

THE JESUITS

Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts

1540–1773

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Madonna of St Luke. Ink and colours on silk. China. Ming dynasty, late sixteenth to early seventeenth century. © The Field Museum, Chicago. Neg. #A113717c. Reproduced with permission.

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15 / Alessandro Valignano: The Jesuits and Culture in the East

ANDREW C. ROSS

David Bosch's classic *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*¹ serves as a major textbook in universities and seminaries around the world. Many of these institutions approach the work in an almost medieval way, with students reading a chapter before the teacher first lectures and then leads discussion upon it. A supplementary volume of documents selected to illustrate Bosch's theses has now been published.² In addition, Saayman and Krizinger have edited a volume of essays by Protestant and Catholic scholars³ which constitutes a sort of dialogue with Bosch's *chef d'oeuvre*, the possibility of a living dialogue having been cut off by the author's tragic death.

Bosch's book is a seminal study, yet it has what I consider a major flaw. In Part Two Bosch describes what he calls the historic missionary paradigms, those of Eastern Christianity, of the medieval Roman Catholic church, and of the Protestant Reformation, and then what he refers to as the paradigm of 'Mission in the Wake of the Enlightenment.' All this serves as a preliminary to his massive Part Three discussion of a relevant, ecumenical modern missionary paradigm. The major flaw in this monumental study is that in all six hundred pages Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), Jesuit Visitor to the East and architect of the Society's dramatically successful work in Japan and China, is not mentioned at all, and Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), missionary and mandarin, Vincent Cronin's famous *Wise Man from the West*, is mentioned only twice in what are, in effect, asides. Furthermore, these two passing references are in Part Three, the 'modern' section, and not in the section dealing with what Bosch calls the Medieval Roman Catholic paradigm. Ricci is glanced at as a sort of failed forerunner of a number of modern developing missionary theologies and practices. In castigating one particular modern approach to 'accommodation,' which he labels the kernel-husk model, Bosch concedes, 'Still, Catholic missionaries, in particular

early Jesuits like de Nobili and Ricci, tried to move beyond the kernel-husk model in their accommodation of the faith to the peoples of India and China.⁴ Somewhat later, when discussing the concept of fulfillment as a pattern of understanding the relationship of Christianity to another religion or culture, he writes: 'When Xavier, de Nobili, and Ricci attempted to accommodate Indian, Chinese, and Japanese religio-cultural values, they ascribed some worth to those cultures and religions and broke, in principle, with the dualistic view of reality sanctioned by Augustine's theology. It was, however, not until the arrival on the scene of the theory of evolution in the nineteenth century ... that the stage was set for an approach according to which religions could be compared and graded on an ascending scale.'⁵

The whole massive Jesuit effort in Japan and China, initiated by St Francis Xavier but decisively shaped by Alessandro Valignano, is recognized only by these two passing references. Yet the Japanese mission was numerically the most successful mission to an already literate people that the church has witnessed since the first six centuries of the Christian era, and the recognition of Matteo Ricci and his successors by the literati of China was a phenomenon unparalleled in Chinese history.

Bosch's incomplete picture of the medieval Roman Catholic paradigm and his perception of that paradigm as continuing relatively unchanged until the Second Vatican Council represent a massive lacuna in his thinking and a distortion of the Roman Catholic tradition that are difficult to account for. What is even more extraordinary is that his two brief references to the Jesuit work in the East constitute, in themselves, an unambiguous recognition on his part of the existence of a radically different Catholic paradigm, which he would appear, therefore, to have ignored deliberately. William Burrows is one of the few to pick up this issue. In a penetrating essay contributed to Saayman and Krizinger's volume,⁶ he insists that Valignano's understanding of the missionary task represents an alternative Roman Catholic paradigm which did not disappear even after the 1742 papal condemnation of 'the practices of Li Madou'⁷ and has certainly reasserted itself in the second half of the twentieth century.

What is not in dispute is that during the Middle Ages in the Latin West what we now call mission came to be understood as the expansion of Christendom, and this understanding went on to have its Protestant as well as its Catholic forms. Thus, when the Iberian kingdoms began their rapid expansion across the world, the Spanish and the Portuguese saw their conquests and their baptisms as different aspects of the expansion of Christendom. This represented a continuation of the view that had prevailed during their immediate past, in the Reconquista, when the Iberian kings had seen the extension of their domains as the expansion

of the church. Thus, the setting up of the Padroado and the Patronato⁸ in the 1490s were reasonable and logical actions by the Holy See and the crowns of Portugal and Spain.

The behaviour of many Spanish settlers in the Americas, however, almost immediately provoked an alternative view of the missionary task to that which simply identified it with the expansion of the Spanish or Portuguese state. This alternative view was created in the Americas by the Dominicans, most notably Bartolomeo de las Casas.⁹ In the new approach the clergy tried to use royal and papal authority to guarantee just treatment for the indigenous inhabitants of the conquered lands and to insist upon this struggle for justice as an essential element in the task of the church. Justice for the indigenous Americans as well as their conversion became a policy with which the Jesuits, when they came to the New World of the Americas, agreed and which they readily followed, notably from the beginning of their work in Brazil.

The Lascasian tradition is an important and worthy tradition. It made clear that the church's concern for people not only should but could be distinguished from both royal policy and whatever the local 'Christian' settler populations wished. But the Lascasian tradition was not focused upon inculturation in the way Valignano's policy was to be. Indeed the Lascasian tradition, noble though it was, was never able to disentangle itself completely from cultural Iberianization, the extraordinary work of the Jesuits among the Guarani notwithstanding.¹⁰ The almost complete lack of an indigenous priesthood in the Americas even among the Guarani is the most visible manifestation of this grave handicap.

Alessandro Valignano was able in Japan and even more spectacularly in China to develop Christian missionary activity sufficiently free from confinement in European forms to allow the Christian message genuinely to enter Japanese and Chinese society and culture and to develop Japanese and Chinese forms. This process was not one of the kernel becoming clothed in a new husk while remaining untouched, but a genuine attempt to translate the Gospel from one culture into another. To put it another way, in terms of elementary chemistry, what was coming into being as a result of this missionary strategy was a solution not a mixture. It has become a commonplace among some historians to assert that the Holy See, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, had begun to see the Padroado and the Patronato as more of a hindrance than a help to the evangelistic task of the church. In response, the Holy See set up the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1622. The Propaganda, with its resurrection of the office of vicar apostolic, was intended as a means of circumventing the problems presented by the agreements of the 1490s, and thus bringing the missionary task under the control more of Rome than of Lisbon or Madrid.

What I want to suggest is that the appointment of Valignano as Visitor to the

East of the Society of Jesus, an event which predates the creation of the Propaganda by half a century, was similarly motivated. It was a very specific assertion of a new pattern in the relations between the Jesuit missions in the East and the Portuguese crown. It was a clear and deliberate new policy decided upon by the superior general, Everard Mercurian. Of course, in many practical ways the Society could not break free of its dependence upon Portugal. However, the appointment of Valignano appears to indicate a desire on the part of the general of the Society to strike a radically different balance in that relationship. How far this was 'cleared,' as it were, with the pope is a question that needs research.

I would suggest, moreover, that the appointment of Valignano by Mercurian seems to represent a deliberate decision about internal relations within the Society as well as about its relationship with the Portuguese. The internal problem was a conflict over the correct understanding of the Jesuit 'way of proceeding.' Mercurian's action has to be seen in the light of the very close relationship that had developed between the Portuguese province of the Society and the Portuguese crown. Although neither was provincial at that time, authority in the Portuguese province was exerted *de facto* by 'the spiritual heads of the Province,' as Schütte calls them,¹¹ the two cousins Leão Henriques and Luís Gonçalves da Câmara. Henriques was confessor to the Cardinal Infante, Dom Henrique, and Câmara, amanuensis to St Ignatius of Loyola – the saint had dictated his *Autobiography* to him – was now the king's confessor.

Given the whole situation, the Society was certainly privileged, but it paid for its privilege in ways that had become a cause for concern. Under the *de facto* leadership of the two cousins, the province had begun to steer a course, in both its internal organization and spirit and its relationship with the crown, that had disturbed the previous general, Francisco Borja,¹² and now was disturbing the new general, Mercurian. By arrangements under the Padroado, the Indian province of the Society was dependent upon the crown for transport and other subventions, but now, because of the powerful positions at court held by Henriques and Câmara, it was in danger of becoming identified with the crown. That to the outside observer it was not clear what was crown and what was Jesuit signalled a threat to the autonomy essential to the Jesuit 'way of proceeding.' Essentially, no missionary could leave Portugal without the agreement of Henriques and Câmara. Missionaries awaiting the sailing of the Indies fleet were vetted by the two cousins, who used the opportunity to prevent some from going at all and to divert others to Brazil. Furthermore, the Portuguese provincial, who deferred in all matters to these two men so closely associated with the palace, had authority to intercept and open all correspondence from the Indies except for letters marked as confidential to the general himself.

Mercurian appears to have been alarmed by the situation particularly because the two cousins had deliberately contradicted the instructions of his predecessor, Borja, and of Borja's visitor to the province, Diego Miro. Borja had attempted to alter the style of governing the Portuguese province of the Society,¹⁵ and Cãmara had opposed him, insisting that he knew the true Ignatian 'way of proceeding.' Cãmara maintained that leaders should guide the members of the Society along the road to perfection by a rigorous exertion of autocratic leadership, punishing all defects and failures vigorously and subduing the passions by severe mortifications. Borja and Miro had modified this approach, insisting on a mutually close understanding between superiors and juniors, where direction was to be *per il modo soave*. As soon as Miro had ended his period as visitor, Cãmara had swept through the province restoring the previous severe style.

Writing from Lisbon en route to the East, Valignano characterized this style as ruling with severity and not with love.¹⁴ His letter to Mercurian of 28 January 1574¹⁵ is fundamental to an understanding of the new visitor's mission. This key letter shows the intimacy between Valignano and Mercurian, and what Valignano has to say indicates that he must have received a clear mandate from the general to confront the leadership of the Portuguese province.¹⁶ In the Lisbon letters we find him not only reporting critically on the administration of the Portuguese province, but challenging Cãmara and Henriques directly on issue after issue. He wanted to take between forty and fifty Jesuits to the East, they wanted him to have no more than twenty; he wanted to keep his recruits together to train and supervise them himself *per il modo soave*, they wanted to scatter them among the Portuguese houses to be shaped by their rigorous regime; at least half of Valignano's chosen recruits were 'new Christians' who the cousins insisted were unacceptable to the crown, to them, and to the Portuguese in general.¹⁷ In the end Valignano had his way on each of these issues. He insisted, furthermore, on appointing a special Indian procurator to reside in Lisbon, who alone would manage all the correspondence of the Society to and from the East, free from interference by the authorities of the province or of the crown. It is clear, then, that Mercurian had chosen this tall, young, confident – some have said arrogant – Italian very deliberately to achieve a new start in the East, unfettered by the *facto* authority of Henriques and Cãmara. Valignano had the general's full confidence, and it is not possible that he challenged the leadership of the Portuguese province in the way that he did without being instructed to do so by the general. In the same long letter of 28 January 1574, quoted very fully by Schiltz,¹⁸ Valignano presents a highly critical, even ruthless appraisal of the 'way of proceeding' of the Portuguese province, going so far as to report a declaration by Henriques and Cãmara that 'the Roman type of government is objectionable. The spirit of the Society has fallen to pieces in Italy.'¹⁹ Although

we do not have the general's instructions to Valignano, this and several other letters the visitor wrote²⁰ make it clear that Valignano's direct confrontation of the leaders of the Portuguese province over their whole way of proceeding was at the behest of Mercurian.

In Japan and China Valignano would show even more clearly his confidence that he had the full support of the general. Assured in his authority, he would guide the Society in the most extraordinary attempt at inculturation of the Christian faith to be undertaken between the ninth and the twentieth century.

The long historical discussion of the so-called Rites Controversy, which would bring this initiative in China to an end, has somewhat diverted attention from what is historically the intriguing central question. The question is not whether this or that detail of the inculturation process was right or wrong, but how it came about that a group of mainly Italian Jesuits developed a policy of radical inculturation of the Christian faith into the Japanese and Chinese worlds in a period in which the *tabula rasa* approach had so far reigned supreme, denied only by Xavier's concern for translation wherever he went. The attempt is all the more extraordinary when we consider that, after it had ended, both the Protestant missionary activity that began at the end of the eighteenth century and the Catholic revival of mission in the mid-nineteenth century unhesitatingly followed – in practice if not always in theory – the path which identified European culture with Christianity; some of the most thorough Europeanizers were those Protestants who said they had nothing to do with culture but came to preach the Gospel and nothing more.

It is necessary at this point to interject a comment on Valignano and anti-Semitism. It has been widely remarked, most recently in Dauril Alden's monumental new work on the Jesuits in the Portuguese empire, that Valignano was prejudiced against Christians of Jewish ancestry.²¹ This notion stems from Valignano's advice to the general in 1577²² not to send any more Jesuits of Jewish ancestry to the East. It has been seized upon by many commentators, who appear not to have noticed that he gives this advice explicitly because of the treatment received by Jesuits of *convertos* ancestry at the hands of the Portuguese. Even more surprisingly, these commentators ignore Valignano's successful struggle with the leadership of the Portuguese province to be allowed to take twenty Jesuits of Jewish ancestry to serve the mission in the East. How can this be the action of an anti-Semite?

But to return to our theme, Valignano left Portugal having successfully carried out the first task given him by Mercurian, which was to break the control, indirect but effective, held by Henriques and Cãmara over the Indian province of the Society. What was there further in the instructions from the general to Valignano relevant to missiological flexibility, which is our concern? Unfortunately, no

copy of Mercurian's instructions to Valignano appears to exist. But in December 1575 Valignano wrote a letter to Mercurian containing a series of numbered paragraphs which appear to be his responses to points in the general's instructions to him, and Schütte confirms this.²³ There are two points of direct relevance to our theme. The first is in paragraph 24, which appears to indicate that the general had counselled discretion with regard to the admission of indigenous people or those of mixed race to the priesthood. Valignano's reply is of great significance: the visitor insisted that it was necessary to admit Japanese to membership of the Society. The other point is in paragraph 31, which asserts the need for translations of the Scriptures, catechisms, and other forms of Christian literature in the languages indigenous to the societies in which the Jesuits worked. This latter point was following up on Francis Xavier's insistence on translation, which his visit to the Parava people seems to have brought to the forefront of his missionary approach.

As I have suggested elsewhere,²⁴ Xavier's early move in this area went along with much that appeared to be of the *tabula rasa* school of mission, so much so that the distinguished Jesuit historian of the church in China, Henri Bernard-Maire, could refer to Xavier's 'deux manières de mission,'²⁵ his two styles of mission, which became one only after his contact with the people of Japan. It is this very ambiguity which allows Donald W. Treadgold to see him as 'pre-Jesuit,' with genuine attempts at inculturation coming only with Valignano.²⁶ Again as I have suggested,²⁷ the work of Lamin Saneh on translation,²⁸ published long after the writing of both Bernard-Maire and Treadgold, would indicate that Xavier by his insistence on the use of the vernacular did make a decisive break, conscious or unconscious, with the *tabula rasa* approach to mission. Saneh argues convincingly that as soon as translation becomes a serious concern of the missionary a real step has been taken by the missionary from his own into the host culture. However, as I have said, it was only in Japan, as Bernard-Maire suggests, that Xavier made anything resembling a self-conscious break with the Iberian tradition. The motivation for this decisive change would appear to have stemmed from his admiration for the Japanese people and their culture, an admiration he maintained to the end despite some disappointments.

Xavier's principal disappointment in Japan was over the disastrous mistakes he made in the initial translation work. Translation was begun too quickly, before enough well-educated Japanese willing to advise Xavier were available for consultation. His main adviser in this initial phase of his work in Japan, Anjirō, had been a *samurai* and so had no deep theological knowledge of Buddhism. Xavier soon discovered, when sophisticated Japanese came to be interested in Christianity, that many of the terms suggested by Anjirō – for such concepts as God, Saviour, and sacraments – were unhelpful when not hopelessly mis-

guided.²⁹ In his haste to withdraw from this apparently disastrous initiative, Xavier decided to replace the mistaken terms in Japanese translations by Japanese versions of Latin words – *Deus*, *anima*, *eucaristia*, and so on. The result was that a key area of inculturation, that of translation, was already severely circumscribed in Japan before Valignano ever got there.

Valignano arrived in India in 1574. He was visitor to the East from then until 1595, except for a break of just over three years, 1583–7, when he was provincial of India. In 1595 he became visitor to Japan and China, and he remained in that office until his death in 1606. During all that time China and Japan were his central concerns. He was in either Japan or Macao from 1579 to 1582, and then from 1588 until his death. He died while planning to visit Matteo Ricci in Beijing.

Valignano showed no particular initiative in terms of inculturation in India or Malaysia: it was in Japan and China that his genius flourished. His Japanese *Sumaria*,³⁰ his work on the spread of Christianity in Japan,³¹ and in particular the famous *Il ceremoniale per i missionari del Giappone* lay out his approach to the task in Japan. His even more radical approach in China is seen not in books or reports written by him – though his *Historia*³² is important – but in the life and work of Matteo Ricci. The mission in China was begun brilliantly by Michele Ruggieri, who has had a poor press until some recent writing by Albert Chan, S.J., of the University of San Francisco showed how well he began the enterprise of learning Mandarin. But the mission was fundamentally shaped by the work of Matteo Ricci. It is important to see, however, that without Valignano there would have been no Ricci. Valignano chose Ruggieri to enter China and then chose Ricci to join him. It was Valignano who asked them to spend their first years getting to know China, learning the language, and reporting to him in detail about the religion, culture, and politics of the land. It was he who ordered Ricci to study the Confucian classics and to translate them into Latin for him. He authorized Ruggieri and Ricci to dress as Buddhist monks, and then it was he whom Ricci consulted about identifying the members of the Society and their teaching with the Confucian literati,³³ and who gave them permission to do so and to adopt the dress and lifestyle of the literati. It was Valignano and Ricci who decided that all new European Jesuits should learn Chinese by working through the classics, so that at the same time they would go some way towards receiving the training of a literati. Valignano affirmed Ricci's decisions about the viability of the Confucian terms for God and the permissibility of the Confucian and ancestral rites being performed by Christians. In other words, what much later was to be called 'the practices of Li Madou' by the great Kangxi emperor in the imperial rescript of December 1706³⁴ was also the way of Valignano and could not have developed without him.

Vallignano's approaches in Japan and China were the same in spirit. They differed in their details because, as we have seen, the entry into the Japanese language and therefore into certain areas of Japanese thought was already closed off by the errors made in Xavier's time and the imposition of Latin words for so many key Christian terms. But with respect to clothing, diet, style of housing, habits of bathing, and conformity to the incredibly elaborate patterns of Japanese etiquette, Vallignano thrust the European Jesuits and the church that grew about them deep into Japanese ways. In order to do so he had to reshape the particular form of the Society's internal regime he met on his arrival in Japan. It was much too close to the Camaran style and had aspects of Iberian racial arrogance — a 'way of proceeding' far from *il modo soave* which Mercurian and the visitor believed to be in the true spirit of the Society.

Having made these internal reforms,³⁵ Vallignano developed the new approach to Japanese culture in close consultation with leading Japanese Christians; he could not otherwise have gained the detailed knowledge of things Japanese which he displayed in *Il cerimoniale*. He was also greatly helped and supported in this effort by another Italian Jesuit, Organino Gnecci Soldi, a Japanese veteran who had gained a profound knowledge of the language and had come to admire Japanese culture deeply. Organino wrote in March 1589, 'Any Jesuit who comes to Japan and does not foster a love for this bride of wondrous beauty, not caring to learn her language immediately, not conforming to her ways, deserves to be packed back to Europe as an inept and unprofitable worker in the Lord's vineyard.'³⁶

As Joseph F. Moran has pointed out,³⁷ it is clear that even before he began the work in China Vallignano was completely aware that he was doing something new and that his innovation would not be readily understood outside the Society. He wrote to the general from Nagasaki in 1580, 'Your Paternity should understand that this is, beyond a doubt, the greatest enterprise that there is in the world today.'³⁸ He did not want it mired with by those who would not be sympathetic to the way he approached the task. That was the reason he sought the help of Mercurian in negotiating a papal ban preventing members of other orders from coming to Japan or China via Lisbon. Furthermore, he sought to prevent anyone at all coming from New Spain and the Philippines, even fellow Jesuits. Members of other orders, he felt, would not understand the Jesuit approach in either land, and serious public conflicts among Christians in the face of unbelievers would be fatal for the mission. Vallignano insisted that the arrival of missionaries of other orders would certainly lead to conflict about the style of mission, and we know only too well how correct his forecast was.

Relations between the Japanese mission and the Portuguese were tolerable, because the Portuguese had no territorial claims or ambitions in the area. Even

so, when the work began in China the Portuguese connection had to be played down as much as possible. How successful the Jesuits in China were in achieving this can be seen in the *Ming shi*, the official history of the Ming dynasty, which refers to the Jesuits as the Italians.³⁹ Spain was another matter altogether: it was a country of conquest, and this became known early to the Japanese and Chinese authorities. Vallignano thus wished there to be no association between the work of the Society in China and Japan, and Spain. There was no ban on Spanish Jesuits working in the field, so long as they came via Lisbon — something that would help to placate the Portuguese authorities nervous of his proceedings. Vallignano was all the more convinced of the rightness of his opposition to anyone's coming to Japan or China from the Americas when he discovered that even some Jesuits in New Spain and the Philippines were tainted by the *conquistador* spirit. He was made aware of this through the actions of Alonso Sanchez, S.J., who was sent to Macao in 1581 by the viceroy in the Philippines to confirm Macanese loyalty to the new united crowns of Portugal and Spain. This same Sanchez in 1583 campaigned in the Philippines and New Spain for a Spanish invasion of China in order to conquer and convert the Middle Kingdom. In 1586 the viceroy accepted Sanchez's plan and sent him to Madrid to present it to the throne. To be fair to the Jesuits in the Americas, it was one of their most distinguished leaders, José de Acosta, who published a decisive condemnation of Sanchez's proposals as contrary to 'our way of proceeding.'

Vallignano's plea for papal support in this matter was successful. That the mendicant orders in the Philippines were to ignore the ban is another story. He did not make any similar request about the work in what we now call India, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The work there was unambiguously part of the Padroado, and other orders were already present, as were secular priests of the archdiocese of Goa. But in Japan and later China the visitor faced a new situation in which he had freedom to develop the work along lines fully consonant with what he believed to be the true Jesuit 'way of proceeding,' which was the necessary basis of his approach.

In a volume of essays which were originally presented as papers at a conference under Jesuit auspices in Rome in 1993, Kristofer Schipper wrote the following of the Jesuit mission in China: 'With hindsight it would seem that by no stretch of the imagination the Jesuit accommodation could have been allowed by the papal authorities, once they knew the facts ... Trent unified liturgy, allowing no exceptions. Could an exception be made for China? The council also redefined the status of clergy versus laity. The separation was very strict, to the point that no layman could ever wear the priest's vestments, nor the priest ever be clothed as a layman. What then to think of the Jesuits, first putting on Buddhist garb and then Confucian robe?'⁴⁰ Quite apart from whether the essay in question

shows a good understanding of the work of the Council of Trent, it shows a lack of knowledge of Jesuit practice from the very beginning of the Society. The *Constitutions* (1558) of the Society, as John W. O'Malley has pointed out,⁴¹ laid down no set dress and prescribed adaptation to the local situation. O'Malley refers to the explanation for this practice given by Jerónimo Nadal, a close confidant of Ignatius of Loyola and the key interpreter of the documents that make up the *Constitutions*: 'Nadal explained that Jesuits had this "freedom of dress" so that they might labour more fruitfully and easily in the Lord's vineyard and that many people to whom they were to minister found a religious habit repugnant.'⁴² Indeed, one of Nadal's principal tasks at the period of the meetings of the Council of Trent and for many years after was to interpret what it meant to be a Jesuit to the members of the Society, and he did so without being challenged by the papal authorities. There was no way that the Holy See could have been unaware of his teachings about the Jesuit way of proceeding. Of course he taught that normally the Jesuits' dress would be whatever was usual among Christian priests in the areas in which they worked, but non-clerical dress, as we have just seen, was a possibility. It was this possibility which Valignano seized upon as an opportunity in the East. Over against Schipper's 'naïve questions', the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions* make it clear that 'the Jesuits were constantly advised in all their ministries to adapt what they said and did to times, circumstances, and persons.'⁴³

Moreover, in 1615, on his mission to Europe, Nicolas Trigault gained papal authorization for the text of the mass to be translated into Mandarin and for the mass to be celebrated in that language, as well as permission for Jesuits in China to celebrate mass while wearing the hat that signified their status as scholars. These requests had not been regarded as out of the way, because Valignano had kept the general and, through him, the Holy See in touch with what he was doing. Schipper's naïve question, then, should rather have been, 'How was it that these things apparently contradicting the Tridentine way were acceptable up to 1615 but the cause of a crisis in the 1690s?' That is not our question here, but it is a question that someone should be asking in that form.

Valignano carried out a dramatically imaginative policy of engrafting Christianity into the life of China and Japan, and he made no attempt to hide his efforts from the authorities in Rome. His policy broke decisively with the hitherto dominant pattern of mission, and after the end of the seventeenth century a similar policy would not emerge again until the twentieth century. But where did this policy come from?

Clearly the emphasis on translation is a key element in any answer to this question, and the impact of any serious attempt at translation in any context can

hardly be exaggerated. However, his support for the general principle of translation is not enough to explain Valignano's initiative in Japan and China. He showed no inclination to attempt any dramatic missiological initiative in India or Malaysia, nor did he make much of the principle of translation there.

Was it therefore his racial and cultural prejudices that were the key to his approach, as some have suggested?⁴⁴ Certainly Valignano saw Indian and Malay people as backward and Africans as even more so. Was his perception of the Japanese and then the Chinese as 'white' races the significant factor? Before going any further, we should note that his seeing the Japanese as a 'white' race itself marked a new beginning, because, as he says himself, that is not how Europeans of the time viewed them, not even Francisco Cabral or some of the other Portuguese Jesuits he met on his arrival in Japan.⁴⁵ In the *Sumario* the visitor says, while writing of the difficulties of learning Japanese: 'Some of them [the Europeans] get to the point at which they can preach to the Christians, but when they do it is so different from what any Japanese brother, even an Ignoramus, can do, that when there is a brother present the Fathers are reduced to silence ... From all this it follows that when the Japanese study, and come to be priests ... they will always be more able in everything and more loved and esteemed by the Japanese, and this is hard to bear, especially for the Portuguese, since they are accustomed to refer even to the Chinese and Japanese as "Blacks."⁴⁶ Francis Xavier never showed the supercilious dismissal of Indian and Malay peoples that Valignano showed at times, but much more important for us is the fact that Xavier saw the Japanese in the way Valignano came to see them, as a people similar to yet perhaps even surpassing the Greek and Roman ancients in virtue. Valignano's was not a romantic judgment made after brief acquaintance, as has sometimes been suggested of Xavier's. Having known the Japanese for over thirty years, Valignano could still write in his *Principio*: 'There is no doubt that where knowledge of God and true religion is lacking, and idolatry reigns, there is always much evil and falsehood. But it can be truly said that no pagan people (including the Romans when they were pagans) were ever so modest and decent as the Japanese. For although there are indeed many sins among them, there is not the public and authorized immorality that there has always been among other pagan nations.'⁴⁷ And again, 'The Japanese are a people all of whom are very much subject to reason, and who can readily be convinced by the reasons we give them for there being one God, sole creator and governor of this world, and rewarder of good and evil.'⁴⁸ The attitude of mind that allowed Valignano to see the Japanese in this light was all the more open to the Confucian literati once Ruggieri and Ricci had made clear to him the nature of Confucian culture. His regard for the Chinese classics, informed by Ricci, is parallel to Ignatius of Loyola's famous defence of Virgil and Terence, that their writings

contained much that was 'useful for doctrine, and much not unuseful, indeed helpful for a devout life.'

We must also note that in both the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions*, adaptation to local circumstances is basic to the Jesuit way of proceeding. The nature of the individual Jesuit's personal formation may help us find an answer to our question. This formation did not produce the automation of Protestant fantasy – which was, unfortunately, fed by Catholic critics of the Society and still appears beneath the surface of some serious modern writing. On the contrary it produced what a social psychologist of the post-World War II era called 'inner-directed men.' The writer who coined the phrase was thinking of the English and New England Puritans, but the comparison is appropriate. The Jesuit was conditioned to make the most effective choices himself, to further his ministry according to the situation at hand – personal, social, political, and cultural – and to have confidence in doing so because of the spiritual certainty he had gained. It was this spiritual formation which helped give Valignano the confidence to break new ground. A radically new situation ought to bring forth a new approach, according to the Society's way of proceeding.

The situation in Japan and China was new in two key ways. First, the mission was outside the political authority of a European power, and second, the Society was working within two very advanced cultures. For the first time in centuries the Christian mission was operating in cultures which these missionaries, at least, recognized as on a par with that of Europe. One aspect of continuity in their work was, in effect, a third new element in the situation: the Jesuits still sought to gain royal support for their work and royal patronage for the new Christian communities coming into being, but the authority whose support they sought to gain was not that of Christian monarchs and princes but that of the *daimyō* initially and then the shōgun in Japan, and of the emperor in China.

Thus, along with their traditional Jesuit concern for adaptation and translation, the particular spiritual formation of these missionaries, which gave them the confidence to choose and follow what they judged to be the best way of carrying out their ministry, offers a key explanation of the dramatic missiological breakthrough led by Valignano. But even these things together do not explain this missiological innovation: the other essential elements are the Japanese and Chinese peoples and their culture.

This mission is inexplicable without them. After all, Valignano did not respond thus to the African societies he met, nor to the Indian and Malay. The tools for a radical approach to inculturation were built into the Jesuit system, but they were brought into action only as a result of the encounter with Japanese and Chinese culture. The crown of the system was put in place in China when Valignano came into contact, first through Ruggieri and then through Ricci, with a classical

culture that was indubitably comparable to Graeco-Roman culture, indeed that surpassed it, because Chinese culture had a monotheistic origin according to Ricci's interpretation of 'original Confucianism,' and Graeco-Roman culture did not. Given the Jesuit belief that grace perfects nature,⁴⁸ the possibility of a far-reaching inculturation was thus opened up. When we add to this that the very goal of Confucian education and philosophy was personal and civic virtue – which was also the goal of the Catholic Humanism the Jesuit schools played such a major part in shaping⁴⁹ – we surely have found another key element in the situation.

Yet, as we know only too well, many other missionaries did not see the Japanese and Chinese in this light – even other Jesuits like the crusading Alonso Sanchez. There would seem to be yet another element in the complex of influences that created the Valignano initiative. That final ingredient in the recipe, I would suggest, is Italy and the Catholic Humanism of the Collegio Romano. Of course, Portuguese, Spanish, and Flemish Jesuits played their part in this story and followed in the path laid out by Valignano. But it is not insignificant that so many of the key figures in the primary stage, when the fundamental choices were made, were Italians: Valignano, Ruggieri, and Ricci were all Italian, but so were Organico Gnecci Soldi and Francesco Pasio, central figures in Japan; and so were Nicolo Longobardi, Lazzaro Cattaneo, Giulio Aleni, a master of Mandarin second only to Ricci, Martino Martini, Prospero Intorcetta, and Ludovico Buglio in China.⁵⁰ Whatever else Italians of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were, they were not *conquistadores*. *Limpieza de sangre* was of no concern to them as Italians, whereas it deeply affected Iberian Jesuits as prominent as Luis Gonçalves da Câmara. It was the Collegio Romano in the period 1570 to 1620 that educated the majority of these key Italian Jesuits, from Valignano to Intorcetta. Perhaps it was this ingredient which acted as the catalyst enabling the other ingredients to interact so as to create Valignano's vision and produce the men able to carry it out.

NOTES

- 1 David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, 1991).
- 2 *Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity*, ed. Norman E. Thomas (Maryknoll, 1995).
- 3 *Mission in Bold Humanity: David Bosch's Work Considered*, ed. Willem Saayman and Klippias Krizinger (Maryknoll, 1996).
- 4 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 449.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 479.

- 6 William Burrows, 'A Seventh Paradigm,' in *Mission in Bold Humility*, ed. Seayman and Krizinger, pp. 121-38.
- 7 Li Madou is Matteo Ricci's Chinese name. The whole English phrase translates the phrase used in some of the documents of the Kangxi emperor to refer to the Christian traditions which the emperor defended in the 'Chinese Rites controversy.'
- 8 These terms refer to the agreements with the papacy whereby the crowns of Portugal and Spain supported the mission of the church in the overseas domains and in return gained vast authority over it.
- 9 See Gustavo Gutierrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ* (Maryknoll, 1993).
- 10 The famous Jesuit 'reductions,' where Jesuit and Guarani lived in Christian communities outside Iberian royal authority.
- 11 Schütte *Val.*, I, pt 1, p. 67.
- 12 Francisco Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na assistência de Portugal*, 4 vols in 7 (Porto, 1931-50), I, pt 1, pp. 303-5. See also Valignano to the general, Lisbon, 28 January 1574, quoted in Schütte *Val.*, I, pt 1, p. 71.
- 13 Rodrigues, *História*, II, pt 1, pp. 293-329.
- 14 Schütte *Val.*, I, pt 1, p. 47.
- 15 Valignano to the general, Lisbon, 28 January 1574; contents summarized in Schütte *Val.*, I, pt 1, pp. 71-4.
- 16 *Ibid.*, I, pt 1, pp. 64-90.
- 17 *Ibid.*, I, pt 1, p. 67.
- 18 *Ibid.*, I, pt 1, pp. 71-3.
- 19 *Ibid.*, I, pt 1, p. 72.
- 20 In particular, two in the archives of the Society in Rome, the first a report signed by Valignano, ARSI 24 I fois 76-7, and the second, Valignano to the general, 4 December 1575, ARSI Goa 47 fol. 42.
- 21 Alden Ent., p. 257.
- 22 See Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742* (Edinburgh and Maryknoll, 1994), pp. 40-2.
- 23 Schütte *Val.*, I, pt 1, pp. 48-51.
- 24 Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 20.
- 25 Henri Bernard-Maire, 'Saint François Xavier et la mission du Japon jusqu'en 1614,' in *Histoire universelle des missions catholiques*, ed. Simon Delacroix (Monaco, 1966), pp. 278-85.
- 26 Donald W. Treadgold, *The West in Russia and China: Religious and Secular Thought in Modern Times*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1973), II 7.
- 27 Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 20.
- 28 Lamin Samneh, *Translating the Message* (Maryknoll, 1992).
- 29 Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times*, 4 vols (Rome, 1973-82), IV 228.
- 30 Alessandro Valignano, *Adiciones del Sumario de Japon* (1592), ed. J.L. Alvarez-Taladiz (Rome, 1994).
- 31 Alessandro Valignano, *Libro primero del principio y progreso de la religion christiana en Jappon* (1601), BL Additional 9857.
- 32 Alessandro Valignano, *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañia de Jesus en las Indias Orientales* (1542-64), ed. Joseph Wicki (Rome, 1944).
- 33 The literati were the graduates of the Chinese equivalent of the university system, which was built upon the study of classical texts associated with Kung Fu-tzu, whose name the Jesuits rendered Confucius. These graduates formed the civil service (mandarins), which administered the empire through all changes of dynasty from c. 200 B.C.E. until the end of the nineteenth century.
- 34 Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 195, and George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy from Its Beginning to Modern Times* (Chicago, 1985), p. 54.
- 35 Schütte *Val.*, I, pt 2, pp. 3-48.
- 36 *Ibid.*, I, pt 2, p. 105.
- 37 Joseph F. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (London and New York, 1993), chap. 6.
- 38 Quoted *ibid.*, p. 51.
- 39 *Fonti ricciane: Storia dell'introduzione del cristianesimo in Cina scritta da Matteo Ricci, S.J.*, ed. Pasquale M. d'Elia, 3 vols (Rome, 1942-9), I cxlii.
- 40 Kristofer Schipper, 'Some Naive Questions about the Rites Controversy,' in *Western Humanistic Culture Presented to China by Jesuit Missionaries (XVII-XVIII Centuries): Proceedings of the Conference Held in Rome, October 25-27, 1993*, ed. Federico Masini (Rome, 1996), pp. 300-1.
- 41 O'M. *First*, p. 341.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 341.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 255.
- 44 See Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits*, pp. 97-8.
- 45 See Michael Cooper, *Rodriguez, the Interpreter: An Early Jesuit in Japan* (New York, 1974).
- 46 Alessandro Valignano, *Sumario de las cosas de Japon*, quoted in Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits*, p. 179.
- 47 Valignano, *Libro primero del principio y progreso*, quoted in Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits*, p. 99.
- 48 O'M. *First*, p. 249.
- 49 See *ibid.*, pp. 208-16.
- 50 See D.E. Mungello, *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou* (Honolulu, 1994).