the Catholicos sent a group of 80 monks and named a metropolitan for Samarkand as well as bishops for Bukhara and Tashkent. It is interesting and instructive to note that the Assyrians understood well the value of the implantation of monastic life for the success of their missions. Further east, in the region of Lake Baikal in Siberia, there were numerous conversions in the X-XI c. among the Turkic tribes of the area, Tartars, Keraites, Uighurs (today almost entirely Moslem), Naimans, and Merkites. For example, in 1077, Abdishô, the Metropolitan of Merv, informed the Catholicos in Seleucia, that the king of the Keraites, together with 200,000 subjects, had accepted Christianity. Again, the famous Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, 1254-1324, found an Assyrian Christian community in Karakorum, where they had settled and built a church. Further, archaeological excavations in southern Siberia have found Christians cemeteries of the late Middle Ages, with tombstones bearing Syriac inscriptions and dating from 1249 to 1345. These inscriptions reveal a community of astounding ethnic diversity, Chinese, Uighurs, Mongols, Kashgars, Persians, etc., all united in one community of Faith that testifies both to the universality of the Christian message and the open spirit of the Assyrian Church.

In the XIII and XIV c., however, two events would destroy this harmony. First arrived in the area Latin missionaries, mainly Dominicans and Franciscans, who

immediately began to create difficulties for the Assyrian Christians, whom they found almost everywhere they went, for they considered them to be heretics, that is, traitors to the true Faith, mainly because their customs and liturgy were so different from those of the Roman Church. The final blow, however, came with the brutal, indeed murderous, military campaigns of the fanatic Timur Leng, that is, Timur the Lame, known as Tamerlane in the West, 1336-1405, who, while professing to be a Moslem nevertheless massacred Moslem and Christian alike, all he found on his bloody way of destruction, sparing only those whom he considered useful for his purpose of rebuilding the Mongol Empire, usually artisans and artists, whom he carried back as slaves to Samarkand. While considered to be a patron of the arts, for instance, he commissioned buildings in Samarkand which still stand today, his demonic brutality, warped sense of pride, e.g. he commanded pyramids to be constructed by piling together the heads of those whom he and his soldiers had killed, and destructive frenzy destroyed the Assyrian communities of Central Asia and so put an end to a magnificent success story of carrying the Gospel to all peoples. History, indeed, repeats itself. It was also Islam that put an end to the flourishing Christian communities of North Africa, of which St. Augustine was the greatest representative.

#### CHINA

The first official mission of the Church of the East to China took place during the Patriarchate of Yeshuyab II, 628-643 AD, when in 635 AD a delegation headed by the monk-bishop A Lo Pen (Abraham) was received by the Emperor Tai Tsung in the ancient capital Chang-an, today's Xi-an. The importance that the Emperor attached to this mission is evident from the fact that he sent an imperial palace officer to meet the delegation at the western frontier of the empire and escort its members safely to the capital, Chang'an, one of the four ancient capitals of the Chinese Empire, today's Xi-an. From this historic event, it is obvious that there had been an Assyrian presence in China already in the latter part of the VI c., at the latest. For it would have taken some time for the first Assyrian merchants on the scene to establish themselves, found a community and develop, receive reinforcements from the homeland, including clergy to serve the faithful, and thus become a presence important enough to attract the attention and the interest of the authorities, who would then report to the Emperor. The Emperor, in fact, was interested enough to request that a delegation be sent to him which would bring him the Christian Scriptures and service

books, that he might have them examined to determine the exact nature of this religion.

The members of the delegation were treated with all due respect, and the Emperor commanded the Scriptures to be translated into Chinese that he might form an opinion regarding the merits of this doctrine. He was pleased by what he discovered, so much so indeed that he issued an imperial edict allowing the predication of the "Resplendent Religion" throughout the empire, and in 638 AD, three years after the arrival of the delegation, he commanded the construction at imperial expense of a monastery in the capital for Bishop A Lo Pen and twenty monks.

The mother Church continued to send monks and priests to serve the expanding Assyrian community in China, which, in 781, erected in Shanxi province, in the north of China to the west of Beijing, a large and elegant stone monument, over 2 m. in height, on which was engraved an explanation of the Christian Faith in Chinese, employing to that end a terminology that had meaning for and was understandable by the Chinese themselves. Reading this text, it is indeed interesting to see how the Assyrians instinctively adapted their discourse to the mentality and conceptual world of their intended audience, something that later missionaries of the Gospel were either unable or unwilling to do. And while the Latin missionaries of the XVIII and XIX c. built gothic style churches in China, and the Russian missionaries built their churches in the traditional Russian style, the remnants of the Assyrian presence in China, uncovered by various western as well as Chinese archaeological expeditions, are in the traditional Chinese style of the epoch. For instance, the bell tower of one of the ancient monasteries is a typical Chinese pagoda.

At the foot of this great stone monument, one finds chiselled into the stone in the Syriac script 128 names of leaders of the Assyrian community, mostly priests and monks, along with a Metropolitan Bishop, Adam. With time and neglect, the monument fell, or was toppled, on its side and was eventually covered over by earth and vegetation. It was discovered in 1625, over eight centuries after its erection, by peasants working in the field. Notice of the find was brought to the residence of the Jesuits in Beijing, who immediately undertook to examine the monument, preserve it, and translate its text, which bears eloquent witness to the spread of Christianity in ancient China and to the good sense of the leaders of that Christian community which instinctively applied principles in the explanation and preaching of their Faith that will only be recognised by the Roman Church in the second half of the XX c. and given a specific name: inculturation. The success of their

enterprise was significant. At the end of the X c., Assyrian communities, with their churches and monasteries, were established in ten of the sixteen provinces of the land.

In 845 AD the Emperor Wu Tsung began a severe persecution of the “foreign religions” in China, Buddhism and Christianity. Of course, given their greater number, the Buddhists suffered proportionately greater. One speaks of 40,000 Buddhist monks and nuns turned out of their monasteries and constrained either to marry, that is, to follow the Chinese way, or to emigrate, not an easy choice for the average monk or nun, ill equipped to confront the multiple difficulties of life in emigration. The Assyrians suffered a similar fate, most of their churches and monasteries being destroyed. Some fled the country, while many simply went underground and waited for the tempest to pass, a common tactic in time of persecution. Thus, the “Resplendent Religion” approved by the imperial government two centuries earlier, found itself seriously diminished, but it did not disappear.

In 942 AD, a certain Abu Dulaf, of Bukhara in Central Asia, travelled in China and reported finding Assyrian Christians and churches in various cities of the country. In 1093 AD the Catholicos Sabaryeshu III appointed a bishop, George, to Sestan in China, and subsequently transferred him to the north of the country. In 1266 AD, it was recorded that a certain Yohanan, Bishop of Hami, an ancient city in the north western Chinese province of Xinkiang which still exists today with a population of some 500,000, was present in Seleucia at the consecration of the Catholicos Denha I, who governed the Church from 1266 to 1281. In 1278 AD we have a report of three churches in Yangzhou, in the costal province of Jiangsu, to the north of Shanghai. And finally, it is recorded that a certain “Mar Sergius,” most certainly an Assyrian, the governor of this same province of Jiangsu from 1278-1280, was elevated to membership in the imperial household of Kublai Khan, the first Mongol Emperor of China and the founder of the Yuan dynasty.

From 1279 till 1368 AD the Mongols held power in China, and, as they were favourably disposed toward Christians, the Assyrian Church flourished there once again. “Mar Sergius,” whom we just mentioned, had seven monasteries constructed in his province, and it goes without saying that he certainly would not have done so had there not been a need for them, and this need speaks eloquently of the quality of the religious life of the community that would inspire so many to consecrate themselves to God in the monastic life. Some of the Mongol Khans took Christian wives, and so their

sons had Christian mothers. Indeed, the mother of Kublai and his brother, Hulagu, who conquered Persia in 1258 AD, was herself a Christian, and Hulagu had a Christian wife. Thus, under Mongol rule, the Christians in Persia enjoyed a time of peace and prosperity, which was a definite improvement over life under Moslem rule.

In the Yuan dynasty, founded by the Mongols, the capital, Khanbaliq, today’s Beijing, was a metropolitan see. Monastic life, as everywhere with the Assyrians, was in honour there as well. One of the monks was a certain Rabban Bar Saumâ, an Uighur, born about 1225 AD, who, at the age of 24 received the monastic tonsure from the Metropolitan himself, Mar Giwargis, and, after first living for seven years as a hermit, then went to live at the Monastery of the Holy Cross, some 70 km. SW of Beijing. A few years later, a young man named Markos, an Öngüt, the son of an archdeacon, while still in his teens presented himself to Bar Saumâ asking to become his disciple. Bar Saumâ accepted the young man, who was professed as a full-fledged monk in 1263 by the Metropolitan himself. Somewhere around 1275, these two, master and disciple, decided to undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. They got as far as Maragha, a city in what is today NW Iran, built by Hulagu Khan to be the capital of the Il-Khanate, that is to say the Mongol Empire in Central Asia, but because of the dangerous and unsettled situation farther to the West and the South, they could not continue on to the Holy Land. It was there that Mar Dinha I, the Assyrian Catholicos, had taken up residence. He advised them that it was not the moment to attempt visiting the Holy Land. In fact, the Catholicos had other plans for them. He proposed to make Markos the metropolitan for the Öngüt region of northern China, just north of the Great Wall, and Rabban Bar Saumâ his Vicar General, and to send them back to China. As they could not return home immediately because of various wars and armed conflicts going on in Central Asia at the time, they took up residence in a monastery near Mosul. Shortly thereafter, however, Mar Dinha died, and the synod held to elect his successor chose the young Markos to be the new Catholicos. There is no doubt that the young man had all the necessary qualities to recommend him for this high position, but of equal importance was the fact of his origins. He was a Turkic Mongol, and the rulers of the land at the time were precisely Mongols, both in Central Asia and in China. Even in those far off times, it seems, it did no harm to be politically correct. He chose the name Yahballaha III, and guided the Church wisely and skilfully for 37 years, from 1280 to 1317. He was an excellent Catholicos, but he had to



guide the Church in a time of political upheaval and uncertainty, and he was twice imprisoned and saved from death in both instances only through the intervention in his favour of persons highly placed and able to influence the Il-Khan. During his reign, there were no less than seven Grand Khans in power, and it is reported that he even baptised one or the other of them. His reign was one of the most fruitful and successful in the history of the Church.

In 1287, at the request of the reigning Il-Khan, Arghun, for a suitable ambassador for Europe, Yahballaha III recommended his monastic mentor, Rabban Bar Saumâ, who was then sent on a diplomatic mission to the West. The Khan wished to form an alliance with the Christian powers of Europe against the Mamelukes in Egypt, who had overthrown the Ayyubids and were seeking to expand their power northward and eastward. As an incentive to such an alliance, the Khan offered his conversion to Christianity. Bar Saumâ approached the Byzantine Emperor, Andronikos II in Constantinople, Pope Honorius IV in Rome, the French King, Philip IV, and the English King, Edward I, whom he found in Gascony in the SW of France at the time. Interestingly, while there he celebrated the Divine Liturgy for Edward and gave him Communion. In Rome, he attended all the services of Holy Week in St. Peter's, on Palm Sunday received Holy Communion from the hand of the Pope himself, and at the request of the Pope, celebrated Divine Liturgy in his presence. It would seem that at the time, the anathemas cast against Nestorius in 451 AD and those cast against the Antiochean theologians Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrillus, and Ibas of Edessa, at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 AD, were no longer in honor in the West, even at the highest levels.

His mission, however, was not crowned with success. Europe's leaders, whose forces were exhausted from nearly two centuries of Crusades, could not be won over for another alliance to travel again to the Near East to do battle against the formidable Mamelukes, even if the alliance partners were to be the powerful and mighty Mongols. So Arghun remained a Moslem, and Bar Saumâ returned home to live in Baghdad until his death in 1294 AD.

In the XIII c., two Italians, the Franciscan Giovanni di Monte Corvino and the explorer/adventurer Marco Polo reported contacts with Assyrian Christians in China, and there is mention of three Assyrian churches in the port city of Yangzhou in the eastern province of Jiangsu. But these reports are not particularly remarkable since they all concern the period of the Mongol Yuan dynasty, which was well-disposed toward Chris-

tianity. Unfortunately, however, the XIV also saw the arrival in China of Latin missionaries, mostly Franciscans and Dominicans, whose attitude toward, criticism of, and disputes with the Assyrians for their liturgical usages, quite different from those of the Latins, and for their Christological beliefs, considered by the Latins to be heretical, was detrimental not only to the Assyrian Church but to the reputation of Christianity in general, revealing discord and acrimony rather than the charity and goodwill proclaimed in the Gospel.

In any case, the end was not far off. In 1368 AD the Mongols would lose power, and their Yuan Dynasty would be replaced by the Chinese Ming Dynasty, founded by the Hans, the largest ethnic group in China, whose power would last until 1644. The disappearance of the Assyrian Church in China was due, however, perhaps less to the new rulers – they had, in fact welcomed the first Jesuit missionaries to China – than to the destruction of the Church in Central Asia, where it was debilitated to the point of extinction by the barbaric and murderous policies of Timur Leng. With the new situation in Central Asia, communication between the mother Church in Mesopotamia and the Church in China was made difficult in the extreme, and the expedition of reinforcements was now practically out of the question.

Whatever may be the multiple and complex causes of the decline, by the end of the XIV c. the Assyrian Church in China became extinct for all practical purposes. It was a sad and, indeed, ignominious end to a magnificent effort of Evangelization that had born much fruit and endured for nine centuries. It was unique in the history of the Church not only in its scope and its successes, but also by the fact that the messengers of the Gospel at no time arrived on the coattails of conquering armies, such as had often been the case in other areas of the world, and, indeed, in China itself in the XVIII and XIX c., when the activities of the missionaries were facilitated and protected by the foreign powers that had divided the country up amongst themselves.

Nevertheless, the Assyrian missions to Central Asia and China are and will remain an excellent example of how the Church should conduct its efforts at evangelization, with openness and profound and genuine respect for the culture of the people to whom it is carrying the Gospel, using as far as possible both the vocabulary and way of thinking of the host people to reveal to them the message of Christ, which, by its very nature, is universal and not tied to any particular culture. Notwithstanding the fact that it first appeared among us in the cultural world of the Jews, it rapidly expanded beyond that world to reach out to all of humanity.

#### JAPAN AND KOREA

Just as the Japanese culture owes much to what it received from China, including its writing system, Japan also received Christian influence and, indeed, Christianity itself from the Assyrians in China. Mar Aprem, the Assyrian Metropolitan of India and a noted Church historian, relates that in 664 AD, that is to say less than thirty years after the arrival at the Imperial Court in China of the first official Assyrian delegation to the Chinese government, the Japanese Emperor promulgated an edict granting the Assyrians the free practice on their religion in Japan. From the same period we have notice of Assyrian churches in Sakoshi and in Kadona, near Kyoto in central Japan, and of a leprosarium in the same area, in Nara, the capital of Japan in the VIII c.

From the official chronicles of Japan, the *Nihonshiki*, we learn that in 736 AD a delegation of the Assyrians, among the members of which was to be found a certain Limitsi, a physician, was received by the Emperor Shomu, and it appears that this Limitsi then became physician to the imperial house. The Assyrians also seem to have made the best of impressions on the Empress Komyo, who, perhaps, embraced Christianity herself and in any case undertook the construction of a hospital, a leprosarium, and a home for orphans, institutions common among the Assyrians but which were unknown to Buddhism at the time. There is also notice of her great-grandchild having become a nun, so it is clear that the imperial house was in no way opposed to the Assyrian Church.

In 1165 AD, the Koryuji Buddhist temple was constructed in Kyoto on the foundation stones of a previously existing Assyrian church, on which are to be seen inscriptions that are like those found on the stele of Hsi Gnan Fu, the great Assyrian monument in China, some of which refer to "Dai Qin," i.e. the Assyrian Church in China, and others to "Uzu Masu." In the *Nihonshiki* there is also preserved a hymn: "O Lord, Our Uzu Masu, Lord of all the earth." Uzu Masu, of course, is simply the Japanese version of the Syriac "Jesu Messiah." Two beams from the ancient Horyuji temple are preserved in the Tokyo Museum, and on them are crosses and inscriptions which seem to be in Syriac. And in the Nishi Honganji temple in Kyoto is kept an ancient manuscript bearing the title "The Lord of the Universe's discourse on Almsgiving," which appears to be taken from the Sermon on the Mount and other passages of St. Matthew's Gospel. In addition, in central Japan there are found ancient wells on the stones of which can still be seen crosses. And at the annual guild festivals in central Japan songs were still

sung in the XX c. in a language that was no longer understood, but which careful attention revealed to be simply the Japanese pronunciation of Syriac words.

Thus, there is much evidence of an early presence of the Assyrians in Japan, all of which supports the claims of Mar Aprem, that in 664 AD, the Japanese Emperor granted the Assyrians the right to practice their Faith. As regards Korea, no archaeological evidence has as yet been found of Assyrian churches, but a number of crosses and seals with Syriac inscriptions have been unearthed, which supports the contention that the Assyrians were also there at an early date, something quite natural considering the location of Korea between China and Japan. The Assyrian Church would finally disappear from Japan for essentially the same reasons as it did in China: simply being cut off from the Mother Church in Mesopotamia.

#### TIBET

This little known and less traveled land, commonly associated with Lamaism, was nevertheless part of the Assyrian world. At the end of the VIII c., the reigning Catholicos Timothy wrote to a friend regarding the consecration of a metropolitan for Tibet, but did not specify where the See was to be located. Possible locations at the time would have been Tanktse, in western Tibet, or Miran, to the north. Both towns were on the Silk Road and had Christian communities. Dunhuang, further to the east and also on the Silk Road is also a possibility, considering that it was part of the Tibetan Empire from 781 to 848 AD, precisely at the time that the Catholicos wrote.

Dunhuang is also famous for the many caves in its vicinity which were used for storing manuscripts, and there, in Cave 17, sealed at the beginning of the XI c., archaeologists have recovered tens of thousands of them, most of them Buddhist, but also a few are Assyrian, including the so-called "Jesus Sutras," some of which are in Chinese and some in Tibetan. One, in Tibetan, speaks of "God Jesus, the Messiah, the judge at the right hand of God." Another speaks of the sending of a Sogdian trader, in all likelihood a Christian, and an Assyrian monk as ambassadors to the King of Tibet in 825/826 AD.

In any case, it is clear that if the Catholicos intended to send a metropolitan to Tibet, it was because there were Assyrian communities there, with their priests and churches, which needed the presence of a bishop, indeed, it indicates that a significant number of Christians were in the land at the time. In addition, in Tanktse, which was part of the Tibetan Empire from 644 to 842 AD and which has been mentioned above as a

possible site for a metropolitan see, eight Assyrian crosses have been found carved on a massive boulder together with inscriptions in Tokharian, Sogdian, Chinese, Arabic, and Tibetan.

Apart from these concrete and eloquent witnesses to Assyrian presence in Tibet, definite similarities between lamaistic and Christian ritual have been noted, namely, the use in both cults of candles, bells, holy water, censers, rosaries, mites, copes, pastoral crooks, etc., as well as litanies and chants to the "Mother of God." However too much should not be made of this, for most of these things are in general use in a great variety of religious cults.

#### SRI LANKA (TAPROBANE)

The passage at the court of Constantine the Great was recorded of a certain Theophilus from Ceylon, i.e. Sri Lanka, who was subsequently consecrated bishop in 365 AD. The monk/traveler Cosmas, whose long sea voyage to Southeast Asia from 520 to 525 AD was mentioned above in connection with Socotra, also reported the presence in Sri Lanka of an Assyrian community with its priest and deacon. But in addition there is concrete evidence as well of an Assyrian presence on the island. While one has yet to unearth an Assyrian church in the land, nevertheless in Anuradhapura, the ancient capital in the north, in Kotte, and in Gintumpitiya Assyrian crosses have been found that have been dated to the IX-X c., and which are quite similar to the crosses found in India, Tibet, and China. From this evidence, an Assyrian presence on the island may be safely deduced, all the more so in that it is in close proximity to southern India, where there is still in important Assyrian presence today.

#### BURMA AND SIAM (MYANMAR AND THAILAND)

Sources witness to the presence of West Asians, i.e. Indians, in Tenasserim, the southern coastal region of Myanmar as early as the IV c., in all likelihood having come as traders, and it is likely, as well that there were Christians among them, as the Church of the East was already solidly implanted in southern India. It was trade that inspired people to settle all along the Silk Road, and the same phenomenon was at work along the great southern sea routes. In the XI c. we find Indian traders in Tonkin and Champa, the northern and central coastal regions of Viet Nam, and there is evidence of them in Thailand as well in the XIV and XV c. A Bolognese who traveled in Southeast Asia in 1503/1504 AD found hundreds of Christians in the King's service in Pegu, in southern Myanmar, due north of Yangon (Rangoon) in the delta area. In the vicinity of Pagan, in central Myan-

mar, a fresco on the wall of a cave temple dated to the XI-XIII c. depicts a cross standing upright in a lotus, which is quite similar to images found in western China as well. Further, the Myinkaba temple, also in the Pagan area, has a fresco closely resembling the Last Supper, dating from the end of the XI c. And finally there is the record of a Genovese merchant that tells of burying his deceased companion in the ruins of a church in Pegu in 1496 AD. Thus there is solid anecdotal evidence of an ancient and long-lasting Assyrian presence in these countries of Southeast Asia.

#### MALAYSIA

The evidence is meager but significant. Church records show that Isho-Yahb III, Catholicos from 650-660 AD, refers in a letter to the interruption of the Episcopal succession in Kedah, on the western coast of the northernmost province of Malaysia. In other words, prior to the mid VII c., the area already had a number of bishops, which means that Assyrian Christians had been there for some time, at least from the incipient VII c. if not earlier. In addition, Arabic texts, accounts of trade and travel, testify to the presence of Christians in that area from the middle of the VII c. on, which is in no way surprising, given that Indian and Persian traders were active there from the III c. The only physical evidence so far unearthed was discovered in the XVII c. in Malacca, on the southwest coast of the peninsula. It consists of an underground hermitage or chapel wherein was discovered a copper cross set in marble. The chapel has not yet been carefully dated, but it certainly stems from an earlier time, and it testifies to the continued Assyrians presence on the peninsula to a period well posterior to the letter of the Catholicos Isho-Yahb III.

#### INDONESIA

Our earliest evidence comes, once again, from an intrepid seafarer, one Abu Salih, a Persian trader, who records having encountered several Assyrian churches in the area in the VII c., one of which, he notes, located in western Sumatra, was dedicated to the blessed Virgin. Also in the VII c., the Chinese Buddhist monk and traveler I Ching, 635-713 AD, left a record of his travels, where we learn that Palembang and Jambi, on the island of Sumatra, already held Assyrian communities and that the Christians seemed to live side by side in peace with their Buddhists neighbors.

The Metropolitan of Nisibis, Abdisho bar Brika, who died in 1318 AD and whose "Nomocanon" is one of the most important sources of canon law in the Church of the East, refers, in his "Rules of Ecclesiastical Judg-

ments” to the “Metropolitan of the isles of the sea ... Dabag, Sin and Masin.” Dabag is an ancient city in Sumatra and is today a suburb of Yogyakarta, the capital of Indonesia, so we know that there was a metropolitan there in the beginning of the XIV c., and we recall that a metropolitan see was made up of from six to twelve dioceses, which gives a fair idea of the strength of the Assyrian presence in Indonesia at the time. Indeed, such was the prominence of Dabag that it was ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in importance after the Patriarchal See of Seleucia. Sin and Masin are ancient terms for southern and central China, concerning which, as we have seen, we already have considerable information. Further, we have the report of the Italian Merchant, Giovanni de Marignoli of Florence who visited the region in 1347 AD on his return journey from China and who mentions Christian communities in both Java and Sumatra.

And in 1503 AD, Elias V, Catholicos from 1491 till 1504 AD, consecrated three metropolitans whom he then sent to Southeast Asia, precisely to Dabag and the isles between Java, China, and India. This is indeed noteworthy, because it is proof that more than a century after the Church of the East so to speak withered and died in China, it was still so alive and well in the region of Indonesia and Southeast Asia that it was necessary to provide three new metropolitan for the area.

#### LAST BUT NOT LEAST, INDIA

The Gospel must have reached India no later than the II c. Tradition says that it was first preached there by the Apostle Thomas, said to have arrived in India in 52 AD, to have evangelized the entire southern tip of the sub-continent, and to have established seven churches there. No historical documents confirming this have been found, but it seems certain that if the Gospel was not brought to India by Thomas, himself, then certainly by his direct disciples, because otherwise there would be no reason why the communities first implanted there should be called “Thomas Christians.” If that is so, then the Gospel reached India by the end of the I c. AD, and this is certainly possible. We know that the Apostles first addressed themselves to Jewish communities of the Diaspora, and records show that there were Jewish communities on the southwest coast of India no later than the III c. BC. This is explained by the fact that at the time of the Babylonian Exile, 486-438 BC, there were many who chose flight rather than captivity, and many of these people fled southward into Arabia, on to Ethiopia, and then further east to India, where those who did not remain in either Arabia or Ethiopia finally

put down roots and established communities. The Jews have always been engaged in trading, and the coast of Kerala in Southern India was a natural stop on the sea route to Asia. In addition, there are reports of Buddhists being received by Clement of Alexandria towards the end of the II c., and these visitors were well informed regarding Christianity. When we recall that at that time Buddhism was the major religion in India, it seems clear that their knowledge came from the presence of Christians among them.

Not only Jesus Himself but the Apostles as well spoke Aramaic, which was the language of the Jews in Palestine from Old Testament times. A close variant of it, Syriac, was the language of trade and commerce in all of the eastern Mediterranean up until the time of the Arab conquest of the area in the VII c. Emigrants always take their language with them, of course, and it is thus highly significant that the liturgical language of the first Christians in India was precisely Syriac, and it so remained until it was replaced some centuries later by the vernacular.

For centuries these Christian communities in India had only relatively loose ties with the homeland of Syrian Christianity, but when the Portuguese arrived in the XVI c. and forcibly brought a large number of these Indian Christians into communion with Rome, many rebelled and sought succor from the Church of the East in Mesopotamia. As negotiations did not go according to the wishes of the Indians, most of them then turned to the Patriarchate of Antioch and accepted its jurisdiction, which was given on condition that they replace their East Syrian liturgy with the West Syrian, or Antiochean, liturgy. And so was born the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church of India. An important minority, however, would have none of it, and these dissenters were then accepted into the jurisdiction of the Church of the East, where they remain to this day. The Assyrian Metropolitan of India, Dr. Mar Aprem Mookken, has written copiously in the field of the history of the Church of the East and has thus significantly enriched our knowledge of the history of the Assyrian Church throughout the ages and of its heroic missionary efforts to bring the Gospel to all peoples.

### ***Conclusion***

It only remains to add a word of admiration for and appreciation of the magnificent efforts of the Church of the East to carry the Gospel to the farthest regions of the planet. This admirable Church never entered a country or a region following behind a conquering army, nor did it ever enjoy the advantage of living and working in regions where the government had declared Christianity to be the official religion. Its people and its missionaries simply moved along the trade routes to the East, both by land and by sea, and founded communities as they went, communities often strengthened by and rooted in the monastic communities that they planted all along the way. They sought to serve the local population and raise the level, economic, educational, and social, of those they served. They succeeded admirably in this enterprise.

It is indeed sad to see this once truly universal Church, universal both in its geographic extent and in its all-inclusive ethnic composition, reduced today to a mere shadow of what it once was, living precariously in its historic homeland, where it is often persecuted and always at a disadvantage as a minority among hostile Moslem populations. Some hope of new life comes from its establishment once again in far off countries by new waves of emigrants, in Western Europe, in America, and in Australia. Indeed, it is significant that the Catholicos of the Church of the East is now firmly established in the USA, where the Church can develop and operate freely without fear of repression. It is still there, alive and vibrant even if reduced in numbers, and that is more than one can say of the Church of North Africa, of which St. Augustine is the most well known representative, which was wiped from the face of the earth many centuries ago by advancing Moslem armies and the all-embracing islamization that followed in their wake.



# CC

Centro Conferences

## The Chinese Rites Controversy A Clash of Culture

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The Chinese rites concerned are those Confucian rites used to venerate Confucius himself as China's great teacher who propagated the values that would become the defining elements of Chinese culture for over three millennia, and one's ancestor's in general.

The controversy involves the conflicting interpretations and reactions to these rites by Catholic missionaries from their arrival in China in the latter part of the XVI c. until well into the XX c., and consequently of their acceptability or not for Chinese converts to the Christian Faith. It is thus a controversy that impacted the lives of Chinese Catholics for three-and-a-half centuries.

Matteo Ricci arrived in Macao in 1582 and spent 19 years working in S. China, learning Chinese customs and culture as well as the written and spoken languages thoroughly. He arrived in Beijing in 1601, where he remained until his death on 11.05.1610. Although at first he dressed as a Buddhist monk, he soon realized that the *literati* were Confucians rather than Buddhists, and began to dress as a Mandarin, whose knowledge of the Classics he came to equal. He could hold his own with the best of them, and he felt that if he gained the educated classes to Christ, then the people would follow.

History has given us various examples of this type of conversion: e.g. the choice by the Emperor of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire; the Baptism of Prince Vladimir in the Dniepr and the imposition of Christianity as the religion of the entire population; *cujus regio ejus religio*, the principle by which it was decided to what religion the population of a given area in Germany would belong in putting an end to the strife between the Catholic and the Protestant princes at the beginning of the Reformation: if the head of state was Catholic, the people over whom he had jurisdiction had to be Catholic, and vice versa. The principle of freedom of conscience could play no role in the individual's religion: indeed, he could not choose, the choice was made for him by the state. The efficacy of such a policy has been amply demonstrated by history, and not only with regard to Christianity.

While Ricci's fellow Jesuit collaborators embraced this policy, not

all Jesuits agreed with him. For example, a certain J. Rodrigues, visiting from the Philippines, felt that the policy was erroneous and that such rites could not be practiced by Chinese converts.

Missionaries of other orders and congregations, such as the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the priests of the Paris Foreign Missions, in general took the opposing view. They condemned these rites as superstitious and would not allow their converts to practice them. The diverging opinions of these two groups of missionaries would soon draw the highest Church authority, the Holy See, into the conflict. And, as we shall see, the position of Rome at first vacillated, then, once it had been settled in firm opposition to the rites, was extremely difficult to enforce.

### *Recourse to Rome*

1) Juan Baptista Morales, OP, sent a negative report to Rome, identifying the rites as "religious." Propaganda Fidei then sent Morales' 17 propositions to the Holy Office, which condemned the rites and forbade the participation in them by Catholics. On 12.09.1645, Propaganda Fidei then issued a decree in this sense, with the sanction of Pope Innocent X.

2) The Jesuits then counter attacked with Martino Martini, SJ, who presented the rites as purely civil in character. Thereupon the Holy Office approved the Confucian rites, i.e. the graduation ceremony in which degrees were conferred on those having successfully sat the state civil service exam, and rites for the deceased, whether in the home, at the hall of ancestors, or at the grave. On the approval of the Holy Office and with the consent of Alexander VII, Propaganda Fidei then issued a decree of approval for these rites on 23.03.1656,

3) Three years later, Propaganda Fidei issued an instruction for the guidance of three new Apostolic Vicars, for Tonking, Cochin China, and China proper south of the Yangtze River. The instruction stipulated that:

a) one must not introduce European practices in mission lands, one

must accommodate oneself to native practices.

b) one must not judge or condemn blindly and exclusively.

c) one is to change what is truly perverse by preparing minds and hearts for Truth, i.e. it will be a gradual process.

4) The Canton Conferences, 1667-68. Missionaries are arrested and exiled to Canton (Guangzhou), where they are interred. They were 19 SJ, 3 OP, and 1 OFM, who decided to make use of their time in detention by discussing the practical problems facing the apostolate. The Conferences lasted 40 days and produced 42 articles regarding baptism, fasting, catechetical instruction, the calendar of feasts, burning of idols, etc. Regarding funerals, the blessing of the coffin and the procession to the grave are to be done or omitted at the discretion of the priest. The cult of Confucius and of the dead is to be allowed, since according to a very probable opinion they seem to be merely civil and political. By declaring these things licit, the missionaries facilitated access to the Faith and adherence to the Church.

5) Juan Polanco and the decision of Clement XI, 1669. The Dominicans inquire of Rome whether the decree of 1645 is still in force, as it is apparently contradicted by the decree of 1656. Rome answers that *both* decrees are to be observed! Thus, nothing is decided and the matter is in fact left to the consciences of the missionaries.

6) Charles Maigrot and the Mandate of 1693. C. Maigrot, of the Paris Foreign Missions, was named Apostolic Vicar of Fujian in 1687. To achieve a common understanding of the question and to allay the scruples of some missionaries, he issued a Mandate on 26.03.93. He attacked therein the exposition of M. Martini, SJ, and decree of Alexander VII of 1656, and decreed that missionaries could not use the permissions granted by Rome. Further, he forbade Christian participation in the semi-annual rites in honor of Confucius and the dead. He restricted Christian use of 'spirit tablets' with view to abolishing them. He flatly denied that cult of Confucius to spirits is political rather than religious. He thus forbade his missionaries to follow the decree of Alexander VII, but he left open the question of less solemn rites (which will nevertheless later be condemned by the Holy See). His decree mentioned the distinction between civil/political rites and religious cults, but denied that the cult of dead is exclusively civil and political.

His intention was to move the Holy See to reopen the case & issue a new judgement. But there was gridlock in Rome, so the P.F.M. Society asked the theological faculty of the Sorbonne to judge the case, which faculty, having at the time a strong Jansenist bent, was already attempting to have the writings of 2 Jesuits regarding the situation in China, published in 1696 and 1697, condemned. The Sorbonne examined 4 points in particular: the knowledge of God, the extent of Revelation, the distribution of divine grace, and the "chosen race" [sic], and on 18.10.1700, the Faculty proceeded to censor them all. This brought the controversy into the realm of speculative theology, while the dispute was in fact only about certain customs regarding the dead, the resolution of which necessitated the expertise of historians, ethnologists, and sinologists as well as theologians. The purely theological standpoint was too narrow and well off the mark, but the initiative of Nicolas Charlot, Maigrot's representative in Rome, to put the

question before the Sorbonne did in fact eventually get the attention of the Roman authorities.

7) Kang Hsi and the Imperial Rescript of 30.11.1700.

The Jesuits in Beijing petitioned the Emperor to clarify the meaning of the "worship" of Confucius and the rites for the dead. Whereupon the Emperor confirmed that they are simply to honor the dead, not to pray to them, but his answer was then construed by other missionaries as undue interference in ecclesiastical matters by the civil authorities! For his part, Kang Hsi saw the matter inversely: a foreign power was tampering with the social and political institutions of China!

8) The Decree of Clement XI of 1704.

a) Christians may *not* assist at solemn rites for Conf. & the dead.

b) Christians may *not* assist at rites on full & new moons, nor when officials receive titles and offices, nor when successful examinees receive degrees.

c) Christians may *not* assist at rites before spirit tablets, whether at home or grave, whether in company of non-Christians or separately.

This decree seems *extremely* restrictive, *however*,

a) mere material presence is possible without active participation or 'positive approbation' (whatever that may mean) where an 'avowal of Faith' is made and no danger to the Faith exists, and where hostility and enmity to the Faith would result were the Christian party to fail to attend. N.B. This appears however to contradict the above points!

b) the responses of the commission do *not* condemn ceremonies on behalf of the dead where there is no real superstition & ceremonies are w/in limits of civil and political rites.

As to which ceremonies are permissible & under what conditions, this is left to the local Church authorities, who should strive gradually to remove all pagan practices and replace them with those of the Church. Regarding spirit tablets, these are admitted in the home *only* when nothing on them suggests that the souls of the departed *reside* in them and when an expression of Christian belief regarding the dead and Christian piety toward deceased parents is placed beside them.

The investigation, begun in 1697 under Innocent XII, lasted 7 years and ended with the decree of Clement XI in 1704. It was largely negative. The small possibilities left open were narrow. The decree was not promulgated in Europe in order to give time to the papal delegate, Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon, Apostolic Commissioner and Visitor of the Chinese Mission, to explain the decree to the ecclesiastical authorities in China and to provide for its observance.

The decree was a serious effort to decide the question, but it was ultimately a failure, not least in light of the fact that, two centuries later, the Church would reverse her stand. We note that the reason – at the time – for the condemnation of the rites was their 'superstitious character.' It did, however, recognize that there might be 'other rites' that could be judged 'civil & political' rather than religious. Finally, in spite of the general condemnation, it admitted 'merely passive material presence' under certain conditions, although it must be said that the conditions postulated seem rather unrealistic.

9) Archbishop Tournon and the Nanking decree of 1707.

The Emperor was – understandably – furious at Clement XI's decree. He met Toumon on 31.12.1705, and wished to come to an agreement on the rites, but since the latest Roman decree left the delegate no room to compromise, Toumon was evasive.

Soon after, Maigrot, the Apostolic Vicar of Fujian, was summoned by the Emperor and examined by him on Confucius and his teaching, the rites, and the Chinese language. Maigrot failed the test and was banished from China.

The Emperor then decreed that only missionaries with a *piao*, i.e. a certificate attesting government permission to work as a missionary, can remain in China, and then only providing they promise to follow practice of M. Ricci and to remain in China all their lives. All new missionaries had to be examined at the imperial court to receive the *piao*, without which they could not function in China.

Toumon was already in Nanking when he learned of the decree on the 'piao.' He reacted by issuing his own decree of 17.02.1707, by which he promulgated the decree of Clement XI and gave instructions to missionaries as to how to answer in the exam for the *piao*, which of course assured their *failure*. The sanction for disobeying the mandate was automatic excommunication. No other interpretation than that of Toumon, himself, was to be allowed.

This meant that the missionaries had to choose between obedience to the Mandate and the *piao*, without which they would be expelled from China. They were thus in an impossible situation. But some felt that Toumon had exceeded his authority and therefore believed that there was still hope of Rome modifying its position, so they applied for the *piao*.

The Emperor ordered Toumon sent to Canton and then to Macao, where he learned that he had been made a Cardinal. He remained there in confinement till his death on 08.06.1711

10) Clement XI and Decree of 1710.

Toumon's mission to China was a complete failure. It polarized both the thinking and the practice of the missionaries and crystallized dissension among them. In March, 1709, Clement XI published the deferred decree of 1704. On 25.09.1710, he published an additional decree meant to close all loopholes. It insisted on full compliance under pain of excommunication, and forbade any dissension in print regarding the rites and the connected controversies, also under pain of excommunication. For Rome, the question was closed. The only problem seemed to be to ensure total obedience and silence. But in addition, Rome also promised a new 'instruction.'

11) Clement XI and 'Ex illa die' of 19.03.1715.

The new 'instruction' was almost five years in coming. New decree reiterated the stipulations of previous decrees against the rites. Non-superstitious ceremonies, purely civil and political as determined by the ecclesiastical authorities were to be tolerated. The decree listed previous excuses and subterfuges and forbade them all. In addition, it now demanded an oath on the Bible against the Chinese rites, and the text of the oath was to be signed by the missionary himself as a condition of his apostolate. Superiors were required to promise in writing to observe the decree themselves and to ensure the obedience of their subjects. All written discussion was forbidden, and the severe

moral constraint of an oath sworn on the Bible to obey the constitution exactly and without reservation was put on the missionaries to control not only their practice but also their thinking.

12) Mezzabarba and the 8 Permissions of 1721.

On 08.11.1716 Charles Castorano, Vicar General of Beijing, promulgated 'Ex illa die.' The missionaries reluctantly took the oath, hoping for future modification of the decree. The Emperor was understandably indignant, and he sent Castorano to Canton to collect all copies of the documents and send them back to Pope! Again Christians were seen as enemies of the rites and the customs of the Chinese. They were persecuted anew, something which the Emperor did nothing to stop.

Clement then dispatched another Apostolic Delegate, Charles Mezzabarba, who arrived in Beijing on 26.12.1720, and was received by the Emperor, to whom he says that he can grant 'certain permissions.' Mezzabarba then returned to Rome to report and to obtain new directives. At Macao, before leaving, he wrote a pastoral letter, in which he insisted on observance of 'Ex illa die,' but also granted the following 8 permissions.

- 1) Christians may have funeral tablets inscribed with names of deceased, accompanied by a declaration of the Christian view of death and proper measures to avoid all scandal.
- 2) Civil ceremonies for the dead devoid of superstition are permitted.
- 3) The civil cult to Confucius and tablets in his honor, with burning of incense and placing food before the tablet, is permitted if devoid of superstitious inscriptions and accompanied with a declaration of Faith.
- 4) Candles and incense are permitted at funerals if explanation is given in writing.
- 5) Genuflections and prostrations are allowed before 'corrected' tablets and before coffin.
- 6) Food may be placed on tables in front of the coffin with corrected tablet provided there is adequate explanation that all this is done to show piety and respect for deceased.
- 7) 'Kowtow' is permitted before 'corrected' tablets on Chin. New Year as well as other times.
- 8) Candles and incense can be used before tombs and 'corrected' tablets with necessary precautions.

This pastoral letter, written in Latin, was not to be translated nor disclosed publicly. Understandably, the letter provoked further confusion and debate. These permissions could be granted, and therefore disclosed, according to 'need or use' as dictated. Certain permissions coincided with the decisions of the decree of 1704, while others seemed to reverse decisions of that decree. Still others seemed to specify further the general terms of that decree. These permissions would eventually be officially rescinded, but from the beginning there were doubts regarding their validity in light of the rigorous directives of 'Ex illa die.' So instead of ameliorating the situation, they provoked general confusion accompanied by the conflicting views of the missionaries.

13) Clement XII – Nullification of Pastoral Letter of Legate and Bp. of Beijing, 1735.

In 1723 the emperor Kang Hsi died and was succeeded by son,



Yang Cheng. Under Kang Hsi, the banishment of missionaries without the *piao* was not strictly enforced, but in 1724 Yang Cheng banished all missionaries to Macao, except those proficient in astronomy (!). Churches were confiscated and the Faithful were persecuted.

In 1730, François Saraceni, the Apostolic Vicar of Shansi, issued a pastoral letter prohibiting the use of Mezzabarba's permissions regarding spirit tablets, but Rome forced him to recant!

Then, in 1733, François de la Purification, the Bishop of Beijing, issued two pastoral letters commanding observance of '*Ex illa die*' according to the 8 permissions of Mezzabarba.

But, on 26.09.1735, Clement XII annulled the pastoral letters of the Bishop of Beijing, insisting on the full observance of '*Ex illa die*,' and stipulating that its interpretation was reserved to Rome. Mezzabarba had issued his instructions on his own authority but, as *legatus a latere*, his authority was that of the Pope. However, with this nullification by Clement XII, Rome attempted to distance itself from these 8 permissions.

#### 4) Benedict XIV and '*Ex quo singulari*' of 1742.

Clement XII instituted an enquiry into the 8 permissions, but he died before its completion. However, Benedict XIV continued the enquiry and then promulgated '*Ex quo singulari*,' the most restrictive decree on the rites. It first reviewed all previous decrees, then said that the validity of '*Ex illa die*' had been greatly weakened by the 8 permissions. With this new decree, the Pope fully confirmed '*Ex illa die*,' examined the history and the reasons for the 8 permissions, and explained their background and how they were inferred from the responses in the pastoral letter of Archbishop Mezzabarba. Against his will information regarding the permissions had been disseminated, and thereupon the Archbishop issued two pastoral letters saying that '*Ex illa die*' was to be understood in terms of these same permissions. The new Roman instruction, however, concluded that all the permissions were incompatible with '*Ex illa die*,' and it therefore abrogated and condemned them! The Bull further stipulates that 'other rites which are not superstitious' can only refer to ceremonies *not* included in those condemned and prohibited by '*Ex illa die*.' Thus, all use whatsoever of the 8 permissions was prohibited.

The Pope then issued a new order that all must obey exactly everything included in '*Ex quo singulari*,' and commanded that all Bishops and religious superiors remove all who did not comply, adding that those who did not do so were to be punished. In addition, he required a new oath, identical in content to that of Clement XI, but adding the proviso that one would ensure the adherence and obedience of the Christians under one's care, and never allow the permissions granted by M. to be used by them.

'*Ex quo singulari*' was based on the decree of 1704 and intended to close all loopholes in the previous decrees. It *did not succeed* however, because of an apparent contradiction: it confirmed '*Ex illa die*,' Clement XI's decree of 1704, but at the same time it condemned the 8 permissions that flowed directly from it.

Thus there remained practical confusion: the Apostolic Vicar of Fujian held that all 8 permissions were condemned by '*Ex quo singulari*,' and he forbade the Faithful to keep even 'corrected' spirit tables

and/or to burn incense before them, even though the use of such 'corrected' tablets was explicitly *permitted* by the decree of 1704. But, on the contrary, the Apostolic Vicar of Shansi held that whatever was even *implicitly* tolerated by '*Ex illa die*' *should be permitted*, and he thus he allowed his flock to retain 'corrected' tablets, to make 'kowtow,' and to burn incense and candles at funerals. His view was, that, while '*Ex quo singulari*' revoked the 8 permissions *as such*, it did not condemn what was already permitted by '*Ex illa die*.'

Thus, while the new decree did not end the controversy, it was the last and the most important of a long series of decrees on the question, and all future problems regarding the rites would henceforth be judged on the basis of this Bull. Further, all missionaries were required to take the oath against the Chinese rites according to the new formula in order to be allowed to work in China and the surrounding countries.

#### *Rites Problem after 1742*

From the promulgation of '*Ex quo singulari*' in 1742 until the 1930s, the Church made no major papal pronouncements regarding the Chinese rites. The political upheavals referred to above served perhaps to relativize the Church's problems in China, but the memory of the decree of 1742 never faded because all missionaries were obliged to take the oath against the rites.

'*Ex quo singulari*' did not succeed in putting an end to the controversy. Questions still arose regarding the application of certain directives and whether specific practices were or were not prohibited, in particular in relation to three points: 1) genuflections and prostrations at funerals, 2) the use of candles and incense at funerals (a Christian practice!), 3) the keeping of 'corrected' spirit tablets.

1753. Two Apostolic Vicars ask if certain practices honoring the dead can be considered *civil acts* and therefore permissible. Propaganda Fidei answers that *all* practices honoring ancestors are *suspect* of superstition and therefore *forbidden*.

1757. The Holy Office issues a decree to all missionaries confirming the instruction of 1753 and specifically forbidding genuflections, candles, and incense at funerals.

1769. The Holy Office forbids Christians to contribute funds for the construction and repair of temples, even when they declare that their contributions are not made for superstitious reasons, and this even when they are threatened with bodily harm and death for not contributing.

1777. The Holy Office replied once again regarding three problems:

a) 'Kowtow' at funerals is forbidden *because it is intrinsically evil*. Further, the Holy Office expresses dismay that the question is even raised after the promulgation of the constitutions of Clement XI and Benedict XIV.

b) Question: may the deceased be buried first and then have a funeral ceremony without the body in order to avoid the proscribed acts of prostration? Answer: yes, but *only* when one cannot avoid prostrations before the corpse.

c) Incense and candles at graves are permitted since these are part of Catholic ritual, but kneeling during prayers at the grave are prohibited if they are similar to pagan prostrations or entail an occasion for evil.

1792. Propaganda Fidei allows the cleansing of family graves if it is done on a different day than the pagan ceremony.

1793. It was asked whether genuflections while the coffin is being removed from the home and when it is lowered into the grave are forbidden as these were allowed by the 'permissions' of Mezzabarba. Answer: affirmative, *they are forbidden*.

1798. It was inquired whether Christians, having successfully passed state examinations, might feign sickness and bribe authorities to accept that excuse for not attending the customary Confucian rites to award degrees after the exam. Answer: No, and neither is the lie (being sick) permissible.

1808. May Christians invite non-Christian friends to a funeral, knowing that they would make 'kowtow' before the bier? Answer: No!

1847. Regarding the ancestors' hall: Christians are not permitted to take part in feasts held in said halls when food offered to ancestors is then consumed by those who offered it. Christians could add the names of their sons to the ancestral registry *only* if such an inscription was generally accepted to be civil and political, i.e. not religious, and there was no danger of scandal or superstition.

1917. The new Code of Canon Law raised certain questions regarding the Bull of 1742 against the Chinese rites and the oath required of the missionaries. Nevertheless, the Bull continued to be strictly applied and the oath was still required of all until 1939, when it was at long last abolished.

1930. It was inquired whether the 1710 prohibition of all writing concerning the Chinese rites was still in effect. Answer: *absolutely*.

Thus, for over 200 years missionaries were forbidden to comment on the rites, which were judged exclusively according to the official Roman decrees, the last of which was '*Ex quo sinfulari*' in 1742. All missionaries working in China or the surrounding countries had to take a solemn oath against the rites, which eventually became simply a matter of routine.

### ***Period of Transition***

The second half of the XVIII c. saw a decline of the missionary effort because of:

- the waning power of Spain and Portugal
- the persecution of the Church in China
- the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773
- the French Revolution
- the Napoleonic wars, etc.

### **EARLY XIX C.**

The Industrial Revolution brought the Western Powers back to the Orient for trade.

The Opium Wars, 1839-42 and 1856-60 greatly weakened the Chinese government and gave the West. Powers overwhelming influence in China.

At the same time, this increased Western influence improved the conditions for missionaries, who were now protected by the treaties signed with these powers.

The arrival of Protestant missionaries.

### **END OF XIX C. AND BEGINNING OF XX C.**

A time of great changes. China was defeated in a war with Japan, 1894-95, by which Japan would receive privileges equal to those of the Western Powers, and this prompted these Powers to increase their own privileges. In turn, this situation fostered the development of indigenous reform movements in China. The Chinese government secretly encouraged the Boxer Rebellion, previously directed toward the imperial government but now aimed at freeing China from foreign influence. It was also directed against the Church, which was led and dominated by foreigners, and this resulted in much loss of life and property.

The Boxer Rebellion was defeated in 1900. The humiliating conditions imposed by the Boxer Protocol of 1901 provoked a growing rejection of the imperial government and fostered the growth of political reform movements.

1901. Girls were given access to education. The curriculum was modified to include Western science. The civil service exams were changed in consequence, and in 1905 they were completely abolished. Chinese now traveled to Japan, Europe, and America to study, which introduced W. ideas into China, including Marxism. The military was reorganized according to Western and Japanese models.

1904-05. The Russo-Japanese war, fought on Chinese soil, strengthened the desire for political reform.

1908. Emperor Kwang Hsi died and was succeeded by a 3-year old, Pu'I, who, on 12.02.1912, was forced to abdicate by the warlord Hsuan Tung, who proclaimed a republic in the North.

01.01.1912. Sun Yat-Sen, the leader of the Guomintang, became provisional President of the Republic of China in the South.

1926. Gen. Chiang Kai-Shek, together w. Communist forces, began a campaign to conquer the North.

10.10.1928. Guomintang government was established at Nanjing. Communists began the 'Long March' to the NW, and Chiang's forces moved north to capture Beijing.

The missionaries at first profited from the defeat of the Boxers, but by 1928 a new wave of anti-foreign sentiment had developed into an anti-Christian movement since Christians were identified with the oppressive foreign powers.

As for the cult of ancestors itself, an essential part of traditional Chinese life for millennia, it was now being threatened by several factors:

- a) Industrialization and urbanization was changing Chinese society.
- b) After the fall of the Qing dynasty and the ensuing internal struggles for power, there were massive movements of populations, which only served to increase the effect that modernization and the advent of Western culture was having on Chinese society.
- c) Western culture introduced individualistic thinking, which in turn weakened the traditional feeling and attitude of solidarity in the Chinese family system.

The cult of Confucius was so closely related to the ancestor cult that it was also diminished as a result of these developments. Confucian-

ism had been actively maintained and fostered by the imperial bureaucracy, which had now disappeared. Thus, Confucianism could not retain its traditional role either in government or in society because of the great changes in the social and political fabric of the country.

Nevertheless, perhaps even precisely because of this multi-millenary connection, Confucianism was so much a part of Chinese culture and spiritual tradition that its principles and influence would survive and remain, although greatly diminished, and continue to be a major element in the Chinese psyche even without the support of the monarchy and the bureaucracy.

The Nationalist government was established in Nanjing in 1928. It did not re-establish the cult of Confucius. Rather, *it decreed religious freedom*, ordering only that the schools observe Confucius' birthday.

Nevertheless, there was a deep-felt conviction that the spiritual salvation of the nation could only be achieved by a moral renewal of the Confucian tradition. Chiang Kai-Shek himself, though a Christian, was steeped in Confucian tradition. In 1934 he began the New Life Movement aimed at the psychological and moral renewal of the people by the cultivation of the traditional Confucian virtues: propriety, right conduct, honesty, and self-respect.

To encourage the practice of these virtues, Aug. 27, the birthday of Confucius, was designated a national holiday.

Given these developments, the Chinese rites question was diminishing in significance, and it could have passed altogether into oblivion had it not been for the solemn oath against them still imposed on the missionaries by '*Ex quo singulari*' in 1742.

It is one of the ironies of history that the resolution of the knotty problem of the Chinese rites would eventually derive from events outside China proper.

### **Japan and Shinto**

There are several different kinds of Shinto:

*Ko Shinto* is the oldest line. It values systematic exercise and training.

*Shrine Shinto* is the main current of the Shinto tradition. There are 80.000 such shrines in Japan today.

*Sect Shinto* dates from the XIX C. It has no shrines, but its adherents congregate in halls. It includes mountain-worshiping sects, faith-healing sects, purification sects, Confucian sects, etc.

*Folk Shinto* comprises a mixture of animism, shamanism, divination, spirit possession, etc.

*State Shinto*, which is all important for the question that occupies us, is the vehicle that was used to modernize and unify Japan in the crucial period which saw the disappearance of the power of the Shoguns, lords of territorial fiefs, and the establishment of the supreme authority of the Emperor in Japanese society.

### **The Church and the State Shinto Rites**

Francis Xavier reached Japan on 27.07.1549. He was able to work there for over two years and worked with success, seeing his fellow Jesuits installed in the country before leaving to return to India. Other

missionaries followed, but it was not long before persecutions broke out which produced many martyrs. The Faithful were obliged to renounce their Faith, to die for it, or go underground, which was the choice of the majority. This underground community managed to preserve its Faith and steadfastly pass it on to succeeding generations.

With the opening of Japan to foreign trade in the XIX C., missionaries returned. Under the guidance of foreign priests and bishops, the restoration of the Church proceeded well. The 'hidden Christians' of the XVI C. were discovered by the new missionaries in 1865.

1889. Meiji government granted freedom of religion.

1890. Regional synod in Nagasaki convened the ordinaries of Japan and Korea, and laid down four principles.

- a) Nothing is to be condemned that is not contrary to religion and morals.
- b) Acts performed symbolically to manifest one's thought, good wishes, affection, etc., are not superstitious *per se*.
- c) Any rite, originally of superstitious origin but at present without a superstitious intention, and so commonly understood, is *not* to be prohibited as superstitious.
- d) A rite of superstitious origin and practiced as such, but to which some reasonable (non-superstitious) meaning has subsequently been given, and into the practice of which some change has been introduced by which, in the understanding of the people or in the judgement of the state, the rite is no longer considered a pagan rite, *can be tolerated*.

As the result of these principles, in particular the last, a distinction is made between formal, active, and therefore intrinsically evil, participation and purely material, passive participation, e. g. simple presence at a ceremony. Thus e.g., attendance at non-Christian funerals as purely passive presence is possible even though Buddhist prayers are recited by a bonze, especially when non-attendance would provoke hostility and even enmity, providing a previous avowal of Faith is made and there is no danger of scandal or perversion of the Faith.

To put this in perspective, we can consider the attendance of non-Christians and non-Catholics at Catholic funerals. By their mere attendance, such persons are not considered to favor or to adhere to the Catholic Faith. Conversely, a Catholic who merely attends a Buddhist funeral is not thereby a Buddhist.

However, in spite of these relatively enlightened principles laid down by the synod, concrete difficulties remained.

Christians attending non-Christian funerals were forbidden to offer incense, but this was in fact perceived as an insult to the deceased and his family. As for Christian students, they were forbidden to bow before Shinto Shrines, as, however, all were expected to do at school visits to these shrines, which visits were intended to instil a sense of unity and patriotism in the people. Thus, Christians were commonly perceived not only as lacking elementary civility, but also as unpatriotic.

Most of the Catholic population lived in the SW of the country, and the government made a special effort to secure their support. In 1915 the governor of Nagasaki invited the local Bishop, Jean-Claude Combaz, to his office and explained to him that the government had separated the Bureau of Shrines from the Bureau of Religions, that the government

shrines no longer had any religious character, and that the rites performed in these shrines were purely *civil* in character meant only to honor the war dead, the imperial family and its deceased ancestors. But Bishop Combaz was not convinced, and this is rather strange, for it flies in the face of the principles established by the synod of Nagasaki in 1890.

1917. In answer to a query of the Japanese bishops, Rome sent G. Petrelli, the Apostolic Delegate in Manila, to Japan. After several meetings with the Japanese Foreign Minister, who explained that the State Shinto cult was purely patriotic and had nothing to do with religion, and that therefore Catholics could participate in these ceremonies with a clear conscience, Petrelli responded that 'ordinary people could not be expected to make such a distinction'!

1918. Bishop Combaz, of Nagasaki, declared publicly that Catholics cannot accept the government's interpretation of shrine worship, cannot visit these shrines, cannot participate in services held in them for the dead, nor pay respect to 'so-called gods.' Thus, Japanese Catholics had real difficulty in being true to both their Faith and their country.

The result was a *complete stalemate*.

In France for the peace conference after WW I, Rear Admiral Shinjiro Yamamoto, educated by the Marists in Tokyo, spoke to Msgr. Tiberghien, a member of the Propaganda Fidei, of the difficulties of Japanese Catholics regarding the Shinto rites, and drew a parallel between these difficulties and those facing Christians in the early Roman Empire in connection with Emperor worship. Inspired by this comparison, Msgr. Tiberghien requested the French historian Pierre Batiffol to clarify what was permitted to Christian citizens of Rome in those early times. Batiffol in turn sought the assistance of byzantinist Louis Bréhier, and together they produced two monographs, which were published together in 1920 as: *Les survivances du culte imperial romain*.

These publications showed clearly, that even after the adoption of Christianity by the Empire, the cult of the emperor remained *as a merely civil and political practice*, devoid of any superstition, and continued to be practiced until the final defeat of Byzantium by the Turks in 1453. The point stressed was, that were the Japanese government to declare the State Shinto cult to be a purely civil and political affair, *then it should be permitted to Japanese Catholics*, just as was the cult of the emperor in the Roman Empire after its Christianization.

Unfortunately, in 1924 a synod held in Tokyo declared that it could not accept this conclusion because the inclination of the head at the shrines is 'directly connected with a superstitious cult,' and this is as startling as it is noteworthy given that nearly ten years earlier, the governor of Nagasaki had assured the then Bishop of the city that the government considered these rites purely civil in character. But the synod went even further and declared that the rites in honor of the war dead 'even though proclaimed to be purely civil, *are still considered by the people as something religious*.'

Again, a stalemate. The synod documents were sent to Rome, where those dealing with the Shinto cult were forwarded to the Holy Office, which *never replied!*

In the meantime, militarist reformers, who, *without the approval of the government in Tokyo* began a war of expansion in Manchuria that

would lead to the founding of the puppet state *Manchuguo*, believed that the Japanese nation not only needed a strong army but that it must be spiritually united. To this end, from 1925 a military officer was assigned to various secondary schools and universities to teach military science and to conduct military drills with the students. This practice, at first partial and experimental, became compulsory and universal in 1939.

Such a program was in fact begun at Sophia Univ. in 1929 by Col. Hitomi Kitahara.

*Incident of 05.05.1932.* Col. Kitahara had taken a group of students to visit the war museum and then pay their respects to the war dead at the Yasukuni Shrine. At the shrine, *two or three students refused to obey the command to salute the dead honored there.* Col. Kitahara of course reported the incident to his superiors, and on 14.06.32. he was recalled from Sophia 'because its spirit did not conform to the principles of Japanese education.' This impacted negatively of course both on the university and on the army as well, since it had not been able to keep the students in line.

At this point, Bp. Johannes Ross of Hiroshima intervened. He believed Canon 1258, of the Code of Canon Law, concerning Catholic participation in non-Catholic worship, would enable Japanese Catholics to participate in visits to Shinto shrines.

He presented his arguments to Archbishop Chambon of Tokyo, who agreed with him and gave oral permission for Catholic students to take part in group visits to shrines to commemorate war dead. It was also decided between the two to refer the matter to the Apostolic Delegate so that all Japanese Bishops would act uniformly.

On 18.09.32, in order to celebrate the founding of Manchuguo, students from Tokyo schools, including 100 from Sophia, marched to the Yasukuni shrine to commemorate the war dead.

22.09.32. Archbishop Chambon requested an official declaration of the Ministry of Education regarding the civil character of the rites at such shrines.

30.09.32. The Ministry of Education answered that such rites, in particular the bowing of the head, 'have no other purpose than to manifest sentiments of patriotism and loyalty.' Thus, *the government officially declared the rites to be non-religious*, considering them as simply civil and political in nature.

Following this government declaration, in Oct. 1932 Bp. Ross clarified his position:

- 1) Passive participation of the Faithful at non-Catholic weddings, funerals, etc. is permitted.
- 2) Solemnities at shrines are *res mixtae*, i.e. ceremonies having both religious and civil aspects.
- 3) Therefore, Catholic students may participate passively, led by a teacher or a military instructor, for non-participation would bring sever penalties.
- 4) At such ceremonies, bowing the head is permissible since Ministry of Education declared this to be a purely patriotic act.
- 5) Even if the ceremonies are conducted by *kannushi* (Shinto priest), bowing is permitted since Can. 1258 speaks of passive participation in *sacris acatholicorum*, i.e. non-Catholic religious ceremonies.

6) Such passive participation does not present the danger of a perversion of the Faith as long as one is sufficiently instructed on the conditions of passive participation. The declaration of the government that such bows are only a demonstration of patriotism thus created a new situation.

7) There is no danger of scandal either to non-Catholic or Catholic bystanders, who understand that passive participation does not signify approval of superstitious rites or defection from the Faith but rather is only a manifestation of patriotism as so defined by the government.

8) In summary, since worship at the shrines is a *res mixta*, passive participation as defined by and under conditions of Can. 1258 *can be permitted*, even if it includes bowing the head.

N.B. The official position of the Church, issued by the Apostolic Delegate Edward Mooney in Jan. 1933, *agrees with and confirms this position*.

28.08.1933 Mooney was named Bishop of Rochester. His replacement, Paul Marella, chaired synod in 1934, which ordered the publication of a *commune directorium* to ensure uniformity of practice in Japan. The manual was published in 1937.

08.12.1935. Marella issued an instruction to all religious superiors in Japan since, working under their respective ordinaries, they would be responsible for the coordination of the missionary effort. In the introduction, he calls for great open-mindedness regarding activities that are not opposed to the Catholic Faith, and he recommends sincere cooperation in activities that manifest love of the country. He then divides such public activities or demonstrations into three categories.

- 1) Activities that no longer have a religious character. Catholics should participate in them as other Japanese, individually or as a member of a group.
- 2) Activities manifesting both a patriotic and a religious character (*res mixtae*). Whatever can be understood as a civil expression of national sentiment should be neither condemned nor prohibited.
- 3) In cases where doubt remains as to the religious or civil character of an activity, it is preferable not to propose an explicit solution. Once the principles for making a judgement are explained and understood, the matter should be left to the consciences of those involved.

These principles were to be used not only regarding public demonstrations but also regarding acts of personal piety towards ancestors. The instruction recognized that changes had taken place and that what was formerly considered a religious act was now more and more understood to be a civil act with an external religious form. All were then advised to follow the directives of their ordinaries.

Marella's instruction was of capital importance and it followed the guidelines previously laid down by Ross, Chambon, and Mooney. Catholics could now act as, and show themselves to be, good, loyal citizens. This was of great importance since, because of previous prohibitions and practice, it was commonly believed that Catholics could not be loyal citizens.

26.05.36. Propaganda Fidei issued the instruction '*Pluries instantanterque*.'

The instruction recalled the advice of Propaganda Fidei in 1659, i.e. to respect and not to alter rites and customs of people. If something was truly depraved, it was to be changed slowly and in silence. Missionaries were to foster love for one's country and loyalty to it. It spoke of acts, originating in ethnic religion, which are not evil *per se* but indifferent, and which are now *not* signs of religion but only civil acts to manifest and to foster love of one's country, and which are devoid of all intent to compel or even to signify adherence to the religion from which they originated.

It recalled that the Japanese Ministry of Education, as far back as 1899, forbade religious education and religious ceremonies in public schools. Thus, when students are told to visit shrines, it is clear that the ceremonies at the shrine have only civil, not religious significance. The instruction considered all other government sponsored public ceremonies on national holidays and other occasions to be in the same category.

The instruction then widened public behavior at Shinto shrines to include family events such as weddings and funerals, for these rites as well have lost their religious significance. *Catholics therefore may and indeed should participate in such events*, for when they formerly refused to do so, they were considered not only cold to the fatherland, but ungrateful and uncivil as well towards their relatives and friends.

Finally, the instruction laid down 3 principles:

- 1) Ordinaries are to instruct their faithful that they may take part in such ceremonies, since they have only civil significance, but that in so doing, they must also clearly explain their intentions when necessary to avoid misinterpretations of their conduct.
- 2) The ordinaries may permit their Faithful, when they participate in marriages, funerals, and other private rites of common social life in Japan, to participate as do other people in such rites and customs of perhaps religious origin but which today signify nothing more than civility, good will, and mutual benevolence, declaring their own intention when necessary or prudent.
- 3) With regard to the oath on the rites, priests are to put into practice what is laid down in the present instruction, avoiding all controversy.

A final remark reminded the ordinaries that they were not only free to follow the norms laid down in the instruction but that indeed they *should* follow them.

The promulgation of the instruction necessitated changes in the national catechism and the prayer books in order to inform the Faithful correctly, and this was done. The text of the instruction was also included in the appendix of the *commune directorium*, published in 1937.

In Feb. of 1937, Card. Dougherty of Philadelphia, who attended the Eucharistic Congress in Manila as Papal Legate, visited Japan, together with the Apostolic Delegate Marella, he was received by the Emperor on 18.02.37. Then, again with Marella, and joined by Archbishop Doi of Tokyo and prominent members of the clergy and the laity, he visited both the Yasukuni and the Meiji Shrines in Tokyo. This action sent a strong message to Japanese Catholics, allaying whatever doubts, fears, and scruples they might have had regarding the new directives. It also showed the nation that Catholics should no longer be suspected of

disloyalty to their country. Finally, it also presaged a new Roman stance regarding the Chinese rites.

Note that at the beginning of this whole process of change was the refusal, on 05.05.32. of two or three Catholic students to bow to the dead at the Yasukuni Shrine. The irony is, that their action would eventually be declared unnecessary and even counter-productive

### **Manchuguo and Wang Dao**

1895. The first Sino-Japanese war was won by Japan, which increased the latter's influence in Korea.

1904-05. Japan defeated Russia in a war fought on Chinese soil!

1910. Japan annexed Korea.

To the West of Korea, Manchuria was governed by warlords after the founding of the Chinese Nationalist Government, which was in control only of the South of the country.

Japan sought *Lebensraum* and control of the natural resources of Manchuria. *Against the wishes of the Japanese central government*, Japan's Kwantung Army engineers the 'Mukden incident' on 18.09.31. as a pretext for the occupation of Manchuria, which was then completed on 18.02.32.

25.02.32. Proclamation of the new state of Manchuguo, which had great racial diversity: Han, Manchus, Mongols, Koreans, and Japanese. Wang Dao, the Way of the Benevolent Ruler, a Confucian concept, was proclaimed as the guiding and unifying doctrine of the new nation, as all of the above-mentioned peoples were familiar with and had lived according to Confucian ideals, in particular the ideal of Wang Dao. Pu'I, formerly dethroned by the new Republic of China, was named Emperor.

Thus, as State Shinto had been used to unify and control the Japanese people, Wang Dao would be the instrument used to unify the diverse nationalities of Manchuguo and to fend off the danger of Communism. The schools were used to educate the young as to the benefits of Wang Dao, and various government sponsored cultural organizations and programs were implemented and directed by the government to indoctrinate the general populace.

Already existing *wen miao*, i.e. temples, were inventoried and repaired and new ones were built throughout the land. 'Ministers' were trained by the Ministry of Education to prepare for and to ensure the proper execution of the Confucian ceremonies. The usual ceremonies in honor of Confucius, the Spring and Fall ceremonies, with government officials present, as well as ceremonies of the new and full moon were performed. Students were expected to take part in these ceremonies, especially the major ones.

Although the number of Catholics in the land was quite small in the early XX C., e.g. around 110.000 out of some 30 million inhabitants, there were relatively large numbers of clergy, mostly foreign, and the Church was taking root in society.

14.02.34. The ordinaries of Manchuguo met at Hsinking. A reception was held for the Japanese ambassador and the Prime Minister of Manchuguo, both of whom assured the ordinaries of government good will toward the Church and its works in the new state.

20.03.34. Propaganda Fidei named Augustin Gaspais, Bishop of Kirin, 'Rep. of the Holy See in Manchuguo,' because international community did not recognize it.

12.04.34. Archbishop Chambon of Tokyo sent a Japanese priest, Taguchi Yoshigoro, to assist Bishop Gaspais in dealing with the government of Manchuguo. In the company of Fr. T., Bishop Gaspais was received by the Prime Minister and by the head of the Foreign Ministry, and he later had a private audience with the Emperor, Pu'I.

28.04.34. Invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fr. Taguchi gave a conference to government officials on the nature and role of the Catholic Church. Thus, there was good will and amicable relations between the Church and the new government.

07.11.34. Gaspais wrote to Propaganda Fidei regarding the difficulties of *wen miao* ceremonies for Catholics.

03.12.34. Propaganda Fidei requested that ordinaries study the problem and make recommendations to Rome.

27.02.35. To prepare for his discussion with the ordinaries, Gaspais wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asking whether the rites in honor of Confucius are religious in nature or purely civil.

05.03.35. The Ministry of Education, responsible for religious affairs as well as for education, replied to Gaspais that the rites in question were *purely civil and did not have 'any religious character.'*

12.03.35. Gaspais convened the ordinaries to evaluate Confucian rites and to consider the possible participation of Catholics.

In his subsequent report to Propaganda Fidei, Gaspais explained that the investigation and the discussions were held having in mind Canon 1258 and the decision of the Propaganda Fidei regarding the Shinto rites in Japan. The results of the discussions were as follows:

- 1) Mission schools may keep an image of Confucius in a special place, and students may make an inclination before it, but they may not erect an altar with candles and incense. Catholic students in non-Catholic schools may participate in Confucian rites only passively, and they may make the same homage to a name tablet of Confucius as they would to his image.
- 2) Catholics may passively assist at Confucian rites in a temple, and, in the case of a Christian employed by the temple, he may perform a subordinate function during the ceremony, provided that his cooperation is purely material and that he would lose his employment in case of his refusal to participate. Further, Catholics may sing hymns and songs in honor of Confucius, except when such songs are directly connected to a sacrificial ceremony. After completion of a sacrifice, acts of obeisance may be performed through passive assistance, but Catholics may *not* partake of the victim, i.e. food offered in the ceremony.
- 3) Monetary contributions *are allowed* for the construction of pagodas in honor of Confucius. If the temple is destined for some religious cult, however, contributions would be allowable *only* if collected together with (*in globo*) taxes for other purposes as well. Taxes for stage performances at shrines are to be judged according to the same criteria, i.e. whether the performance has a superstitious (religious) purpose or is only for public enjoyment.
- 4) At funerals, inclinations before the deceased are permitted,

because these have lost their religious character and are now seen as civil homage to the deceased. Thus, where participation is purely passive, such acts of homage are permitted.

These results of the ordinaries discussions were drawn up in writing by Gaspais on 25.03.35, and taken by him to Rome, where they were studied by the Propaganda Fidei.

On 16.05.35, Gaspais had an audience with Pius XI.

On 28.05.35, Gaspais received the official response of the Propaganda Fidei:

- 1) Ordinaries in Manchuguo must prudently make known to the Faithful the written confirmation of the government that Confucian ceremonies have 'absolutely no religious character.'
- 2) Ordinaries must be guided by this official declaration (of the government) in giving guidelines to the Faithful.
- 3) Priests having taken the oath against the Chinese rites must follow the instructions of the ordinaries, avoiding all questionings and controversies, i.e. they are to obey without discussion.

Finally, the ordinaries are urged to follow closely the development of the question and to act with one mind.

The importance of this reply was that it was the first official document from Rome marking a change in the Church's position on the Chinese rites. The explanation for this change will be finally given – in terse form – in the instruction '*Pluries instantereque*' of 26.05.36, regarding the Shinto rites in Japan.

Thus, the Church's position, expressed in '*Ex quo singulari*' of 1742, had remained unchanged for nearly two centuries. It is only in the letter of the Propaganda Fidei to Bishop Gaspais that we first see a softening of this position, based 1) on a *better understanding of the culture and the civilization of the peoples being evangelized* and 2) on the realization of the *evolving signification of the rites in question*. But in this softening, one also sees great caution in the Church's directives, in which reference is still made to the oath against the Chinese rites, and missionaries are still instructed to abstain from all controversy on the matter, i.e. to display no public or otherwise open dissent.

### ***The Final Decision and the End of the Controversy***

Pius XI, 06.02.22 – 10.02.39.

With the approval of this Pope, on 28.05.35., Propaganda Fidei issued the instruction allowing participation in the Shinto rites in Japan, and on 26.05.36., it issued the instruction allowing participation in the Confucian rites in Manchuguo. With these decisions, the way was now clear to grant similar permissions for the rites in China and thereby put the whole matter once and for all to rest.

The political situation in China was extremely complicated. The monarchy was overthrown, but the Japanese were attempting to restore it in Manchuguo as a means of unifying the people.

The Nationalist government in Nanjing was, at first with the cooperation of the Communist forces, trying to defeat the warlord-led rebels in the North, but then had to fight the Communists as well. Finally, when the Japanese launched their campaign in the South against Nanjing and the Yangtze valley, they had to retreat into the mountains stronghold of Chungking, where they would remain for the duration of

the war.

In spite of all this and the ensuing disruption of national life, the church was undeterred in her task of bringing the Gospel to all peoples, including those of China.

In the period between the wars, shortly after his accession to the Throne of Peter, Pius XI appointed *Archbishop Celso Costantini as Apostolic Delegate to China*.

On 15.05.24., Costantini presided over the *First Council of the Church in China*, which was attended by 42 bishops, 5 Apostolic Prefects, representatives of 13 missionary orders, and the heads of various religious institutes, together with representatives of the Chinese clergy, held in Zikaweinear Shanghai. The purpose of the council was to plan a *general reform of the Church in China*. The council fathers considered the rites question to be too complicated and too delicate a matter to discuss in the council sessions, so they simply reminded the missionaries and the native priests of the obligation of all regarding the oath against the Chinese rites prescribed by Benedict XIV in 1742. Indeed, they believed that the entire matter of the rites should be re-examined. Their intention was to provide Propaganda Fidei with all the necessary and pertinent information and to leave the matter for the Holy See to decide.

For his part, Pius XI took further steps to support and to develop the missionary effort of the Church. On 15.06.26, he issued the encyclical '*Rerum ecclesiae*,' in which he stressed the great need for a significant increase in missionary vocations and the urgent necessity for missionaries to forget their respective homelands, together with the disputes, divisions, and wars that were going on among them, and to consider themselves the adopted sons of the nation and the people to whom they had consecrated their lives. Finally, he stressed the *urgent necessity of building up a native clergy* so that the new Christians might be led by their own. In other words, long before the term was coined, he stressed inculturation.

To underline his point, he proceeded, also in 1926, to ordain 6 Chinese bishops (the goal for which Fr. V. Lebbe had fought all his life), and, in 1927, he consecrated the first Japanese bishop.

In addition, in his pontificate the two authoritative instructions allowing the Faithful to participate in the Confucian ceremonies in Manchuguo (28.05.35) and in the Shinto ceremonies in Japan (26.05.36) were issued.

The first Apostolic Delegate to Japan had been appointed in 1919 under Benedict XV, and in 1922, Pius XI established the first Apostolic Delegation to China in Beijing. In 1936, he appointed a 'special representative' of the Vatican for Manchuguo. The final question to be resolved in this whole matter would be addressed by Pius XII.

*Pius XII* became Pope on 02.03.39., and on 20.10.39., he issued his first encyclical: '*Summi pontificatus*,' in which he stressed that the unity of humankind is enriched by the particular cultural heritages of the various peoples of the earth. He insisted that the one, universal Faith must *cherish all cultural traditions that are not in conflict with the Faith*. Regarding these various traditions, he wrote: "All that in such usages and customs is not inseparably bound up with religious errors will always be subject to kindly consideration, and when... possible, will

be sponsored and developed. . . .”

To make his point, on 29.10.39, he consecrated 12 men from diverse nations as bishops of the Universal Church.

Then, six weeks later, on 08.12.39, Propaganda Fidei issued the last formal instruction on the matter of the Chinese rites, ‘*Plane compertum est*,’ in which it is made clear that certain customs in the Orient which ‘. . . may have been involved with pagan rites in ancient times, have – with the changes in customs and thinking over the course of centuries – retained merely the civil significance of piety towards ancestors, or of love for the fatherland, or of courtesy towards one’s neighbors.’”

The instruction further stated that the Chinese government has declared freedom of religion and declared that ceremonies in honor of Confucius mandated by the civil authorities are in no way religious but only expressions of honor and respect according to ancestral tradition.

Therefore, declared *Plane compertum*, “*it is permissible for Catholics to attend these ceremonies, whether in temples or in schools.*” Moreover, Catholic schools may display a portrait of Confucius or a tablet with his name.

Where there might be danger of scandal, it suffices for the Catholic to declare his right intention. All this is in accordance with the principle of passive participation as specified in Canon 1258 regarding gestures and ceremonies that the law considers purely civil. A declaration of intention is sufficient to prevent false interpretations.

In addition, regarding funerals, bowing and other gestures (kneeling), the use of incense, etc. before the coffin, as well as a picture or tablet of the deceased *are permitted*.

The final point of the matter was then addressed: the oath against the Chinese rites. Since the oath is no longer in harmony with the recent directives given for Manchuguo and Japan, and since these rites themselves, being purely civil, are no longer an issue, the oath was *finally and formally abolished*.

To keep matters in perspective, several things regarding this final instruction on the whole question of the Chinese rites should be pointed out:

- 1) This instruction is the final one regarding the Chinese rites. It closed a debate that had lasted for over three centuries. Cf. the directives of 1603 by Fr. Alessandro Valignano, SJ, Visitor to the Far East.
- 2) The instruction appeared in a time of war, which tended to lessen its impact, and the number of Catholics in China was relatively small.
- 3) Regarding the Confucian and ancestral rites, the instruction added nothing to what was stipulated by the decrees for Manchuguo of 1935 and for Japan of 1936.
- 4) The instruction was largely motivated by government declarations in Manchuguo and Japan that the rites were devoid of any religious cult or content.
- 5) What was new in this instruction was the *abrogation of the oath*

against the Chinese rites, an oath that was first required by Clement XI in 1715, and then, in an amplified form, by Benedict XIV in 1742.

- 6) The instruction maintained the prohibition against disputes regarding the Chinese rites. After the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law in 1917, in 1930 the Holy Office (again) prohibited “any writing on the Chinese rites without the express and special permission of the Holy Office.”

Thus, the final instruction simply extended to China proper what had already been granted to Manchuguo and Japan, and, in addition, it abrogated the oath, which had outlived its usefulness (assuming it had been useful in the first place).

But the final instruction was *not quite the last word* on the subject. On 28.02.41, Propaganda Fidei issued a *mens*, a reminder, or, in fact, an additional clarification to the Apostolic Delegate in China. It read:

“The composition of a list of permissible or forbidden ceremonies is *absolutely to be avoided*. . . . Where necessity demands, the ordinaries can merely give *general rules and norms* . . . because we live in a period of transition.”

It continued to say that the ordinaries were not to go into specific details of particular rites, *leaving matters to the consciences of individual priests and lay people*. Further, they were to ensure that schools instruct students on the general principles involved and the permissions granted by the Holy See. Priests were to use the confessional to resolve questions and doubts. Here, Prop. Fidei followed the same procedure as that used in the instruction to Japan, where general principles were given for the evaluation of the particular rites. In contrast, the ordinaries of Manchuguo had drawn up a list of specific cases and replied to each of them. It is clear that general principles were to be preferred as the rites were still evolving. *Noteworthy* here is giving the individual Catholic the possibility of judging a specific case according to his conscience.

### **Evaluation**

1) Great caution is required in the accommodation of the Gospel to local tradition and in the evaluation of the acceptability of local customs and usages. Cf. *quodquod datur, ad modum recipientis datur*, e.g. the different ‘incarnations’ of the Faith in the Greek, Roman, and Semitic worlds, which provides a principle valid for other cultures. Only that which is contrary to the Gospel is to be rejected.

2) Necessity of proceeding *slowly and prudently*. Cf. the pitfalls and dangers of ecumenism and the ‘inter-faith’ dialogue. We cannot welcome and take on board everything, nor can everything that is acceptable be integrated and implemented *at once*. Change, particularly in respect to rituals, ceremonies, customs, and convictions, needs to be *gradual*. Otherwise, the only result is alienation. As much as good theology, good psychology is also necessary.



# A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF INTERCHURCH AND INTERCONFESSIONAL THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUES

Twenty-fourth Supplement - 2009

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR CONFESSIONAL FAMILIES CHURCHES AND COUNCILS

A . . . . . Anglican	M . . . . . Methodist
AC . . . . . Assyrian Church of the East	MECC . . . . . Middle East Council of Churches
AIC . . . . . African Instituted Churches	Mn . . . . . Mennonite
B . . . . . Baptist	Mo . . . . . Moravian
CC . . . . . Chaldean Catholic Church	O . . . . . Eastern Orthodox ( <i>Byzantine</i> )
CEC . . . . . Conference of European Churches	OC . . . . . Old Catholic ( <i>includes Polish National</i> )
CCEE . . . . . Council of European Episcopal Conferences	OO . . . . . Oriental Orthodox ( <i>Non-Chalcedonian</i> )
CP . . . . . Constantinople Patriarchate	Pe . . . . . Pentecostal
CPCE . . . . . Community of Protestant Churches in Europe ( <i>formerly Leuenberg Church Fellowship</i> )	R . . . . . Reformed
D . . . . . Disciples of Christ	RC . . . . . Roman Catholic
DOMBES . . . . . Groupe des Dombes	SA . . . . . Salvation Army
E . . . . . Evangelicals	SDA . . . . . Seventh-Day Adventist
FC . . . . . Free Churches	U . . . . . United Churches
FO . . . . . Faith and Order	W . . . . . Waldensian
L . . . . . Lutheran ( <i>includes German 'Evangelische'</i> )	WCC . . . . . World Council of Churches

## LIST OF DIALOGUES

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|---|---|
| <p><b>A-B:</b> Anglican-Baptist International Forum</p> <p><b>A-D / aus:</b> Anglican Church of Australia-Churches of Christ Conversations</p> <p><b>A-L:</b> Anglican-Lutheran International Commission</p> <p><b>A-L / africa:</b> All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission</p> <p><b>A-L / aus:</b> Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in Australia</p> <p><b>A-L / can:</b> Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue</p> <p><b>A-L / eng-g:</b> Representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and of the Church of England</p> <p><b>A-L / eng-nordic regions:</b> Representatives of the Nordic countries and of the Church of England</p> <p><b>A-L / eur:</b> Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission</p> <p><b>A-L / usa:</b> Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA</p> <p><b>A-L-R / eng-f:</b> Official Dialogue between the Church of England and the Lutheran-Reformed Permanent Council in France</p> <p><b>A-M:</b> Anglican-Methodist International Commission</p> <p><b>A-M / eng:</b> Anglican-Methodist Conversation in Great Britain</p> <p><b>A-M / usa:</b> United Methodist-Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue</p> <p><b>A-Mo:</b> Anglican-Moravian Conversations</p> <p><b>A-Mo / usa:</b> Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue in the USA</p> <p><b>A-O:</b> Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission</p> | <p><b>A-O / usa:</b> Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the USA</p> <p><b>A-OC:</b> Anglican-Old Catholic Theological Conversations</p> <p><b>A-OC / na:</b> Anglican-Old Catholic North American Working Group</p> <p><b>A-OO:</b> Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue</p> <p><b>A-OO / copt:</b> Anglican-Coptic Relations</p> <p><b>A-R:</b> Anglican-Reformed International Commission</p> <p><b>A-RC:</b> Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)</p> <p><b>A-RC:</b> International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM)</p> <p><b>A-RC / aus:</b> Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission of Australia</p> <p><b>A-RC / b:</b> Belgian Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee</p> <p><b>A-RC / br:</b> Brazilian Anglican-Roman Catholic National Commission</p> <p><b>A-RC / can:</b> Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission</p> <p><b>A-RC / eng:</b> English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee</p> <p><b>A-RC / eur:</b> Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group in Western Europe</p> <p><b>A-RC / f:</b> Anglican-Catholic Joint Working Group in France</p> <p><b>A-RC / usa:</b> Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA</p> <p><b>A-U / aus:</b> Conversations between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia</p> <p><b>AC-CC:</b> Joint Commission for Unity between the Assyrian Church of the East</p> |
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and the Chaldean Catholic Church  
**AC-OO / copt:** Theological Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Coptic Orthodox Church  
**AC-OO / syr:** Bilateral Commission between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church  
**AC-RC:** Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East  
**AIC-R:** Dialogue between the African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches  
**B-CPCE / eur:** Dialogue between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the European Baptist Federation  
**BL:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue  
**BL / g:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Germany  
**BL / n:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Norway  
**BL / sf:** Baptist-Lutheran Conversation in Finland  
**BL / usa:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA  
**B-M-W / italy:** Baptist-Methodist-Waldensian Relations in Italy  
**B-Mn:** Baptist-Mennonite Theological Conversations  
**B-O:** Baptist-Orthodox Preparatory Dialogue  
**B-R:** Baptist-Reformed Dialogue  
**B-RC:** Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations  
**B-RC / f:** Baptist-Catholic Joint Committee in France  
**B-RC / usa (ab):** American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue  
**B-RC / usa (sb):** Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue  
**CEC-CCEE:** Joint Committee of Conference of European Churches and Council of European Episcopal Conferences  
**D-L / usa:** Disciples of Christ-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA  
**D-O / rus:** Disciples of Christ-Russian Orthodox Dialogue  
**D-R:** Disciples of Christ-Reformed Dialogue  
**D-RC:** Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue  
**D-U / aus:** Conversations between the Churches of Christ in Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia  
**D-U / usa:** Disciples of Christ-United Church of Christ Dialogue in the USA  
**DOMBES:** Dialogues des Dombes  
**E-RC:** Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission  
**E-SDA:** Theological Dialogue between the World Evangelical Alliance and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church  
**FC-O / g:** Free Churches-Orthodox Dialogue in Germany  
**FO:** Faith and Order conferences, consultations, studies  
**LM:** International Lutheran-Methodist Joint Commission  
**LM / n:** Conversation between the Church of Norway and the United Methodist Church in Norway  
**LM / s:** Dialogue between the United Methodist Church in Sweden and Church of Sweden  
**LM / sf:** Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue in Finland  
**L-M / usa:** US Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue  
**L-Mn :** Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission  
**L-Mn / f:** Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in France  
**L-Mn / g:** Theological Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany (AMG)  
**L-Mn / usa:** Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in the USA  
**L-Mo / usa:** Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue in the USA  
**L-O:** Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission  
**L-O / g-cp:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate  
**L-O / g-rom:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Romanian Orthodox Church  
**L-O / g-rus:** Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Russian Orthodox Church  
**L-O / sf:** Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church  
**L-O / sf-rus:** Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church  
**L-O / usa:** Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in the USA  
**L-O-R / f:** Dialogue between Representatives of the Inter-Orthodox Bishops' Committee in France and the Protestant Federation of France  
**L-O-R / na:** Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Theological Conversations in North America  
**L-OC / g:** Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Old Catholic Church in Germany  
**L-OO / copt:** Theological Dialogue between the Coptic Evangelical Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church  
**L-OO / copt-s:** Coptic Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue in Sweden  
**L-OO / india:** Dialogue between the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Lutheran Churches in India  
**L-Pe :** Lutheran-Pentecostal Conversations  
**L-Pe / sf:** Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Finland  
**L-Pe-R / f:** Pentecostal-Protestant Dialogue in France  
**L-R:** Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission  
**L-R / arg:** Dialogue between the Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata and the Evangelical Congregational Church of Argentina  
**L-R / aus:** Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Reformed Churches of Australia  
**L-R / can:** Canadian Lutheran-Reformed Conversations  
**L-R / f:** Fédération Protestante de France  
**L-R / usa:** Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations in the USA  
**L-R-RC:** Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue  
**L-R-RC / f:** Catholic-Protestant Joint Working Group in France  
**L-R-SDA / f:** Protestant-Seventh-day Adventist Dialogue in France  
**L-R-U / eur:** Leuenberg Church Fellowship  
**L-RC:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity  
**L-RC / arg:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Argentina  
**L-RC / aus:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Australia  
**L-RC / br:** National Roman Catholic-Lutheran Commission in Brazil  
**L-RC / can:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Canada  
**L-RC / g:** Joint Commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Episcopal Conference (DB)  
**L-RC / india:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in India  
**L-RC / jap:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Japan  
**L-RC / n:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Discussion Group in Norway  
**L-RC / s:** Official Working Group of Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm  
**L-RC / sf:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Relations in Finland  
**L-RC / usa:** Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA  
**L-SDA:** Lutheran-Seventh-Day Adventist Consultations  
**L-U / aus:** Theological Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia  
**M-O:** Methodist-Orthodox Commission  
**M-R:** Methodist-Reformed Dialogue  
**M-RC:** Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council  
**M-RC / eng:** English Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee

- M-RC / usa:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church in the USA
- M-SA:** Methodists and Salvation Army in Dialogue
- Mn-R:** Mennonite World Conference and World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- Mn-R / nl:** Mennonite-Reformed Dialogue in the Netherlands
- Mn-RC:** Mennonite-Catholic International Dialogue
- Mn-RC / latin america:** Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue in Latin America
- O-OC:** Joint (Mixed) Orthodox-Old Catholic Theological Commission
- O-OO:** Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
- O-OO / rus:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
- O-OO / rus-armenia:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church
- O-R:** Orthodox-Reformed International Dialogue
- O-R / ch:** Protestant-Orthodox Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
- O-R / na:** Orthodox-Reformed Conversations in North America
- O-R / rus:** Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church
- O-RC:** Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church
- O-RC / ch:** Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
- O-RC / f:** Joint Catholic-Orthodox Committee in France
- O-RC / g:** Greek Orthodox-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Germany
- O-RC / rom:** Joint Commission for Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic)
- O-RC / rus:** Theological Conversations between Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church
- O-RC / rus-g:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Episcopal Conference
- O-RC / usa:** North American Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation
- O-U / aus:** Theological Dialogue between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
- OC-R-RC / ch:** Old Catholic-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
- OC-RC:** Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Conversations
- OC-RC / ch:** Dialogue Commission of the Old Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches in Switzerland
- OC-RC / g:** Dialogue between the Old Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany
- OC-RC / na:** Joint Commission of the Polish National Catholic Church and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops
- OC-RC / nl:** Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Study Commission in the Netherlands
- OC-RC / pol:** Joint Commission of the Polish Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland
- OO-R:** Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue
- OO-RC:** International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.
- OO-RC / armenia:** Armenian Apostolic Church-Catholic Church Joint Commission
- OO-RC / copt:** International Joint Commission between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
- OO-RC / eritrea:** Eritrean Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
- OO-RC / ethiop:** Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
- OO-RC / india:** Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
- OO-RC / syr-india:** Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church
- OO-RC / usa:** Official Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation
- Pe-R:** Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue
- Pe-RC:** Pentecostal-Roman Catholic International Dialogue
- Pe-WCC:** Joint Consultative Group between the WCC and Pentecostals
- R-RC:** Reformed-Roman Catholic Joint Study Commission
- R-RC / a:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Austria
- R-RC / b:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Belgium
- R-RC / ch:** Protestant/Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
- R-RC / nl:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands
- R-RC / scot:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland
- R-RC / usa:** Roman Catholic-Presbyterian Reformed Consultation in the USA
- R-SDA:** International Theological Dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- RC-SDA:** Conversations between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Roman Catholic Church
- RC-U / aus:** Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniting Church in Australia
- RC-U / can:** Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group in Canada
- RC-W / italy:** Roman Catholic-Waldensian Relations in Italy
- RC-WCC:** Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches
- SA-SDA:** Theological Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- WCC:** World Council of Churches - assemblies, convocations, relations

#### PERIODICALS SURVEYED

ACK aktuell; Acta Apostolicae Sedis; AFER-African Ecclesial Review;

American Baptist Quarterly; Amicizia ebraico-cristiana; Amitié; Angelicum; The

Anglican; Anglican Theological Review; Anglican Episcopal World; Annales theologici; Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia; The Asia Journal of Theology; Associated Christian Press Bulletin.

Bausteine für die Einheit der Christen; Bolentín de ecumenismo y diálogo interreligioso en la Argentina; Bulletin du Centre Protestant d'Études; Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology.

CADEIO Newsletter; Call to Unity; Calvin Theological Journal; Carthaginensia; Catholica; CCA News-Christian Conference of Asia; CEC-KEK Monitor; Centro - News from the Anglican Centre in Rome; Centro Pro Unione Bulletin; Chrétiens en Marche; Christian Orient; Der christliche Osten; Una città per il dialogo; La Civiltà cattolica; Commonweal; Communio; Concilium; Confronti; Contacts; Courier; Courier ecuménique du Moyen Orient; Cultures and Faith; Current Dialogue; Currents in Theology and Mission.

Diakonia; DIAKONIA News; Diálogo ecuménico; Distinctive Diaconate News; Doctrine and Life; La Documentation catholique; Doxology; Eastern Churches Journal; Ecclesia Mater; Ecclesiology; ECO: evangelici, cattolici, ortodossi; Ecumenical Letter on Evangelism; The Ecumenical Review; Ecumenical Trends; The Ecumenist; Ecumenism; Ekklesia; Encounter; ENI-Ecumenical News International & Nouvelles ecuméniques internationales; Episkepsis; ESBVM Newsletter; Études; Exchange.

Forum Focus; Forum Letter; Foyers mixtes; The Greek Orthodox Theological Review; Gregorianum; Herder Korrespondenz; Heythrop Journal; Information Service & Service d'Information; Interchurch Families; International Bulletin of Missionary Research; International Centre of Newman Friends Newsletter; International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church; International Review of Mission; Infoekumene: noticias ecuménicas; Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift; Irénikon; Irish Theological Quarterly; Istina; Italia ortodossa.

Jeevadhara; Journal of Anglican Studies; Journal of Ecumenical Studies; Journal of Pentecostal Theology; Kerygma und Dogma.

Lettera da Taizé; LibreSens; Lutheran Forum; Lutheran Quarterly; LWF/LWB Documentation; LWI-Lutheran World Information.

MD-Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim; Melita theologica; Ministerial Formation; Missionalia; Le Monde copte; Le Monde des Religions; Näköala utsikt; Newman Studies Journal; NEO-Nordisk Ekumenisk Orientering; Nicolaus; La Nuova Alleanza; Nouvelle revue théologique; Nuevo siglo.

O Odigos; Ökumenische Rundschau; Ökumenisches Forum; Oikumene; One in Christ; Origins; The Orthodox Church; Orthodoxes Forum; L'Osservatore Romano (weekly English); Ostkirchliche Studien.

Pastoral Ecuménica; The Pastoral Review; Pneuma; Positions luthériennes; Proche-Orient Chrétien; Pro Dialogo; Pro Ecclesia; Protestantesimo; Quaderni della Segreteria Generale CEI; Qiqqjôn di Bose.

The Reformed and Presbyterian World; Il Regno; Relaciones Interconfesionales; Religioni per la pace; Reseptio; Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques; Revue des sciences religieuses; Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo; Rivista Ecumenica; The Romanian Patriarchate News Bulletin.

SAE Notizie; SEIA Newsletter on the Eastern Churches and Ecumenism; Scottish Journal of Theology; SEDOS Bulletin; S.I.C.O. Servizio Informazioni Chiese Orientali; SIDIC Roma Documentazione: bollettino di informazione; SMT-Svensk Missions Tidskrift; Sobomost; SOP-Service orthodoxe de presse mensuel & supplément; St. Ansgar's Bulletin, St. Nersess Theological Review; St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly; Studi Ecumenici; Studia i dokumenty ecumeniczne; Studia Oecumenica; Studia Liturgica; Studies in Interreligious Dialogue.

The Tablet; Texte aus der VELKD; Theoforum; Theological Studies; Theologische Revue; Theology Digest.

Una Sancta; Unité des Chrétiens; V Edinosti; WARC Up-Date; Wereld en Zending; The Window; Worship; Zeitzeichen.

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### Key to sub-headings:

INFORMATION: facts, communiqués, surveys, brief reports

REFLECTION AND REACTIONS: essays, responses, commentaries, theological papers

TEXTS AND PAPERS: documents, reports, statements, official responses

### Key to reading the bibliographical entry:

For periodical entries:

the first number refers to the volume and the second refers to the issue followed by the year and page numbers, thus:

*Christian Orient* 16, 4 (1995) 180-191 = pages 180-191 in volume 16, issue no. 4 in 1995 of *Christian Orient*.

### GENERAL

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-compiled by Loredana Nepi

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