

Contribution of Conclusions from the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin-America and the Caribbean in Aparecida on Inculturation

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3. The Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin-America and the Caribbean in Aparecida

“Faith in God has animated the life and culture of these nations for more than five centuries. From the encounter between that faith and the indigenous peoples, there has emerged the rich Christian culture of this Continent, expressed in art, music, literature, and above all, in the religious traditions and in the peoples’ whole way of being, united as they are by a shared history and a shared creed that give rise to a great underlying harmony, despite the diversity of cultures and languages.” (BENEDICT XVI, *Opening Speech for the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin-America and the Caribbean in Aparecida*, Brazil, V-13-2007, n. 1: AAS 99 (2007) 445).

On the XXVII Ordinary Assembly of CELAM, celebrated at Caracas in 2001, it was decided to propose to John Paul II the possibility to call the Fifth General Conference of Bishops of Latin-America and the Caribbean. Even though the preparation process toward the Fifth Conference was very wide, it is convenient to mention some significant steps¹. Benedict XVI approved the subject: *Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ, so that our peoples may have life in Him. "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life" (Jh 14, 6)*. The result from the work of the Central Commission of preparation of the Fifth Conference of CELAM, and also from a group of experts was the *Participation Document*² and *Working Cards* published on September 2005.

From the contributions of the Bishop Conferences, several seminaries in a continental level and others taken from Latin-American ecclesiastical organisms were elaborated – after a very hard work- the *Synthesis Document*³.

The Fifth General Conference of Bishops of Latin-America and the Caribbean took place from May 13th to 31st 2007 at *Santuario Nacional de Nuestra Señora de la Concep-*

¹ Although in a succinctly way but with an adequate vision the conference shows that Card. Errázuriz Ossa, in his quality of President of CELAM at that time, delivered before the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Commission for Latin-America in Rome on January 19, 2007: ERRÁZURIZ OSSA, CARD. FRANCISCO JAVIER; *Preparation of the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin-America and the Caribbean at http://celam.org/documentos_celam/doc_12.doc* (5-VII-2010).

² Cfr. CELAM; *to the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin-America and the Caribbean. Participation Document. Working Cards, Bogota, 2005*. The Document is contained on five chapters: 1) The longing of happiness, truth, fraternity and peace (n. 1-20); 2) Since the arrival of the Gospel to Latin-America and the Caribbean we live our Faith with gratitude (n. 21-35); 3) Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ (n. 36-93); 4) At the beginning of the Third Millennium (n. 94-158); 5) So our peoples may have life in Him (n. 159-174). For a very helpful introduction on the same we suggest the reading of STANOVNIK, MONS. ANDRÉS; *Reading keys for the Participation Document*, in «Medellín» XXXII/n. 125 (2006) 29-59.

³ Cfr. CELAM; *Synthesis on the contributions received for the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops in Latin-America and the Caribbean, Bogotá, 2007*. The designated team by CELAM for the writing of this document was integrated by: Mons. Andrés Stanovnik, Mons. Ricardo Ezzati, Mons. Santiago Silva, P. Francisco Merlos, P. Sydney Fones, P. Mario França Miranda, Sister Rosa Montero, Dr. Consuelo Vélez and P. Víctor Manuel Fernández. Also participated for several days Cardinal Francisco Errázuriz, cfr. FERNÁNDEZ, VÍCTOR MANUEL; *Estructuras internas de la vitalidad cristiana. La vida digna y plena como clave de interpretación de Aparecida*, in *Theology* XLIV/nº 94 (2007) 422, note 4.

ción Aparecida in Brazil, with 266 participants: 162 members, 81 guests, 8 observers and 15 experts⁴.

Benedict XVI delivered the *Opening Speech*⁵: He began by making an important historical reference to Christian Faith in Latin-America, mentioning the continuing of the Conference with the precedents and deepening glosses on the subject of the Conference, this speech had a notable influence in the development of the same⁶. It is also important to remember his Homily⁷ in the opening Mass of the Fifth Conference and the *Speech at the end of the recitation of the Holy Rosary*, together with the *Final Message* of the Bishops, constitutes essential lectures in order to go deeper and understand in a better way the Conclusions of *Aparecida*⁸.

⁴ In order to have a joint vision on the development of the Conference we refer to: ORTIZ LOZADA, PBRO. LEONIDAS, *The event of Aparecida, step by step*, in «Medellín» XXXIII/n. 130 (2007) 215-274; STANOVNIK, MONS. ANDRÉS, *OfmCap, Notes about Aparecida. Event, Method, Document and Mission*, at: http://www.celam.org/documentos_celam/207.doc (5-VII-2010). Number 5 and 6 contain a wide reference to the method followed at the Fifth Conference.

About the environment at the Fifth Conference we recommend the first part of the intervention by Archbishop from Valparaíso (Chile): DUARTE GARCÍA, MONS. GONZALO, *Our people and culture according to Aparecida*, which was presented at the Vicars and Bishops Conference, Lo Cañas, August 9, 2007, at: <http://www.iglesia.cl/especiales/vconferencia/documentos/mduarte.pdf> (5-VII-2010).

⁵ Cfr. BENEDICT XVI, *Opening Speech at Aparecida*, 13-V-2007; AAS 99 (2007) 445-460. From now on the present will be quoted as OS from the related numeral.

⁶ With great difference it is the most quoted document within *Aparecida* Conclusions, it appears quoted over 50 times. With no intention of giving a greater value to the group of documents –and the number of times that it appears quoted at the Conclusions–, it seems to us that it is helpful to have a superficial vision: OS: 50; BXVI (other documents): 26; NMI: 19; JPII (other documents): 17; SD: 16; DP: 15; EAm: 15; LG: 11; PDV: 9; SC: 9; EN: 9; DCE: 9; FC: 7; LE: 5; AA: 5; CfL: 4; EV: 4 y DM: 2. There are other documents which are quoted- but their frequency does not exceed twice- which does not appear in the group of documents so we do not extend on an unnecessary way in something that is illustrative.

⁷ Cfr. *Homily in the Opening of the Fifth Conference of Bishops of Latin-America and the Caribbean in Aparecida*, 13-V-2007; AAS 99 (2007) 433-438.

⁸ Cfr. MELGUIZO YEPES, MONS. GUILLERMO, *The ecclesiastic way of the Fifth Conference and the questions of the Pope*, in «Medellín» XXXIII/n. 130 (2007) 275-287.

3.1 Conclusions or Document from Aparecida⁹

3.1.1 *The connection faith-culture*

There is no question about the importance of subjects such as faith-culture.

In the Opening Speech of Benedict XVI since the first moment He focuses the attention on the great historical importance which has had faith in Latin-America and in its culture:

“Faith in God has animated the life and culture of these nations for more than five centuries. From the encounter between that faith and the indigenous peoples, there has emerged the rich Christian culture of this Continent, expressed in art, music, literature, and above all, in the religious traditions and in the peoples’ whole way of being, united as they are by a shared history and a shared creed that give rise to a great underlying harmony, despite the diversity of cultures and languages. At present, this same faith has some serious challenges to address, because the harmonious development of society and the Catholic identity of these peoples are in jeopardy. (DI 1).

Most of the first part of the Speech is dedicated to go deeper on this subject; and also pointed out that the religious present desire in pre-Columbian religions led them to be capable of *knowing and taking Christ, the unknown God whose ancestors, without knowing kept looking for Him through their rich religious traditions.* (OS 1)

Bishops also use it in the Introduction of Conclusions (DA 1-18), by talking on initial evangelization in Latin-America¹⁰ and it is also present on the First Chapter (DA 20-

⁹ Cfr. Fifth GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE BISHOPS OF LATIN-AMERICA, *Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ, so that our people may have life in Him*; Conclusive Document, 3^a edition, CELAM, Bogotá 2007. From now on to make easier the reading this document will be quoted as DA, immediately adding the numeral that it belongs to. As it is used in all of those texts the *cursive writing* is ours, and it is made with the object to highlight some idea or useful concept in the respective comment.

¹⁰ It is obvious the change of perspective of the bishops between Puebla and Aparecida - 29 years of difference- related to the initial evangelization of Latin-America. In DP 409 says: *Latin-America has its origin in the meeting of the Hispanic-Lusitanian race with pre-Columbian and African culture.* Meanwhile in DA 4 it is stated that: *Gospel arrived to our land in the middle of a dramatic and unequal meeting of people and cultures.* Benedict XVI expressed in DI with the following terms: *The announcement of Jesus and His Gospel did not mean, at any moment, an alignment of pre-Columbian cultures, and neither was it an imposition of a strange culture.* Which pointed out during the next few days, in Rome at the General Assembly of 23-V-2007, by saying: *Certainly the memory of a glorious past cannot ignore the shadows that accompanied the evangelization work of the Latin-American continent: it is not possible to forget the suffering and injustice that inflicted the colonists on indigenous people, often abused on their fundamental rights. But the obligatory mentioning of those unjustifiable crimes- for everybody else already condemned by missionaries like Bartolomé de las Casas and also by theolo-*

32) and also on a larger part of the Second Chapter (DA 33-100), which corresponds to the analysis of Latin-American reality. The dedication of Chapter 10 to this subject denotes the importance that culture¹¹ has for Latin-American Bishops.

As it has been said before, references to culture and evangelization of it appear multiple times in the Conclusions, but the proper treatment of the subject is made on a more systematic way on Chapter 10: *Our people and culture*, which is contained on numerals 476 to 554, to talk about culture and the way of evangelize it:

*gians like Francisco de Vitoria, from Universidad de Salamanca- it should not be prevented to recognize with gratitude the admirable work that has been carried out by the divine grace among those people throughout these years. It seems to us from a particular guiding relevance what Cardinal Poupard writes about it: "In a similar way, evangelization of the Latin-American continent set the path for a new synthesis, different from the ancient and rich American-Indian civilizations, not more than what it already was, simply the culture of the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors transferred to the other side of the ocean. In this new synthesis, a true miscegenation in all levels, which finds its most genuine expression in American baroque, which conveys to a global vision of man and existence. As it could not be less, in this cultural process encounter some proper cultural indigenous elements disappeared. Today, five hundreds years later, we feel sorry for everything that was unfairly lost, except for those elements that offended human dignity. Although, it is important to remember that in this merging process, the situation is not different to the one of Israel People, constantly subjugated to purification through prophet words, which constantly denounce Israel fondness to look up in their own national culture, with their own idols, «to be just like other people», and open it to the nations and to the universal. To be sorry for the lost elements and ignore the richness of the new granted synthesis by the Gospel constitutes the recurrent temptation to turn sight to the misleading memory of the garlic and onions of Egypt, to create a false past idealizing that it never really existed. In the encounter between culture and the Word of God, two different orders of reality, it happens the same that in the personal area, where man carried out by the living side of the Word of God, «living and effective, sharp as a double edged sword», it is gradually purified from its ancient mental habits and criteria. Analogously, when Gospel finds a determined culture, a process is always caused, that, together with Santo Domingo document, we can describe to the light of the great mysteries of salvation, Incarnation, Easter and Pentecost. By the redeeming incarnation, Gospel goes deeper in the culture of men and becomes one with it; through Easter mystery passes thorough the purification of death and elevation by grace; finally, just like in Pentecost, by the strength of the Spirit, culture opens to the universal, going beyond its own limits..." in GARCÍA QUESADA, ALFREDO, *La Fe y la Cultura en el Pensamiento Católico Latinoamericano*, Universidad Católica San Pablo, Arequipa, Perú, 2007, pages. 8-9.*

¹¹ The term culture appears 84 times in the Conclusions, over passing in the number of times to the following terms: Disciples/s, Communion, Family, Values, Gospel and Evangelization. The term culture is over passed by: Formation, Pastoral, Community/ies, Mission, World, Service/s, Disciple/s /ship missionary, Faith, Missionary/ies, and Jesus Christ.

10. OUR TOWNS AND CULTURE	(476-554)
10.1 Culture and its evangelization	(476-480)
10.2 Education as public welfare	(481-483)
10.3 Pastoral of Social Communication	(484-490)
10.4 New areopagus and decisions centers	(491-500)
10.5 Disciples and missionaries in Public Life	(501-508)
10.6 Urban Pastoral	(509-519)
10.7 At the service of our unity and fraternity of our people	(520-528)
10.8 Indigenous and Afro-American integration	(529-533)
10.9 Reconciliation and Solidarity Paths.	(534-554)

3.1.2 *Culture Concept*

Aparecida does not define what culture is, and neither does it dedicate extended numerals as it was done in Puebla by presenting a definition for Culture (cfr. DP 386 and ss.) By the content of DA 476, at the beginning of our study chapter, it clearly seems that Aparecida refers to culture by using the same description that Puebla does on it, which proceeds from GS¹².

3.1.3 *Evangelization of culture and Inculturation*

How does Aparecida treat terms such as *evangelization of culture and inculturation of Gospel*?

The term *evangelization of culture* appears in the document under numbers: DA 99f, 491 y 526. On the first one it explains that now Church has more means to evangelize culture: radio, TV, movie theaters, press, Internet, web sites and RIIAL, etc. The following talks about new areopagus and about the mission of inculturation of Gospel in history. And in the third one it is mentioned as mean to obtain the great Latin-American land. The mentioning of this term is in a pastoral action context, without clarifying what it is about.

The term *inculturation* appears on the following: DA 4, 94, 99b, 479 and 491. On the first one remembers our Lady of Guadalupe as a sing of inculturation of the faith. On the second one it is said that bishops see with hope the inculturation process discerned to the light of Teaching. In the following ones it mentions the efforts of

¹² It can be said that this statement is also confirmed with the Reading of DA 37, 39, 41 and 51.

inculturation on the liturgy of indigenous and Afro-American people, and also that the fact of inculturation of faith is enriched with new expressions and values. There are no descriptions or explanations of how inculturation of faith and/or Gospel is carried out.

It is important to say that inculturation is hardly mentioned in Aparecida and it practically disappears compared to SD. It is only a matter of checking that the term in SD is mentioned 50 times but in DA it only appears 8 times (DA 4, 94, 99b, 479; 248, 258, 325 and 491)¹³.

It is not mentioned the incarnation of Gospel in culture –as it was abundantly done in Puebla and then in Santo Domingo – except in DA 517, d. And it is neither emphasized in the Conclusions the inculturation role in the pastoral proposals which are done.

It seems to us that Aparecida does not dedicate space in its Conclusions to discuss and explain doctrinally speaking these two terms- it was already done by the bishops in Santo Domingo- because it gives more importance of interest and urgency to the pastoral action, the *new urgency* of Aparecida which is expressed since the beginning of the Conclusions:

- "This V Conference sets out "the great task to take care and feed the faith of the people of God, and also to remind to the believers of this continent that in virtue of their baptism, *they are called to be disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ*" (DI 3). A new period begins in history with challenges and demands, characterized by the generalized uncertainty which is spread by new social and political turbulences, also by the dissemination of a distant and hostile culture to the Christian tradition by the emerging of varied religious offers, which are trying to answer, in their own ways, to the thirst of God which is expressed by our people (DA 10).
- It also tries to state, renew and revitalize the novelty of Gospel deep-seated in our history, *from a personal and community encounter with Jesus Christ, that interest disciples and missionaries*. They do not rely on great programs and structures, but they do it through new men and women who incar-

¹³ This fact would require a wider explanation as well as to study in depth in order to clarify why and it would make us separate from our fundamental study. As it is said, it does not take away the attention, after SD, the meager space that Aparecida dedicates to inculturation even though SD designates a wide space to the subject and which also- later to Santo Domingo- there is a proliferation of teaching documents which enriches this concept and its practice, that could have been an splendid frame for Aparecida to have pondered about it. We refer to documents such as: *Catechist Guides* (1993), *Roman Liturgy and Inculturation Introduction* (1994), *Vita Consecrata* (1996), *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997), *Fides et ratio* (1998), *Ecclesia in America* (1999), *For a Culture Pastoral* (1999), *Popular Piety and Liturgy Directory* (2001), etc.; together with other documents that, by referring to other geographical areas, have a lot of references on inculturation: *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995), *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999), *Ecclesia in Oceania* (2001).

nate such tradition and novelty, as disciples of Jesus Christ and missionaries of His Kingdom, leading people of a new life for a Latin-America which wishes to be recognized with the light and strength of the Spirit (DA 11).

This is the *new pastoral urgency* that Aparecida wants to promote throughout the Continent: *a personal and community encounter with Jesus Christ, that interest disciples and missionaries*. This missionary wish, as it was seen, is present in the Opening Speech of Benedict XVI, drenches the Conclusions, dominates the Final Message of the Bishops, and from that angle there are also structured the Conclusions in order to obtain that objective:

FIRST PART

THE LIFE OF OUR PEOPLE TODAY

1. MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

2. VISION OF THE MISSIONARY DISCIPLES ABOUT REALITY

SECOND PART

JESUS CHRIST LIFE ON MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

3. THE JOY OF BEING MISSIONARY DISCIPLES TO ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

4. THE CALLING OF MISSIONARY DISCIPLES TO SAINTLINESS

5. THE COMMUNION OF MISSIONARY DISCIPLES AT CHURCH

6. THE FORMATIVE ITINERARY OF MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

THIRD PART

JESUS CHRIST LIFE TO OUR PEOPLE

7. THE MISSION OF DISCIPLES AT THE SERVICE OF A FULL LIFE

8. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

9. FAMILY, PEOPLE AND LIFE

10. OUR PEOPLE AND CULTURE

CONCLUSION

Just like Puebla concludes setting a pastoral emphasis in the *evangelization of culture*, and Santo Domingo on *inculturation of faith*, Aparecida concludes setting an emphasis in the immediate apostolic action: the *personal and community encounter with Jesus Christ, that interest disciples and missionaries*, that finds a continent in which faith, hope and love renew the life of people and also transforms their culture (DA 13). *The pastoral conversion of our communities demands that it changes from a pastoral of sole conservation to a decisively missionary pastoral* (DA 370).

3.1.4 *Aparecida proposal related to the evangelization of culture.*

On the first part of the Document *The Life of our People Today* (20-100), it is analyzed the reality of Latin-America making, as it is logical, many references to current culture and its evangelization.

Bishops consider that Latin-American people and the Caribbean *live today a marked reality by great changes which deeply affect their lives* (DA 33), a group of changes connected to what is known as globalization¹⁴. Making an impact and bringing consequences in all of the aspects of their social life, religion included. Part of that *generalized uncertainty* that is mentioned.

These facts make that reality become *more and more dull and complex*. This means that any individual person always needs more information, if he wants to exercise over reality the governing mission that he is called to exercise (DA 36). All of this has carried to a *sense crisis*, on that sense that grants unity to all that exists and happens to us through experience, and that we, believers call religious sense, present in popular religiousness, which has played such as noble and guiding role, specially on the devotion to Virgin Mary, which has contributed in making us more aware of our common condition of children of God and also about our common dignity before His eyes (DA 37).

Bishops recognize the positive value of cultural Christian legacy and popular religiousness (DA 258-259, 262-264), which continue being important elements of Latin-American culture (DA 56), but also see that this precious legacy begins to erode (DA 38), and suffers the attacks of a pernicious influence of the new global culture, a culture that knows how to use the media. And it is also noticed that *our cultural traditions are no longer passed from one generation to another with the same fluency that happened in the past* (DA 39, also see 38 and 127), making also difficult in this way the passing of faith. Against this situation Bishops propose again a clear missionary action:

¹⁴ The characterization of this globalization phenomenon appears written on several numerals of the document: DA 34-36, 38-40, 44-51. It also appears forward, without being exhaustive, there are other characteristics of globalization: DA 61, 177, 185, 315, 321, 387, etc.

- For this reason, we as Christians need *to begin again since Christ*, since the contemplation of who has revealed to us in His mystery the contemplation of the human calling and its sense. *We need to become docile disciples in order to learn from Him*, in His pursuit, dignity and fullness of life. And we also need at the same time, *to be consumed by the missionary zeal to be able to take to the heart of culture of our time, that Unitarian and complete sense of human life that neither science, or politics, or even economics nor media could be able to grant it*. In Christ Word, Wisdom of God (cf. 1 Co 1, 30), culture will be able to find its center and depth, since the place where you can see reality as a group with all of its factors, spreading them to the light of Gospel and giving to each of them its own place and the adequate dimension (DA 41).

The same thing happens to other cultures present in Latin-America (DA 56, 58, 59): they coexist in unequal conditions in front of the new global culture and they are being modified by them (DA 57).

And everything leads into the danger that this diversity cannot converge *in a synthesis, which by wrapping the variety of senses, be able to project it in a common historical destiny. In this resides the incomparable value of the Marian willingness of our own popular religiosity, which, under different names, has been able to pass on several Latin-American stories in a shared history: those that lead to Christ* (DA 43).

After those general ideas made by the bishops on culture and its evangelization we go now to Chapter 10 *Our People and Culture*:

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The first attitude that we must have toward the different ways of culture which are present in our continent is to look at them in an emphatic and positive way. It is reminded to us the teaching made by John Paul II which says *faith is only suitably professed, understood and lived, when it deeply penetrates the cultural substrate of people*; at the same time that it clarifies that the encounter of faith with other cultures implies a purification of them and it enriches them too, because all of them are looking for *the truth, which is Christ* (DA 477).

It is also reminded to us that Church has been creator and encourager of culture and that it has been expressed in multiple cultural and artistic fields throughout the history of our people (DA 478).

It is also recognized that through the inculturation of the Church *it becomes enriched with new expressions and values, expressing and celebrating better and better the mystery of Christ*, and at the same time that cultural heritage seems to be threaten *by current culture, which has to be seen with empathy in order to understand it, but also with a critical posture to be able to discover what is inside of it which is the result of human limitation and sin* (DA 479).

This is a point in which Aparecida insisted several times, an appropriate attitude toward culture: to confirm the diversity of cultures in the continent (DA 56, 58 and 59) and opening of attitude before the cultures but at the same time a fair critical sense before them (DA 35, 36, 44, 56, 51, 177, 387). At the end of DA 479 we are warned –with clear and strong words–about the danger of the new globalized culture *which ends by establishing individualism as dominant feature of the current society, responsible for the ethical relativism and family crisis*, it is also added to this situation the need that Church clearly denounces these fake anthropologic models, an audacious approach and at the same time compromising in the evangelization of culture in order to *cause alternative cultural models for the current society* which convey that Christians be creative in their own acting fields (DA 480).

Until this part ends what is related to the evangelization of culture (DA 476-480), next Aparecida lists other subjects related to culture:

a) Education (DA 481-483)¹⁵: where it reminds the necessity that educational centers do not ignore the opening to transcendence and that the comprehensive education

¹⁵ In this subject we suggest the reading of: STANOVNIK, MONS, ANDRÉS, *Education to the Light of Aparecida Document*, Conference for Catholic Teachers, Posadas, Misiones, February 29, 2008, at http://www.isparm.edu.ar/novedades/2008/02_consudec/la_educacion_a_la_luz_del_documento_de_aparecida.pdf (5-VII-2010); or from the same author: *La Educación Católica a la Luz de Aparecida*, September 6, 2008, presentation at the IV Conference for Catholic Teachers, Corrientes Archdiocese (Argentina) at <http://www.arzcorrientes.com.ar/documento/Homilias%202008/ConferenciaIVEncuentroEducadoresCatolicos.doc> (5-VII-2010).

of people claims a religious content: Church commitment for the religious education of students from public schools;

b) The pastoral of social communication (DA 484-490): will help to recognize the new languages and media methods that might help the evangelization process which also implies the need to know and value this new culture of communication and the efficient action in this sector: to educate competent communicators engaged with Christian values, special attention to the owners, directors, programmers, etc.; to be present in this media; to help those institutions related to the field to find their own place in the evangelist mission of the Church; to take advantage of Internet;

c) New areopagus and decision centers (DA 491-500): Christians are encouraged, coherently, to keep spreading evangelistic values in the environments where culture is traditionally celebrated. It is insisted, to focus, on the education of thinkers and in the evangelization of entrepreneurs, politicians and opinion leaders: *the formation of a laity capable of acting as true ecclesiastic subject and competent interlocutor between the Church and the society, and between the society and the Church;*

d) Disciples and missionaries in the public life (DA 501-508): *they must illuminate with the light of the Gospel in every aspect of social life, and well aware of their calling to saintliness by virtue of their baptismal vocation...in order to build a temporal city that agrees with the project of God;*

e) The urban pastoral (DA 509-519): *the city has become the proper place of new cultures which are being conceived and which are setting a new language and a new study of symbols. This urban mentality is also extended to the same rural world. And it is recognized that we can make with joy and courage the evangelization of the current city, preventing in not taking a defensive attitude before the new culture. The section finishes with some recommendations on that new urban pastoral: to be open to new experiences, styles, and languages that might incarnate Gospel in the city. There are also recommendations for the pastoral agents: a larger presence on decision centers, laymen and laywomen who may influence on opinion centers and an education for a pastoral capable to answer to the new culture challenges;*

f) Unity and fraternity of our people (DA 520-528): *due that Gospel has been transformed in the key element of a dynamic synthesis that expresses in all ways the identity of Latin-American people. Pleading for this union because the life of the catholic tradition is funda-*

mental foundation of its construction, as in its moment was remembered by Puebla and Santo Domingo;

g) The integration of indigenous and Afro-Americans (DA 529-533): to discover and recognize *the seeds of the Verb present in the traditions and cultures of indigenous people, and at the same time get to know the cultural values, history and traditions of Afro-American people, to support the dialogue between black culture and Christian faith.*

3.2 Valuing of the Conclusions of Aparecida on inculturation and the evangelization of culture

From the study of the *Conclusions of Aparecida*, we are able to do the following brief valuing:

- The main key to read and interpret the Conclusions is the main subject that guided to the bishops in their reflections: *Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ, so that our peoples may have eternal life in Him. "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life" (Jh 14, 6).*
- In the central subject of Aparecida we can distinguish three great axes: disciple missionary, life in Christ and our people. It is deduced as the life in Christ, a decent life, integral and full for the disciple and for our people; this is an essential element to be able to understand the Document.
- The proposed and approved subject by Benedict XVI, his Opening Speech, the prayer and fraternity environment on the deliberations reached this foundation and gravitation on what refers to the Life of Christ.
- It is expressed that the calling of the disciples missionaries and the calling of our people is the Life in Christ and for that reason, the mission of the disciples of Jesus Christ is to make that our people have life in Him.
- Aparecida uses the same culture concept from GS, or better said it takes it as assumed according to Santo Domingo and Puebla.
- Its concern is eminently pastoral and results in an urgent missionary action, as it is expressed by the bishops in the Final Message. In summary it is about recovering *the value and apostolic audacity (DA 555).*

- It is possible that for this same apostolic urgency, it did not take long to deliberate on the concept of inculturation and the same became minimized in the respective Conclusions.
- The consideration on the importance of education-the integral training of people claims for the inclusion of religious contents-which conveys to a notable effort on the religious education of believers who attend public schools from the state system and for the proper training of religion teachers.
- On the Social Communication Pastoral bishops find several urgent aspects from this pastoral task: to know this media culture very well; to know that it cannot be or should not be disregarded the media in order to take the Good News to millions of people; to educate competent and compromised communicators with Christian values; particular attention to the owners, directors, programmers, etc.; to be present in this media; to help the institutions on this field to find their own place in the evangelist mission of the Church.
- The need of an ethic and coherent education which continues spreading evangelic values in the environments where culture is traditionally celebrated as well as in new areopagus. It is the only way that Gospel can be inculturated in history. To be able to achieve it, a great important task is the education of thinkers and people who are part of the decision levels.
- *The formation of a laity capable of acting as true ecclesiastic subject and competent interlocutor between the Church and the society, and between the society and the Church (DA 497, a).*
- *It is the laypersons from our continent, well aware of their calling to saintliness by virtue of their baptismal vocation, who have to act as leaven in the dough, in order to build a temporal city that is agreed with the Project of God (DA 505).*
- The urgency of a proper urban pastoral because *the city has become a proper place for new cultures*, in a way that it is possible to incarnate Gospel in the city, through several means, with a good education of laypersons so they are able to answer to the great questions and aspirations of urban life and also without fear to the difficulties, know how to be present in the decision and opinion centers.

- Before the verifiable fact that Gospel has been transformed in the key element of a dynamic synthesis that with diverse shades according to nations, anyway expresses the identity of Latin-American people, bishops plead to educate and take care of the Latin-American unity (cfr. DP 428 and SD 15).
- The great Conclusion from Aparecida: to recover the value and apostolic audacity in the Continental Mission. Mission that is conceived as “permanent state mission”: compliance of the evangelistic calling of the Church, personal encounter with Jesus Christ, education of missionary communities, renovation of pastoral structures, search for those who are distant.
- Criteria for the Mission¹⁶: Disciple identity; pastoral conversion of people and pastoral structures of the Church; communion environment with the Pope, Episcopal Conferences and Local Churches; participation that must incorporate to all people in the missionary commitment, being at first place laypersons; incultured, being unique, must at the same time be diverse: it is a huge the difference between addressees of a rural environment and those in a suburban environment from great outskirts; continuity: to insist on a *permanent mission state*.

¹⁶ Cfr. ORTIZ LOZADA, PBRO. LEONIDAS, *The event of Aparecida, step by step*, in *Medellín* XXXIII/n. 130 (2007) 262-271. Also see: CASTRO QUIROA, MONS. LUIS AUGUSTO; *A continental movement. The mission of the Church in the Conclusive Document of Aparecida*, in «*Medellín*» XXXIII/n. 131 (2007) 447-496. GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, JAVIER, L. C.; *The mission for the new Evangelization. Walking with Aparecida*, in «*Ecclesia*» XXIII (2009/1) 93-112.