

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION WITH VIETNAMESE CULTURE: THE CASE OF ALEXANDRE DE RHODES (1591 – 1660) AND LÉOPOLD MICHEL CADIÈRE (1869 – 1955)

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history, tolerance has always been a requirement for human ethics, but it is not always easy to implement when people live together and become integrated with one another. In the process of East-West cultural integration, with its potential for conflict between civilizations, the need for tolerance in coexistence and integration is especially important. This article studies the religious tolerance and cultural integration of Christians in Vietnamese culture through the cases of two Western missionaries, who are also two famous scholars, during two different periods in Vietnamese history: Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660) and Léopold Michel Cadière (1869-1955). The scholarly contributions of these two figures are well-researched and acknowledged in Vietnam, but from the perspective of religious tolerance and cultural integration, their missions in Vietnam have not received much attention. This article aims to contribute to the study of Christian evangelization in Vietnamese history and draw some lessons about religious tolerance and cultural integration in the context of current globalization.

Introduction

Culture is “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group” (UNESCO 1982). In essence, cultures are different and the differences between cultural communities are their invaluable assets, and should thus be preserved and promoted. However, cultural differences also tend to lead to conflicts and can impede cultural integration, because each culture has its own assumptions, its own peculiar values, and each culture also inclines to consider itself better than others (Mach 1993, 7). Accordingly, in order to live and share with one another, people, as well as cultures, need a spirit of tolerance and respect for differences.

Unlike previous regional cultural contacts, the East-West cultural relations in the Middle Ages (according to the history of Eastern culture) took place in around the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, marking a turning point in the history of human culture. The basic cultural differences, especially those of religion and belief, led to critical conflicts and distinctive behaviors between cultures belonging to two typologically different civilizations (Trần 2001, 39).

Prominent in the above mentioned East-West cultural contact is the communication between Western cultures, typically Christian culture, with East Asian cultures, in particular the cultures of



the countries in the region under the profound influence of Confucianism. As is often the case, differences in religions and beliefs often lead to profound cultural conflicts, because such beliefs are “a strong basic for social and cultural identity and are a common yardstick by which people compare themselves with others” (Levinson and Ember 1996, 1088). History has also recorded that “where Christian missionaries were successful, societies often experienced dramatic transformations in notions of family and community.” (Levinson and Ember 1996, 1101). This was unavoidable, especially with the new awareness of religious pluralism and multiculturalism, which was not laid out in the past as it is in our time.

Through the process of evangelization, and the development of Catholicism in the medieval culture of East Asian countries, including Vietnam, it can be demonstrated that the missionaries basically had a spirit of religious tolerance, respect for differences, and suitable methods for conducting inculturation, thereby bridging East-West cultural relations. Of the influence on Vietnamese culture, as Nguyễn Tài Thư notes: “If speaking of the influences of Western ideology and culture in Vietnam, Christianity is certainly the first factor” (Thư 1997, 59). The fact that Catholicism is the second largest religion in Vietnam after Buddhism, also demonstrates this (Dũng 2013).

In this article, and from the perspective of cultural relations, I seek to contribute to an understanding of the conceptions, the attitudes and the approaches employed by the missionaries in becoming inculturated in Vietnam as they faced the challenges of religious differences in particular, and cultural differences in general. I chose to examine two typical cases, namely Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660) and Léopold Michel Cadière (1869 - 1955). The former, “the first Frenchman to Vietnam”¹, had striking success in the early stages of the missionary process and contributed to the creation and development of the Vietnamese script in Romanized form. The latter, also a Frenchman, belonged to the last generation of Western missionaries in Vietnam, where he vowed to spend his life, loving and contributing to the country, and where he is highly appreciated for his mission and his scientific research. He wrote over 250 studies on Vietnamese culture, covering many fields, especially the Vietnamese language, and Vietnamese family and religion.

One common point in the missions in Vietnam from the first missionaries to Léopold Michel Cadière is that they took place before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which advocated the policy of opening Christianity to the world, on the principle that “due regard for the philosophy and wisdom of these peoples and Christian life will be accommodated to the genius and the dispositions of each culture” (Vatican Council II 2006, 292). This reveals that mission in the earlier period was perhaps more difficult than the period after Vatican II, because of a lack of a basic spirit of cultural tolerance and respect for differences.

Christian Inculturation and Vietnamese Culture

Originally located in the ancient Southeast Asian cultural space, Vietnam, like other countries in this area, has rich indigenous Southeast Asian cultural strata with diverse traditions. However, during its development before modern times, unlike other cultures in Southeast Asia that were influenced by India, Vietnam, as G. Coedès defines it, was instead deeply influenced by Chinese culture and “had to adopt or copy her institutions, her customs, her religions, her language, and her writing.” (Coedès 1975, 35).

Up until the middle of the sixteenth century, when the first missionaries arrived, Vietnam had been in contact with and acculturated to Chinese culture for over 1500 years. The first period followed the path of war (a thousand years of colonial rule) and the next was when the Vietnamese

¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Alexandre de Rhodes,” accessed June 10, 2019, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/alexandre-de-rhodes>.

government chose the Chinese model for the country's development (from the tenth century onwards). By the end of the nineteenth century, while gradually integrating into international culture, Vietnamese culture had for about 2000 years been associated with the Northeast Asian cultural orbit, was deeply influenced by Chinese culture, and was often considered part of the Sino-sphere, a cultural sphere with many differences from Western culture, especially in terms of religion.

Vietnam continued to absorb many Chinese cultural elements into its Southeast Asian indigenous culture, including the feudal-political-cultural model with Confucianism as the official ideology for organizing society. In terms of religious beliefs, besides animism—a kind of local polytheism—Vietnam absorbed and reconstructed a localized and harmonized form of religion and religious beliefs that came from China, which included the Three Teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism), and especially ancestor worship. Historically, Buddhism has always ranked first among the religions in Vietnam, deeply affecting both intellectuals and common people. There was a period when Buddhism (Mahayana Buddhism) developed to a peak in Vietnam, and included significant contributions from the nobility. Typically, under the Tran Dynasty (1225-1400), King Trần Nhân Tông established the Trúc Lâm Yên Tử Zen sect that has had great influence on Vietnamese Buddhism in particular and Vietnamese culture in general (Xuân 2012, 35). Taoism was not a religion in Vietnam, but nevertheless deeply penetrated indigenous beliefs and has had a great influence on the populace. In general, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism deeply influenced Vietnamese culture, because in reality the “Three Teachings” formed a syncretic belief system that could be found at all levels of Vietnamese society (Dutton, Werner, and Whitmore 2012, 114). Ancestor worship has also held a special position in Vietnamese culture and is considered a religion in Vietnam. According to a recent study entitled *Ancestor Worship in Some Countries of the World and Vietnam* (Thoa 2015, 180), “100% of families in Vietnam have ancestral altars.” It is ancestor worship that has truly been the foundation and expression of Vietnamese cultural identity, especially of the Viet ethnic group—the representative of Vietnamese people. According to Ngô Đức Thịnh:

In Vietnam, experiencing many ups and downs with events of history, while many other popular religions and religious beliefs were subject to the stigma of being condemned “superstitious,” the ancestor worship has and still has occupied a sacred position in the spiritual life of people. Especially, this is the belief recognized by the political institutions (States) from the past until now, even at different levels. (Thịnh 2012, 24)

The continuous process of dealing with external cultural elements in both normal and unusual conditions, especially the process of acculturation of foreign religions, has demonstrated the spirit of tolerance and the ability for integration of the Vietnamese people. Perhaps because of this, cultural synthesis has been considered one of the outstanding features of Vietnamese culture (Trần 2001; Vương 2003). A Jesuit missionary who preached in central Vietnam from 1618 to 1622 noted the following in a book he published in Italy in 1633:

The Cochinchinese [Vietnamese] are more gentle and courteous in conversation than any other nation of Europe . . . They stand much upon their valour . . . They ask us many questions, they invite us to eat with them, usually all kinds of courtesy, civility and familiarity. . . . It seemed to us as if we were among ancient acquaintances . . . There is a fare gate opened for the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ among them.”²

² “Quotations: Medieval and Colonial Vietnam,” Alpha History, accessed June 10, 2019, <https://alphahistory.com/vietnamwar/quotations-medieval-colonial-vietnam>.

However, evangelization in Vietnam was still not easy because of cultural and religious differences, and because of the disapproval of the Vietnamese government, who feared that the new religion would disturb the social order and create difficulties. Besides, there were the issues to do with the attitude of the missionaries, in relation to the state of awareness before the Second Vatican Council. Taking the typical case of the relationship between evangelism and Vietnamese ancestor worship, Peter Phan, a theologian at Georgetown University, notes that Vietnam was heavily influenced by both China and Rome's prohibitions against the cult of ancestors, which profoundly affected the development of Vietnamese Catholicism (Phan 2003, 122-129).

While it is true that in the Ten Commandments of the Bible there is a commandment to "honor your father and your mother," ancestor worship in Vietnamese culture is not only a way of expressing affection for parents; it is also a religious belief about one's duty to dead relatives in the afterlife. In addition, ancestor worship is a kind of religion of family and lineage, and is a way of asserting Vietnamese identity as the Vietnamese proverb puts it: "birds have nests, men have stock."

Therefore, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu (1822-1888), a Vietnamese poet well-known for his nationalist and anti-colonial writings against the French presence in Cochinchina, strongly criticized the demolition of ancestor worship of Christian followers at that time. He called ancestor worship the "home doctrine," and said: "Better being blind than having eyes but not worshipping ancestors" (Chiểu 1982, 248). Before that, in the seventeenth century, as noted by one researcher, even the highly successful evangelist Alexandre de Rhodes and his colleague P. Marquez met with some opposition because of the cult of the ancestor of the Vietnamese and "their teachings clashed with superstitions, polygamy, and at the same time undermined the influence of Buddhism. Throughout the country, the Vietnamese accused missionaries of being witches, breaking temples, and attempting to overthrow the Trinh Lord." (Hùng 2010, 205).

The above mentioned problem reveals that in order to obtain success in evangelization in Vietnam, missionaries, in particular Alexandre de Rhodes and Léopold Michel Cadière, experienced many difficulties and needed to have a spirit of religious tolerance, in order to accept the differences as well as take appropriate measures.

Alexandre de Rhodes and Léopold Michel Cadière's Inculturation

According to a historical record of the Nguyễn Dynasty, the year 1533 marked the beginning of the first Western priests entering Vietnam to carry out missionary work (Quốc Sử Quán Triều Nguyễn 1998, 301). However, the early missionaries were rarely successful due to their unfamiliarity with Vietnamese language and culture. In the seventeenth century, when more Jesuits came to Vietnam and had better conditions for learning the language and about Vietnamese culture, evangelization achieved better results. Prominent in this early period, as mentioned above, was the missionary Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660).

During the course of his evangelization in Vietnam (1st phase: 1627-1630; 2nd phase: 1640-1645), Rhodes wrote three important works: a *Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin Dictionary*; an *Eight-Day Catechism*; and a *History of the Kingdom of Tonkin*. The first two works were written in Latin script (what the Vietnamese later called *Quốc ngữ*—the Vietnamese national writing script), both of which were published in Rome in 1651, while the third was written in Italian and published in 1650, translated into French and published in 1651, and in Latin in 1652.

The three works reveal Rhodes' important contribution to the systematization and development of *Quốc ngữ* in Vietnam, as well as his commitment to recording and reflecting Vietnamese culture in a special period of Vietnamese history. Among them, the *Eight-Day Catechism* and the *History of the Kingdom of Tonkin* clearly reflect the conception, elaboration and methods of Rhodes' missionary process in Vietnam. We can trace his attitude to other religions from the perspective of cultural tolerance.

The *History of the Kingdom of Tonkin* is Rhodes' report to the Vatican about the political and social situation of the Kingdom of Tonkin and the mission of evangelization there. In the report, it can be seen that Rhodes clearly holds to the orthodox views of Christianity, especially in the context of the European Catholic crisis during the religious reform movements, where Catholicism was seeking to assert itself by denying anything other than Catholicism.

In *History of the Kingdom of Tonkin*, Rhodes devoted eight chapters out of thirty-one of volume I to criticizing the three religions of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, along with other religious practices. He considered all of them superstitions (Rhodes 1994, 39). Concerning Confucianism, Rhodes recognized the sage, and Confucius' great contribution to moral education, but denied Confucius was a spiritual leader of a religion or a saint, because in his view, if Confucius was holy, he would have mentioned the Great God. He also criticized people in the Kingdom of Tonkin as cowardly for revering Confucius as a God (Rhodes 1994, 39). He considered Buddhism a heresy that spread an untrue myth, and felt that the people believed in Buddhism blindly. He wrote:

In Cochinchina, there are numerous temples and pagodas where numerous idols are worshiped and praised. No matter how small or large a village, no matter how filthy or poor conditions, every village has a temple or a pagoda to which people closely attach themselves. Twice a month, at the beginning of the month (lunar calendar), and at the full moon people come to the temple filled with thick smoke and incense, pray and offer their sacrifice. No matter how poor a person is, all bring something and place it at the feet of the statue covered with dust. They kneel and prostrate four times, their faces drop closely to the ground. Then they chant and pray. (Rhodes 1994, 42)

The sect Rhodes criticized most is Taoism, because "it is too popular and much related to the devil" (Rhodes 1994, 43). Rhodes also devoted many chapters to criticizing the "superstitions" related to the deceased, including the special filial piety of children for parents who had died, and who spent too much on worship (Rhodes 1994, 51). Along with that were "superstitions" in the customs of marriage, birth, and year-in and year-out rituals, etc.

The views of Rhodes in the *History of the Kingdom of Tonkin* are also easily found in his famous *Eight-Day Catechism*, showing that he did not really have or promote the spirit of religious tolerance and respect for differences in beliefs. However, this is understandable if one puts that perspective into its historical context, both from a Catholic perspective and from the perspective of the then progress of the meeting between Eastern and Western civilizations. So where did the results Rhodes gained in his evangelizing work—as recognized by many people—come from?

In the second part of his *History of the Kingdom of Tonkin*, which reports on the process of spreading the faith in Tonkin, Rhodes clearly states his advantages and difficulties. Here, as in the *Eight-Day Catechism*, it can be seen that Rhodes' success mainly came from an awareness of mission and from his method of preaching. At the same time, he also partially demonstrated a spirit of respect for cultural differences and respect for indigenous culture, except for matters related to belief and faith.

First of all, Rhodes was aware of the need to master a local language in order to understand a culture and as a means of evangelization. He spent a lot of time learning the Vietnamese language and after that contributed greatly to the development of the *Quốc ngữ* script by compiling his *Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin Dictionary*, which was based on the contributions of some of his predecessors. He wrote the *Eight-Day Catechism* in the Vietnamese script, not only for his own use, but also as a guide for other missionaries. Secondly, Rhodes chose a neutral and moderate method. He said that many missionaries preached the Gospel by advocating the destruction of wrongs and the heresy of the people before promulgating Christian principles, in order "to destroy and pluck, to build and plant." He chose instead a way of teaching that did not focus on the errors

of other denominations, and took appropriate steps so that listeners could understand and accept reasonably:

Not to oppose the wrongs of the religious sects in the Kingdom of Tonkin but laying some of the principles that naturally understood, such as the creation of the universe, the end, and the absolute principle of everything . . . I was more successful, as I remarked, if I gave them some natural filial piety and natural affection for the Creator and their supreme essence. (Rhodes 1994, 94)

Because of his awareness of the type of mission mentioned above, Rhodes barely criticized Vietnamese ancestor worship and was not too harsh on other sects during the course of his mission, though in his report to the Vatican (*History of the Kingdom of Tonkin*), he presented a clear critique of other religions and beliefs he thought were superstitions. In addition, he paid close attention to indigenous customs, keeping his hair long, dressing and behaving like a Vietnamese, etc. One of the remarkable things about Rhodes is that he knew how to transform Catholic rituals using Vietnamese customs. For example, he changed the baptismal ritual to put salt in the hands instead of in the mouth of the baptized, and he did not use his saliva to anoint the baptized person and did not anoint the breasts of women, only their foreheads (Kết 2001, 67). Rhodes also found words that accorded with the Vietnamese people's feelings and understandings with which to preach about Christianity, God, angels, hell, original sin, baptism, preachers, etc. Vietnamese people had a tradition of considering fidelity and piety important, so Rhodes also put this content into preaching. For example in his *Eight-Day Catechism*, instead of using the Latin word "Deus" to denote "God," he used the term *Trời* (Heaven), which is very familiar to Vietnamese people when analyzing, interpreting and talking about the God who created the heaven and earth (Rhodes 1993, 13). From that work he introduced further terms, such as *Đức Chúa Trời* (the Lord of Heaven), *Thiên Chúa* (God), terms that are still widely used in Vietnam, both inside and outside Catholicism.

During his mission in Vietnam, Rhodes converted 6,700 Vietnamese people to Catholicism (Thuần 1996, 46). That was not a small number and as the researcher Nguyễn Văn Kiệm notes: "Alexandre de Rhodes, by the way of cleverness and fluency in Vietnamese, had great success in building a solid foundation for Vietnamese Catholic Association" (Kiệm 2007, 63).

For his part, Léopold Michel Cadière, carrying out missionary work in Vietnam 250 years after Alexandre de Rhodes, had many advantages, especially from the end of the nineteenth century, with the Peace Agreement (June 6, 1884) of the Nguyễn Dynasty which accepted French rule of the whole of Vietnam, creating many helpful conditions for the activities of Catholics in Vietnam.

From Alexandre de Rhodes to Léopold Michel Cadière, and up to now, there have been great examples of Christian cultural inculturation, but according to Bishop Paul Nguyễn Thái Hợp:

In the context of post Council of Trent (1545–1563), the adaptation problem had been neglected or not properly enforced . . . In order to carry out the inculturation in Asia, talented missionaries were needed, both proficient in Christianity and quite at home in Eastern culture as well as in its rites and customs. In fact, it is difficult to find those who fully qualify. How many missionaries met those conditions during the 350 years of preaching the Gospel in Vietnam? It must be honestly acknowledged that Cadière's experience of promulgating the Gospel in the cultural field is a unique and quite rare case in Vietnam. (Hợp 2011)

Indeed, Léopold Michel Cadière was probably not only a unique and quite rare phenomenon in Vietnam, but also in the world. Coming to Vietnam to serve as a missionary when twenty-three years old (1892), Cadière followed Jesus' incarnational spirit and vowed to become Vietnamese. He lived in Vietnam sixty-three years making many contributions; he rarely visited France; and he wished to stay and die in Vietnam. He was finally satisfied and passed away in 1955 in Huế, Vietnam.

Like Rhodes, Cadière attached great importance to understanding the native language for his mission. However, with Cadière it was more than that. He learned the Vietnamese language because he loved the Vietnamese people and wanted to understand more about them. He wanted to study Vietnamese culture as a Vietnamese. At the age of seventy-three (1942), Cadière wrote:

I learned their language from the first day I arrived, I still continued to study and found that Vietnamese language is very subtle in terms of structure and we should not underestimate the richness like some people think. . . . Because I have studied and understood Vietnamese people, I really love them. (Huệ 2000, 22-23).

However, unlike Rhodes, Cadière was outstanding both as a missionary and as a scholar. He was good at the Vietnamese language, researching Vietnamese culture in almost all fields, especially the Vietnamese language, Vietnamese religious consciousness, and the relationship between families and the beliefs of Vietnamese. As Đỗ Trinh Huệ wrote in his foreword to one of Cadière's works, Cadière studied Vietnamese culture "with a sense of understanding and with a spirit of engagement" (Cadière 2010, 6).

With over 250 research works on Vietnamese culture, Cadière surprised many researchers with his work, especially with his research method. Many scholars wondered how, in the context of leaving France early (in the late nineteenth century) and in the then academic context in Vietnam, he could master the views and research methods of modern anthropology, such as an interdisciplinary approach, participant observation, etc.

Louis Malleret, the former Director of the Ancient Far East School, noted in the preface to Léopold Michel Cadière's work *Vietnamese Religious Beliefs and Practices* reprinted in 1958, three years after Léopold Michel Cadière died: "No need to reiterate that all our knowledge of Vietnamese culture is thanks to this excellent missionary, who had devoted his life with so much diligence" (Cadière 2010, 18).

Perhaps Cadière's great contribution to scientific research made him less likely to be spoken of as a missionary. It is also possible that the context where Cadière conducted his mission did not have as many problems as in previous periods. However, it can be seen that a special feature of Cadière is that he rarely separated the mission of preaching the Gospel from the study of indigenous culture, though once, in the paper *Outline of the Missionary and Research*, he revealed difficulties in completing both exemplary mission work and serious research: "To be honest, it is only a very little time for research to live like that. How can I be free to study while I have to run back and forth like a shuttle, while there are still many people who want to meet? It's hard to maintain the mind in peace" (Hợp, 2011).

In fact, in sixty-three years living in Vietnam, Cadière was both a professor and a pastor, teaching in many places and appointed pastor in many parishes, including in places in a province in central Vietnam that were considered remote. In the work *Practical Instructions for Missionaries* presented at Louvain University in 1910, when he had a chance to return to visit his country of France, he asserted: "Any missionary who is concerned about religious research is always a missionary." (Cadière 2010, 251).

In the above-mentioned paper, Cadière imparted his experience and awareness of evangelism in Vietnam. For him, as for Alexandre de Rhodes before, "if you want to evangelize, you need to know the local language very well" (Cadière 2010, 221). At the same time, he said, missionaries and religious researchers "need to be respectful [of] the various manifestations of the religious consciousness they study" (Cadière 2010, 222). He affirmed: "It is necessary to respect the beliefs of others, as far as I understand, indispensable in the missionary, not only to study the religion of those around him, but also to convert them." (Cadière 2010, 223). He continued:

A missionary is almost the one who has the confidence of the indigenous people; a missionary is never a stranger in the places they go through. They personally enjoy that belief because of their function, their lives, their help . . . A missionary speaks the language of the indigenous people, lives the life of the people and takes care of the people, almost like a native. (Cadière 2010, 235)

Reading the research works of Cadière, in particular the works on religion, we rarely see him studying for the purpose of finding a suitable missionary method to convert non-Catholic people. In contrast, highlighted in his outstanding research on Vietnamese religion is the spirit of respect and affection. We do not see him criticize or ridicule forms of animism, magic or childish practices; on the contrary, he always tries to understand their meanings and considers them special cultural forms. In his work *Religion of the Viet People*, Cadière describes Vietnamese religion as a “thick forest with many kinds of colorful flowers” that is very hard to fully research (Cadière 2010, 20).

Unlike Rhodes’ perceptions of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in Vietnam, Cadière studied the Three Teachings from a scientific perspective, with care, and pointed out that this was one of the “religious mosaics” of the Vietnamese people, and more deeply, that those religions were all manifested mainly through ancestor worship (Cadière 2010, 45).

In the spirit of respecting differences, and through an objective scientific view, Cadière studied deeply and made a particularly important contribution to the study of Vietnamese culture as well as contributing to the development of Catholicism in Vietnam. From the perspective of religious tolerance and methods of integration, it can be said that, it was a long path from Alexandre de Rhodes to Léopold Michel Cadière, with developments in methods of evangelization, especially in the awareness of religious tolerance and the respect for differences. It was a path that led to great strides being made in East-West cultural integration in Vietnam.

Conclusion

The spread of Christian culture into Eastern cultures, especially into cultures influenced by Confucian ideology, is one of the typical manifestations of contact and communication between cultures and civilizations. In medieval times, it was not meetings under normal conditions that led to acculturation, but those meetings made from the initiative of one side, which came out of a sense of promulgating a culture, especially the evangelization of non-religious communities. Cultural conflicts, or other potential conflicts, would be unavoidable if there were no suitable methods of inculturation, because cultures are different, especially in their most sensitive layer: religious feelings.

Not coincidentally, *inculturation* is a special Christian term referring to “the adaptation of Christian liturgy to a non-Christian cultural background”³. In inculturation, the spirit of cultural tolerance and respect for differences is a prerequisite. The process of promulgating Christianity in Vietnam, represented by two individuals, Alexandre de Rhodes and Léopold Michel Cadière, reveals the importance of cultural tolerance. The success of Christian missionaries in Vietnamese history, as well as in the world, reveals their great contribution to East-West cultural relations and to the richness of many cultures.

Catholic inculturation leads us to think more about cultural integration. In cultural contact and interference, cultural tolerance, especially religious tolerance, not only comes from cultural promulgators but also from the receiving side. In the current globalized context, cultural tolerance plays a vital role. The relationship between inculturation and integration needs to be considered as two-way interaction leading to stronger intercourse and cultural harmony. It is also a great opportunity for religious dialogue and cultural integration in the global context of religion, and for

³ *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd ed., s.v. “inculturation.”

cooperation between civilizations today as McLean (2000) once stated in one of his works on Islamic and Christian cultures on a global horizon.

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