

## **Birth of Maya Catholic Theology**

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Fernando Zuaso joined the ranks of Spanish worker priests attempting to reach workers living on the margin of society, alienated from the church. What drove him was a vision of religion, incarnated in society, thisworldly. He participated in the liberation theology movement in Spain. Fifteen years ago he shifted focus to working with Kekchí Indians in the Cobán region of Guatemala.

His presence helps to explain the expansion of Latin American, if not liberation, theology to the Indians of Latin America. Liberation theology opened doors to other forms of theology in Latin America.<sup>1</sup> A major expression of this influence is indigenous theology, or better, Maya or other theologies.

This paper fulfills two purposes. It examines native religion which express Christianity in a manner distinct from mainline European or North American religion. They rest upon distinct cosmologies that are not European. In contrast to dominant Christianity which has lost touch with the earth, healing, and, to some extent, connectedness with one's ancestors, these religions offer

an alternative which millions of practitioners consider superior. In addition to Christian versions, indigenous religions may also be non-Christian.

A second purpose of this paper is to mark the birth of Latin American indigenous theology. Liberation theology set the example in modern times of indigenizing theology, contextualizing theology, making theology rest clearly on roots which not primarily European. Latin American theology of liberation has influenced theologians and activists in other countries and has helped to spawn other theologies of liberation. The first areas of the world where that influence were noted were Africa and Asia.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Catholic Church and the Guatemalan Maya

This paper builds on lengthy archival research and interviewing in Guatemala and overseas since 1981. It continues Bruce Calder's important work presented at the 1995 LASA meeting.<sup>3</sup> In describing the Catholic church's relations with the Maya, Calder showed how the period, 1940-1969, built the basis for change in the Catholic-Mayan relationship.<sup>4</sup> At first, Catholic Action, developmentalism, and Christian Democracy became common emphases in several Guatemalan regions. Then, in the 1970s, liberation theology, basic Christian communities, and the preferential option for the poor replaced some of older emphases. As Richard Wilson observes: "The formation of catechists and Catholic base communities among the Kekch'ís amounts to something akin to the Reformation within the Catholic church."<sup>5</sup> Sectors of the Catholic church and many educational programs became transformed and, to some degree radicalized. Many Mayan Catholics joined in the mobilization of the poor which took place in the mid-1970s. Thousands were killed in the ensuing violence.

By the mid-1980s, as Calder notes, both the Catholic church and Mayan communities were participating in an equally vital, if more cautious, movement for change. Mayan revindication acts as a driving force for the movement. Both the church and Catholic Maya increasingly found value in traditional Mayan culture. In Calder's view: "Numerous modifications to church policy based on respect for indigenous culture, including a tentative exploration of the possible 'Mayanization' of Catholicism have resulted. At the same time there have been Mayan initiatives, such as an effort to revitalize the traditional Mayan priesthood, which are independent of the Catholic church. Both the Mayan and the Catholic innovations can be traced back to trial initiatives begun in the 1970s."<sup>6</sup>

### Contextual Theology

In Latin America a second generation of contextual theology is beginning to appear, slowly, only in outline, but definitely taking shape, and in time for the 21st century. Contextual theology has become a generic frame for much of non-Eurocentric Christian theology.<sup>7</sup> In Latin America this theology is being midwifed by theologians and anthropologists steeped in the spirit of Vatican II, slowly and carefully nurturing theology done at the grassroots in Indian communities.

Emphasized here are Guatemalan efforts, especially at Centro de Estudios Ak'Kután at Cobán, and expressing what they hear. And they are awaiting the emergence of theologians who are Indian. But what they hear and express is not new: Indian religion is strong and has been around a long time, more than five hundred years in its Christian forms. What is new are, first, our perceptions of these distinct forms of religion; and second, efforts to express the beliefs of the people in a reflective form. This effort to systematically state indigenous beliefs is the meaning here of theology.<sup>8</sup>

Seeking a comprehensive view of Indian religion and theology is an extraordinarily difficult task for many reasons. Indians have had to shield their religion. This bred further misunderstandings, as outsiders pointed to such practices, as excessive drinking associated with rituals or Indians seeking out for punishment wrong-doers who brought down hailstorms. There is a sense that the sacred should be also shielded from the gaze of outsiders. Further, Indian languages are many and not typically learned in schools.

The Fifth Centenary of Columbus's encounter with Latin America and the Caribbean caught the attention of a great many persons in and out of the region. The Fifth Centennial was nothing like the Fourth, celebrated in places like Chicago in its Columbian Exposition as progress being brought to the New World from the Old.

Contentious voices spoke during the centenary. The main political sensitivities of men and women in 1992 were such that the negative aspects of the "discovery" were judged so ruinous to native peoples that pardon was to be asked of the Indian population, not celebration. The twentieth century's great advance has been an awareness of human rights. Luis N. Rivera, among many others, has shown how these rights were not only were violated but also the effects of these violations continue today.<sup>9</sup>

A new voice from the grassroots was heard during the centenary. Previously mute or pushed to the margins of society, Indians of Latin America spoke up and were heard.<sup>10</sup> No, they did not want a celebration, but penance for the devastation of the Spaniards. They gained a hearing in Europe to the extent that the Swedish Nobel committee granted its Peace award to Rigoberta Menchú, a Guatemalan Indian. John Paul II in his address on October 12, 1992, emphasized the human rights violations 500 years ago and the present pitiable situation of

Indians today.<sup>11</sup> But Menchú and other leaders speaking for an Indian movement do not solicit pity. They wish to be seen for what they are: moving spirits of their own destiny, protagonists of memory and resistance.

### Indian Populations: Magnitude and Movements

Latin American Indians number more than 40 million, many more than the two million Indians in Canada and the United States. They form about half or more of the population of four countries, mostly in highland regions, of Guatemala in Central America, and Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador in South America. This remoteness has a lot to do with their survival through the last centuries because the Indians, in closest contact with Spaniards and Portuguese, largely disappeared. Despite imported diseases, abuse, and the rigors of their characteristic dryland and mountainous environments, Indians in these countries have been gradually building up their numbers to reach a high level in modern times. In Guatemala the majority, well over half, are Indian.

In June 1990 the movement gained enough power to convulse national life in Ecuador where conflicts had been controlled by the ruling elite and Indians have been compliant. Thousands of Indians paralyzed a large part of the country for more than a week.<sup>12</sup> In October 1990 Bolivian Indians transversed a large part of the country, starting in the tropics and ending with thousands joining them for the entrance to La Paz. Indians made clear that they want power and politics to serve them.

Close observers can point to processes beginning well before the Centenary by which indigenous movements: 1) have gained strength in numbers and organization; 2) are non-violent but determined; 3) are increasingly aware of native religion; and 4) are speaking for themselves and not through non-native anthropologists or others.

Darcy Ribeiro, a Brazilian and a "great man" in anthropological circles, furnished the right phrase for the movement when he labelled Indian groups as pueblos testimonio (witness peoples),<sup>13</sup> those who managed to maintain to the present day the most profound roots of the region. Stephen Judd characterizes the groups as giving witness to other values than those of the modern world in the survival of ancient and often clandestine cultures."<sup>14</sup> Many in the Indian movements prefer to speak of themselves as pueblos de resistencia.

Although able to mobilize thousands for specific events or issues, Indian movements<sup>15</sup> are small in numbers, relatively new in national prominence,<sup>16</sup> and sometimes fragile in unifying factors.<sup>17</sup> As Carol Smith says of Guatemala: "A 'Maya nationalist movement' is so young that it is difficult to know exactly what it is and where it is going. But it will likely play a major role in the future of this country."<sup>18</sup> The reason for this surge is found in the rediscovery of what Smith calls "their proper identity" in recent years. Key to understanding the groups is memory of their struggle, especially since colonial times.

The strength of Maya cultural activism can be seen in Edward Fischer and McKenna Brown's edited volume, Maya Cultural Activism in Guatemala.<sup>19</sup> As Fischer and Kay Warren note, the role of language as a focal point for Maya culture has been central to the ferment that has been taking place in Guatemala.<sup>20</sup>

Leadership of the movements tends to be come from literate and self-defined Indians, persons from three groups: community-based professionals, as teachers and health workers; intellectuals and students; and local and national leaders of non-governmental organizations. They face formidable obstacles in the labyrinth of national politics where national political

leaders have preferred to deal with Indians on a patron-client basis<sup>21</sup> and where Indian leaders have had to fight economic exploitation and interests which had been class-based rather than based on ethnicity.<sup>22</sup> Further, thousands of Guatemalan and Peruvian Indians have died in the last two decades in wars in which they were used as more as pawns than subjects of their own destiny. This desire to control their own cultural lives has been reinforced by these destructive enterprises.

### Cosmovision, Culture, and the Church

Changes in Catholic theology expressed in Vatican II opened a new way for approaching Latin American native religion. Theologians began to see that God also was working in civilizations before the arrival of Christianity to a region. The "seeds of the Word of God" were there. Further, the native cosmovision had to be one of the starting points for theology and a different approach to ministry to the indigenous was called for. In the Sur Andino region of Peru, some Maryknoll priests and sisters from various congregations: 1) abandoned the customary practice of living in rectories and convents to live in ordinary houses as part of the indigenous community; 2) went to listen to Aymara explanations for life and faith, of their ceremonies and their motivations for entering into ritual; and 3) fit in with the indigenous rhythm of life, for example, accepting the role of the native yatiri (priest-healer) in seeking healing.<sup>23</sup>

Religion forms a major element in Indian identity. Extraordinarily sensitive judgement is called for to avoid the stereotypes of Indian religion. One convention, poetically embellished by Ted Lewellen, is: "Thus the religion is fading in bits, like a great Cheshire cat, its body, the theological system - gone; its stripes, - the spirits - fading; so that only the grin of ritual will endure. But ritual, too, shows at least incipient signs of dissolving."<sup>24</sup> Other stereotypes have

invented by anthropologists and missionaries and have been repeated by Catholics and Protestants, as Jacques Monast and Quentin Nordyke.<sup>25</sup>

While Indian religion has been diluted or has disappeared in some individuals, especially those in contact with cities. Indian religion also flourishes. It has many practitioners and many forms. There are commonalities enough to allow for generalizations about the religion of large cultural groups, as Aymara, Quechua, and Maya but even the characterizing of these groupings is tentative, as those familiar with the warrior tone of the Quiché as contrasted to the more pacifist proclivity of the Kekchí will attest. Christian Indian religion exists alongside non-Christian. So in Mesoamerica there are Maya Maya and Maya Católicos.<sup>26</sup> Telling the difference between them is a patient process of listening and evaluation.<sup>27</sup>

### Maintenance and Change

Searching out and systematizing Aymara, Quechua, or Maya religious thought before Spanish influence has entailed a great effort but may help only marginally in describing Indian religious thought which flourishes today. Within Indian communities religion is a living enterprise which has changed over time, subject to the influence of other cultures (transistor radios have been common for 30 years) and to social and economic changes. The worldview internalized by Inca people has changed over time.

But observers believe there is an identifiable Aymara or Kekchí cosmovision existing today which gives distinctive shape to a particular religion, its beliefs and practices. How is it that many ethnic groups have maintained a way of life - "or more specifically, symbolic configurations and complex modes of organization - which is derived from their...past and which distinguishes them from the hispanicized world of the 'modern' classes inhabiting the towns and



cities," as Roger Rasnake asks.<sup>28</sup> It would be strange if this religion did not bear similarity to the views of the Inca or Maya religion before Columbus because many of the same symbols and realities are there: mountains, sky, animals are still there and survival is still problematic.

At the heart of Indians cultures in Latin America, and therefore one of the bases of theology, are distinct cosmologies. These views of the world persist through time and help to explain why, as Robert V. H. Dover states: "Andean indigenous communities remain recognizably Andean even after half a millennium of forced exposure to Western systems of thought."<sup>29</sup> Indian culture has persisted and emerged. Nancy Farriss, Richard N. Adams, and others provide studies of the mechanisms by which this is accomplished.<sup>30</sup> The cosmologies are fundamental in explaining differences between the theologies which are emerging from Indoamerica.

These cosmologies also help explain why Indian theology differs from mestizo theologies, like theology of liberation, and from European theologies. Indigenous theology is not western Christianity to which Andean or Mesoamerican elements have been added. Rather, as Dover says: "There is a structural and processural continuity in Andean cosmological thought through which non-Andean cultural features become systematically Andean."<sup>31</sup> So Christian concepts are reworked and assimilated as Andean. (Among Andean religions, one presumes differences between Aymara and Quechua, as a minimum.)

In a central debate of the Latin American church during the process leading up to the CELAM conference at Santo Domingo, a question was raised about the presumption made by many bishops (and many academics in the United States)<sup>32</sup> of "Catholic substratum" in Latin America, giving Latin America a distinctive identity. Many Catholic bishops and John Paul II, as

well, assume that Latin America has a special unity, owing to "una alma católica." Pedro Morandé has been a major figure among sociologists, and in the forefront of Catholics on the right, attempting to demonstrate a Latin American Catholic cultural synthesis.<sup>33</sup> This perspective is also used to paint Protestants as outsiders disrupting the soul of Latin America. In the debate, though, the indigenist point of view was heard clearly, perhaps for the first time in the main chambers of the Latin American Catholic church. As Stephen Judd points out: "One's Catholic identity, they affirmed, owes as much to an encounter between the gospel and the Maya, Quechua, or Ayamara culture and religious worldview as it does to an evangelization from a European centered worldview."<sup>34</sup>

Popular religion, the world of rosaries, devotions, and statues, also was presumed to be largely one world, that of peasants and other ordinary persons in Hispanic America. Liberation theologians at first ignored this world and later discovered it. None have been mined this area as a starting-point of theologizing more ardently than Hispanic theologians in the United States. The presumption of unity breaks down, though, in examining indigenous religion. Again those with indigenous sensitivities feel obliged to say, this is not hispanicized religion but a distinct form of Christianity, resting on a cosmology which differs from Iberian. No wonder, then, that: "In Yucatan there was almost complete lack of the apparatus of popular piety - the rosaries, the shrines, the images - so abundant in Mexico."<sup>35</sup>

Lack of acknowledgement of the distinctness of Indian worldview has hindered the recruitment of Indians for leadership in the Catholic church. Frank Salomon speaks of the "cultural doubleness" of the Indian and European worlds which confronted one another and could not be integrated as long as both modes of discourse retained their essential integrity.<sup>36</sup> One does

not have to define well the differences to understand that they exist and may explain, in part, why in 500 years so few Indians have become priests and today many do not persevere in seminaries. Carlos Berganza, at the Ak'Kután Center, in Cobán believes, that in the case of the Mayan students: "The structures of their thought are entirely unsuited for 'Western' philosophy and theology of the seminary. They cannot persevere as Maya. Mayan Catholic priests who seem to persevere are the ones who turn their backs on their culture."<sup>37</sup>

Beyond maintenance of traditional visions, a new world has to be assimilated as well. Indian religion in the altiplano or in marginal settlements of Lima has been affected by massive changes in the world and the nation, changes which Irarrázaval, writing from Chucuito deep in the Peruvian altiplano, calls "true social earthquakes: vast migrations to cities, forging of new identities among the masses,... multifaceted grassroots political activity, emergence of women's interests, and in the midst of all this, the anonymous citizen reconstructing his existence."<sup>38</sup>

Thus changes in Indian culture, and their religion have come in response to larger social changes in Latin America, especially in the last twenty years. In describing the emergence of an indigenous theological movement in Latin America, Stephen Judd, sees: "Vast social transformations across Latin America coupled with rapid urbanization have...fostered a new expression for them."<sup>39</sup> Judd who observed changes in Peru and Indian America while at Instituto Pastoral Andina, has seen "remarkable growth of historical awareness of indigenous identity." So have many others in Mexico, Central America, and South America.

The beginnings of systematized Indian theology as it is emerging are the result of long and patient efforts by extraordinarily gifted and sensitive theologians and anthropologists. These are persons with advanced degrees from Chicago, Cornell, Berkeley, and other universities;

careful and extensive publishing records; making mature reflections on years of research.<sup>40</sup>

Noteworthy publications, as The Indian Face of God in Latin America are beginning to appear.<sup>41</sup>

Of special import for Maya regions is Guillermo Cook's edited work, Crosscurrents in Indigenous Spirituality: Interface of Maya, Catholic, and Protestant Worldviews. The Centro de Estudios Ak'Kután at Cobán has begun limited publication of its research.<sup>42</sup>

One of the marks of these persons is their self-conscious effort is to set the stage so that native-born will be the main theologians of Indian religion. They see themselves as midwives of Indians giving birth to systematic theology (theology already exists in the people) or mentors, advising as needed but stepping aside. Xavier Albó, a Cornell Ph.D. in anthropology, working with for many years with Quechua and Guaraní groups, as well as his principal work with Aymaras in Bolivia, has strenuously fought off suggestions of a study center to which outsiders would come and go, doing their studies of the Aymara. Instead he immersed himself in Aymara circles, helping them to create a sense of an Aymara "nation."

Indians who are theologians are beginning to appear. They may have the training and capacity for theological understanding but, as yet, lack the special aptitude for the delineation of a fully expressed theology. One may point to Eleazar López Hernández in Mexico<sup>43</sup> and Domingo Llanque in Peru as offering Indian perspectives on theology.

López Hernández's most forceful position statement was made in a letter addressed to the papal representative in Mexico, Archbishop Girolamo Prigione, in June 1992.<sup>44</sup> John Paul II<sup>45</sup> and the bishops were preparing then for the Fourth General Conference of CELAM at Santo Domingo. López links the current emergence of indigenous theology to the openings of Vatican II and to the heightened awareness of indigenous peoples of their distinct identity and their

movements for respect of their cultures and for increased respect for human rights.

The events surrounding the Santo Domingo meeting - the choice of date, place of celebrations, honoring a Spanish missionary - offered few images to suggest that the church was prepared to deal adequately with indigenous traditions or movements.<sup>46</sup>

These poorly chosen public images masked the leadership by progressive national churches in Guatemala and Bolivia. There the bishops are, in the eyes of close observers, the continuing force of Vatican II in Latin America. One need not accept that assessment to appreciate the leadership of Guatemalan and Bolivian bishops for the limited task of highlighting the place of indigenous culture and religion in the Latin American church. They began at home to foster in their countries and in neighboring areas (Indians and nations are not coterminous). And they represent as well as themselves the pioneering efforts of bishops in other countries who conspicuously promoted indigenous interests (religion and human rights being most prominent). These include: Samuel Ruíz García of Chiapas, Mexico; Leónidas Proaño of Riobamba, Ecuador; Jesús Calderón Barrueto of Puno, Peru; and Erwin Krautler of Xingu, Brazil.

The Guatemalan and Bolivian bishops reacted strongly to the documents circulating for comment in preparation for the Santo Domingo meeting, issuing "500 años sembrando el Evangelio" in Guatemala and "Aporte a la IV Conferencia" in Bolivia.<sup>47</sup> Their leadership continued into the Santo Domingo meeting. The document furnishes further steps in the emancipation of indigenous culture within the Catholic church, creating a sense of anticipation for a fully developed indigenous theology.<sup>48</sup>

### Core Indigenous Theology

In Barnes and Noble superstores a New Age category expanded in the late 1980s to its own section. Many concerns expressed in the New Age volumes are addressed in the religions of Latin America. In contrast to European theology, this religion is based on contact with the earth and incorporates deeply felt concerns, as justice in this life and life after death, as well. Mayan religion, close to the United States and practiced by several millions in Guatemala and Mexico, offers an example of a theology for the 21st century, in terms of awareness of limited resources, of health, human connectedness, and issues of masculinity-femininity. Its appeal, as based on one strain of Mayan religion (the Kekchí), is due also to its approach through attraction rather than coercion.<sup>49</sup>

In this view God is not nature, but a separate person. But he enters the earth as a force. He (masculine features on images) is especially to be found in the mountains, an idea as old as humans and given conspicuous place in the Old Testament where prophets and leaders accepted God's revelation and in the Spanish mysticism of John of the Cross, who spoke of steps up to advancement, from purification to enlightenment. The self is viewed as part of the historical world. Through their ancestors, they are securely connected to the past but they are also connected to people in the future. For Mayan and Andean Indians, self alone makes no sense. Human personality, for them, includes masculine and feminine characteristics, as does God.

A basic difference between "Western" theology and indigenous Christian thought occurs in understanding a core tenet of Christianity. Nothing is more fundamental to Christianity than death and resurrection. When first viewed by outsiders the celebrations of Holy Week, appear to

be highly weighted toward Good Friday with an emphasis on suffering. (This alarmed Protestants, as John Mackay, many years ago and contemporary Catholics after the reforms of Vatican II.) After the build-up of processions and emotions centered on the cross, Easter seems to be an afterthought, or a gradual deflation from the emotional high of Good Friday. The question persists that perhaps the Maya do not have an understanding of Easter.

They would have to have a sense of resurrection to be Christian. And they do. Death and resurrection for many Mayas means reincorporation of themselves in the community, signified for them especially in the Good Friday ceremonies. Mayas do not have a highly developed sense of self, as Westerners do. For Europeans and Americans, resurrection may mean an exaltation of self. It may be that Maya Indians have not only a defensible, but a commendable view of Christianity, one of inclusion and incorporation, rather than raising up or glorifying self.

More, many Maya Indians and other indigenous persons have a vivid sense of the future, a future in which they will have a part through death and resurrection. Contemporary Peruvian Catholic intellectuals translate this as "utopia." The Maya in the Yucatan held a similar forceful view of their future, as Inga Clendinnen describes: "When the Lord Jesus descends in the 'Province of the Yucatan,' then at last there will be an end to the domination of foreigners and of submission to their extractions. Then the rule of the Lord Jesus, and of Maya Lords, will begin."<sup>50</sup>

These strong views of a reconstruction of the world in the future contribute some force to the heroic effort of maintaining a subordinate culture over a long period of time. These Indian visions also foreshadow a theology which would be constructed from this culture, elements for a thisworldly view with a strong social justice orientation.

It is premature, though, to categorize Latin American indigenous theology as liberation theology, as has been attempted,<sup>51</sup> when the theology is not yet expressed systematically, when liberation praxis may not exist in the communities from which the theology arises, and when the theology rests on different fonts than "classic" liberation theology. Indigenous culture and religion has a highly conservative bent and its own imprint (in the Skinnerian sense). It will develop on its own.

The Kekchí Mayan religious and cultural vision embraces the whole world as an integrated whole, with all men and women participating in the same process of living and being. God has placed a harmony in creation which one has to love and respect. The universe is an authentic manifestation of the divine and the transcendent. Every created thing is necessary for unity and integration. Therefore, men and women have to give justo valor a cada cosa, not undervaluing anything created.

Healing and natural medicine are practiced with some connections to religion, many native healers also being priests. This may owe more to an indigenous vision of religion as life than religion seeking a hold over the health field. Alternative medicine is becoming increasingly less controversial for educated Indians and for readers at Barnes and Noble through contributions, as those of Libbet Crandon-Malamud and Joseph Bastien,<sup>52</sup> building on a growing work of Margaret Lock, Jean Comaroff, and others. Christian Indians, out on the Andean altiplano and unaware of the controversies, seek the care of yatiris on a pragmatic basis: healers work better than nurses or paramedics for some symptoms. Carlos Berganza has experienced cures from native healers for tropical ailments which baffle medical doctors.



Indians cultivate a great respect for life, for persons, for other living things, for what exists. Everything has life, a spirit, sentiments. Taking possession of things is not a goal since a person is not the owner of them, but their servant. To use them he or she has to ask the permission of the Supreme Being. To make bad use of things, to abuse the equilibrium established by God, or not to ask the proper permission is to break the established order of the universe - to be a sin - and recompense and restitution is called for, to recover lost harmony.

The philosophy of the Kekchí aims at creating a great community where men and women feel united among themselves. This ideal expresses itself as a fundamental commitment: the sacred duty of protecting and loving life, of sharing it, and of celebrating it.

In summary, this theology leads to a deepened awareness of the sacredness of the world; the transcendence of God; God as male and female and of humans with both masculine and feminine qualities; death, resurrection, and utopia; and identity through community.

#### Antepasados and Maya Maya Relations

Carlos Berganza, a Spanish Dominican, has spent many years in Guatemala, especially in the Cobán area, listening to Mayan Indians of the region. Berganza believes that los antepasados (ancestors) are key to entering into this expression of Christianity. When interviewed by José Parra Novo about the meaning and role of antepasados, practitioners of the religion responded: "They lived before us. They are the ones who began our journey here in this world. They are our 'grandfathers' and 'grandmothers' and they are the ones who organized or began to organize life in this world."<sup>53</sup>

Berganza has experienced in the special way of the Mayas a connection to his own ancestors, a religious experience which enhanced his sense of being grounded in the past,

connected to others, and looking forward to communion with them. Catholic theology has a place for reverence of ancestors but Catholicism, as experienced by the Mayas, sometimes "has massacred Mayan culture by breaking connections to the antepasados." Berganza is not thinking here of colonial Spanish but contemporary efforts, as Catholic Action and Delegados de la Palabra. They stress doing away with la costumbre. Even worse, in his and others's view, are the Protestants, especially the Pentecostals, "who have snatched the souls away from the Indians. They do not allow attention to antepasados and anything like praying to them. They turn their back on all customary beliefs. Their object is to convert Indians to something different, without an Indian identity."

Thus, Berganza was not surprised by the first meeting of Maya Maya priests with Maya Catholic priests. The meeting was "violent," in that the Maya Maya expressed pent-up resentment about the damage done their culture by outsiders, by the attempts to steal the soul of Indians by cutting the connection to ancestors. Mayan Catholics, in response, point to incorporation of respect for ancestors in what goes on in Mayan Catholic communities, as during the days of November 1-2, when All Saints and antepasados receive attention, like separate grains of rice melding into the flavor of one dish.

The Maya Maya priests present for the theological encounters were both men and women and included in their number curanderos/as. These healers often employ natural medicines and techniques for healing. During the encounters Berganza presumed that those Mayans who favor influence through dialogue and education were being patient with him, hoping for his enlightenment.

## Conclusion

A measured view is called for in the assessment of the clash of dominant and subordinate cultures. No where is that balanced view more important than in assessing Indian theology, as contrasted to Latin American (for example, liberation theology) or Hispanic mestizo (as confected in the United States) theology. Indigenous theologians are grateful to liberation and other Latin American mestizo theologians for the leadership they have given but the time has come for the development of indigenous theology, for Indians to speak for themselves.

One sure sign of this vitality is the networking by those involved in the creation of indigenous theology. They have held Interamerican meetings (Talleres de la Teología Indígena) in 1989, 1991, and 1992. They have set up working groups for six areas: Mexico, Central America, Caribbean, Andes, Amazon, and Southern Cone.

Centennials are like doors that open every now and then and allow outsiders to peer inside native cultures. In 1992, when they looked, many expected to see another stage in the degeneration and disappearance of Indians and their culture, in view of the forces of changes exerted on them by modernization. Instead the complex process of integration/assimilation did not occur in the manner any one predicted. In 1993 Bolivians elected their first Indian vice-president. But Víctor Hugo Cárdenas represents not the model homogenized citizen governments had hoped for but a symbol of strong Indian identity within the nation.<sup>54</sup> Cárdenas (hispanicized from Chokewanka) represents the steady resistance of Indians in Latin America that has sustained their culture and religion.

Indians in Latin America, along with the other poor of Latin America, have gone through what Gustavo Gutierrez and others have called an "irruption." This can best be described as

seeing themselves as subjects of their own destiny, not objects to be moved around or assimilated, diluted or diminished, within a larger cultural pattern.

### Notes

Carlos Berganza, María Pilar Aquino, Bruce Calder, Stephen Judd, Curt Cadorette, Thomas McGonigle, Jeffrey Gros, and Timothy Conlan aided substantially in the preparation of this paper.

1. See Diego Irarrázaval, "Nuevas rutas de la teología latinoamericana," Revista Latinoamericana de Teología 13, 38 (May-August 1996), pp. 183-197.
2. Kosuke Koyama's No Handle on the Cross or Allan Boesak's Farewell to Innocence read like Asian or African inventions rather than Latin American imitations.
3. Calder, "The Catholic Church and the Guatemalan Maya, 1940-1969: Building a Base for the 1990s," paper for Latin American Studies Association International Congress, 1995.
4. See also Phillip Berryman's Stubborn Hope: Religion, Politics, and Revolution in Central America (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1994).
5. Wilson, Maya Resurgence in Guatemala: Q'eqchi' Experiences (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), p. 172.
6. Calder, "The Catholic Church," p. 15 and fn 35.
7. The issue of contextualization has been part of the Christian church since its inception but the theological vocabulary only dates from the early 1970s. Robert Schreiter's Constructing Local Theologies (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1985) serves as a useful introduction to a first contextual theological wave. This paper cites several second-wave attempts. Anthropologist Darrell L. Whitman provides a view of contemporary theory and practice in "Contextualization: The Theory, The Gap, and the Challenge," International Bulletin of Missionary Research 21,1 (Jan. 1997), pp. 2-7.
8. For a view of theology's evolving meaning, see Jonathan Z. Smith, ed., The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), p. 1067-1068.
9. Rivera, A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas (Nashville, Tenn.(check): Westminster/John Knox, (year).
10. See, for example, the indigenous response at a consultation for CELAM (Latin American Bishops Council) in Mexico by CENAMI (Centro de Ayuda a Misiones Indígenas) in Misiones Extranjeras 116 (March-April 1991), pp. 169-175; "Indigenous Declaration," LADOC New Keyhole Series 3, 5 (Oct. 1988), pp. 49-50.
11. Many organizations have documented human rights violations to indigenous peoples. See, for example: Amnesty International, The Americas: Human Rights Violations against Indigenous Peoples (New York: Amnesty International, 1992)
12. For issues involved, see: Les Field, "Ecuador's Pan-Indian Uprising," Report on the Americas, 25, 3 (Dec. 1991), pp. 39-44.

13. Ribeiro, "Introducción: La cultura," in Roberto Segre, ed., América Latina en su arquitectura 2nd ed. (Mexico: Unesco and Siglo XXI, 1978), p. 13.
14. Judd, in Alfred T. Hennelly, "From Lamentation to Project: The Emergence of an Indigenous Theological Movement in Latin America" Santo Domingo and Beyond, pp. 226-227.
15. See a recent description and appraisal of movements in Donna Lee Cott, ed., Indigenous Peoples and Democracy in Latin America (New York: St. Martins Press, 1994).
16. But not new in terms of movements and rebellions largely overlooked by historians. See, for example: Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, "La lucha de un pueblo," in Xavier Albó, comp., Raíces de América: El mundo Aymara (Madrid: Unesco, 1988), pp. 495-534.
17. For an account of the transition to indianismo from paternalism, see: José Alcina Franch, comp., Indianismo e indigenismo en América (Madrid: Alianza Editorial/Quinto Centenario, 1990).
18. Smith, "Maya Nationalism," Report on the Americas 25, 3, (Dec. 1991), p. 29. See earlier accounts: Arturo Arias, "El movimiento indígena en Guatemala: 1970-1983," in Daniel Camacho and Rafael Menjívar, eds., Movimientos populares en Centroamérica (San Jose, C.R.: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana, 1985), pp. 62-119 and "Changing Indian Identity: Guatemala's Violent Transition to Modernity," in Carol Smith, ed., Guatemalan Indians and the State: 1540 to 1998 (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1990), pp. 258-286; and Ricardo Falla, "El movimiento indígena," ECA - Estudios Centroamericanos 33, (June-July 1978), pp. 437-461.
19. Fischer and Brown, eds., Maya Cultural Activism in Guatemala (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).
20. Fischer, "Induced Culture Change as Strategy for Socioeconomic Development: The Pan-Maya Movement in Guatemala," in Fischer and Brown, eds., Maya Cultural Activism, pp. 57 ff.; Warren, "Language and the Culture of Self Expression: Maya Revitalization in Guatemala," Cultural Survival (Summer/Fall 1994), pp. 81-86.
21. For an account of Aymara political struggles in Bolivia and Peru, see: Cárdenas, "La lucha," pp. 495-534.
22. Bolivia offers an especially striking example of growing Indian consciousness. See: Herbert S. Klein, Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multi-Ethnic Society (New York: Oxford, 1982), esp. ch. 7, pp. 188-226.
23. Esteban Judd, "La inculturación en el contexto andino: Rasgos de una presencia pastoral distinta," Misiones Extranjeras 116 (March-April 1990), pp. 105-121.
24. Lewellen, Peasants in Transition: The Changing Economy of the Peruvian Aymara: A General Systems Approach (Boulder; Westview, 1978), p. 93.
25. Monast, Los indios aimaraes: Evangelizados o solamente bautizados? (Buenos Aires: Carlos Lohlé, 1972); Nordyke, Animistic Aymaras and Church Growth (Newberg, Ore.: Barclay Press, 1972).
26. Many persons of Mayan background are Pentecostal. Given the apparent Pentecostal rejection of key elements of Mayan culture, as los antepasados, the question arises of whether they retain Mayan identity. Richard N. Adams maintains that they do, in "Strategies of Ethnic Survival in Central America," in Greg Urban and Joel Sherzer, eds., Nation-States and Indians in Latin America (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), p. 200.

27. Peter Schineller, S.J., suggests a "hermeneutical circle" in which three poles - the Christian message, the cultural situation, and the pastoral agents - are used in evaluation. See his "Inculturation and Syncretism: What Is the Real Issue?," International Bulletin of Missionary Research 16, 2 (April 1992), pp. 49-53. Diego Irrarázaval tends to accept as person as Christian who is baptized and identifies himself or herself as Christian. Non-Christian or "Aymara religious thought," for him, would be a theology which is based on Aymara ceremonial, leadership, or wisdom, with scant or no Christian component. See his "Teología Aymara: Implicaciones para otras teologías," Revista Latinoamericana de Teología 9, 25 (Jan.-April 1992), p. 100.
28. Rasnake, Domination, p. 4.
29. Dover, "Introduction," in Dover, et al, eds., Andean Cosmologies through Time: Persistence and Emergence (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 1.
30. Farriss, Maya Society under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); Adams, "Strategies," pp. 181-206; Dover, et al, eds., Andean Cosmologies; Rasnake (above); Inga Clendinnen, Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Steve J. Stern, Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquests: Huamanga to 1640 (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).
31. Dover, "Introduction," in Dover, et al, eds. Andean Cosmologies, p. 2.
32. Prominent examples include: Glen Dealy, "Prologomena on the Spanish American Political Tradition," Hispanic American Historical Review 48 (Feb. 1968), pp. 37-58 and The Latin Americans: Spirit and Ethos (Boulder; Westview, 1992); Howard Wiarda, "Toward a Framework for the Study of the Ibero-Latin Tradition: The Corporative Model," World Politics 25 (Jan. 1973), pp. 206-235.; and Richard Morse, "The Heritage of Latin America," in Louis Hartz, ed., The Founding of New Societies (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1964), pp. 123-172. Claudio Véliz and Lawrence Harrison have written in the same vein.
33. Morandé, Cultura y modernización en América Latina Ensayo sociológico acerca de la crisis del desarrollismo y su superación (Madrid: Ediciones Encuentro, 1987) and "La síntesis cultural hispánica indígena," Teología y Vida 32:1-2 (1991), pp. 43-59.
34. Judd, in Hennelly, Santo Domingo, p. 229.
35. Clendinnen, Ambivalent, p. 191.
36. Salomon, "Chronicles of the Impossible: Notes on Three Peruvian Indigenous Historians," in Rolena Adorno, ed., From Oral to Written Expression: Native Andean Chronicles of the Early Colonial Period (Syracuse, N.Y.: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, 1982), pp. 9-39.
37. Interview, Guatemala City, Feb. 16, 1993.
38. Irrarázaval, "Teología," pp. 99-100.
39. Judd, in Hennelly, Santo Domingo, p. 226.
40. Besides works by individual authors, the work of these persons and their research centers can be found especially in: Pastoral Andina, Allpanchis, Aymar Yatiyawi, Revista Andina, and publications of CIPCA (Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado).
41. Manuel M. Marzal, Eugenio Maurer, Xavier Albó, and Bartolmeu Melià, The Indian Face of God in Latin America (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1996).

42. Jesús Espeja, coordinator, Inculturación y teología indígena (Salamanca: Editorial San Esteban, 1993); Jesús Espeja, El evangelio en nuevas culturas (Estella, Navarra, Spain: Editorial Verbo Divino, 1992); and Jesús Tapuerca, "Una aproximación a la cultura Maya-Q'equi'," Revista Cidal (Bogotá), 30 (1996), pp. 25-20.
43. See his "Teutlatolli: Speaking about God - Indigenous Theology and Roman Catholicism," in Cook, ed., Crosscurrents, pp. 139-170.
44. López Hernández, "Carta a Monseñor Girolamo Prigione," Mexico City, June 25, 1992.
45. A description without analysis is provided of discourses of John Paul II before 1990 is provided by José J. Vera Blanco, "Las culturas indígenas en los discursos de Joan Pablo II," Misiones Extranjeras 116 (March-April 1990), pp. 142-151.
46. See, esp: Stephen Judd's description of the events surrounding Santo Domingo, in Hennelly, Santo Domingo, pp. 224-226.
47. In addition to the documents, see also: Bishop Julio Cabrera Ovalle, El Quiché, "Desafíos de la pastoral indígena en Guatemala," and Bishop Gerard Flores Reyes, "Una experiencia concreta: La Verapaz," Misiones Extranjeras 116 (March-April 1990), pp. 122-129 and 152-156, respectively.
48. Conclusions, Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops, Santo Domingo, October 12-28, 1993, nos. 243-251. An English-language version is found in Hennelly, ed., Santo Domingo.
49. The depiction of Mayan religion in this section is based in part on interviews with Dominican members of the Ak'Kután Center, Cobán, Guatemala, especially with Carlos Berganza. See publications in endnote above. See also Wilson, Maya Resurgence; Carlos Rafael Cabarrus, La cosmovisión k'ekchí en proceso de cambio (San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1979); Luis Pacheco, Religiosidad Maya-kekchí alrededor del maíz (San José, C.R.: Edición Escuela para Todos, 1985; and Luis Pacheco, Tradiciones y costumbres del pueblo Maya-K'ekchí (San José, C.R.: Ediciones Amba, 1988).
50. Clendinnen, Ambivalent, p. 192.
51. See, for example: Enrique Jordá, La cosmovisión aymara en el diálogo de la fe: Teología desde el Titicaca (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica, 1980).
52. Libbet Crandon-Malamud, From the Fat of Our Souls: Social Change, Political Process, and Medical Pluralism in Bolivia (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1991) and Joseph W. Bastien, "Shaman versus Nurse in an Aymara Village: Traditional and Modern Medicine in Conflict," in Dover et al, eds., Andean, pp. 137-165.
53. José Parra Novo, O.P., conducted many interviews over a period of eighteen months in 1990. Parra Novo was interviewed by the author in Guatemala City, Feb. 20-21, 1993. See also his "Aproximación cultural a la comunidad Q'eqchí de Santa María Cahalión: Reflexiones en torno al desafío de la inculturación," licenciatura thesis, Facultad de Teología, Universidad Francisco Marroquín, 1992.
54. See: Cárdenas "La lucha," in Albó; "Conversations/Víctor Hugo Cárdenas," New York Times, Sept. 19, 1993, Section 4.