

Paper Title: Seeds of a Global University: The “Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity”

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Abstract:

In a “globalized” world, the idea of a global university is evocative and timely: global in outreach, but also in content, offering a “global education”. The very term “university” emerged from a perspective of universality, implying the capacity to “comprehend” the multiform riches of the cultural heritage of the world. But in a culture where fragmentation prevails, where can we find academics with the openness of vision and the wide-ranging competence needed to transmit a sense of inter-connectedness?

As Dr. Eric Weislogel has pointed out, what is needed is “a network of open and exploratory international and interdisciplinary collaboration,” and certainly Metanexus has given a significant contribution in this direction. Dr. Weislogel also noted that by its very trans-disciplinary methodology the science-religion dialogue has begun to restore that “feel for the wholeness of wisdom to which knowledge was always meant to contribute.”

This is an important start. Wisdom, however, is not only the desired end but also the common root from which all the sciences were born. We would add that the ideal environment for imparting and receiving integral knowledge should also be imbued with practical wisdom, such as the decision to treat others as we would have them treat us, a tenet common to all the great world religions.

To offer a model which may contain initial seeds of a “global university,” this paper describes some aspects of the pilot experience of the “Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity”, which in the past four years has welcomed 200 university students of various faculties and of cultures from around the world.

Emerging from the cultural humus of the Focolare Movement’s spirituality of unity, the project began with the desire to extend to youth the unique experience of a group of 30 academics of various nations and fields of study ranging from theology and philosophy to science, economy, sociology, etc., who meet regularly to share how the light of wisdom illuminates their various disciplines. The summer school is a fruit of this common experience. Each lecturer strives to transmit, in the few hours at his or her disposal and in a language accessible to all, the key ideas of one’s subject matter put into focus against the background of wisdom.

In their turn, the students bring their own thirst for an integral form of knowledge, knowing that what will be asked of them in these two weeks each summer is extremely demanding. They are asked to live in total and continuous intellectual and spiritual

communion with one another and with all of the teachers, opening their minds without reservation to what each lecturer has to share. They are also asked to reciprocate by expressing the thoughts, questions and inspirations that the lessons provoke in them. The result is an intense learning experience for lecturers and students alike. It is, perhaps, an initial seed for the blossoming of a truly global university.

**Biographies:**

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Paper Text:

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is now common to find multifaceted descriptions of the fragmentation that plagues our culture and our educational systems. As Alasdair MacIntyre diagnosed, such is in part attributable to the way in which “modernity partitions each human life into a variety of segments, each with its own norms and modes of behavior. So work is divided from leisure, private life from public, the corporate from the personal.” (MacIntyre, 204).

In academic and professional spheres, the drive for increasing specialization has reaped benefits, but it also threatens to eclipse an overarching vision of the whole. As Eric Weislogel described in a recent article, “In our highly sophisticated Babel, we have lost a feel for the wholeness of wisdom to which knowledge was always meant to contribute.” (Weislogel, 15). Further, our “globalized” world adds a new urgency to the quest for a broader vision of the whole, for it is clear that political, economic, social and scientific realities cannot be fully understood in geographic or cultural isolation.

Where might one begin to look for the seeds of a “global” university that can respond to the most pressing needs of our times? In many universities strategic planning committees are hard at work to imagine what kind of curricula and programs could meet these challenges.

The model we will outline in this brief narrative in some ways illustrates this process in reverse. In developing its model for a summer school, the Association for Cultural Studies began not with the problem of fragmentation and division, but from within an experience of living out a spirituality and culture of unity. The Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity emerged not so much from a strategic action plan, but as a natural fruit of what the members of the Association had themselves lived. It was also a response to the requests of youth who had already experienced the “global” dimensions of a culture that opened them to the international, interdisciplinary, intergenerational and integrative effects of the culture of unity.

The first section describes three underlying elements which converge in the Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity: the cultural humus of the Focolare Movement’s spirituality of unity, the subsequent cultural project which emerged from the spirituality, and the efforts to transmit an integrative “global” culture to youth. The second part gives a brief overview of the summer school’s origins and methods, and then draws out the “global” dimensions of its approach. After a brief synthesis of some of the initial results and the structures for follow-up with graduates of the program, it concludes with observations on the extent to which the model may be replicated in other contexts.

### **I. ELEMENTS FOR A GLOBAL UNIVERSITY**

#### **A. The Cultural Humus: The Focolare Movement’s Spirituality of Unity**

The Focolare Movement is one of the relatively new ecclesial movements in the Roman Catholic Church. It traces its origins to 1943 in Trent, northern Italy. Amidst the disastrous ruins of their heavily bombed city, the founder, Chiara Lubich and her friends discovered God as the only Ideal that never dies, that God is love, and that the life of the

Gospel put into practice could be the solution to every personal and social problem. Since several of their homes had been destroyed, they gathered in a small apartment that came to be known as the “Focolare” (which in Italian means “hearth”) because of the warm atmosphere of family and love that continues to be characteristic of these communities. (Gallagher, 35-36).

As the war continued to rage, conscious that any moment could be their last, they asked, what might be the words especially dear to Jesus. They discovered, “I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12-13), and they understood the measure of his love, he gave his life. Lubich remembers how they gathered in a circle and made a pact: “I am ready to give my life for you; I for you; each one for the other.” The effort to keep the flame of mutual love alive among them became their lifestyle. (Uelmen, 55-56).

In another moment, taking refuge from the bombings in a dark cellar, they opened the Gospel to the solemn page of Jesus’ prayer before dying: “Father, may they all be one” (Jn 17:11). As they read by candlelight the difficult and profound passage, Lubich remembers, “We had the impression that we had been born for those words, for unity, for contributing toward building it in the world. The new commandment, which we made the effort to keep alive among us always, achieved precisely that, unity.” (Focolare in Brief, Origins).

When the war ended, people of the community traveled to other cities for work or study, and carried with them their newly discovered lifestyle. Focolare houses were opened first in other cities in Italy, then throughout Europe, and starting in the late 1950s and into the 1960s, in North and South America, Asia and Africa. (Focolare in Brief, Diffusion).

Little did Lubich know at the time that the disastrous ruins of war-torn Trent would serve as the backdrop for the initial growth and development of a movement which now involves about five million people of different races, cultures, social backgrounds and religious traditions. They are committed to being seeds of social and spiritual renewal, to building a more united world. They often face what war-torn Trent continues to represent, all over the world—not only war and violence, but also poverty, injustice, and discord of every kind, in families, and between people of different religions and cultures, and they work to build up a community in which a life of mutual love brings the gift of unity. (Uelmen, 54-55).

As marked by conferral on Lubich of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion in 1977, the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in 1996, and numerous other awards, over the course of its history, as it has spread throughout the globe, the Focolare Movement has emerged as an effective instrument for “constructive dialogue and creative interchange between peoples of different cultural backgrounds and religious faiths.” (Smoker). As Pope John Paul II summarized in his message to Lubich on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Movement, “the members of the Focolare Movement have become apostles of dialogue, the privileged way to promote unity: dialogue within the Church, ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, dialogue with non-believers.” (John Paul II, Letter).

## **B. The Cultural Project: The Association for Cultural Studies**

As with the Focolare Movement itself, its cultural project is rooted not in a strategic action plan, but in, as Fondi and Zanzucchi describe, a “love story.” At a certain point in her own philosophy studies, Lubich was struck by this thought: “You are inconsistent because you are searching for the truth in philosophy while every morning you are in communion with the one who is truth: Jesus.” This, she explained, gave her the push “to put my beloved books in the attic, in order to follow him.” What emerged was a spirituality which, Lubich explains, “if it is lived, it brings us to have present in our midst Jesus, who is way, truth, and life.” (Fondi, 466-68).

In a writing from 1949, Lubich poetically drew out the connections between the spiritual life and the transformation of culture: “The point is that we need to bring God back to life in us, then keep him alive, and therefore overflow him onto others like bursts of Life that revive the dead. And we need to keep him alive among us by loving one another . . . Then everything changes, politics and art, education and religion, private life and recreation. Everything.” (Lubich, *Resurrection*, 101).

Further, she explained, when academics who live the spirituality of unity enkindle the presence of the Risen One in their midst, then each discipline can be discovered anew. Since January 1991, the Focolare’s interdisciplinary study center (also familiarly known as the “Abba School”) has met regularly to probe the spiritual patrimony of the Movement in light of Christian doctrine and tradition, and to explore the novelty that it offers for the cultural challenges of our times. (Fondi, 470-72). The group is comprised of university professors, lecturers and researchers, of various specializations in theology, philosophy, and the social and natural sciences. The recently formed “Sophia” Association for Cultural Studies (“ACS”) is an offshoot of this experience.

Each meeting begins with the “pact” of being ready to give their lives, one for the other, if not physically at least spiritually and intellectually. Concretely, this requires a readiness to “let go” of one’s own way of thinking in order to try to enter into the thought of the other. For example, an expert in Thomism “lets go” of this expertise in order to “enter into” the thought of another, perhaps an expert in Bonaventure, or another school of thought. From this communion emerge intuitions that become “truth” for everyone. The same method is applied not only within the various theological currents, but also among all the different disciplines represented, among experts of different Christian churches, and in comparisons with the affirmations of the great religions. (Fondi, 471).

Theologian Jesus Castellano, former president of the Carmelite University in Rome and an associate member of the ACS, has described the connection between the spiritual commitment and the intellectual intuitions that emerge. He wrote: “The experience of such a life that impels us to live for one another, ‘making ourselves one’ with our neighbor, raises our life to a continual and wonderful supernatural level, to a height where love is the supreme law, and the primary and indispensable condition of all other actions. By living in God, by living God’s own life, we discover how God sees and wants things to be.” (Castellano, 11).

As theologian David Schindler summarized in his introduction to an English translation of a recent collection of essays from the study center, this method “testifies to how we must resist assuming that the response needed to the problems of our time can be

realized easily or quickly—for example, through management techniques or political strategies or ‘expert’ analyses.” Rather, Schindler surmises, the study center embodies a much more promising method: “namely, a reflection sustained by and centered in a life of community and entailing a transformation of one’s being and consciousness through prayer, the suffering of difference, and the like, all of which presuppose the duration of time.” (Schindler, 14).

### **C. Fostering a Global and Integrative Culture in Youth**

In the mid-1960s, the youth branches of the Focolare Movement began to take shape. In the various Focolare communities which at that point already dotted the globe, youth of various ages, in college, high school, and in elementary school, began to gather in small groups to repeat, in essence, the initial experience of the group of young girls in Trent. On the basis of a “pact” to love one another, they share their joys and difficulties in living out the spirituality of unity, and then reach out to build relationships of love and unity with the youth around them. (Fondi, 245).

The “credo” on the current website of “Youth for a United World,” their vehicle for outreach to vast numbers of youth throughout the world, is indicative of the kind of culture of global awareness that the Focolare spirituality fosters in youth:

We believe it is possible to build a better world, one with greater solidarity, and to create one human family where the identity of each person is respected. We use every available means to foster unity, to heal the existing disunities in this worldwide family: among generations; between groups and movements; among Christians of varied denominations; between believers of different religions. We want to tear down the barriers that divide ethnic groups, races, peoples, cultures, social classes, people of different convictions and persuasions.

Sensitivity to the roots of global and local injustice and division is only one dimension of the way in which the Focolare spirituality fosters a global culture in youth. They also participate in a culture that encourages them to see love as the heart of every aspect of their life, and so to discover in their own everyday lives “a wonderful unity.” As Lubich described, in contrast to “a boring and flat existence made up of disconnected fragments, in which the time for lunch has nothing to do with the time for prayer, or outreach is relegated to a specific time slot,” by living the spirituality of unity one discovers how every aspect of life—even the most concrete and mundane—can be rooted in and an expression of love. (Lubich, *Via Nuova*, 66-67). Youth also discover that studies, too, can be lived as an aspect of love. As Lubich explained, we study because “we love God, and when you love someone you want to know everything you can possibly know about that person.” Further, every kind of knowledge can be at the service of love. (*Via Nuova*, 141).

## **II. THE SOPHIA SUMMER SCHOOL FOR A CULTURE OF UNITY**

### **A. Overview and Method**

The development of the Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity is best understood against the backdrop of the elements discussed above. For more than sixty years, the Focolare Movement's spirituality of unity has helped generations of ordinary citizens in every continent to open their hearts and their minds to a "global" culture in the strongest and deepest sense of the word. Such entails not only an awareness and sensitivity to the international and interdisciplinary nature of the problems and the solutions to heal the wounds of our globalizing world. It also entails a capacity to see one's own life as an integrated whole, and to live out one's commitment to build relationships of love and unity in the context of actual and concrete local and global communities.

The Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity brings together professors and students who both have a strong preparation in living the spirituality of unity. They bring to the school a well-cultivated appreciation of the "unity between life and thought" and a readiness "to build bridges between people and disciplines," and "to look for the truth in love." (Zanzucchi, 52; Baggio, 54).

An experimental stage of the program began in August 2001, in Switzerland, with a group of 50 university and graduate students enrolled in a vast range of diverse faculties, from physics, chemistry and biology to psychology, communications, law and philosophy, to name just a few. The core group of 20 professors, mainly ASC members, included 9 experts in the various fields of theology and 11 specializing in human and natural sciences, several of whom hold degrees in both theology and science.

Subsequent courses held in Rome (2002) and the small ecumenical Focolare village near Munich, Germany, "Oekumenisches Begegnungszentrum" (2003, 2004), added fifty students a year, and a new level of study. The current enrollment is at 200, divided into four levels. Currently, students are from 36 different countries in Eastern and Western Europe, North and South America, Australia and Asia, including one representative from India and two from Africa. The common language of the school is Italian. No tuition is charged, but students are expected to cover their travel and living expenses, often with support from their local communities.

Each day begins with a commentary on a Bible passage which students and professors are encouraged to put into practice throughout the day, during the lecture sessions, and in the informal moments spent together. A typical day includes four hours of lectures, one hour of individual or group study, and one hour of dialogue with the professors of the day. Students are encouraged to offer their own contributions, not only through questions, but also by sharing their personal insights related to the lectures.

About half of the curriculum focuses on material of a more theological, spiritual and ethical nature, and the other half pertains to the various social and natural sciences. The latter are always considered from the unifying perspective of "wisdom," that is of the insights they can derive from religion and spiritual experience. Ample space is also given to material in ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue.

The method is based on a "Trinitarian logic", in which the professors work to build among themselves an intense communion and a profound dialogue which in and of

itself overcomes the split between spirituality and the various disciplines. As ACS Professor and current director of the summer school, Piero Coda explained, this starts the process of “genuine interdisciplinary conversation, in contrast to the fragmentation of thought which so plagues our current educational system.” (Fondi, 482). As much as possible, ACS professors elaborate their lesson plans together. During the school, the “faculty room” includes a monitor through which the professors of other disciplines can follow the lessons of their colleagues. (Parmense, 51).

Simultaneously, relationships of reciprocal love also extend to the dynamic between teachers and students. As Professor Coda describes:

By listening attentively to the students, professors are able to catch profound inspirations in the thought of the students. And, vice versa, the students are able to help the professors express themselves in the most complete and comprehensible way, if their attitudes are not merely utilitarian, but based on the love which is modeled on the new commandment [of Jesus]. (Fondi, 482).

## **B. Seeds of a Global University**

In what sense can the structures and methods of the Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity be described as “global”? The following sections briefly describe a few of the highlights of its international, interdisciplinary, integrative characteristics.

### ***1. International***

First, the Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity is “global” in the most obvious sense: both students and professors are from all over the globe. Its international make-up creates the possibility to look at cultural issues and questions from a global perspective.

Such is possible also because of their concrete commitments to help one another through a communion of material goods that facilitates students’ travel from developing countries. As ACS professor and Reformed tradition theologian Stefan Toeblér reflected, this is especially important—for the meeting of students from poorer and wealthier nations provokes a “meeting of basic differences among people and also among disciplines. The international dimension invites change.” (Zanzucchi, 53).

The novelty, however, is perhaps not so much the composition, for exchange programs in other universities have long facilitated this type of encounter. The real novelty of the Sophia Summer School’s approach is the spiritual disposition that it fosters and that forms the basis for a truly global exchange.

As ACS sociology professor Vera Araújo summarized, “In the lessons, during meals, in the spontaneous conversations that emerge, in the time for relaxation and sports, one can sense a true dialogue that emerges from respect, and an attitude that welcomes the other as gift. Each feels respected not only personally, but also together with their own cultural experiences and customs. Each is invited to offer the gift of oneself and of one’s culture, and so the days are filled with dynamic exchange. Welcoming the culture



of the other in turn opens one's own heart and mind. It is an enriching experience.” (Parmense, 50).

Brazilian sociology and psychology student Herivelto Pereira Souza confirmed, “I have never had an experience like this, in which so many different cultures come together, each one trying to be a gift for the other, also on an intellectual level. In our own countries, it is difficult to emerge from our social and intellectual frameworks, but here we are able to do it.” (Parmense, 50).

## ***2. Interdisciplinary***

Second, the Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity is global in the sense that it aims to offer a broader vision of the wholeness of wisdom, and is thus interdisciplinary in the deepest sense of the word. As Professor Araújo explained: “Rather than aiming at an increasing specialization, our summer school proposes to these young people a global approach to education. Such does not dismiss the importance of specialization, but aims at developing a taste for global knowledge that can give meaning and a goal to the intellectual life because it opens up the possibility of a vision of the whole. The approach is certainly not easy, and it is in a sense even risky. But we have seen it is an experiment which results in a certain intellectual serenity—a rare gift in our times.” (Zanzucchi, 53).

The brief courses in no way intend to exhaust the content of the material. Rather they aim to offer students a new methodology to approach the various materials. The basic anthropology which undergirds the project in and of itself aims to overcome a rigid division between the disciplines. (Parmense, 50). As Claire Neveaux, a Paris law student in the second year of the course, reflected, “For me this variety is no longer strange, because I have understood that every discipline adds to my understanding. And to associate the theological disciplines with other more scientific disciplines is not bad: who said that reason and contemplation are incompatible?” (Parmense, 50).

## ***3. Integral and Intergenerational***

Third, the Sophia Summer School's approach is global in the sense that it builds on a vision of the human person and culture in which the spiritual, intellectual, and physical dimensions are seen as an integral whole. Exploration and discussion of theory are deeply connected to the commitment to practice, which in turn is understood in the context of the renewal of authentic relationships in a concrete life of community. The Sophia Summer School's approach also works to break down boundaries between the generations by fostering genuine relationships of equality through which each discovers the full dimensions of their roles as professors, students or administrators.

As ACS economics professor Luigino Bruni admits, the founders of the great universities dreamed of creating authentic educative communities, but most fall short. “Increasingly, students, professors and administrators feel that our institutions are increasingly taking on the character of businesses rather than communities.” (Parmense, 49).

In contrast, integral to the Sophia Summer School curriculum and method is an effort to build a genuine community that encompasses all aspects of life. As most of the

students and professors are Roman Catholic, Eucharistic communion holds a central place in the day. Communion is also fostered by sharing of the effects of living out the scriptural passage chosen for the day, and by fostering attentive care for other students and professors as neighbors to be loved. (Parmense, 50). Such creates, as Zanzucchi observed, a “human and divine tapestry” which allows the Spirit to manifest itself as wisdom. (Zanzucchi 2001, 57).

Thus far, the ACS method has proved to generate an authentic community that Professor Bruni believes is attributable to the effort to foster genuine reciprocity, and therefore relationships of equality and friendship between students, professors, and secretaries. “On the basis of this social dimension of fraternity, we discover that each is then able to fulfill his or her specific role as student or professor. During the lessons, through the experiences of reciprocity—in which listening is just as important as speaking—it often happens that I discover new intuitions and ideas that I would have never thought of. Lessons then move beyond the exposition of ideas or truths, and become a real possibility for the creation of culture.” (Parmense, 49). Brooke Rubino, an Australian pharmacy student, captured well the dynamic: “Our professors, in addition to being available, are also able to change directions when one of us students suggests something interesting. Where else can you find this?” (Parmense, 49).

Life in community among professors and students also includes sports, prayer, meals, washing dishes, and excursions together. (Zanzucchi, 53). As Leoluca Brancaccio, a law student from Italy reflected, “I am used to a university environment in which the professors really had nothing to do with the students except for their academic duties. It took me some time to realize that our professors were always available to continue our conversations—and not only to share their cultural insights, but also to communicate something of their personal lives. . . . [In my university in Italy] I was a number, here I am a person.” (Parmense, 49).

### **C. The Results**

The students’ response to the Sophia Summer School’s approach has been enthusiastic. Many reflect that while they once suffered a kind of schizophrenic division between their faith and their intellectual endeavors, through this program they have come to discover a rich unity of vision.

As a student of literature put it: “The mark which the summer school has left on me is this: it has unified everything, within me and outside of me, in the light of Wisdom.” And a chemistry student echoed: “Discovering and experiencing that all Truth is one . . . has given me a unity of mind and soul.”

An Italian physics student commented, “The categories with which I consider my role as a researcher have changed profoundly. I feel that all knowledge is now a part of me, including theology. It is a new understanding, a capacity to embrace knowledge as one.” Another student, a Brazilian about to receive her doctorate in math, commented: “Trying to place myself in God and look at the sciences from this viewpoint has been a great novelty. I discovered a mathematics rich in ‘seeds’ of God’s wisdom.”

Students also carry with them new paradigms and methods for approaching their disciplines. Julie Lacoq, a Belgian psychology student recounts:

At first I was afraid that by looking at my discipline from a spiritual standpoint I would lose the scientific perspective. I didn't think it was possible to have unity between the two elements. Here I have seen how it is possible to find within the various currents of psychology "seeds of the Word." The perspective from the spirituality of unity is not simply one theory among many, but a new paradigm, a paradigm of love, with which it is possible to recognize the truth in the different theorists. Above all, now I see an author as a person with whom I can enter into a relationship, to understand what the author brings to me, and what I carry within myself. (Baggio, 54-55).

#### **D. The Follow-Up**

Upon returning to their universities, students remain in close contact with one another and the ACS professors via e-mail throughout the year. Several have initiated or completed their final thesis at their home universities in consultation with ACS professors. This process has enabled them to integrate into their ongoing studies the new perspectives they have gained during the summer school.

In addition, many of these youth in turn animate local groups in their respective countries, transmitting what they have gained to others. This process is also encouraged by their interaction with local Focolare communities that in turn reinforce the integration between spirituality and intellectual life, and between theory and practice. The comment of an electrical engineering student in this regard is especially promising: "Finding the unity of knowledge has opened new horizons, building me up as a whole person, from both an intellectual and a human perspective. . . . I want to cherish the communion we experience here in such an authentic and powerful way and continue in it with others so that our fields of study and our lives may continue to be enlightened, transformed, and renewed."

Or as a psychology graduate of the program described her continuing journey: "Each year in the experience of the summer school we found that Wisdom could penetrate our minds only if sustained by a concrete life of deep mutual love for one another. Analogously, I am now beginning to experience in my personal life a 'filling in the gaps' between spiritual life, intellectual formation, and my profession."

Now the first "graduates" of the four-year program have been inserted into the larger international gatherings of ACS associates, which enable them to continue the conversation with ACS professors as well as other associate members who are working in the different fields. This structure encourages both a continued interdisciplinary approach as well as an ongoing exchange regarding efforts to probe the contours of specific disciplines in light of the spirituality of unity.

### **III. THE FUTURE**

Given the positive results and the promising structures for follow-up, one might ask whether this model could be replicable for other forums and formats. The answer is no and yes.

No, in the sense that the elements which converge in the Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity—the cultural humus of the Focolare spirituality, and the particular commitments and experiences of ACS professors and Focolare youth—are in many ways unique. Further, because the synergy between the elements is unique, it would be impossible to reduce it to a replicable formula or a generic plan.

But yes, in the sense that the seed of this project corresponds to the deepest yearnings of educational endeavors of the past and other integrative models. In many ways, it captures the pulse of the schools of Aristotle and Plato, the Lyceum and the Gymnasium, in which the common life among students and teachers was a reality, and the purpose of the dialogic method was to bring together life and thought. It expresses the aspirations of the medieval *universitas*, the unity of knowledge, in which all of the disciplines present in the same educational place, gathered around theology, in an open dialogue with culture and scientific discovery. It is also in harmony with the methods of great eastern educational communities, especially the Hindu *ashram* in which the guru transmits not only one's knowledge, but also one's faith. (Fondi, 482).

And yes, in the sense that all Local Society Initiatives aim to irradiate beyond their local experience in order to have broader influence and to contribute to renewal of the larger culture. As both ACS professors and students who participate in the Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity return to their own universities throughout the globe, the integral vision of the whole that they carry within them undoubtedly influences their research, their pedagogy, and their life within academic communities.

And certainly yes, in the sense that the active dynamic of the Sophia Summer School for a Culture of Unity is a living “laboratory” from which much can be gleaned for a broad appreciation of the necessary elements of a global university.

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