



The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World

Lausanne Occasional Paper 17 Christian Witness to Traditional Religionists of Latin America & Caribbean

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Christian Witness to Traditional Religionists of Latin America & Caribbean

Report of the Consultation on World Evangelization

Mini-Consultation on Reaching Traditional Religionists of Latin America & Caribbean

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Prefatory Note

This report, Christian Witness to Traditional Religionists of Latin America and Caribbean is one of a series of Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs) emerging from the historic Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) held in Pattaya, Thailand, in June 1980. The report was drafted by members of the "Mini-Consultation on Reaching Traditional Religionists (Latin America and Caribbean)" under the chairmanship of Dr. Pablo Perez, who served as International Coordinator of the pre-COWE study groups on Traditional Religionists (Latin America and Caribbean).

The major part of this report went through a draft and a revised draft, which involved all members of the mini-consultation. It was also submitted to a wider "sub-plenary" group for comment, but the responsibility for the final text rests with the mini-consultation and its chairman.

The report is released with the prayer and hope that it will stimulate the church and individual members in reaching this large segment of the population.

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Appendix A

1. Introduction

Much religious expression throughout Latin America could be defined as "traditional religion," including Catholicism and even Protestantism as popularly practiced by the masses. In this study, however, we are limiting the term to two situations: a) indigenous societies which retain elements of pre-Columbian religion, though these may be mixed to a greater or lesser extent with Catholicism, and b) groups with elements of traditional African origin, found particularly in the Caribbean.

Such indigenous groups include a) the descendants of Incan, Mayan, Aztec, and other great civilisations found mainly in the Andean highlands, Guatemala, and Mexico, b) groups in Argentina, Paraguay, and Chile, and c) more isolated groups of the Amazon basin and coastal areas of Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, as well as of other areas of Central and South America.

These groups have had varying degrees of contact with Western civilisation (so-called) since the arrival of the *conquistadores*. Their religious beliefs, as well as other aspects of their culture, have been affected by these contacts and, in many cases, a high degree of syncretism now exists.

A. Methodological Considerations

Recognising that there are several approaches to the study of the peoples we wish to evangelize, we acknowledge that this does not serve as a detailed study. Every society occupies a particular geographical environment and may be thought of as having three dimensions: ideological (world view), sociological, and techno-economic.

The ideological dimension has to do with ideas and concepts people have concerning the world around them—the universe, their local environment, and their relationships to them. It also includes religious beliefs, values, and ideas of right and wrong.

The sociological dimension deals with the way people organise themselves into different social institutions—the family, clubs, fraternities—and how they make decisions.

The techno-economic dimension deals with the various activities which relate to physical survival—the means of production, systems of distribution and division of labor, and use of environment.

It is taken for granted that an understanding of the language is essential to an understanding of the way these dimensions inter-relate to make up and to maintain a particular cultural system.

In addition to the above, particular attention must be given to the historical context of a people and to conflict or tension which exists within a culture, or as a consequence of contact with another culture. No society operates in complete isolation, but is in dynamic relation to other groups, affecting and being affected by them. Dynamic forces effect change. One needs to be alert to conflicts within and between groups which give rise to such change. This is particularly true for the indigenous groups of Latin America and the Caribbean, because socio-cultural change in them is taking place at a rapid rate.

Any attempt to evangelize an indigenous people requires a willingness to do so through the local language and culture, in all of its dimensions, in order to present a witness which is culturally relevant, not itself distorted through miscommunication, and minimally disruptive to the indigenous way of life. It implies a commitment to adapt one's manner of life as much as possible to that of local custom, in a way consistent with the Word of God; and to give priority to the translation of God's written Word into the local language at the earliest possible stages of evangelism if a translation is not already available.

Methodologies are only of value in the hands of the Holy Spirit and when measured by the Word of God. With confidence in the Word and Spirit, such techniques can be effective in spreading the Good News to unreached people.

B. Historical Sketch

We may describe the indigenous societies of Latin America in three historical periods: the pre-Columbian, the European colonial, and the period of independence. The pre-Columbian period is the era of indigenous peoples in the whole American continent from the arrival of the first American Indians until the arrival of the European powers. During this time, hundreds of Indian groups interacted with one another.

Beginning with the arrival of the Europeans, the indigenous groups experienced a time of socio-cultural alienation due to the colonial policies of the dominant powers. The conquest and colonisation of the indigenous groups and the virtual extermination of some of them were carried out in the name of civilisation and Christianity. Although a few voices protested this violence against the Indians (e.g., Fr. Bartolome de las Casas), on the whole the contacts between Western society and indigenous groups were destructive for the indigenous peoples and cultures. "Christianization" of indigenous peoples was forced and often superficial, leaving basically intact the world view of the indigenous societies. The result has been a type of syncretism. It is evident that the gospel of Jesus Christ was not adequately presented to the indigenous population.

Most early Protestant missionary efforts were directed toward speakers of colonial languages. On the whole, the indigenous population of Latin America did not come into contact with Protestant Christianity until the early 20th Century. Protestant missionary efforts were not always sensitive to the socio-cultural context of indigenous peoples; often an individualistic approach was followed. The Indian culture was not appreciated. As a result, alien Protestant churches were often planted among indigenous peoples and evangelization was done in colonial languages. There were some notable Catholic and Protestant exceptions, and some lessons have been learned, so that more contextualised indigenous churches have begun to appear, and the Spirit of God is moving.

C. Key Doctrinal Concepts

The doctrinal positions of the first Roman Catholic missionaries to Latin America had some aspects in common with the theology of the indigenous religions there, and thus the life and activities of all the population were affected. Several key examples of this are:

(i) The concept of God

The Roman Catholic idea of an immanent God who shares his essence with persons, places and objects associated with him fits quite closely with the Indian notion that the spirits of the wind, water, trees, etc., contain the essence of the high gods and thus are to be revered.

This has resulted in innumerable amulets, practices and twisted visions of the reality of God, who is seen as a transcendent being in contact with his creation but not extending the essence of his being to it.

(ii) The concept of salvation

Sacrifices or propitiation are needed in most Indian religions, including help to secure a better place in the life after death. This may be accomplished by the person himself, or by others for him after he dies. Roman Catholic beliefs about penance and prayers for the dead relate to this. Thus, in both religions one must secure help to find favour with God, a better place in the after life, or a shorter stay in purgatory.

(iii) The nature of conversion

For indigenous religions, encounters with God do not necessarily have an effect on the life of the person. Thus, conversion is not a radical change but may be seen as a series of encounters with the supernatural which produce ecstatic experiences, specific obedience to ritualistic laws, and compliance with other demands. In the Roman Catholic system, the observance of the sacraments marks definite steps in Christian growth and acceptance by God, with little change in everyday living

D. Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples

We affirm that exploitation, oppression and violation of fundamental rights persist to the present day in regard to our indigenous fellow countrymen. For this reason we urgently call upon governments, churches and individuals of good will to recognise the indigenous peoples as human beings with the same rights as any other citizen.

It is evident that Latin American indigenous peoples continue to suffer dehumanising processes of conquest. New forms of oppression deny their rights and destroy their cultures. Their land is being taken away, their family and community life is being undermined and destroyed. They are denied social services, education, housing, medical assistance and credit. At times the authorities are even indifferent to their murder. Churches seem to be unaware of the situation.

We believe that the church in its evangelizing mission must include, together with the redemptive process, a continuing effort on behalf of these people to respect their rights and to insure for them, their families and communities a life of dignity.

We also believe that, without this commitment the mission of evangelizing among indigenous peoples will lose its credibility and moral authority.

2. Case Histories

With the background given, let us consider some case studies.

A. The Nature of Conversion in Haiti (Rony Joseph)

Conversion is the final goal of all evangelization efforts. The evangelist or evangelizer should clearly define what he means by conversion, and what the word means to those he is trying to evangelize. Upon this depends the success or failure of all evangelistic campaigns. How does this work in Haiti?

Before 1804, Christianity was imposed upon slaves. They had to be baptised. This was a kind of conversion. Coming from Africa with traditional religions and their beliefs, they were forced to adhere to a religion which to them was totally foreign. In short, conversion in colonial times preceded evangelization.

However, in spite of this masquerade by their masters, the slaves remained strongly attached to their beliefs, their religions, and their African gods. As they could not express themselves publicly, they practiced their religion in hiding and especially at night. To lead them in their struggle, they looked for spiritual strength to their beliefs and not to the religion of the colony.

However, Catholicism was planted firmly enough that it was not rejected when national independence came. Thus the ground was laid for cohabitation of Catholicism and the popular religion which was later called "Voodoo."

Syncretism was so pronounced that all the efforts of the Catholic clergy to stop the expansion of Voodooism ended in failure. One needs only to remember the anti-superstition campaign against "rejected" enterprises of the Catholic church around the year 1940. Even today, people speak of Catholic Voodooists.

However, if Voodoo by its own dynamics absorbs Catholicism, it still is not the same as Protestantism. There exists a clear line of demarcation between the Protestant churches and Voodoo. Realising the syncretism between Voodoo and Catholicism, the Protestants see that the Catholics also need to be converted, to benefit from the salvation offered in Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to the Haitian to be converted? The Catholic leaders have tried hard to make their people understand that conversion doesn't necessarily signify a change of religion, but rather a change in their conduct and their lives. However, for the Haitian, conversion supposes an obligatory change of religion.

Since the idea of ecumenism has begun to spread in Haiti, Catholics are free to participate in Protestant services, but clergy still do not allow their members to become Protestants. One only has to read the publication *La Bible et Les Catholiques*, by Father Claessens, to be convinced of this. This booklet, sold at a very low price to permit all of their members to read it, tries to assure the reader that their church was the first church—the church founded by Christ himself—and they shouldn't allow the Protestants to make them lose this privileged position. A lot of pastors, having understood this game, have refused to get involved in the ecumenical movement, and according to them, the Catholics remain a people to be evangelized and won to Christ.

The Haitians, whether they are practicing Catholics or Voodooists, live under the influence of fear. They are trapped in a network of things which they are not allowed to do. To find rest from this, they become converted. The popular expression "enter the gospel" explains well what we mean to say: to be exempt or get out from under the wickedness of the gods and the wicked acts of the evil spirits (zobob, chanprel, lougarou, oungate, etc.). The Protestant churches constitute a sure shelter from this.

To be converted does not necessarily mean to accept Christ as one's Saviour for the forgiveness of one's sins, but to be protected against the gods and the evil spirits. Realising this fact, certain Protestants, in their efforts to convert the people—that is, the Catholics and Voodooists—have the tendency to replace the evangelical message with a message of healing or protection against evil spirits and demons. In brief, they put the accent on the consequences rather than on the fact.

We do not wish to under-estimate the importance of such a strategy because when a person thinks of all that the gospel has to offer, they accept the message, but they do not fully understand until they are taught. This is the importance of the class for new converts which is carried on in certain churches.

In general, conversion in Haiti is not static but dynamic. Many people understand from the beginning the decision they make. They accept Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and become children of God. The majority need to wait for a period of observation before they are eligible for baptism. The persons who refuse baptism for quite a while after their conversion make the pastors wonder about their conversion. One pastor said that 65% to 70% of the conversions in Haiti are from other motives than the acceptance of salvation by faith for the forgiveness of sins, and to inherit eternal life. The same pastor, however, remarked that those who are converted—who "enter the gospel" to be healed, or for protection from evil spirits (i.e. the gods who are persecuting them, or for a better economic situation, etc.) can become Christians, fervent and convinced, after having discovered the reality of the gospel. This pastor concludes by saying, "In order to be convinced, you only have to attend some of the testimony services."

To understand the nature of conversion in Haiti, one needs to refer to the causes which make the Haitian become converted: fear of evil spirits, a precarious material situation, the order of a parent, an illness, etc. The gospel is the solution to all these problems, but it is above all "a power for the salvation of whoever believes." The gospel can enter by means of physical healing or by an improved economic situation. We are certain of this. But he who is converted to satisfy these needs only is still far from salvation and from eternal life, to which conversion gives access. We can't say exactly when a person is truly converted. But the rigid division between active, participating members and believers gives us the right to suggest that conversion in Haiti in many cases, is superficial—and that the proselyte should be followed and formed, up until the time he becomes convinced of the significance and the totality of the act to which he committed himself previously.

C. Reaching Traditional Religionists (A study paper on the Quechua of Apurimac and San Martin, a highland area and a lowland area, respectively—Estuardo McIntosh.)

(i) Introduction

Apurimac, Peru, is a department of some 20,000 square kilometers ranging from warm inter-Andean valleys at 2,000 meters to punas at 4,500 meters. Its population is about 350,000, 90% of which are monolingual or bilingual Quechua speakers. There is a high illiteracy rate of 65%.

San Martin covers some 54,000 square kilometers of tropical lowland forest and has a smaller population of about 175,000 of which some 3,000—4,000 are bilingual or monolingual Quechua speakers. The two areas have distinct dialects and require separate translation materials. Missionary work, both national and foreign, has taken place over the last fifty years. As a result, there is a Quechua-speaking church of some 1,000 members in one area of Apurimac; and a Quechua-speaking church of some 200 members in San Martin. Missionary work in evangelism by foreigners has been done through interpreters; though, curiously enough, foreigners have been largely responsible for translation materials!

(ii) Ideological Concepts and World Views

Too much attention has been paid to political geography in the Andean zone in the evaluation of Quechua world views. Hence, missionaries and church leaders have assumed that the Quechua speakers of the Andean zone hold an Hispano-Catholic world view, the traditional view of the Roman Catholic church until Medellin; or, in the case of more "indigenista" missionaries, an Inca world view. With the latter, it is argued that all we have to do is study the Incas, their worship, their social system, etc., and we shall discover the Quechua world view of today. Both these positions must be recognised as simplistic. At best, they point towards a study of Quechua religion as a fusion of these two systems as a "new religious movement."

A study of pre-Columbian and conquest history indicates that the Inca domination of the Apurimac area was not long enough to imprint its ideology on the separate and warring tribes of the *ezza* (Chances, Pokras, Quechuas, etc.), and that in the case of San Martin, the Incas never got there at all! Hence a world view must begin with an analysis of local historical and cultural anthropological elements, and a recognition that pre-Incan elements form the basis for their world view.

(iii) Basic Elements

Common to all Quechua-speaking groups is a concrete interpretation of reality. This can be seen both in the language structure (the absence of indirect speech, for example), and in the culture (the three-tier world of *kay pacha*, *hanaq pacha*, and *ukhu pacha*: this world, the world above, and the world below, all part of one *pacha*, and all equally concrete). Consequently, any preaching in abstract terms such as salvation or sanctification is not readily understood. The Quechua-speaking man is a man with his back toward the future. The "now" and the past are before him, not behind him as in Western culture. This can be shown from linguistic and cultural analysis (*naupa*, in front of, but *nuapa tiempo*, the past). Hence God is immanent, and the acts of God in the past, as for the Hebrews, of great significance. Note also the importance of testimony of what God *did* for me and *does* for me rather than what he will do for me, in the preaching of the gospel. Common to all is that the sacred and the secular are one.

Work has its religious aspect—illness, journeys, and relationships as well. Hence, to become a Christian will affect all aspects of their life at once, and the use of the phrase "entering the gospel" (*entrar en el Evangelio*) signifies more than "receiving Christ," which would be a more typical Western approach. San Martin, being on linguistic and historico-cultural analysis a jungle tribe rather than a highland cosmivision, could be summed up in the phrase "to live happily at peace" (*vivir tranquilo, gosozo alegre*). This is the phrase that occurs again and again in testimony. Apurimac, on the other hand, is more complex, but follows the basics already mentioned plus the fact that there is a capriciousness in the spirits of the mountains (*apus*), the spring, the earth (*pachamama*), the passes (*apachita*), the winds (*soq-a huayra, sullu huayra, muyu-huayra, etc.*) that requires continuous vigilance and propitiation through certain acts of feasts and offerings, or through intermediaries (shamans), the *pongo*, the *layqa*, etc., or the priest, and, what is often the case, the pastor! God, in Apurimac, for Christians is often, therefore, considered to be capricious and in need of propitiation. This concept is reinforced by the concept of *ayni* (work done in exchange for a reciprocal favor), so that if I do certain things for God (prayers, vigils, fasts), then he must do me an equal favor in return.

(iv) Socio-cultural Aspects

It is beyond the scope of a short article to deal in any depth with socio-cultural aspects, but several key aspects can be mentioned that bear on the reaching of the Quechua for Christ. Firstly, family and community decision-making is part of the culture. It is not done without reflection and participation of all in the debate. This can be shown linguistically (e.g., the use of the inclusive and exclusive "we" and "we, but not you"), and culturally (the circular *cabildo* community meeting).

Hence, the evangelistic campaign and many decisions registered through them produce no long-term fruit, for they do not give time for the normal process of decision-making to take place. It can be demonstrated that the great majority of Quechua Christians in Apurimac and in San Martin belong to closely related family or community groups. This suggests other than mass evangelistic approaches.

In San Martin, few, if any, become Christians in the church. That step more probably is taken in the home or in the fields. However, they make a formal recognition of that decision within the church building and before the congregation. It would not be unusual to hear a comment, "Please make an altar call tonight because so-and-so wants to make his decision." This decision would also be a corporate one for wife and children, so that group conversion must be taken seriously and provision be made for "confirmation" of that decision for the children at a later date.

Authority of elders is part of Quechua community life. This must be taken into account in the formation and discipline of the nascent church.

As the fiesta is part of an integrated life for both Apurimac and San Martin, functional substitutes must be introduced to take their place. Hence, the importance of conferences, retreats, and conventions in the life of the nascent church which must provide fiesta-like gatherings for new believers. The gospel and the church must touch all aspects of society and culture, for religion affects all of life.

Quechua culture, in Apurimac and San Martin, does not exist in isolation from mestizo culture and influences. There has been a tendency in both areas not to recognise local differences. And an attempt has been made to preach the gospel to both and neglect homogeneous church principles. There is also a tendency for the mestizo to dominate in a Quechua congregation by cultural precedence rather than spirituality.

(v) Economic and Technical Dimensions

San Martin Quechua are slash-and-burn agriculturalists, with main crops of corn, cotton, rice, beans and plantains. Hunting and fishing are very much part of their life, too, and many move further and further into remote areas in order to maintain this great love. Indeed, no Christian feast would be complete without *sacha aicha* (wild meat). However, many are in bondage to the mestizo storekeepers (*comerciantes*), who lend them money to make *chacras* (fields). Work is done in community (*mita, peonadas*), and so community work in and for the church must be done in the same way. The double cropping in a year allows for a relaxed life, and the church could be free to involve itself in outreach for extended periods throughout the year.

Adventism did not take hold in San Martin, because of the delight in pork and wild meat, and the need for *chicha* (maize beer) and *masato* (yuca beer) as a staple food drink in the many dry field areas. The evangelicals, however, permitted the use of *chicha* and *masato*, stipulating the strength of fermentation by the number of days made and the sugar content. In Apurimac, the main crops are corn in the valleys and potatoes, wheat, and barley on the higher slopes. Many also own animals and graze them.

It has been said that the child was the invention of Edwardian England. In Apurimac there are no "children," only little adults. Sunday schools and young people's work are not easily understood in such a culture. There is great value in "work" itself, "work" in community. It is interesting that all Quechua congregations have built their own churches without outside funding and help. Generally, too, tithing (first fruits of crops and animals) is an accepted principle.

One interesting factor is that the church in Apurimac has grown primarily in one region only. That region was the home of a warlike group, the Chancas, who fought with their neighbours, the Quechua (literally, the "warm valley people"), and finally were overthrown for some decades by the Incas in the famous battle of Yahuar Pampa. One notices this inherent aggressiveness in that church in comparison to those of other areas. This principle also has been illustrated in a comparison of Quechua and Aymara in Bolivia, and perhaps with the Otovalo in Ecuador.

(vi) Conclusions

Both foreign missionaries and mestizo nationals have been notoriously unsuccessful in evangelizing the Quechua of San Martin and Apurimac (perhaps of other areas as well). Most Quechua have been won by Quechua preachers, or by members of their own extended family. Most have been reached in their own language. It is not that they are not open to the gospel; it is that there are few to preach it and to live it in its context. That is not easy for a mestizo, for it would mean rejection by, and of, his own culture. For the foreign missionary, the problem is a linguistic and cultural identification with the minority cultural ethos; while, in many cases, the pressure is on to minister or to be content with majority dominant Spanish cultural groups.

As regards the use of "redemptive analogies," Pachamama and the Virgin Mary, the cross and the *apachita*, show the very real danger of syncretism in this approach to the presentation of the gospel. If a choice were to be made, the "power encounter" approach would be more suitable. In San Martin, a student who failed in Bible school (his Spanish was not good enough to cope) ministered fruitfully. He lived and worked in the fields, talked around the hearth in the evenings, prayed with the sick, resisted the *brujos* (witch doctors) in Jesus' name, and brought the first groups to the Lord. He ministered exclusively in Quechua. It was also the Lord working with them (many times revealing himself through dreams—a channel uncommon to us, but common to non-literate tribal communities), that helped bring in the first harvest. Not until almost five years later did meetings move out of different homes and into a church building.

A similar beginning could be demonstrated for Apurimac, where itinerant preachers preached and worked in the Quechua communities. They used the language and the music as a vehicle to reveal the gospel of God, and they suffered much persecution to bring in the first fruits.

Evangelization of the Quechua people of San Martin and Apurimac (who form part of the "traditional religionists") awaits no great evangelist or fly-by-night missionary society. They must be reached by workers of their own, or of another culture who will put their faces in the dust and lose themselves that others may be found.

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C. How To Evangelize Traditional Religionists of the Andean Zone (Analysis of the religious, social, and techno-economic situation of the department of Ayacucho, Peru, and strategies of evangelism—Melchor Huilca H.)

(i) Introduction

The department of Ayacucho is located in the Valley of the Andes, Southern Range of Peru. The local ethnic group numbers over half a million, 33% urban and 67% rural. The group is characterised by its Roman Catholic makeup. It is said that in Huamanga, capital of the department, there is a church on every other block. The *ayacucho* (person of Ayacucho) spends over one-third of his time in religious holidays. Ayacucho is also characterised by its agitated state; there are continual confrontations, protests, and demonstrations, which have become an accepted part of daily life. For many years, Ayacucho was known for its resistance to the gospel. But in the '70s a change occurred, and today Ayacucho is open to and accepting of the gospel. It is wide open for evangelism.

The most important characteristic of Ayacucho is its Quechua culture, which has been thriving ever since the Inca Empire (15th Century). The *runa simi* ("language of the world") began to be called Quechua during the colonial period. This term also was used to identify the Andean people who spoke this language.

Middendorf (19th Century) considers that the Quechua of Ayacucho conserve to a high degree the ancient vocabulary and idioms; some local terms such as *mamachay* are impossible to translate. The neighbouring departments of Apurimac and Huancavelica also speak this same variety of Quechua.

The region of Ayacucho was the site of great civilisations from pre-Incan times. The ruins of Wari, twenty kilometers outside the city of Huamanga, are thought to be the site of the capital of the ancient Andean empire (originally made up of the Wari cultures, and later of the Incan cultures). We still hear about Wilcashauman, the sacred falcon, and about Pomacocha. Some area buildings, such as several mansions and churches, date from the colonial period.

Ayacucho was the site of important historical episodes. The battle of Choquepampa was decisive for the Inca chieftain Huirakacha. In this battle, the Incan empire conquered the tribes of Chancas and Pocras. On November 4, 1780, the emancipation movement was initiated by Tupac Amaru, and independence from Spanish domination was achieved with the seal of freedom at Quinua on December 9, 1824.

The origin of evangelical Christianity dates from 1937, when Alonso Hitchcock of the Presbyterian church came to Ayacucho. Most of the first thirty converts were students. From 1937 to 1967, local evangelical Christians suffered persecution initiated by the Roman Catholic priests.

Evangelical witness in Ayacucho took on new characteristics during the '70s, and the seven Protestant denominations of the area became more productive. In some communities, conversion of the majority of the population has been accomplished. Follow-up of new converts falls to the local evangelicals. Within the ethnic Quechua group, evangelicals have a well established position in the ordinary population and have gained the respect of the community at large.

On August 14-19, 1979, the First International Festival of Evangelical Quechua Music took place in Ayacucho, with the participation of the best musical groups from Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. During the festival, the evangelical leaders of the three countries formed an Andean Committee of Quichua/Quechua with the purpose of promoting the fulfillment of the Great Commission of Jesus among all Andean peoples.

It is not accurate to describe Ayacucho merely as a Christian Roman Catholic area. Even the local Catholic leaders affirm that behind the "Christian" facade there is no consciously Christian life which follows the demands made by God in the Bible. Though the liturgy is performed and the eucharistic calendar observed according to the norms of the Roman Catholic Church, the "fiesta" observance of holy days is primarily a social occasion. The fiesta originates as a spiritual search, but it progresses to a largely carnal manifestation, actually resulting in greater poverty.

Behind the Roman Catholic veneer, the group maintains its traditional ancestral animistic beliefs. The superimposition of Catholicism upon the animistic foundation has resulted in syncretism. Animism survives in the everyday life of the average *ayacucho*. Due to inter-relationships and the emigration to Lima of the Quechua, and the arrival from the jungle of other peoples, the cultural makeup of the area is changing. This change may prove good and educational: spiritually, because some immigrants convert to the gospel; morally, because the converts adopt Christian values. For these reasons, there is at present an increase in evangelism.

While the gospel is making an impact upon the lower-income classes, the middle class and student class have not yet been reached. The *Circulo Biblico Universitario* (University Bible Circle), one of the AGEUP bases, has been working to reach students since 1971.

The evangelistic meeting constitutes the most effective means of evangelism in this region. The elements of indigenous gospel music, the prayers of confession and healing, and the biblical exposition of the *runa simi* language affect the proclamation and acceptance of the gospel.

(ii) Ideology of Ayacucho

The ideology of Ayacucho is not limited to Ayacucho. It is shared with the neighbouring communities and departments, and with the whole Andean area. The belief in God as omnipotent and creator is only a vague shadowy concept. Vallejo, a noted Peruvian poet, describes God as remote and indifferent to human suffering, though he does exist. The world of visible tangible gods such as the *apus*, the *Pachamama*, the images, and the crosses is more evident in everyday life; these gods are invoked when one drinks, sleeps, works, or travels. The practice of *senalay* (making a special mark on one's animals) is the dedication of the animals to the *apus*, the spirits of the hills. Holocausts, or bonfires, are events dedicated to the *Pachamama*, mother earth, for the expiation of sins and to make special petitions.

When one neglects to be faithful to the *apus*, one lives with the weight of guilt, waiting for punishment from the gods. Such retaliation may come upon crops, animals, or persons. If the sin is especially grave, punishment has larger repercussions on a community or regional level. Such problems do have a solution.

One must treat plants and animals well, because the *apus* of the hills watch over the community. If plants and animals are mistreated, blessings are revoked by means of *pacarinas* or *puquios* rainstorms or floods, and in their place illness may take possession of the evil doer, especially during the rains. Such an event is known as *waspi*.

The *supay*, spirit of evil, lives in the *supay wasi*, from which it sends terror over the community. But it may be dealt with through the *pongo* witch, and thus the evil spirit problems avoided. Witches are known as *jampeq*, witch doctors, and as counsellors, *yachac*. Each *pongo* has his favorite *apu*. In the areas around Huancavelico the *apus* are known as the Five Apostles, though there is one *apu* who does not belong to them.

Since the advent of the gospel, witchcraft has been diminishing. The Quechua hymn number 95 says in its last verse, "*Jesusslay pimantaq nisaq? yachaqmancho, apumanchum?*" (My Jesus, to whom will I confess my limitations? To the witch, or to the spirit of the hills?) As a response, the chorus of the hymn proclaims Christ as the only hope. This hymn, a strong declaration about spiritual warfare, is the most popular of the region.

(iii) Sociological Aspect of Ayacucho

Social life is oriented around the family, which is the most important influence in the community. The family works together, as in plowing its fields, and it seeks respect from others when it spends money on drink at community fiestas. A person is given dignity and respect when he marries. The baptism of infants, the ceremony of hair cutting, weddings, and confirmations link persons socially through *compadrazgo* (godfatherhood). Single persons do not achieve respect from others. This has implications in training new Christians for leadership.

Courtship and marriage according to tribal modes is disappearing. The *yaykipakuy* signifies marriage itself, and involves parents and other sponsors participating in a midnight kidnapping. Previously, the courtship involved dances, drunkenness, and *silvos* (outdoor nighttime parties). Forced rape is practiced, the strongest guarantee for marriage. This mode of courtship and marriage is still practiced and has been in effect since the time of Toledo.

To work according to Western modes is counter-cultural for the people of Ayacucho—where everyone, grandparents and children, works together, perpetuating the Incan value of living and working together.

The relationship of the Ayacucho with the national culture (i.e., the Western aspect) has not always been good. The aristocratic and creole classes have not known anything about, nor understood, Quechua culture. Consequently, two opposing worlds have evolved with racism as the separating gap. There always have been priests, judges, officials, and magnificent lawyers for the civilized exploiters, but practically nothing for the "backward" peasants and rural people (a sad indictment of the "civilized").

Festivals are categorised as *patronales* (civic) and religious. Beyond the religious meaning of the festivals, those who profit from them are the religious leaders

and the tradesmen with their institutionalised business of selling alcoholic beverages.

The mayor, the governor, and the judge constitute the principal authorities elected in the *cabildo* (town council), which is under the assessment and approbation of the Subprefect of the Department. Thus the structure of the municipal government is linked with that of the national government.

(iv) Techno-Economic Aspect

Geographically, Ayacucho is in a disadvantageous situation. Its environment, prone to natural disasters, is not well suited to agriculture, and it lacks water.

Every job is linked to agriculture. Animal-raising is practiced. Another occupation is that of creating folk crafts. For the creation of these crafts, there exists no school: skills are handed down from generation to generation. The human and natural resources of the area provide the region with great economic potential. The economy of the region suffers at the hands of intermediaries or middlemen who pay below value prices for the products. The lack of mobility gives rise to the appearance of these middlemen.

(v) Strategy of Evangelism for Ayacucho

- To focus the biblical message, using equivalent cultural values which are present in the people, such as the beliefs in expiation and dreams, and the fear of the reality of punishment.
- To train and send messengers from the same culture, or those who would identify closely with the people by means of their participation in the most basic and essential aspects of life.
- To attempt conversion on a family and community scale by means of the progressive and contextualised exposition of the Word.
- To make a scriptural-theological statement on animism; also, to promote spiritual warfare in order to demonstrate the supremacy of the gospel.
- To call to repentance from animistic practices; to help new converts free themselves from ties to the occult.
- To use musical, textile, and ceramic folk arts as means of proclaiming the gospel.
- To form churches with functional character to continue with evangelism in order to provide something to substitute for the religious festivals—such as conferences, retreats, and festivals of thanksgiving for the harvest.

D. How Shall We Reach the Unreached? (Cleto Perez M.)

Knowing of the need to reach or disciple, I can only compare the early church with that of today. Today, in the 20th Century, we have amplifying equipment, materials for evangelism, means of transportation, congresses and programmes, financial resources, and means of communication.

In spite of these advantages which we have over the early church, we have really done nothing. Until now, we have not been able to reach our world for Christ. The early church, on the other hand, in more or less thirty years, reached the world of its day with the gospel. Why have we failed even though we have the advantage over the infant church with our modern science and technology?

Let us analyse a little of the Book of Acts.

(i) Filled with the Holy Spirit

Just before his ascension, our Lord charged the disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the promise from the Father. In this way, everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. On that same day, Peter announced to his listeners the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Acts 4:31 tells us that all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. When the gospel reached Samaria (chapter 8), the apostles immediately sent Peter and John, so that the new believers would receive the Holy Spirit. Saul also received the Holy Spirit upon his conversion. In Acts 9:31 the church had grown and the writer emphasises that "the church had peace and was built up...and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied."

When Peter preached the gospel in Cornelius' house, his listeners also received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-48). Acts 13:52 says that the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. We thus see that, without exception, all the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. The church was filled with power and there was something else: that church also manifested healings, miracles, and signs.

(ii) Evident Holiness

Holiness flowed in and out of the church, and each disciple reflected Christ in his life. And what of their leaders? They were full of the Holy Spirit, of good testimony, and of wisdom. The phrase "good testimony" implies holiness. But what of the church and holiness today?

(iii) Christian Fellowship

In addition to what Luke writes in Acts 2:42-47, he says in Acts 4:32-34, "Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul,...There was not a needy person among them."

What fellowship! What communication! What unity, also doctrinally! Not just fellowship, communication, and physical unity between men, but in their hearts and souls and spirits. It is such fellowship which has value, and which God desires of us.

A terrible disparity exists among us today. We are stingy, apathetic in our relationships between pastor and church members. There is disparity between churches, between denominations, and between church leaders. We forget Paul's warning, "But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another" (Galatians 5:15).

(iv) The Method of Discipling of the Early Church

How did the early church spread? What were its methods? Each of them received the power of the Holy Spirit and was a witness wherever he went—in the upper room, at the temple gate, in the temple, and from house to house. In spite of the warning from the council, Peter and John said, "You decide if we should obey God or men. We cannot help but speak the things which we have seen and heard." And, "We are witnesses to these things...but those who were scattered abroad went throughout the world preaching the gospel." This was the method of the early church. This is what they did, making disciples—one disciple, then another, and so on, multiplying disciples.

(v) How Shall We Reach Our Generation?

How then did the early church reach its world with the gospel in spite of limitations of science and technology? They did it because every one of its members, from first to last, was filled with the Holy Spirit. The celestial fire burned in each of their hearts, filling their hearts with love for lost souls. Holiness flowed through the church. It was a church filled with life, health, power—a living church that swept away everything in its path, manifesting holiness, miracles, signs, and wonders.

The leaders of the early church were men who ministered to the Lord, who fasted and persevered in prayer as did all the church. These were prayers which moved the hands of God, not the five-minute variety we make today. They were also a church that spoke the Word of God with boldness.

The temptation is for us to say, "We already know this concerning the early church." The problem is not in knowing it, but in having it, in being it, in being a church like God wants. Such a church can reach our generation.

Today we are doing personal evangelism. We preach the gospel in the streets and parks, in the church, in hospitals and in jails, but the people see in us nothing spiritual. We are dry and apathetic. People arrive at the church and find it dead, worldly, and full of problems. They see that we lack fellowship and unity, and they say, "Why should we go to the church, or to the gospel? There is nothing in the church if the brethren are like that, and we do not wish to be hypocritical like they are."

Without the power of Acts 1:8, we cannot be effective witnesses. But if we recognise our error and return to God's method of being filled with the power of the

Holy Spirit, in fellowship, unity, and holiness, we will reach the last unreached person of our world. We will experience complete success in cross-cultural evangelism.

E. The Ayacucho Declaration

The Quechua/Quichua evangelical leaders of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia assembled in Ayacucho, Peru, at the First International Festival of Evangelical Quechua/Quichua Music, August 14-18, 1979. This document is the first effort of the Quechua/Quichua church to express itself beyond individual geographical borders. The following conclusions were reached:

(i) We have organised ourselves into a Quechua/Quichua Andean Committee for the purpose of promoting the proclamation and extension of the gospel within our cultures in our countries.

(ii) We recognise that our cultures possess many positive characteristics that in the past were neglected when the gospel was proclaimed. But now the Quechua/Quichua church is in the process of growing and maturing and, therefore, is rediscovering and utilising many of these characteristics for the glory of God. Examples of these would be: music, drama, arts and crafts, communal work, etc.

(iii) Therefore, we call upon:

- the Quechua/Quichua churches of the Andean area to recognise and seriously reflect on the value of proclaiming and expressing the gospel through our own context;
- the same churches to incorporate the goals and activities of the Andean Quechua/Quichua Committee;
- the church at large to recognise and appreciate each other as members of the universal church of Christ.

(iv) We commit ourselves to unite our spiritual and cultural efforts to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ among our peoples and the entire world.

3. Presuppositions of a Latin American Strategy

A. Introduction

We feel the necessity of formulating a biblical Latin American strategy to reach traditional religionist groups mentioned in this paper. This includes some presuppositions:

B. Diffusion of the Gospel in Traditional Religionist Groups

The gospel permeates indigenous groups more rapidly through the witness of members of the group itself. Indigenous peoples uniformly hold to a holistic view of life, as our own forefathers did before being led astray by humanistic teachings of the "enlightenment." We must, therefore, present the gospel as it relates to the whole man in his total context. The gospel must be preached, written, and taught in the local language and thought forms of the people.

C. The Gospel and Society

In face-to-face societies, the gospel can be expected to enter through social units such as the family or the community. There are other roads into the heart than those which predominate in Western society, such as deliverance from fear, healing of the body, power encounters with spirits.

D. Church Development

The extension and control of Christian work among traditional religionists in Latin America ought to be in the hands of the indigenous church as it comes to birth. Overseas participation should have to be in subjection to the local national church, and the national church should be the body through which help and invitations come.

E. Functional Substitutes

Elements of indigenous beliefs which are not in disobedience to the Word of God must be allowed to stand, though always at the discretion of the indigenous peoples themselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit's illumination of the Word of God. Functional substitutes should be sought whenever appropriate to replace elements which are not in accordance with the Word of God.

F. Traditional Artistic Forms

One of the principal vehicles of communicating the gospel to indigenous peoples is artistic expression in its various traditional forms—music, poetry, weaving, ceramics, drawing, etc. Radio and cassettes are also important media for successful evangelization in indigenous communities.

G. Leadership Training

Local leadership must be developed from the first moment of work, with due confidence in indigenous leaders to lead their people. Training programmes appropriate to the needs of such leaders must be developed as a high priority.

H. Dynamism in Traditional Religionist Groups

With confidence in the Word and Spirit more than in techniques, the churches of traditional religionist groups must become missionary vehicles to other religious groups, sharing their values and experiences.

I. Modernisation

Modernisation is part of the historical process of socio-cultural change to which we referred in the introduction. Through it, indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean come into contact with material, social, and ideological innovations which, when accepted, diversely affect their society, world view, and culture. Many of these innovations are derived from the advances of science and technology, as well as the pressure of expanding dominant economic systems in the world. Such innovations may contribute to the socio-economic betterment of the community, or they may be harmful to it. There is a great deal of debate and controversy on this matter, and therefore the issue must be studied carefully. At the outset, however, the indigenous community must determine for itself, and under what conditions it will accept innovations. In the case of Christians, these decisions should be made under the authority and guidance of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

4. Toward a Latin American Strategy

On the basis of all that has been said, we urge the following considerations toward a Latin American strategy:

- A. to challenge the Latin American and Caribbean church with their responsibility for evangelizing the unreached indigenous groups of their own regions;
- B. to gather information concerning unreached indigenous groups and distribute it throughout the church in Latin America and the Caribbean in the languages of those churches;
- C. to develop adequate infrastructures within the national church as well as the indigenous churches for the recruitment, training, and support of missionaries as cross-cultural communicators, Bible translators, literacy workers, etc.
- D. to call upon overseas Christian organisations with special skills and ministries to transfer their resources and technology to the national and indigenous churches.

**Appendix A
In Attendance**

Obed Ramon Alvarez, Peru
Alva L. Montes de Oca, Peru
Beatriz E. de Zapata, Guatemala
Graciela Esparza, Guatemala
Domingo Guitz, Guatemala
Melchor Huillca, Peru
Gregorio Landero, Colombia
Stewart McIntosh, Peru
Lois McKinney, U.S.A.
William Merrifield, U.S.A.
David Morales, Bolivia
Raimundo Morris, Peru
Tito Paredes, Peru
Cleto Perez, Bolivia
Pablo E. Perez, Mexico
Ezequiel Romero, Peru
Jonathan Santos, Brazil
Esteban Sywulka, Guatemala
Alfredo Torres, Colombia
Samuel Trinidad, Mexico
Manuel Chucho Valla, Ecuador
Stanley Wick, U.S.A.
Norvald Yri, Norway
Manuel Naula Yupanqvi, Ecuador

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