

Lascassas denounces this mass baptism and conversion as an evil mission that denies the very personhood of man, made in the image of God. It denies man's God-given intellect, willpower, and spiritual being, and denounces the world's method of boasting in numbers and seeking glory as a mission of the devil. It criticizes this missionary method as being in direct conflict with the Apostle Paul's confession that "no man seeks glory..." (2:6).

B. Missions Without Riches

Lascassas describes the second type of true missionary: "I am a missionary who serves the people I serve. I claim to be a true missionary in the biblical sense of the word when I am respected in a material sense by the people I serve, when they say, "Oh, this missionary is really not interested in the fringe benefits and income that come from preaching the gospel."[\[12\]](#) This is also the missionary method of the apostle Paul, who said, "God bears witness that we have not at any time used words of flattery or the garb of covetousness" (1 Thessalonians 2:5).

The mission without money was actually a criticism and accusation of the Catholic Church in the 16th century, which amassed enormous wealth under the guise of missions in Las Vegas. Another consequence of the Patronato missions, which were unlimitedly supported by the state, as already mentioned above, is the incalculable wealth of the Catholic Church, including its vast fortune and real estate holdings. If we count the Indian labor that the Catholic Church used for free, the numbers are astronomical.

Indeed, the astronomical wealth and property accumulated by the Catholic Church in the colonies was not just in churches and buildings - although these are enormous - but also in the vast amount of land it owned: farms, orchards, and the loans it made to the ranchers and individuals who operated them...it is hard to imagine. To give a simple example, in 1748, 1135 of the 2806 houses in Lima, the capital of Peru, were registered as belonging to the Order, and by 1790, at the end of Spanish colonial rule, 1935 of the 3387 houses in Mexico City, the center of New Spain, were owned by the Church. In addition, an unexaggerated insider account by Luca Allaman, the official church secretary, records that by this time the Catholic Church owned half of all the arable land and real estate in New Spain--a territory that includes all of Mexico, Central and South America, and the islands of the Caribbean."[\[13\]](#)] Being a bishop was a symbol of great wealth and power, and with it inevitably came corruption. Simony, the buying and selling of priesthood for money, was rampant, and clerical concubinage was an open secret and a major issue in the colonial church.

And the corruption of the clergy due to the accumulation of such enormous wealth was not just a problem of parish priests; it was the same problem in the religious orders and missions that had once prided themselves on their poverty and purity. The Jesuit missions in Paraguay, also featured in the movie, were nicknamed the Jesuit Republic-Republica Jesuita-because of their enormous wealth and political influence. The over-politicization of the Jesuits and the accumulation of wealth became the subject of scrutiny by colonial leaders, who began to see the Jesuit missions as an economic entity that did not help or contribute to the colonial society, which was not unrelated to the reasons for the expulsion of the Jesuits from the New World in 1761.

B-2. In the end, missions that are motivated by power and material, or missions that are driven by power and material (projects, material, or money are more important than

essence), have corresponding historical consequences and reactions.

Peruvian writer Ciro Alegria's novel *El Mundo es ancho y ajeno* (The Wide and Far is the World) exposes the Catholic Church in Latin America as a handmaiden of such power through the eyes of a priest in an Andean village. In *The Broad and Far is the World*, Ciro Alegria depicts the pain and suffering of Indians whose ancestral lands and properties are being taken from them by vested interests in the village. The white farmers and landowners who make up the village leadership, the mestizo bureaucrats, rural civil servants and police officers, and the priest of the village church are all in cahoots and know where the centers of power are, and the paths to upward mobility and respectability. When the Indian head of the family is wrongfully robbed of everything and loses his last piece of land, he grabs for straws and goes to this person, that person, the police chief, the mayor of the town, and even the lowest officials in the countryside, but when he can't find a solution, he goes to the priest in the church. When the Indian head of the family realizes that the evil landowner who took his land is also a member of the church, he asks the priest to "Do something about it." After listening to the Indian's words, the priest closes his eyes, clasps his hands together, says, "This is a sinful world, and we should not put our hope in this world," and sends the Indian home. Shortly thereafter, he runs to a feast at the home of the landowner who took the Indian's land for free and asks for a blessing. This is a typical picture of the Catholic Church in Latin America in the pre-Second Vatican Council years of 1962.

Unable to see the Indians as equals, companions, and human beings, the Church did not heed the prophetic message of Las Casas, and the exploitation of the Indians continued, in different forms, throughout the nineteenth, twentieth, and even today, producing the phenomenon of extreme poverty. In the end, the Catholic Church in Latin America failed in this authentic mission and was challenged by the harshness of history. At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the Latin countries were led to independence by liberal and secularist elites, influenced by the 1793 Boulanger Revolution, and after gaining independence, the liberals confiscated church property and buildings. However, the elites were not the least bit interested in the rights of the Indians, and their lives remained unchanged. Nothing changed for the Indians, except that they changed from one boss to another.

In the twentieth century, the Catholic Church in Latin America had three main spiritual responses and outcomes.

First, the socialist revolutions and the liberation theology of the second half of the twentieth century were the first reaction against the Catholic Church in Latin America, which had become a friend of the vested interests, not listening to the suffering of the people. The Mexican Revolution of the early 20th century (1910-1920), the Cuban Revolution of 1958, and the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua in 1979. The priest Ernesto Cardena, who believed in liberation theology, took up arms with the Sandinista revolutionary army and fought against the Somoza regime, and after the revolution he became the first cultural minister of the Sandinista government.

The enthusiasm and support for Che Guevera by many Latin Americans, both popular and intellectual, from the Argentinean population, was also rooted in a resentment of the Catholic Church, which had become the handmaiden of vested interests.

The second reaction is syncretism. The second reaction of the indigenous peoples of South America to the Catholic Church's mission of power and influence is syncretism, which takes two forms. The first is a passive form of syncretism. Well aware of the consequences of refusing to submit to the coercive mission of the conquistadores, who called for the cross or the sword, the Indians outwardly accepted the message of the missionaries and conquistadores, and forced mass conversions took place. But they rejected the foreign religion of Christianity in their worldview, in their inner world. The result is a large number of syncretists who are Catholic in appearance but pagan in practice. In fact, because of this situation of the Catholic Church in Latin America, evangelical missions are more necessary than ever. The second is an active form of syncretism, as seen in the revival of old Mayan and Inca religions and rituals (such as solar worship) in the late 20th century, when religious persecution ostensibly ceased, and in syncretistic religions such as Boodoo, which is active in Haiti and Jamaica, and Umbanda, which has a large and growing following in Brazil and Uruguay. By blending elements of Catholicism, African indigenous religions, and Native American primitive religions, they are seeking to find their own religiosity, which they have been unable to satisfy in a misguided Christianity.

A third reaction was the rise of Pentecostal churches in Latin America in the late 20th century, especially after the 1970s. Historically ignored by the powers that be and intellectuals, Pentecostal churches grew and spread among the grass roots of society, and today make up 70-75% of Protestantism in Latin America. Despite a lack of theology, a post-historical perspective, hyper-individualism, prosperity theology, dualistic theology, and self-righteous leadership, Pentecostal churches have provided a sense of community and belonging for the grassroots in Latin America who have been unable to find a medium to express their pain, oppression, and frustration.

SIMPLE

by providing a sense of community and belonging to the people of Latin America who have not found a medium to express their spirituality. “The liberation theologian opted for the poor, but the poor opted for the Pentecostal churches,” a phrase that has been circulating since the fall of communism in Europe in 1990, is an ironic reality that sums up the current missionary situation in Latin America in the 21st century.

So where will the Latin American church go in the 21st century?

C. Mission with the Imago Dei. Mission as humble and respectful friendship, seeing the image of God in the local people.

Regarding the third virtue of true mission, Las Casas again speaks of a mission with humility, respectfulness, and the joy of being a friend, seeing the Imago Dei among the locals.

As the Apostle Paul confesses, “Only we have become docile (like little children) among you, as a nurse anoints her children with oil” (1 Thess 2:7), the true missionary insists on approaching the people he serves with humility and gentleness, first and foremost. He emphasizes the need to respect their ideas, personalities, cultures, and histories, and to seek to learn from them. Rather than unilaterally proclaiming, teaching, giving direction, and exercising leadership, Lascassas argues that missionaries should treat the people of the mission field with respect that comes from a sincere desire to listen, learn from their life stories, and share direction and leadership with them. To do this, he argues, we must befriend them by seeing the image of God (Imago dei) in them, which is no different from our own: a mission that is not missionary-centered, but people-

centered, and one in which the image of God is reclaimed and restored. He emphasized the need to serve them with a proper understanding and respect for their history, society, culture, language, and the local church, and to embrace them with the incarnational attitude of life that Jesus demonstrated.

History, of course, is not without what ifs. Nevertheless, one of the regrettable facts of Latin American history in the 20th century is that if, in the early 1950s, before the socialist revolution in Cuba had begun, a young man named Castro, a romantic nationalist not yet tainted by communism, had visited the United States and American politicians had treated him respectfully, had listened “respectfully” to the stories of the Cuban people, to the corruption of the Batista regime and to the ravages of the long dictatorship, how might history have changed? We also wonder if the relationship between the United States and Venezuela would be as bad as it is today if, at the end of the 20th century, the United States had not characterized Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, a man of Indian descent, as a socialist and a troublemaking populist politician against U.S. national interests and had not tacitly supported the Venezuelan establishment in its efforts to remove him from power. Furthermore, even if American televangelist Pat Robertson had not publicly stated that “assassinating one Chavez would be better than sending U.S. troops to pacify Venezuela,” it begs the question of whether the New Tribe Mission would have been expelled from the Venezuelan jungle after more than 50 years of indigenous missionary work.

In fact, the humble and respectful mission that Lascassas describes is also a warning against the racist and paternalistic missions that missionaries can covertly engage in. Sadly, we see examples of this racism and paternalism in the history of missions. In the mid-18th century, the Jesuit missionaries who founded and ran the massive Guarani Indian missions of what was once called the Jesuit Republic failed to see the indigenous people in the Paraguayan Guarani missions as true missionary partners, treating them as children to be taught and protected. Unable to stand on their own feet, the Guarani Indians and the Jesuit Guarani Mission quickly disintegrated and disintegrated after the Jesuits were expelled in 1761. The Guarani Indians were peculiar “missionary Christians,” unable to stand on their own and dependent on missionaries.

D. Mission in Love

Lascassas identifies the fourth virtue of proper mission as mission in love. Citing the Apostle Paul's confession in 1 Thessalonians 2:11, “As you know, we exhort, comfort, and guard each one of you as a father does his children,” he calls for a mission with fatherly love, but this is not the same as paternalistic mission. Whereas a paternalistic mission is one that lords over the people and makes them dependent on the missionary, a truly paternalistic mission involves the tears and sacrifice of conceiving a child and the sweat, labor, and love of raising that child. And a mission with this fatherly love is a mission that treats them as partners, as people, and builds them up to become true leaders, great leaders, before God, not as a means of my ministry. And it is a mission that rejoices in seeing local leaders being raised up.

The relationship between the missionary and the local people is not a true partnership until the missionary shares leadership with the local people. But when the Father's heart is present, this is possible and natural.

Lascassas also quotes 1 Thessalonians 2:8, “For we are so dearly beloved of you that we have

loved to give you not only the gospel of God, but also our lives, because you have become our dearly beloved.” He argues that mission in love involves a heart that is willing to lay down one’s life for those whom the missionary serves, and a love that sees those whom he or she serves as such “dearly beloved.” Recalling the words of Chrysostom, who proclaimed that love is the beginning and end of mission, he calls for mission to be undertaken in love and to end in love. When a missionary confesses from the heart that the people he serves are “those whom I love so much that I would give my life for them,” Lascassas emphasizes that life-changing, transformative work is done in the mission field.

E. Mission as Life.

The final virtue of true mission, Lascassas argues, is that it is a mission that is demonstrated by life and accomplished by life. Citing the apostle Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 10, “Of what we have done toward you believers, holy, right, and blameless, of which you are witnesses, and so is God,” Lascassas argues that true mission is found in the missionary’s life, a life of holiness, love, and God. There is a holy encounter between life and life in mission that witnesses to Christ not just in words and teaching, but in the missionary’s daily life, actions, and whole being. There are life-changing missions where the missionary’s life is invested and the lives of local Christians are built up. And these missions are accompanied by the three “C’s”

1. Comunidad(Community) - a genuine community of life, where life and life are intertwined and melded. This is the reason for the growth in Latin America of Pentecostal churches and other cults, despite their numerous shortcomings. Evangelical churches should approach Pentecostal churches with an attitude of understanding and learning, rather than antagonism and judgment, as they grow to provide authentic communities of life and faith for the poor and empower them.

2. Conocimiento / crecimiento(Growing): An authentic community of life and faith must grow its members in Christ and bring them to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. These missions work to awaken the latent, “sleeping giants” in local Christians. A mission that finds and awakens the potential in them, and a mission that builds them up as Christians, as Christians, as loyal members of Christ, not as missionaries, is a mission with conocimiento and crecimiento.

A mission with a commission and with this kind of life is a mission that awakens the Latin American church to world mission and invites them to participate in it. If the Great Commission is not just a calling for the Western or Korean churches, but for all of Christ’s churches, then missionaries should help the Latin American church to fulfill this task with joy.

VI.

The Korean church’s mission, which began in earnest in the mid-1970s, has now, by God’s grace, sent out 18,000 missionaries. Each one of those 18,000 missionaries has a precious testimony of dedication and pure passion. But the lesson of missionary history that we are highlighting today from Las Cruces shows us that pure zeal and pure motives do not lead directly to the right mission, the true mission.

We have seen how the Spanish mission, which began in the late 15th century with the pure enthusiasm that God would raise up Spain to be a light to the nations after the discovery of the

New World, eventually became a paternalistic mission, a corrupt mission, and a mission that failed to fulfill the mission of the times, despite the strong support and momentum of the state. We have also seen how even the most profound theological scholars, in the absence of a proper understanding of human beings, could only have a wrong human theory, which ended up being written as a theory to justify the actions of conquerors who oppressed and exploited their neighbors, people created in the image of God. Of course, 500 years later, the missions of the 21st century do not have the same blatant racism, patriarchy, and power missions of the past. However, I must confess that there is still a subtext in the mission of our evangelical churches that seeks to teach and proclaim one-sidedly, rather than a truly incarnational mission based on sound human understanding. But the lessons of history today teach us to listen to and respect the cultures, histories, and life stories of the peoples we encounter, and to see them as true missionary partners, not as instruments of our ministry. There must be a deep love, study, and appreciation for them, and a genuine encounter of life with life. In the square of authentic encounter between life and life, God's revealed Word (Logos) teaches us that in your own time (kairo) you witness to Christ and that Christ himself is the agent of life-changing mission, and the Holy Spirit teaches us that those we minister to with humility, respect, and patience, those on the mission field whom we serve with love and life, will eventually be our "glory, joy, and crown" (1 Thessalonians 2:19) in the presence of the Lord at Christ's coming. May these precious "crowns" of ministry abound in the ministry of each of our 18,000 Korean missionaries.

SIMPLE