

INCULTURATION AND CATHOLICITY IN RELATION TO THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH

Look up at the sky and count the stars. . . .—Gen. 15:5

Let us begin where our issue arose first. Let us start with a story, or better with an image. The image of a couple standing at the beginning of the process that led us to the possibility and the need to organize a conference on inculturation and catholicity

I would like to begin with the father of all believers, Abraham. Abraham could not have been alone in his experience. A man cannot be a father on his own. Abraham would have been nowhere without Sarah. The promise given to him was not given to him, but to him and her. It was a promise of life. A man alone does not manage that. In fact the author of the letter to the Hebrews (11:11) enables Sarah, too, to become the progenitor of the child, in a text which according to some exegetes is "a cross which is frankly too heavy for expositors to bear."¹ And in the Genesis text we read, "Yahweh dealt kindly with Sarah, as Yahweh had said, and did what Yahweh had promised her."² In the end you begin to wonder who really was the father of Isaac.

Sarah and Abram are not only the parents of all believers. They are the ancestors of all unbelievers.³ God told them to leave their country, their kindred, their culture, their all, in view of a new life. An initiative by which all human clans would be blessed.

We know the religion Abram left. In Ur the moon and the stars determined the human fate. All was fixed, there was no way out, the human lot had been sealed once and for all. All was written in the stars. It is what Abram and Sarah could not believe any more. They left, giving up a culture that threatened to fix them and humanity for all ages to come. They gave up on those stars. They were going to move in another way. A new future was offered to them. They took up the challenge and "strayed away" from the old. They did not know how the new ever would be able to be fruitful, not only because Sarah is barren, but also because the new was so new.

¹"The difficulty is that on the face of it the verse ascribes to Sarah an activity possible only to males: *dunamin eis kataboln spermatos*." Leon Morris, "Hebrews," in vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 119.

²Genesis 21:1.

³Okke Jager, *Oude beelden spreken een nieuwe taal* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1990) 23-33.

Then, one cool starry night, God takes Abram out again, and tells him to do, what he and Sarah had decided not to do any more: "Look up at the sky and count the stars."⁴

No, not again. They had passed that stage. Yet, it was what they were asked to do, but in a new way. Rooted in the old, trying to count the stars, the future opened to them. In between the old stars they saw the brilliant new "city with foundations whose architect and builder is God."⁵

It was looking at those stars that later the astrologers from the East would be led to Bethlehem from within their old belief. Is it not remarkable that we, too, still surround the happening at Christmas with the stars, old human monuments like the structures at Stonehenge point at? The old religion becomes a sign of the new faith in a future God promises to all. The sign even John still uses, when he writes: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . . I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven."⁶

It was there, that night, that old and new met as never before. It was there that the developments we are speaking about in this paper began once and for all.⁷

Abramic humanity was asked to integrate a new vision, a new approach, a new reality, a new life, a new promise, a new presence, a new awareness, a new culture and consequently a new mission. That is what acculturation is about, and Sarah and Abram left the old. Then Yahweh invited them to look again up at the stars they had strayed away from, and invited them to integrate the new from within the reality and life they had been accustomed to. That is what we normally mean by inculturation.

Allow me to refresh our minds and hearts on certain notions and sensitivities we all know and intuit, and therefore often take for granted and forget in the practice of our lives.

Let us not look for a definition. Let us ask ourselves what a culture does. Anybody knows something about that, because the fact that you survived is an indication that you grew up in a context, where human beings had organized themselves—physically and symbolically, prosaically and poetically—in a way that your life was possible and celebratable. You came into life as a stranger, a newcomer. You could have entered this world in a multitude of cultures. You were born in one. Your parents or/and others fed and clothed you, and initiated you in the way they organized human life. You introduced yourself to their language, their food, their songs, their dances, their social customs, and—if they prayed—to their prayers.

Culture is a life condition. We would not be able to live without being part of one. Culture roots us, and anchors us in our environment. It roots us in a setting that changes all the time, not only because of the development and progress from within our own culture, but increasingly as people coming from all kinds of en-

⁴Genesis 15:5.

⁵Hebrews 11:10.

⁶Revelation 21:1-2.

⁷Cf. Donald Senior, C.P., and Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., *The Biblical Foundations of Mission* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1983) 36-55.

vironments and cultures are getting mixed with each other. Sometimes this mixing is caused by natural disasters like floods or droughts, at other times it is the result of human disastrous interactions like war, conquest, and colonialism, then again it is due to religious (and cultural) zeal. Missionaries often were, and are the first ones to make the latter type of contacts.

Different kind of interactions may develop at those contacts. Specialists in different branches of learning are using different names for these interactions. I was asked to use one of those terms—a theological one—*inculturation*.

I indicated already in the image I used to introduce my paper that I think and feel that this term calls for another one: *acculturation*. Experts again differ on the exact meaning of these words. So it becomes almost impossible to be faithful to my intent to avoid definitions. Let me give again operational ones. What do they do? *Acculturation* takes place when an alien culture profoundly influences and changes an indigenous one, and *inculturation* when an indigenous culture profoundly influences a culture of foreign origin. It is, obviously, impossible to draw sharp lines between the two while those processes take place. They always will accompany each other in one or another way, but it is the final outcome that will determine what interaction prevailed.

Practically all the theologians who studied the issue from a theological point of view, and especially of course from a missiological, spiritual or pastoral point of view, regret that the Western church in general has been more inclined to go in for acculturation, than for inculturation.⁸ The reports to that effect from the Americas, Asia, and Africa abound.⁹

Not only theologians blame the Western church for that type of approach. Anthropologists, sociologists and even economists blame—what is rather vaguely called—the West or North of the same. Development and growth, technical progress and success is but too often the imposition of Western culture.¹⁰

Their common complaint is that indigenous cultures were not respected, that they were often unnerved, emasculated or repressed. The Western approach tended to destroy the ways in which people had been able to live and celebrate their life in environments different from the West, while the Western ways—originating from a different context—sometimes do not and even cannot assure their survival.

And again may I remind you of some simple facts. Any culture develops in a certain geographic, economic and social environment. It makes quite a difference whether you live in a semiarid area or under the thick and green umbrella formed by the foliage of a tropical forest. It will make a difference from all points of view, including relationships to the transcendent. Reading certain parts of the bible, de-

⁸Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1988) 164-67.

⁹For a recent study of these issues, Local Church: Practices and Theologies, Sedos Seminar March 20-24, *Sedos Bulletin* 22/4 (April 1990): 84-126. For Africa, cf., e.g., Eugene Hillman, *The Roman Catholic Apostolate to Nomadic Peoples in Kenya, An Examination and Evaluation* (Brussels: Pro Mundi Vita, 1980).

¹⁰Thierry G. Verhelst, *No Life Without Roots* (London and Atlantic Heights NJ: Zed Books, 1990) 39-108.

scribing some of the formative periods of the Judaic people, you can almost taste and smell the desert sand in their symbolic and moral codes.

It would be absurd to impose a nomadic value and symbol system and culture on a settled population, but it is as problematic to impose a settled culture and lifestyle on a group of nomads.

Does this mean that all indigenous cultures should be preserved and maintained as they developed over the ages? The question begs the answer. Cultures do not exist as fixed assets. They do not exist on their own either. Changes are taking place. The whole world is changing. No one human group can isolate itself from those changes. Those contacts, however, should not lead to an acculturation by which the Western world swamps, exploits and intimidates by the non-Western world. The indigenous knowledge, intuitions, symbols and values should be the starting point for an alternative path of cultural development.

There is another good reason to argue this approach. While developing their cultures in their own environments, the different ethnic groups often worked with insights, symbols and models the West did not use. They are new to the West. They are alternatives to the Western way of feeling and thinking. That they are alternatives does not mean that they are useless. On the contrary, they can introduce us to ways of experiencing, thinking, modelling and organizing, that may supplement the ways we approach our world. All of us have begun to realize that alternatives to our way of life are what we need to be able to survive. We all know that if all six billion of the world's people would succeed in achieving the kind of "development" we have achieved from within our cultural context, the planet would become uninhabitable within a day or so.

Missionaries—and I am one of them—will tell you how much they learned from the people they went out to teach. This is not only true in the spiritual or religious realm. Our Western technologies and skills are in many ways already factually complemented by those developed from within other cultures and world visions. It would have been unlikely for us in the West to develop a medical technique like Chinese acupuncture on the basis of our Western chemical/physical approach to the human body. Or to give an example of a maybe less important, but nevertheless quite interesting skill or art: who does not enjoy the taste of an—for her or for him—exotic kitchen.

The world around us is still so richly gifted by her Creator, that we can organize her smells and tastes, her colors and sounds, in an almost endless variety of different artistic, political, social and religious ways. Cultural variety is obviously not a scandal, it is a blessing.

It is in this world that we meet Jesus, and the church who always has been calling him Christ, the anointed one. Calling him like that seems to imply the belief that he is the person by whom the church should be measured.

In the belief of the church, Jesus appeared among us as one with a message. The message of what he called himself the kingdom of God. The culture he was born in encountered as the first one his kingdom message. A struggle ensued. Initially it turned around, and in the end against him. It can only be said with some reservations, but in Jesus' case the medium was really the message. It remains the message because though killed, he did not die.

In every culture two questions should regularly be asked: (1) "What irritates you in your own culture?"; and (2) "What do you enjoy in your own culture?" There is not a single culture in which both questions should not be asked. Every existing culture has its "pro's" and its "con's," its privileged and underprivileged ones, its exploiters and exploited, its rich and its poor, its authentic worship and its idolatry. Jesus presented his yardstick to interpret the answers to those questions in the first place in his own environment.

In most of his correspondence—and probably all his life—Paul struggled with the same issues as regards his own tradition, and the cultures and religions he met on his apostolic journeys. In his letter to the Ephesians he comes to the conclusion that the message—he called it the mystery hidden up to now—is that it was shown in Jesus Christ that we are all equal to God.¹¹ It is that equality—expressed in the reality of the sharing of the One Body and the One Blood during the eucharist—that has to be realized in all human cultures by whoever belongs to them.

It is at the end of Matthew's Gospel that this same principle or theorem is best expressed, when it concludes with a saying attributed to the risen Jesus. In the last but one verse Jesus asks his followers to introduce the nations to the reality that all human beings are *originating from God*, are created together as *God's offspring*, and are carried by the same life spirit.

The trinitarian formula used: Father, Son and Spirit, is not only meant—and maybe even not mainly meant—as revealing God's life, but also as a revelation of who we are, and how we should consequently treat each other, and all that was given to us to realize our personal and communal dignity. This belief is the foundation of the catholicity in our human and creational holiness and unity. It is the guarantee for the reality of the "city with foundations whose architect and builder is God."

It is because of our faith in this trinitarian definition of the human being that we all are so to speak "hanging in" together. Coming out of the same womb, forming the same fruit, sharing the same life holiness, catholicity and holiness are our human birthday gift. It is because of this common-ness that we belong together, and we will not be fully ourselves, we will not be holy, catholic and one before this belonging finds its expression in reality. Working at that expression, at that final birth into the reality of ourselves is what we call mission.

We could add to this creational common-ness the salvific one, as John Paul II did when he stated:

Humanity—every person without exception—has been redeemed by Christ, because Christ in a way is united with humanity—with each person without exception whatever.¹²

All this might sound abstract and in the air. It is not. In the Acts of the Apostles we can read how this belief led at once to a new organizational life pattern in a practical way. In the first communities—described twice in their success and failure—Christians organized a consequence of their belief, John Paul II does not stop

¹¹Ephesians 3:5.

¹²*Redemptor hominis*, 14.

to stress, namely that the goods and services provided for in creation are intended for all. They went so far as trying to own their goods in a new way.

The organization of the divinely willed equality—the establishment of the kingdom of God—cuts straight through our actual world set-up. Its achievement would make the division of the world in a first, a second, a third and a fourth one, an impossibility. It is the basic in Catholic social teaching. It is the foundation of a catholic morality.

This does not mean that the reign of God message is only a social, or a justice-and-peace one. Matthew's text closes with Jesus' remark, that he will be with us in this work of salvation, proceeding from the Father's love, until it reaches its eschatological, final completion. Living this trinitarian equality in the concreteness of our human life, is living the divine life and love.

We touch here at the same time at the core of the human element in any valid development program, in whatever cultural or cross-cultural context. All actual cultures and their political, social, economic, and aesthetic expressions, whether Western, Eastern, Northern or Southern stand judged by it. So does the church and the Western (and Eastern) type of Christianity it helped to form. Any discrimination or inequality, any predilection or favoritism, any tolerance of injustice and violence should have become intolerable. A development that leads to real human and creational liberation. Our trinitarian theology cannot be but liberational.

The question remains how we would be able to reach others with this kingdom of God gospel in a way that the receiving cultures are not destroyed, but remain faithful to their own roots—or to use the image we used in the beginning speaking about Abram—that they remain finding their direction looking at their own stars? How should this interaction be organized?

In a church that has been blamed for its acculturation approach John Paul II was the first pope to use the term inculturation. He did this in 1979 in a statement to the Pontifical Biblical Commission which he quoted in the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*:

The term acculturation or inculturation may be a neologism, but it expresses very well one factor of the great mystery of the Incarnation.¹³

The use of the term alone does not bring us much further. In fact one of the difficulties seems to me that the Western Church is handicapped by the way in which she herself inculturated the kingdom message. In her too we can ask the two questions we mentioned above: (1) "What irritates you in her?" and (2) "What do you enjoy in her?" I am afraid that the answers to that question would indicate that the church herself did not manage to integrate as yet fully the kingdom of God principles, neither in her own hieratic, hierarchical and patriarchal structures, nor in the Western society she is so much part and parcel of. A world in which every day an average of 40,000 people die of starvation—though the food to feed them is there, but either directly or indirectly controlled by the West—can hardly believe that a formally "Christian" West inherited the divine solution to the problems in this world while practising their faith.

¹³*Catechesi tradendae*, 53.

The church—and we forming that church—should consequently be rather modest in our approach. Having not integrated fully the kingdom of God among ourselves—and in the impossibility of realizing the catholicity demanded in our own communities on their own—we hardly can present our version of inculturated Christianity as a model to others. Its inculturation in other, non-Western cultures, would definitely be an ambiguous venture.

The kingdom principles and the ecclesial living of Christ's risen life remain. They remain the treasure and the pearl of the church. At the same time they remain, it seems, a *tertium quid*, something that as such remains an issue to all, though in different degrees. John XXIII spoke in this context about "the substance of the deposit of the faith" in his opening address of the Second Vatican Council.

It seems to me that it is on this point that we might find an answer to our question how to go about "inculturation" in a catholic spirit. I wonder whether we are not overlooking at our own disadvantage an earlier step foreseen by the Second Vatican Council and in its follow-up. That step is dialogue. The word is not even found in the index to Shorter's book *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*. In the context of what we said earlier, I would like to suggest that in our dialogue with non-Christians and in our contacts with non-Christian cultures, we do not dialogue on the ways we have inculturated the kingdom principles ourselves, but that we dialogue on those principles themselves. What would it mean if we try to organize a world where we treat each other as coming from God, as being created together as God's offspring, and as living from the same divine breath. In other words I would like to suggest that we take the kingdom of God as such, or in other words the message of Jesus and its practical realization as the topic for our dialogue. If that would happen the words of a document of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christian from 1984, entitled *The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections on Dialogue and Mission*, might prove to be prophetic:

As the human sciences have emphasized, in interpersonal dialogue, one experiences one's own limitations as well as the possibility of overcoming them. A person discovers that he does not possess the truth in a perfect and total way but can walk together with others towards that goal. Mutual affirmation, reciprocal correction, and fraternal exchange lead the partners in dialogue to an ever greater maturity which in turn generates interpersonal communion. Religious experiences and outlooks can themselves be purified and enriched in this process of encounter.¹⁴

It is the type of dialogue we ourselves need even for our own inculturation of the gospel. *Ecclesia semper reformanda!* It is in that kind of dialogue that our actual inconsequentialities will be revealed and hopefully remedied. It is an encounter in which the gospel will come back to us in the idiom of other cultures with the power to question what we made of it.

It is in that kind of dialogue that others may taste the catholicity of the kingdom principles inculturating them in their own cultural and religious context to their and our enrichment. The dialogue on the implications of Jesus' insights and

¹⁴*The Attitude of the Church toward the Followers of Other Religions*, 22.

feelings on human dignity and value is needed not only with representatives of other religiously influenced cultures, but also with the more secularized expressions of human organizational and cultural life styles. It involves all. It is the dialogue on what Jesus stood for, and consequently at the same time on who he is. Too many of our discussions and creeds have been centering on Jesus the Christ, without paying as great an attention to his message of the kingdom.

This dialogue will be difficult. It will be difficult for all of us, it will be difficult for the Roman Catholic Church. It will be hard because it will ask for many changes, religious and spiritual, but also practical, social, financial—think of the crippling debt crisis in the third world—economic, and political ones.

It will be difficult at a cross-cultural level. This statement is in the future tense, not in the present. It is the kind of dialogue that is hardly taking place at a cross-cultural level in our days. Notwithstanding the Vatican II insistence on dialogue suggested in documents like *Nostra aetate*, little has been done, except that the institutional instances to do so often have been put into place. The only dialogue that really developed, and could not but develop because of the holocaust, was the dialogue with those faithful to the Judaic religious expression. In that dialogue a remark made by Msgr. Jorge Mejia, Secretary of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, introducing the statement *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Teaching in the Roman Catholic Church* during a press conference in Rome June 24 1985, shows us how far we can come in this dialogue:

. . . there is the affirmation about Christ and his saving event as central to the economy of an affirmation which is essential to the Catholic Faith (section 17). This does not mean that the Jews as a people cannot and should not draw salvific gifts from their own traditions. Of course they can and should do so.¹⁵

This approach to others remains an exception. Maybe not in theory but definitely in practice. In 1959 John XXIII noted several times, among others in his encyclical *Princeps Pastorum*:

As you know she [the Church] does not identify herself with any one culture to the exclusion of the rest—not even with European and Western culture, with which her history is so clearly linked.¹⁶

A statement echoed in the II Vatican Council's document *Gaudium et Spes*:

Nevertheless, the Church has been sent to all ages and nations and, therefore, is not tied exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, to any particular way of life, or to any customary practices, ancient or modern. The Church is faithful to its traditions and is at the same time conscious of its universal mission; it can, then, enter into communion with different forms of culture, thereby enriching both itself and the cultures themselves.¹⁷

¹⁵Eugene J. Fisher, "Interpreting *Nostra aetate* through Postconciliar Teaching," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 9/4 (October 1985): 159.

¹⁶Shorter, 187.

¹⁷*Gaudium et spes*, 58.

We must do everything possible to make all persons aware of their right to culture and their duty to develop themselves culturally and help their fellows.¹⁸

Hoping that these words would be true, the African Cardinal Paul Zoungrana of Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) stated just before Paul VI was visiting Uganda in 1969:

Our very being must not be conferred from the outside; the gospel is a germ of life and the Church of Africa must develop itself and build itself up thanks to its own apostolic priorities.¹⁹

Paul VI responded in Kampala asking himself, "Must the Church be European, Latin, Oriental . . . or must she be African?" But when later the African Episcopacy began to insist on an African Council in view of an inculturated African Church, there was at first a refusal, then delaying, and at the moment there are still a lot of unsolved organizational problems, while the bishops from Europe will have their Council on the Churches in Eastern Europe within a year after their liberation!

In an article on the recent developments in the world, Paul Kennedy recently made an observation that we might apply to the processes in the church:

Ideas, policies and "purpose" are much more important in moving the world forward—or bringing it to a halt—than are institutional structures and material power.²⁰

Since 1973 the African Church began to support officially the small Christian communities that had formed themselves or were forming themselves, parallel to such-like developments in Latin America. A process that is also taking place in Asia and even in Europe and Northern America. It is within those contexts that the needed dialogue and the consequent inculturation is developing.²¹

In 1982 John Paul II founded The Pontifical Council for Culture,

. . . giving the whole Church a common impulse in the continuously renewed encounter between the salvific message of the gospel and the multiplicity of cultures to which she must carry her fruits of grace.²²

But the impression prevails that John Paul II is afraid of the consequences of these principles. Shorter quotes Johann Baptist Metz who suggests that it might be "because of the pope's travels" that the interests of the local churches are "increasingly removed from the agenda of the Universal Church."²³ The actual centrally organized "unity" prevails over interest in the local discomforts caused by this practically monocultural imposition. In a paper delivered during a seminar at

¹⁸Ibid., 60.

¹⁹Shorter, 208.

²⁰Paul Kennedy, "Fin-de Siècle America," *The New York Review of Books* 37/11 (29 June 1990): 33.

²¹Cf. Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel, An Inculturation Handbook for Pastoral Workers* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990).

²²*L'Osservatore Romano*, 28 June 1982, 1-8; see Shorter, 230.

²³Shorter, 70.

the Catholic University of America, M. Zieba, O.P., from the Catholic University of Lublin in Poland noted:

It is likely that this is the reason why the current pontificate stresses the inner unity and clarity of the transmission of truth in the church. Otherwise the centrifugal force would break the unity of the church working on all continents and participating in diverse cultures and communities. These papal priorities, with the constant tension and the antimonic unity between them, imply that many of the problems belonging to the inner nature of the church move somewhat to the background.²⁴

We can speak about the church in an abstract, speculative way. We can speak about her ideally as about the Bride who integrated and inculturated the life of her Divine Groom. We can speak about how the church should be considering the data in Holy Scripture. Yet we cannot pass over the fact of her empirical, and historic concretization in the world. She and her members often have been a blessing all through the ages of her long existence. But when we are "honest to God" we have to admit that she and her members often have not been faithful to the gospel she is the carrier of.²⁵ For all kind of ideological, political and other reasons, she and her members often did and do neither believe nor practice that all human beings—and that is what catholicity is about—are created equal in, and as God's offspring, brought into life by sheer godly love and a divine eagerness to share joy.

We did not allow ourselves to be fully acculturated by the Jesus message on humanity and creation, we did not as yet inculturate the gospel. We did not draw all the consequences of the reality of humanity's trinitarian relationship to God, though we accepted them in our baptism and celebrate them in our sacramentally signified life. It is in our dialogue with others on how to inculturate Jesus' message that we ourselves might get aware of how our religious energy is disconnected, and consequently un-inculturated from our public and individual life.

I am afraid that we have to distantiate ourselves from what an ideologically oriented church, and the world it helped to form, has done and is still doing to humanity. The American Catholic episcopacy is sometimes giving a lead. They began the kind of dialogue we are speaking about within the context of their own culture and church on important issues like war and peace, the economic "order," the role of minorities, and the issue of the place of women in society.

Coming back to the image with which I began this paper: like Abram and Sarah we have to stray away. We have to lose a faith in a heaven and earth that had fixed our destiny along too narrow a path, caught in too small a circle. And like he did to the Abrams, and later the Abrahams, God will lead us out and tell us: "Look at the stars," look at what you left behind and discover in it in a new way the city you have to build. It is from the old earth and the old heaven that new will arise. Astronauts and all who looked at the pictures they took saw the dawn of that city

²⁴M. Zieba, O.P., "The Eternal Church in the Changing World. Notes about the Relationship between the Church and the World in the Interpretation of John Paul II," unpublished paper (Washington DC, Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Catholic University of America, April 1990) 33.

²⁵Edward Schillebeeckx, *Mensen als verhaal van God* (Baarn: Uitgeverij H. Nelissen, 1989) 206.

already. Abram imagined and believed it, we ourselves saw it already from afar in the midst of the stars:

The only thing that could end war for ever is changing the human psyche. Those who fly up above the earth and see her in all her beauty and fragility will undergo a psychological change. At first only individuals, but then hundreds, then millions. It will a different civilization, a different humanity. They will reevaluate the earth's beauty, the taste of each of her berries.²⁶

Together with him, whom so many called Christ, the earthly creation will start to shine with the glory we—together—had from the beginning: *Lumen gentium*.

We are asked to integrate a new vision, a new approach, a new reality, a new life, a new promise, a new presence, a new awareness, a new togetherness, a new multicolored seamless robe, a new pluralistic culture and consequently a new mission. That is what *acculturation* is about, and like Sarah and Abram we have to "stray away from the old."

And then we will have again to look up at the stars, we strayed away from, to be invited to integrate a new holiness, catholicity and unity within the reality and life we were accustomed to. That is what we mean by *inculturation*.

JOSEPH G. DONDERS
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²⁶Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *Wild Berries*, Antonina W. Bouis, trans. (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1984) 296.