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It is impossible to discuss missionary work in modern times without engaging in the concept of culture. Whether the topics center on cultural imperialism, enculturating theology, or religious practice, countless theologians, philosophers, anthropologists, and other scholars have discussed the relationship between culture and religion. Yet the analysis of how these two concepts correlate with one another should not be taken for granted, since the way 'culture' and 'religion' were deployed by missionaries in the past was quite different from how these concepts are used today. Discussions about culture and religion often take the two concepts for granted: recognizing the genuflection in front of the tabernacle is a religious gesture, but a bow to a company president is culture. It is often easy to discern the two, that is, until the two concepts seemingly overlap. Why, however, would we consider the concepts as overlapping as opposed to being one and the same? How did the Church differentiate the two and what happened to the Church after it began to distinguish culture from religion?

Discernment of something as cultural rather than religious is paramount in maintaining what is considered the true substance of Catholicism while editing what is not necessary so that the true substance can be more easily accepted. I would like to explore this division of 'religion' and 'culture' by bringing into conversation the notion of the Secular, though more specifically the medieval *saeculum*: a secular which is not antithetical to the Sacred but is coexistent. When the Catholic Church lost its political influence, it re-codified the *saeculum* into its own version of "culture" and retains the characteristics of temporality and non-divinity. The examination of the genealogies of 'culture' and 'religion' are useful in rethinking the topic of evangelization not only in a historically non-Christian country such as Japan, but also worldwide in a post-Vatican II Church. This paper will also include a brief ethnography of Seido, an Opus Dei center in

Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture, and how they attempt to evangelize while navigating the concepts of culture and religion.

To begin, scholar Tomoko Masuzawa points out the distinction between the 'culture' and 'religion' is quite modern and serves to reinforce modern, that is, secular, political purposes (Masuzawa, 71). These purposes include the recognition and regulation of what can be can be considered religious institutions, or in the case of Japan, religious corporations (宗教法人), and the sustaining of secular rule.[1] However, the secular government is not the only institution to deploy the concept of the secular: in fact, it has inherited and transformed their definition from the Church's historical use of the word *saeculum* in reference to the 'non-religious,' that is, those who are not of a religious order (such as the Benedictines).

Within Medieval Latin Christendom, the religious and secular were in reference to one another through the aspect of divine time. The 'religious' referred to those who resided in the monasteries and related to eternal/divine time (Taylor, 32). Edicts such as the Rule of St. Benedict are regarded as unchanging and therefore part of the religious. Other aspects of Catholicism such as the Holy Trinity and the Eucharist are Sacred since they are part of Eternity, or sacred time. On the other hand, the secular referred to the space 'in the world,' or the temporal, changing, non-sacred/profane (Casanova, 56). Things within the secular realm included food, money, craft, and physical location. In these senses of the terms, there could be both religious clergy (i.e. Benedictines) and secular clergy (priests who live and work with laity).The Catholic Church continues to use these conceptions theologically and in practice, though they are not referred to directly as sacred and secular.

[1] For a more in depth examination of these agendas, look into Talal Asad's *Formation of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity (Cultural Memory in the Present)* (Stanford University Press: 2003)

Hoa Francisco Ngo

The deployment of 'religion' and 'culture' by the Catholic Church at large is a continuation of the medieval understands of the 'sacred' and the 'secular,' respectively. The former, religion, has all the same characteristics of sacred: eternal, a-historic, and unchanging. The latter refers to all that is changeable over time and space: words, practices, physical materials, and even ideas. These temporal characteristics are the same as those of the *saeculum*, or the secular. Rather than disappear from Church history as part of medieval theology, the sacred and the secular become recoded as religion and culture, respectively. If a practice was categorized as religious, it would be considered unchangeable and fundamental to Catholicism since it is linked to eternal time. However, if the practice was categorized as cultural, it could be susceptible to change because it is temporal and not essential to Catholicism since it came from a particular point in time or location. The recognition of culture as part of the *saeculum* allows the entire Church in Japan to be reformatted to reflect the secular, or the culture of Japan. Thus, a politics of enculturation emerge. Within these politics, missionaries, theologians, and regular clergy engage in debates of how to properly address a certain people's 'spiritual needs.' They must decide what aspects of Catholicism are essentially religious and what are essentially cultural so that they can adapt the faith to the people they wish to evangelize while maintaining that they are legitimately Catholic, as opposed to perverting orthodoxy. The introduction of 'culture' did more than just change missionary work, however; it also changed the way the Church relates to her theology.

While the Roman Catholic Church always had an interest in the enculturation of the religion for its spread, the material, or non-doctrinal, aspect of it had been standardized for a long period of time since her medieval period. However, in 1962 Pope John XXIII opened the Second

Vatican Council which, among many concerns, addressed the modern concept of culture.[2] In the Apostolic Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, the Church recognizes culture as the context to where humanity 'develops a diverse manner of using things, of laboring, of expressing oneself, of practicing religion, of forming customs, of establishing laws and juridic institutions, of cultivating the sciences, the arts and beauty,' (*Gaudium et spes* Section 53). The Church, in this constitution, reifies the concept of culture and sees all aspects of life, no matter how little connection there may be, to be linked in some way to it. This understanding of culture is quite similar an anthropological notion of culture where culture has come to encompass the entirety of a life, including the 'practice of religion.' It is from within a culture, *Gaudium et spes* describes, that man acquires his sensibilities of how to exhibit virtues like piety: sensibilities which must be acknowledged and incorporated into how a specific culture practices Catholicism. There is a subtle yet important distinction in general anthropology and the Church's usage of culture, however; while the former conceptualizes religion as an extension of culture, the latter does not see religion, as a matter of doctrine and dogma, to be an extension of any particular culture but boundless.[3] It is not belief that is circumscribed by locale but rather practice. *Gaudium et spes* proceeds to recognize the possible conflict between the Catholic faith and culture, to which it prescribes theologians to find more 'suitable ways of communicating doctrine to the men of their times' and that the 'Deposit of Faith,' that is the teachings of the Catholic Church, and Truth, are 'one thing and the manner in which they are enunciated, in the same meaning and understanding,

[2] As one would suspect, the Second Vatican Council was a fairly complicated ecumenical council lasting from 1962-1965. Like other councils, the council was in reaction to contemporary movements in order to figure out the Church's official position on the ideas currently circulating within the institution. One of the highlighted movements was a type of Catholic Modernism which aimed to embrace post-Enlightenment modernity and incorporate said ideas into the Church. Among these modern concepts discussed is 'culture.'

[3] This is not to say the Church sees itself without roots in Judaism, but rather it is spreading universal Truth as opposed to Judaism.

is another,' (*Gaudium et spes* Section 62). Thus, in order to avoid a conflict between culture and religion, *Gaudium et spes* endorses, benignly put, better enculturation of Catholic concepts.

The Second Vatican Council opened a space for the emergence of the Mass of Blessed Paul VI, which allowed for further enculturation of the mass and the possibility to change the canon of the missal. While there were local forms of piety, everything liturgical was in Latin. The uniformity of the use of Latin in prayer and in documents gave the impression that the Church was indeed the single Body of Christ. Latin, along with rituals that comprised the mass, *was* part of the sacred: it was indispensable to the practice of Roman Catholicism since those elements were what made it Roman and sanctified to be part of eternal time. Even today, the Church holds the position that Latin is the official language of the Church (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* section 36.1). While the Church still endorses Latin, the language has fallen out of use outside of high bureaucratic business within the Church.[4] Latin as part of the sacred had become recognized as being historically specific to the development of the Catholic Church in Europe and therefore losses its affiliation with divine time. It is recognized as being part of culture, the culture of Medieval Europe, and its usage is not necessary for the Church to fulfill her religious duties. Latin becomes part of the *saeculum* and is replaced with the vernacular, in this case Japanese.

Although conceptually the sacred and *saeculum* are neutral towards one another, the emergence of the concept of culture and its association with temporality has increased the space which the *saeculum* circumscribes. What once was considered part of divine time is now recognized as the production of human history and in an effort to salvage the sacred from being conceptualized as completely culturally specific, the sacred has been trimmed of some of its

[4] As I write this, the current pope, Pope Francis, has since been less of an advocate of the traditional use of Latin, evident in the variety of languages used during the first meeting of the Synod of the Family in October 2014.

'nonessential' elements after seeing parts of it as a result of culture and not God's institution. What remains as sacred is essential to the Catholic religion, while the secular elements, what is understood as cultural, are up to the discretion of bishops to decide if their congregations will get exposed to them. However, bishops are a different type of missionary than those who are with the regular everyday Japanese people. In the following section, I will introduce and explain how Seido approaches enculturation and evangelization while wrestling with the concepts of culture and religion on a practical level as opposed to just discussions among clergy.

For two months, I stayed in the Opus Dei residence of Seido in Ashiya-shi, Hyogo Prefecture. I conducted interviews as well as did participant observation with the members: praying with them, eating with them, talking with them, and even exercising with one of them. Having connections with the Opus Dei in Berkeley, I was able to get in contact with the center in Ashiya. 'Seido' is legally an 'international language and cultural center' and stands as a secular institution despite being an Opus Dei center. Attached to the center is a language school which teaches English and Spanish as well as ethics and Catholic virtues, although they are not marketed as Catholic characteristically.

Seido is an Opus Dei center for men and hosts only men. It regularly consists of eight numeraries, two of whom are priests, a supernumerary, and a Catholic but non-Opus Dei member, along with myself for my two-month stay. A numerary is a man or woman devoted to Opus Dei, who gives a large portion of their salary to the center for housing, food, community, and access to the sacraments. They do not marry. Some numerary males choose to become priests who are then placed around centers worldwide, though generally within their country of origin. A supernumerary is a man or woman who intends to or already is married so they do not necessarily give financial support to the center since they could have a family to support.

The residents at Seido are diverse in their careers as well as backgrounds. The director of the center is Kohei, a graduate student in history at a university in a nearby city. While Japanese, his family immigrated to Brazil before he was born and converted to Catholicism (Fieldnotes, 17 July). He joined Opus Dei when he was eighteen and was asked to go to Japan for college. He has been in Japan for eight years. The numerary who deals with the finance of the center is Kenji, who is a doctor for multiple hospitals in the Hyogo prefecture. He was born and raised in Japan but converted to Catholicism after being unable to understand the difference from killing and eating fish from killing and eating humans. Yoshi is a numerary who teaches English at another nearby university. He was born and raised in the United States and his parents had been part of Opus Dei so Yoshi joined as well. After graduating from college, Yoshi was asked to go to Japan and has been living in Japanese Opus Dei centers for several decades. Shoya was born and raised in Nagasaki, the historical center of Catholicism in Japan. He teaches earth and space science to elementary and junior high students and is an absolute master at story telling. Hikaru is currently the sole supernumerary and he along with Yuta work as businessmen. Yusuke is not an official Opus Dei member but is somewhat of a cooperator to Opus Dei, working as a caretaker. Father Akira is highly active in the diocese of Osaka and is often celebrates mass for the local parishes whenever the other priests are away (Fieldnotes, 14 July). Father Takeshi was originally from Mexico though he is ethnically Japanese as well. A frequent visitor to Seido is Hayato, a numerary living in Tokyo, and is a recent convert (less than 5 years). Each of these members have a specific apostolate, or relation with

One of the biggest obstacles Seido members note about Japan is that the culture is not conducive to receiving charity from others. In the context of Seido, charity refers not just to almsgiving, which they say is quite difficult in Japan because there is no (visible) homelessness,

but also to acts of generosity and good will for the benefit of another person.[5] At the end of a camping trip with the Yoshida Opus Dei Center's and Seido Opus Dei Center's Boys' Clubs, campers had the opportunity to be blindfolded and spun around for a few seconds and then attempt to split a watermelon with a stick while dizzy and blindfolded.[6] There were two rather large watermelons and we managed to strike both of them open, but only consumed one and a half. I asked if we can offer the other half to any other family or group around but a member of the Yoshida center, Sasuke, shook his head. He explained that if we offer something to someone, it would be an act which demanded exchange and therefore they would reject since they would not give anything back to us. He elaborated that Japan did not understand the concept of free charity since it did not have a Judeo-Christian tradition (Fieldnotes, 26 July). During the lunch after we had returned from the camping trip, I relayed what I thought of the trip to Shoya and Takeshi. I mentioned what Sasuke said at the end about charity being an alien concept and Shoya remembered at the beginning of the trip when a boy offered me some of his lunch when I forgot to bring mine. Shoya noted that those on the trip were good boys for showing kindness. Takeshi added that sort of behavior was rare for people in Japan because they tend to get hesitant (*enryo*) and that they did not want to start any drama. This hesitation often leads to an ignoring of foreigners, says Takeshi (Fieldnotes, 28 July). Not wanting to engage with foreigners can be a problem in terms of apostolate work because within the social imaginary of the Japanese, Christianity is understood to be a foreign religion and only practiced by non-Japanese.

In his interview, Kohei mentions that there is a lack of young, Japanese vocations, by which he means more Japanese clergy.[7] He states that if there are more Japanese vocations, it

[5] The 'good of the other' is defined in relation to the positions of the Catholic Church.
[6] The Yoshida Center is in Kyoto.
[7] Vocations often refer to the vocation of priesthood within the Church. It is not a common word used by laity nowadays.

would 'help destroy the image that Christianity is a Western religion' and that they would signify the possibility that Japan could also be a Christian nation since 'there are many Japanese like them [who are Christian],' (Interview with Kohei, 17 July). The idea of culture appears once again, performing a similar type of labor as it did before when issues of translation were brought into question. In this circumstance, culture once more circumscribes religion as a product of specific historical developments, but instead of molding religion into a more harmonious concept with Japanese culture, it is rejected entirely as being non-Japanese.[8] The more Japanese Catholics (or at least Christians) there are, the more likely it would seem that Christianity has a place in Japan and that the two identities could coincide.

Although the Western association of Christianity is often seen to be detrimental in Japan, Seido members are able to use the foreign impression of Christianity to their advantage. Yoshi always advises his students to study Christianity whenever they want to learn about Western culture in order to learn about 'its influence in Western society,' (Interview with Yoshi, 16 July). In Hayato's interview, he revealed that his conversion to Catholicism started with advice from his father, telling him to study Christianity to better understand Western culture. He traveled to Spain after his undergraduate where he lived near an Opus Dei center and started attending events. After repeated exposure, he decided to get baptized and eventually joined the Work (Interview with Hayato, 15 July). At that point, Catholicism did not register as a Western religion but the true religion.

A noteworthy point in Hayato's interview is his parents' reactions to his conversion. His family is historically linked with a Buddhist temple as being patrons and so there is a rupture in the tradition of passing on a Buddhist icon from generation to generation. Since Hayato is a numerary, he will also not marry and therefore not continue the family name. Most alarming to

[8] This rejection is exactly the reason the liturgists wanted to enculturate to the extent that they did.

his parents is the fear that Hayato will grow distant from Japanese customs and will eventually abandon them while they are old (Interview with Hayato 15 July). Hayato's conversion is understood to be a complete break from his pre-Christian life; he has stopped the Buddhist icon passing, the name passing, and the care of parents.[9] All of these practices are associated with the Japanese identity and the threat of ceasing all of them cuts Hayato from being able to identify himself Japanese. Culture behaves as a normative model for Japanese citizens and deviation elicits a fear of alienation and inability of understanding. There is no mention of 'cross-cultural' exploration, but to claim even that would presume an essence to any cultures being crossed. Hayato's parents exhibit the attitude Kohei talked about when he described the need for more Japanese vocations. Since Japanese Catholics are still a minority in Japan, Hayato's conversion was seen being quite contrary to a multitude of societal norms, not just being a Catholic in a heavily non-Catholic nation. However, Seido's attitude to the Church in Japan is not all bleak; they have a vision for how the Church can grow, despite being culturally alien.

One late afternoon in Seido, Shoya was working in the computer room while I was there. I decided to take advantage of this opportunity and ask him what he thought the Church in Japan needed. He responded that the Church needs an 'apostolate for young people' and emphasized Seido activities as being an opportunity to reach out to young men, who are absent in the Church (Fieldnotes 27 July, 2014). Currently, he says, they have to choose between studying and going to church and do not learn the value of attending mass. Shoya suggests, though, that the boys should study at Seido so that they can get their school work done as well as being able to meet and talk to the numeraries, learn virtue, and perhaps learn about Catholicism as well.

During the part of summer I was in Ashiya, junior high students were in the final weeks of instruction. As my time in Japan neared its end, so too did their school year. With their final

[9] I mean only to list these, not to say that Hayato will indeed abandon his parents as they are elderly.

exams coming around the corner, Seido set up study halls for the children both in the actual residence of members and in the English teaching school. Study halls typically lasted the entire afternoon until dinner time at Seido and are split up into sessions by stretch and snack breaks. During one break, one of the members gives a talk on a certain virtue and why it is important to try to cultivate good behavior, though they do not mention any theological purpose. Kohei gave a talk during one of the study sessions and taught on the importance of service. He showed a Thai video of a man who performed acts of service towards people in need consistently for weeks. In the end, those whom the man was kind to experienced positive life changes and Kohei explained how beneficial it is for everyone if people regularly served others but stayed clear from referring to any Christian significance of service. In speaking to Kohei about these talks, he says some of the kids really appreciate them. He mentions that some families do not have a strong bond because parents do not have the time to raise their children since they have to work so often. This statement resonates with what Shoya speaks of when he answered my question about what he thought the Church needs. It is both their hopes, and indeed Seido's, that these children come into the Church by learning what they consider universal virtue, which would make it easier to receive the universal religion. These acts of building virtue are not tied with debates about discerning culture and religion, but rather developing what Taisei, another member of Seido from Brazil, calls a 'natural foundation for the supernatural,' (Field notes 10 June, 2014). Taisei said he was quoting St. Thomas Aquinas, a doctor of the Church who developed Aristotelian models of theology.

While Taisei's statement of the natural foundation preceding the supernatural can be interpreted as a statement of the primacy of a secular identity, what he is referring to is the primacy of virtue. For Taisei, the development of virtue, even though it is not inherently Catholic,

creates dispositions to the faith. Just as the rites at State Shinto sites such as Yasukuni Jinja predispose citizens to a more nationalistic, pre-WWII ethos, the learning and practicing of what Seido considers virtue will predispose the kids to Catholicism, since they hope the kids will see a resonance in the good of which they practice in the goodness of the Church.

I would like to return to the topic questions I brought up in the beginning of this paper: why do we distinguish culture and religion, and what happens to the Church when she distinguishes the two as well? To answer the former in relation to the Church, separating what 'culture' is from what 'religion' is aims to better spread Catholicism, though picking at what is culture and what is religion is not an obvious task. The first answer is related to the second, as using the word 'culture' as opposed to '*saeculum*' begins to complicate how the Church relates to her own past and practices, most obviously seen in the introduction of the Mass of Blessed Paul VI. Yet, cutting through this dichotomy or religion and culture is the universal accessibility of practice: either religious practice in physically praying a rosary, or practicing virtues such as humility. Seido emphasizes both, but particularly the latter to non-Catholics, as virtues are seen as a-cultural, as opposed to the specific morals of the Church. In terms of evangelization, it may be wise to shift discussions from what is or is not culturally appropriate or what is religious in nature to what practices and virtues can be propagated to lay a foundation for the Church.

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