

Globalization from Benedict XV to Benedict XVI: The “Astonishing Optimism” of *Gaudium et Spes* in a Missionary Context

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Globalization

GEORGE WEIGEL has read *Gaudium et Spes* and Ratzinger’s 1982 *Principles of Catholic Theology*, and wonders whether the “multiple failures” of the Pastoral Constitution to discern the real “signs of the times . . . suggest a certain naïveté about modernity, as Pope Benedict XVI suggested several times in his pre-papal commentary on *Gaudium et Spes*?”¹ I cannot find that suggestion in *Principles*. It claims that “the history of the influence of *Gaudium et Spes*” shows we need “to discover the real Council,” that is, what *Gaudium et Spes* actually says, and that that “means that there can be no return to the *Syllabus*,” for “neither embrace nor ghetto can solve for Christians the problem of the modern world. . . . [A]s Hans Urs von Balthasar pointed out” in “1952, . . . the ‘demolition of the bastions’ is a long-overdue task.”²

One of the “signs” of modern times which Weigel believes the Vatican II Constitution ignored is globalization: “*Gaudium et Spes* did not,” he says, “anticipate the silicon revolution, . . . the Internet and other new communications media, and . . . communications-driven ‘globalization.’ That the world would soon become, for economic purposes, a single time-zone world in which virtually everyone is in real-time communication with

¹ George Weigel, “Rescuing *Gaudium et Spes*: The New Humanism of John Paul II.”

² Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology* (German 1982), trans. Sr. Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 390–91.

everyone else is not something a reader of *Gaudium et Spes* in 1965 would have learned.” On his election, John XXIII struck a chord which runs through the Pastoral Constitution: “The various nations are simply communities of men, that is, of brothers. They are to work in brotherly cooperation for the common prosperity of human society.” Wise to the new electronic medium of television, John XXIII hoped that the Council would be a “wonderful Spectacle of unity,”³ and so it was: “both the proceedings and the outcome of the council suggested the formation of a global church. At the council itself, for the first time in the modern era, native bishops from Africa, Asia, and Latin America joined their European and American colleagues.”⁴ The Council’s opening message, drafted by Congar and Marie-Dominique Chenu, and broadcast in mid-October 1962, “[u]sing almost the same words as *Gaudium et Spes*, . . . spoke of the Council which ‘unites all nations.’”⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, addressing the “German-speaking bishops” on “October 10, 1962, . . . on the eve of the first session,” reflected on a sermon by Eusebius of Caesarea on Nicea:

“The foremost servants of God had assembled from all the churches in . . . Europe, Africa and Asia. And the *one* Church became . . . worldwide by God’s grace, embraced Syrians, Cilicians, Phoenicians, Arabs and Palestinians as well as Egyptians, Thebans, Africans and Mesopotamians.” . . . [T]he theological statement that Eusebius intended [was that] Nicea was a new Pentecost. . . . The Council is a Pentecost—that . . . thought . . . corresponded to . . . what we experienced on our arrival in the city of the Council: . . . a lived experience of real Catholicity with its Pentecostal hope—that was the promising *signum* of those first days of Vatican II. That is the way it was then.⁶

In October, 1965, Pope Paul VI told the United Nations general assembly, “your identity reflects in the temporal order what the Catholic Church wants to be in the spiritual order: one and universal.”⁷

It would be surprising if *Gaudium et Spes* had failed to reflect this experience. Stating that the Council looks toward “the whole human

³ John XXIII, “Ad Petri Cathedram,” June 29, 1959, §§23, 79.

⁴ John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter With Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 160.

⁵ Charles Moeller, “History of the Constitution,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II: Volume V. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, trans. W. J. O’Hara (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 9.

⁶ Ratzinger, *Principles*, 367.

⁷ Paul VI, Address to United Nations on the 20th Anniversary of its Foundation, October 4, 1965.

family along with . . . that world which is the theater of man's history" the Pastoral Constitution describes its vocation as "proclaiming the noble destiny of man and championing the Godlike seed which has been sown in him" and therefore as "offer[ing] to mankind the . . . assistance of the Church in fostering the brotherhood of all men which corresponds to this destiny of theirs." The human origin in the "divine image" creates a human brotherhood, and her eschatological future is its rebirth and recapitulation, when, "saved by grace, men will offer flawless glory to God as a family beloved of God and of Christ their Brother." Without confusing it with this divine project, *Gaudium et Spes* claims that globalization gives us a picture of what Christ's drawing all peoples into brotherhood means. *Gaudium et Spes*'s own theological vision of history is the ingathering of all human beings by God into a single family, and it recognizes a sign or symbol of this in the way modern history is moving: "The destiny of the human community has," it says, "become all of a piece, where once the various groups of men had a kind of private history of their own." Although the Fathers at Vatican II did not foresee email, they state that, "One of the salient features of the modern world is the growing interdependence of men . . . a development promoted chiefly by modern technical advance. . . . Thanks to increased opportunities for . . . social contact among nations, a human family is gradually recognizing that it comprises a single world community and is making itself so."⁸

The Constitution specifies the facilitation of communication, the emergence of a single world "culture," and global commerce as "razing the bastions" between nations and observes:

New ways . . . for the perfection . . . of culture . . . have been prepared by the enormous growth of natural, human and social sciences, by technical progress, and advances in developing and organizing means whereby men can communicate with one another. . . . [C]ustoms and usages are becoming . . . more uniform. . . . The increase of commerce between . . . nations and human groups opens more widely to all the treasures of different civilizations and thus . . . there develops a more universal form of human culture, which better promotes and expresses the unity of the human race to the degree that it preserves the particular aspects of the different civilizations. (§54)

Shortly before the Constitution was promulgated, Paul VI had told the United Nations that its "vocation was to create a fraternity, not of some people, but of all peoples," the "highest" task given to us in the "natural

⁸ *Gaudium et Spes*, §§2, 3, 32, 5, 23, 33, cf. 6.

order,” the building of “humanity.”⁹ The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World defines modernity in terms of globalization. It inspired a chain of thought about globalization from *Populorum Progressio* (1967) to *Caritas in Veritate* (2009). The latter states that “Paul VI clearly understood that the social question had become worldwide and he grasped the interconnection between the impetus towards the unification of humanity and the Christian ideal of a single family of peoples in solidarity and fraternity. *In the notion of development, understood in human and Christian terms, he identified the heart of the Christian social message*, and he proposed Christian charity as the principal force at the service of development.” Benedict XVI continues, “[t]he principal new feature” since the 1960s “has been the *explosion of worldwide interdependence*, commonly known as globalization. Paul VI had partially foreseen it, but the ferocious pace at which it has evolved could not have been anticipated.”¹⁰

There’s an *interconnection* between closer human community and the Christian vision of brotherhood: meaning not that the two are one and the same thing, but that they are analogous. *Gaudium et Spes* calls us to see the new sense of *humanity* as a single organism which globalization has achieved as a witness, and a moral imperative: the “spiritual and moral” significance of “autonomy” “becomes clear if we consider the unification of the world and the duty which is imposed on us, that we build a better world based on truth and justice. Thus we are witnesses to the birth of a new humanism, one in which man is defined first of all by this responsibility to his brothers and to history.” What is offered is an analogy, not an equation. When the Pastoral Constitution says, “the force which the Church can inject into . . . modern society” is “faith and charity,” adding, “not . . . external domination exercised by merely human means,” it is distinguishing Christian humanism from the secular variety. It claims the Church offers “authentic union,” “namely . . . that faith and charity by which her own unity is . . . rooted in the Holy Spirit.”¹¹

From the seventeenth century, Christian missionaries made the Church advance across the world rather than lurking behind bastions. The Church was drawn to reflect on the symbol of globalization by her missionaries. *Gaudium et Spes* draws on twentieth-century magisterial teaching about mission. A core theme of the document is “the Church which civilizes by evangelizing.”¹² *Gaudium et Spes* imagines history as the ingathering of all humanity to Christ. The Church’s missionary work was the historical

⁹ Paul VI, Address to the United Nations, 1965.

¹⁰ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), §§13, 33.

¹¹ *Gaudium et Spes*, §§55, 42.

¹² Moeller, “History of the Constitution,” 71.

stepping stone to an imaginative eschatology which lends to *Gaudium et Spes* what Ratzinger calls its “astonishing optimism.”¹³

The Paradoxes of Imperialism

Globalization has been defined as the “rapid integration of international markets for commodities, manufacture, labour and capital.”¹⁴ The more we learn about ancient history, the more we appreciate that our modern “globalization” is not entirely novel. Archaeologists have turned up evidences of trade between distant lands occurring back when older history books had led us to imagine they were solitarily gestating their national genius. But “archaic globalization,” or the pattern of international communication and exchange before the nineteenth century, had distinctive features. It was characterized, from Alexander the Great to the Emperor Asoka to the early modern Spanish emperors, by “the idea of universal kingship,” the world-wide expansion of a sacral imperium. These ventures were underpinned by “cosmic religion.” Merchants from the Greek and Islamic to the Chinese worlds also had shared “humoral or moral understandings of bodily health”: their trade in medicines and medical texts was based in ancient, traditional understandings of how the body works. The theory and practice of kingship, of cosmic religion, and of medicine, were all tied to the management of diversity. Fuelled by curiosity about and the desire to possess exotic things and persons, archaic globalization was about “collecting charismatic goods and substances”: this is where it differed “from the market-driven uniformity of today’s world,” the product of the “capitalist globalization” of the nineteenth century.¹⁵

The slave trade was originally a product of archaic, not modern, globalization. This “most advanced form of . . . the long range deployment of capital” and of “technologically innovative . . . human beastliness” did not enslave persons on the basis of their “race or nationality.” Early modern slavery was “pre-modern,” in that it came down to a sense of “caste,” a “series of interlocking rankings of people in terms of their embodied status, their honor, or purity or lineage . . . a ‘caste system,’ in the original Portuguese use of the term.” The notion of “blue blood” helps us to understand it: “European aristocratic blood purity provided one pole of embodied status, and slave origins the other.” Within their cosmic religiosity,

¹³ Ratzinger, *Principles*, 380.

¹⁴ Niall Ferguson, *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* (London: Penguin, 2008), 287.

¹⁵ C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 42–44.

Mexican, Muslim, and Chinese traders were all able to make use of a notion of “caste” status.¹⁶

The one new thing Rome and its Empire gave the world was law, and “law is what regulates transactions.”¹⁷ Law enables “the circulation of wealth,” and is a link between archaic and modern globalization. The rise of the Imperial powers, especially the British, co-operated with capitalist globalization, by establishing and policing legal frameworks which lent security to “overseas investment.”¹⁸ No myths of cosmopolitan kingship heralded the massive imperial expansion of the British and French into Africa, and of Europeans and Americans in China. “Nationalism” was “a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century.” It holds “that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics that can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is self-government.” Having been taught by the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) that “[t]he principle of sovereignty resides essentially in the nation: no body . . . can exercise authority that does not emanate from it,”¹⁹ Europe embarked on a century of colonial conquest. The engine of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imperial expansion was competing nationalisms. The colonial acquisition of peoples by the Imperial powers was legitimated by nationalistic racism. “Imperialism and nationalism,” that is, “were part of the same phenomenon.” Whereas archaic globalization had collected diversities under a single roof, modern globalization tended to impose uniformity, because it came back to national self-assertion. The former was less artificially “idea” driven. Imperial administrators were pragmatists, not ideologues, and took care not to distress the natives. Imperialist writers like Rudyard Kipling were religious pluralists, who deprecated any absolute religious truth claims. Their true church was the nation. The “implications” of the “[r]ace theory, which became dominant at the end of the nineteenth century . . . were almost everywhere worked out in the language of the nation state.”²⁰

Modern globalization is thus a meeting of contraries: on the one hand, driven ahead by nationalistic competition, but on the other, always wanting to slide round the limitations of nationalism. People like communicating with one another. That is why ancient peoples treasured their

¹⁶ Ibid., 46–47.

¹⁷ Rémi Brague, *Eccentric Culture: A Theory of Western Civilization* (French, 2nd ed., 1992), trans. Samuel Lester (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2002), 31.

¹⁸ Ferguson, *Money*, 295.

¹⁹ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson, 1960), 9, 12.

²⁰ Bayly, *Modern World*, 230, 237.

artefacts brought from distant lands. So irrepressible is our curiosity about one another that people who are locked into “nationalist” conventions will imagine means of evading them: “The hardening of boundaries between nation-states and empires after 1860 led people to find ways of linking, communicating with, and influencing each other across those boundaries.” Neither the “archaic” practice of “gathering” curiosities nor the modern capitalist globalization of imposing uniformity quite gives vent to the human taste for contact with our fellows, since both are patterns of “consumption,” or assimilation, which, once having absorbed the other, has lost what it wanted from him, which is contact with another person.²¹

Rémi Brague distinguishes between a relation of “digestion” to a cultural “other,” and the cultural relation of “inclusion.” Digestion absorbs another culture “to such a point that it loses its independence,” whilst inclusion “maintain[s]” and enhances the “otherness” of the “foreign body.”²² If we think of globalization as a work of “the city of man,” conceived on rigid Augustinian lines as the city so intent on self-love that it is evidently “predestined to final damnation,” we must identify its operation solely as “digestive.” “Augustine sometimes reduces history” to “simplifying pairs of opposites . . . two cities, Babylon and Jerusalem . . . two peoples, the reprobate and the elect . . . and two kings, the devil and Christ.” And yet Augustine was no Manichean: “Bad” though the society built on self-love may be, “it does exist,” it is part of God’s creation and providential design to build up the City of God, “and in so far as it exists it is good.”²³ We may find *Gaudium et Spes*’s using globalization as an analogy for Christ’s inclusion of all peoples into his Body unnerving, because globalization ever exhibits what Kant called the “crooked timbre” of humanity. But globalization has sometimes been “inclusive,” to the extent that created humanity itself has operated as an “inclusive” medium, sustaining the sameness of persons in their difference.

From the end of the eighteenth century, British and other European powers had engaged in an “unprecedented” degree of missionary evangelization of the “extra-European world.” From one perspective, the marketing of Christianity was a side-effect of the imperialist mission of the West. In 1792, the English Baptist William Carey claimed that “navigation, especially that which is *commercial*, shall be one great means of carrying on the work of God.” Whilst they were coextensive, imperialist

²¹ Ibid., 199, 41.

²² Brague, *Eccentric Culture*, 106–7.

²³ Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* (French 1949), trans. L. E. M. Lynch (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), 180, 182, 174.

and missionary expansion were never identical: missionaries lived at close quarters with their converts, and “Christians and their churches” often “provided powerful stimuli for local resistance and opposition to colonial rule.”²⁴ The modern missionaries used the trade routes and peace imposed by the European powers without simply being agents of European imperialism.

From the early nineteenth century, theologians presented the Church as a means to universal communication. This is what happens in Adam Möhler’s “mystical body” ecclesiology. “Savage” nations, Möhler wrote in 1830, are those which have lost contact with other cultures, whereas, from ancient times, members of “civilized nations” read one another’s books, and acquire their “spirit.” Hence, Möhler argues, “*The maintenance of intercourse and communion with foreigners, and accordingly, the voluntary establishment of relations of dependence on them, is . . . an absolute condition to the general civilisation of man; so that the more this communion and mutual dependence is extended, that is . . . the more the notion of what is foreign disappears, the more is humanity exalted.*” “[T]rue emancipation” from auto-didacticism, Möhler argues, “is a problem which . . . religion alone can solve.”²⁵ It is notable that, in the era in which imperialism was beginning to drive globalization, Möhler does not say that teaching or policing foreigners, for instance, establishing the rule of law, is the key to the spread of civilization. For Kant, the “good man is an autonomous man” and “[s]elf determination” thus “becomes the supreme political good.”²⁶ Möhler says the opposite. He argues that what is needed for civilization to expand is the creation of “relations of dependence on” others. This is a model of a “civilizing” or humanizing dynamic which is achieved not by the deprivation of independence, by control from above, but by the recognition of “mutual dependence.” The moral “savage” is the one who does not realize his need of depending on others to expand his horizons, and the civilized human being is the one who does.

Rémi Brague contends that an “inclusive” culture is one which recognizes its “secondarity” with respect to another. Its members “know that what one transmits does not come from oneself, and that one possesses it . . . only in a fragile and provisional manner.” “The elevation of cultural secondarity to the level of the relationship with the Absolute,” with God, is, Brague

²⁴ *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. Andrew Porter, vol. 3: *The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 222, 231, 223.

²⁵ Johann Adam Möhler, *Symbolism: Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants as Evidenced by their Symbolical Writings*, trans. James Burton Robertson (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 269–70.

²⁶ Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 29.

claims, the defining mark of Christianity, which “knows itself to be second in relation to the Old Covenant.” The Old Covenant is “a permanent foundation” in relation to Christianity, not a “past from which” it “distanced itself progressively.”²⁷ Here we have moved from speaking of globalization to something that occurs at a new level.

There is a recognition of dependence and secondarity within the human project of globalization. Recognizing dependence is a religious act, like Aeneas’s *pietas*. But it is not the supernatural gift of faith. Israel and the Christian Church stake a higher claim: to have been made universal by a gracious, providential sending. Here “progress” or universalization is achieved not only by recognizing dependence but by factually being called into God’s family. One could call such missionary dependence “englobalization.” There’s an analogy between the two, since both come back to dependence: the difference is that globalization is a human project and englobalization is the divine plan. Englobalization is not something that *we do*: we enter a universal community by being gathered by Christ into his Body, the Church. Baptism “englobalizes” us. That made it a global dynamic to be reckoned with. Benedict XV’s *Maximum Illud* (1919), called “the charter for the Catholic missionary movement of modern times,” begins by recalling the Great Commission (Mark 16:15).²⁸

The magisterial teachings which paved the way for *Gaudium et Spes* are those which describe the tasks of the missionaries, with an insistence on the human equality of all peoples, allied to a determination to distinguish Catholic *mission* from the imposition of an external national identity. Because of the evident effects of racism and nationalistic war-mongering, the popes from Benedict XV to John XXIII were clear-sighted about the human project of globalization: universal peace, which makes possible the international exchange of goods and ideas, is not to be had without acquiescence in the divine project of englobalization.

The Church’s Teaching

Benedict XV (1914–1922)

The Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud: On the Propagation of the Faith throughout the World* describes the work of the early modern missionaries: “an army of apostolic men set out for the New World. This great host, which included that glorious son of St. Dominic, Bartholomew de Las Casas, undertook there the twin tasks of protecting the unfortunate natives from human oppression and wresting them from their grinding subjection to the

²⁷ Brague, *Eccentric Culture*, 40, 110.

²⁸ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 8.

powers of darkness.”²⁹ The missionary is represented as a counterforce to the imperial expansion which, empirically, brought him to South America.

“Remember,” Benedict XV says, “that your duty is . . . the acquisition of citizens for a heavenly-fatherland and not for an earthly one.” In 1919, when the European powers were busy at Versailles, carving up “colonies, protectorates and spheres of influence,” Benedict offered a “post-colonial” view of the Church’s global vocation. Forty years before de-colonialization, Benedict warned that if it appears that the missionary is “serving the interests of his homeland,” the “people immediately suspect everything he does,” “giv[ing] rise to the conviction that the Christian religion is the national religion of some foreign people.”³⁰

All over the world, after the First World War, a “backlash” against globalization took place, entailing “restrictions on trade, migration and investment.” Many unfortunate states aimed for “economic self-sufficiency (autarky), the ideal of a de-globalized society.”³¹ In China, the French protectorate saw Catholicism as a means to extend French colonial interests, and the Chinese, in turn, regarded Catholicism as the religion of the French. *Maximum Illud* insists that Catholicism be detached from European interests and enabled to develop a properly “indigenous character”: *Gaudium et Spes* will describe enculturation as an aspect of evangelization. People like to communicate, so the trans-national quality of Christianity is equally emphasized: “The Catholic Church is not an intruder in any country,” writes Benedict XV, “nor is she alien to any people.”³² The expression is like Terence’s *Homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto*, “I am human: nothing human is alien to me.” So there are potentially no outsiders at all: in his Italian translation, the author of *Maximum Illud* “[l]ook[s] to the future,” and hears the Lord’s call to “[l]aunch out into deep water” and enfold “*tutta intera l’umanità*,” the whole of humanity, in the Faith.³³

George Weigel suggests that the First World War was the origin of the dechristianization of Europe.³⁴ Since Kant prized autonomy at the expense of dependency, he interpreted political relations between states solely in terms of struggle and “competition.”³⁵ Set in motion by “imperialist rivalries,” that is, by the “internationalisation of nationalism” on

²⁹ Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud* (Nov. 30, 1919), §4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, §19.

³¹ Ferguson, *Money*, 288, 304.

³² Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*, §16.

³³ *Ibid.*, §41. In the English and Latin, this hopeful peroration is directed to “the multitudes,” or *innumerabiles*.

³⁴ George Weigel, *The Cathedral and the Cube: Europe, America and Politics Without God* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 36–42.

³⁵ Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 52–53.

which nineteenth-century global markets rode, the root of the conflict was that “nationalism” involved defining oneself not just by reference to other peoples, but in *antagonism* to them.³⁶ In his first encyclical, *Ad Beatissim* (November 1914), Benedict XV asked, “who could believe that such peoples, armed against each other, are all descended from the same progenitor . . .? Who would think they could be brothers, sons of a single Father in Heaven?” His attempts to recall both sides to their common humanity by condemning the atrocities of each and all were parodied by the Allies as the words of the “Boche Pope.” His projects for bringing the warring parties to the peace table were sidelined by the Axis Powers as the works of a *Franzosenpapst*.³⁷

Benedict marked the ending of the most deadly war in history with the encyclical *Pacem, Dei Munus Pulcherrimum* (Pentecost 1920; *Peace, the Most Beautiful Gift of God*). He advised that “all States . . . should unite in a single league, . . . a sort of family of peoples, calculated both to maintain their own independence and safeguard the order of human society.” The Pope presented the Church as the working analogy for any such “league of nations”: “She possesses in her organization and institutions a wonderful instrument for bringing this brotherhood among men, not only for their eternal salvation but also for their material well-being to . . . sure acquisition . . . when the Church pervaded with her spirit the ancient and barbarous nations of Europe, . . . the . . . differences that divided them were diminished and their quarrels extinguished; in time they formed a homogeneous society from which sprang Christian Europe which, under the guidance and auspices of the Church, whilst preserving a diversity of nations, tended to a unity that favoured its prosperity and glory.” Benedict’s message is couched in terms of globalization, presenting the advantage of Christianity as being that it helps a multi-national society to endure. He recalls Augustine’s statement that “[t]his celestial city, in its life here on earth, calls to itself citizens of every nation, and forms out of all the peoples one varied society; it is not harassed by differences in customs, laws and institutions, which serve to attainment or the maintenance of peace on earth; it neither rends nor destroys anything but rather guards all and adapts itself to all; however these things may vary among the nations, they are all directed to the same end of peace on earth.”³⁸ Nineteenth-century papal teaching on politics frequently recalls the hostility between the “city of man” and the “city of

³⁶ Ferguson, *Money*, 304; Bayly, *Modern World*, 41, 204.

³⁷ J. Derek Holmes, *The Papacy in the Modern World: 1914–1978* (London: Burns and Oates, 1981), 3.

³⁸ Benedict XV, *Pacem, Dei Munus Pulcherrimum* (Pentecost, 1920), §§17–18.

God.”³⁹ Benedict’s *Pacem, Dei Munus Pulcherrimum* draws on the other side of *The City of God*, the universal desire for peace. Anticipating *Gaudium et Spes*, Benedict relinquishes the pained tone of earlier magisterial observations of modern politics and society, out of a clear-sighted recognition of the stark choice faced by the modern world.

Whilst Benedict XV’s observations on human brotherhood seem anodyne and unexceptional to us, *Maximum Illud* and *Pacem* were written at a time when “social theories had a strong biological character” and the “sense of race was deeply embedded in the worldview of the Anglo-Saxon elites.” Perceived as a “civil war” between “white” tribes, the Great War had undermined Euro-American confidence in white superiority without uprooting its racist bias. Racial thinking and a touching faith in the superiority of some races was a common currency of sociology until the 1930s.⁴⁰ From the nineteenth century, missionaries both Protestant and Catholic had stood out against such credulity: “Although critical of non-Christian cultures, missionary thinking was profoundly egalitarian,” not subservient to racial-nationalist ideologies, because, to the would-be evangelist, “‘race’ was immaterial, humans everywhere corrupt yet equally open to conversion and redemption.”⁴¹ After the First World War, missionaries became especially “sensitive to the resentment generated by racist practices.” Unwilling to be equated to a “white tribe,” Protestant missionary groups held conferences in Honolulu in 1925 and in Jerusalem in 1928, declaring at the latter event that “any discrimination against human beings on the ground of race or colour, any selfish exploitation of man by man is a denial of the teaching of Jesus.”⁴² Within the Protestant churches which had been planted in Africa by English and American missionaries, continuing leadership by Anglophone clergy was resented.

In *Maximum Illud* (1919), Benedict XV declares that “anyone who has charge of a mission . . . must make it his special concern to secure and train local candidates for the sacred ministry.” Non-Europeans are to receive “the same kind of education for the priesthood” as a “European.” The Apostolic Letter marks the establishment of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches. Its “task” was to be “the supervision of the growth and development of the local churches.”⁴³ This practice had wider ramifications: “In 1926, Pius XI reemphasized this theme in *Rerum Ecclesiae*, along with

³⁹ Gregory XVI, *Mirari Vós* (1832), §14; Pius IX, *Quanta Cura* (1864), §4.

⁴⁰ Frank Furedi, *The Silent War: Imperialism and the Changing Perception of Race* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 63, 38, and 5.

⁴¹ Porter, *Nineteenth Century*, 229.

⁴² Furedi, *Silent War*, 84, 87.

⁴³ Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*, §§14–15.

ordaining large numbers of native clergy. 'Anyone who looks upon these natives as members of an inferior race,' Pius XI warned, 'makes a grievous mistake.' Papal statements were primarily directed toward church officials in Africa and China, but African-American Catholics, as well as Catholic liberals generally . . . viewed them as applicable to the American situation."⁴⁴

Pius XI (1922–1939)

The segregated American church was not at the forefront of Pius XI's mind in the decades of the dictators. In 1924 Mexico's Communist government initiated its own deglobalization program by progressing from murdering the clergy to exiling them. Pius XI protested that "those men who now in Mexico persecute their brothers and fellow citizens" should "recall . . . that whatever there is of progress, of civilization, of the good and the beautiful, in their country is due solely to the Catholic Church. . . . [E]very man knows that after the introduction of Christianity into Mexico, the priests and religious . . . worked without rest and despite all the obstacles placed in their way, on the one hand by the colonists who were moved by greed for gold and on the other by the natives who were still barbarians, to promote . . . both the splendor of the worship of God and the benefits of the Catholic religion, works and institutions of charity, schools and colleges for the education of the people and their instruction in letters, the sciences, both sacred and profane, in the arts and the crafts."⁴⁵ Pius is asking the Mexicans to recognize their cultural dependence on the Church: the Gospel is presented as a force which comes from without to civilize. The persecution of the Church by Communist governments and fascist regimes was answered by a vocal assertion of the humanizing effects of Christian culture. Written in December 1943, De Lubac's opening contention, in *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*—"It is not true . . . that man cannot organize the world without God. What is true is that, without God, he can ultimately only organize it against man"—captured the spirit of the Church's apologetic against totalitarianism in the inter-war years.⁴⁶

De Lubac heard the denunciations of "racism" by Pius XI and Pius XII as directly addressing anti-Semitism.⁴⁷ Few today read texts like *Mit Brennender Sorge* so charitably. Rather than "reverently" picking up the cue of

⁴⁴ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 9.

⁴⁵ Pius XI, *Iniquis Afflictisque* (Nov. 1926), §30.

⁴⁶ Henri de Lubac, S.J., *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (French 1944), trans. Edith M. Riley, Ann Englund Nash, and Mark Sebanc (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 14.

⁴⁷ Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Christian Resistance to Anti-Semitism: Memories from 1940–1944*, trans. Elizabeth Englund, O.C.D. (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1990), 25–28, 83.

a trouncing of German *anti-Semitism*, we feel frustrated by the encyclical's dancing around the point with generalizations: "Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the State," it says, commits idolatry. "None but superficial minds," it abjures, would "attempt to lock within . . . the narrow limits of a single race, God, the Creator of the universe, King and Legislator of all nations."⁴⁸ My Catholic students demand to know why the text didn't simply say *anti-Semitism* rather than "racism." Outside such Vatican documents, though, "criticisms of racial thinking in the 1930s were," according to Frank Furedi, "narrowly focussed on Nazi propaganda." There were "few consistently anti-racist intellectuals in the 1930s": most "British intellectuals . . . attacked Nazi racism but were indifferent to comparable practices in the Empire and South America." For "the principle of racial equality had few intellectual defenders in the 1930s." Julian Huxley saw "no . . . contradiction between his trenchant attack on German race theory" in *We Europeans* (1934) "and his paternalistic view of Africans who, he wrote in 1944, had 'for the most part' remained 'in an early stage of barbarism'." When *Mit Brennender Sorge* was delivered in 1937, "the term 'racism' did not yet have an unambiguously negative connotation":⁴⁹ its principal author, Eugenio Pacelli, was spearheading the contemporary meaning of "racism."

Rerum Ecclesiae (1926) and *Mit Brennender Sorge* (1937) should be compared with the attitudes of inter-war anthropologists toward race and toward cultural difference. Both freely used terms such as "barbarism." For Pius XI, lack of intellectual development is a result of "material conditioning," and not genetic or innate: "Experience over a long period of time," he writes in *Rerum Ecclesiae*, "has proven that the inhabitants of those remote regions of the East and of the South frequently are not inferior to us. . . . If one discovers an extreme lack of the ability to understand among those who live in the . . . heart of certain barbarous countries, this is largely due to the conditions under which they exist, for since their daily needs are so limited, they are not often called upon to make use of their intellects. . . . We have here under Our very eyes the example of . . . native students attending the colleges of Rome who not only are equal to the other students in ability . . . but frequently even surpass them. Certainly you should not allow the native clergy to be looked upon as if they were a lower grade of priests, to be employed only in the most humble offices of the ministry."⁵⁰ Pius XI draws empirical observation into a Thomistic anthropology to promote the development of a native clergy and episco-

⁴⁸ Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge* (March, 1937), §§8, 11.

⁴⁹ Furedi, *Silent War*, 8–9, 108.

⁵⁰ Pius XI, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, §26.

pate. A year later, "at the 1938 Summer School for British Colonial Administrators, held at Oxford University, . . . Professor Le Gros Clark's lecture took exception to the German and Italian versions of race theory, but not to race theory as such. Le Gros Clark took as given the prevailing notions of British superiority and African inferiority. In his lecture the 'retarded development of the Kenyan adult' was beyond doubt. The only question was whether this fact was 'fundamental, or in some way related to the environment.'"⁵¹

The future for anthropology belonged not to proponents of European racial superiority, but to cultural relativists. The social anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski was as "scathing" about "Nordic" race supremacism as about "racial equality": his "'middle of the road' approach emphasized that all races were different and all worthy of respect." Under the influence of Malinowski's cultural relativism, "British anthropology . . . moved away from its concept of superior culture," substituting for it the notion of fixed cultural difference. The notion of "cultural incommensurability" was "deployed to justify segregation and attack assimilation." Since "amongst the liberal intelligentsia, the inegalitarian consequences of cultural relativism were rarely explored," "the celebration of cultural traditions was quite consistent with a paternalistic imperial outlook." South Africa is a well-known example of the use of "anti-egalitarian logic of the relativists' notion of difference . . . to legitimatise segregation." Relativist cultural anthropology cued administrators to conceive societies in terms of a *static* cultural pluralism, from which evaluative terms like "backward" and "progress" have been eliminated, and in which "rightness" is therefore ascribed to the status quo. In one sense, anthropological "cultural relativism" is inimical to capitalist globalization, because it respects the fixed diversity of traditions whilst disregarding human samenesses. At its lowest common denominator, market-driven globalization has as a prerequisite that people want to eat and drink analogous things. The exchange of goods from consumptibles to artefacts to ideas requires commonality. But in another sense, the anthropologists' relativism is a fruit of capitalist globalization, because the anthropologist wants the alien to retain its otherness, so that he or she can harvest it. "Native cultures" were rich objects of intellectual consumption for anthropologists. Like museum keepers, they needed their delectable acquisitions housed in optimal climactic conditions. "Dr Margaret Read enthused about Africa because of the research opportunities it provided for Western scholars." She wrote that "The continent of Africa is in a sense a laboratory and experimenting ground

⁵¹ Furedi, *Silent War*, 108–9.

for research in the social sciences, for all the nations, who administer colonies here.”⁵² Nationalist-imperialist globalization knows no commonality between “researcher” and “native,” because what the “native” has to give it is his difference. It wants to “museumize” its objects because their digestible substrate is their past.⁵³

For Pius XI, the future “goal” was “building up a native clergy.” The pope looked to tradition to discern how prudently to act in the present: “sufficient attention has never been paid,” he felt, “to the method whereby the Gospel began to be preached . . . [T]he clergy placed in charge of the faithful in each new community by the Apostles were not men brought in from the outside but were chosen from the natives of that locality.”⁵⁴ *Mit Brennender Sorge* admits “spiritual superiorities among individuals and nations,” the “fruits of education and progress.” At the same time, it envisages all peoples as potentially englobed in a single community:

The Church is one, the same for all races and all nations. Beneath her dome, as beneath the vault of heaven, there is but one country for all nations and tongues; there is room for the development of every quality, advantage, task and vocation which God the Creator and Savior has allotted to individuals as well as to ethnical communities. The Church’s maternal heart is big enough to see in the God-appointed development of individual characteristics and gifts, more than a mere danger of divergency. . . . But she also knows that to this freedom limits have been set by the majesty of the divine command, which founded that Church one and indivisible. . . . Whoever tampers with that unity . . . wrenches from the Spouse of Christ one of the diadems with which God Himself crowned her.

Therefore, “Should men . . . offer you the seduction of a national German Church, be convinced that it is nothing but a denial of the one Church of Christ and the evident betrayal of that universal evangelical mission, for which a world Church alone is qualified and competent.”⁵⁵

Pius XII (1939–1958)

What may first strike contemporary readers of that passage is not its defiance of German nationalism, but its engulfing conception of the unity of the Church. Pius XII’s 1943 encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* is, to some extent, accurately criticized for the judicial confines which it sets to

⁵² Furedi, *Silent War*, 94, 96–97, 224–25, and 97–98.

⁵³ Bague, *Eccentric Culture*, 103.

⁵⁴ Pius XI, *Rerum Ecclesiae*, §19.

⁵⁵ Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge*, §§18, 22.

membership of the Body of Christ. Because it states that “those who are divided in faith or government” from the Catholic Church “cannot be living in the unity of such a Body,”⁵⁶ *Mystici Corporis Christi* seemed to deny any membership to Protestant or Orthodox Christians. This was canonically problematic, since, for instance, Orthodox baptism has always been recognized as valid. “Is the non-Catholic Christian,” Ratzinger pointedly mused in 1960, “the ‘other’ brother only in the sense in which an unbaptized person is?”⁵⁷ But, in 1943, Pius XII did not present faith in a single Church as harsh medicine. Rather, in the midst of World War II, it was proffered as a symbol of peace: “while before their eyes nation rises up against nation . . . if they turn their gaze to the Church” and “contemplate her divinely-given unity—by which all men of every race are united to Christ in the bond of brotherhood—they will be forced to admire this fellowship in charity.”⁵⁸ In the United States, “mystical body ecclesiology” had been, since the mid 1930s, a potent political force. “‘Jim Crowism in the Mystical Body of Christ’, Bernard Sheil, the Bishop of Chicago, said in 1942, ‘is a disgraceful anomaly.’” Americans read the encyclical as directly applicable to anti-racist activism: “‘If any one tenet of the Church may be called all-inclusive’, wrote the editor of the *Harlem Friendship Review*, ‘it is this doctrine of the Mystical Body . . . it has no common ground with racial discrimination of any sort.’”⁵⁹

Pius XII’s first encyclical was called *On the Unity of the Human Race* (*Summi Pontificatus*). Recalling *Maximum Illud*’s prescriptions about the “equality” of “native clergy,” the 1939 encyclical announced, “We have chosen the . . . Feast of Christ the King to raise to the Episcopal dignity at the Tomb of the Apostles twelve representatives of widely different peoples and races. In the midst of the disruptive contrasts which divide the human family, may this solemn act proclaim to all Our sons, scattered over the world, that the spirit . . . and the work of the Church” is “that which the Apostle of the Gentiles preached: ‘putting on the new (man), . . . according to the image of him that created him. Where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all and in all.’”⁶⁰ Englobalization is Christological.

Pius XII uses Mystical Body ecclesiology as a form of *apologetics*, running together “evidentialist” arguments for the human desire for a just society

⁵⁶ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §22.

⁵⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood* (German 1960) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 87.

⁵⁸ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, §5.

⁵⁹ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 49–52.

⁶⁰ Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus* (1939), §48, citing Colossians 3:10–11.

with theological claims about that desire's being fulfilled on a supernatural level, in the Church. The argument is that the "globalizing" tendency of humanity can only be fulfilled by "englobalization," in Christ. Such apologetics can be seen at the origins of mystical body ecclesiology, for instance in Möhler's *Symbolism*. This "providential" conception of globalization became a commonplace of mystical body thinking: "Among the Gentiles as among the Jews," Henri de Lubac claimed in 1947, the Church Fathers "could discern the *Corpus Ecclesiae* already in process of formation. For them . . . the Church was nothing else than the human race itself, in all the phases of its history, in so far as it was to lead to Christ. . . . It was the *omnis humana conditio*."⁶¹ By the mid-twentieth century, the "Unity of the Human Race" had become a matter of life or death. In 1951, in *Evangelii Praecones* (On the Promotion of Catholic Missions), Pius XII asserted that "missionaries preach to all men the practice of natural and Christian virtues and that brotherly and common fellowship which transcends racial conflicts and national frontiers."⁶² The insistence of *Humani Generis* (1950) on monogenism can be seen in this light.⁶³ Viewing the history of the "Christianization" of Europe with less benignity than Benedict XV, Pius XII asserted, in his first, 1939, encyclical that "even when Europe had a cohesion of brotherhood through identical ideals gathered from Christian preaching, she was not free from divisions, convulsions and wars . . . ; but perhaps they never felt the intense pessimism of today as to the possibility of settling them. . . . In Our days . . . dissensions come not only from the surge of rebellious passion, but also from a deep spiritual crisis." He names the primary source of this "spiritual crisis" as "forgetfulness of that law of human solidarity and charity which is dictated and imposed by our common origin and by the equality of rational nature in all men, to whatever people they belong, and by the redeeming Sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ . . . on behalf of sinful mankind."⁶⁴

Gaudium et Spes has been difficult to assimilate for two related reasons: its mixing "social justice" teaching with ecclesiology, when we are accustomed to thinking about them in separate compartments, and its optimism that global social justice is achievable. Set in historical context, its drawing ecclesiology and social justice together appears as a sort of desperate manoeuvre in the face of total war: either we hope for the

⁶¹ Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (French, 1947), trans. Lancelot Shepherd (London: Burns and Oates, 1950), 93.

⁶² Pius XII, *Evangelii Praecones* (1951), §2.

⁶³ Pius XII, *Humani Generis* (1950), §37.

⁶⁴ Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus*, §§33, 35.

englobalization of humanity, by Christ in his Church, or we abandon ourselves to genocidal warfare between nations. Delivered one month after the outset of war, in October 1939, *Summi Pontificatus* is grimly optimistic that “in the light of this unity of all mankind,” “imposed by the very force of their nature,” “the nations, despite a difference of development . . . , are not destined to break the unity of the human race, but rather to enrich . . . it by the sharing of their own peculiar gifts and by that reciprocal interchange of goods which can be possible . . . only when a mutual love and a lively sense of charity unite all the sons of the same Father and all those redeemed by the same Divine Blood.”⁶⁵

All of the themes relating to “global” humanity in *Gaudium et Spes* can be seen in the magisterial writings of Pius XII. The Pastoral Constitution begins by speaking of “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age.” It describes the “thinking reed” as ever wanting to hope and ever cast down by self-questioning, and of Christ as answering both. Pius XII’s Christmas Broadcast of 1942 commences by depicting the “message of Jesus” as one which “infuses exuberant and trustful joy into mankind, torn by the anxiety of deep, bitter sorrow.” “That message” which Jesus “consecrated can solve,” Pius XII affirmed, “the most tortuous questions, unsolved and insoluble for those who bring to their investigations a mentality and an apparatus which are ephemeral and merely human; and those questions stand up, bleeding, imperiously demanding an answer, before the thought and the feeling of embittered and exasperated mankind.”⁶⁶

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church will assert that mission does not impose the “Gospel of Christ” externally or extrinsically upon cultures: rather, “By riches coming from above, it makes fruitful, as it were from within, the spiritual qualities and traditions of every people of every age.”⁶⁷ The expression “from within” seems strikingly radical, as if the Vatican II Constitution were denoting all potential converts as anonymous Christians. Pius XII’s encyclical on the Promotion of Christian Mission specifically adjures missionaries not to “translate European civilization and culture, and no other, to foreign soil, there to take root and propagate itself.” Rather, he advises that “[t]he Church from the beginning down to our own time has always followed this wise practice: let not the Gospel on being introduced into any new land . . . extinguish whatever its people possess that is naturally good, just or beautiful. For the Church, when she calls people to a higher culture . . . does not act like

⁶⁵ Ibid., §§42–43.

⁶⁶ Pius XII, Christmas Message, 1942.

⁶⁷ *Gaudium et Spes*, §58.

one who recklessly cuts down and uproots a thriving forest. No, she grafts a good scion upon the wild stock that it may bear a crop of more delicious fruit." "Although," Pius continues, "human nature is tainted with original sin, yet it has in itself something that is naturally Christian; and this, if illumined by divine delight and nourished by God's grace, can eventually be changed into true and supernatural virtue."⁶⁸ "Humanity" has "in itself" something that is "naturally Christian." Here, with the use of Paul's metaphor from Romans 9, we see why Pius generalizes, from Christianity being engrafted into Judaism to its being engrafted into the whole "human race." One may hold, as I do, that too much was "not said" by the popes from Benedict XV to Pius XII about European anti-Semitism.⁶⁹ But it should not be forgotten that Pius XII's own balance sheet concluded as it began, with a denunciation of racism: in 1958, one week before his death, the Pope ordered the American Catholic Church to desegregate, in his own, autocratic words, "at once."⁷⁰

From Benedict XV to Pius XII, the simultaneous insistence on the global-and-indigenous character of Christianity had a practical side: when governments expelled "foreign" missionaries, Christianity would go with them unless a native clergy and episcopate had been planted. The Church was compelled to conceive of mission not as the centrifugal extension of a central power, but as the "property" of the converted peoples, by the fact that Southern and Asian governments, like that of China, equated Christian mission with that form of "globalization" which was merely European imperialism by another name. European clerics suffered such expulsions after 1919, and the "anti-global" retrenchment forced the Church to think "non-territorially" about its missions. Pius XII's development of a properly "theological," or spiritual, conception of global community began even earlier than that. The loss of territorial power, in 1870, had required a bit of rethinking at the Vatican. If it was no longer a normal "sovereign" state, what kind of state was it? Ever since Boniface VIII, in the thirteenth century, canon lawyers had maintained that law relates to territory, and cannot oblige anyone outside the territory in which the law is made. Eugenio Pacelli's teachers at the Apollinaire, the College of Canon Law in Rome, taught him that the Church is a "*sui generis* State," with an *international* juridical personality. From the turn of the century, Eugenio Pacelli assisted in the revision of canon law necessitated by the new situation. In 1912, Pacelli published his own contribution to the problem of territorial power: *La personalità*

⁶⁸ Pius XII, *Evangelii Praecones*, §§56–57.

⁶⁹ Martin Rhonheimer, "What Was Not Said," *First Things* (Nov 2003): 18–27.

⁷⁰ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 91–92.

giuridica e la territorialità delle leggi specialmente nel diritto canonico; studio storico-giuridico. The Thomists of Salamanca, like Vitoria, had developed the modern conception of international law in the seventeenth century. Using Thomas Aquinas and later Thomist writers, Pacelli argues that territoriality is not an essential property of law: "In effect, the idea of territory does not appear as a necessary element of the notion of law; rather, for there to be a genuine and proper law, it suffices that there be given a *perfect community*." Law can thus be "international" or supra-national, so long as a "community" effects it. It is the mutual reception of legal obligation which makes law possible. Between 1870 and 1914, whilst nationalism reached a global apogee, the Vatican morphed into the world's first virtual state. This encouraged it to envisage the global bonds between states and peoples in dynamic, spiritual terms. The policy pursued by Pius X was to present the Vatican as a "supra-territorial power," standing impartially above all national-territorial interest groups. Pius X asserted in 1911 that "the Pope, is independent of all States, he is not bound to the interests of any one people, but is not alien to any people."⁷¹ The expression used later in reference to the missions, "The Catholic Church is not an intruder in any country, nor is she alien to any people," looks like an offshoot of this.

The strange confluence of "social justice" teaching and ecclesiology in *Gaudium et Spes* has its origins in that theological backwater, the missionary practice of the Church in the twentieth century. The apparently otherworldly belief of the Pastoral Constitution that social justice is achievable for all humanity, not at the behest of a fearful elite, but as emerging from the desires of ordinary people, has its beginnings in the concourse of missionaries and their converts. The missionaries sensed first what was later to become a commonplace experience. At least since the writings of Vitoria and Las Casas, the Church had given notional assent to the shared, universal humanity of all men. Pius XII was evidently versed in their writings. But what comes about first through the "missionary experience" is a real assent to the deep-seated analogies between peoples. When, later in the twentieth century, Father John Anthony Kaiser wrote that the "Abagusii" of Kenya "seemed exactly like the Scandinavian farmers among whom I had grown up in Western Minnesota . . . tenacious and stubborn . . . generous, tight-fisted and grasping,"⁷² he was expressing a living recognition of shared humanity which was a new moral experience. The experience was a product of a "globalization" deeper than the globalization of commerce, more radical

⁷¹ Philippe Chenaux, *Pie XII: Diplomate et pasteur* (Paris: Cerf, 2003), 49–51, 71–72.

⁷² Anthony John Kaiser, *If I Die* (Nairobi, Kenya: Cana Publishing, 2003), 17.

even than the virtualization of communication, and which is simultaneously entirely ecclesial and entirely human. Something new came about in human self-understanding in the mid-twentieth century; it was filtered through missionary practice into the thinking of the Church, and was formally exhibited in *Gaudium et Spes*. Missionary experience turned the notional idea of a single global humanity into real assent to fraternity.

John XXIII (1958–1963)

With the recognition of the indivisibility of opposition after World War II, it became “inevitable that the movement against colonialism would reject the racist assumptions of the imperial powers.”⁷³ As John XXIII put it in *Pacem in Terris* (1963), “Today . . . the conviction is widespread that all men are equal in natural dignity; and so, on the doctrinal and theoretical level, at least, no form of approval is being given to racial discrimination.”⁷⁴ “We are witnessing,” he said in *Mater et Magistra* (1961) “the break-away from colonialism and the attainment of political independence by the peoples of Asia and Africa.”⁷⁵ Instead of a repetition of the anti-Imperial de-globalization of the interwar years, “[d]rawn together by their common needs nations are becoming daily more inter-dependent.” Some are beginning to think transnationally: “an ever-extending network of societies and organizations . . . set their sights beyond the . . . interests of individual countries and concentrate on the economic, social, cultural and political welfare of all nations throughout the world.”⁷⁶

It might seem from these reflections that englobalization within the Church is merely extrinsically related to the smooth progress of global fraternity. But, as Weigel notes, Vatican II convened, unfortuitously, during the Cuban missile crisis of 1963. In his first, 1959 encyclical, John XXIII observed, “We are called brothers. We actually are brothers. . . . Why do we ready lethal weapons for use against our brothers?” From John XXIII’s initial expression of horror at the “monstrous weapons our age has devised”⁷⁷ to the call for disarmament in *Pacem in Terris* (1963), and from there to Paul VI’s eloquent request to the United Nations, “Si vous voulez être frères, laissez tomber les armes de vos mains,”⁷⁸ it is clear that the popes who presided over the Second Vatican Council did not think

⁷³ Furedi, *Silent War*, 19–20.

⁷⁴ Benedict XV, *Pacem, Dei Munus Pulcherrimum*, §44.

⁷⁵ John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, §49.

⁷⁶ John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, §49.

⁷⁷ John XXIII, *Ad Petri*, §§27, 34.

⁷⁸ Paul VI, Address to the United Nations, 1965.

that the human project of globalization was its own security. Far from “repos[ing] considerable confidence” in the United Nations,⁷⁹ the only reference in *Gaudium et Spes* to this organisation is a footnote citation following a condemnation of “total war” which alludes to two 1954 allocutions from Pius XII, *Pacem in Terris*, and Paul VI’s whereabouts when he called for peace.⁸⁰

Like *Gaudium et Spes* itself, John XXIII held ecclesial englobalization to be an intrinsic requirement of continuing human globalization, and the desire for global community to be linked to receptivity to baptism. John XXIII stated that “whatever their ethnic background, men possess, besides the special characteristics which distinguish them from other men, other very important elements in common with the rest of mankind.”⁸¹ But, at the same time, he was concerned that the process of economic and intellectual globalization should not iron out the differences between peoples, and particularly that the peoples of the global South should not become “Western” at the expense of their full humanity. “The developing nations,” he wrote in *Mater et Magistra*, “have . . . unmistakable characteristics of their own, resulting from the nature of the particular region and the natural dispositions of their citizens, with their time-honored traditions and customs. In helping these nations . . . the more advanced communities must recognize and respect this individuality. They must beware of making the assistance they give an excuse for forcing these people into their own national mold.”⁸² Likewise, *Gaudium et Spes* asks:

What is to be done to prevent the increased exchanges between cultures, which should lead to . . . fruitful dialogue . . . from disturbing the life of communities, from destroying the wisdom received from ancestors, or from placing in danger the character proper to each people? How is the dynamism and expansion of a new culture to be fostered without losing a living fidelity to the heritage of tradition? This question is of particular urgency when a culture which arises from the enormous progress of science and technology must be harmonized with a culture nourished by classical . . . traditions. . . . Every sector of the family of man carries within itself and in its best traditions some portion of the spiritual treasure entrusted by God to humanity, even though many may not be aware of the source from which it comes.⁸³

⁷⁹ Weigel, “Rescuing *Gaudium et Spes*.”

⁸⁰ *Gaudium et Spes*, §2.

⁸¹ John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (1963), §100.

⁸² John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, §§169–70.

⁸³ *Gaudium et Spes*, §§56, 86.

This respect for the antique “canons” of behaviour in non-Western cultures is more than the antiquarian desire of the cultural relativist that researchable behaviour patterns not be effaced by modernity. Rather, it sees the particular traditions which flourished before global secularization as the religious root upon which supernatural faith is engrafted. These ancient moral and aesthetic traditions should be nurtured because so much of the humanity of non-Western cultures is incarnate within them, and, therefore, so much of their intrinsic receptivity to the Gospel.

Gaudium et Spes will present the graces of the Body of Christ as the fulfilment, and not the destruction, of the natural desire for freedom and independence. It does this in clear view of the experience of “globalization” by non-Western cultures as an assimilation or ingestion into the West. Over the course of the twentieth century, the popes had alternated between the cultural language of “globalization,” describing Christianity as a civilizing force, and the ecclesial language of englobalization. So, for instance, John XXIII states that “in bringing people to Christ, the Church has . . . brought them many social and economical advantages. For true Christians cannot help feeling obliged to improve their own temporal institutions and environment. They do all they can to prevent these institutions from doing violence to human dignity. They encourage whatever is conducive to honesty and virtue.” Here Christian faith sounds like the best one can buy, in terms of globalization. But, *Mater et Magistra* continues by speaking of the Church as sheltering individualities by giving them rebirth: “[I]n becoming as it were the life-blood of these people, the Church is not . . . a foreign body in their midst. Her presence brings about the rebirth, the resurrection, of each individual in Christ; and the man who is reborn and rises again in Christ never feels himself constrained from without. He feels himself free in the very depth of his being, and freely raised up to God. And thus he affirms and develops that side of his nature which is noblest and best.”⁸⁴

One author argues that after Vatican II, “[n]o longer would the mark of the universal Church be uniformity across time and culture. . . . [C]onciliar documents emphasized the links between evangelization . . . and a sensitivity to local situations. According to *Gaudium et Spes*, the Church is ‘not bound exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, to any one particular way of life, or to any customary pattern of living.’ . . . [T]he bishops . . . strove to create a pluralistic institution, one more deeply rooted in local cultures.” It is not entirely accurate to say that this “altered the terms of the discussion.”⁸⁵ John XXIII could do more than to quote Pius XII’s

⁸⁴ John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, §§179–80.

⁸⁵ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 223.

1939 *Summi Pontificatus*: “The Church aims at unity . . . ; she does not aim at a uniformity which would only be external in its effects and would cramp the natural tendencies of the nations concerned. Every nation has its own genius, its own qualities, springing from the hidden roots of its being.”⁸⁶ *Gaudium et Spes* has nothing to add to this: what it does that is new is more firmly to establish the discourse about universal community within a programmatic description of the communion of the Church.

Gaudium et Spes

Ratzinger does not convict the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of naïveté about *modernity*: he does criticize it for straying into naïveté about “the world” as such. Complaining that *Gaudium et Spes* uses the term “world” in a “pretheological” way, he argues that “[t]he Church cooperates with the world in order to build up the world . . . thus . . . we might characterize the vision that informs the text. It is not clear . . . whether the world that cooperates and the world that is to be built up are one and the same world. . . . [T]he authors . . . acted on the assumption that they themselves were not the world but its counterpart.”⁸⁷ In Ratzinger’s youth, a cleric could recall the days “when I was in the world,” as if he were now on another planet. Ratzinger objects to *Gaudium et Spes* when it strays into sounding like an episcopal version of this bemused cleric, who doesn’t realize that “the church” and “the world” are not two separate, autonomous spheres. *Gaudium et Spes* states that “the People of God and the human race [*genus humanum*] in whose midst it lives render service to each other. Thus the mission of the Church will show its religious, and by that very fact, its supremely human character.”⁸⁸ Ratzinger finds the “use of the term ‘genus humanum’ to denote the other partner” “unsatisfactory” because “the Church itself is part of the *genus humanum* and cannot . . . be contradistinguished from it. . . . The Church meets its vis-à-vis in the human race, . . . in non-Christians, . . . etc. But it cannot stand outside the human race, . . . and then artificially create a solidarity which in any case is the Church’s lot.” Ratzinger ascribes these lapses “to the deep-rooted extrinsicism of ecclesiastical thought, to long acquaintance with the Church’s exclusion from the general course of development and to retreat into a special little ecclesiastical world from which an attempt is made to speak to the rest of the world.”⁸⁹ Globalization, for instance, is not

⁸⁶ John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, §181, citing *Summi Pontificatus*, §43.

⁸⁷ Ratzinger, *Principles*, 379.

⁸⁸ *Gaudium et Spes*, §11.

⁸⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, “Introductory Article and Chapter I: The Dignity of the Human Person,” in *Commentary on the Documents*, ed. Vorgrimler, 119.

something which the Church suddenly happens to find occurring in the modern world, and offers to help out: the Church has been in the middle of it since, as Benedict XV put it, “an army of apostolic men set out for the New World.”⁹⁰

These lapses are more than compensated for by the positive contribution made to the Pastoral Constitution by missionary experience itself. There are many reasons within the development of European philosophy why its authors, like Karol Wojtyła, put the *genus humanum* at the centre of the document. But it was missionaries who first realized, at more than a notional level, that it’s possible to talk “man to man” with absolute strangers. It must have been an extraordinary experience to learn the languages of China and India and Africa, and to realize the Gospel could be translated into them, and be preached in them. They realized that the words of Christ could be embodied in any human language, and by that token that every human language is open to Christ. They learned from mission what it is to be human. And so the Pastoral Constitution puts human communication at its heart. Rather than setting the human project at odds with the divine gift of englobalization, it sees the human experience of global “interdependence” as needing the Church and also as forming the Church. The “Church,” *Gaudium et Spes* says, “sent to all peoples . . . is not bound to any race or nation, any particular way of life. . . . [C]onscious of her universal mission, she can enter into communion with the various civilizations, to their enrichment and to the enrichment of the Church herself.”⁹¹ The model is of learning and reception, not because, like the Imperialist administrators, the missionary will take more than he gives, but because what he offers is reception by God.

Marxism

Sections 19–20 of *Gaudium et Spes* deal with modern atheism. George Weigel thinks it unfortunate that “*Gaudium et Spes* depicted a world in which the chief philosophical challenges to the Christian worldview and the Christian view of man are Marxism and existentialism of the Sartrean variety” since “Marxism was in the ash can of history within a generation of the Pastoral Constitution’s promulgation.” Rather than Marxism, he thinks, the Church today is faced with “post-modern man, metaphysically indifferent, spiritually bored.” With the collapse of Soviet Communism, Marxism lost the last of its moral capital. But Marxism seems to be vibrantly alive today: postmodern culture is simply Marxism without the messianism. Retaining the materialism, the interest theory (the concep-

⁹⁰ Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*, §4.

⁹¹ *Gaudium et Spes*, §§26, 58.

tion of society as a congeries of competing interest groups), and the concomitant conviction that ideas and beliefs are really just strategic means of bluffing one's way to power, but dropping the hope of Utopia, Marxism thrives in the professional classes. Though the *texts* of J. P. Sartre may be little perused, and are in that sense only, as Weigel says, "of antiquarian interest" (Weigel, 255), the "existential atheists" to whom the Pastoral Constitution is directed are "people who think waiting for Godot is a hopeless gesture,"⁹² and there are many here amongst us. The rhetoric of postponement and deferral in postmodernist theory comes back to saying, the Kingdom will not come. Our Marcionite Marxists are bored by metaphysical faith because they imagine that those who maintain it do so either because someone else is capitalizing on it, or because they themselves are capitalizing on pretending to hold it. Marxism was reborn in postmodern capitalism, with its magical conception of money. "Modern" Marxist "man may have been 'obsolete' in 1945 or 1965," Weigel says. "What came next was even worse" (Weigel, 259). Henri de Lubac, who was involved in writing Sections 19–20, described such an outcome in *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*:

[Marx's] communism offered itself as the only concrete realization of humanism . . . "the religion of the workers has no God," Marx wrote, "because it seeks to restore the divinity of man." . . . What has become of man as conceived by this atheist humanism? A being that can still hardly be called a 'being'—a thing that has no content, a cell . . . merged in a mass that is in the process of becoming: 'social-and-historical man,' of whom all that remains is pure abstraction, apart from the social relations and the position in time by which he is defined. There is no stability or depth left in him, and it is no good . . . claiming to discover any value exacting universal respect. There is nothing to prevent his being used as material or as a tool either for the preparation of some future society or for ensuring, here and now, the dominance of one privileged group. There is not even anything to prevent his being cast aside as useless. . . . [T]he types of man conceivable vary. . . . But underneath these diversities there is always the same fundamental creature, or rather the absence of any creature. For this man has literally been dissolved. Whether in the name of myth or in the name of dialectic, losing truth, he has lost himself. In reality there is no longer any man because there is no longer anything that is greater than any man.⁹³

Gaudium et Spes speaks to this "hollow man," neither by accepting his claim to a substantive humanism, nor by calling his bluff, since it doesn't

⁹² Ratzinger, "The Dignity of the Human Person," 147–48.

⁹³ De Lubac, *Drama*, 41, 66.

propose a Marxist hermeneutic of suspicion, but by seeking to kindle the dying flame of his utopianism. Early drafts did not refer to atheism. Cardinal Silva Henríquez of Santiago (Chile) requested it, in October 1964: “He pointed out the humanist character of modern atheism, which cannot be met by a mere condemnation but can only be given a Christian answer in terms of Christ as the new man. . . . [T]he Cardinal . . . declared that one task of the schema would be to outline an eschatology on the basis of the risen Christ.”⁹⁴ It is not surprising that Marxists gave up on their New Man, because eschatology tries the faith of all believers. It wants us to imagine the Kingdom as really present. But we want to postpone it, for the more concretely exact the dénouement, the more exacting a demand the analogy makes upon faith. *Gaudium et Spes*, with its own “utopianism,” proposes that the “remedy which must be applied to atheism” is just such eschatological faith: “it is the function of the Church, led by the Holy Spirit Who renews and purifies her . . . to make God the Father and his Incarnate Son present and in a sense visible. This result is achieved chiefly by the witness of a living and mature faith. . . . What does the most to reveal God’s presence . . . is the brotherly charity of the faithful who are united in spirit as they work together for the faith of the Gospel and who prove themselves a sign of unity.”⁹⁵

The Lord of the World or The Light of the World

Doctrinally or conceptually, there is only one orthodox way of conceiving the concluding, eschatological embrace of the “City of God” on earth into the eternal, heavenly city. It is the final “englobalization” of history, brought about by God. Pastorally or imaginatively, this eschatological end can be imagined in at least two ways. These two orthodox ways of imagining the end time each have a heterodox counterpart. In Western Christianity, both Protestant and Catholic, the commonest orthodox way of imagining the end is, as it were, tragically. The city of man, conceived as Augustine did, as the idolatrous city fuelled by self-love, will rebel increasingly against God, persecuting the city of God on earth with ever-greater vigour, until God returns in glory to reclaim his martyrs. A fictional version, by Robert Hugh Benson, presents the pope as the last man on earth, saying Benediction whilst the airborne army of the Anti-Christ flies in to bombard him: the novel concludes, “Then the world passed, and the glory of it.”⁹⁶ Such a vision is represented in Pius XII’s *Evangelii Praecones*, which states that

⁹⁴ Ratzinger, “The Dignity of the Human Person,” 143–44.

⁹⁵ *Gaudium et Spes*, §20.

⁹⁶ Robert Hugh Benson, *Lord of the World* (1907) (Doylestown, PA: Wildside Press, n.d.), 254.

“almost the whole human race is today allowing itself to be driven into two opposing camps, for Christ or against Christ. The human race is involved today in a supreme crisis, which will issue in its salvation by Christ, or in its dire destruction.”⁹⁷ An example of a heterodox secular version of this “tragic” vision is, perhaps surprisingly, Marxism. For Marxism, struggle is the motor of history, and a catastrophic breakdown of capitalism paves the way for the communist utopia. This is a materialist reconfiguration of the theological image of the reign of the anti-Christ preceding the last Judgement. Marxism is not a heterodox version of a “comic theological” eschatology. Only a bland, “Whiggish” conception of history as an uninterrupted progress toward perfection could be that.

There are elements of the “tragic” vision in *Gaudium et Spes*: it speaks of “all human life,” as “a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness.”⁹⁸ But the overall impression of the Pastoral Constitution is of a comic theological eschatology. For that reason, we have no need to regret that Eastern Orthodox conceptions of the cosmos and history, which were present in early drafts, were ultimately jettisoned.⁹⁹ They were not. Rather than connoting the antithetical rival of the heavenly city, the “earthly city” is given a positive meaning. *Gaudium et Spes* speaks of “Christians” as “citizens of two cities,” “exhort[ing]” them “to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously.” For Augustine, one cannot simultaneously be a citizen of both cities: a member of the city of God can use the earthly city, reside in it and “make use of the peace of Babylon,”¹⁰⁰ but he is not of its “race.” To the contrary, *Gaudium et Spes* says, “[T]he Church has a saving and eschatological purpose which can be fully attained only in the future world. But she is already present in this world, and is composed of men, that is, of members of the earthly city who have a call to form the family of God’s children.”¹⁰¹ Paul VI told the United Nations general assembly, “We . . . bear to your terrestrial city of peace the greetings and good wishes of the spiritual city of peace.”¹⁰² Even the “Augustinian” Benedict XVI can say, in the wake of *Gaudium et Spes*, “In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, that is to say, the community of peoples and nations, in such a way as to

⁹⁷ Pius XII, *Evangelii Praecones*, §70.

⁹⁸ *Gaudium et Spes*, §13.

⁹⁹ Moeller, “History of the Constitution,” in *Commentary on the Documents*, ed. Vorgimier, 72.

¹⁰⁰ Augustine, *City of God*, XIX.26.

¹⁰¹ *Gaudium et Spes*, §40.

¹⁰² Paul VI, Address to the United Nations, 1965.

shape the *earthly city* in unity and peace, rendering it to some degree an anticipation and a prefiguration of the undivided *city of God*.”¹⁰³

Just as for Bonaventure, according to Ratzinger, “the Spirit . . . achieves a particular power in the final age; but this age . . . is an age of Christ,”¹⁰⁴ so *Gaudium et Spes* is “convinced that the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God’s grace and the flowering of His own mysterious design.”¹⁰⁵ When it speaks of reading the signs of the times, it means looking for the presence of God’s grace in the world. The “comic eschatological” vision imagines history and the “human city” as achieving obedience to God before the Last Judgment: Benson himself wrote a second novel in which the world reaches its consummation in exact social and political conformity to *Rerum Novarum*. Benson’s *The Dawn of All* devises an entirely orthodox, in every sense of the word, eschatological scenario.

For in Revelation, “the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into” the heavenly city (Rev 21:24). The “treasure” which *Gaudium et Spes* pictures being “raised up” into God is humanity itself: “For here grows the body of a new human family, a body which even now is able to give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age. For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in His Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again, but freed of stain, burnished and transfigured, when Christ hands over to the Father: ‘a kingdom eternal and universal, a kingdom of truth and love, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.’ On this earth that Kingdom is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns it will be brought into full flower.”¹⁰⁶

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¹⁰³ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, §7.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure* (German 1959), trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971, 1989), 117.

¹⁰⁵ *Gaudium et Spes*, §34.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, §39.