Accommodating the Other: Jesuit Missions in Early Modern Catholicism

Week 08 – Lecture 2
29 October 2004

BC Urban Project is holding an event in the Back Bay that would dovetail nicely with Bethany's concert tomorrow. We are giving a South End walking tour! We are meeting at 4:00 in front of St. Ignatius Church.

THREE PRIMARY LOCATIONS OF ACCOMMODATION:

1. "SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION":
   -- Confession / Counseling / Retreats

2. PREACHING AND TEACHING

3. FOREIGN MISSIONS

St. Jerome, ca. 1570-90
Produced by Jesuit Art School at Court of Grand Mogul

Madonna and Child, (ca. 1560-1600)
Jesuit Art School at Court of the Grand Mogul
Fr. Mancinelli, S.J., in Constantinople

Jesuits in Indochina [present-day Vietnam]: Bringing the scientific revolution to Far East Asia

NOTE: Fascination with observation of nature / astronomy / culture “Renaissance” blending into the “Scientific Revolution”…

Emperor of China comes into Jesuits’ chapel

Jesuits in China: dressed as Buddhist monks Accommodating themselves to dress of “Buddhist priests”
Problem:
people hate their Buddhist priests!!!

Fr. Paul Siu, S.J.
New accommodation:
Dress: Imperial Confucian
Imperial sage!

Fr. Johann Adam von Bell, S.J.
Jesuit astronomer / geometer
in Chinese imperial court
Renaissance: Science = Religion
Measuring the world is God’s activity

Fr. Matteo Ricci, S.J.;
“Wise Man of the Great West”

Accommodating the message in terms of Chinese interests

Matteo Ricci’s Mappamondo
“Map of the World”

NB accommodation:
China at the center of the world
France: “Land of Peace”
England: “Isle of Harmony”
1610: Death of Ricci

Emperor Wanli of Ming Dynasty gives Jesuits exemption: Ricci does not have to be buried in Macao [custom for foreigners]

He is buried in Beijing. Emperor designates a Buddhist Temple for Fr. Ricci’s grave.

Grave of Matteo Ricci, Ferdinand Verbiest and Adam Schall
Just outside walls of Forbidden City, Beijing

Fr. Joseph-Marie Amiot, S.J. “Mass of the Jesuits of Beijing”
• Note cultural hybridity:
  • A Latin Mass in Chinese for the Chinese Rites
    – Words: standard Latin hymn at beginning of Mass for the sprinkling with water:
      • Asperges me, Domine: “Wash me with hyssop and I shall be whiter than snow.”

HOWEVER:
-- words are Chinese
-- musical scales, instruments and style taken from classical Beijing Opera of Imperial court:
“Sprinkle me with bamboo, O God…”

MESSE DES JESUITS DE PEKIN
MASS OF THE JESUITS IN BEIJING
JOSEPH-MARIE AMIOT
XVIII-21 MEUSE DES LOUBARS
Accommodation / "inculturation"
hybrid: "secular / sacred"
"Pre-modern"? "Post-modern"?

KEY: NOT-MODERN
!!!MODERN

cf. al-Andalusia / Spain

Matteo Ricci, The Lord of Heaven [1601]

• Note Hybridity: Written in the form of a "Platonic" dialogue (e.g., Republic)
  – between a "Chinese Scholar" (Buddhist Confucian) and "Western Scholar"
  – a Humanist form... from Plato – recovered in Italian Renaissance

The "Chinese Rites Controversy" : The Problem of Cultural Accommodation
Paragraph 580

580. [The Lord of Heaven] thereupon acted with great compassion, descended to this world Himself to save it, and experienced everything [experienced by man]. One thousand six hundred and three years ago, in the year Keng-shen,18 in the second year after Emperor Ai of the Han dynasty adopted the regnal title Yuan-shou,19 on the third day following the winter solstice, He selected a chaste woman who had never experienced sexual intercourse to be His mother, because incarnate within her and was born. His name was Jesus, the meaning of which is “the one who saves the world.” He established His own teachings and taught for thirty-three years in the West. He then ascended to Heaven. These were concrete actions of the Lord of Heaven.

581. The Chinese scholar says: You may say this, but what proof is there of these events? How did the people of that time test
...offensive to Confucian worldview that the wise man should be violently killed?

Ricci has accommodated this.

but left out this:

Pope, persuaded by Jesuit enemies (Dominicans, Franciscans), condemns “Chinese Rites” in mid-18th century. Not rescinded until 1930s!!

cf. Douglas: “mixture” = perversion” . . . . FEARS OF LOSING SELF-IDENTITY

• Problem of “inculturation” stretches over centuries: when accommodating your ideas to another culture, WHEN DO YOU FEAR YOU HAVE LOST YOUR “IDENTITY”?
  – Cf. Douglas/Gilman: sense of “self” constructed over/against others; boundaries thick or porous

Is “Europe” “Christian”?

Are Istanbul and Athens “Eastern”?

NB: they are boundary regions: ambiguous identities
6. Multicultural world of Jesuits: Italian and Iberian Peninsulas

- If all cultures have been created by a Creator;
- and if Christ became human and all things human are somehow sacred;
- then all cultures are somehow sacred.
- E.g.: sanskrit!

Mary Douglas: "The final paradox of the search for purity is that it is an attempt to force experience into logical categories of non-contradiction. But experience is not amenable and those who make the attempt find themselves led into contradiction."

--- Purity and Danger: 163

Caroline Walker Bynum [on werewolves]:

"I cannot tell you whether your race or gender is biologically given or culturally constructed, how far your sexual preference lies in your genes and hormones or in your education and your hopes. ... These dichotomies of nature versus nurture, biology versus social construction, mind versus body ... Do not seem to me to give us the help we need to deal compassionately with ourselves or with others. In the complex decisions we must make as we gain and lose children, parents, lovers, friends, even the selves we thought we were, we need a sense of identity ... More labile and nuanced than these stark contrasts suggest. Who I am, who you are, is (as we all know all heart) seldom a matter of either/or."


PRE-MODERNITY / MODERNITY / POST-MODERNITY

Why was Early Modern Catholicism successful?

Old story: Force! Violence! Imposition!

New story: It was attractive! It appealed to hearts and emotions!
THREE IMAGES from “EARLY MODERN CATHOLICISM”:

1) (Saint) Teresa of Avila [Spain]
   -- sculpted by Bernini [Italy]

2) El Greco
   [NB: Greece / Spain]

3) (Saint) John of the Cross
   [NB: Spain]


Early Modern Catholicism:
Same turn to individual / immediate… but Deeply Sensual!!
2. El Greco

3. St. John of the Cross
[Juan de la Cruz]

Dark Night of the Soul
O Living Flame!!!