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Liturgies of the Future: The Process and Methods of Inculturation

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feminist and liberation theologies as well as the key role Protestant churches played in organizing the World Council of Churches. Indeed, throughout this work, Rausch and Voss do not give adequate attention to women's roles and their contributions to the world religions. Moreover, if the audience is students and laity, then why did the authors not spice up their presentation with anecdotes in order to communicate their first-hand encounters with adherents of each religion? After all, story-anecdotes are often one of the best methods of teaching.

The reader will need to supplement this work with other surveys for a more comprehensive, thorough presentation of the world religions.

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Liturgies of the Future: The Process and Methods of Inculturation

Ansc ar J. Chupungco, OSB
New York: Paulist Press, 1989
220 pages \$13.45 Cdn. paperback

This book is about *inculturation*, which along with globalization, will be a major theme for theology in the 1990s. Here, Father Chupungco, professor of Liturgical History and Liturgical Adaptation at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute in Rome, carries forward the work he began in his "Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy" (Paulist Press, 1982). He writes from the context of the Roman liturgy and its changes since Vatican II. With the first stage of recovering the classical shape of the liturgy now complete, the second challenge emerges, to inculturate the liturgy.

What is "inculturation"? He defines it as "the process whereby the texts and rites used in worship by the local church are so inserted in the framework of culture, that they absorb its thought, language, and ritual patterns.... inculturation allows people to experience in liturgical celebrations a 'cultural event' whose language and ritual forms they are able to identify as elements of their culture" (29).

He begins by comparing what must happen in worship today to what happened historically when the early Roman liturgy moved north and was adapted to the Franco-Germanic style of expression. Today the sobriety and simplicity of the early Roman liturgy has again been recovered; but this is not the cultural style of all peoples today, any more than it was in the eighth century! Although uniformity may be a blessing, it should not preclude cultural variation and adaptation.

Realizing that there are pitfalls in inculturation, Chupungco warns of two dangers: liturgy imposing a meaning on culture which is alien to culture; culture overcoming liturgy so that it assimilates the original meaning

of the liturgy. He observes that there have been failures in the history of liturgical inculturation, such as the blessing of instruments of ordeal and torture during the Carolingian period and the failure of the Tridentine liturgy to become acculturated during the Baroque period. However, there have also been successes small and large over the centuries, so that Chupungco has no qualms about advocating liturgical creativity, even to the point of advocating composition of new liturgical texts which fall outside the traditional structure of the Roman Mass.

The method which he suggests for this process of inculturation is that of *dynamic equivalence*. Without elaborating in great detail on this term, Chupungco describes it as the process "... whereby the Roman rite is 'translated' into other patterns of thought, language, and rite" (35). There are two steps involved in achieving dynamic equivalence: defining the theological content of a rite as distinguished from its liturgical form and isolating the immutable elements of a rite from the elements which are subject to change. An example of a mutable element would be the use of Latin in the Roman mass; an example of an immutable element would be the use of water in baptism.

He spends one chapter considering the cultural adaptation of the eucharist. Observing that the liturgy of the word especially lends itself to cultural adaptation because of its dialogical structure, he points out some possible ways of adapting this part of the liturgy: different styles of listening and response, placement of furniture, manner of proclamation, form of the homily and intercessions, external appearance of the books, and the bodily posture of the assembly.

The liturgy of the table also lends itself to cultural adaptation because of its essential meal-structure (as opposed to the traditional interpretation of its theological content as sacrifice) which lays it open to a vast range of cultural meanings. In all cases, the governing rubric should be to isolate the theological meaning from the literary or liturgical form, and retain the theological meaning in the process of inculturation.

Chupungco then gives examples of three officially approved rites which have been inculturated, and briefly describes them. First he presents the 1981 Mass approved by the Conference of Bishops of India. This rite includes many inculturated changes: a sitting posture instead of standing; making the "profound bow" instead of genuflecting; touching sacred objects with the fingers or palm and then bringing the hands to one's eyes or forehead as a sign of respect; including the presentation of the gifts in the entrance rite; using an Indian rite of respect for welcoming the celebrant; inclusion of a traditional lamplighting ceremony; permitting some spontaneity in the structure and content of the prayer of the church; including in the eucharistic prayer a triple *arati* of incense, flowers, and light.

Next he describes the 1988 Zairean Mass, which on the surface appears to follow the Roman order closely, but which in its spirit incorporates a radical change. "The entire celebration is focused on the presence of the sacred, of God, and the world of spirits and ancestors with whom the

assembly is asked to commune with an attitude of humility and awe... Not only the saints but also the 'ancestors of righteous heart' are invoked during the entrance litany... by becoming a Christian an African does not sever all relationship with the ancestors. Invoking them in Christian worship is consequently a pastoral and liturgical imperative" (89). Other less controversial inculturations in this mass include veneration of the table by touching it with the forehead, use of traditional rhythmic movements during canticles, exchanging the sign of peace by washing hands in the same basin, and the use of drums and gongs to punctuate the liturgy.

These two examples of inculturation involve pioneering, creative approaches to liturgy. The third example he gives might be called "backward inculturation" as in the 1976 Phillipine Tagalog Mass such as lighting of candles and sounding of bells at the eucharistic prayer and a procession with the consecrated element.

He continues with a less satisfactory chapter on the future shape of other Roman sacramental celebrations: confirmation, ordination, marriage, initiation, reconciliation, and anointing.

His final chapter deals with the cultural reform of the liturgical year. Here we find a familiar theme: the "northern" context of our festival calendar. He eschews any efforts to change the dates of major festivals such as Easter, Christmas, and Pentecost, regardless of the cultural bondage to the weather of the Northern Hemisphere. However, he does have some telling criticism of present efforts to make the Paschal Vigil the focus of Easter liturgical celebrations, at the expense of Easter Sunday itself. Finally, he concludes with some comments on alternate forms of Sunday observance (this is a response to the increasing secularization of the "Lord's Day"), the importance of secular festivals (Labour Day, Thanksgiving, etc.), and the politicization of feasts such as Christ the King.

The book is uneven in its movement and gives the impression of being a "work in progress" which indeed it is. For the subject of inculturation is very new to students of liturgy. Again and again Chupungco makes the point that the purpose of inculturation is to foster active, informed participation by the *laos*, making worship more accessible to the masses, and ensuring that the search for liturgical purity does not become an "archaeological exercise" (63). The classical shape of the liturgy, he warns, may not be the ideal shape for a culturally pluralistic church!

The book is written out of the context of Vatican II and makes reference only to inculturation within the Church of Rome. But the challenge is thrown out just as surely to other Churches. Lutherans share the Western Roman liturgy. Like Romans and Anglicans, our present "authorized" liturgies are a result of the rediscovery, through the labours of the liturgical movement, of the classical western liturgy. The development of our liturgy from the Common Service through the Service Book and Hymnal to the Lutheran Book of Worship is a worthy attempt to recover a rite based on the best of our own history and the fruits of the liturgical movement. However, it assumes that because we all speak English, we are all of one culture, and that one rite and one rubric fit all.

This is no longer the case (if it ever was). Congregations and communities have always inculturated their own liturgy, albeit unofficially and unconsciously. Recently more organized attempts have appeared in Spanish, indigenous, and gender-neutral revisions. Inculturation of liturgy among us has been scattered and often discouraged by the official guardians of the Lutheran liturgy.

But now the door is wide open. Inculturation will not go away; nor will it tolerate restraint or deterrence, whether it be creative and forward-looking (as in Zaire and India) or retrospective (as in the Phillipines). Chupungco has given us a window on how the process is being viewed and conducted in Rome. It will be up to us to adapt our liturgy to our own culture.

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Reading Scripture in Public: A Guide for Preachers and Lay Readers

Thomas Edward McComiskey
Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991
196 pages

"I am surprised," writes the author, "at how frequently I hear the Scriptures read carelessly with little attention to the reader's responsibility to interpret the biblical author's thought or intention" (9). This is true of people who ought to know better; it is truer still of the many lay readers who are untrained, or unrehearsed, or carry some notion that because Scripture is "holy" it must be read dully. McComiskey's book is a laudable and welcome manual designed to improve just this situation. It is a "self-help tool" whose purpose is "to set forth principles of oral interpretation as they relate to the public reading of Scripture" (9). His thesis—and it is an important perspective for every reader of Scripture to grasp—is that "effective public reading is interpretation, and the effective use of vocal emphasis is exposition. One should read in such a way that the hearers will feel they have caught the sense of the passage" (9–10).

The book is divided into two parts: (1) Understanding the Principles of Reading Scripture in Public; (2) Applying the Principles.

Part 1 begins with a chapter on the importance of the public reading of Scripture. Two chapters are devoted to "finding and communicating meaning" in, respectively, narrative and poetic materials. Chapter 4, "finding and communicating meaning in sense structures", examines the smallest units of meaning, viz., clauses and sentences which are coherent literary