

DECREE ON THE MISSION ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH

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Prior to the Council, the Church's missionary activity often occurred in tandem with colonization by European powers, utilizing similar means. Missionaries sought to replace native religions with European Catholicism, just as colonizers sought to replace native cultures with their own. The evangelized people added nothing to the Church, other than expanding its membership. Now the Council Fathers say that the wisdom, customs and traditions of native cultures who have been assimilated into the Church can offer new light by which to scrutinize Scripture and magisterial teachings. In other words, they can actually contribute to divine revelation! (#22)

In describing how new churches in mission territories should be established, the Council Fathers reiterate themes from many of the documents already approved. In effect, they say that all the reforms being mandated by the Council should be built into the mission churches from their inception.