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Cátedra Fray Bartolomé
de las Casas

El legado de Fray Bartolomé de las Casas / ALBERTO VÁSQUEZ TAPIA

The legacy of
fray Bartolomé
de las Casas

Alberto Vásquez Tapia



The Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair is an academic space created in the Catholic University of Temuco, inspired by the legacy of Padre de las Casas, which seeks to safeguard the essential value of the individual in order to take a fresh look at citizen coexistence and generate new practices of intercultural dialogue in the regional community and the country.

This university chair promotes reflection on themes which cut across the University and indeed society as a whole, such as justice, recognition and truth; a critical analysis of development models; and the relation between education, culture and knowledge, and the consideration of this relation in decision-making by various social actors.

Ricardo Salas Astráin

Director

Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair

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The legacy of fray
Bartolomé de Las Casas

Alberto Vásquez Tapia
Rector

Prologue

To mark its fiftieth anniversary, the authorities of this House of Learning have decided to found the first Chair of the Catholic University of Temuco, and Rector Alberto Vásquez Tapia has decided to give it the emblematic name of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, “whom the university wishes to honour and emulate, because his work and his person exemplify the clearest and most essential ideals of his own way of understanding and judging a given reality....”. This ideal was very strongly expressed by the first invited speaker in 2009, Raúl Fonet-Betancourt, who indicated that UC Temuco was setting itself an exacting moral standard by giving that name to the Chair of a university located in a territory where progress is needed in a dynamic of recognition, to bring progress to a region characterized by interethnic and intercultural conflict.

When Rector Alberto Vásquez says in his founding speech that **“We have opted for the name Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair”**, he means to tell us that the legacy of Las Casas has not been left behind in the sixteenth century, but that his message is current today and relevant for our House of Learning, located here in what was frontier territory. The Rector means to tell us, too, that this choice made by UC Temuco is part of an exercise of institutional liberty, which like all choices in life has many levels of meaning: to name but one, drawing our inspiration from the legacy of Las Casas implies assuming a vision of the university in which theory, practice and daily life must always meld in projects charged with significance. As he says very clearly, *we must embrace, from a posture of faith, all the sciences, so as to integrate our qualified scientific production with culture, with life, with the destiny and the fortune of concrete people and groups, especially the very poor, who expect and require of us clear answers, discourse which makes sense, theory and practice which demonstrate an ethical posture determined to declare, recover and promote the full, profound meaning of the human dignity of every man and every woman.*

This central idea, which the Rector reiterates in his founding speech, also implies the assumption that UC Temuco is a university inspired essentially in values, and that we are indeed a catholic institution charged with history, with the light and shade of many centuries; and therefore that we are much more than a lay institution, an educational institution or a business; that there really is something which sets us apart: namely that we are an academic community inspired in a Christian, humanist anthropological vision, as was reaffirmed by professor Domingo Moratalla, our third

speaker invited in 2010, who emphasised the value of Las Casas, the great humanist of Salamanca.

In short, the essence of the legacy of Las Casas, and what the Rector considers to be key of this new foundation, is respect for every man and woman, every human being, for reasons which are not merely historical, but which are metaphysical, founded on the value of the person, as he stresses in his conclusion: “And therefore we declare and affirm that man’s dignity exists in and of himself, that it becomes him and belongs to him consubstantially, intrinsically, of itself and by its nature.”

To conclude, let us state that in founding this institutional Chair with the name of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, UC Temuco is assuming a new academic and institutional commitment which will allow us to progress towards the consolidation of a space dedicated to dialogue with the socio-cultural and economic problems of Chile’s southern macro-region: we are –says the Rector– telling *other national and international academic communities that we are determined to construct a new space for social intercourse, devoted to honest, rigorous dialogue with all well-intentioned actors who are disposed to generate knowledge and practical, reflective academic thought along political, ethical, social and cultural axes aimed at strengthening the coexistence of citizens in the Araucanía Region.*

The principal guiding light of the legacy of Las Casas, which is the basis of the foundation of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair, is to project and consolidate a space for fecund dialogue and for permanent learning and personal and institutional witness to

faith-science, faith-culture and faith-life. Thus this university Chair seeks to embrace the various activities of all the faculties dedicated to the production of theoretical, political and practical knowledge in the fields of interculturality, justice, productive development, education and the coexistence of individuals and groups.

For all these reasons, our aim in this first “Masterclass” volume is to draw attention to a line of academic production in which we publicise the principal addresses which the Chair will offer the university community, year after year. Through this book collection, with its approachable format, the Chair seeks to extend the work of the classroom to the whole community, in our striving to transcend the walls of academe and promote culture, reflection and in-depth debate on these topics which are of key importance for the future of our region and of society in Chile and around the world.

Dr. Ricardo Salas Astraín
Directing Professor

The legacy of fray **Bartolomé de Las Casas¹**

Alberto Vásquez Tapia
Rector

1. Foundation of the Chair

In the context of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of this university we have decided to found the first Chair in Universidad Católica de Temuco. In seeking to found the first Chair of this university, named after Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, our intention is to assume an academic and institutional commitment which will help us to construct a new space for social intercourse, devoted to honest, rigorous dialogue with all well-intentioned actors who are disposed to generate knowledge and practical, reflective academic thought along political, ethical, social and cultural axes, with the aim of strengthening the coexistence of citizens in the Araucanía Region.

We have decided to honour and emulate Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, because his life and work bore witness to his

¹ Founding speech of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair of Universidad Católica de Temuco, read as a speech in the Chair Foundation Ceremony, 30 March 2009.

consistency in following the dictates of an upright conscience, in the duty to report and to denounce. His actions exemplify the clearest, most essential ideals of Human Dignity, the way of life of a true Christian. Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas “had the penetrating intuition to see in the Indian, in this *other* of the western world, the ‘poor’ of the gospel... Las Casas saw Christ in the oppressed Indian” (Pierce, 2006). As Padre Las Casas wrote:

“I leave Jesus Christ in the Indies, our God, whipping and afflicting and buffeting and crucifying him, not once but thousands of times...”

His contemplation of men’s deeds in the “New World” moved him, drove him to protest against their actions from the deep, spiritual values of humanism. His clarity and courage in representing these values and ideals formed what today we might call the “Lascasian legacy”, constructed from divine reason and the immediate, daily realities which he experienced at close quarters, and which are absolutely contemporary for us today.

The decision to found a University Chair specifically under the legacy of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas means reiterating the traits which are characteristic of our academic vocation, devoted to embracing, from a posture of faith, all the sciences, so as to integrate our qualified scientific production with culture and with the lives of concrete people and groups, especially the very poor, who expect and require of us clear answers, discourse which makes sense, theory and practice which demonstrate an ethical posture determined to declare, recover and promote the full, profound meaning of human dignity. We are a university community inspired

by a Christian, humanist anthropological vision and a positive vision of the world with respect to the imperfect stages derived from creation. And therefore we declare and affirm that man's dignity becomes him and belongs to him consubstantially, intrinsically, of itself and by its nature. The dignity of an individual is before and above the moral values of an age, or even those of a given religion; it comes from God's Person and therefore acquires full dignity beforehand, since time began, and eternally.

Thus we are interested in progressing towards a genuine understanding between different cultures based on respect for their differences, in order to construct more civic friendship, more pluralism and more respect for the peculiar ethnic, cultural and social characteristics of the various collectives constituting the society which inhabits this legendary land, rich in natural resources and inhabited by good people; this frontier territory, with its measure conflict, where men have come together or drawn apart.

Therefore we found this Chair in the hope of bearing witness to the values which marked the actions of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas – man of faith, legalist and priest, whose life was intensely dedicated to the cause of justice and to the service of the nameless. A man of great spirit and mettle, who stood up in defence of those who were not even recognized as human; and this without doubt required profound conviction in his life as a believer, as well as personal strength to resist the enormous pressure which his contemporaries exerted to drown his prophetic voice. He was accused of “scandal and exaggeration”. Power with its network of interests, and the prejudices of his contemporaries at the controlling levels of society and culture, constituted enormous difficulties, and

even today some biased re-readings and criticisms of his work exist².

Padre Bartolomé de Las Casas was far ahead of his time. This was, precisely, because of the way he chose to live. A man in a privileged position in society on the island of Hispaniola who, in 1502, opened his eyes and his heart –the abode of liberty and conscience– to the systematic abuses committed against the indigenous populations of the Indies.

² See a brief but powerful reply to the critics of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas by Isasio Pérez Fernández in the Introduction entitled “What has been said about Padre Las Casas with reference to Negroes”, in “Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, O.P. de Defensor de los Indios a Defensor de los Negros” (1995).

2. Life and work of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas

The biography of Fray Bartolomé presents the long pilgrimage of “a man who learnt to see with God’s eyes – although not all at *once*– ... It was a process of gradual transformation which lasted for the whole of his long life” (Pierce, 2006, p. 26), with its light and shade, its aspirations and failures; leading him to appreciate, value and promote the dignity of the *Indians*; to act with courage and determination, committing not only the brilliance of his thought, not only the consent of his soul, but his time, his goods, his passion, his prestige, in fact his whole life.

His actions are an incarnation of God’s love and compassion for the weaker human groups of any age, moving him to share the indignation and the passion of the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas, subjected to Conquest and subsequent Colonization by the Spanish Empire.

Bartolomé de Las Casas was born in Seville in 1484. His father, Pedro de Las Casas, was native of Cadiz, a well-off Spanish

merchant and friend of Christopher Columbus. At Easter 1493, after Columbus' first voyage, Bartolomé de Las Casas, still only a child, had an encounter which changed not only his life but the history of the Church and the modern world. Using our imagination, and seeing ourselves as chroniclers, we might describe this moment in the words of Fr. Brian Pierce:

Little Bartolomé was holding his father's hand, while "... standing behind Columbus, probably looking confused and physically debilitated after the long voyage, were some men of magnificent appearance, with dark red skins, brought from the distant lands across the sea... that unforgettable day remained graven in his curious and impressionable mind... in the depths of his heart a love inspired by God's providence was born" (2006, p. 17).

In 1498, his father, who had accompanied Christopher Columbus, brought him a present –received from Columbus himself– of a young Indian called Juanico, with whom he made friends. In 1500 Juanico was sent back to the Indies on the orders of Queen Isabel (León-Portilla, 2004, p. 13), together with other Indians. The two friends promised to meet again in the "New World", and this was the motive for the young Bartolomé to set out on the conquest of what would be the rest of his life, the defence of the Indians.

To understand the life and the position of Las Casas, we need to put ourselves into the historical context of sixteenth century Spain, when a new world was being discovered, while the Renaissance flourished in all its splendour; the age of painters like El Greco, of writers like Miguel de Cervantes, in short, the age of

the greatest glories of the Spanish world. It is not surprising that he should have chosen the religious calling, living as he did in the land and age of three great reformers and founders of a new Catholic spirituality, able to infuse the humanism derived from a Christian anthropological vision into renaissance humanism, a spiritual impress which marked all those alive at the time and would make a decisive mark on our Latin America. I refer to Saint John of the Cross, Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint Ignatius Loyola.

Thus Las Casas –both as the young Bartolomé excited by the New World, the Indians and their suffering, and as the old Fray Bartolomé, denouncing the abuses in the Indies and the right to conquest, debating them with great legalists, defending the Indians’ (and negroes’³) rights– fought to the utmost of his strength for his ideals. He may indeed have been the inspiration for the literary figure of Cervantes’ knight errant, a “Lascasian Quixote” tilting against the windmills, as Fray Antonio González Pola proposes in a fascinating work (2006).

Although no precise or definite evidence exists as to the formal studies of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, the testimony of his works demonstrates his extraordinary and multi-faceted intellectual training, with mastery of Latin, theology, the humanities and universal history; “...he displays a profound knowledge of law, both canon and natural in the widest sense of the word” (León-Portilla, 2004, p. 13).

The records show that he sailed to Hispaniola in 1502 as a

3 See “Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, O.P. de Defensor de los Indios a Defensor de los Negros” (Pérez Fernández I. , 1995).

young *encomendero* (in receipt of a grant of land and Indians) in the expedition commanded by Nicolás de Ovando. Once in the Indies, he began his theological studies and in 1507 he returned to the Old World, to Rome, where he was ordained as a priest⁴. Later, in the spring of 1512, Bartolomé ceded his grant of land and took part in the conquest of Cuba as chaplain to the *conquistadors*. In this island he received a new *encomienda* from the governor of Cuba and experienced what is known as his “first conversion”. Disturbed by the abuses and the systematic extermination of the Indians by the Spanish colonists, he renounced his right to the Indians granted to him and started to promote a campaign to defend the human rights of the indigenous peoples. A key moment in his life occurred during his Whitsun Vigil in 1514 when, moved by the sermon of Fray Antón de Montesinos in Santo Domingo, who denounced the humiliations inflicted on the Indians, he experienced his prophetic vocation, which he describes as follows:

*“...From that day when the mist cleared from my eyes, I never read another book... which did not in some way provide proof of the Indians’ rights and the Spaniards’ injustices. Finally I decided to preach what I had discovered; but still having Indians in my property... I could not freely condemn the encomienda system as tyranny, unless I formally renounced my Indians and handed them over to the Governor...”*⁵

Later, already imbued with this moral and religious struggle,

4 Fr. Brian J. Pierce (Pierce, 2006, p. 20) explains that many historians have been confused by the fact that Padre Las Casas started his theological studies in the New World, but states that Helen Rand Parish has provided documentary confirmation of his ordination in Rome.

5 Historia de las Indias [History of the Indies], Book III, Ch. 79.

after a obtaining the authorization of Fray Pedro de Córdoba, he travelled to Spain, together with Fray Antón, where he obtained an audience with Ferdinand, the Catholic King. He later continued his efforts with the new king of Spain, Charles I⁶. Charles' accession to the throne allowed Las Casas to gain a hearing at court, and in 1520 he obtained orders from *the Crown* for a plan for colonization of the mainland under his proposals for peaceful *evangelization*. With this mission, Las Casas sailed for the Indies at the end of 1520, to start “the work of population” (Pérez Fernández, 2000, p. 108). At the same time, Padre Las Casas forged new alliances in his struggle for indigenous rights, obtaining the help of the Franciscans, “starting with the Grand Cardinal of Spain, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, who named him *Universal Protector of the Indians*” (Larrúa Guedes, 2006).

However, Padre Las Casas' efforts and accusations had started to generate great resistance, betrayals and reprisals by the colonists, who saw the conquest of New Spain threatened by his activities. As Larrúa Guedes says (2006, p. 65), “on arrival at Puerto Rico, he discovered that the Indians over whom he had been given jurisdiction on the mainland... had rebelled because of the atrocities committed by Alonso de Ojeda, killing several Spaniards including two Dominican friars. The Royal Audience of Santo Domingo sent an expedition to exterminate them”, which Las Casas could not prevent despite the powers which he had negotiated with the Crown, committing “a horrible slaughter, and they returned with a shiplot of slaves”. In the following months Padre Las Casas

6 Better known to the English-speaking world as the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. However as the Indies were Spanish rather than imperial colonies he will be referred to here as King Charles I of Spain. (TN)

continued to persevere stubbornly, but his failures mounted up until "...desolated by so many catastrophes, he withdrew to the seclusion of the Dominican monastery in Santo Domingo", where what is known as his "second conversion" occurred. And so in 1522 he entered the Dominican Order of Preachers, which from then on "would be his greatest support in the struggle and the search for truth".

In this context, Fr. Pierce O.P. comments that "In the Order of Preachers, Las Casas had the great fortune to coincide with the renaissance of Thomist thought which was occurring in Salamanca. At the same time... Francisco de Vitoria was being elected Professor... of the University of Salamanca... Although he was unaware of it, Las Casas was not as alone as he imagined. An alliance was being forged which would open new horizons for theological activity for many later generations" (2006, p. 30).

Thus, in accordance with the mysterious ways of Divine Providence, the failed experiment of Cumaná, Venezuela (1520), although it was a painful failure for Fray Bartolomé, led to a new step. After several years which he devoted to writing in seclusion as a novice, he emerged strengthened as a member of the Dominican Order of Preachers.

The "Protector of the Indians" as he was known, persevered; the struggle continued. In Nicaragua, Guatemala and then Chiapas, step by step he set up "a project for peaceful, unarmed evangelization, entrusted to friars alone and under conditions of justice and respect for the dignity of the Indians; very advanced for its time, but very much in accordance with the spirit

of the *Gospel* and the best Dominican and Thomist tradition of voluntary conversion of the indigenous peoples” (Rojas, 2006, p. 116). Pierce describes this period: “On both sides of the Atlantic, pastoral practice and theological reflection were starting to march together with renewed seriousness and hope, opening new paths for the defence of indigenous peoples’ rights. It even looked as if new projects would be possible... This was the start of what Las Casas called *The Only Way*, and would become one of the most important efforts of his whole life” (2006, p. 30). Padre de Las Casas proposed and fought for a peaceful evangelizing mission, “he wanted to give back to evangelization the loving sweetness of Christ, the love and mercy of apostolic times. He wanted to offer the Indian world the joy and liberty of Jesus of Nazareth... Not a *Gospel* wrapped in threats and slavery” (Pierce, 2006, p. 31).

Following this path, after obtaining authorisation from the Crown, “Las Casas set his mind once and for all on giving himself up freely and fully to the peaceful evangelization of the Indians. In 1537, with only a handful of friars, Las Casas sailed for the Maya land of Guatemala, with the words of *The Only Way* written in the book of his heart. The opportunity had finally come to sow the seed of his dream on fertile ground in a place called Tuzulutlán, which in the Maya language meant *Land of War*” (Pierce, 2006, pp. 30-31). So on arrival on the American mainland he set about the “Vera Paz” [True Peace] project for the peaceful conversion of Guatemala, rejecting the *encomienda* system as a means for colonization. “Las Casas spent very little time in Guatemala before being called back to Spain, this time to be appointed Bishop of Chiapas. But his project took root, and to this day the Dominican family continues to offer its peaceful presence and pastoral care to the Achí and

Q'eqchí indigenous communities in the region of Guatemala still known as Verapaz: 'The Land of True Peace'" (Pierce, 2006, p. 31).

Giving intellectual and documentary body to his "*The Only way*" as a proposal for the *evangelization* of the Indies, Las Casas wrote various works such as: *De unico vocationis modo* (1537); and his famous *Brevíssima relación de la destrucción de las Yndias* [Brief account of the destruction of the Indies], written between 1541 and 1542 and published in Seville in 1552. In this central work "he speaks of the 'killings and destruction of innocent people and the depopulation of towns, provinces and kingdoms' carried out by the Spanish who, degenerating from their human condition to become 'wolves' and 'tyrants', stab, hang, burn and set dogs on millions of Indians" (Gil, 1995, p. 421). Fray Bartolomé addressed this document to Prince Philip, to inform him and his subjects of the abuses and crimes committed by the Spaniards in the New World.

His tireless, prophetic accusations influenced the renewal of legislation on the Indies. In this task, harking back to the annals of the "Burgos debate of 1512", he translated Palacios Rubios (*On the right and justice of the conquest of the kingdom of Navarre*), but he makes a clear note of his open disagreement with the thesis of the legitimacy of the conquest set up by Palacios and other sages or theologians who "to relieve the conscience of Ferdinand the Catholic... vied with one another at that time to compose a series of treatises" (Gil, 1995, p. 410). Thus the influence of Las Casas, after a profound review of the practices, legislation and convictions of the time, took material form in the proclamation of the "New Laws" (1542-1543). This legislation considered the Indians as free men, not to be enslaved or forced to do arduous labour; it prohibited

the creation of new *encomiendas* and required the immediate dissolution of the *encomiendas* of clerics and officers of the crown. As Juan Gil says, the “New Laws of 1542 cut out the old abuses, almost abolishing the *encomienda* system and promoting a more humane policy towards the Indians, enslavement of whom was prohibited even in the case of rebellion” (1995, p. 408). Likewise, Salvador Larrúa comments on the application of these New Laws of 1542 in Cuba: “The colossal effort of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas in favour of the rights of the indigenous people of the new World had triumphed... The great clamour of Dominicans and Franciscans calling for freedom for the Indians... was so great, that its repercussions are still felt today... the 1542 Statutes freed the Indians in Cuba, and this was made effective during the following years by the selfless work of the Dominicans and Franciscans in the island” (La Conexión Las Casas Cisneros..., 2006). Isasio Pérez Fernández states unequivocally that Bartolomé de Las Casas was the author of the end of “slavery” and “*encomiendas*” in Central America (2000, p. 180).

In 1544 he was appointed Bishop of Chiapas, with his see in the “Royal City” (today San Cristobal de Las Casas), a province of the Captaincy General of Guatemala, where the Spanish monarch authorised him to put his ideals into practice. Here he devoted himself to investigating the treatment received by the Indians of his diocese⁷. As was to be expected he was not very kindly received by the colonists, who considered him to be responsible for the publication of the “New Laws”.

7 See León-Portilla, Miguel, in his Introduction to the Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies (2004, p. 27).

Maintaining his convictions, and knowing the abuses of the *encomenderos*, he ordained that no cleric could absolve an *encomendero* at confession, unless the penitent set all his slaves at liberty (León-Portilla, 2004, p. 27). Not only the most influential of his congregation opposed him, but even prelates of the Church manifested growing hostility due to his demands on the social and personal behaviour of Christians and his denunciation of the crimes committed by colonists.

Finally, after a brief but intense period in Chiapas where he faced numerous attacks and insults, in 1546 he was obliged to return to Spain, from whence he never again ventured to the Americas.

Despite the heavy blow of exile, his vast experience, his reflections and convictions involved him in action once again, this time in Spain. Based on his testimony and the influence of his thinking, King Charles decided to convoke the so-called “Valladolid Debate of 1550”, to define the position of the Crown in view of how the legitimacy of the conquest was developing.

In this context, a confrontation occurred between the thesis of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas and the position of Charles I's official chronicler, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. In reply to the postulations of Padre de Las Casas, Ginés de Sepúlveda put up a tenacious defence of the Spanish right to an empire and the slave nature of the Indians, which he set down in his manuscript “*Democrates Secundus*”, strongly influenced by the precepts of the Aristotelian school⁸.

8 “... it is significant that the two principal submissions in defence of the conquest, those of Palacios Rubios and Sepúlveda, were never to see the light of day in print, an

As Juan Gil says, “The prestige enjoyed by Sepúlveda and his adherence to the dangerous Aristotelian theory of natural slavery alarmed Las Casas and the Dominican order, which managed to hinder the printing of Democrates. Sepúlveda tried to defend himself in an *Apología* published [covertly]... in Rome... but in 1550 the king ordered all the copies of the print-run to be collected” (1995, p. 420).

Las Casas meanwhile was supported by other ecclesiastical figures whose precepts were close to his own, like Fray Francisco de Vitoria, Domingo de Soto and even the Franciscan Bishop Juan de Quevedo (with whom he argued fiercely, even though their respective arguments for the defence of the Indians were close to his own⁹). He was also strongly encouraged by the diligent letters sent by his Dominican brothers from all over America, who closed ranks with Fray Bartolomé, “from Santa Fe, from Mexico,... to denounce the various outrages and excesses perpetrated by the Spaniards” (Gil, 1995, p. 422). He answered his opponents’ arguments, adducing that human dignity is given to man through the mere fact of his existence, which implied recognizing the ability of the native to discern his faith; this served to counter the ‘natural right’ of the European to govern the fate of the Indian.

Juan Gil describes the gestation and unfolding of the “Valladolid Debate”, suggesting that the king, in the presence of

indication of the extreme insecurity felt by the Court as to the rectitude of these theoretical arguments” (Gil, 1995, pp. 419-420)

9 “The strong characters of the two antagonists perhaps explains the violence of this shock between two men whose opinions did not differ to any great degree and who both after all attached the same epithets to the conquistadors: ‘tyrants’ and ‘oppressors’” (Gil, 1995, p. 406)

such a high-level debate and motivated by his own doubts about the direction of the conquest and “the legality of the procedures used in the subjection of the Indians”, called a meeting of theologians and legal experts to resolve the dispute between 1550 and 1551. Ginés de Sepúlveda and Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas expounded their positions in long sessions before the Dominican theologians Soto, Carranza and Cano, and the Franciscan Arévalo, and legal experts Ponce León, Anaya, Mercado, Pedraza and Gasca. They did not reach a definite conclusion, and indeed this was hardly likely to occur seeing that the basic problem was political. Condemnation of the conquest of the Indies would have been a blot on the memory of the Catholic Kings¹⁰. Nonetheless, the “Valladolid Debate [provoked by Las Casas] marks a milestone: it is the first and perhaps the only time in the annals of history that the conqueror has undertaken a voluntary, conscious examination of the legitimacy of his acts, analysed coolly and rigorously in a meeting expressly convoked for the purpose” (Gil, 1995, p. 420-1).

Ginés de Sepúlveda’s thesis proposed four reasons to sustain the legitimacy of the manner of proceeding of the colonists of the time:

1. The inability of the Indians to govern themselves adequately, being slaves by nature due to their behaviour, lacking in Aristotelian reason.

¹⁰ As history has shown, the nature of the problems generated by Padre de Las Casas’ denunciations and arguments were not only philosophical and legal, but profoundly political, because his inflexible position “in practice led the political power down a blind alley, since nobody disguised the fact that it was unthinkable to abandon territories coveted by all the powers in Europe, or to set about returning to the indians all that had been stolen or ‘usurped’” (Gil, 1995, pp. 423).

2. The crimes against nature committed by the Indians (cannibalism, human sacrifice etc.).
3. The obligation to save the souls of these unfortunates condemned to perish.
4. Preaching and spreading of the faith, which must be carried out by force if the natives would not admit it by kinder means.

In response to Ginés de Sepúlveda, among other disputes, “Las Casas admitted only one just title:

“Preaching the Gospel and the conversion of these peoples; and in this cause not by compulsion but as an objective...” (Gil, 1995, p. 421).

For Padre de Las Casas, peaceful, unarmed evangelization, the invitation to the *Gospel*, was the “Only Way”:

“There is one way, the only way, ever to teach a living faith to all, established by Divine Providence... It must be gentle, attractive, kind... The apostles were chosen as guiding lights, examples to be imitated... They used no weapons,.. They did it by preaching Christ crucified, using simple words, loving words which contain a miraculous power”¹¹.

On the other hand, although Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas would not have known Francisco de Vitoria personally, he read him and respected him deeply; he permitted himself to dissent but always recognizing Victoria's authority as professor.

11 Las Casas, *The Only Way* (De Unico Vocationis), cited by Pierce (Pierce, 2006, pp. 30-31), who in turn took it from Helen Rand Parish, *The Only Way*, (ed. Rand Parish, Helen, trans. Patrick Sullivan, S.J. New York: Paulist Press, 1992, pp. 201-208).

Fr. Ramón Hernández says of them “They were contemporaries, and both were famous in the Spain of their time: Las Casas as the unrivalled promoter of the liberation of the Indians from the hands of the conquistadors and encomenderos; Vitoria as the creator of a school and a movement to support the rights of individuals and peoples against the oppression of governments and their laws” (2006, p. 89).

Towards the end of his life, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, tormented by how the conquest in America and the fate of the Indians had developed, despite all his efforts and those of the Dominicans, Franciscans and others who followed him, went to live in the Atocha monastery in Madrid, where he died in mid 1566¹². After his death, his “Brief account of the destruction of the Indies” was translated into many languages. Today, in explicit recognition of his work, the beatification of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas is in progress.

12 For more detail on this period see Miguel León-Portilla's Introduction to “Brief account of the destruction of the Indies” (2004, pp. 27-28).

3. The Lascasian legacy

The times we live in today are very different from those of Fray B. Las Casas, but there are pending matters which resonate with the debates of that age, especially now when we are learning to value the experience of cultural diversity, when we have started to ask forgiveness for cruel experiences, distant or close at hand, in the struggle of man against man, and when an ideal is raising its head once more of the promotion of human rights as the ethic which should govern social coexistence, the underlying conviction of our life in society. Peaceful colonization, rejection of the enslavement of indigenous peoples, condemnation of the crimes and abuses of the encomenderos, recognition of the Indians' right to possess the New World, are the valiant responses which called forth Bartolomé de Las Casas' greatest virtues.

We can say then that "Las Casas was capable of passing from contemplative experience to prophetic action, and for this reason he continues to be an attractive model for... our times" (Pierce, 2006, p. 29). As Fray Antonio Gonzalez Pola has said: "We

are convinced that by defending or rejecting Las Casas's position we are opting to defend or reject not only a historical personage, but something more vital and transcendent –wars and the self-determination of peoples” (2006, p. 102).

Turning to what today we may call the “Lascasian Influence” –“in the sense of following the lines which have kept his legacy alive over time” as Alzate Montes says– Las Casas left two lines which we can use to review his legacy:

- “1. In Latin America, where his influence was not direct, but was reproduced every time a cleric¹³... opposed abuses to defend the natives from the excesses of the conquest.
- “2. In Europe, through the stir caused by his Brief account of the destruction of the Indies, finished in 1552...” (2006, p. 40), which influenced the tenor of legislation for the Indies thenceforward.

Thus on the one hand the Legacy of Padre Las Casas meant live resistance during the conquest, offered day by day by both Dominicans and Franciscans who continued the work started by this distinguished Dominican. On the other, important gains were achieved in Europe, such as the successive new regulations promulgated by the Crown which accepted the need to restrain its own colonists, with particular successes such as the abolition of the encomienda system. However, on the American front in particular

13 See for example some sketches of Dominicans and Franciscans who followed in the footsteps of Bartolomé de Las Casas in America in: “El eco de Las Casas” (Gil, 1995, pp. 438-440); “Los Dominicos en Centroamérica” (Rojas, 2006, p. 116); *Influencia lascasiana en el Perú del siglo XVI* (Álvares, 2006).

there were as many failures as successes, reported first by Las Casas and of which history has provided sufficient evidence, which we all had to face up to, as members of the Catholic Church, at the Jubilee in 2000.

From the theological, philosophical and legal point of view, the legacy of Las Casas today enjoys a solidity which allows it to be seen as a primordial datum in respect for the Human Rights which are due to Man's Dignity.

Summary of the Lascasian Theses¹⁴:

The heritage of Las Casas is one of the prime sources of modern theories of Law, with deeply humanist and rationalist conceptions which have marked the face and the sensitivity of current state structures. One way of understanding the modernity of his doctrine is to examine each of the theses which can be identified in his work, known as Lascasian theses.

First Lascasian Thesis, “The rationality of man”:

“As the human species has the same rational nature everywhere, this implies that every individual, by his intelligent will, is not dependent on other men, but is an absolute moral being belonging necessarily to himself”¹⁵.

14 In this summary we follow Margarita Cortés Cid who reviews the thought of Bartolomé de Las Casas, comparing it with that of some of his detractors, in the light of the situation of the indigenous peoples in Chiapas today (2006, pp. 303-305).

15 *De Unico Vocationis Modo*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1942, cited by Cortés Cid, Margarita (Cortés Cid, 2006, pp. 302-303).

This thesis places a primordial value on reason, following the intellectual impress of the renaissance and honouring the figures of the great reformers of Catholic thought in Spain and Latin America. For Fray Bartolomé, the reason which inspires human beings exalts the presence of God in every man, evidence of the miracle which each one is, raising each to the same dignity.

The antithesis is the position of Ginés de Sepúlveda, convinced of the innate superiority of the European over the Indian: “In prudence, temperament, virtue and humanity, (Indians) are as far inferior to Spaniards as children to adults, women to men, cruel men to mild, the very intemperate to the chaste and temperate, and, I nearly said, monkeys to humans’. Las Casas replies that Indians cannot be sub-human, nor anything less than men, because that would signify a flaw and imperfection in God’s universe. God’s plan is for all men to be happy and civilized, and He has given them the capacity to be so” (Cortés Cid, 2006, p. 303).

Second Lascasian Thesis, of the equality of all peoples:

“No nation, however intoxicated, absorbed or submerged in vice, even of the most corrupt customs, is excluded from participation in the Gospel, nor is it licit for any to think that it is forgotten by divine mercy”¹⁶.

This thesis expresses the inalienable condition of every man as God’s creature. Man’s being is a frail thing composed of lack and potential. All of us, without exception, undergo the experience of the quest for God in ourselves, and at the same time,

¹⁶ Apologetica Historia, cited in Giménez, Manuel, Actualidad de las tesis lascasianas, Ed. Univ. Sevilla, 1966, p. 460, in Cortés Cid, Margarita (Cortés Cid, 2006, p. 303).

the certainty of being part of Him. This condition of solidarity with God is a guarantee of equality in God's eyes.

Refuting him, Tomás Ortiz writes of the mainland Indians: "They are incapable of learning... they do not perform any of the human arts or industries... as they grow older their behaviour becomes more undesirable. Around ten or twelve years they seem to have a small amount of civilization, but later they become like wild beasts... God never created a race more full of vices... Indians are stupider than donkeys and reject any type of progress."

Padre Las Casas, with the experience which he had gained living with indigenous peoples, replied:

"If we want to be sons of Christ and disciples of evangelical truth, we must consider that, even if they were complete barbarians, yet they are still created in the image of God. They are not so abandoned by divine providence as to be incapable of entering the kingdom of Christ, any less than the most learned and erudite men in the whole world"¹⁷.

Third Lascasian Thesis, the liberty of man:

"From their origin, all rational creatures are born free and equal by nature; God did not make some slaves of others but granted the same free will to all. Because liberty is a right instilled into men necessarily of itself from the beginning of the rational creature, and this is why it is said to be a natural right"¹⁸.

17 Cited by Milton, Ronald, El padre Las Casas, el castellano y las lenguas indígenas, 1977, p. 195, in Cortés Cid, Margarita (Cortés Cid, 2006, p. 304).

18 Apologetica Historia, cited in Giménez, Manuel, Actualidad de las tesis lascasianas,

Without this liberty ab origine, neither love for God nor love for other men would be possible. Every human action requires the condition of liberty for it to be a genuine expression of divinity.

Fourth Lascasian Thesis, human sociability:

“Every man, believer or infidel, is a rational and social animal, and therefore society between them is natural”¹⁹.

The existence of the other, as the limit and the potential of our own existence, is God’s gift. Man, when his reason and sensitivity have not been damaged by fear and ambition, naturally experiences the presence of the other as an opportunity to perfect the project of his own life. God is always present in this meeting.

Finally, as Fr. Brian Pierce says, we can sum up the Lascasian legacy by saying that “for Las Casas, the Indian was Christ, and seeing the poor, beaten, crucified face of the Indian was, for Fray Bartolomé, the same as seeing the face of Jesus humiliated and crucified. Today’s world has much to learn from this passion, this compassion. Every step taken by Las Casas throughout his long life took him more deeply into that mystery of love which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas still teaches us, five centuries later, especially in this age in which ethnic cleansing, genocide and war are a central feature of every day’s news, is that it is never too late to open our eyes and recognise the face of God in the other” (2006, pp. 33,34).

Ed. Univ. Sevilla, 1966, p. 461, in Cortés Cid, Margarita (Cortés Cid, 2006, p. 304).

19 Cited by Milton, Ronald, El padre Las Casas, el castellano y las lenguas indígenas, 1977, p. 201, in Cortés Cid, Margarita (Cortés Cid, 2006, p. 305)

4. The projections of the Chair

Universidad Católica de Temuco is set in a context of marked social and economic differences, with a strong component of rural and urban indigenous inhabitants who lag seriously in economic and social indicators and suffer grave deficiencies in education. It is the desire of the university to safeguard the essential value of the individual with rigour, quality and courage, so as to broaden opportunities for development and for meetings between the Region's various social actors.

We may say beyond doubt that the example of Las Casas is for us a challenge and a source of hope. What this man learnt to do was to lead an exemplary life, and that example was a gift to many. This motivates us similarly to seek to dignify, a challenge which implies: academic production governed by an upright conscience; university activities which will help to dignify those who live or survive on the margins of society; working together with those who are building a better society.

The foundation of this Chair reiterates the basic traits which are characteristic of our academic vocation, devoted to embracing, from a posture of faith, all the sciences, so as to integrate our qualified scientific production with culture, with life, with the destiny and the fortune of concrete people and groups, especially the very poor, who expect and require of us clear answers, discourse which makes sense, theory and practice which demonstrate an ethical posture determined to declare, recover and promote the full, profound meaning of the human dignity of every man and every woman.

This Chair seeks to embrace the activities dedicated to the production of theoretical, political and practical knowledge in the fields of interculturality, justice, productive development, education and the coexistence of individuals and groupings in the Araucanía Region. Under the aegis of this Chair we also intend to sponsor academic production in the form of research work, theses, publications, seminars, addresses etc. in order to broaden our range, strengthening and perfecting our character and our vocation as a regional university.

Finally, through this Chair, Universidad Católica de Temuco seeks to extend the work of the classroom to the community, in an effort to transcend the walls of academe and promote culture, reflection and in-depth debate on these topics which are of key importance for the future of our region and of Chilean society.

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I hereby certify that the following has been decreed:

RECTOR'S OFFICE DECREE 20/2010

Establishes the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair and promulgates its Regulation

CONSIDERING:

- 1° The appropriateness of installing the first Chair of Universidad Católica de Temuco in the year of its fiftieth anniversary.
- 2° The decision to give this Chair the name "Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair".
- 3° The proposal of the Special Deans' Committee.
- 4° My powers as Rector.

I HEREBY DECREE:

- 1° That the "Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair" be established in Universidad Católica de Temuco, with the following inspiration and aims:**

1. Inspiration

The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the University has been a moment for examination of the maturity of our academic reflection and our contribution to building regional and national society. In this context a "Chair" is founded which will enable us to project, under a full academic statute, the excellence of our university work, the search for truth which motivates us, the fraternal relations which bind us together and the social responsibility with which we understand our university activities. The choice of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas as patron of this Chair marks some of the essential characteristics which we expect of it, namely:

• **Catholic conscience and identity of the University.** The “Catholic University, as a University, is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered”. Specifically, a Catholic University promotes: “a) the search for an integration of knowledge; b) a dialogue between faith and reason; c) an ethical concern; and d) a theological perspective” (Ex Corde Ecclesiae 12 and 15), characteristics which also distinguish a thinker and man of the church like Las Casas. Thus we should fill this space with a fecund dialogue and for permanent learning and personal and institutional witness to faith-science, faith-culture and faith-life.

• **Dialogue and reason as a means for resolving difficulties.** Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas is an extraordinary example of our faith in human reason as a means for understanding socio-political problems, debating differences and convincing with ideas instead of imposing our will by force. This is clear for example when we read his Exhortation to Prince Philip: “I could not refrain from begging Your Majesty, in the most urgent manner, not to allow or permit the things which the tyrants invented, continued and have committed, and they call them Conquests: which, if they are permitted, they will inevitably again commit; things which of themselves, committed against those pacific, humble, docile Indian peoples who offend nobody, are unjust, tyrannical, and condemned, detested and accursed by all divine and human natural law” (BARTOLOME DE LAS CASAS, Brief account of the destruction of the West Indies, N^o4).

In this sense, the legacy of Las Casas may be linked not only to philosophy and/or theology, but also to history, law and the political sciences, among other disciplines which we cultivate in the university.

• **Human dignity.** As expressed in our Statutes, “Universidad Católica de Temuco was founded in the spirit of the Gospel, to serve the Church and society by promoting human dignity, teaching, research and culture, and offering a variety of services to the local community”. The promotion of human dignity and service to the region are concrete expressions of the evangelical spirit which inspires us. In the words of Benedict XVI: “On the one hand, charity demands justice: recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples. It strives to build the “earthly city” according to law and justice. On the other hand, charity transcends justice and completes it in the logic of giving and forgiving. The “earthly city” is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties, but to an even greater and more fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion. Charity always manifests God’s love in human relationships as well, it gives theological and salvific value to all commitment for justice in the world” (Caritas in Veritate, N°6).

• **Intercultural dialogue.** One of the most defining characteristics of the geocultural environment in which the Catholic University of Temuco is set is its intercultural and interethnic fabric. Setting aside the attempts at cultural homogenization which have characterized a certain western point of view, the Holy Father says to us today: “the possibilities of interaction between cultures have increased significantly, giving rise to new openings for intercultural dialogue: a dialogue that, if it is to be effective, has to set out from a deep-seated knowledge of the specific identity of the various dialogue partners.” (Caritas in Veritate, N° 26).

Thus we who recognize ourselves as the heirs of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas must assume the viewpoint of those excluded from social welfare, and from there promote dialogue and respect for cultural diversity, the pursuit of justice and the defence of human

dignity, promoting dialogue and coexistence between citizens from a clearly catholic conscience and identity.

2. Aims

The Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair of Universidad Católica de Temuco seeks to safeguard the essential value of the individual human, in order to extend reflection on, and critique of, options for development and meeting between the different actors who make up society in our region. To do this we propose to generate theoretical, political and practical knowledge in the fields of intercultural dialogue, justice, development models and the relationship between education and culture, knowledge directed towards rethinking citizen coexistence and generating new practices in social relations in the Araucanía Region and in the country.

The Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair favours academic production expressed in research work, theses, publications, seminars and conferences. It is open to academic staff and students of Universidad Católica de Temuco and from outside, the principal requirements being consistency with the Chair's values and aims, and the academic quality of the proposals.

Outreach to and links with the regional community are consubstantial with the Chair's academic work, being an expression of our striving to transcend the walls of academe and promote culture, reflection and in-depth debate on these topics which are of key importance for the future of our region and of society in Chile.

2° That the Regulation of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair be promulgated, the text being as follows:

Regulation of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair

1. Objective

The Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair of Universidad Católica de Temuco proposes to generate theoretical, political and practical knowledge in the fields of intercultural dialogue, justice, development models and the relationship between education and culture, in order to safeguard the essential value of the individual human, rethink citizen coexistence and help to generate new practices in social relations in the Araucanía Region and in the country.

2. Organizational Structure

The Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair is an interfaculty academic organ, combining the efforts of the academic units which work from the viewpoint of its aims and objectives.

The Chair depends directly on the Rector's Office.

It functions with a Directing Professor, a Chair Council and an Executive Secretariat.

3. Chair Council

The Chair Council is the highest decision-making body of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair. It is composed of the Directing Professor of the Chair, as president, all the Deans of the University, a person of regional significance nominated by the Grand Chancellor, and the Executive Secretary of the Chair.

The functions of the Chair Council are as follows:

- a. To define the development and outreach strategies of the Chair to achieve its declared aims and have an impact in the regional and national context.

- b. To generate policies and strategies to ensure that the aims of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair are embodied in the activities of the University's academic units.
- c. To define and approve the Chair's Annual Programme of Activities.
- d. To define and approve the criteria, norms and procedures for carrying out the Chair's various activities.
- e. To approve annually the proposal for the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas publication.
- f. To obtain external economic resources for the Chair's functioning, and to supervise economic and budget management.

4. Directing Professor

The Directing Professor of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair is an academic of Universidad Católica de Temuco nominated by the Rector with the agreement of the Higher Council of the University. He/She must be an academic with a notable academic career, in particular his/her contribution in the area of the Chair's aims.

The position will be held for two years and the principal functions are:

- a. Preside over the Chair Council.
- b. Direct the execution of the Chair's Annual Programme of Activities.
- c. Compile and edit the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair's publication
- d. Ensure dissemination of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair, its activities, results, products and impact.
- e. Present the Higher Council of the University with an annual report of the Chair's actions, results and projections.

5. Executive Secretariat

The Executive Secretariat of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair

is the body responsible for carrying out the Annual Programme of Activities approved by the Chair Council, to achieve the Chair's objective and in harmony with the guidelines given by the Chair's Directing Professor.

The Executive Secretariat is composed of UCT's Director of Outreach and Links, who acts as Executive Secretary.

The functions of the Executive Secretariat are as follows:

- a. Prepare the Chair's Annual Programme of Activities, based on the proposals received from all the University's academic units.
- b. Execute the Chair's Annual Programme of Activities approved by the Council.
- c. Propose to the Academic Council the criteria, norms and procedures for carrying out the Chair's various activities.
- d. Prepare the Chair's Annual Accounts.
- e. Manage the Chair's annual budget.

6. Activities

The Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair will carry out the following activities:

- a. **Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair Masterclass:** An annual address given by an academic of recognized international prestige in relation to the declared aims of the Chair. The presentation must be original, read by its author in a solemn university ceremony and published in the Chair's annual volume.
- b. **Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Medal:** Every year, Universidad Católica de Temuco will award this recognition to a natural or legal person, in the region or the country, whose career strongly represents the Chair's aims. Awarding this medal will be the responsibility of a Jury appointed annually for that purpose by the Chair Council.
- c. **Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair sponsorship for thesis production:** Undergraduate or post-graduate students of

the University's various academic programmes can apply for sponsorship when their research topic is directly connected with the aims of the Chair. Once a year, the Chair Executive Secretariat will make a call for applicants to write their theses under Chair sponsorship and to submit their research topics. The selection of the two prize theses will be the responsibility of a Jury appointed annually for that purpose by the Chair Council.

- d. **Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair sponsorship for academic events:** The academic units of Universidad Católica de Temuco may apply for sponsorship for Addresses, Seminars, Colloquia or other outreach activities in their annual programmes which are directly linked with the aims of the Chair. Application will be once per year through the DGA's integrated projects competition, with the Chair Council being responsible for ensuring that the events selected are consistent with the aims of the Chair.
- e. **Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Chair publication:** Every year Universidad Católica de Temuco will publish one academic work with the products sponsored by the Chair, assigning special importance to the Masterclass. Academics, professionals and undergraduate or post-graduate students can present their articles and contributions, which must be original and fully in tune with the Chair's inspiration and aims. The Directing Professor will be responsible for compilation and editorial coordination.
- f. **Accumulation, safeguarding and use of the legacy of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas:** The Chair will have a physical space in which to keep, safeguard and facilitate the use of the legacy of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas. At the same time it will ensure that all the materials, works, theses and other documents are available in this library.
- g. **Final:** All matters not contemplated in the present Regulation will be analysed and resolved by the Chair Council in harmony with the inspiration and aims declared in the present Decree.

7. Temporary

The present Regulation will operate from the nomination of the Directing Professor of this Chair.

To be recorded, communicated and filed.

Temuco, 28 May 2010. ALBERTO VÁSQUEZ TAPIA, Rector.
ARTURO HERNÁNDEZ SALLÉS, Secretary General.

Transcribed for your information.

Arturo Hernández Sallés
Secretary General



Alberto Vásquez Tapia,

graduated as a Sociologist at the Universidad Católica de Chile in 1978. He holds a Masters degree in Management Sciences from the Universidad Católica de Janeiro, Brazil (1993), and graduate degrees in Higher Education (1984), Organizational Development (1994), and Strategic Planning (1996).

He has been lecturer in Sociology of Organizations, Organizational

Change, Leadership and Educational Management and Strategic Planning in Bachelor, Master and PhD programs in Latin American universities such as Universidad de Chile, Universidad Católica de Córdoba, Argentina; Universidad Católica de Santa Fe, Argentina; Universidad Católica de Minas Gerais, Brazil; and Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile.

He has held outstanding positions such as Director of the Centre for Cultural Research and Education Pedro Arrupe of the Society of Jesus in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1990-1994), Director General at the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO), Guadalajara, Mexico (1994 to 1998), Academic Vice President of the Universidad Alberto Hurtado (1999 to 2006), Vice-president (2007) and presently President of the Universidad Católica de Temuco.