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**“LIGHT FROM LIGHT”:  
THE NEW EVANGELIZATION AND THE MISSIONARY VOCATION OF  
THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| AA      | Apostolicam Actuositatem  |
| AAS     | Acts Apostolicae Sedis  |
| ACPI    | The Association of Christian Philosophers of India                  |
| AG      | Ad Gentes   |
| AMAT    | Archives, Major Archdiocese of Trivandrum                           |
| CA      | Centesimus Annus  |
| CBCI    | Catholic Bishops' Conference of India                               |
| CCEO    | Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium                               |
| CD      | Christus Dominus  |
| CDF     | Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith                          |
| CELAM   | Consejo Episcopal Latino AMericano                                  |
| CIC     | Codex Iuris Canonici  |
| CL      | Christifideles Laici  |
| CPCSMCC | Code of Particular Canons of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church     |
| CPL     | Catholics' Pastoral Letter  |
| CT      | Catechesi Tradendae   |
| DeV     | Dominum et Vivificantem   |
| Diss.   | Dissertation for the Doctorate in partial fulfillment of the degree |
| DM      | Daughters of Mary   |
| DV      | Dei Verbum  |
| EN      | Evangelii Nuntiandi   |
| FABC    | Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference                             |

|      |   |
|------|---|
| FC   | Familiaris Consortio                                  |
| GCD  | General Catechetical Directory                        |
| GE   | Gravissimum Educationis                               |
| GS   | Gaudium et Spes                                       |
| KCBC | Kerala Catholic Bishops' Conference                   |
| LG   | Lumen Gentium   |
| LRC  | Liturgical Research Centre of the Syro-Malabar Church |
| MC   | Marialis Cultus                                       |
| MF   | Mysterium Fidei                                       |
| MIT  | Massachusetts Institute of Technology                 |
| NA   | Nostra Aetate   |
| NCCB | National Conference of Catholic Bishops (U.S.A.)      |
| NCE  | New Catholic Encyclopedia                             |
| OE   | Orientalium Ecclesiarum                               |
| OIC  | Order of the Imitation of Christ                      |
| OIRS | Oriental Institute of Religious Studies               |
| OLA  | Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta                       |
| OR   | L'Osservatore romano                                  |
| PC   | Perfectae Caritatis                                   |
| PO   | Presbyterorum Ordinis                                 |
| PTI  | Press Trust of India                                  |
| AP   | Associated Press                                      |
| SC   | Sacrosanctum Concilium                                |

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|-------|--|
| SIC   | Sisters of the Imitation of Christ             |
| SMCC  | Syro-Malankara Catholic Church                 |
| STh   | Summa Theologiae                               |
| UR    | Unitatis Redintegratio                         |
| USCCB | United States Conference of Catholic Bishops   |
| VJTR  | Vidyajyothi, Journal of Theological Reflection |
| WCC   | World Council of Churches                      |
| WGI   | Win-Gallup International                       |



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

*Lumen gentium cum sit Christus* – so begins the seminal ecclesiological document of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), which was convened to rededicate the Church, in order to transmit ‘the splendor of Christ’, who is the light of the world (cf. Jn 8:12). Church assumed this responsibility by becoming the *universale salutis sacramentum*,<sup>1</sup> to accompany the ‘earthly city’, in its journey to the ‘heavenly city’. She is at the service of the world in obedience to the command of the Lord. In the opening paragraph of *Lumen Gentium*, the Synod Fathers affirmed the close link between the nature of the Church and her ongoing missionary task.<sup>2</sup> The question facing the Church in the present hour is how the Light of Christ can be transmitted to the nations today, as in the past, amidst the cultural strife, religious stagnation, along with the social revolutions of our time. The perennial task of Christian evangelization is how Christians ought to preach an unchanging Truth in an ever-changing world which is challenged by its craving for constant, frenetic stimulus in all areas of life.

By her very nature, constitution, and identity, the Church is missionary. Just as Jesus Christ is *Lumen gentium*, the Church too is called to be “Light of the nations” since her mission is to continue the work of her Head and Spouse. According to Pope Paul VI, evangelization is the God-given vocation of the Church. In his 1975 Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, he writes, “evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. This task and

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964), 48: AAS 57 (1965). Hereafter, LG.; Pope Benedict XVI, referring to this document writes in *Sacramentum Caritas* that the Council in this regard stated that “the Church, in Christ, is a sacrament – a sign and instrument – of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race.” Referring to the saying of Saint Cyprian, Pope Benedict says that the Church shares the communion of the Holy Trinity, as she is the sacrament of Trinitarian communion. Cf. Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (22 February 2007), 16: AAS 99 (2007). Hereafter, SC.

<sup>2</sup> *Lumen Gentium* speaks of the present-day conditions of the world, which add greater urgency to the missionary task of the Church in helping everyone to attain a fuller unity in Christ. Cf. LG 1.

mission are particularly urgent because of the expansive, penetrating severe changes in present-day society. In fact, evangelizing is the grace and vocation proper to the Church; her utmost identity. She exists in order to evangelize”<sup>3</sup> and to light the world with the everlasting light of Christ.

It is only within this context of the universal Church’s vocation to evangelize the world that the particular missionary role of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church (hereafter, SMCC) can be understood. This thesis will examine the factors, which precipitated and necessitated the call of the Universal Church for the New Evangelization as well as the theological foundations of the New Evangelization before examining the unique vocation of the SMCC in this endeavor. This research will not only evaluate the effectiveness of the SMCC in responding to the modern day challenges, but also provide several missionary models of the SMCC in view of helping other Churches. Some practical suggestions to evaluate the missionary endeavors of the Church are inducted into the thesis in order to improve further, in fully realizing her missionary vocation.

### **A.1 Thesis Statement and Project Overview**

The varieties of cultural and intellectual challenges faced by the Church at the present hour are global phenomena. These challenges, generate formidable obstacles, and at the same time, genuine opportunities to the Church in fulfilling her missionary vocation. The solution to the present difficulties is to be found in the call for new evangelization, i.e., the perennial vocation of the Church to renew and reinvigorate her missionary consciousness. However, the solutions to the present challenges would differ in the East and the West insofar as they experience these global phenomena differently. The Western culture must once again recover its Christian roots and identity. The Church needs to equip herself in aiding the faithful for this

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<sup>3</sup> Pope Paul VI. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 13: AAS 68 (1976), Hereafter, EN.

recovery, even though it demands an inevitably painful and complex process. Moreover, in the East, the call for a new evangelization must reinvigorate the Church in facilitating the Eastern culture in its discovery, and being shaped by a Christian identity. New evangelization of the Church in the East must lead to a renewed enthusiasm and zeal for an evangelization of the societies and cultures of its affected countries.

As an Eastern Catholic Church, SMCC has a unique role not only in responding to the challenges of the present hour but also in the work of the New Evangelization. The SMCC fulfills this missionary vocation by remaining faithful to her traditions in order to discover a renewed missionary spirit, and in directing her people to live a faithful Catholic life to become a witness to all nations. As a result, the SMCC will truly be “Light from Light” in reflecting Christ, who is *Lumen gentium*.

In order to manifest this, the present study is divided into three chapters. A brief description of these chapters is given below.

- 1) In the first chapter, the thesis systematically evaluates the present challenges to evangelization such as atheism, globalization, secularization, relativism, modernism and postmodernism, individualism, materialism and religious pluralism. These terms are defined, analyzed and interpreted in their relationship to new evangelization. Justice is rendered to the proponents of these “theories” but, at the same time evaluated critically from a Catholic perspective. While it is necessary to briefly examine the historical origin and development of these ideas, greater emphasis is given to their impact on the world in general and Catholic Church in particular.

Considerations are also given to arguments that some of these factors have not affected the religious behavior of the people in the West.<sup>4</sup>

- 2) In the second chapter, the theological foundations of the New Evangelization are discussed in order to demonstrate its urgency and necessity as a proper response to the challenges of the contemporary era. Though the aim is not to study the development of the concept as such, it will be necessary to set forth the Church's teaching on evangelization and new evangelization. Thus, this chapter gives emphasis to the encyclicals and other writings of the Popes, as well as documents of the Magisterium and the writings of select theologians. Most of the contemporary theologians in this area are consulted in order to give a broad and comprehensive understanding of the theme. In the second part of this chapter Charles Taylor's "Riccian Model" is proposed as one of the answers to the present day challenges to provide a practical dimension to the study.
- 3) The third chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, the cultural, religious, historical and liturgical background of the SMCC is discussed. This evaluation of the background is conducted in view of discussing the theme of new evangelization in relation to the missionary consciousness of SMCC. Examples of these themes include multi-religious and multi-cultural background of India, the introduction of the Gospel to India by St. Thomas the Apostle, later historical developments and the practice of the Antiochene Liturgy in the SMCC.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Peter Berger, a renowned sociologist of religion, argued in his earlier writings that secularization would adversely affect the religious practices of the people in the West. But later, he recanted his position acknowledging that even after decades of secularization process, people in the West are heavily religious. Cf. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, NY: 1967). ; *A Far Glory: The Quest for Faith in an Age of Credulity* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

In the second part of the final chapter, particular topics related to the SMCC are discussed in view of linking them with the theme of new evangelization. They include the missionary vision of Servant of God Mar Ivanios, the religious congregations in the SMCC, the relevance of reunion, ecumenism, inter-religious dialogue, inculturation, social apostolate and so on. The birth of new movements and a few practical suggestions to face the future challenges are also part of this section.

## **A.2 Review of Prior Research and Justification for Further Research**

This thesis not only develops prior research but also integrates various aspects of new evangelization, ecclesiology, and ecumenism to form a coherent but unique contribution. The justification for this work lies in this integration. That is, while some, like James Wehner, have studied the new evangelization as “theological concept” and traced its development in the writings of the Popes,<sup>5</sup> and while others have studied either current obstacles to evangelization,<sup>6</sup> or the Western Church’s role in the New Evangelization,<sup>7</sup> an integrative study of how Eastern Churches might contribute has not been conducted. By examining the particular role of the SMCC in responding to challenges of the present time through the new evangelization, this dissertation seeks to help the Church live out her catholicity and seeks to **bridge** East and West to promote a common challenge. But, at the same time, this work is heavily indebted to, and relies upon, the prior research conducted in these fields.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. James A. Wehner, “The Theological Concept ‘Evangelization’: A Study of the Documents of the NCCB (1970-2000) in context of the Magisterium of Paul VI and John Paul II: Pastoral Implications for the Church in the United States,” STD diss., (Rome: Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Avery Dulles, *Evangelization for the Third Millennium* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *A Turning Point for Europe?* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010) and Ratzinger, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009).

## **A.3 Methodology**

### **A.3.1 Approach**

The methodology of the proposed project is historical, theological, analytical, contextual, critical and reflective. We will define and then critically analyze the contemporary cultural, sociological and intellectual challenges, which partially influenced the call for the new evangelization. As we progress through the research, the theological foundations of evangelization and new evangelization will be analyzed to situate them in the present day context: especially of the SMCC. The documents of Vatican II and the post-Conciliar documents along with reflections of theologians will be analyzed. The historical background of the SMCC is discussed only in so far as it relates to our study since various attempts have been made to explain by different authors. The critical and reflective part is necessitated to aid the missionary endeavors of the Church, particularly of the SMCC.

### **A.3.2 Scope**

The scope of the proposed project is to examine the particular missionary vocation of the SMCC in the 21<sup>st</sup> century on the basis of contemporary obstacles to evangelization and magisterial teaching on evangelization and the new evangelization. The intended audience is the Church universal, that is, it includes non-Malankara faithful as well as members of the SMCC. Insofar as it deals with the role of a particular Eastern Catholic Church in the universal mission of the Catholic Church, it would benefit all Catholics. Since it touches upon the Christian response to the challenges faced by Christians, and indeed all people throughout the world, it would benefit everyone. Insofar as it deals specifically with the SMCC, it would benefit members of the SMCC, hierarchy and laity alike. The scope of this proposed project assumes a personal nature in view of SMCC's earnest desire for the Canonization of Mar Ivanios, the

Servant of God, by shedding some light into his life in relation to his attempt to revitalize the Malankara Church with his missionary vigor and enthusiasm.

#### **A.4 Limitations**

This thesis has certain limitations:

- 1) It is not a comprehensive study of the SMCC as it deals with the history, liturgy, and theology of the SMCC solely from the perspective of evangelization.
- 2) Though it proposes practical and concrete suggestions to aid the missionary efforts of the SMCC, it cannot guarantee the full implementation or even the reception of these ideas since that depends on various other factors.
- 3) The dissertation is also limited insofar as it examines how the SMCC alone participates (can participate) in the new evangelization. In that it does not examine the Catholic response from a more universal perspective: it is limited.

#### **A.5 Aims and Objectives**

The following are the aims and objectives of the proposed project:

- 1) To demonstrate the gravity of present obstacles to evangelization and the practice/flourishing of religion;
- 2) To show that these challenges are faced throughout the world and not just in Western societies;
- 3) To present the new evangelization as the Catholic response to these challenges;
- 4) To study the history, liturgy, cultural background and theology of the SMCC, in order to formulate models of evangelization which are organic to her patrimony;
- 5) To invite the rest of the members of the Universal Church to a better understanding of the role of the Eastern Churches, especially of the SMCC in the

evangelization work of the Church, and to show that the East has a lot to offer to the West and vice versa.

- 6) To propose a model to the non-Catholic Malankara Churches of the difference the SMCC is making due to the Catholic communion and that the same benefits in the missionary endeavors could be enjoyed by all, at least in improving a better ecumenical relationship, if not more.
- 7) To provide more information on the life of Mar Ivanios through the works of the SMCC and give some theological insights in accelerating the Canonization process of the Servant of God, Archbishop Mar Ivanios, the first Metropolitan Archbishop of the SMCC.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL MILIEU OF NEW EVANGELIZATION

#### 1.1 Introduction

The present intellectual and cultural milieu of the world not only challenges the evangelization efforts of the Church, but also is responsible for the “split between the gospel and culture”.<sup>8</sup> These challenges are similar to symptoms of illness; left untreated, they may develop into something far worse. It is essential to understand the context in which the Church finds herself in this era, so we can properly assess how the Church can adequately respond to these challenges and fulfill her task of evangelization. In other words, diagnosing the symptoms will help the Church to provide a cure that revitalizes the ailing body of the Church. Admittedly, it is primarily in the European and American context that these symptoms appear, but left untreated the “sickness” will eventually spread to the rest of the world. This chapter will examine several of the major intellectual and cultural factors which prompted the Church’s call for the new evangelization.<sup>9</sup> The major issues which need our attention – atheism, secularization, globalization, relativism, individualism, materialism, (post)modernism, and religious pluralism – are treated as philosophical and sociological disciplines. They are evaluated for their success in creating challenges seeking a Church response. Continuing the metaphor of illness: examining the severity of the symptoms.

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<sup>8</sup> Pope Paul VI, in his exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (no. 20), notes that the split between the Gospel and culture is the split of our time. Since culture(s) need to be regenerated through an encounter with the Gospel in every age, the Church should make every effort to evangelize them.

<sup>9</sup> The terms ‘evangelization’ and ‘new evangelization’ will be defined and developed in the second chapter.

The existence of a large body of literature complicates any effort to understand this complex phenomenon.<sup>10</sup> A synthetic and general approach is adopted here in order to situate these intellectual and cultural developments in relation to our analysis of new evangelization. The breakdown of the early worldview based on Greek and Christian thinking began with developments in science<sup>11</sup> and the spread of Enlightenment ideas like Cartesian rationalism and Kantian idealism.<sup>12</sup>

A failure to understand the challenges posed by these developments will inevitably lead to a failure not only of Christianity but also for any religion based on divine revelation. Rather than branding the Enlightenment the ‘beginning of modern paganism’,<sup>13</sup> an intellectually oriented faith is necessary to tackle these challenges. Paul’s ἄγνωστος Θεός (“unknown God”, cf. Acts 17: 16-34) in the *Areopagus*, Justin Martyr’s adoption of Greek philosophy, and Aquinas’s use of Aristotelian thinking are a few examples from the history of the Church of such an intellectually oriented faith. The ‘crisis of faith’ is also a ‘crisis of education’ primarily in knowing the root

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the famous Canadian political philosopher and social scientist Charles Taylor begins his book *A Secular Age* asking the question “What does it mean to say that we live in a secular age?” Then he goes on answering the question in 874 pages. Cf. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Scientific discoveries of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries especially of Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Isaac Newton (1642-1727) changed the then understanding of the world. In 1948, the British historian Herbert Butterfield wrote in his book, *The Origins of Modern Science*: “Since [the Scientific Revolution] overturned the authority in science not only of the middle ages but of the ancient world -since it ended not only in the eclipse of scholastic philosophy but in the destruction of Aristotelian physics – it outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and Reformation to the rank of mere episodes, mere internal displacements, within the system of medieval Christendom.” Cf. Gary Rosenberg, ed., *The Revolution in Geology from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Colorado: The Geology Society of America, 2009), 1.

<sup>12</sup> James Byrne writes that the age of enlightenment is one in which people have the courage to think for themselves, no matter who they are or what their status in life is... and to think for yourself meant to think for yourself in all things, including matters of religion. Cf. *Religion and the Enlightenment: From Descartes to Kant*, (London: SCM Press, 1997), x.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Gay has written a two-volume book on this theme: “There were many philosophes in the eighteenth century, but there was only one Enlightenment.” That is how he begins the first volume, then goes on to unfold their warfare against Christianity, even naming them as authentic “modern pagans.” The philosophes threw away myth founded on faith and they put their faith in reason. Cf. *The Enlightenment: An interpretation*, 2 vols. (New York: Knopf, 1966, 1969). Also, *The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1969).

cause of the problems facing the Church today. This chapter is an attempt to understand these challenges in order that the Church may carry out her new evangelization work effectively.

## 1.2 Atheism

Any contemporary discussion of religion requires a thorough understanding of “atheism” since, “atheism and modernity seem to be inextricably linked.”<sup>14</sup> Not only has faith been challenged with unbelief, but religious indifference is on the rise. The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* teaches that many of our contemporaries fail to recognize an intimate and vital link with God and have explicitly rejected it. The Council Fathers, thus, account atheism “among the most serious problems of this age.”<sup>15</sup>

Atheism is commonly understood as a belief system which posits that there is no God. The absence of belief in the existence of God is either a deliberative choice on the part of an individual or arises from a lack of belief in religious teaching regarding the existence of God. Yet, atheism is more complex than this and requires further investigation, which is the purpose of this section.

### 1.2.1 The Inadequacy of a Negative Definition

#### 1.2.1.1 Greek Origin

The word “atheism” itself is derived from Greek: *a* meaning “without” and *theos* meaning “God” or “deity”. Thus, “atheism” literally means “without God”. It involves either the practical or theoretical denial of the existence of a deity.<sup>16</sup> However, ‘American Atheists’, the

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Martin, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 28.

<sup>15</sup> Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes* (7th December 1965), 19: AAS 58 (1966). Hereafter GS.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. George Panthanmackel, “Atheism (Western),” *ACPI Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, et al., Johnson Puthenpurackal (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2010), 117-121.

website of the prominent atheist civil rights organization, rejects the popular idea of defining atheism as a system of belief or a separate religion. Rather, it claims that “atheism is not a disbelief in gods or a denial of gods; it is a lack of belief in gods.”<sup>17</sup> Accordingly what binds atheists together “is a lack of belief in god and supernatural beings.”<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Michael Martin in his book *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification*, further clarifies this negative definition of atheism: “From this standpoint an atheist would simply be someone without a belief in God, not necessarily someone who believes that God does not exist. According to its Greek roots, then, atheism is a negative view, characterized by the absence of belief in God.”<sup>19</sup>

### 1.2.1.2 The Negative Definition

This negative definition is inadequate insofar as it demands an explanation of what has been negated by it, namely, the theological understanding of God. A negative atheist is somebody who is simply devoid of any idea of God. According to George Smith, “An atheist is not primarily a person who believes that a god does *not* exist; rather, he does *not believe* in the existence of a god.”<sup>20</sup> How can you deny something you do not know? This definition thus bears the ‘burden of proof.’

A theologian’s definition of an atheist differs from an atheist’s self-definition. As Gordon Stein points out, a theologian defines an atheist as a person who denies the existence of God. This certainly makes the work of the theologian easier. This position enables the theologian to

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<sup>17</sup> “What is atheism?” in American Atheists, accessed on January 10, 2013. <http://atheists.org/activism/resources/what-is-atheism>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Martin, *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 463.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Paul Cliteur, *The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 37.

point out that there are no atheists (or almost none) and that the so-called atheist is making a ‘leap of faith’ in denying God and it eliminates the need on the part of the theist to have to prove his position: “If the atheist is simply without God, then he is not asserting anything. On the other hand, the theist *is* asserting the existence of something (God)...”<sup>21</sup>

### 1.2.1.3 Toward a Better Definition

For most atheists, it is more acceptable to say that they are without an idea of God rather than to deny the existence of God: “The atheist does not say that there is no God, but he says ‘I know not what you mean by God. I am without the idea of God. The word God to me is a sound conveying no clear or distinct affirmation. I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception, and the conception of which by its affirmer is so imperfect that he is unable to define it for me.’”<sup>22</sup> In his book *Atheism: The Case Against God*, George H. Smith says that in its basic form atheism is not a denial of belief in God, rather it is the absence of belief: “An atheist is not primarily a person who believes that God does not exist; rather, he does not believe in the existence of a god.”<sup>23</sup> A. J. Ayer and the ‘logical positivist school’ expand upon this, further holding the view that it is meaningless to make statements like “there is no God” since the word “God” did not signify anything meaningful or definable. For them, it is a meaningless, self-contradictory word to show a state of impossibility.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Bradlaugh, “A Plea for Atheism (1864)”, accessed on January 10, 2013. [http://infidels.org/library/historical/charles\\_bradlaugh/plea\\_for\\_atheism.html](http://infidels.org/library/historical/charles_bradlaugh/plea_for_atheism.html).

<sup>23</sup> George H. Smith, “Atheism: The Case Against God,” in *An Anthology of Atheism and Rationalism*, ed., Gordon Stein (New York: Prometheus, 1980), 5.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Ibid., 5.

## 1.2.2 Types of Atheism

### 1.2.2.1 Positive and Negative Atheism

Today there are many types of atheism. The broadest categories are positive atheism and negative atheism. The absence of belief in any god or gods is negative atheism since it is not just the absence of belief in a personal theistic God.<sup>25</sup> It is the lack of theistic belief which does not imply that no such entity actually exists.<sup>26</sup> In a narrow sense negative atheism can be understood as the absence of belief in a theistic God. Disbelief in all gods characterizes positive atheism in the broad sense and disbelief in a theistic god in a narrow sense.<sup>27</sup> It is the asserted disbelief in God, because belief in God or gods is unjustified and false.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.2.2.2 Other types of Atheism

*The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics* identifies various types of atheism such as conceptual, dialectical, mythological, practical, semantic, and traditional atheism.<sup>29</sup> For conceptual atheists (since God is hidden from empirical experience) the human mind is not able to construct a concept about God. Hence, “it denies a concept of God, as being truly infinite or being truly God.”<sup>30</sup> Dialectical atheism wants to see the once alive God as dead in the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.<sup>31</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche and companions believed that

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Martin, “General Introduction,” *The Cambridge Companion*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Martin Mickan, *American Atheism: The Community of Reason as a Social Movement of Secularization* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand GmbH: 2012), 13.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Martin, “General Introduction,” *The Cambridge Companion*, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Mickan, *American Atheism*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> Norman Geisler and Lanny Wilson, “Atheism” in *The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics: Surveying the Evidence*, eds., Ed Hinderson and Ergun Caner (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2008), 82-86.

<sup>30</sup> William W. Young III, *The Politics of Praise: Naming God And Friendship in Aquinas And Derrida* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007), 184.

<sup>31</sup> Norman and Lanny, “Atheism” in *The Popular Encyclopedia*, 82

God has never existed but was created by the people as a ‘myth’ by which to live. Thus as a mythological atheist, Nietzsche “was proclaiming that the concept of God was functionally dead – or was at least dying.”<sup>32</sup> This myth has been killed by improvements in man’s understanding and culture’s advancement.<sup>33</sup> Practical atheists confess that God exists but live in complete indifference. “...the practical Atheist confesses a Deity in his words but denies Him in his life and actions.”<sup>34</sup> Logical Positivists claim to be semantical atheists saying that God-talk is dead, thus challenging the meaningfulness of language regarding God. Since it is not possible to talk about God in meaningful terms, “...Using a meaningless word cannot give meaning to our lives.”<sup>35</sup> Traditional (metaphysical) atheism argues that there never was, is, or will be a God: “Metaphysical atheism is based on metaphysical monism – the view that reality is homogenous and indivisible...they explicitly deny the existence of non-physical being”<sup>36</sup>

There are various other ways of classifying atheism based on the philosophical approach such as existential (Sartre), Marxist (Marx), psychological (Freud), capitalistic (Ayn Rand), and behavioristic (B.F. Skinner).

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<sup>32</sup> Gregory A. Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Religion: Losing Your Religion for the Beauty of a Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 165.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Norman and Lanny, “Atheism,” in *The Popular Encyclopedia*, 82.

<sup>34</sup> William Hurd, *A New Universal History of the Religious Rites, Ceremonies, and Customs of the Whole World*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Manchester: Gleave, 1814), 819.

<sup>35</sup> Herman Philipse, “The Incompatibility of Science and Religion,” in *Beyond Conflict and Reduction: Between Philosophy, Science, and Religion*, Louvain Philosophical Studies 16, et al., William Desmond (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 2001), 129.

<sup>36</sup> Robyn E. Lebron, *Searching For Spiritual Unity... Can There Be Common Ground?* (Bloomington: CrossBooks, 2012), 539.

### 1.2.2.3 Contemporary Atheism

Today, there are three prevalent senses of atheism. They are: 1) Classical atheism which is not a general denial of God's existence but the rejection of the deity of a particular nation. Christians were repeatedly called atheists in this sense by their Roman persecutors. 2) Dogmatic atheism which is the absolute denial of God's existence. 3) Practical atheism in which God is not denied, but one's life is lived as if there is no God. There is complete indifference to theistic claims.<sup>37</sup> Almost all atheists hold the position that the invention of "god" is hostile to human life and existence: "When the existence of God is no longer taken for granted, then strength, intellectual freedom, independence and concern for the future of human demand atheism. Belief is a sign of weakness, cowardice, decadence, and no-saying attitude to life."<sup>38</sup>

### 1.2.2.4 Atheism and Agnosticism

In order to fully grasp the meaning of atheism, it is important to understand the word "agnosticism" as originally coined by Thomas Huxley. He presents agnosticism not as a creed, but rather as a method:

Positively the principle may be expressed: In matters of the intellect, follow your reason as far as it will take you, without regard to any other consideration. And negatively: In matters of the intellect, do not pretend that conclusions are certain, which are not demonstrated or demonstrable. That I take to be the agnostic faith, which if a man keep whole and undefiled, he shall not be ashamed to look the universe in the face, whatever the future may have in store for him.<sup>39</sup>

"Agnosticism" has a deeper and wider meaning today than as in Huxley's time. The most common usage of the term could mean 'neither affirming nor denying a belief in God'... Gordon

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Panthanmackel, "Atheism (Western)," *ACPI Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 118.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Huxley, "Agnosticism," in *The Secular Web*, accessed on 10 March 2013. [www.infidels.org/library/historical/thomas\\_huxley/huxley\\_wace/part\\_02.html](http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/thomas_huxley/huxley_wace/part_02.html).



Stein points out: "...an agnostic is one who holds that some aspect of reality is *unknowable*," not suspending the judgment of an issue, "but rather one who suspends judgment because he feels that the subject is unknowable and therefore no judgment can be made."<sup>40</sup> Thus, an agnostic is simply a person who believes that the idea of the supernatural is inherently unknowable by the human mind.

### 1.2.3 Historical Development

*The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* divides the development of ancient atheism into three periods 1) The Classical Period, 2) The Hellenistic Period and 3) The Christian Period.<sup>41</sup> Even though real atheists were a rare phenomenon in the Greek world, there were exceptions. Protagoras is one such advocate of atheism of the classical period. He famously argued: "Concerning the gods, I am unable to discover whether they exist or not or what they are like in form; for there are many hindrances to knowledge, the obscurity of the subject and the brevity of human life."<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Diagoras of Melos became an atheist after praying unsuccessfully to the gods for the return of a lost manuscript.<sup>43</sup> Sextus Empiricus wrote about Euhemerus saying "the traditional gods were important mortals and therefore deified by their contemporaries and considered gods."<sup>44</sup> In the Christian period, the Romans accused Christians of atheism and vice

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<sup>40</sup> Smith, "Atheism: The Case Against God," in *An Anthology*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Jan N. Bremmer, "Atheism in Antiquity," in *The Cambridge Companion*, 12.

<sup>42</sup> William Keith and Chambers Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy (Volume 3): The Fifth Century Enlightenment*, reprinted. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 234.

<sup>43</sup> Kerry Walters, *Atheism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Bloomberg Academic, 2010), 13.

<sup>44</sup> Shackleton Bailey, ed., *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 151.

versa. Justinus called Christians with whom he disagreed “atheists and impious heretics,” while Origen charged the pagans of “atheist polytheism” and “polytheist atheism.”<sup>45</sup>

In *A Short History of Atheism*, Gavin Hyman argues that there is a remarkable shift in the last five hundred years from what had been considered impossible to a viable philosophical option in defending atheism.<sup>46</sup> It is hard to pinpoint exactly when a particular strain of thought of modern atheism began. Enlightenment thinkers provided the intellectual fuel for French revolution and atheism rose to a certain kind of respectability: “In socio-political terms, atheism was suddenly transformed from being an enemy of the state to being almost the official state creed.”<sup>47</sup> Alister McGrath calls the time between the fall of Bastille in 1789 and that of the Berlin Wall in 1989, “the golden age of atheism.”<sup>48</sup> Monumental figures who helped transform the intellectual landscape in favor of atheism include Kant, Hegel, Hume, and Feuerbach. Their attempts gained popular appeal with Karl Marx’s theory of philosophical materialism where idealism joined hands with materialism. By eliminating religious theories from modern thinking they wanted to make religion, especially Christianity, a ‘relic of human history.’

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries also produced a large body of work in this area especially with the rise of New Atheists<sup>49</sup> including Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Christopher Hitchens, and Victor Stenger. Books like *The God Delusion* (Dawkins) and

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Bremmer, “Atheism in Antiquity,” 21.

<sup>46</sup> Gavin Hyman, *A Short History of Atheism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>48</sup> Alister McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 1.

<sup>49</sup> The title “New Atheism” is given to the ideas promoted by a collection of modern writers who have advocated the view that “religion should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized and exposed by rational arguments wherever its influence rises. Cf. Simon Hooper, “The Rise of the New Atheists.” (November 9, 2006), accessed on March 17, 2013. <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/11/08/atheism.feature/index.html?iref=allsearch>.

*God is Not Great* (Hitchens) played a pivotal role in disseminating atheistic ideas as they made it to the best-seller lists. The New Atheists attempt to depict religion as immoral, irrational, and unreal. In 2002, Martin Amis, a novelist wrote:

Since it is no longer permissible to disparage any single faith or creed, let us start disparaging all of them. To be clear: an ideology is a belief system with an inadequate basis in reality; a religion is a belief system with no basis in reality whatever. Religious belief is without reason and without dignity, and its record is near-universally dreadful.<sup>50</sup>

#### 1.2.4 Some Statistics

In his book *Atheism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2010), Kerry Walters claims that non-belief is in fourth place after Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, having 500 to 750 million people who do not accept the existence of God.<sup>51</sup> But he admits, even when religion has lost much of its hold on popular culture, some kind of God-belief is still the majority opinion: "...though modern secularization may not actually have murdered God, it certainly has made many traditional features of God-belief appear quaint and implausible."<sup>52</sup>

But for religious people, the number of those who do not believe in God is alarming. Phil Zucherman, a prolific writer and an ardent supporter and propagator of atheism, gives some statistics on the number of non-believers in the world in his essay, "Atheism: Contemporary Numbers and Patterns." He claims that the number of non-believers might be higher than the statistics show since the designation "atheist" is stigmatized in many societies. He has given statistics from the top fifty countries containing the largest percentage of people who identify as atheistic, agnostic, or nonbeliever in God: "...41 percent of Norwegians, 48 percent of the

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<sup>50</sup> Tina Beattie, *The New Atheists: Twilight of Reason and the War on Religion* (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008), 3.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Walters. *Atheism: A Guide*, 10-11.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

French, and 54 percent of Czechs claimed to not believe in God, but only 10 percent, 19 percent, and 20 percent of those respondents self-identified as ‘atheist,’ respectively.”<sup>53</sup> A recently published, more accurate,<sup>54</sup> Win-Gallup International Global Index of Religiosity and Atheism – 2012, shows that only a minority of the world, mostly concentrated in China and Western Europe, claims to be atheists.<sup>55</sup> But even the small number of atheists (13%) doesn’t include 23% who are included as ‘not religious’. Zuckerman observes that erosion of God-belief is more evident in nations that are healthier (and have lower birth rates), wealthier, better educated, and democratic.<sup>56</sup>

### 1.2.5 The Future of Atheism

It would be futile to attempt to give proof for a spiritual reality to a scientific atheist on his own terms since spiritual and material things belong to two realms. Gerald Bray argues that if the material world points to a reality beyond itself and everything in it cannot be understood clearly, then how much more difficult it would be for a person to understand the realities of the spiritual world:

To the scientific atheist, therefore, the existence of such a spiritual world is irrelevant, because even if it is there, he can neither know it nor say anything meaningful about it. The only way for a Christian to tackle scientific atheism is to examine its presuppositions and demonstrate, if he can, that they are inadequate and unable to account for the data or to perform the tasks that its adherents claim it can do. As a matter of historical fact, Christians have been doing this ever since scientific atheism made its appearance in the seventeenth century, and although they have certainly not eliminated it, they can

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<sup>53</sup> Phil Zuckerman, “Atheism: Contemporary Numbers and patterns,” in *The Cambridge Companion*, 47.

<sup>54</sup> WGI has done interviews with more than 50000 men and women selected from 57 countries across the globe in five continents. The survey also provides trend data for shifts in five continents.

<sup>55</sup> Win Gallup International, “Global Index of Religiosity and Atheism – 2012,” accessed on March 14, 2013. <http://www.wingia.com/web/files/news/14/file/14.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Walters. *Atheism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 11.

reasonably claim to have demonstrated that the atheist case is not nearly as compelling as its proponents think it is.<sup>57</sup>

The complex tensions and intersections between rationality as a means to worldly ends and religious belief have been matter for intellectual debate in the West for some time. “Theology engages the world from the revelation of God, which is always an alien reality to the world.”<sup>58</sup> It is difficult to give a precise answer to the question whether atheism is growing or declining in the world. Gavin Hyman in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* writes: “Atheism, it seems, is a feature or symptom of modernity that is traumatically coming to birth....In this sense, atheism is an inescapable aspect of modernity, atheism and modernity seem to be inextricably linked.”<sup>59</sup> Worldwide atheism is in decline due to the demographic fact that highly religious nations have the highest birth rates, and highly irreligious nations have the lowest birth rates in the world. As Norris and Inglehart observe, “the world as a whole now has more people with traditional religious views than ever before - and they constitute a growing proportion of the world's population.”<sup>60</sup>

### **1.2.6 Atheism and New Evangelization**

In a letter to the bishops of the Church on 10 March 2009 Pope Benedict wrote: “The real problem at this moment of our history is that God is disappearing from the human horizon, and, with the dimming of the light which comes from God, humanity is losing its bearings, with

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<sup>57</sup> Gerald Bray, *God is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 461.

<sup>58</sup> Ralph N. McMichael, *Walter Kasper's Response to modern Atheism: Confessing the Trinity* (New York: P. Lang, 2006), xiii.

<sup>59</sup> Gavin Hyman, “Atheism in Modern History,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism*. 27.

<sup>60</sup> Zucherman, “Atheism: Contemporary Numbers and Patters,” in *The Cambridge Companion*, 59.

increasingly evident destructive effects.”<sup>61</sup> In a summary of 300 replies gathered from around world with regard to the state of the non-believers, the Pontifical Council for Culture made certain observations. The survey detected an increase of unbelief among women who work outside of their homes, a surge in religious indifference and practical atheism, and a new degraded form of believing – ‘believing without belonging’ taking roots in human life.<sup>62</sup> The purpose of this work was to find the best pathway to: bring the good news of the Gospel of Christ to non-believers, misbelievers and to the indifferent in our times; raise their interest; make them question the meaning of their existence; and help the Church transmit her message of faith and love at the heart of cultures, *novo millennio ineunte*.<sup>63</sup>

Atheism originates when God becomes the product of human understanding rather than its origin: “We learned how to think about ourselves and about the world without thinking about God, and when we think about God, we would do so from ourselves and the world.”<sup>64</sup> Walter Kasper believes that atheism represents the dual concern for fidelity and openness. Kasper responds to the challenges of modern atheism as a ‘theological problem,’ i.e. the denial of God in modern atheism is not just a problem *for* theology but a problem *within* theology. His thesis is that the proper theological response to modern atheism is the confession of the Trinity. The God revealed in Jesus Christ is the answer to the critical questions posed by modern atheism.

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<sup>61</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church Concerning the Remission of Excommunication of four Bishops Consecrated By Archbishop Lefebvre,” (March 10, 2009), accessed on March 15, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/letters/2009/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_let\\_20090310\\_remissione-scomunica\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20090310_remissione-scomunica_en.html).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Paul Poupard, *Where is Your God? Responding to the Challenge of Unbelief and Religious Indifference Today* (Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 2004), 14.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>64</sup> Ralph N. McMichael, *Walter Kasper’s Response*, xi

Kasper's response issues from the revelation of God in Jesus, while also including natural theology.<sup>65</sup>

There is no lack of philosophical and theological efforts in answering the atheistic attitudes in the history of the Church. Even though strict atheism was rare in Augustine's time he attacked the denial of God which is arising because of the moral corruption of atheists: "being slaves to desire they do not want to believe in goodness or recognize the truth."<sup>66</sup> Aquinas' five ways of proving the existence of God is the accepted rationalistic way of answering atheistic claims of the non-existence of God. He taught that "the sin of unbelief is greater than any sin that occurs in the perversion of morals," and he recommended that the heretic "be exterminated from the world by death" after the third offense.<sup>67</sup>

The challenge offered to the believers from the part of the atheists is not of intellectual proof, but as Kasper says, it is the crisis of God-talk reflecting a deeper crisis of faith in God, which has been brought about by atheism's assertion that humans can no longer speak of a personal God. It is ultimately a crisis of prayer and of a personal relationship to God.<sup>68</sup> The challenge atheism offers to new evangelization is to give a lived and experienced faith life in order to offer the truth outside of some objective means. Only personal prayer with a personal God can fully reveal this truth to a person. As Kasper wisely notes the atheistic proclamation of the death of God is really the death of the God of philosophy: "The human act of killing God is

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>66</sup> John Rist, "Faith and Reason," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 28.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, rev. by Daniel J. Sullivan, *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 1952), Second Part, Pt. II, Q. 10, A. 3. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Ralph N. McMichael, *Walter Kasper's Response*, 4.

the rejection of a human-made idol. In his estimation, the death of this idol has a positive result. There is now the possibility for a new experience of God or of the holy. Kasper contends that behind modern atheism is the human longing for the God beyond “metaphysical thought.”<sup>69</sup> William Craig observes that what God is interested in is building a love relationship with us, not just getting us to believe that he exists.<sup>70</sup>

Kerry Walters is of the opinion that there are many reasons for people rejecting belief in God. Some people have natural skeptical temperaments, like Nietzsche, and are just “natural atheists;” some others disagree with religious ritualism, and many use the moral hypocrisy rampant among religious leaders to wash their hands off from religion.<sup>71</sup> People belonging to the first category are the difficult ones with whom to deal with since the issue is more psychological and intellectual in nature.

The document “Where is Your God? Responding to the Challenge of Unbelief and Religious Indifference Today” makes some concrete proposals in answering the question of unbelief. Since each atheist or non-believer has his own story, only a dialogue that is: “personal, patient, respectful, loving, sustained by prayer”<sup>72</sup> can bring good fruits. The presence of the Church in the public forum, especially in public witness which involves youth, new city missions, Christian movements and associations, the collaboration of the Church with organizations of non-believers and the promotion of public events on cultural themes are a few

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> William Lane Craig, “Theistic Critique of Atheism,” in *The Cambridge Companion*, 92.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Kerry Walters, *Atheism*, 14.

<sup>72</sup> Pontifical Council for Culture, “Where is Your God? Responding to the Challenge of Unbelief and Religious Indifference Today,” (Vatican City, 2004), accessed on March 20, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/cultur/documents/rc\\_pc\\_cultur\\_doc\\_20040313\\_where-is-your-god\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultur/documents/rc_pc_cultur_doc_20040313_where-is-your-god_en.html).



examples to engage in with the world of non-believers.<sup>73</sup> Cardinal Newman’s two-sided approach of “heart and head,” i.e. through feeling and reason, is one of the best ways to create a culture of meaningful relationship.<sup>74</sup>

### 1.3 Secularism and Secularization

Secularism and secularization play a crucial part in discussions on the new evangelization. These terms have positive and negative connotations with varying nuances offering both opportunities and challenges to the new evangelization.<sup>75</sup> A clear understanding of the definitions of the terms is necessary to analyze the background of the call for new evangelization.

The social, cultural and intellectual milieu developed in the West created an atmosphere of secularization with the evolutionary process of modernization in a sense of receding religious influence.<sup>76</sup> Gerhard Lenski, in his book *The Religious Factor*, talks about the expectation of Western intellectuals since the Enlightenment: that their children and grandchildren would live in a world devoid of the “institutionalized ignorance and superstition”<sup>77</sup> and might see the dawn of a new in era that the “infantile illusions of religion would be outgrown” (Freud).<sup>78</sup> Since many sociologists, until recently, considered secularization a doctrine rather than a theory, its

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Charles Taylor, an intellectual authority in the areas of ‘secularism’ and ‘secularization’ has emphasized “the church, at its best, has always realized that it must express itself in different ways to different cultures and civilizations in order to be heard.” Cf. William D. Wood, “Back to Christendom: One Cardinal’s Response to Secularism,” *Commonweal* 132, no. 12 (June 17, 2005), 9.

<sup>76</sup> Jeffrey K. Hannden, “Toward Descralizing Secularization,” *Social Forces* 65(1987): 588.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Gerhard Lenski, *The Religious Factor* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), 3.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbride, *The Future of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 1.

propositions were taken for granted and were unexamined, even to the extent that *the idea of secularization became sacralized*.<sup>79</sup>

The term ‘secularization’ has acquired a multivalent status on account of the many ways in which it is understood. Numerous processes and phenomena are designated by this term.<sup>80</sup> Many writers just assume that the nuances of secularization are known to the reader, and will proceed to argue for or against them without properly defining them. It is necessary to understand this term properly, “because secularization increasingly benefits from treating it not as a unified process, but an umbrella term that encapsulates multiple processes that do not necessarily presuppose each other and may have distinct etiologies.”<sup>81</sup> The common view of secularization as declining “religiosity,” is mainly based on the evaluation of church attendance, membership, and professed religious faith, giving only a partial outlook of the idea of secularization.

### 1.3.1 Definition

The English term ‘secular’ comes from the Latin *saeculum*, which means a generation, or an age, or the spirit of an age, and could also signify the span of a century.<sup>82</sup> *Saeculum* first appeared as a unit of time among the Etruscans and was adopted by the Romans. It eventually

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. Jeffrey Hannden, “Toward Descralizing Secularization,” 588.

<sup>80</sup> The existence of a large body of literature on the meaning and significance of the term secularization makes it an exhaustive topic for discussion. In the light of the variety of interpretations, ‘secularization’ cannot be considered as a uniform theory of social change. In order to fully grasp its significance, it is necessary to place it in the context of the various interpretations given to it by those who associate themselves, either positively or negatively, with this theory. This section would only treat the topic in a limited way especially in view of, and in its relation to, our discussion of new evangelization.

<sup>81</sup> Jonathan Eastwood and Nikolas Prevalakis, “Nationalism, Religion, and Secularization: an Opportune Moment for Research,” *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (September 2010), 90.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Larry Shiner, “The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall 1967), 208.

became roughly the equivalent of a century.<sup>83</sup> It could also be used to mean “unending time,” signifying “world without end” or “forever and ever” like in the Latin prayer, *in saecula saeculorum*.<sup>84</sup> Early Christian theologians, such as Tertullian and Augustine, developed the notion of *saeculum* to signify the world in which we live, a world characterized by sin and the rejection of God and heavenly realities.<sup>85</sup>

In a practical sense, ‘secular’ originally used to designate those members of the clergy who lived ‘in the world’ rather than a monastic setting,<sup>86</sup> but it also contained a sense of a life or life-style that is at odds with God.<sup>87</sup> In his book *Theology and Social Theory*, John Milbank writes, “The *saeculum*, in the medieval era, was not a space, a domain, but a time – the interval between fall and *eschaton* where coercive justice, private property, and impaired natural reason must make shift to cope with the unredeemed effects of sinful humanity.”<sup>88</sup> By the time it was adapted into the social sciences, ‘secular’ became an ambiguous, but increasingly negative term.<sup>89</sup> The closure of monasteries or the liquidation of goods of the Catholic Church were known in Germany as *saecularisatio* and *secularizare* in legal terminology.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. William H. Swatos and Kevin J. Christiano, “Secularization Theory: The Couse of a Concept,” in *The Secularization Debate*, eds. William Swatos and Daniel Olson (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 3.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Jan M. Bremmer, “Secularization: Notes Toward a Genealogy,” in *Religion: Beyond a Concept*, ed., Hent de Vries (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 432-433.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Vincent P. Pecora, *Secularization and Cultural Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Swatos and Christiano, “Secularization Theory: The Couse of a Concept,” 3.

<sup>88</sup> John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 9.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Swatos and Christiano, “Secularization Theory: The Couse of a Concept,” 3.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Bremmer, “Secularization: Notes Toward a Genealogy,” 434.

In the course of time the term “secular” began to be used to distinguish between civil and ecclesiastical law, land and possessions. Today, ‘secular’ is understood as something distinct from religion, but the root notion of the term is something juxtaposed not to religion but to eternity. The negotiation for the Peace of Westphalia (1648) ought to be noted for using the word “secularization” (*saecularizatio*) in its present connotation where the ecclesiastical land and possessions were transferred to civil control.<sup>91</sup> George Holyoake and the British National Secular Society began to use the term in a more radical sense: ‘secularism’ referring to any social order that was separate from religion without engaging in any direct criticism of religious belief.<sup>92</sup> They advocated a practical philosophy for the people to understand and interpret life without recourse to the supernatural.<sup>93</sup>

The most commonly used sense of ‘secular’ implies a framework of nonreligious ideas that explicitly excludes religion: “To be a secularist, in this sense, is to adopt a stance toward life that clearly separates religious from nonreligious ways of being.”<sup>94</sup> As Charles Taylor puts it: “When certain functions, properties, institutions were transferred out of church control to that of laymen, this was ‘secularization’.”<sup>95</sup> Both cultural and social factors played a significant role in actualizing these changes. On the other hand, some argue that secularization is the development of human culture from its primitive forms to the modern: “For this strand of secularization

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Shiner, “The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research,” 208.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Bryan S. Turner, *Religion and Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularisation and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 129.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Shiner, “The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research,” 208.

<sup>94</sup> Calhoun, *Rethinking Secularism*, 8.

<sup>95</sup> Charles Taylor, “Forward: What is Secularism?,” in *Secularism, Religion and Multicultural Citizenship*, eds., Geoffrey Brahm Levey and Tariq Modood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xviii.

cannot happen unless there has been some prior process by which religious institutions have become differentiated and gone on to acquire some hegemonic force in society.”<sup>96</sup>

### 1.3.2 Historical Development

Hugh McLeod identifies the various stages of the historical development in the secularization of Europe.<sup>97</sup> According to him, most historians identify the period of Enlightenment as the beginning of modern secularization: “Reason was the king, and science would pave the way to a world that would soon rid itself of superstition and tyrants.”<sup>98</sup> It has been continued in recent times, even though the nature and extent of secularization varies in different nations in Europe.

Some historians identify the Industrial Revolution as a pivotal moment in the process of secularization. In the Industrial Revolution, a massive migration of people from villages to towns happened in search of better life opportunities, bringing about a number of changes. As Steve Bruce describes: “...industrialization brought with it a series of social changes – the fragmentation of the life-world, the decline of community, the rise of bureaucracy, technological consciousness – that together made religion less arresting and less plausible than it had been in pre-modern societies. This is the conclusion of most social scientists, historians, and church leaders in the Western world.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Bryan, Eileen, James and Karen Dobbelaere, *Secularization, Rationalism, and Sectarianism: Essays in Honour of Bryan R. Wilson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 89.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848-1914* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2000), 5.

<sup>98</sup> Jeffrey K. Hadden, “Toward Descralizing Secularization Theory,” *Social Forces* 65 (1987): 589.

<sup>99</sup> Steve Bruce, *God Is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 36.

Around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, developments in science, philosophy, and the study of religion led to another stage in the process of secularization. Charles Darwin is the central figure of this time on account of his publication of *On the Origin of the Species*. The scientific developments of this period rendered traditional forms of religion a phenomenon of the past.

The United States had seen rudimentary elements of secularization as a theme in scholarly circles for some time. The secularization of America is different from that of Western Europe, even though America has high economic development. In 1912 Samuel Wilson Brown published a book on *The Secularization of American Education* and Robert and Helen Lynd introduced the term *secularization* in their famous 1929 study *Middletown*<sup>100</sup> to denote many of the developments that later would be generally accepted in the discussions on secularization, including the separation of religion from politics, the restriction of religious activities in public places, etc.<sup>101</sup>

### 1.3.3 Types of Secularization

Larry Shiner speaks of six contemporary types of secularization.<sup>102</sup>

1. Decline of religion: Since many accepted symbols, doctrines and institutions lose their prestige and influence, secularization will culminate in a religion-less society.

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<sup>100</sup> These were sociological case studies conducted by Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd in the city of Muncie, Indiana, famously known as Middletown Studies. The Lynds' findings were detailed in *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*, published in 1929, and *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts*, published in 1937. The word "Middletown" was meant to suggest the average or typical American small city. They conducted an in-depth field research study of a small American urban center to discover key cultural norms and better understand social change.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Bremmer, "Secularization: Notes Toward a Genealogy," 435.

<sup>102</sup> Shiner, "The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research," 211.

2. Conformity with “this world”: Religious people and society at large are more interested in “this world” than in the “supernatural”: “The culmination of secularization would be a society totally absorbed with the pragmatic tasks of the present and a religious group indistinguishable from the rest of society.”<sup>103</sup>
3. Disengagement of society from religion: Society takes the initiative to separate itself by limiting religion to the sphere of private life. This happens in two ways – institutional existential and institutional social. Institutional secularization happens when the state takes over the educational and welfare activities once performed by the churches.
4. Transposition of religious beliefs and institutions: Many things (knowledge, patterns of behavior, institutional arrangements etc.), which were understood as having a divine basis, are transformed into human creation and responsibility: “The culmination of this kind of secularization process would be a totally anthropologized religion and a society which had taken over all the functions previously accruing to the religious institutions”<sup>104</sup>.
5. Desacralization of the world: When man and nature could be explained in a rational-casual way, the phenomenon of the supernatural would play no part. According to Eric Kahler, secularization means, “that man became independent of religion and lived by reason face to face with objectified, physical nature.”<sup>105</sup>
6. Movement from a “sacred” to “secular” society: This is the result of a process of social changes where “all decisions are based on rational and utilitarian considerations.”<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 214

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Ibid. 216.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

Bernard Meland explains this as “the movement away from traditionally accepted norms and sensibilities in the life interests and habits of a people.”<sup>107</sup>

### 1.3.4 Proponents of secularization

In a scholarly article on “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” Warren S. Goldstein divides modern sociologists of religion into three different camps. Talcott Parsons, Robert Bellah and Niklas Luhmann have adopted a functionalist approach to religion. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (students of Alfred Schutz) belong to the school of sociological phenomenologists, and Bryan Wilson, David Martin and Richard Fenn, articulate a dialectical theory of secularization.<sup>108</sup> Dissecting their thoughts is essential in understanding the modern religious-sociological meaning of secularization.<sup>109</sup>

**Talcott Parsons:** Secularization is a process of differentiation where a system, structure, or units divides into two or more subsystems. Religion becomes a subsystem, which is differentiated from the secular spheres of society. Western culture went through a process which resulted in the complete split between the religious and secular: “In this dualism, the religious and secular have become differentiated from each other, yet have interpreted each other, become integrated with each other, and this has resulted in a synthesis.”<sup>110</sup> Even when the secular order changes in the direction provided by religion, its interests dominate over the religion. But at the same times,

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid. 217.

<sup>108</sup> Warren S. Goldstein, “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” *Sociology of Religions*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (2009): 159.

<sup>109</sup> These are mainly philosophers or social theorists who had discussed these topics at length. They are treated here not as opponents or supporters of ‘secularism’ or ‘secularization’ rather intellectuals who grasped different dimensions of these theories. One could include to this list, Charles Taylor, who has elaborately dealt with this topic and has brought so much clarity to the discussions. Because of the importance and relevance of this topic, it has given more space than other issues we would be discussing in this chapter.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 160.



religious interests are present in a ‘more general level’ pervading the secular institutions ‘under disguise’. Religion gave secular institutions the vast array of social functions, which is a good thing according to Parson, since it can concentrate more on their core missions.<sup>111</sup> What is seen as a conflict between the religious and the secular is a conflict between religion and secular religion, which could be reconciled like earlier religious conflicts.<sup>112</sup>

**Robert Bellah:** In his attempt to test Weber’s Protestant Ethic thesis in Japan,<sup>113</sup> Bellah, “saw the roots of economic development (capitalism) lying in religion.”<sup>114</sup> It was in religion that rationalization began and then moved to political as well as economic spheres. The asceticism of Tokugawa religion, similar to the Protestant Ethic with its inner-worldly asceticism, promoted economic rationalization. Thus labor became a ‘sacred obligation’ and religion provided the “values of inner-worldly asceticism, which motivates the individuals in the economic system and legitimized the political system.”<sup>115</sup> Religion can decline only when human nature ceases to be problematic since it is through it that human beings relate to the conditions of their existence. In *Tokugawa Religion* he writes: “Religion reinforced commitment to the central value system by making that value system meaningful in an ultimate sense. The family and the nation were not merely secular collectives but also were religious entities.”<sup>116</sup> It is a myth to believe that with the

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<sup>111</sup> Cf. Hunter Baker, *The End of Secularism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2009), 99.

<sup>112</sup> Goldstein, “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” 160.

<sup>113</sup> Robert Bellah did his doctoral dissertation at Harvard under the supervision of Talcott Parsons on *Tokugawa Religion* - an attempt to explain industrialization in a nonwestern (Oriental) society. He became one of the foremost authorities on Japanese history and culture and explains how religion in the Tokugawa period (160-1868) established the foundation for Japan's modern industrial economy, which is contrary to the arguments of many secularists in the West.

<sup>114</sup> Goldstein, “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” 161.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Cultural Roots of Modern Japan* (New York: The Press, 1985), 194.

rise of modern science religion will fade away since there is “increasing detachment with a world which is based on ‘utilitarianism and science’.”<sup>117</sup>

**Niklas Luhmann:** Secularization is a term used to describe the transformations in society after the French Revolution. Religious systems are one of many, trying to exert its influence but only at a minimal level because of its declining authority. Even though religion is able to adjust to the secularization of society, it is unable to express the complexities of society. Religion has the power to resolve some of the tensions of differentiation: “Even in secularized societies, people need to be able to find the answers to religious questions.”<sup>118</sup> The religious systems go through evolutionary transformations since religion is not capable of preventing the changes. Any attempts on the part of religion to stop secularization, “paradoxically lead in the opposite direction – to functional differentiation which is the cause of secularization.”<sup>119</sup> Religion may naturally adapt to the conditions of modern society even when there might be a decline in people’s need for religion. The present situation is the result of two centuries of change in many areas - economic, political, legal, scientific, and other systems: “Given secularization of system principles, religion no longer has direct legitimating relations to them and is no longer directly implicated in societal structure.”<sup>120</sup> At the same time, society doesn’t move in one direction for the sacred to the profane and secularization may also be “a source for religious regeneration.”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Goldstein, “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” 162.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Turner, *Religion and Modern Society*, 87.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. 164.

**Peter Berger:** Peter Berger has moved from being a staunch advocate of secularization (in the sense that religion is on the decline), claiming it to be the central feature of modern, pluralistic societies, to being a critic of that theory. He affirms, “that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today, with some exceptions... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever.”<sup>122</sup> He defined secularization as “the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols.”<sup>123</sup> On an institutional level secularization results in a separation of church and state and on an individual level it creates a ‘secularization of consciousness’.<sup>124</sup> Due to the effects of secularization, established churches will lose their monopoly in society that will lead to religious pluralism. Pluralism and secularization are interconnected since “pluralism produces secularization as it is to say that secularization produces pluralism.”<sup>125</sup> Berger is of the opinion that “*rejection* and *adaptation* are two strategies open to religious communities in a world understood to be secularized.”<sup>126</sup> To face the powerful force of the modern culture, religion needs an “airtight defense system”.<sup>127</sup> When religion goes on the way of too much rationalization it weakens itself. Berger believes that religiously-identified institutions can play social or political roles even when very few people believe or practice a certain kind of religion. But, “the relation between religion and modernity is rather complicated... the world today, then, is

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<sup>122</sup> Peter Berger, “The Desecularization of the World: A Global View,” in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed., Peter Berger (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 2.

<sup>123</sup> Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: A Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 107.

<sup>124</sup> Goldstein, “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” 166.

<sup>125</sup> Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 155.

<sup>126</sup> Berger, “The Desecularization of the World: A Global View,” 3.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

massively religious, and it is anything but the secularized world that had been predicted (be it joyfully or despondently) by so many analysts of modernity.”<sup>128</sup>

**Thomas Luckmann:** For Luckmann, social structure is a product of the human mind which also shapes human consciousness.<sup>129</sup> Using the American example where church attendance had not reduced considerably, Luckmann states, “no simple unilinear and one-dimensional theory of ‘secularization’ in modern society can be maintained.”<sup>130</sup> He is known for his theory of privatization of religions, where religion becomes one among many systems as a result of secularization. The religious sphere has only a weak connection to the sacred universe since “the institutionally specialized norms are no longer able to present the whole of the sacred cosmos and even the norms conveyed by the Church cannot interpret the world as a whole anymore, but become ‘restricted to a specifically religious sphere’.”<sup>131</sup> While traditional church religion in Europe was pushed to the periphery of modern life, church religion in the USA has undergone a process of internal secularization, which has kept it ‘modern’ and visible.<sup>132</sup> Every individual is forced to ‘select certain religious themes from the available assortment’ and then create a ‘somewhat precarious private system of ultimate significance’.<sup>133</sup>

**Bryan Wilson:** Secularization is a long time evolutionary process occurring in modern society where the social influence and significance of religion happens when “society develops from

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<sup>128</sup> Peter Berger, “Secularism in Retreat,” *The National Interest*, No. 46 (Winter 1996), 3.

<sup>129</sup> Goldstein, “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” 168.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Detlef Pollack and Gert Pickel, “Religious Individualization or Secularization: An Attempt to Evaluate the Thesis of Religious Individualization in Eastern and Western Germany,” in *The Role of Religion in Modern Societies*, eds. Detlef Pollack and Daniel V. A. Olson (New York: Routledge, 2008), 193.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Michael Argyle and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *The Social Psychology of Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 27.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Detlef and Pickel “Religious Individualization or Secularization,” 193.

*Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft.*”<sup>134</sup> Secularizations and societalization accompany each other where “the community is essentially religious; the society is essentially secular.”<sup>135</sup> For him, secularization occurs when human consciousness changes as a result of rationalization processes, and then people learn to regulate their behavior to conform to the rational structures of the social order. Man might continue to resort to the supernatural privately, but might live in an environment that is increasingly man-made. As a result of this, organizational and individual secularizations do not necessarily accompany the societal decline in the influence of religious structures.<sup>136</sup>

Religious institutions have only a limited capacity for rationalization since faith cannot be rationalized. But still, religion is needed in society for their “service function” (baptism, marriages, and burials).<sup>137</sup> Even though church attendance in the United States is considerably higher than in Europe, it plays more of a social function than a religious function: “...they compensate for the isolation and alienation which results from a high degree of mobility in American society.”<sup>138</sup> The emergence of various cults is part of the process of secularization and they are movements in the direction of sacralization; they are a counter movement against secularization.<sup>139</sup> Wilson believed that secularization is a concomitant result of societalization where empirical rational thinking is demanded by the development of technology. So, he comes

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<sup>134</sup> Cf. Goldstein, “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” 169.

<sup>135</sup> Bryan Wilson, “Aspects of Secularization in the West,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (December 1976): 260.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Ludwig Gelot, “On the Theological Origins and Character of Secular International Politics Towards Post-Secular Dialogue,” (PhD diss., Aberystwyth University: Ceredigion, UK, 2009), 41.

<sup>137</sup> Goldstein, “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” 170.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Ibid.

to this conclusion in an article on *Aspects of Secularization in in the West* “Religion in secular society will remain peripheral, relatively weak, providing comfort for men in the interstices of a soulless social system of which men are the half-willing, half-restless prisoners.”<sup>140</sup>

**David Martin:** The word ‘secularization’ should be used outside of its technical context, because it is not used to indicate the decline of an institution in certain ways but as a class. Martin even advocates the elimination of the word “since the essence of its normal meaning turns precisely on this assumption that religious groups undergo a common process because they share certain common denominators.”<sup>141</sup> Martin was a social scientist who argued initially against the theory of secularization, demanding: “secularization should be erased from the sociological dictionary.”<sup>142</sup> In his book *Religious and the Secular* he predicts that “religion is on the way out, and this simply means that churches, chapels, synagogues, and temples are playing a progressively less important role in social life.”<sup>143</sup> The role of the sociologists here is to describe “the secular” but not to celebrate it since society is in need of certain ‘myths’ for its existence. According to Martin, the power of the church is seen as an effect of secularization and a betrayal of true religion: “The establishment of the church and its loss of power are instances not only of secularization but also of desecularization.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Wilson, “Aspects of Secularization in the West,” 276.

<sup>141</sup> David Martin, *The Religious and the Secular: Studies in Secularization* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 15.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>144</sup> Goldstein, “Secularization Patterns in the Old Paradigm,” 172.

**Richard Fenn:** He believed that there is an unclear boundary or dividing line between the sacred and the profane which is further blurred by a highly complex process, i.e. secularization.<sup>145</sup> In this process, religious and political symbols become part of ‘civil religion’ and political authority becomes secularized when “the state is increasingly restricted in its ability to limit the right of religious groups and to take action on religious issues.”<sup>146</sup> In *Beyond Idols: The Shape of a Secular Society*, Fenn argues that secularization destroys the distinction between the sacred and the profane since social life itself becomes complex: “In any event, secularization increases as the boundary between the sacred and the profane becomes more permeable and less distinct.”<sup>147</sup> In his introduction to *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*, Fenn comments that secularization makes it difficult for people to act as if their allegiances to this world and the next could be played out on a single stage: “With regard to the process of differentiation, secularization usually represents a narrowing of the scope of institutionalized religion’s authoritative control over the sacred.... There is no religious framework to guarantee that they could be both faithful sons and daughters of their families and natural communities, on the one hand, and citizens of a larger society on the other.”<sup>148</sup>

**Charles Taylor:** Charles Taylor assumed undeniable significance in the discussions on secularization with his enormous volume of writings. At the beginning of his book *A Secular Age* he speaks about the three meanings of the concept of secularism in relation to religion. The first

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid. ,173.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>147</sup> Richard K. Fenn, *Beyond Idols: The Shape of a Secular Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 13.

<sup>148</sup> Richard K. Fenn, “Editorial Commentary: Religion and the Secular; the Sacred and Profane: The Scope of the Argument,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion*, ed. Richard K. Fenn (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 5.

sense of the word could be understood in a political sense: “Our understanding of secularity then is in terms of public spaces. These have been allegedly emptied of God, or of any reference to ultimate reality.”<sup>149</sup> It signifies a neutral modern state with a separation of religion and politics.<sup>150</sup> The second sense of the term “consists in the falling off of religious belief and practice, in people turning away from God, and no longer going to Church.”<sup>151</sup> This could be understood as sociological secularization where the number of religious adherents has gone down in some but not all parts of the world.<sup>152</sup> In the third sense secular describes the plurality of belief and non-belief in modern society, and the need for individuals and communities to make religious choices. Here, “*what it is to believe*, stemming in part from the fact that belief is an option...is one human possibility among others. Secularity in this sense is a matter of the whole context of understanding in which moral, spiritual or religious experience and search takes place.”<sup>153</sup>

### 1.3.5 Recapitulation

Since elaborating on ‘secularization’ overlaps into many areas as various authors have explained, it is important to clarify in what sense this thesis hold the meaning of the word in relation to new evangelization related discussions.<sup>154</sup> In narrowing it down to our need,

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<sup>149</sup> Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 2.

<sup>150</sup> Philip L. Wickeri, “The End of *Missio Dei* – Secularization, Religions and the Theology of Mission,” in *Mission Revisited: Between Mission History and Intercultural Theology*, ed. Volker Küster (Munster: Verlag, 2010), 31.

<sup>151</sup> Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 2.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Wickeri, “The End of *Missio Dei*,” 31.

<sup>153</sup> Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3.

<sup>154</sup> Many Christian authors write just assuming that secularization simply is a theory advocating complete elimination of religion, particularly Christianity (in the European context) from the public sphere. Also, there are a few authors use the terms ‘secularism’ and ‘secularization’ interchangeably without distinguishing the difference.



secularization does not mean the process which leads to the loss of function for religion, but rather a call for religion adapting to the conditions of modern society. It is more of a desirable process in the sense of treating all religions equally, not only in the European and American context, but also on a global scale, including the places where Christianity is minority or non-existent.<sup>155</sup>

The resurgence of religions in recent times contradicts any theory that advocates the disappearance of religions from political and social life of humans. Hunter Baker is of the opinion that removing God from public deliberations does not help us to focus on the things, which we have in common since the idea of God influences how we think about human rights and civil rights. He compares removing the idea of God from society as something like replacing the organic heart of the civilization with a mechanic one.<sup>156</sup> Jeffrey Hadden notes that Max Weber tried to find the clues about the place of religion in human society by studying the major religions of the world. The future study of secularization will once again take us back to where Weber began.<sup>157</sup> The secular intellectuals demand to slaughter the monstrous dragon of religion to create a brilliant scientific civilization will only remain as a fascinating but never

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We have already explained the difference before. In the third chapter we will again see an explanation of 'secularism' and 'secularization' in relation to the Indian context, which slightly differs from the European.

<sup>155</sup> Abraham Thomas suggests four elements for an operating definition for a 'secular state' which might help us to understand our choice more clearly. They are 1) institutional separation between religion and state, 2) religious freedom for individuals and groups, and neutrality of state toward religion, 3) equality of citizens before the law, and, 4) pursuit of social justice and social reform even when this involves control over religious freedom in its secular aspects. He argues that the last is specifically relevant in the Indian context than the West. Cf. Abraham Vazhayil Thomas, *Christians in Secular India* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1974), 18.

<sup>156</sup> Baker, *The End of Secularism*, 194

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Hannden, "Toward Descralizing Secularization," 609.

accomplishing dream.<sup>158</sup> In fact, secularism is a blessing in disguise in some ways; it helps the Church to purify itself and redefine its mission with greater fidelity to the Gospel.<sup>159</sup>

### 1.3.6 Secularization and New Evangelization

As we have noted earlier the language of ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ comes from the Church vocabulary list. Mark Juergensmeyer argues – in order to better understand the distinctions one should think in a post and pre-Enlightenment mindset: “One is the narrow idea of religious institutions and beliefs that are set apart from secular social values in the modern West. The other is the broad idea of moral values, traditional customs, and spiritual sensibility that includes much of what the secular West regards as public virtue and purposeful life –values shared by most thoughtful and concerned citizens within a society.”<sup>160</sup>

*Arend Leeuwen* writes that when Christianity spread across Europe, it brought the message of secularization with it: “Christianization and secularization are involved together in a dialectical relation.”<sup>161</sup> In a similar tone Adrian Hastings comments that the secularization of society may provide for liberation of religion, allowing it in principle, to relate anew to the totality of the secular.<sup>162</sup> Philosophers like Friedrich Gogarten believe that the independence of science and culture from the supposedly ‘Christian’ worldview is the logical and appropriate

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<sup>158</sup> William Al-Sharif, *Christianity, Islam and Secular Criticism* (Scotland: Jerusalem Academic Publications, 2010), 25.

<sup>159</sup> Ambrose Mong Ih-Ren, “Challenges and Opportunities for the Church in Secular Societies,” *Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (April 2011):148.

<sup>160</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 18.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Mong Ih-Ren, “Challenges and Opportunities for the Church in Secular Societies,” 152.

outcome of God having turned the world over to man's responsibility.<sup>163</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, as an ardent critic of secularism, believes that the emptiness of modern European society comes from the Enlightenment-derived secularism which "hollows out" its own originally Christian morality and the meaning of life from which it was derived. European civilization has been thus transformed into a secular culture by relativism, which substitutes: "vacuous entertainments" and "shabby pleasures" for a Christian way of life.<sup>164</sup>

Jürgen Habermas, a German philosopher and Neo-Marxist social critic, surprisingly agrees that the fundamental principles of European civilization are of Christian origin and remain dependent on Christianity for their sustenance. In the famous Habermas - Ratzinger dialogue at the Catholic Academy of Bavaria, Habermas identifies that for both the secularists and religious -"the secularization of society as a complementary learning process," where they must be willing "to take seriously each other's contributions to controversial subjects in the public debate."<sup>165</sup> In his reply Ratzinger argued:

I am in broad agreement with Jürgen Habermas' remarks about a postsecular society, about the willingness to learn from each other, and about self-limitation on both sides...Religion must continually allow itself to be purified and structured by reason...Accordingly, I would speak of a necessary relatedness between reason and faith and between reason and religion, which are called to purify and help one another. They need each other, and they must acknowledge this mutual need.<sup>166</sup>

In many countries, what is really happening is 'religious change' rather than secularization because people begin to abandon one religion when they begin to believe in another. One of the major arguments of the advocates of secularism is that religious language is

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. Shiner, "The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research," 209.

<sup>164</sup> Mong Ih-Ren, "Challenges and Opportunities for the Church in Secular Societies," 150.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Joseph Ratzinger and Jürgen Habermas, *The Dialectics of Secularization: on Reason and Religion*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 47.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-79.

no longer credible to the (post)modern society. In order for religion to be understood by society today it should speak a ‘secular language’. Adopting George Baum’s suggestion is one way of breaking into the realm of secularism. He recommends that the supporters of the bright side of Christianity enter into dialogue with the supporters of the bright side of secularity. Christians are called to a critical conversation and, if possible, to cooperative action with nonbelievers in the pursuit of justice and peace, the protection of the environment, and the promotion of humane conditions worldwide.<sup>167</sup> This goes well with what Pope Benedict says in his encyclical *Spe Salvi*.

A self-critique of modernity is needed in dialogue with Christianity and its concept of hope. In this dialogue Christians too, in the context of their knowledge and experience, must learn anew in what their hope truly consists, what they have to offer to the world and what they cannot offer. Flowing into this self-critique of the modern age there also has to be a self-critique of modern Christianity, which must constantly renew its self-understanding setting out from its roots.<sup>168</sup>

Thus a diagnosis of the current situation enables Pope Benedict to call for “Christian believers” to become the “creative minority” that will “help Europe to reclaim what is best in its heritage.”<sup>169</sup>

Philip Wickeri suggests turning any discussion on secularization and religion from the world of ideas to a matter of practice, observance and doing – as much as it is a matter of faith, belief and thinking.<sup>170</sup> Since “religious truth is acquired by practical action,” separation of

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<sup>167</sup> Cf. Gregory Baum, “The Churches Challenged by the Secularization of Culture,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Summer 2011): 451.

<sup>168</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Spe Salvi* (30 November 2007), 22: AAS 99 (2007).

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Gary D. Glenn, “Is Secularism the End of Liberalism? Reflections on Europe’s Demographic Decline, Drawing on Pope Benedict, Habermas, Nietzsche, and Strauss” in *The Catholic Social Science Review*, Vol. 13 (2008): 97.

<sup>170</sup> Wickeri, “The End of *Missio Dei*,” 35.

religious thought from religious practice or disassociating the immanent from the transcendent work only to help a counter-witnessing.<sup>171</sup>

#### **1.4 Globalization**

As a consequence of the growing interconnectedness of the world, what happens in one part of the world affects the people in other parts of the world. These changes are the result of what is generally termed ‘globalization’. The causes, connotations, and consequences of these changes are matters of debates for experts, but their rapid and ever-changing effects are a reality in the daily lives of the people affected by such changes. Thus ‘globalization’ became the catchword at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century with a range of meaning attached to it and now has become a universally accepted phenomenon. There is abundant empirical evidence that the effects of globalization are widespread even when it is difficult to define exactly what it is.

The word ‘globalization’ is of modern origin but cannot be ascribed to any specific historical moment or time period since it is the result of a long evolution. Reiser and Davies first used the word “global” and “globalism” in their book *Planetary Democracy*<sup>172</sup> although the meaning of these terms were only made clear in subsequent decades. The evolution of a different world order after World War II, especially the establishment of the United Nations (UN), emphasized the need to “see and interpret the world as a whole,” thus giving the term a place in modern dictionaries. Those who used to think on a national basis began to think on an international or global basis but still the Cold War prevented the phenomenon of ‘globalization’ from becoming a fully matured reality. However, the world is now witnessing unprecedented

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<sup>171</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 35-40.

<sup>172</sup> Oliver J. Reiser and Blodwen Davies, *Planetary Democracy: An Introduction to Scientific Humanism and Applied Semantics* (New York: Creative Age Press, 1944), 212, 219.

transformation in all levels and in varying degrees. Going back to previous ‘state of affairs’ is unrealistic even when globalization has not evolved to a level to satisfy everyone.

Due to the transformations stemming from the effects of globalization, homogeneous societies are challenged in various levels both individually and collectively besides its influence in social and political structures. Economic liberalization and increased consumer choice are agents of change not only in social but also in religious spheres. It is a multidimensional process that includes complex and overlapping networks where structures impose constraints on communities and states with empowering elements. These global changes are very complex at the same time with unpredictable local consequences.

#### 1.4.1 Definition

Finding a precise definition for ‘globalization’ is not an easy task.<sup>173</sup> Kenneth Himes argues that globalization is in the process of “coming to be,” and it is not yet a fully formed or developed reality. This process is shaped by human choices and actions. It is a set of processes that are humanly guided and is subject to ethical assessment. Such an evaluation does not presume whether globalization is inherently right or wrong.<sup>174</sup> On a closer look, rather than ‘globalization,’ there are ‘globalizations’ happening in the world. So, it goes well with the argument of Daniel Groody (*Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice*) that globalization means different things to different people:

To the political scientist, it signified a new internationalism. To the economist, it connotes linking local, regional, and national financial networks. To the sociologist, it

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<sup>173</sup> For example, Ulrich Beck says “Globalization has certainly been the most widely used—and misused—keyword in disputes of recent years and will be of the coming years too; but it is also one of the most rarely defined, the most nebulous and misunderstood.” Ulrich Beck, *What Is Globalization?* trans. Patrick Camiller (Maiden: Blackwell, 2000), 19.

<sup>174</sup> Kenneth R. Himes, “Globalization with a Human Face: Catholic Social Teaching and Globalization,” *Theological Studies* 69 (June 2008): 269.

entails the rich intersection of multiple societies and worldviews. To the anthropologist, it implies the struggle for unique ethnic and cultural identities amidst what has been called the “McDonalization” or “Wal-Martification” of world culture.<sup>175</sup>

Kenneth Himes adds social activists, consumers, diplomats, and artists to the list of those who are responsible in creating globalization – from above and below: “The former includes the activities of large institutional actors in politics and business (governments, banks, corporations), while the latter refers to other actors, groups or individuals, who are engaged in forging a globalized civil society (e.g., artists, lobbyists, interest groups, and social activists).”<sup>176</sup>

The meaning of the term globalization can be further expanded as it is a process effecting worldwide linkages, joint action, and the formation and maintenance of transnational institutions, made possible by recent advances in electronic communications and high-speed international travel. Ivan Strenski comments that “the broad definition encompasses everything from the World Trade Organization (WTO), to Al Qa’ida, to ‘world music’ or ‘Medicins sans Frontières...’”<sup>177</sup> Thus, globalization defies the traditional notions of a definition as it covers a whole gamut of areas, but stands as a highly familiar and highly charged term.<sup>178</sup>

Roland Robertson, a leading authority in explaining the phenomenon of “globalization”, defines the term in reference to the whole world as a single social space.<sup>179</sup> While the size of the world materially remains the same, the broadened view has shrunken the size through this new

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<sup>175</sup> Daniel G. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice: Navigating the Path to Peace* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2007), 13. See also, George Titzer, *The McDonalization of Society*, rev. ed., (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>176</sup> Himes, “Globalization with a Human Face,” 270.

<sup>177</sup> Ivan Strenski, “The Religion in Globalization,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (September 2004): 631.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Peter Beyer, *Religions in Global Society* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 18.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (1992; repr., London: Sage Publications, 2000), 130.

perception. This space is the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole.<sup>180</sup> Combining all these aspects, Esin Karacan and Emre Ergin, in their essay “Economic, Social and Political Dimensions of Globalization and Welfare: A Worldwide Research,” summarize it as follows:

Globalization is defined in a narrow sense as the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets. In a larger sense, globalization refers to a fast growing of every aspect of international interaction in which the dependence increases in every field such as production, trade, communication, culture, international relationships, law, human rights and so on. Global forms replace local and regional ones. Global actors emerge in every area.<sup>181</sup>

Most definitions also contain the attitude of the theorists as some consider ‘globalization’ inevitable and beneficial to society, and some others condemn it as unjust, destructive for people’s cultures and environment. After summarizing the main thrusts of globalization as perceived by Robertson and Giddens, two leading social thinkers of this discipline, Malcolm Waters writes that globalization is: “*A social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly.*”[italics in original]<sup>182</sup> In the words of Jeannine Fletcher, it is like “a ‘girdle put round the earth’ which ‘binds the world and the nations of the earth together,’ transnational technologies that make the world a single place are characteristic of the globalizing era.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Cf. Ibid., 8.

<sup>181</sup> Esin Karacan and Emre Ergin, “Economic, Social and Political Dimensions of Globalization and Welfare: A Worldwide Research,” in *Globalisation Dimensions & Impacts*, eds. Ismail Siriner and Lubomir Nenicka (London: IJopec Publication, 2011), 52.

<sup>182</sup> Malcolm Waters, *Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 5.

<sup>183</sup> Jeannine Hill Fletcher, “Religious Pluralism in an era of Globalization: The Making of Modern Religious Identity,” *Theological Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (June 2008): 394.



### 1.4.2 Globalization and Modernity

As noted earlier, because of its recent origin, many theorists of globalization see this in relation to modernity. Hence it could be defined as an extension of the effects of modernity along with “the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole.”<sup>184</sup> Schreiter describes the effects of modernity both in its positive and negative dimensions: *positively* it brings, “increased material prosperity, better health care, expanded opportunities for formal education, an increase in personal freedom and individuality, and a liberation from many traditional constraints,” and *negatively* it is too much materialism, consumerism, an anomic individualism, and the relativization of values.<sup>185</sup> Both positive and negative effects are disseminated in the world through the modern means of technology.

Change is an essential aspect of the process of globalization and can go in any direction. Joshua Hochschild comments that this change is without any definite *terminus a quo* or *terminus ad quem*.<sup>186</sup> The very grammatical structure of the name globalization—an adjective, converted into a barbaric verb, then forced into service as a still more barbaric noun—conveys the sense of an incoherent stasis-of-change.<sup>187</sup> Because of this some sociologists argue that globalization was necessitated by an evolutionary development rather than a contingent historical development. They are of the opinion that globalization has no agent at all; human beings, taken singly and corporately, are only the subjects of a change whose agent is History, or the march of

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<sup>184</sup> T. Howland Sanks, “Globalization and the Social Mission of the Church” in *Theological Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (December 1999): 631.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> Joshua P. Hochschild, “Globalization: Ancient and Modern,” in *Intercollegiate Review*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Spring 2006): 40.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

Progress.<sup>188</sup> The consequence of this argument is that those who oppose globalization are moving opposite to the current, taking a position against the movements in history.

### 1.4.3 Historical Development

Some authors trace the origin of globalization back to the capitalist agriculture progress in Europe.<sup>189</sup> Peter Byer notes that it was only in the mid-to late 1980s that globalization became part of our vocabulary and only in the 1990s that it attained its current stature.<sup>190</sup> Depending on the interest and the nature of interpretation there are different views on tracing globalization. Globalization is a technological and cultural reality which has gone through different stages of development. Robert Schreiter in an essay “Contextualization from a World Perspective,” proposes that globalization has gone through three stages and each stage has been shaped by larger developments that serve as the carrier of these developments.<sup>191</sup>

#### 1.4.3.1 First Phase (1492- 1945)

The ‘expansion and the building up of empires’ period is dominated by the European voyages until the conclusion of World War II. European expansion to other continents took place during this period: “The *carrier* of this phase of globalization is an image of expansion and establishment of political power over wide areas of the world – empire.”<sup>192</sup> A famous socio-cultural anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai is of the opinion that the present conditions find their

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein in a Marxist way of analyzing the world, sees it as economic in origin with the changes in agriculture (1450-1640). Cf. *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the Eastern World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

<sup>190</sup> Beyer, *Religion in Global Society*, 18.

<sup>191</sup> Robert Schreiter, “Contextualization from a World Perspective,” in *Theological Education*, Vol. 30, Supplement I (Autumn 1993): 79-79.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 80.

roots in the colonial order: “Complex colonial orders centered on European capitals and spread throughout the non-European world. This intricate and overlapping set of Eurocolonial worlds (first Spanish and Portuguese, later principally English, French, and Dutch) set the basis for a permanent traffic in ideas of peoplehood and selfhood which created the imagined communities of recent nationalisms throughout the world.”<sup>193</sup> Jeannine Fletcher argues that it is not the technological development through Internet, communications, or electricity that mark the advent of the era of globalization, but technologies of sea travel that provided opportunities to traverse the globe, and the technologies of industry that propelled a European need for permanent expansion into various parts of the world for material resources.<sup>194</sup>

#### 1.4.3.2 Second Phase (1945-1989)

World War II also caused the dissolution of the overseas empires of Europe, which created an optimism of a new economic expansion in overcoming the evils of the past and became: “The *carriers* of this second phase were *decolonization, independence, and economic optimism.*”<sup>195</sup> The colonial expansion of European countries planted the seeds of territorialization: “Every space, every piece of land, and large portions of the seas, the so-called territorial waters, have been parceled out, appropriated, and territorialized within the fixed boundaries of nations-states.”<sup>196</sup> A similar process happened within each nation state to peoples and cultures.

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<sup>193</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 28.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Fletcher, “Religious Pluralism in an Era of Globalization,” 396.

<sup>195</sup> Schreiter, “Contextualization from a World Perspective,” 81.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

### 1.2.3.3 Third Phase (1989-present )

Schreiter sees the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 as a great moment in the globalization process of the modern era. It was the result of many other events including technological, which marked the move away from industrial economies to economies carried away by the flow of information, technologies, goods and services. Global capitalism becomes the carrier and globalization becomes a “quest for the bridges between the global and the local. The global has changed; its economic face appears to be even less benign than in the recent past.”<sup>197</sup> Most of the discussions in this section of the first chapter are concentrated on this phase since it has seen a maturing of the ideas on the issue of globalization.

### 1.4.4 Effects of Globalization

As noted earlier, globalization is an irreversible part of world development today affecting every strata of human life in every part of the world. According to Kenneth Himes, what unites the multiple elements together is the increasing experience of interconnectedness “on a planet where distance is shrinking and time is accelerating, compared to the experience of life just a few decades ago.”<sup>198</sup> Jose Casanova argues that globalization affects all cultural systems, including religious ones. A “deterritorialization” happens where the disembeddedness of cultural phenomena from their “natural” territories.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. Himes, “Globalization with a Human Face,” 270.

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Jose Casanova, “Religion, the New Millennium, and globalization,” *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (2001): 428.

With all the changes happening globally, many mistakenly argue for a “global government,” some others for a “global religion.”<sup>200</sup> Both of them are considered to be impractical ideas by many others. The system, which shapes globalization, is evolving on a rapid pace and it is impractical to give a permanent status without being stabilized by itself. Global civil society is a transnational space, a transnational network of associations, movements, organizations, and communications that transcend the territorial nation-state, but it is not itself a territorially organized society or domain.<sup>201</sup> Rather in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century we were engaged in “a massive, two-fold process involving the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism.”<sup>202</sup>

#### 1.4.5 Some Negative Effects

Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez-Maradiaga of Honduras has been an out-spoken critic of globalization because of its adverse effect on the lives of the poor people in the developing world. He cautions everyone that globalization without solidarity amounts to “suicide for the poor and, therefore, for the majority of humanity.”<sup>203</sup> Some of the criticisms raised against globalization include presenting it as “an exercise in empire-building, and as such greedy, short-sighted, and hubristic.”<sup>204</sup> It is too dependent on industry and technology,<sup>205</sup> rather than any

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<sup>200</sup> Emile Durkheim famously proclaimed “the old gods are growing old or already dead, and others are not yet born” Emile Durkheim, *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), xIviip. But Casanova responds “What none of the Enlightenment prophets and positivist sociologists could have anticipated was that, paradoxically, the old gods and the old religions were going to gain new life by becoming the carriers of the process of sacralization of humanity.” Jose Casanova, “Religion, the New Millennium, and globalization,” 430.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Sanks, “Globalization and the Social Mission of the Church” Howland Sanks,” 636.

<sup>203</sup> John Allen, *The Future Church: How the Ten Trends are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church* (New York: Double Day, 2009), 26.

<sup>204</sup> Hochschild, “Globalization: Ancient and Modern,” 41.

religious or even intellectual foundations. According to African moral theologian John Mary Waliggo, the “first and most hideous injustice of globalization” is that the people in the developing world are “told over and over again that they have no choice but to accept it” or face even further marginalization.<sup>206</sup> Some of the basic demerits of globalization include cultural aggression, political imperialism, global economic integration and ecological degradation besides massive deterritorialization due to migration.<sup>207</sup> Michael A. Casey notices that one of the main problems with globalization is its operation with a tendency to foster secularization among peoples and cultures that are not secular and do not want to be secular: “Indeed, globalization seems to be in this sense like a last spasm of an obsolete type of Enlightenment that took Western society on the wrong existential path.”<sup>208</sup>

Vincent J. Miller is of the opinion that theological reflection on the cultural effects of globalization has long emphasized homogenization: “globalization erodes local cultures, replacing them with either some version of Western culture or a global consumer culture.”<sup>209</sup> Some of the sociologists call this change as ‘heterogenization’. “The same economic and technological forces that make globalization possible also encourage people to think of themselves as members of distinct cultures and to join together in ever purer, smaller cultural

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<sup>205</sup> Cf. Theodor Damien, “Christianity as Ideal Paradigm of Globalization,” in *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 20. (Fall 2008):157.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Himes, “Globalization with a Human Face,” 271.

<sup>207</sup> Cf. Gemma Tulud Cruz, “Between Identity and Security: Theological Implications of Migration in the Context of Globalization,” *Theological Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (June 2008): 374.

<sup>208</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>209</sup> Vincent J. Miller, “Where is the Church? Globalization and Catholicity,” *Theological Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (June 2008): 413.

units. Globalization reifies difference as much as it homogenizes it.”<sup>210</sup> Homogenization is also the most popularly understood of globalization’s cultural impacts. It describes globalization as the imposition of a single culture—whether a continuation of European colonialism or the reduction of the global diversity of cultures into one generic, consumerist conglomerate.<sup>211</sup>

Michael Amaladoss criticizes globalization saying that it is dominated by the spread of one certain culture, country, ideology or economic system over another. He fears that globalization leads to subordination, if not disappearance, of the ‘other’ cultures, ideologies, etc.<sup>212</sup> Teresa Okure sees in globalization “the destruction of the cultures of those places to which the globalized culture spreads.”<sup>213</sup> When globalization is conceived in terms of homogenization, strategies of defense, closure, protection, and purification seem like fitting responses. Religious responses focus on inculturation in order to undo the destructive legacies of colonialism to indigenous cultures and to ground robust contemporary local forms of Christianity.<sup>214</sup> Ronald Robertson also argues that cultural clashes and tensions are an inevitable part of globalization: “What should be called the dark side of globalization involves, the militance, and indeed, violence that not infrequently accompanies these clashes.”<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 412.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 413.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. Miller, “Where Is the Church? Globalization and Catholicity,” 415.

<sup>213</sup> Teresa Okure, “Africa: Globalization and the Loss of Cultural Identity,” *Concilium* Vol. 5 (2001): 67

<sup>214</sup> Miller, “Where is the Church?” 414.

<sup>215</sup> Ronald Robertson, “Globalization and the Future of ‘Traditional Religion,’” in *God and Globalization* (Vol. I) *Religion and the Powers of the Common Life*, ed. Mark L. Stackhouse (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 2000), 61.

### 1.4.6 Globalization and New Evangelization

The spread of Christianity throughout the world is also an example of its globalizing character. The fulfillment of the command of the Lord: “Go to all nations and preach the Gospel to everyone” (Mat. 28: 19) became instrumental in transforming the Apostles into some of the dynamic globalizers the world had ever seen: “Christianity is meant to go everywhere, to take on different forms of existence, and while keeping and protecting its essential values it inculturates itself borrowing from other cultures--as it did from Hellenism--that which makes it stronger.”<sup>216</sup> The recitation of the Nicene Creed that “I believe in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church” is also another affirmation of the universal and global character of the Church.

There is a sense among religious people that “today’s language of globalization betrays an implicit religious depth.”<sup>217</sup> It is true that there are numerous challenges and opportunities for religion with the spread of ‘globalization’ into every corner of the globe. Pope John Paul II argued that globalization in itself is not good or bad because it depends on what people make of it. In *Centesimus Annus*, he notes that the issue of ‘globalization’ cannot be easily dismissed since it provides the opportunity for greater prosperity for humanity. But at the same time international agencies should be able to oversee the economy for the common good.<sup>218</sup> He echoes this again in his address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, saying that globalization is not an end in itself and it must be at the service of the human person in bringing

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<sup>216</sup> Damien, “Christianity as Ideal Paradigm of Globalization,” 162.

<sup>217</sup> Strenski, “The Religion in Globalization,” 633.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991): 58 AAS 83 (1991). Hereafter, CA.



solidarity and common good.<sup>219</sup> The Church always has the responsibility to “discern and evaluate the cultural *novum* produced by globalization.”<sup>220</sup> This responsibility is part of our discipleship with Christ, which “has for its primary object the inevitable human, cultural and spiritual impact though it also involves the economic and financial aspects of globalization. What is the image of man (that globalization) proposes and even imposes? What culture does it favour? Is there room for the experience of faith and the interior life?”<sup>221</sup> Michael Casey comments that in calling for globalization to “respect the diversity of cultures,” John Paul II is calling for respect for freedom. Globalization “must not deprive the poor of what remains most precious to them, including their religious beliefs and practices, since genuine religious convictions are the clearest manifestation of human freedom.”<sup>222</sup> The promising opportunities of globalization must be built on the values of justice, equity and solidarity.<sup>223</sup>

In his first encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* Pope Benedict talks about globalization as the *explosion of worldwide interdependence*.<sup>224</sup> Socio-economic factors are not the only dimensions of globalization: “The truth of globalization as a process and its fundamental ethical criterion are given by the unity of the human family and its development towards what is good.

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<sup>219</sup> Cf. John Paul II, “Address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences,” (27 April 2001), accessed on March 30, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/2001/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20010427\\_pc-social-sciences\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20010427_pc-social-sciences_en.html).

<sup>220</sup> John Paul II, “Address of John Paul II to the Sixth Public Session of the Pontifical Academies of Theology and of St. Thomas Aquinas,” (8 November 2001), accessed on March 30, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/2001/november/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20011108\\_pontificie-accademie\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2001/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20011108_pontificie-accademie_en.html).

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. Michael A. Casey, “How to Think About Globalization,” *First Things*, 126 (October 2002): 52.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. John Paul II, “Peace on Earth to Those Whom God Loves,” World Day of Peace, *Origin*, Vol. 29, No. 28 (December 23, 2009): 5.

<sup>224</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Caritas in Veritate*, (29 June 2009), 33: AAS 101 (2009).

Hence a sustained commitment is needed so as to *promote a person-based and community-oriented cultural process of world-wide integration that is open to transcendence.*<sup>225</sup> Cardinal Dionigi Tettamanzi notes that “man does not exist for globalization, but globalization for man.”<sup>226</sup> John Allen in his book *The Future Church: How Ten Trends Are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church* calls the Catholic Church the oldest globalized institution in the world.<sup>227</sup> He writes that globalization would lead the Church to think more about Africa, Asia and Latin America, interact more with Islam and Eastern religions, pass more pastoral responsibilities to lay faithful, be willing to discuss moral issues (abortion, birth control, homosexuality) on a global platform and vigorously engage in ecumenical relationships even with the Pentecostals.<sup>228</sup>

Many globalization experts such as Robertson see religion as a critical ingredient in the process of globalization in different ways. The creation of a ‘borderless world’ is part of the globalization process, which is very significant in analyzing the relationship between state and religion. When globalization becomes so powerful it can diminish the role of religion in the life of people both in the private and public level. The role of religion here must be that of giving motivation and meaning to the lives of people when the effects of globalization affect daily life: “The rise of religious fundamentalism and religious–secular struggles indicates that globalisation is not a linear process of religious decline but rather a complex process of identity (re)formation and associated political changes.”<sup>229</sup> Many scholars see globalization as “a powerful force that

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid., no. 42.

<sup>226</sup> Allen, *The Future Church*, 267.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. Ibid., 1.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>229</sup> Jeff Haynes and Guy Ben-Porat, “Globalisation, Religion and Secularisation – A Changing Terrain?” Workshop 10 (March 2008, European University Institute): 2.

seems to erode religion's hold on private and public life. In a 'disjunctured' globalisation process, religion is a significant yet variable political and social force that unsurprisingly strives not only to protect its societal position but also, when and where possible, to expand its spread, influence and followers."<sup>230</sup>

## 1.5 Relativism

Relativism has become a dominant intellectual view and the topic of much debate in contemporary culture. Relativistic thinking and attitude have "infected our society, affecting nearly every aspect of our public culture."<sup>231</sup> Many scholars argue that relativism does not stand for a unified doctrine but a multi-layered subject that covers a vast area of human enquiry and activity. Maria Baghramian is of the opinion that a precise definition of the term is not easy since relativism includes several loosely interconnected doctrines developed and shaped as a response to a variety of philosophical concerns. Relativism is known more for what it denies – absolutism, universalism and monism – than what it endorses.<sup>232</sup> The phrase "it's all relative" has become common to the level of ordinary people thinking that there is no such thing as right or wrong.

### 1.5.1 Definition

According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: "Relativism is not a single doctrine but a family of views whose common theme is that some central aspect of experience, thought, evaluation, or even reality is somehow relative to something else."<sup>233</sup> Everything in life

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Francis J. Beckwith and Gregory Koukl, *Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 13.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Maria Baghramian, "A Brief History of Relativism," in *Relativism: A Contemporary Anthology*, ed. Michael Krausz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 31-32.

<sup>233</sup> Chris Swoyer, "Relativism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed on March 12, 2014. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/relativism>.

is relative when culture, language or biological make up become standards of justification for moral principles and truths. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines relativism as the “theory that value judgments, as of truth, beauty, or morality, have no universal validity but are valid only for the persons or groups holding them.”<sup>234</sup> A common definition of relativism among philosophical circles is the view that cognitive, moral or aesthetic norms and values are dependent on the social or conceptual systems that underpin them, and consequently a neutral standpoint for evaluating them is not available to us.<sup>235</sup> A certain position is understood to be relativistic when it argues that something exists in relation to something else. It becomes a challenge to religions when people begin to argue: “truth is relative because meaning is contextual and being is relational. Contextualized meaning and relational being join to form relative truth disclosed through symbolic awareness.”<sup>236</sup>

Maria Baghramian writes that relativism is often defined both negatively and positively in terms of the doctrines it denies and affirms. When relativism is defined negatively, it amounts to the denial of a cluster of interconnected philosophical positions that are traditionally contrasted with it; in this sense negative relativism is ‘anti-anti-relativism’ for it provides legitimacy for relativism by denying.<sup>237</sup> It is more difficult to define the positive claim of relativism when it is about distinguishing between relative and non-relative (or absolute) properties. A property is non-relative if its ascription depends only on the subject to which it is being attributed. A property is relative, if its correct ascription depends on additional background

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<sup>234</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. 5th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), accessed on March 18, 2014. <http://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=relativism&submit.x=30&submit.y=27>.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. Maria Baghramian, *Relativism (Problems of Philosophy)* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1.

<sup>236</sup> Mark Taylor, “Toward an Ontology of Relativism,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 46, No. 1 (March 1978): 41.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Baghramian, *Relativism*, 2.

factors.<sup>238</sup> Michael Krausz in *Relativism: A Contemporary Anthology* also explains relativism in its dual meanings. Primarily, truth, goodness and beauty are relative to some frame of reference. Secondly, there are no absolute standards to adjudicate between competing reference frames.<sup>239</sup> Timothy Mosteller in his book *Relativism: A Guide for the Perplexed* offers another comprehensive and broad definition: Relativism can be defined as “the nature and existence of items of knowledge, qualities, values or logical entities non-trivially obtain their natures and/or existence from certain aspects of human activity, including, but not limited to, beliefs, cultures, languages, etc.”<sup>240</sup>

Today’s culture is greatly influenced by ideas of relativism in understanding and interpreting the social and legal institutions. As a consequence the understanding that truth and justification are relative has wide-ranging impact on most fundamental issues about objectivity, knowledge, and intellectual progress.<sup>241</sup> Max Kölbel, in his attempt to explain relativism gives four sample forms of relativism and then tries to discover what they have in common:

First, Protagoras (as portrayed by Plato in the *Theaetetus*) claims that it is relative to judges whether any judgment is true. Second, Hartry Field (1982) claims that it is relative to the choice of an evidential system whether a belief is justified. Third, according to Einstein’s special theory of relativity, whether two events are simultaneous is relative to a frame of reference. Fourth, Harman (1975) claims that it is relative to certain considerations and motivating attitudes whether a person ought to perform an act.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. Michael Krausz, *Relativism: A Contemporary Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 2.

<sup>240</sup> Timothy Mosteller, *Relativism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 3.

<sup>241</sup> Swoyer, “Relativism,”

<sup>242</sup> Cf. Max Kölbel, *Truth Without Objectivity* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 116.

### 1.5.2 Historical Development of the Theory of Relativism

Relativism is one of the most tenacious theories related to truth, with a pedigree as old as philosophy itself. Protagoras' lost work *Truth*, known through Plato's *Theaetetus*, is considered to contain the first articulation of the theory of relativism. Protagoras views man as "the measure (*metron*) of all things (*chremata*): of the things which are that they are, and of the things which are not, that they are not."<sup>243</sup> He was reacting to a situation where he believed that in an argument where two who disagreed on a given statement could be right at the same time. Protagoras is the first philosopher to argue 'that there are two sides to every question, opposed to each other' and he used the maxim 'on every topic there are two arguments contrary to each other' as the starting point in all his teachings.<sup>244</sup> But in reality ancient philosophers defined the scope and meaning of relativism more widely than many of the modern thinkers.

The early modern period discussion of relativism begins with Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) whose writings give a relationship between relativism and skepticism. Baghramian is of the opinion that with the publication of *Outlines of Scepticism* by the French Scholar Henri Estienne, relativism, which had been ignored for almost fifteen centuries, became a live philosophical issue.<sup>245</sup> Pyrrhonian skeptics argued that human judgments change because of the bodily and emotional conditions in such a way that one and the same judgment may seem true to a person on one occasion and false on another.<sup>246</sup> Montaigne also had great influence in the

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<sup>243</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. M. J. Levett, rev. Myles Burnyeat, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 155.

<sup>244</sup> Baghramian, *Relativism*, 25.

<sup>245</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.* 52

development of the French Enlightenment, which heralded the emergence of the Modern scientific outlook and secular humanism.<sup>247</sup>

Johan Hamma, another Enlightenment thinker of the relativistic strand, denied the existence of an objective order, a *rerum natura*, from where all knowledge and values emerged where one can test all human actions.<sup>248</sup> But John Grote is credited with using the terms ‘relativism’ and ‘relativity’ for the first time in his *Exploratio Philosophica* in the mid-nineteenth century. He says, “The notion of the mask over the face of nature is . . . what I have called ‘relativism.’ If ‘the face of nature’ is reality, then the mask over it, which is what theory gives us, is so much deception, and that is what relativism really comes to.”<sup>249</sup>

In an article, “Toward an Ontology of Relativism,” Mark Taylor argues that the roots of the contemporary relativism lie deep within eighteenth and nineteenth century theological and philosophical movements and are inseparably entangled with the psycho-social pluralization endemic to the process of modernization.<sup>250</sup> David Hume was influenced by skepticism and argued that morality is based ultimately on feeling rather than on reason. Hume was not a relativist, but his arguments helped support elements of relativism.<sup>251</sup> It was Immanuel Kant whose radical idea that the individuals who shaped reality through the nature of their own perceptions of reality, who provided a fertile ground for the roots of relativistic thinking to take

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<sup>247</sup> Cf. Baghramian, “A Brief History of Relativism,” 37.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. Isaiah Berlin, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*, ed., Henry Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 354.

<sup>249</sup> John Grote, *Exploratio Philosophica: Rough Notes on Modern Intellectual Science* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co., 1865), 229.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. Taylor, “Toward an Ontology of Relativism,” 41-61

<sup>251</sup> Cf. Emrys Westacott, “Moral Relativism” in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed on March 18, 2013. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/moral-re/>.

hold.<sup>252</sup> Baghramian believes that Kant's distinction between raw experience and the conceptual principle for organizing them introduced the possibility that a variety of equally-acceptable yet, incompatible schemes of organization could exist to which ontology is relativized.<sup>253</sup> In the recent history of relativism, Nietzsche stands as the most influential philosopher. Lester Hunt writes that Nietzsche, as an ethical relativist, believed that what counts as right or good varies from one individual to the other.<sup>254</sup>

Nietzsche's influence on Jacques Derrida is clear when the latter infamously announces that 'there is nothing outside the text' - by which he means that we are not able to access reality directly without language and the context within which it is embedded. The meaning is fashioned by the reader and is dependent on the context of reading, leaving no room left for the idea of an ultimately correct or legitimate interpretation.<sup>255</sup> Derrida has objected to anyone labeling him as a relativist.<sup>256</sup> But Diogenes Allen and Eric Springsted in their book *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* comment that it is easy to see why Derrida has been accused of relativism when he says that truth is simply relative to a situation and neither universal nor abiding.<sup>257</sup> Another monumental figure of contemporary philosophy who contributed to the

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<sup>252</sup> Cf. Patrick J.J. Phillips, *The Challenge of Relativism: Its Nature and Limits* (New York: Continuum International Publications, 2007), 11.

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Baghramian, "A Brief History of Relativism," 14.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. Lester H. Hunt, *Nietzsche and Origin of Virtue* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 130.

<sup>255</sup> Cf. Baghramian, *Relativism*, 83.

<sup>256</sup> Baghramian writes that in her correspondence with Derrida he said that it is a 'radical' misunderstanding to see him as a relativist. Cf. Maria Baghramian, *Relativism*, 83.

<sup>257</sup> Cf. Diogenes Allen and Eric Springsted, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 229.



discussion of relativism is the French philosopher Michel Foucault. He is considered as a universal skeptic and total relativist who deny that there are any objective truths at all.<sup>258</sup>

### 1.5.3 Verities of Relativism

Relativism is divided into different categories. Steve Edwards in an article “Formulating A Plausible Relativism” comments on nine verities of relativism, which include some claim of truth.<sup>259</sup> Three of them – Cognitive, Cultural and Moral – are analyzed in short length in the following section.

#### 1.5.3.1 Cognitive Relativism

Cognitive relativism asserts the relativity of truth claiming that no objective knowledge exists except certain beliefs.<sup>260</sup> Immanuel Kant argued that the experience of the world is mediated to a person through the knowledge and ideas one holds about the world. As a result, this relative epistemology – or cognitive relativism – makes it difficult to identify universal experiences that hold true for everyone, because it is likely that one person’s experience of an event or activity will not be the same as that of another person.<sup>261</sup> Alexandra Howson then argues that cognitive relativism: “refers broadly to an intellectual stance that rejects the idea of

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<sup>258</sup> Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 272.

<sup>259</sup> The nine verities of relativism are: (i) moral relativism (ii) conceptual relativism (iii) relativism of truth (iv) perceptual relativism (v) relativism of reason (vi) linguistic relativism (vii) ontological relativism (viii) species relativism (ix) cultural relativism. Cf. Steve Edwards, “Formulating a Plausible Relativism” *Philosophia*, Vol. 22, No. 1-2 (January 1993): 63 - 74.

<sup>260</sup> Cf. Emrys Westacott, “Cognitive Relativism,” Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed on March 10, 2013. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/cog-rel/>.

<sup>261</sup> Cf. Alexandra Howson, “Cultural Relativism” Research Starters, (EBSCO Publishing Inc. 2009): 1, accessed on April 10, 2013. <http://www.ebscohost.com/uploads/imported/thisTopic-dbTopic-1247.pdf>.

an absolute viewpoint and the existence of objective criteria for making judgments about what is or is not real or true.”<sup>262</sup>

Cognitive relativism can take different forms depending on how truth is relativized. William Gairdner talks about two types of cognitive relativism – historical and linguistic.

### 1.5.3.2 Historical Relativism

Historical relativism considers truth a historical concept claiming that truth could change over time because it is relative to its moment in history.<sup>263</sup> Osman Bilen argues that historical study can enable us to grasp the meaning of the past: “Our understanding of history is always relative to conditions under which past events took place, and the meaning of these events are understood only with reference to a certain historical process which is constantly changing.”<sup>264</sup> Both Hegel and Marx are proponents of this kind of view in their approach to history. Marx claims that truth is a changing product of historical process that culminates in the creation of a classless communist society.<sup>265</sup> Hegel was convinced that: “unless we delve into the differentiation hidden by the universality of concepts, our thoughts cannot be complete and certainly not practical.”<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Cf. William Gairdner, *The Book of Absolutes: A Critique of Relativism and a Defence of Universals* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 25.

<sup>264</sup> Osman Bilen, *The Historicity of Understanding and the Problem of Relativism in Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Washington: Council for Research in Values & Philosophy, 2000), 16.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. Gairdner, *The Book of Absolutes*, 25.

<sup>266</sup> Daniel Berthold-Bond, *Hegel's Grand Synthesis: A Study of Being, Thought, and History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 15.

### 1.5.3.3 Linguistic Relativism

Linguistic relativism holds the idea that truth is something which is created and reflected by language and sometimes it could develop even as a product of language.<sup>267</sup> It is the understanding that the particular language one speaks influences the way one thinks about reality.<sup>268</sup> In real life no person speaks “language-in-general” but always with a specific meaning and particular structure.<sup>269</sup> Language influences thought and therefore can be defined in contrast to closely related but analytically distinct realities. When the structure and vocabulary of a person’s language influence one’s perception of the world, language could force the shape of thought in varying degrees. According to Gadamer, the linguistics of understanding is *the concretion of historically effected consciousness* and language is not just man’s possession in the world; but rather language depends the fact that man has a *world* at all. The world as world exists for man as for no other creature that is in the world. But this world is verbal in nature.<sup>270</sup> The German philosopher and linguist, Johann Hamann maintains that language is the instrument and criterion of reason. It is also the source of all the confusions and fallacies of reason, which leads to epistemic and linguistic relativism.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Cf. Gaidner, *The Book of the Absolutes*, 26.

<sup>268</sup> Cf. John A. Lucy “Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis,” *The MIT Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science*, eds. Robert Andrew Wilson and Frank C. Keil (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 475.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. John A. Lucy, “The Scope of Linguistic Relativity: an Analysis and Review of Empirical Research,” in *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*, eds. John Gumperz and Stephen Levinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 41.

<sup>270</sup> Cf. Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, rev. edition. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004), 405.

<sup>271</sup> Cf. Krausz, *Relativism*, 38.

### 1.5.3.4 Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism has been the topic of discussion in modern political and social life for some time. The simple meaning of cultural relativism is the understanding that all cultures are equal, and universal values become secondary when examining cultural norms.<sup>272</sup> This kind of relativism is applied to a group or groups of people. Even though Franz Boas did not coin the word “cultural relativism,” it was his thinking which led to the formation of such a notion. He wrote in 1887: “...civilization is not something absolute, but ... is relative, and ... our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes.”<sup>273</sup> Those who advocate cultural relativism agree that “*what is believed or practiced as true, or right, or wrong for any culture is whatever that culture believes or practices as true, or right, or wrong.*”[italics in original]<sup>274</sup> Rod Aya in an essay comments that relativists argue about having no such thing as objective knowledge tested by fact and no objective truth. On the contrary, for them ‘knowledge is a social construction’, and truth is not correspondence with fact but coherence with culture, ideology, or ‘discourse’, so a sentence that is true in one culture, society, or ‘discourse community’ may be false in another and vice versa.<sup>275</sup> According to William D. Gairdner, this way of understanding is a complete departure from the idea central to Western civilization until recently, since the search for permanent universal truths ought to be the aim of everyone.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Elisabeth Reichert, *Understanding Human Rights: An Exercise Book* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2006), 104.

<sup>273</sup> Franz Boas, “Museums of Ethnology and Their Classification,” *Science*, Vol. 9, No. 228 (1887): 589.

<sup>274</sup> Gairdner, *The Book of Absolutes*, 29.

<sup>275</sup> Cf. Rod Aya, “Reign of Error; or, The Case against Cognitive Cultural Relativism,” *Irish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 13, No.1 (2004): 32.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

The writings of William Graham are very influential in the area of cultural relativism and he advocated the principle of ethnocentrism saying that “one’s own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it.”<sup>277</sup> Since no outside culture is superior to the local one, any attempt to insert domination of one culture over another is inherently wrong. The difference between people, cultures, moral systems, beliefs and practices began to take surprising views that “*one culture is as good as another*, that there may be such things as good-better-best *within* a culture or civilization but not *between* them.”<sup>278</sup> This argument is seen as a radical shift from the old understanding that what unifies humans is the differences rather than what is common. Even though it may look very attractive from the outset, there are unseen dangers inherent in such an argument. Elisabeth Reichert gives an example, saying that if a certain culture accepts genital mutilation, then no outside principle should overrule the cultural norm.<sup>279</sup> In order to avoid such drastic dangers, she proposes the following guidelines in analyzing cultural relativism.<sup>280</sup> 1) Examine closely the history of the cultural practice. 2) Examine the power brokers who determine the cultural norm. 3) Analyze the cultural practice within a contemporary human rights standard.

The term “culture” carries a wide range of meanings with ambiguous connotations in relation to relativistic thinking. Its meaning varies from person to person and people to people in order to make cross-cultural ethical judgments. Ruth Maclin in his book *Against Relativism: Cultural Diversity and the Search for Ethical Universals in Medicine* says that the systems of belief about the natural world differ from one culture to another and so, too, do the ways of

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<sup>277</sup> William Graham Sumner, *Folkways: A Study of Mores, Manners, Customs and Morals*, (New York: Cosimo Publications, 2007) 13.

<sup>278</sup> Gairdner, *The Book of Absolutes*, 29.

<sup>279</sup> Cf. Reichert, *Understanding Human Rights*, 104.

<sup>280</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 105-106.

justifying beliefs about ‘matters of fact.’ No one-belief system can be held to be more valid than the next. Beliefs based on modern science are no more true than beliefs based on myth or superstition.<sup>281</sup>

### 1.5.3.5 Moral Relativism

This is the most common form of “relativism” and much discussed in religious circles. The term ‘moral relativism’ is understood in different ways. Katinka Quintelier and Daniel Fessler argue that moral relativism consists of three components. First, it holds that descriptive, prescriptive, or meta-ethical aspects of prescriptive terms such as ‘right,’ ‘wrong,’ ‘ought,’ etc., (e.g., their use, legitimacy, or meaning) are relative to a moral view. Second, moral relativism holds that there is variation in these moral views, and, third, this variation cannot be entirely eliminated, either practically or by following certain epistemological rules.<sup>282</sup> It is commonly understood as a view, which asserts “the ethical and moral points of view and practices of individuals (or groups, cultures, peoples) are all equally valid, good, and true.”<sup>283</sup> There is not a single objectively true morality but only many different moralities.

Generally moral relativism is explained as an empirical thesis with strong disagreements on truth or justification of moral judgments that is relative to some persons or situations. Moral relativists claim that there is no single objectively true morality but only different moralities just as there is no language common to all but having different languages to communicate to

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<sup>281</sup> Ruth Maclin, *Against Relativism: Cultural Diversity and the Search for Ethical Universals in Medicine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8.

<sup>282</sup> Cf. Katinka Quintelier and Daniel MT Fessler, “Varying Versions of Moral Relativism : the Philosophy and Psychology of Normative Relativism” *Biology & Philosophy*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (January 2012): 96.

<sup>283</sup> Gairdner, *The Book of Absolutes*, 27.

others.<sup>284</sup> Different moralities are created based on the reactions of people and there is no objective way to show that one is the correct one and the other is wrong. Gilbert Harman explains:

According to moral relativism, there is not a single true morality. There are a variety of possible moralities or moral frames of reference, and whether something is morally right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust, etc. is a relative matter—relative to one or another morality or moral frame of reference. Something can be morally right relative to one moral frame of reference and morally wrong relative to another.<sup>285</sup>

Since there is no objective way of finding what is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ one has to conclude that there is no point in believing in a single true morality. Harman continues to argue that one needs to keep in mind various differences people accept in morality before talking about moral relativism. Some of the contentious issues on the chart are abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, religion, etiquette, slavery, caste system, cannibalism, eating meat and many more of the similar nature including experiments on human nature.<sup>286</sup>

The obsessive compulsion of the post-modern society with relativism is compared to the “death of truth” in the sense of the extinction of the idea that any particular thing can be known for sure.<sup>287</sup> As a result of such thinking, facts of truth are understood as mere opinions subjected to personal preferences: “The word *truth* now means ‘true for me’ and nothing more. We have entered an era of dogmatic skepticism.”<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Cf. Gilbert Harman and Judith Jarvis Thomson, *Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 5.

<sup>285</sup> Gilbert Harman, “Moral Relativism Explained,” (Princeton University: June 19, 2012), 1, accessed on April 10, 2013. [http://www.princeton.edu/~harman/Papers/Moral\\_Relativism.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/~harman/Papers/Moral_Relativism.pdf).

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>287</sup> Cf. Francis and Koukl, *Relativism*, 19-20.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

‘Tolerance’ is the pretext many moral relativists use to make this thesis more appealing to the common people. Since morals are individual, one needs to tolerate the views of others. Lawrence Hinman argues that one of the aspects which makes relativism attractive, is its promise of tolerant attitude towards others.<sup>289</sup> A prescription to tolerate means that you should not interfere with actions that you (or your culture) consider wrong.<sup>290</sup> Dex Bahr in his book *No Christian Man is an Island* comments that tolerance is the major beachhead of moral relativism, presenting it as the supreme virtue.<sup>291</sup> Ruth Maclin writes: “Tolerance is a virtue, at least according to Western cultural values. Practicing tolerance demands careful scrutiny of alien beliefs and customs before rejecting them out of hand.”<sup>292</sup> The moral relativist strongly believes that tolerance is necessary to live together harmoniously, and this is achieved “if we disavow a universal or cross-culturally binding moral standard.”<sup>293</sup> But there are some moral relativists who also criticize tolerance for it being psychologically impossible.<sup>294</sup>

#### 1.5.4 Moral Relativism and New Evangelization

Before entering the conclave to elect a successor to Pope John Paul II on 18 April 2005, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger presided over the Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica. The reverberation from the homily of the *Missa Pro Eligendo Romano Pontifice* still continues in discussions related to secularization and new evangelization because of his famous use of the phrase “dictatorships of

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<sup>289</sup> Cf. Lawrence M. Hinman, *Ethics: A Pluralistic Approach to Moral Theory*, 5th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2013), 40.

<sup>290</sup> Cf. Katinka and Fessler, “Varying Versions of Moral Relativism,” 98.

<sup>291</sup> Bahr, *No Christian Man is an Island* (Maitland: Xulon Press, 2010), 125.

<sup>292</sup> Maclin, *Against Relativism*, 58.

<sup>293</sup> Dean Kowalski, *Moral Theory at the Movies: An Introduction to Ethics* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 77.

<sup>294</sup> Cf. Katinka and Fessler, “Varying Versions of Moral Relativism,” 98.



relativism: “Today, having a clear faith based on the Creed of the Church is often labeled as fundamentalism. Whereas relativism – that is, letting oneself ‘tossed here and there carried about by every wind of doctrine’ – seems the only attitude that can cope with modern times. We are building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one’s own ego and desires.”<sup>295</sup> Here, by relativism he means the attitude of the contemporary culture which does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one’s ego and desires.<sup>296</sup>

John Paul II vehemently opposed the relativistic attitudes of modern culture and even talked about a kind of “religious relativism” in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* saying that such attitudes are hindrances to evangelization as “incorrect theological perspective and characterized by a religious relativism, which leads to the belief that ‘one religion is good as another’.”<sup>297</sup> When truth is denied to man, he might be dominated by what is accidental and arbitrary.<sup>298</sup> John Paul II suggested truth as an alternative to relativism: “According to Christian faith and the Church’s teaching, only the freedom which submits to the Truth leads the human person to his true good. The good of the person is to be in the Truth and to the Truth.”<sup>299</sup> An intense pastoral effort is needed to counter the attacks from relativistic attitudes and also to find the “essential bond between truth, the Good and the Freedom.”<sup>300</sup> The Congregation for Catholic

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<sup>295</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “Homily of the Mass: *Pro Eligendo Romano Pontifice*,” (St. Peter’s Basilica, 18 April, 2005) in *L’Osservatore Romano*, 19 April 2001.

<sup>296</sup> Cf. Gediminas T. Jankunas, *The Dictatorship of Relativism: Pope Benedict’s XVI’s Response* (New York: Alba House Publishers, 2011), Kindle edition.

<sup>297</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), 36: AAS 83 (1991). Hereafter, RM.

<sup>298</sup> Cf. Jankunas, *The Dictatorship of Relativism*, Kindle edition.

<sup>299</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor* (August 6, 1993), 84: AAS 85 (1993).

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

Education observes that there is a growing sense of marginalization of Christian faith even in countries with Christian roots – that Christian faith is no longer a reference point and a source of light.<sup>301</sup>

Pope Benedict sees the ‘crisis of faith’ as a ‘crisis of truth’ and vice versa.<sup>302</sup> One way to confront relativists is to apply the philosophical methodology of relativizing relativizers, i.e. refuting relativism with its own arguments.<sup>303</sup> But the ultimate winning element of any relativistic thinking is the strength of the faith of Christians: “It is not only important to have the truth, but also to be able to communicate that truth to others. This requires the renewal of Christian faith and intelligent commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the only secure basis of authentic humanism.”<sup>304</sup> In his World Youth Day address at Cologne in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI said:

In the last century we experienced revolutions with a common program-expecting nothing more from god, they assumed total responsibility for the cause of the world in order to change it. And this, as we saw, meant that a human and partial point of view was always taken as an absolute guiding principle. Absolutizing what is not absolute but relative is called totalitarianism. It does not liberate man, but takes away his dignity and enslaves him. It is not ideologies that save the world, but only a return to the living God, our Creator, the guarantor of our freedom, the guarantor of what is really good and true.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, “The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, (Rome, 28 December 1997), accessed on April 15, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_27041998\\_school2000\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html).

<sup>302</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Christ Our Hope: The Papal Address of the Apostolic Journey to the United States* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2008), 46.

<sup>303</sup> Jankunas, *The Dictatorship of Relativism*, Kindle edition.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Benedict XVI, “Address of Pope Benedict on 20<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day” (Cologne – Marienfeld: August 20, 2005), accessed on May 10, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2005/august/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20050820\\_vigil-wyd\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/august/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20050820_vigil-wyd_en.html).

Thus, answer to the problem of relativism is found in a search for truth about man and God.

### 1.6 Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism and postmodernism carry wide-ranging meanings<sup>306</sup> in contemporary society, but are treated here as intellectual disciplines from a theological perspective where they became instrumental in shaping or reshaping the Western culture, especially in their animosity to religion. Historic Modernism is a phenomenon of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though later in the twentieth century it acquired a certain after-life.<sup>307</sup> Pope Pius X condemned modernism through his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* in 1907, viewing it as the ‘synthesis of all heresies.’<sup>308</sup> The doctrine of modernism leads logically and fatally to the destruction of the very conception of a real God, distinct from the world, personal and transcendent, which is the very foundation of religious belief.<sup>309</sup>

Modernity has a tendency to separate present from the past in its deliberate attempt to create a historical difference. When the continuity of the present with the past is eroded, obtaining knowledge of the past becomes impossible, resulting in a dramatic revision of values and modes of perception of realities in the present situation. Modernism thus questioned the validity of historical reliability of Scripture and the Church’s authority to interpret it, and denials

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<sup>306</sup> John Cobb argues that the word “modern” initially had a positive meaning but now carrying a negative connotation. He argues that “modern” refers to an epoch that is felt to be past or at least passing. It is no longer equivalent to “contemporary.” It refers to an era from which more and more people feel detached, if not alienated. Cf. John Cobb, “Two Types of Postmodernism: Deconstruction and Process,” *Theology Today*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (July 1990):150.

<sup>307</sup> Aiden Nichols, “Modernism a Century on,” in *Christendom Awake Website*, accessed on April 9, 2013. <http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/anichols/modernism.htm>.

<sup>308</sup> Cf. Pius X, Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, (8 September 1907), 40: AAS 40 (1907).

<sup>309</sup> Cf. C. J. T. Talar, “‘The Synthesis of All Heresies’ – 100 Years On,” *Theological Studies* Vol. 68, No. 3. (September 2007): 494.

of immutable truth. It presented religion as a human phenomenon, the product of the evolving creative consciousness of the human race.<sup>310</sup>

### 1.6.1 Development

Broadly conceived, postmodernism may be configured by its opposition to Enlightenment norms championed by Modernity. In his article “Postmodernism and the need for Rational Apologetics in A Post-Conciliar Church” Glemm Siniscalchi argues that the traditional conception of truth as an absolute, objective, and universal description of reality went through a radical reinterpretation as it is no longer seen as a goal worthy to be pursued in and of itself. Now truth is understood as something inseparable from politics, culture, psychology, biology, race, and gender – determined and discovered by individuals.<sup>311</sup> Richard Rorty comments that the ideas ‘truth is made rather than found,’ and ‘the world doesn’t offer any spiritual comfort,’ took hold of the imagination of the Western culture. As a result, anything could be made to look good or bad, important or unimportant, useful or useless by being re-described.<sup>312</sup> Siniscalchi, summarizing the ideas of Jean Francois Lyotard on Postmodernism, writes that it is difficult to define postmodernism because the movement is characterized by: (1) the affirmation of radical and irreducible pluralism; (2) the rejection of unifying metaphysical or religious claims; and (3) suspicion toward binary categories that characterize different regions of thought or ontological realities.<sup>313</sup> It runs rampant in the culture of postmodernity - ‘true for you, but not for me!’

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<sup>310</sup> Cf. James Hitchcock, “Postmortem of a Rebirth: The Catholic Intellectual Renaissance,” *American Scholar*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (March 1980): 211.

<sup>311</sup> Cf. Glemm B. Siniscalchi, “Postmodernism and the Need for Rational Apologetics in a Post-Conciliar Church,” *The Heythrop Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (September 2011): 751.

<sup>312</sup> Cf. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1,3,7.

<sup>313</sup> Cf. Siniscalchi, “Postmodernism and the need for Rational Apologetics,” 751.

Postmodernism assumes the nature of deconstruction in Derrida and Foucault when they deconstruct everything that the modern world has taken for granted. Deconstruction undercuts every quest for certainty. It does not seek to replace what is torn down with a new edifice, showing instead the problematic character of the aim to construct any edifice at all. In these ways it stimulates the alienation from modernity that is already widespread and intensifies it.<sup>314</sup>

### **1.6.2 Modernism, Postmodernism and New Evangelization**

Because of modern and post-modern attitudes, the Church faces a dire situation in her evangelization of the world: In her effort to evangelize the world, the Church faces a situation that the unifying claims of the Church might not seem to be true and to be obeyed by everyone. As the adherents of postmodernism clearly reject the existence of universals, this adversely affects the possibility of interpersonal communications. Because words do not have referents, language loses its power to make definitive statements and is no longer capable of persuading others. Written texts no longer refer to reality when metaphysical truths (such as human nature) are illusory.<sup>315</sup> Some thinkers such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson claim that texts must be released from an objective message that readers can somehow discover for themselves. Every text can be shown to be ambiguous. The original meaning the author placed in her or his writing does not limit the reader's understanding of what is written. Readers therefore impose their own meaning upon the text.<sup>316</sup> Walter Kasper remarks that postmodernism admits defeat in the face of mankind's great questions, including the question of God, declaring itself to

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<sup>314</sup> Cf. Cobb, "Two Types of Postmodernism," 151.

<sup>315</sup> Cf. Siniscalchi, "Postmodernism and the need for Rational Apologetics," 753.

<sup>316</sup> Cf. Richard Rorty, "Introduction," in *Pragmatism: From Pierce to Davidson*, ed. John P. Murphy (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 4-5.

be incompetent or indifferent. The truth no longer exists, only truths.<sup>317</sup> Thus, the story of postmodernism has become a story of no stories – without a master narrative to interpret this world. When postmodernism is highly critical of any metaphysical assumptions, many theologians ask the question if and how it is possible to have faith in a postmodern society.<sup>318</sup> According to Avery Dulles even theologians have fallen into the trap of postmodernism in their interpretations of scripture and dogma: “Theology, for its part, all too often evades the challenge of truth. Falling into fideism or sheer positivism, many theologians limit themselves to sociological, linguistic, and historical studies of the Bible and Church teaching.”<sup>319</sup>

The philosophical and cultural milieu of modern age, which is the topic of discussion in this chapter, could be grouped under the section of Modernism and Postmodernism since atheism, secularism, globalization and relativism are closely linked to these trends. A brief discussion of individualism, materialism and pluralism is also necessary to support our efforts to properly locate the call for new evangelization.

## **1.7 Individualism and Materialism**

### **1.7.1 Individualism**

The language of ‘individualism’ is the result of the rise of capitalism from the eighteenth century. When Adam Smith wrote in his *Wealth of Nations*, “The natural effort of every individual to better his own condition ...is so powerful a principle...not only capable of carrying

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<sup>317</sup> Walter Kasper. “The Timeliness of Speaking of God: Freedom and Communion as Basic Concepts of Theology,” *Worship* Vol. 83, No. 4 (2009): 293-311.

<sup>318</sup> A. H. Verhoef, “Postmodernism and the need for story and promise: How Robert Jenson’s Theology Addresses some Postmodern Challenges to Faith,” *Acta Theologia*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2012): 71.

<sup>319</sup> Avery Dulles, *Church and Society: The Lawrence J. McGinley Lectures, 1988-2007* (New York: Fordham University Press), 302.

society to wealth and prosperity,”<sup>320</sup> he was laying the foundation of modern individualism in economic terms. Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarian principle, “the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people,”<sup>321</sup> is closely related to individualism. When we speak about man as an individual, two concepts are involved at once: a) an object out there which is the empirical subject of speech, thought, and will (the individual sample of mankind as found in all societies) b) a value which is the independent, autonomous and thus essentially nonsocial moral being.<sup>322</sup> In simple terms individualism is seen as a moral or political doctrine, which gives precedence to the need of the individual over communal, cosmological, metaphysical and religious priorities.

Saint-Simon, a French social theorist, coined this word “individualism” to characterize the condition of humanity in the nineteenth-century.<sup>323</sup> At first, it was a word to criticize the negative character of society: “Saint-Simon introduced the term to describe a doctrine based on individual reason, right and interests... a generic principle from modern times manifested in liberalism, laissez-faire attitudes, atheism, materialism, skepticism, Protestantism, and utilitarianism.”<sup>324</sup> But American democracy and liberal capitalism are credited with the emergence of the current form of individualism. Robert Bellah claims that individualism lies at the heart of the American culture in different forms – biblical, civic, utilitarian and expressive –

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<sup>320</sup> Adam Smith, William Playfair and Dugald Stewart, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Hartford: Cooke & Hale, 1918), 27.

<sup>321</sup> Jeremy Bentham and Sir John Bowrin, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, Vol. IV (London: Marshall & Co., 1843), 84.

<sup>322</sup> Cf. Louis Dumont, *Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 25.

<sup>323</sup> Cf. Philip Brown, *Authentic Individualism: A Guide for Reclaiming the Best of America’s Heritage* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1996), 1-2.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

believing in the dignity and sacredness of the individual.<sup>325</sup> It emerged as an attitude against the oppressive and arbitrary monarchical or aristocratic authority who ruled against the will of the common people.<sup>326</sup>

From the beginning of modern idea of individualism criticisms were numerous including accusing individualism of making contribution to the great disequilibrium in opportunity that is seen in the modern world.<sup>327</sup> Retreat from public life to individualistic and ‘special groups’ created an atmosphere of isolation, especially for the elderly of the community. It also helped Karl Marx to develop his communistic ideas as an opposition to the individualistic capitalist market economy.

### 1.7.2 Individualism and New Evangelization

In his essay on “Freedom and Community in an Age of Individualism and Globalization” Jürgen Moltmann argues that the stepped-up individualism and global marketing threaten the communicated and communicating shared life of humans.<sup>328</sup> It has become a kind of secular religion influencing the human way of life even more than the religious traditions.<sup>329</sup> Robert Bellah in his book *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* quoting John Winthrop, argues that “individuality without community is *individualism*, the fruits of which are dissolution, isolation, selfishness, disorder, anarchy, confusion, war.... What we need, then

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<sup>325</sup> Cf. Robert Bellah, ed. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 142.

<sup>326</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>327</sup> Cf. Daniel Shanahan, *Toward a Genealogy of Individualism* (Massachusetts: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 11.

<sup>328</sup> Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, “Freedom and Community in an Age of Individualism and Globalization,” *International Congregational Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Summer 2012): 13.

<sup>329</sup> Eric Mount, “American Individualism Reconsidered,” *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 22, No. 4, (June 1981): 362.



is...communalism and individuality harmonized...atoned.”<sup>330</sup> This argument parallels what Tocqueville advocates, namely, that individualism destroyed the individual with its indifference towards society.<sup>331</sup>

There are numerous challenges offered to faith by extreme individualism. In a world dominated by individualism, faith becomes a personal opinion. In his address to the Asian Bishops, Pope John Paul II remarked that “exaggerated individualism now threatens the traditional values, which, generally speaking bestowed meaning and harmony on the life of individuals and on the communities they composed.”<sup>332</sup> In connecting individualism, freedom and evangelization, Cardinal Avery Dulles writes that a correct theological notion of freedom can overcome the individualism that today inhibits the task of evangelization.<sup>333</sup> According to Dulles, the Gospel should be presented as an attractive alternative to everyone who suffers from the isolation of contemporary individualism.<sup>334</sup>

Moltmann argues that a person is not an individual but an *individuum*, something like an atom in Greek, which is ultimately indivisible.<sup>335</sup> Catholicism recognizes the autonomy of the secular spheres - but not detached from morality, relegating morality to the private sphere: “It resists the radical individualism that accompanies privatization and stresses the collective and

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<sup>330</sup> Robert Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 118.

<sup>331</sup> Brown, *Authentic Individualism*, 3.

<sup>332</sup> John Paul II, “Message to the IV FABC Plenary Assembly,” in *New Evangelization in the Third Millennium, Studia Missionalia*, Vo. 48 (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1999): 260.

<sup>333</sup> Cf. Dulles, *Evangelization for the Third Millennium*, 87.

<sup>334</sup> Cf. Dulles, *Church and Society*, 436.

<sup>335</sup> Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 156.

communal – the ecclesial – character of the proclamation of faith and of religious practices, while simultaneously upholding the absolute rights of the individual conscience.”<sup>336</sup>

The answer to the radical individualism is cultivating a proper understanding of human freedom. John Paul II always tried to connect human freedom with the reality of truth. “A freedom that refuses to be bound to the idea of a truly good choice ‘would fall into arbitrariness and end up submitting itself from obedience to truth’... ‘self-love which leads to an unbridled affirmation of self-interest which refuses to be limited by any demand of justice.’”<sup>337</sup> Choosing well is the basis of authentic freedom.

### 1.7.3 Materialism

In contrast to idealism, which believes that ultimate reality exists in man’s consciousness and reason, materialism claims that matter is the only thing that truly exists, rejecting the possibility of the existence of God, angels, or heaven. Feelings, morals, thoughts, and reason are purely physical processes that take place in the brain because of biochemical actions and reactions in neurons. Materialism has its origins in atheistic philosophical systems and has wide acceptance in contemporary culture.<sup>338</sup> In materialism, the world is explained in terms of itself through the material conditions, natural laws excluding any innovation of the supernatural: “In its most general sense, then, materialism claims that the origins and development of whatever exists is dependent on natural processes and ‘matter,’ that is, a level of physical reality, that is

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<sup>336</sup> Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 104.

<sup>337</sup> Kenneth Craycraft, “‘Having’ and ‘Being’: John Paul II as Pastor,” in *A New Worldly Order: John Paul II and Human Freedom* ed. George Weigel (Lanham: University Press of America, 1992), 72.

<sup>338</sup> Cf. David Lindsey, *The Beast in Sheep’s Clothing: The Exposing the Lies of Godless Human Science* (Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2005), 99.

independent of and prior to thought.”<sup>339</sup> Philosophical materialism is monistic only in denying the possible existence of anything other than matter, while it regards matter itself as an infinitely diverse and contradictory phenomenon. Thus it considers matter not as the basis of reality but the whole of reality.<sup>340</sup>

The philosophical definition of materialism is seldom used in the religious and economic discussions today. But even in popular usage, the above definition is understood in creating the economic meaning of the term. Russell Belk defines materialism as: “The importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person’s life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.”<sup>341</sup> It is associated with a greater drive to acquire the goods that marketers provide for consumers.<sup>342</sup> Sociologists, on the other hand, speak about three components of materialistic values: 1) Possessions make a materialistic individual happy in life by using all the sources of happiness available. 2) People’s successfulness in life is judged by the quantity and quality of their possessions by a materialistic individual. 3) Since possessions become a central aspect of one’s life, a materialistic individual tends to direct one’s thoughts and behaviors toward possessions: even intellectual enrichment.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark and Richard York. *Critique of Intelligent Design: Materialism versus Creationism from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008), 21.

<sup>340</sup> Cf. E.T. Borodin, “Contemporary Philosophical Materialism and Synergetics,” *Russian Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Fall 2004), 35.

<sup>341</sup> Russell Belk, “Materialism: Trait Aspects of Living in the Material World,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 12 (December 1985): 265.

<sup>342</sup> Cf. James A. Muncy and Jacqueline K. Eastman, “Materialism and Consumer Ethics: An Exploratory Study,” *Journal of Business*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (January 1988): 137.

<sup>343</sup> Andrew N. Christopher, Pam Marek and Stephen M., “Materialism and Attitudes Toward Money: An Exploratory Investigation” *Individual Differences Research*, Vol. 2, No. 2. (August 2004):110.

Since materialism admits the existence of anything but matter, it becomes instrumental only in creating wealth and not human happiness. Instead, it places heavy burdens on the human soul and thus also becomes instrumental in creating unhappiness. Working hard to possess more goods eventually ends up in frustration when the desired result is not achieved. Its promise of happiness remains an unachieved goal since it does not treat man in his integral nature: “Thus, in the journey of life, materialists end up carrying an ever-heavier load, one that expends the energy necessary for living, loving, and learning – the really satisfying aspects of that journey...Materialism, it appears, tends to ripen best among people who feel uncertain about matters of love, self-esteem, competence, or control.”<sup>344</sup>

A related topic to materialism is consumerism, which is often called “the religion of capitalism.”<sup>345</sup> It is because of the materialistic belief that a good life is measured more by what one has than who one is. Doles Curran writes: “We are well-programmed to believe in consumerism as the panacea to happiness, the antidote to emptiness, and the entitlement of hard work. Accumulation of unnecessary goods has become a habit--even an addiction--as we wring our hands over lack of storage space. What we once considered luxuries we come to regard as necessities, and eventually we become dependent upon the things we acquire.”<sup>346</sup> When consumerism becomes the way of life, competition, workaholism and individualism increase at the expense of the happiness of the person and society. David Myers and Ed Diener report that people have not become happier over time as their cultures have become more

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<sup>344</sup> Tim Kasser, *The High Price of Materialism* (Colorado: Bradford Books, 2002), xi.

<sup>345</sup> Doles Curran, “There is a Lot to Be Said for Less,” *U.S. Catholic*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (February 1999): 34.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*

affluent.<sup>347</sup> John Paul II in his encyclical *Centesimus Annus* says: “It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed toward ‘having’ rather than ‘being,’ and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself.”<sup>348</sup> Both materialism and consumerism reduce people to a commodity and a person’s value and worth is assessed in society based on how much possessions one owns.<sup>349</sup>

#### 1.7.4 Materialism and New Evangelization

Since philosophical materialism rejects the idea of a supernatural origin and destiny of man it is always a threat to religious thinking. It lays the foundation for liberalism, rationalism, Marxism, positivism and agnosticism, which vehemently oppose the idea of God, revelation, grace and redemption.<sup>350</sup> Two of the most prominent economic systems – capitalism and communism – are based on their explanation of materialism. Cardinal Dulles writes in his study of the Church documents on evangelization that the Church should diligently work towards transforming the culture from its too much dependence on materialism: “To prevent our civilization from sinking ever deeper into consumerism and materialism... these Areopagi need to be transformed by contact with the gospel. They cannot be evangelized simply from outside, by words of admonition; the evangelization must come from within, by committed Christians

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<sup>347</sup> Cf. David Myers, and Ed Diener. “The Pursuit of Happiness,” *Scientific American* Vol. 274, No. 5 (May 1996): 70-73.

<sup>348</sup> CA 36.

<sup>349</sup> Cf. Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 50.

<sup>350</sup> Cf. Arnold Sparr, *To Promote, Defend, and Redeem: The Catholic Literary Revival and the Cultural Transformation of American Catholicism 1920-1960* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1990), 54.

thoroughly familiar with the relevant disciplines.”<sup>351</sup> In Church’s understanding, both capitalism and Marxism share materialism as a root problem. John Paul II’s first social encyclical *Laborem Exercens* criticized these economic philosophies as “materialistic economism” which stood in the way of authentic and integral development of a human person.<sup>352</sup>

In his book, *Pope Francis*, Matthew Bunson talks about Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez of Honduras speaking of Latin America on Vatican Radio: “God has been displaced by materialism, and the Church exists to announce God and his loving care of the world. This is our main challenge.”<sup>353</sup> Even from the very beginning of his Papacy Pope Francis is trying to emulate the simple life style of the Gospel in challenging the world’s materialism by giving a counter-cultural example. “

It is precisely to this history of care for the poor coupled with cultivated humility and deliberate evangelization that Pope Francis appeals. ...Pope Francis selected his new name because he ‘had a special place in his heart and his ministry for the poor, for the disenfranchised,’ and ‘for those living on the fringes and facing injustice.’ His episcopal motto while in Buenos Aires was ‘Lowly, but chosen.’ Perhaps the selection of the name Francis says that though chosen, he remains lowly.<sup>354</sup>

## 1.8 Religious Pluralism

There are many people even today who believe that the famous statement: “tantum religio potuit suadere malorum” (So much wrong could religion induce)<sup>355</sup> of the Roman poet and philosopher Titus Lucretius Carus (ca. 99 BC – ca. 55 BC) is literally true. A religiously

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<sup>351</sup> Dulles, *Evangelization for the Third Millennium*, 97-98.

<sup>352</sup> Cf. Charles E. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 221-22.

<sup>353</sup> Matthew Bunson, *Pope Francis* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2013), 75-76.

<sup>354</sup> Candida Moss, “What’s in a Name?” *Newsweek Global*, Vol. 161, No. 11 (3/15/2013):1

<sup>355</sup> Susan Ratcliffe, ed., *Oxford Treasury of Sayings and Quotations* (New York: Oxford University Press: 2011), 384.

pluralistic world brings many challenges not only to the religious but also to the non-religious. Now-a-days many people believe it is arrogant and arbitrary to hold onto one's own beliefs and reject others. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religions*, religious pluralism is “the view that different, or even contradictory, forms of religious belief and behavior could or even should coexist. The problem with religious pluralism arises when one particular tradition (the mainstream) dominates society, denying the legitimacy of other streams and marginalizing them as sectarian phenomena.”<sup>356</sup> Stanley Smartha argues that there is also a tendency to accuse those who recognize the plurality of religions and cultures of holding on to the theory of relativism. But he is of the opinion that pluralism does not relativize truth. It relativizes different responses to truth, which are conditioned by history and culture. It rejects the claim of any particular response to be absolute. Those who accept the fact of plurality do not surrender their critical ability, based on their commitment to the absolute through the relative, to judge and reject demonic elements, either religious or ideological.<sup>357</sup>

### **1.8.1 The Challenges Posed by Religious Pluralism**

As for pluralism, Philip Quinn believes that the awareness of religious diversity has recently assumed qualitatively new forms. Among the factors that might account for this transformation is the increased contact people now have with religions other than their own.<sup>358</sup> Modern technologies of travel and communication foster interchanges between adherents of different religions. Modern scholarship has made available translations of and commentaries on

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<sup>356</sup> Robert M. Seltzer, “Pluralism, Religious” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (2nd ed.), ed. Adele Berlin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 571.

<sup>357</sup> Cf. Stanley J. Samartha, “The Holy Spirit and People of Other Faiths,” *Ecumenical Review*, 42, 3–4 (July–Oct. 1990): 253.

<sup>358</sup> Philip Quinn, “Religious Diversity and Religious Toleration” in *Issues in Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Eugene Thomas Long (Norwell: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 57.

texts from a variety of religious traditions, and cultural anthropologists have recorded fascinating descriptions of the practices of many such traditions. People who live in religiously pluralistic democracies have ample opportunities to acquire personal familiarity with religions other than their own without leaving home.<sup>359</sup>

But there are many theologians who argue that pluralism represents a profound challenge to the very core of Christian belief that Jesus is the unique Son of God and the only savior of all humanity.<sup>360</sup> Those who argue for understanding and tolerance advocate that when the world becomes increasingly pluralistic, those who adhere to a particular position, creed or religion must be willing to understand positions other than their own. Great efforts are needed both intellectually and emotionally in order to understand and appreciate the fragmentary uniting elements rather than the dividing ones for a meaningful co-existence. Paul Tillich talks about the two different approaches within pluralism to the nature of truth: (1) there are not one but many truths from the beginning (hard pluralism); (2) truth is one but it appears in many forms (soft pluralism). The difference between first and second is unclear because we cannot really grasp what “the truth” itself is.<sup>361</sup> Gavin D’Costa argues that a form of inclusivism, doing full justice to the Christian faith, is possible by affirming that salvation comes through God in Christ alone when God’s salvific will is truly universal.<sup>362</sup> There could be a fruitful tension between these two axioms: “...the inclusivist paradigm can be characterized by an openness and commitment: an openness that seeks to explore the many and various ways in which God has spoken to all his

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<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> David Nah, *Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism: A Critical Evaluation of John Hick* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 2.

<sup>361</sup> Cf. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 16.

<sup>362</sup> Cf. Gavin D’Costa, *Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 90.



children in the non-Christian religions and an openness that will lead to the positive fruits of this exploration transforming, enriching and fulfilling Christianity, so much so that its future share may be very different from the Church we know today.”<sup>363</sup>

### **1.8.2 Religious Pluralism and New Evangelization**

The Catholic Church’s attempt to improve her relationship with other religions and cultures of the world intensified with the publication of the document *Ad Gentes* of the Second Vatican Council. It resulted in bringing tremendous changes in the Church’s relationships with other religions of the world. The leaders of the world religions also made a positive response to the changes happening in the Church. The establishment of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue has made valuable contributions in exerting enormous influence on the Church’s attitude toward other world religions.

Interreligious dialogue should lead us to the awareness that we are not alone in this world and are called to cooperate with people of other religious traditions. Human dignity and the sacredness of family life are considered precious by almost all religions. When these ideals are threatened by the materialistic, atheistic attitudes of different regimes around the world, a united effort by various religions can prevent such attacks. Dialogue also helps us to work together in the service of our fellow human beings. Even when I hold on to my identity as a Christian, dialogue makes me accept the “otherness” in the community around me. This dialogue of life, work, theological ideas and spiritual beliefs is not an option anymore, but has become a necessary condition for living in the post-modern world. Dialogue leads us to a journey of discovery together with an opportunity for mutual enrichment.

The Church exhorts the members that “...through dialogue and collaboration with the

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<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the sociocultural values found among men”<sup>364</sup> Interreligious dialogue is a response to the religious plurality around us. It can happen between individual believers at an informal level or between representatives of communities. When we engage in the evangelization work of the Church, “...even before converting the world, nay, in order to convert it, we must meet the world and talk to it.”<sup>365</sup> But our talks should lead also to profess what we believe. *Lumen Gentium* describes Church “...as a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men.”<sup>366</sup> This communion goes beyond the boundaries of the membership of the Church:

The Catholic Church looks into the distance, beyond the limits on her love, if this very loci is to be that of God the Father who showers his favors upon everyone (cf. Mt 5: 45), and who so loved the world that for it he gave his only Son (cf. Jn 3: 16). Look therefore beyond your own sphere and observe those other religions that uphold the meaning and the concept of God as one, Creator, provident, most high and transcendent, that worship God with acts of sincere piety and upon whose beliefs and practices the principle of moral and social life are founded.<sup>367</sup>

## 1.9 Conclusion

The philosophical, sociological and economic systems discussed in this chapter were instrumental in generating a situation which prompted the call for a new evangelization. At this present moment, without understanding the cultural and intellectual milieu, evangelization and new evangelization will remain theoretical ideas rather than practical realities. Even though the

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<sup>364</sup> Vatican Council II, Declaration on the Church’s Relations with Non- Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, 2: AAS 58 (1966).

<sup>365</sup> Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesiam Suam* (August 6, 1964), 68: AAS 56 (1964).

<sup>366</sup> Cf. LG 1.

<sup>367</sup> Thomas P. Rush, *Evangelizing America*. (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2004), 173.

discussion in this chapter mainly concentrated on Euro-centric culture and systems, they are applicable on a larger level.<sup>368</sup>

Opening the historic Second Vatican Council Pope John XXIII remarked that the Church should not abandon her sacred treasures of truth but at the same time, “she must ever look to the present, to the new conditions and the new forms of life introduced in to the modern world.”<sup>369</sup> The above-mentioned are the conditions offered in the present world, and the Church has no choice but to deal with them. John Paul II reminds the Church of similar conditions existing today like St. Paul encountered in Athens “that there are many ‘areopagi’, and very different ones: these are the vast sectors of contemporary civilization and culture, of politics and economics. *The more the West is becoming estranged from its Christian roots, the more it is becoming missionary territory, taking the form of many different ‘areopagi’.*”<sup>370</sup> Bernard Lonergan observed that the contemporary culture has more of a ‘crisis of faith expression’ than a ‘crisis of faith’.<sup>371</sup>

Some of the present-day cultural and intellectual conditions are misunderstood and even misused because of inadequate knowledge and even personal interests.<sup>372</sup> Atheism is a philosophical system with a large number of adherents. The response of new evangelization should be able to address scientifically this principle. Secularism should be challenged and

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<sup>368</sup> The third chapter is about the new evangelization work of the SMCC based on the principles we will discuss in the second chapter. This discussion will be needed for the second and third chapters and what is needed more than this especially of secularism in India will be treated there.

<sup>369</sup> Cf. Edwin Scott Gaustad, Mark A. Noll, eds., *A Documentary History of Religion in America: Since 1877*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 538. Also, Pope John XXIII, Speech 11 Oct 1962, ref. Vatican archives & *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter Abbott ed., London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966).

<sup>370</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (10 November 1994), 57: AAS 87 (1995).

<sup>371</sup> Cf. Pat Collins, *Basic Evangelization: Guidelines for Catholics* (Dublin: Columba, 2010), 59.

<sup>372</sup> As noted earlier secularism and secularization is always used inter-changeably in theological circles which carry different meanings.

secularization should be seen as an opportunity in our new evangelization efforts. Globalization is primarily seen as an economic system with cultural and social consequences. A 'globalized Catholic Church' would help this system to humanize itself by her divinely oriented efforts. Relativism should be encountered with the truth of the Gospel and the witness of life. Exaggerated individualism should be challenged with true the true freedom of making human beings aware of what everyone ought to do, rather than a license to do anything. In the same way, the true worth of human beings should be emphasized when materialistic attitudes overtake the thinking and living patterns in the modern society.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NEW EVANGELIZATION: THE CATHOLIC RESPONSE

#### Part One: Different Dimensions of Evangelization

##### 2.1.1 Introduction

The Church's struggle with contemporary culture<sup>373</sup> is nothing new. The Church has responded to the "signs of the times"<sup>374</sup> in various ways, especially through the heroic witness of the saints who sacrificed their lives for the Kingdom of God.<sup>375</sup> After having considered the cultural and intellectual milieu of the present age in the first chapter, we consider the necessity of a Catholic response in this chapter. This response also demands a clear understanding of the teachings of the Church on evangelization and new evangelization.

The *raison d'être* of the Church is the dissemination of the Gospel to the ends of earth. The Church's identity is grounded in her vocation to evangelize the world.<sup>376</sup> Since "the Church

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<sup>373</sup> Aidon Nichols in his book *Christendom Awake: On Re-Energizing the Church in Culture* comments that a culture must embrace four dimensions – intellectual, moral, material and practical: "A culture is, therefore, a system of inherited conceptions (intellectual), a set of common standards of behavior (moral), a pattern of meanings embodied in symbols (material), and a series of conventions governing human interaction (institutional), by which human beings communicate and perpetuate, but also modify and develop, their knowledge about and attitude of life." (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 10.

<sup>374</sup> *Lumen Gentium* (no. 4) states that in every age the Church carries out the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, if it is to carry out its task. "Signs of the times" is a new phrase in a Church document signifying the very old idea of Church being both a teacher and a learner.

<sup>375</sup> One of the examples from history of an intellectual response is that of St. Thomas Aquinas who adapted the newly discovered ideas of Aristotle to express the truth of the faith using Aristotelian categories. Ignatian, Dominican and Franciscan ways of life were also responding to the 'signs of the times' in the Church.

<sup>376</sup> Cf. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 14. This document explains that the Church does this following the command of the Lord "I must proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God," apply in all truth to herself. She willingly adds with St. Paul: "Not that I boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty that has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not preach it." It is a task and mission which the vast and profound changes of present-day society make all the more urgent. Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection.

on earth by its very nature is missionary,”<sup>377</sup> her members, through their baptismal call and individually defined roles, actively participate in this responsibility – especially when it means confronting the challenges outlined in the first chapter. In order to understand the teachings of the Church on new evangelization, it is necessary to understand the theology of evangelization with its various nuances. This chapter outlines the teachings of the Church on evangelization in its various dimensions, and then proposes some of the compelling arguments posed by a few well-known theologians and intellectuals in handling the issues created by secularism and modernism. Based on our analysis in the first chapter on the influence of modernity in shaping our contemporary Christian life, it is also necessary to establish the principles of new evangelization to understand the relationship between the two.

### **2.1.2 Mission and Missionary Activity**

The current widespread use of the term ‘evangelization’ is the result of the theological vision of the Second Vatican Council. ‘Mission’ was the catchword used to designate the missionary activities of the Church and it is still used in many circles.<sup>378</sup> Despite its origin in Christian theology, the word ‘mission’ has assumed a meaning beyond the Christian meaning of propagation of faith. It can now mean any work undertaken by persons or institutions such as schools, humanitarian organizations or even business enterprises.

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<sup>377</sup> Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes*, (December 7, 1965): 2, AAS 58 (1966).

<sup>378</sup> In an article “Mission or Evangelization?” Indian missiologist Jacob Kavunkal writes about the ongoing debate about the use of “mission” or “evangelization” to describe the task of the church in the world. According to him, one group, especially Europeans, use “mission” to designate the verbal proclamation of the gospel, and “evangelization” to designate other aspects such as social justice work, inculturation and dialogue. Another group, especially those from Latin America, defines “mission” and “evangelization” in exactly the opposite way. He argues, after a biblical and historical analysis of both terms, that the two terms should mean the same thing. However, mission or evangelization today should not be about the expansion of the church or even primarily an appeal to non-Christians. Rather, the Church’s evangelizing mission must be lived out in selfless service of the world, in imitation of God’s own other-directed nature. Cf. *Mission Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (2004): 55-66.

The term ‘mission’ was not used in the contemporary Christian sense until the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>379</sup> Though missionary activity is undoubtedly at the core Church’s existence since the very beginning, the way it is explained has changed over the centuries. Evangelization efforts were understood mainly as “propagating the faith,” “expanding the boundaries” or “journeying to the infidel” to make them Christians.<sup>380</sup> In the last four or five centuries of the history of the Church, however, ‘mission’ has been understood as a geographical expansion rather than the evangelization of peoples as it means today.

In response to the Protestant Reformation, the newly formed Society of Jesus (Jesuits) is notable for its unique fourth vow: “the vow of the mission”<sup>381</sup> in obedience to the Roman Pontiff. Pope Paul III in his first bull of approval *Regimini militantis ecclesiae* of 1540 states the Jesuits take this vow: “...for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrines and for the propagation of the faith.”<sup>382</sup> Thus, the term contained a wide-ranging meaning including the complex activities by which the western ecclesiastical systems were expanded to the rest of the world.

An etymological analysis of the term will help to understand the wide-ranging meaning inherent in the term “mission”. The term is used in general to refer to everything the Church does

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<sup>379</sup> Cf. John W. O’Malley, “Mission and the early Jesuits,” accessed October 23, 2013. <http://www.theway.org.uk/Back/s079O'Malley.pdf>

<sup>380</sup> *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith) was founded by Pope Gregory XV in 1622 to coordinate and arrange the missionary work of various religious institutions of the Church. In 1627 Pope Urban VIII established a training college for missionaries under the care of the same Congregation. Because of the ecclesiological understanding of Vatican II, in 1982 Pope John Paul II renamed the congregation to *Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione* (The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples). For details about the present nature and working of the Congregation, Cf. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cevang/](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cevang/).

<sup>381</sup> The formula in the *Constitution* says: “I, [name], make profession, and I promise to Almighty God ... poverty, chastity, and obedience; ... I further promise a special obedience to the sovereign pontiff in regard to missions, according to the same apostolic letters and the Constitutions.” Cf. John W. O’Malley, ‘The Fourth Vow in Its Ignatian Context: A Historical Study,’ *Studies in Spirituality of Jesuits*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (January 1983): 1-45.

<sup>382</sup> John W. O’Malley et al. , *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts 1542-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2006), xxvii.

to further the kingdom of God on earth. The term ‘missionary’ comes from the Latin root *mitto-mittere* (to send) and its derived nominal forms are *missio* (mission) and *missionarius* (messenger). The Greek equivalent is *apostolos* from the verbal root *apostelein* which means to send.<sup>383</sup> In a narrow sense *mittere*<sup>384</sup> refers to sending out persons to preach and to teach signifying that they are ‘missionaries.’ In a broad sense it refers to the special tasks or purposes of a person or group, including evangelization and social activities.<sup>385</sup> The study of the Church mission is known as ‘missiology’. The name missiology is derived from the Latin *missio* (‘a sending forth with a special message to bring or with a special task to perform’) and the Greek *logos* (‘a study, word, or discourse’). Etymologically, missiology is a study of the sending forth or expansion of the Church.<sup>386</sup>

When “mission” is understood in terms of geographical and juridical meaning, it carries the danger of limiting conversion to **a process** of changing of religions rather than an **encounter** with Christ. ‘Christianization’ becomes the way of incorporating more and more people into a socio-political and religious entity of ‘Christendom’.<sup>387</sup> There were many official documents mainly encyclicals<sup>388</sup> that came out just before the period of Vatican II encouraging missionary

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<sup>383</sup> Cf. Ishanand Vempny, *Conversion: National Debate Or Dialogue* (Anand, Gujarat: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1999), 23.

<sup>384</sup> The Latin translation of Bible, Vulgate also uses the word *mission* in connection with the apostles and disciples of Jesus, who were sent to preach the ‘good news’. Cf. Kathaleen M. Comerford and Hilmar Pabel, *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honor of John W. O’Malley* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 266.

<sup>385</sup> Cf. Frank C. Senn, *The Witness of the Worshipping Community: Liturgy and the Practice of Evangelism* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1993), 7.

<sup>386</sup> Cf. Louis Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 12.

<sup>387</sup> Cf. John F. Gorski, “From ‘Mission’ to ‘New Evangelization’: The Origins of a Challenging Concept.” : accessed October 20, 20013. <http://www.maryknollvocations.com/Mission.pdf>.

<sup>388</sup> Pius XI issued *Rerum Ecclesiae* in 1926, Pius XII issued *Evangelii Praecones* in 1951 and *Fidei Donum* in 1957, and John XXIII issued *Princeps Patorum* in 1959.



activity in the lands outside of Europe. This period also witnessed the emergence of many missionary movements and activities all around the world. However, these documents failed to give a theological foundation of missionary work except to mention the great commission of Jesus from Matthew's gospel (28: 20). This commission also was explained differently, since it was understood as entrusted only to the hierarchy of the Church: "This commission to the apostles was now passed on to the successors of the apostles, the bishops. These were to go out and rescue those lost in darkness and the shadow of death (*Maximum Illud*, 6; *Evangelii Praecones*, 16)."<sup>389</sup>

The salvation of all mankind was clearly the intention of missionary work. The specific purposes of the mission as intended by the above mentioned Church documents were the winning of converts and the establishing a local church. But, as Robert Schreiter points out, the bulk of these encyclical letters is taken up with methods in mission: problems of education, financing, roles of bishops etc.<sup>390</sup> A shift in mission theology was inevitable -from the image of mission as territorial "expansion" to an "encounter" with the person of Jesus Christ. The recipients of evangelization are invited to become missionaries.

Mission is not about recruiting new church members simply for the sake of the church; the fullness of salvation offered by the church involves the wholeness achieved in lives lived in dedication and service to God's purposes. The goal of the church's mission is not the expansion of the church for its own sake; men and women are invited into the church so that they can join a community dedicated to preaching, serving and witnessing to God's reign. It is in such dedication and service that the fullness of salvation is achieved, as men and women participate in the community-in-mission of Father, Son and the Spirit/Mystery, Word and Presence. Christians are 'saved to save,' 'reconciled in order to reconcile.'<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Robert J. Schreiter, "Changes in Roman Catholic Attitudes Toward Proselytism and Mission" in *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 2*, eds. James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1994), 115.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

<sup>391</sup> Stephen B. Bevans and Roger Schroeder, *Constant in Context: Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 2004), 8.

Georgia Masters Keightley comments on the shift in understanding at the Second Vatican Council: “The Council’s key assertion is that mission is simply not something the Church does. Rather, mission is what the Church is and it is thus because ecclesial reality originates and participates in the very missions of the Son and the Spirit.”<sup>392</sup>

### 2.1.3 What is Evangelization?

The Second Vatican Council’s decree, *Ad Gentes*, shifts emphasis in the Church’s understanding of mission: the Church moves from ‘having missions’ to ‘being missionary’. It is not just a duty given to Christians but part of the very nature of being a Christian: “Mission became, therefore, more than an extending of the perimeters of the church, it was to be something motivating the very heart of the church, not because some command had been laid upon the faithful, but because by being missionary the church was drawn into the life of the Trinity itself.”<sup>393</sup>

Since Vatican II, evangelization, not mission, has become the ordinary word for all kinds of mission work – even more so now, with the call for new evangelization. In order to properly understand evangelization, we need to examine its etymology. The English word evangelization has its roots in the Greek *evangelizō* which is simply to “announce the good news” or “to bring the good news of salvation.” *Evangelizō* is a translation of the Hebrew word *basar*<sup>394</sup> which has

<sup>392</sup> Georgia Masters Keightley, “Vatican II: The Church’s Self-Understanding” in Anthony J. Cernera (ed), *Vatican II: The Continuing Agenda* (Fairfield: Sacred Heart University Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>393</sup> Schreiter, “Changes in Roman Catholic Attitudes toward Proselytism and Mission,” 117.

<sup>394</sup> Millard Erickson comments that ‘basar’ has the general sense of ‘proclaiming good news.’ An example is found in 1 Kings 1: 42, where Adonijah says to Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest, “Come in. A worthy man life you must be bringing good news.” David uses the verb in 2 Samuel 4: 10: “when a man told me, ‘Saul is dead’ and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news!” A messenger coming from battle is thought to be bearing good tidings (2 Sam. 18: 27). In Jeremiah 20: 15 the verb is used of the glad tidings of the birth of a son. Cf. *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), 1070.

the same meaning: “to announce good news” or “to bring the good news of salvation” (Is. 52: 7; 61: 1).<sup>395</sup> This Greek verb is used fifty-five times in the New Testament. And in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament it is used to describe “a runner coming with the news of victory; in the Psalms it occurs twice in the sense of proclaiming God’s faithfulness and salvation.”<sup>396</sup>

According to Avery Dulles, evangelization is twofold. Its primary meaning is “the announcement of the global Christian message to those who do not believe”<sup>397</sup> or to those who have not been given an opportunity to believe. Cardinal Dulles defines the second aspect of evangelization as “everything that brings human life and the world under the sway of God’s Word.”<sup>398</sup> In a broad sense, this second meaning embraces the overall action of the Church community and her essential mission: “It is, rather, the umbrella under which all ministries are carried out. Everything we do must be seen as evangelization.”<sup>399</sup> Recognizing the rich meaning contained in the term, the Congregation of Doctrine of Faith makes this observation:

In the broad sense, it [evangelization] sums up the Church’s entire mission: her whole life consists in accomplishing the *traditio Evangelii*, the proclamation and handing on of the Gospel, which is “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (*Rom* 1:16) and which, in the final essence, is identified with Jesus Christ himself (cf. *I Cor* 1:24). Understood in this way, evangelization is aimed at all of humanity. In any case, *to evangelize* does not mean simply to teach a doctrine, but to proclaim Jesus Christ by one’s words and actions, that is, to make oneself an instrument of his presence and action in the world.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Archdiocese of Chicago, *Spreading the Holy Fire: A Plan and Study Guide for Catholics Evangelizing in the Archdiocese of Chicago* (Chicago: Archdiocesan Office for Evangelization, 2002), 7.

<sup>396</sup> Alan Streett, *The Effective Invitation: A Practical Guide for the Pastor* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2004), 34.

<sup>397</sup> Cardinal Dulles, *Evangelization*, 5.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>399</sup> Robert S. Rivers, *From Maintenance to Mission* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2005), 21.

<sup>400</sup> Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith, *Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization*, (3 December 2007), 2: AAS 100 (2008).

Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* implies that it is impossible to comprehend the concept of evangelization without understanding all of its essential elements. A partial definition will impoverish and distort its meaning. He defines evangelization as “bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new.”<sup>401</sup> This understanding is aligned with the teaching of Second Vatican Council which understood evangelization to be the “entire Christian endeavor”<sup>402</sup> and invited “Catholics to share their faith”<sup>403</sup> with the rest of the world. This viewpoint is fully supported by the American bishops in their document *Go and Make Disciples*: “evangelizing means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself. At its essence are the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and the response of a person in faith, which are both works of the Spirit of God.”<sup>404</sup>

The Latin American bishops further define evangelization in terms of man’s integral growth in conjunction with one’s rights and duties: “Evangelization promotes integral development, by demanding that all fully respect their rights and fully observe their duties so as to create a just and solidary society en route to its completion in the ultimate reign.”<sup>405</sup> This unique blend of respect and obligation reflects the essence of the gospel. Fr. Robert Rivers in his book, *From Maintenance to Mission*, comments that if we say everything is evangelization, then

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<sup>401</sup> EN, 18.

<sup>402</sup> Archdiocese of Chicago, *Spreading the Holy Fire*, 7.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

<sup>404</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2002), no. 10. Hereafter, GMD.

<sup>405</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New Evangelization, Human Development, Christian Culture: Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops*, Santo Domingo, 12-18 October, 1992, translated by Phillip Berryman (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Office of Pub. and Promotion Services, 1993), no. 47.

nothing is evangelization unless it challenges “all baptized persons to a conversion to Christ, by living their faith fully, sharing it freely, and living these gospel values in the world.”<sup>406</sup>

The bulletin on the *Synodus Episcoporum* on “The Transmission of the Christian Faith” in its proposal brings out the Trinitarian and Sacramental character of evangelization: “Evangelization has to be understood in a broad and profound theological-doctrinal framework as an activity of word and sacrament which, especially through the Eucharist, admits us to participation in the life of the Trinity, and then arouses through the grace of the Holy Spirit the power to evangelize and to give witness to the Word of God with enthusiasm and courage.”<sup>407</sup>

#### **2.1.4 The Need for Evangelization**

A large portion of our world has yet to be influenced by the Gospel of Christ. The Church is well aware of this reality and remains committed to Jesus’ command to evangelize all nations: “Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all.”<sup>408</sup> The Church understands that we are called to obey the command of the Lord: “Obedience to the Lord’s command is therefore the primary motive for evangelization.”<sup>409</sup> The second Vatican Council also highlights the intrinsic reason for the missionary activity seeing it as closely bound up even with human nature and its aspirations. It is God’s will that everyone should be saved by knowing the truth. Preaching the gospel is a sacred duty God has bestowed upon the Church:

By means of this activity, the Mystical Body of Christ unceasingly gathers and directs its forces toward its own growth (cf. Eph. 4:11-16). The members of the Church are impelled to carry on such missionary activity by reason of the love with which they love

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<sup>406</sup> Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 18.

<sup>407</sup> Synodus Episcoporum Bulletin, XIII Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 7- 28 October 2012, English Edition, accessed on September 15, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/sinodo](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo).

<sup>408</sup> RM 10.

<sup>409</sup> Dulles, *Evangelization*, 6.

God and by which they desire to share with all men the spiritual goods of both its life and the life to come.<sup>410</sup>

Christ or the Church cannot be considered foreign to any culture, society or persons. The document continues on the necessity of salvation for all: “On the contrary, all stand in need of Christ, their model, their mentor, their liberator, their Savior, their source of life. The Gospel has truly been a leaven of liberty and progress in human history, even in the temporal sphere, and always proves itself a leaven of brotherhood, of unity and of peace. Not without cause is Christ hailed by the faithful as ‘the expected of the nations, and their Savior.’”<sup>411</sup>

Preaching the Gospel is not an option for the Church since it is a question of people’s salvation. In the words of Pope Paul VI, “It is the duty incumbent on her by the command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved.”<sup>412</sup> *Dominus Iesus* expressing the missionary nature of the Church speaks about God’s plan of universal salvation: “...the Church... must be primarily committed to proclaiming to all people the truth definitively revealed by the Lord, and to announcing the necessity of conversion to Jesus Christ and of adherence to the Church through Baptism and the other sacraments, in order to participate fully in communion with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”<sup>413</sup> According to Pope Benedict XVI, it should be done with charity so that it shouldn’t be reduced to the level of some philanthropic or social activity.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> AG 7.

<sup>411</sup> AG 8.

<sup>412</sup> EN 5.

<sup>413</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church Dominus Iesus* (6 August 2000), 22: AAS 92 (2000).

<sup>414</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, “Charity, Soul of the Mission,” Message for the 80th World Mission Sunday, in *L’Osservatore Romano* (English ed.) 3 (June 14, 2006).

The Decree *Ad Gentes* of the Second Vatican Council states that the apostles diligently carried out their mission to evangelize and through their words and actions gave birth to the Church.<sup>415</sup> It is all the more urgent today that we should propagate our faith that “all things might be restored in Christ, and so that in him men and women might form one family and one people of God.”<sup>416</sup> The United States Bishops’ document *Go and Make Disciples* sees this mission continuing until the last person is saved: “We must evangelize because the Lord Jesus commanded us to do so. He gave the Church the unending task of evangelizing as a restless power, to stir and to stimulate all its actions until all nations have heard his Good News and until every person has become his disciple.”<sup>417</sup>

In his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II highlights the tremendous achievements humanity has made, but at the same time laments of a world that has lost the sense of ultimate realities. Making people aware of the real meaning and worth of human life “is the primary service which the Church can render to every individual and to all humanity in the modern world.”<sup>418</sup> It is the Church’s obligation to make people aware of these realities and the meaning of our existence. It is for her mission to evangelize, and her ability to successfully communicate life’s ultimate realities as shown through the gospel, that she will one day be held accountable. It is from this mission to evangelize that our salvation is made known.

Salvation in Christ is offered through the works of the Church. Our mission, as Church members, is to bring people to the knowledge of Christ: “people must be brought to the salvation

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<sup>415</sup> Cf. AG 1.

<sup>416</sup> EN 5.

<sup>417</sup> GMD 28.

<sup>418</sup> EN 2.

that Jesus the Lord offers in and through the Church.”<sup>419</sup> The Church proclaims that God’s love extends to all of humanity and she “believes that God has established Christ as the one mediator and that she herself has been established as the universal sacrament of salvation.”<sup>420</sup> The good news of salvation through Christ should be taken to all people irrespective of cast, creed and culture because Jesus is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14: 6).

Once we experience the love of Christ, we want to share it with others who have not yet had that experience. This gift of faith has been given to us freely through the gospel message and the faith of the Church so that we may share it freely: “Like the large catch of fish or the overflowing measure of flour, faith makes our hearts abound with a love-filled desire to bring all people to Jesus’ Gospel and to the table of the Eucharist.”<sup>421</sup> Pope John Paul II says that we cannot evade the task of this mission as long as there remain people who do not know Christ as the redeemer of humanity: “In a specific way this is the missionary work which Jesus entrusted and still entrusts each day to his Church.”<sup>422</sup>

### **2.1.5 The Agents of Evangelization**

Who is called to preach the Gospel? According to *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “The command to the Twelve to go out and proclaim the Good News is also valid for all Christians, though in a different way.”<sup>423</sup> However, many Catholics still believe that evangelization is the work of a select few who receive a special vocation to become missionaries, while the role of the greater Church community is limited to prayer and financial support, rather than a meaningful extension

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<sup>419</sup> GMD 30.

<sup>420</sup> RM 9.

<sup>421</sup> GMD 33.

<sup>422</sup> RM 31.

<sup>423</sup> EN 13.



of their own individual faith life. *Lumen Gentium* corrects this perspective by stating that this mission is given to all baptized: “All disciples of Christ are obliged to spread the faith to the best of their ability.”<sup>424</sup> Based on their individual faith commitment, each Church member is responsible, accountable and shares an active role in proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel.

Mission work is not the isolated action of a few individuals. Every Christian member’s work is ecclesial in nature; therefore no evangelizer can act apart from the Church. Pope Paul VI states that the whole Church responds to the invitation of mission work and “the work of each individual member is important for the whole.”<sup>425</sup> In *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II states that the Church as the sacrament of human salvation has to extend her activity to the whole of humanity: “She is a dynamic force in mankind’s journey toward the eschatological kingdom, and is the sign and promoter of gospel values.”<sup>426</sup> John Paul II further states that this confidence comes from our faith, “from the certainty that it is not we who are the principal agents of the Church’s mission, but Jesus Christ and his Spirit. We are only co-workers, and when we have done all that we can, we must say: ‘we are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty’ (Lk 17: 10).”<sup>427</sup> This is what we have been called to, and it is our vocation as Christians.

John Paul II also addresses the role of individuals in evangelization, especially those who have received the sacrament of holy orders. He emphasizes in *Redemptoris Missio* that, in relation to proclaiming the gospel, the hierarchical structure is based on responsibility and accountability rather than status or position.<sup>428</sup> Pope Paul VI notes this deep sense of

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<sup>424</sup> LG 17.

<sup>425</sup> EN 15.

<sup>426</sup> RM 20.

<sup>427</sup> RM 36.

<sup>428</sup> Cf. RM 63 – 64.

accountability in his encyclical on evangelization: “The Successor of Peter is thus, by the will of Christ, entrusted with the preeminent ministry of teaching the revealed truth.”<sup>429</sup> John Paul II strives to continue this tradition and forewarns his brother bishops that they are ultimately responsible for the evangelizing efforts of the Church at the local level: “My brother bishops are directly responsible, together with me, for the evangelization of the world, both as members of the College of Bishops and as pastors of the particular churches.”<sup>430</sup>

The universal Church is made tangible within the communal framework of the local church. “Mission is seen as a community commitment, a responsibility of the local church,”<sup>431</sup> therefore priests and deacons, as ordained ministers, share in the responsibility of the bishop in empowering the laity and communicating their responsibility in taking up the task of evangelizing the world. The Latin American bishops also emphasize that all levels of service require a coordinated effort when preaching the Gospel: “The agent of new evangelization is the whole church community in accordance with its own nature: we bishops, in communion with the pope; our priests and deacons; men and women religious; and all of us men and women who constitute the people of God.”<sup>432</sup>

The Catholic Church as a whole is becoming increasingly aware of the role and responsibility of the laity in missionary work. The lay faithful are shining gems who are fully incorporated into the body of Christ through baptism and share Christ’s threefold office as priest,

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<sup>429</sup> EN 67.

<sup>430</sup> RM 63.

<sup>431</sup> RM 27.

<sup>432</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New Evangelization*, no. 58.

prophet and king.<sup>433</sup> They “live in the world” (because of their profession and occupation), but “are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative where only through them can she become the salt of the earth.”<sup>434</sup> The response to this great vocation defines the spirituality and mission of the laity in today’s world.

The laity’s “secular character” must be seen as a great challenge and opportunity to promote the Holy Spirit’s direction and influence in the rediscovery of evangelization. This character makes Christ present through a life of holiness as shown through the ordinary circumstances of family and culture. The laity should equip themselves to be actively involved in the temporal affairs of the world by spearheading a spiritual renaissance, i.e., “to engage in conversation with others, believers or non-believers, in order to manifest Christ’s message to all men.”<sup>435</sup> They should get involved with the world—the economic, social and political institutions—with the purpose of transforming them in the light of the gospel. It is from here that the seed of the Word can penetrate today’s culture and bring the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth. “The ‘world’ thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation.”<sup>436</sup>

As ‘secular apostles’, the lay faithful have to develop an attitude and awareness of actively listening to the Word of God and participating fully in the sacraments of the Church, while discerning a response to their call. It is impossible for anyone to accomplish this mission without God’s help: “The laity derives the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with

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<sup>433</sup> Cf. LG 31.

<sup>434</sup> LG 33.

<sup>435</sup> Vatican Council II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, (18 November 1965), 31: AAS 58 (1966). Hereafter, AA.

<sup>436</sup> John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (30 December 1988), 14, 16: AAS 81 (1989). Hereafter, CL.

Christ the head; incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself."<sup>437</sup> Lay Catholics are in need of good formation just like ordained ministers: "The fundamental objective of the formation of the lay faithful is an ever-clearer discovery of one's vocation and the ever greater willingness to live it so as to fulfill one's mission."<sup>438</sup> Once the laity is ready to embrace their baptismal vocation and the ordained ministry is willing to empower the laity with the resources necessary to realize this vocation, the ultimate command of the Lord becomes possible.

In *Ecclesia in Africa*, Pope John Paul II speaks about the need for formation for the agents of evangelization in order to be successful in evangelization works. The local Church, realizing that this is something central to the Christian life, should undertake this formation.

In all areas of Church life formation is of primary importance.... 'the whole community needs to be trained, motivated and empowered for evangelization, each according to his or her specific role within the Church.' This includes bishops, priests members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, members of Secular Institutes and all the lay faithful.<sup>439</sup>

### **2.1.6 The Methods of Evangelization**

The General Secretary for the Synod of Bishops Nikola Eterović, in his preface to the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the New Evangelization for the Transmission for Christian Faith writes on the need to adopt new methods in our evangelization work: "With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, this so-called ordinary evangelizing activity can be endowed with renewed vigor. New methods and new forms of expression are needed to convey to the people of today the

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<sup>437</sup> AA 3.

<sup>438</sup> CL 58.

<sup>439</sup> Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* (14 September 1995), 75: AAS 88 (1996).

perennial truth of Jesus Christ, forever new and the source of all newness.”<sup>440</sup> Cardinal Dulles believes that persuasive heralding of the gospel message today requires a new quality of evangelization and methods attuned to the sensibility of our times.<sup>441</sup>

According to Pope Paul VI, proper execution of the mission is preeminently important since the evangelizer should take into consideration the time, place and culture to which the gospel is presented. Our “capacity for discovery and adaptation”<sup>442</sup> may result in great success in the evangelization process. Pope Paul VI states that the first means of evangelization is our witness to an authentic Christian life: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”<sup>443</sup> The Church should evangelize the world through her conduct and devotion to a life of holiness. It means “in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus—the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity.”<sup>444</sup>

Cardinal Dulles describes martyrdom as the preeminent form of personal witness.<sup>445</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris* for the new evangelization synod notes that martyrdom gives credibility to those who bear witness as they do not seek power or gain, but give their very lives for Christ.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> Synod of Bishops, XIII Ordinary General Assembly, The New Evangelization for the Transmission of Christian Faith, *Instrumentum Laboris* (Vatican City, 2012), no.1: accessed on October 10, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20120619\\_instrumentum-xiii\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20120619_instrumentum-xiii_en.html).

<sup>441</sup> Cf. Dulles, *Church and Society*, 93.

<sup>442</sup> EN 40.

<sup>443</sup> EN 41.

<sup>444</sup> EN 41.

<sup>445</sup> Dulles, *Evangelization*, 92.

<sup>446</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 35.

The heroic witness of faith by the early Church martyrs, beginning with St. Stephen, is continuing in our own era: “The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission.”<sup>447</sup>

John Paul II considers personal witness, especially by families, the best means of bringing the gospel to everyone. He states that the “first form of witness is *the very life of the missionary, of the Christian family, and of the ecclesial community*, which reveal a new way of living”<sup>448</sup> that is characterized by a willingness to forfeit personal motive for the sake of the gospel. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published a document in 2012 entitled *Disciples Called to Witness*, which specifically speaks about the need to create a “culture of witness” for evangelization work. It says that a “Christian life lived with charity and faith to future generations, strengthen the faith of her members, and renew the faith of those who have slipped away from the Church.”<sup>449</sup> On the final propositions submitted to the pope at the end of the new evangelization synod, Proposition 8 speaks about ‘witnessing in a secularized world’: “In our present age, that manifests aspects more difficult than the past, even if we are like ‘the little flock’ (*Lk 12:32*), we bear witness to the Gospel message of salvation and we are called to be salt and light of a new world (cf. *Mt 5:13-16*).”<sup>450</sup>

Preaching, or the verbal proclamation of the gospel, is equally important since faith is generated through both word and action. The preaching of the Apostles was the heart of

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<sup>447</sup> RM 42. We should be aware that martyrdom is not for everyone but the witness of ordinary life is. Many saints talk about the “little way” (like St. Therese of Lisieux and St. Jose Maria Escriva) by seeking holiness of life in the ordinary and the everyday.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.

<sup>449</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization*, (Washington DC: USSCB, 2012), 10.

<sup>450</sup> Synod of Bishop, Proposition 8.

evangelization. John Paul II says that proclamation should always be the priority of mission work: “The Church cannot elude Christ’s explicit mandate, nor deprive men and women of the ‘Good News’ about their being loved and saved by God.”<sup>451</sup> The *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Synod on new evangelization talks in detail about preaching and verbal proclamation of the gospel. It directs the local Christian communities to adopt a more missionary presence in society because they “might better know how to attract people’s attention today and interpret their questioning and search for happiness.”<sup>452</sup> Raniero Cantalamessa writes that the true Christian proclamation (*the kerygma*) does not consist in conveying propositions about the faith but in conveying the faith itself. When someone says that ‘Jesus is Lord’ it is equal to saying ‘Jesus is my Lord!’ Therefore, “an intimate relationship with Jesus, made up of absolute devotion, deep friendship, and admiration, is the secret of true proclaimer of the Gospel.”<sup>453</sup>

Since modern man is “tired of listening,” according to Pope Paul VI, we should use multiple methods of modern communications as instruments to disseminate the gospel into people’s hearts: “The word remains ever relevant, especially when it is the bearer of the power of God. This is why St. Paul’s axiom, ‘Faith comes from what is heard,’ also retains its relevance; it is the Word that is heard which leads to belief.”<sup>454</sup> It is through his love that Christ attracts the people of every generation to himself and “in every age he convokes the Church, entrusting her with the proclamation of the Gospel by a mandate that is ever new.”<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> RM 44.

<sup>452</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris*, 138.

<sup>453</sup> Raniero Cantalamessa, *The Mystery of God’s Word* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996), 39.

<sup>454</sup> EN 42.

<sup>455</sup> Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei* (October 11, 2011), 7: AAS 103 (2011).

It is also true that evangelization is not complete with the first proclamation of the gospel: “It is a lifelong process of letting the gospel permeate and transform all our ideas and attitudes”<sup>456</sup> into a genuine experience of God’s unfailing love for us. In his book *Church and Society*, Cardinal Dulles writes that it is in the teaching of the Church that salvation comes through personal faith in Jesus Christ, which must be preached to all creation:

Nothing is more striking in the New Testament than the confidence with which it proclaims the saving power of belief in Christ. Almost every page confronts us with a decision of eternal consequence: Will we follow Christ or the rulers of this world? The gospel is, according to Paul, ‘the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith’ (Rom 1: 16). The apostles and their associates are convinced that in Jesus they have encountered the Lord of life and that he has brought them into the way that leads to everlasting blessedness. By personal faith in him and by baptism in his name Christians have passed from darkness to light, from error to truth, and from sin to holiness.<sup>457</sup>

Another important method of evangelization is Christian worship. Sacramental worship has always been oriented to evangelization since those who are coming to Church direct worship to God. Timothy Byerley writes in his book *The Great Commission: Models of Evangelization in American Catholicism* that after the Peace of Constantine, when Christianity expanded throughout the empire, the liturgy was not only the source of Christian sustenance but it also became more and more an instrument of evangelization.<sup>458</sup> The public worship of the Christian community became the “means by which the mind of the gentiles and the barbarians was attuned to a new view of life and a new concept of history.”<sup>459</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> Dulles, *Evangelization*, 80.

<sup>457</sup> Dulles, *Church and Society*, 522.

<sup>458</sup> Cf. Timothy Byerley, *The Great Commission: Models of Evangelization in American Catholicism* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2008), 29.

<sup>459</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture: The Classic Study of Medieval Civilization* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 41-42.



It is through active participation in the sacraments and preaching that Christians respond personally to the call of Christ and continue a Spirit-filled life outside of the Church walls. Pope Paul VI states that it would be “a mistake not to see in the homily an important and very adaptable instrument of evangelization.”<sup>460</sup> Cardinal Dulles says that our worship is directly connected to evangelization when it influences outsiders as well as our community members.<sup>461</sup> This evangelizing influence has been valued throughout history. There is a legend that around the year A.D. 988, Russian Emperor Vladimir of Kiev sent a group of emissaries to Constantinople in order to evaluate what he heard about the influence of Christian worship in the lives of the people there. Upon their return, they reported that they “knew not if we were on earth or in heaven” in describing their experience of Christian liturgy. It was upon this news and its evangelizing moment that Vladimir chose Christianity to be his country’s religion.<sup>462</sup>

In *Sacramentum Caritas* Pope Benedict speaks about the relationship between the celebration of the Eucharist and evangelization. After reminding the faithful that there is nothing more beautiful than to know Jesus and to speak others about our friendship with Jesus, Pope Benedict admonishes that the love that we celebrate in the sacrament of Eucharist is not something we can keep for ourselves but has to be shared with the rest of the world:

By its very nature it demands to be shared with all. What the world needs is God's love; it needs to encounter Christ and to believe in him. The Eucharist is thus the source and summit not only of the Church's life, but also of her mission: ‘an authentically Eucharistic Church is a missionary Church.’ We too must be able to tell our brothers and sisters with conviction: ‘That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us’ (*1 Jn* 1:3). Truly, nothing is more beautiful than to know Christ and to make him known to others. The institution of the Eucharist, for that matter, anticipates the very heart of Jesus' mission: he is the one sent by the Father for the

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<sup>460</sup> EN 43.

<sup>461</sup> Cf. Dulles, *Evangelization*, 95.

<sup>462</sup> Cf. Edward Faulk, *101 Questions and Answers on Eastern Catholic Churches* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2007), 15.

redemption of the world (cf. *Jn* 3:16-17; *Rom* 8:32)... Missionary outreach is thus an essential part of the Eucharistic form of the Christian life.<sup>463</sup>

Personal witness, preaching the Gospel, and Christian worship are all primary methods of evangelization. The American bishops in their document *Go and Make Disciples* cite several different ordinary ways to evangelize, especially by the way we live our daily life through our love and support of one another. Family members evangelize each other through their daily faith life. The two main elements at work here are witness and sharing<sup>464</sup>—the simple living of the faith and spreading it in an explicit way. If we could “explain it [the faith] intelligently, defend it charitably, and share it effectively”<sup>465</sup> in a consistent manner, it is likely that many more individuals would be moved to embrace the faith of the Church.

Another important and indirect way of evangelizing is by utilizing institutions such as schools, hospitals and other charitable institutions that are connected to the local churches. Christians who involve themselves with social activities and justice-related issues are doing so out of their love for Christ. Thus, the missionary message becomes Christ-like. No matter what methods of evangelization we adopt, we should be inspired by the Holy Spirit to be evangelizers through all that we do and say.

### **2.1.7 The Goals of Evangelization**

The possibility of having an encounter with the living Christ is the goal of all evangelization. This relationship of a person with Jesus is intimate, personal, public and

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<sup>463</sup> SC 84.

<sup>464</sup> GMD 35-36.

<sup>465</sup> Envoy Magazine, “What is Envoy’s Mission?” quoted in Laura N. Anzilotti, “Evangelization: Three Contemporary Approaches” in *Evangelizing America*, ed., Thomas P. Rausch (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2004), 35.

communal.<sup>466</sup> The *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Synod of new evangelization clearly states: “The transmission of the faith is the goal of evangelization which, according to the divine plan, is to bring all people through Christ to the Father in the Spirit (cf. *Eph* 2:18). This experience of the newness of the Gospel transforms every person.”<sup>467</sup> The *Lineamenta* of the Synod also speaks about the goal of evangelization:

The missionary mandate which the disciples received from the Lord (cf. *Mk* 16:15) makes an explicit reference to proclaiming and teaching the Gospel (‘teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you’ *Mt* 28:20)... Therefore, the Church's task consists in realizing the *Traditio Evangelii*, proclaiming and transmitting the Gospel.... In referring to the Gospel, we must not think of it only as a book or a set of teachings. The Gospel is much more; it is a living and efficacious Word, which accomplishes what it says.... The Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, not only does the Gospel have Jesus Christ as its content; but even more, through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ is also the promoter and the center of its proclamation and transmission. Consequently, the goal of the transmission of the faith is the realization of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, in the Spirit, thereby leading to an experiencing of his Father and our Father.<sup>468</sup>

The document of the American bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, proposes three specific goals as part of Catholic evangelization:

Goal I: To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.<sup>469</sup>

All baptized Catholics must get enthused about their own faith and evangelize themselves before trying to spread the faith. In other words, evangelizers need to be evangelized. Every baptized Catholic should engage in works that deepen one’s faith. This deepening of faith enables one to witness and share the gospel. Robert Rivers, in his *Maintenance to Mission*,

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<sup>466</sup> Cf. Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris*. 18.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.* no. 31.

<sup>468</sup> Synod of Bishops, XIII Ordinary General Assembly: The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith. *Lineamenta*, (2 February 2011), no. 11, accessed on October 10, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20110202\\_lineamenta-xiii-assembly\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html)

<sup>469</sup> GMD 46.

comments that evangelization begins with the people in the pew.<sup>470</sup> Unless we ourselves are enthusiastic about our faith, we will never share it. Once people become convinced of their vocation to live and spread the gospel, they are able to invite others to participate in the same joyful life they are having. A personal invitation might lead to conversion, curiosity, questions, answers and finally to full communion.

By evangelizing all those who are regular church members, it helps us to reach others who are not present in the church. In order for this to occur, many of the regular church attendees, who do not yet have a basic conversion to Christ, must be catechized first: “If faith is not transforming each heart and life, it is dead.”<sup>471</sup> We need to keep the flame of faith alive in the minds and hearts of all the faithful who attend church weekly. Robert Rivers writes that many Catholics have not had the fundamental charismatic experience of basic conversion to Jesus Christ. It happens because some of the baptized failed to come to the point of making a commitment to practice the faith as adults.

There is still much room for growth in enthusiasm, deepening of faith, and pursuit of holiness. Mercifully, the challenge is lifelong. Like the rest of the disciples, we are in process. We must be aware, however, of the danger of stagnating or even of abandoning this challenge. The bishops caution, ‘We can only share what we have received; we can hold on to our faith only if it continues to grow. But if salt loses its taste, Jesus asked, with what can it be seasoned?’ (GMD, no. 14). This sobering admonition moves us along our pursuit, as it should compel all Catholics. ‘If faith is not transforming each heart and life, it is dead’ (GMD, no. 16).<sup>472</sup>

Goal II: To invite all people... whatever their social or cultural background, to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so they may come to join us in the fullness of Catholic faith.<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 97.

<sup>471</sup> GMD 16.

<sup>472</sup> Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 105.

<sup>473</sup> GMD 53.

Jesus' invitation to partake in his life is extended to all. Those who have already received the invitation should also convey the good news to others. But in the present day culture, due to the presence of the large number of people belonging to various religions in any given city, discussion of religious matters has inherited certain limitations. The *Doctrinal Notes on New Evangelization* says:

From this perspective, it would only be legitimate to present one's own ideas and to invite people to act according to their consciences, without aiming at their conversion to Christ and to the Catholic faith. It is enough, so they say, to help people to become more human or more faithful to their own religion; it is enough to build communities which strive for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity. Furthermore, some maintain that Christ should not be proclaimed to those who do not know him, nor should joining the Church be promoted, since it would also be possible to be saved without explicit knowledge of Christ and without formal incorporation in the Church.<sup>474</sup>

God's universal plan of salvation is carried out today through the Church. Vatican II came up with a clear teaching on the Church's attitude towards other religions, cultures and churches. The way to engage in order to understand and communicate better is through dialogue but at the same time we should not dilute the basic message of salvation for the sake of dialogue: "We must proclaim Jesus Christ as universal savior *in dialogue with other religions*. We must proclaim that the Catholic Church has the fullness of the means to salvation *in dialogue with other Christians*, who also form part of the one church of Jesus Christ."<sup>475</sup>

The document *Go and Make Disciples* reminds us: "People can know they are invited to experience Jesus Christ in our church only if they are really and effectively asked and adequate provisions are made for their full participation. We want our Catholic brothers and sisters to

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<sup>474</sup> Congregation on the Doctrine of Faith, *Doctrinal Notes*, no. 3.

<sup>475</sup> Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 107.

effectively ask and to really invite.”<sup>476</sup> Thus, every Catholic can be a minister of welcome, reconciliation, and understanding to those who have stopped practicing the faith.<sup>477</sup> But those who are engaged in missionary activity are to visit people and Robert Rivers talks about four types of visitations that develop relationships with the intention of evangelization—census visit, social visit, witness visit and pastoral visit.<sup>478</sup>

Goal III: To foster Gospel values in our culture, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of the family, and the common good of our society, so that the nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.<sup>479</sup>

Fostering Gospel values is a call for all Catholics to reorder the world in which we live for Christ. This change is not a human endeavor, “rather, it is a matter of participating in the transforming power of Christ already at work in the world through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>480</sup>

*Maintenance to Mission* talks about three specific goods to foster Gospel values in society: 1) the dignity of the human person, (2) the importance of the family, and (3) the common good of our society.<sup>481</sup> The story of Jesus has to become our story, and then his gospel has to shape us individually and collectively to a level of influencing society around us. As Pope Paul VI has clearly pointed out: evangelization transforms culture - affecting the criteria of judgment by

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<sup>476</sup> GMD 55.

<sup>477</sup> Cf. GMD 40.

<sup>478</sup> Cf. Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 118.

<sup>479</sup> Cf. GMD 56.

<sup>480</sup> Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 132.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.* 134.

determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life which make the cultural world.<sup>482</sup>

The transforming power of Christ creates a new awareness in our management of temporal affairs. *Go and Make Disciples* states that the third goal “calls for results not only in the way we evaluate things but also in the way we carry the Good News through the practical works of justice, charity, and peace that alone can fully authenticate our message.”<sup>483</sup> This goal is initiated through the most basic institution of society—the human family. It is in this place that we learn the essential lessons of life and faith: “Families are challenged to make their faith real in society”<sup>484</sup> by actively embracing the direction and guidance offered through the Holy Spirit.

These goals demand that we be enthusiastic about our faith and invite others to share in this enthusiasm, with the end result being a culture and Church that are completely defined by life-giving values. This requires that we be liberated at our individual and communal core. As Pope Paul VI states in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the Good News of Christ is “liberation from everything that oppresses man but which is above all liberation from sin and the Evil One, in the joy of knowing God and being known by Him, of seeing him, and of being given over to Him.”<sup>485</sup> At the same time the Pope warns against the tendency to reduce “liberation” to a “man-centered goal”. It must “envisage the whole of man, in all his aspects, right up to and including his openness to the absolute, even the divine Absolute”<sup>486</sup> and the work of this liberation through the Church is incomplete “if she neglects to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ.”<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>482</sup> Cf. EN 19.

<sup>483</sup> GMD 60.

<sup>484</sup> Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 144.

<sup>485</sup> EN 9.

<sup>486</sup> EN 33.

### 2.1.8 Evangelization and Catechesis

The relationship between evangelization and catechesis is a pertinent concern in the discussions associated with new evangelization. Considering all the dimensions which define evangelization from the previous discussions, there is an intrinsic link between the two. Evangelization is bringing the Gospel to every area of human life and Catechesis, according to the *General Directory of Catechesis*, “is nothing other than the process of transmitting the Gospel, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it and communicates it in many ways.”<sup>488</sup> An interior transformation into a new creation happens in the life of the one who is evangelized. Here, the Pentecost event stands as the best example (Acts 2: 36-41); but those who evangelized continued to listen to the teachings of the Apostles and the elders of the community to strengthen in the power of the spirit.

Pope John Paul II sees evangelization and catechesis as two complementary missionary activities of the Church. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* he writes: “There is no separation or opposition between catechesis and evangelization. Nor can the two be simply identified with each other. Instead, they have close links whereby they integrate and complement each other.”<sup>489</sup> This learning process through catechesis is needed to mature the faith, which was already received through evangelization, and it leads toward a fuller and better understanding of life in Christ.

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<sup>487</sup> EN 34.

<sup>488</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), no. 105. Hereafter, GDC.

<sup>489</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* (16 October 1979), 18: AAS 71 (1979). Hereafter, CT.



Catechesis is also part of the pastoral mission of the Church. After the initial proclamation of the Gospel through the kerygma, faith is aroused in the person which is followed by “apologetics or examination of the reasons for belief, experience of Christian living, celebration of the sacraments, integration into the ecclesial community, and apostolic and missionary witness.”<sup>490</sup> In this sense catechesis comes after evangelization or at least after the intention to be evangelized. What has begun with evangelization is brought into completion or to fullness through catechesis. The *General Directory for Catechesis* says: “Catechetical renewal should be based thus on prior missionary evangelization.”<sup>491</sup>

The recent call of the Church for new evangelization brings another dimension to the relationship between catechesis and evangelization. In certain contexts catechesis might become a moment for evangelization. Jane Regan writes: “... the relationship between evangelization and catechesis goes beyond simply initiating and socializing new members; catechesis is at the heart of the process whereby the person who had been evangelized becomes an evangelizer. Through catechesis the parish is formed and transformed into an evangelizing community. The movement then is not simply from evangelization to catechesis but also from catechesis to evangelization.”<sup>492</sup> Elements of catechesis aiding evangelization are also found in *Catechesi Tradendae*, as the document places catechesis firmly within the Church’s mission and notes that evangelization is a rich, complex and dynamic reality which comprises essential but different “moments”: “Catechesis is one of these moments—a very remarkable one—in the whole process

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<sup>490</sup> CT 18.

<sup>491</sup> GDC 63.

<sup>492</sup> Jane E. Regan, “The Aim of Catechesis: Educating for an Adult Church” in *Horizons & Hopes: The Future of Religious Education*, eds., Thomas H. Groome and Harold Daly Horell (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2003), 36.

of evangelization.”<sup>493</sup> The descriptive conciliar term for catechesis, ‘ministry of the word’ now was seen in relationship to ‘the ministry of evangelization.’ “It would appear then that evangelization provides for catechesis a comprehensive conceptual framework within which catechesis finds its meaning.”<sup>494</sup>

### **2.1.9 Who Should Be Evangelized?**

According to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, all men and women are to be evangelized. This position is both fundamental and foundational to the Church since the day of Pentecost. The Gospel of Christ must be preached to all human beings. The gospel transcends the barriers of race, gender, nationality and socio-economic condition and is to be proclaimed first to those who have not heard it. The *Instrumentum Laboris* of the Synod of Bishops states that those who truly accept the Gospel, precisely as a gift and for the fruits it produces in them, come together in the name of Jesus so as to preserve and nourish the faith which is received and shared, and to continue and grow in this lived-experience.<sup>495</sup> It was after the personal experience the disciples had with Jesus that they had been sent to preach the gospel. After Christ's death and resurrection, the missionary mandate given to the disciples by the Lord (cf. *Mk* 16:15) makes an explicit reference to proclaiming the Gospel to everyone, teaching them to observe everything he commanded (cf. *Mt* 28:20).

The de-Christianization of present-day culture also makes it necessary for us to preach the good news to all those “who have been baptized but who live outside Christian life, for simple people who have a certain faith but an imperfect knowledge of the foundations of that

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<sup>493</sup> CT 63.

<sup>494</sup> Cf. Marylin T. Kravatz, *Partners in Wisdom and Grace: Catechesis and Religious Education in Dialogue* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2010), 48-49.

<sup>495</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 25.

faith, for intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children, and many others.”<sup>496</sup> As has been repeatedly said, the purpose of the existence of the Church is evangelization and the *Instrumentum Laboris* once again reminds everyone of this mission:

The Church exists in the world to continue Jesus’ evangelizing mission, knowing well that in doing so she continues to share in divine life, because she is compelled by the Spirit to proclaim the Gospel in the world and to experience again within herself the presence of the Risen Christ, who brings her into communion with God the Father. Every action performed by the Church is never closed in upon itself but is always an act of evangelization, and, as such, an action that manifests the triune face of our God. The Acts of the Apostles records those actions most intimately involved in the Church’s life: prayer, listening to the Word and the Apostles’ teaching, a “lived” fraternal charity and the breaking of the bread (cf. *Acts* 2:42-46). All acquire their full meaning when they become an act of witness, a source of attraction and conversion, and a preaching and proclamation of the Gospel, by the whole Church and each baptized person.<sup>497</sup>

Cardinal Francis George in an article “Evangelizing Our Culture,” argues that “the culture in which we evangelize, itself needs to be evangelized.”<sup>498</sup> In our attempt at the successful evangelization of cultures, the Catholic Church offers counter-cultural ideas in response to the modern day deviations. Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* says that our living of the Gospel is linked to certain cultures in every age, even though Gospel and evangelization are “not identical with culture, and they are independent in regard to all cultures.”<sup>499</sup> Hence the Gospel should permeate all cultures without becoming subject to any one of them. The culture has “to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel.”<sup>500</sup> Archbishop Caput of Philadelphia links

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<sup>496</sup> EN 52.

<sup>497</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 27.

<sup>498</sup> Francis Cardinal George, “Evangelizing Our Culture,” in *The New Evangelization: Overcoming the Obstacles*, eds., Ralph Martin and Steven Boguslawski (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2008), 43.

<sup>499</sup> EN 20.

<sup>500</sup> EN

Catholic culture to an active Catholic faith: “Unless we truly believe and practice our faith. ‘Catholic culture’ is a dead skin of nostalgia and comfortable habits.”<sup>501</sup>

Cardinal Dulles argues that it is a misinterpretation of the teaching of Vatican II by some theologians to say that living according to one’s conscience is sufficient for human salvation, eliminating the need to preach the gospel to all. At the same time we should use our pastoral prudence to avoid proselytization and confrontation in this matter. If there is a reason for the Church “to wait for an opportune moment before confronting certain persons or groups with the claims of the gospel,”<sup>502</sup> we should use our pastoral prudence. Pope Paul IV, in his writings, highly extols the different non-Christian traditions, cultures and religions all around the world. At the same time he clearly points out that “neither respect and esteem for these religions nor the complexity of the questions raised is an invitation to the Church to withhold from these non-Christians the proclamation of Jesus Christ.”<sup>503</sup> They all have the right to hear the Word and to experience Christ.

Salvation through Christ applies to all humanity. Cardinal Dulles argues that preaching the gospel to all humanity includes Jews and Christians who are not Catholics. Since the Church is inseparably connected to Christ, joining the Church is not an option for salvation but a necessity: “Therefore, those could not be saved who refuse either to enter the church, or to remain in it, while knowing that it was founded by God through Christ as required for salvation.”<sup>504</sup> *Lumen Gentium* states “Fully incorporated into the society of the Church are those

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<sup>501</sup> Charles A. Caput, “A Light to the Nations: Meaning and Future of the Catholic Church.” *Crisis Magazine*, 22 March 2011: accessed on October 2, 2013. <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2011/a-light-to-the-nations-the-meaning-and-future-of-the-catholic-church>.

<sup>502</sup> Dulles, *Evangelization*, 8.

<sup>503</sup> EN 53.

<sup>504</sup> LG 14.

who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept its entire structure and all the means of salvation established within it and who in its visible structure are united with Christ, who rules it through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops, by the bonds of profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion.”<sup>505</sup>

The documents of the Second Vatican Council<sup>506</sup> acknowledge the existence of authentic values in the world prior to the preaching of the gospel, but clearly state that evangelization “preserves everything good that is to be found in human cultures or religions, frees it from admixture with evil, and elevates it to a higher plane.”<sup>507</sup> In his opening address to the fourth general conference of Latin American Bishops, John Paul II admonished the bishops that “Culture is not the measure of the gospel; rather Jesus Christ is the measure of all culture and all human endeavor.”<sup>508</sup> The bishops then echoed this sentiment by asking the people to allow Jesus to purify whatever bears the mark of sin and to elevate what is good in the culture: “All evangelization must therefore mean inculturating the gospel. Every culture can thus become

<sup>505</sup> LG 14.

<sup>506</sup> There will be repeated discussions in the following sections, and in the third chapter, on the theme of *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* (“outside the Church, there is no salvation”). Francis Sullivan talks in detail about the extra ordinary attitudinal change took place at Vatican II in the position of the Church regarding the possibility of salvation of non-Catholics and non-Christians. *Lumen Gentium* (no. 8) talks about the Church of Christ “subsists in the Catholic Church.” It was a change from the earlier *est* (is) to *subsistit in* (subsists in). Sullivan writes: “There would have been no point in making this change if the new term ‘subsists in’ were to be understood in the same exclusive sense that had been affirmed by the simple copulative ‘is’”. Francis Sullivan, *The Church We Believe in: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1988), 25. Also, Cf. Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church: Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (London: Chapman, 1992), 140-160. Cf .M.D. Litonjua, *Joint Ventures: Religious Studies and Social Sciences* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2012), especially Chapter 6: “Jesus, the Christ, his Church, and Religious Pluralism: Personal Considerations,” (189-222).

<sup>507</sup> Dulles, *Evangelization*, 6.

<sup>508</sup> John Paul II, “Opening Address of Pope John Paul II,” Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops (October 12-28, 1992) in *Santo Domingo and Beyond*, ed. Alfred T. Hennely (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 45.

Christian, that is, point toward Christ and draw inspiration from him and his message.”<sup>509</sup> What is God already doing in a given culture is the starting point for any missionary who attempts to bring Christ into that culture. Louis Luzbetak in his book *The Church and Cultures* writes that cultures cannot be looked upon exclusively but there is the element of a “hidden Christ” which is the result of God’s action within humanity:

The ‘hidden Christ,’ is a force that the Church must look for, discover, and build upon. Evangelization should, in fact, be built on no other foundation than on the one that God himself in his universal love, providence, and mercy (cf. 1 Tm 2:4) has already laid. That foundation is most clearly visible in a people’s culture – in their ‘soul,’ which happens to be transmitted from generation to generation through the process of enculturation.<sup>510</sup>

Just as the Word became human, the faith of the Church needs to become local depending on to whom it is presented. Cardinal Francis George argues that when a given culture lacks certain components necessary to express the faith in its fullness, it is quite natural to experience tension. Certain practices such as polygamy, ritual murder, sexual promiscuity, abortion, exploitative business practices, might be normal to certain cultures but opposed to our Catholic faith: “When believers recognize demonic elements in their culture and work to diminish or eradicate them, the dialogue between faith and culture turns into the evangelization of culture. Culture is the object of our evangelization and not just the sea in which we swim. To form gospel-shaped people, the Church must work to create gospel-friendly cultures.”<sup>511</sup> The need to evangelize the present day culture was often highlighted in the speeches of John Paul II: “Indeed, evangelization of cultures represents the deepest and most comprehensive way to evangelize a

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<sup>509</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>510</sup> Louis Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 197.

<sup>511</sup> George, “Evangelizing Our Culture”, 44.

society, since the message of Christ thereby permeates people's awareness and is projected into the 'ethos' of a people, its essential attitudes, its institutions and all its structures."<sup>512</sup>

### 2.1.10 The Content of Evangelization

Cardinal Dulles says that ordinary people sometimes have a misconception that after the Protestant Reformation the Catholic Church became "the Church of tradition, law, priesthood, and sacraments rather than the Church of the Word of God."<sup>513</sup> He goes on to elaborate, making a reference to the Council of Trent: "In its discussion of the authorities to be used for teaching and conduct, that the Council declared that the gospel was the source of all saving truth and moral discipline, and was to be preached to every creature."<sup>514</sup>

The content of all evangelization is based on the preaching of Christ: "a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy."<sup>515</sup> Pope John Paul II states that "The subject of proclamation is Christ who was crucified, died and is risen: through him is accomplished our full and authentic liberation from evil, sin and death; through him God bestows 'new life' that is divine and eternal."<sup>516</sup> Proposition 9 of the Synod of Bishops clearly brings the *kerygmatic* dimension proclamation:

The foundation of all initial proclamation, the kerygmatic dimension, the Good News, makes prominent an explicit announcement of salvation. 'For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the

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<sup>512</sup> Cf. John Paul II, "Address to Medellin Intellectuals and to the University World," (July 5, 1986), *Origins*, Vol. 22, Nos. 1-24 (1992): 329.

<sup>513</sup> Avery Cardinal Dulles, "Vatican II and Evangelization," in *The New Evangelization*, eds. Ralph Martin and Steven Boguslawski, 1.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> EN 27.

<sup>516</sup> RM 44.

scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve' (*1 Cor* 15:3-5). The 'first proclamation' is where the kerygma, the message of salvation of the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, is proclaimed with great spiritual power to the point of bringing about repentance of sin, conversion of hearts and a decision of faith. At the same time there has to be continuity between first proclamation and catechesis which instructs us in the deposit of the faith.<sup>517</sup>

People all over the world have the right to hear the good news of Christ which saves humanity and human history. This salvation is not of a temporary nature but an ultimate union with God: "a transcendent and eschatological salvation."<sup>518</sup> Even though that union begins here on earth, it will be completed and fulfilled only in eternity. Consequently, our proclamation must contain our hope in the life to come: "Evangelization therefore also includes the preaching of hope in the promises made by God in the new Covenant in Jesus Christ; the preaching of brotherly love for all men—the capacity of giving and forgiving, of self-denial, of helping one's brother and sister—which, springing from the love of God, is the kernel of the Gospel; the preaching of the mystery of evil and of the active search for the good."<sup>519</sup>

Pope Paul VI repeatedly emphasizes that the Gospel message should contain elements for ordinary people who are confronted by the challenge of daily life. Efforts to liberate people from famine, chronic disease, illiteracy, poverty, and injustices are part of the message we are to preach. The Episcopal Synod of 1971 declared evangelization as liberation in every area of life: "the mission of proclaiming the gospel in our times requires that we commit ourselves to man's

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<sup>517</sup> Synod of Bishops, XIII Ordinary General Assembly. Final List of Propositions, 27 October 2012. Proposition 9. There are no official translations of the original Latin text and only an unofficial one in English: accessed October 2, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino\\_25\\_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02\\_inglese/b33\\_02.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02_inglese/b33_02.html).

<sup>518</sup> EN 27.

<sup>519</sup> EN 28.



integral liberation, here and now, in our earthly existence.”<sup>520</sup> These are based not on any ideology but are part of Christ’s mission that the Kingdom of God be manifested in the world. In his address to the Latin American bishops, John Paul II states that “ideologies cannot overthrow the evil that holds human beings in bondage. The only one who can free us from this evil is Christ.”<sup>521</sup>

In his first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* Pope Benedict XVI speaks about the relationship of Christians with Christ: “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice of a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”<sup>522</sup> Ralph Martin in an article titled “Who Can Be Saved? What does Vatican II Teach?” says that: “...it is a huge mistake theologically and pastorally to move from the possibility of salvation apart from Christ and Church to the probability or even presumption of such salvation.”<sup>523</sup>

At the end of *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II tells the Church that a true missionary is a saint, since each person’s mission is derived from their call to holiness. Unless the missionary commits himself to holiness, he will not be able to achieve anything: “Holiness must be called a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation in the Church.”<sup>524</sup> Our call to holiness and our call to mission are inseparably linked to each other. John Paul II goes further stating that the missionary must be

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<sup>520</sup> World Synod of Catholic Bishops, *Justitia in Mundo*, 1971, n. 35 quoted in Anzilotti, “Evangelization: Three Contemporary Approaches”, 29.

<sup>521</sup> John Paul II, “Address to Medellin Intellectuals and to the University World,” 329.

<sup>522</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25 December 2005), 1: AAS 98 (2006).

<sup>523</sup> Ralph Martin, “Who Can Be Saved? What Does Vatican II Teach?” in *The New Evangelization*, ed. Ralph Martin and Steven Boguslawski, 32.

<sup>524</sup> RM 90.

a “contemplative in action,”<sup>525</sup> a person who is characterized by committing hi soul to the daily search for God.

The first encyclical of Pope Francis *Lumen Fidei* also speaks about the sharing of the ‘light of faith’ for those who have freely received it from God. This light of Christ is with each Christian as a reflection in a mirror.

Those who have opened their hearts to God’s love, heard his voice and received his light, cannot keep this gift to themselves. Since faith is hearing and seeing, it is also handed on as word and light....The word, once accepted, becomes a response, a confession of faith, which spreads to others and invites them to believe. Paul also uses the image of light: ‘All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image’ (2 Cor 3:18).... The light of Christ shines, as in a mirror, upon the face of Christians; as it spreads, it comes down to us, so that we too can share in that vision and reflect that light to others, in the same way that, in the Easter liturgy, the light of the paschal candle lights countless other candles. Faith is passed on, we might say, by contact, from one person to another, just as one candle is lighted from another. Christians, in their poverty, plant a seed so rich that it becomes a great tree, capable of filling the world with its fruit.<sup>526</sup>

### 2.1.11 Obstacles to Evangelization

Our Church is rich in its history of evangelization, but, at the same time, we have faced disappointments in many areas of missionary work. The disappointments are both internal and external. Internal disappointments are based on the reluctance of Church members to take up the challenge of mission work, coupled with human weakness and limitation. Patrick J. Brennan in his book *Re-Imagining the Parish* argues that many parishes are just maintenance-oriented because parishioners have a consumer consciousness;<sup>527</sup> therefore they have drifted away from a spiritually driven awareness of the call to evangelize. When our weakness disrupts God’s work,

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<sup>525</sup> RM 91.

<sup>526</sup> Francis, *Encyclical Letter Light of Faith, Lumen Fidei* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), no. 23.

<sup>527</sup> Cf. Patrick J. Brennan, *Re-Imagining the Parish: Base Communities—Adulthood—and Family Consciousness* (Chestnut Ridge, New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1990), 10.

it slows down momentum and creates negative effects. The *Instrumentum Laboris* also highlights both obstacles from within and outside of the Church and invites the Synod to suggest some remedies for the proper handling of these problems:

The principal obstacles to the transmission of the faith are the same everywhere and arise from within the Church and the Christian life, namely, a faith which is lived in a private and passive manner; a person's not feeling the need to be instructed in the faith; and a separation of faith from life. The responses also mention obstacles from outside the Christian life, especially from culture, that make it difficult and perilous to live and transmit the faith: consumerism and hedonism, cultural nihilism; and a closure on transcendence which extinguishes any need for salvation. The Synod could provide the occasion to reflect on the above assessment so as to assist Christian communities find the proper remedies for these problems.<sup>528</sup>

Our consumer culture reinforces the attitude that church exists only as an institution that provides for sacramental needs: “Parishes end up spending a lot of time and energy serving them, the people who are present, rather than reaching out to those who are absent.”<sup>529</sup> John Paul II sees internal difficulties being the most painful when they manifest “fatigue, disenchantment, compromise, lack of interest and above all lack of joy and hope,”<sup>530</sup> but the most serious internal obstacle is the widespread indifferentism found among Christians.<sup>531</sup> Proposition 17 of the Synod highlights some of the obstacles caused by the global culture of skepticism and the need of Church to respond to them: “In the contemporary context of a global Culture, many doubts and obstacles cause an extended skepticism and introduce new paradigms of thought and life. It is of

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<sup>528</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 95.

<sup>529</sup> Robert Rivers, “Evangelization in the Contemporary Catholic Church” in *Evangelizing America*, ed. Thomas P. Rausch, 59.

<sup>530</sup> RM 36.

<sup>531</sup> Cf. RM 36.

paramount importance, for a New Evangelization, to underline the role of the *Preambles of Faith*.<sup>532</sup>

There are many other external obstacles which include the preachers of God's Word "deprived of their rights, persecuted, threatened or eliminated solely for preaching Jesus Christ and His Gospel."<sup>533</sup> These external difficulties increase as missionaries are being denied entry into certain countries and are having conversion "seen as a rejection of one's own people and culture."<sup>534</sup> John Paul II states that these seemingly insurmountable difficulties could lead one to discouragement<sup>535</sup> when embracing the mission to evangelize, though the evangelizer should recognize that it is not mere human enterprise. In John Paul's opinion, one of the temptations of this age is to "reduce Christianity to merely human wisdom, a pseudo-science of well-being."<sup>536</sup> The proliferation of this mindset will end up in the "gradual secularization of salvation"<sup>537</sup> and alienate us from ultimate union with God.

Cardinal Avery Dulles discusses in details some of the theological obstacles to evangelization. He is of the opinion that the exaggerated egalitarianism in our present day culture, placing every religion, every conviction, and every moral practice at the same level, is one of the greatest threats to evangelization.<sup>538</sup> An egalitarian and individualistic culture influences us to believe that religion is a human construction and God has not shown any special

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<sup>532</sup> Synod of Bishops, XIII Ordinary General Assembly, "Final List of Propositions." Proposition 17.

<sup>533</sup> EN 50.

<sup>534</sup> RM 35.

<sup>535</sup> Cf. RM 35.

<sup>536</sup> RM 11.

<sup>537</sup> RM 11.

<sup>538</sup> Cf. Avery Cardinal Dulles, "Current Theological Obstacles to Evangelization" in *The New Evangelization*, ed. Ralph Martin and Steven Boguslawski, 13.

favors to anyone. Cardinal Dulles argues strongly against this position, noting Scripture and Tradition teach us that “the Christian religion is a uniquely precious gift of God.”<sup>539</sup> Equating Christianity to other religions and cultures is a considerable danger to our evangelization work: “We could not evangelize anyone unless we were confident of having something important to give.”<sup>540</sup> There are elements of goodness and truth in other religions and cultures, but that does not mean those religions and cultural values are the way to eternal salvation.

Growing secular and individualistic thinking heavily impact the traditional eschatological teachings of the Church. Richard Bauckham comments: “Since 1800 ... no traditional Christian doctrine has been so widely abandoned as that of eternal punishment.... Universal salvation, either as hope or as dogma, is now so widely accepted that many theologians assume it virtually without argument.”<sup>541</sup> Cardinal George Pell of Sydney, Australia at the Tenth Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops talked about the silence and confusion regarding Catholic teaching on Last Things in recent times: “Limbo seems to have disappeared, Purgatory slipped into Limbo, Hell is left unmentioned, except for terrorists and infamous criminals, while Heaven is the final and universal human right; or perhaps just a consoling myth.”<sup>542</sup>

Ralph Martin, in his book *Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization*, is analyzing the consequence of the teaching of *Lumen*

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<sup>539</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>541</sup> Richard J. Nauckham, “Universalism: A Historical Survey,” *Themelios* Vol. 4, No. 3 (January 1979): 48.

<sup>542</sup> George Cardinal Pell, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, (November 7, 2001).

*Gentium* 16.<sup>543</sup> He has dedicated chapter 5 to discussing Rahner’s theory of “anonymous Christians” and chapter 6 to Balthasar’s “duty to hope for the salvation of all” - and believes that both of them have been a major influence on the “culture of universalism” that pervades the climate of the Church today.<sup>544</sup>

Cardinal Dulles points to another harmful attitude in the Church’s mission to evangelize—the belief that all Christian churches and ecclesial communities are equally legitimate. There are many who believe that the Church of Christ “has been fragmented into a multitude of denominations, no one of which claim to have the fullness of Christianity.”<sup>545</sup> This is not a belief accepted by the Catholic Church. Dulles clearly states the position of the Church being that the fullness of God’s revelation to humanity is found in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Without accepting and proclaiming this reality, our evangelization is not complete.<sup>546</sup>

### **2.1.12 What Is New Evangelization?**

The slogan “aggiornamento” (i.e. bringing up to date) introduced by Pope John XXIII in convening the Second Vatican Council contained, among many other things, the seeds of a new awareness for evangelization, while the missionary identity of the Church has been reaffirmed through this Council. Pope Paul VI in taking the name of the great missionary Apostle made it clear that he was going to walk in the footsteps of his predecessors, who gave great leadership and vision to the missionary activities of the Church. At the beginning of his apostolic

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<sup>543</sup> LG 16 talks about the issue of “salvation outside the Church”: “Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience.”

<sup>544</sup> Cf. Ralph Martin, *Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 93-190.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>546</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI states that the Synod fathers expected from the Pastor of the universal Church a new direction in the area of evangelization, “capable of creating within a Church still more firmly rooted in the undying power and strength of Pentecost a new period of evangelization.”<sup>547</sup> The Thirteenth Synod of Bishops *Lineamenta* also talks about the development of the idea of new evangelization since the Second Vatican Council: “Ever since the Second Vatican Council, the new evangelization has increasingly presented itself as an appropriate, timely tool in addressing the challenges of a rapidly-changing world, and the way to respond to God’s generosity in our being gathered together by the Holy Spirit to experience God as the Father of us all and to bear witness and proclaim to all the Good News -the Gospel- of Jesus Christ.”<sup>548</sup>

John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* further clarified the idea of new evangelization when he speaks about the different situations we need to understand in evangelization: “... there is an immediate situation, particularly, in countries with ancient Christian roots, and occasionally in the younger Churches as well, where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In this case what is needed is a ‘new evangelization or a ‘re-evangelization.”<sup>549</sup> *Redemptoris Missio* highlights some of the problems the traditional Christian

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<sup>547</sup> EN 2.

<sup>548</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta*, no. 1.

<sup>549</sup> RM 33. Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the President of the Pontifical Council for New Evangelization, in his book *The New Evangelization: Responding to the Challenge of Indifference*, argues that it is better not to use the word “re-evangelization” as it can have multiple meanings which generate confusion in understanding the theology of evangelization. After outlining his reasons to avoid the word he says: “In this jungle of interpretation, I consider that it is best to avoid the neologism ‘re-evangelization’, to allow us to speak of the new evangelization as a form by means of which one and the same Gospel from the beginning is proclaimed with new enthusiasm, in a new language which is comprehensible in a different cultural situation and with new methodologies which are capable of transmitting its deepest sense, that sense which remains immutable.” (Herefordshire, United Kingdom: Gracewing, 2012), 20-23.

countries are facing. It is a fact that these Christian countries are not able to send missionaries to the rest of the world as they did in previous generations. Now the increasing number of non-Christians create the possibility of Christianity becoming a minority religion in these countries: “Hence missionary activity *ad intra* is a credible sign and a stimulus for missionary activity *ad extra*, and vice versa.”<sup>550</sup>

By definition, the new evangelization presumes the carrying out of a previous evangelization. It is the continuation of the former evangelization by starting from the many rich values it has left in place and proceeding to complement them by correcting previous shortcomings.<sup>551</sup> John Paul II states that the new evangelization is not the preaching of a “new gospel” nor is it “trimming away from the gospel everything that seems difficult for the contemporary mind-set to accept.”<sup>552</sup> The newness doesn’t change the unchangeable gospel. It provides an overall awareness of what is true and eternal in character. The Synod on the theme of New Evangelization in its propositions added a third meaning to the understanding of evangelization making ‘new evangelization’ part of ordinary evangelization: “Evangelization can be understood in three aspects. Firstly, evangelization *ad gentes* is the announcement of the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ. Secondly, it also includes the continuing growth in faith that is the ordinary life of the Church. Finally, the New Evangelization is directed especially to those who have become distant from the Church.”<sup>553</sup>

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<sup>550</sup> Ibid., no. 34.

<sup>551</sup> Cf. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New Evangelization*, no. 58.

<sup>552</sup> John Paul II, “Opening Address of Pope John Paul II,” 45.

<sup>553</sup> Synod of Bishops, Proposition 7.



The Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops explains the meaning of John Paul II's statement that the new evangelization is new in its ardor, methods and expression.<sup>554</sup> It is Christ who gives new ardor to our evangelization work through the working of the Holy Spirit: "An evangelization that is new in its ardor means a solid faith, intense pastoral charity, and steadfast fidelity, which under the Spirit's action, generates a mystique, an enthusiasm that irrepressibly proclaims the gospel and that can awaken credibility so that the good news of salvation may be accepted."<sup>555</sup>

It is this faith, charity, fidelity, and action of the Spirit which requires us to adopt new approaches to evangelization. Here evangelizers must use creativity and imagination to present the message in a compelling way: "Since we live in an image culture, we must boldly use the means made available to us by science and technology, while never placing all our trust in them."<sup>556</sup> The new evangelization becomes new in its expression when the good news is presented "in a language that will bring the perennial gospel closer to the new cultural realities of today."<sup>557</sup> The culture around us is changing and we need to express the gospel in a new way without diluting the faith. It demands that we go through a pastoral conversion presenting the Church as a means of salvation through Christ.

People have drifted away from or abandoned the Catholic faith for a myriad of reasons. They include a lack of formation in faith as a child, difference of opinion on the teachings of the Church, and mistreatment by church representatives. The aim of new evangelization is to address

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<sup>554</sup> John Paul II, Speech to the CELAM Assembly in Port-au-Prince (Mar. 9, 1983), in *Pope John Paul II to CELAM: The Task of the Latin American Bishop, Origins* 12 (1983), 659-661.

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 60.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*

all these issues. The document *Go and Make Disciples* states: “As a community of faith, we want to welcome these people to become alive in the Good News of Jesus, to make their lives more fully a part of the ongoing story of salvation and let Christ touch, heal, and reconcile them through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>558</sup> The inactive members of the Church, most prevalent in much of Europe, always have a place in the Church. Cardinal Hume prays that Europe be given a new soul to become aware of its present condition.<sup>559</sup> It is a daunting task to bring the spirit of new evangelization to the Church in Europe: “In many ways, the evangelization of Europe must be started all over again as if it had never before taken place.”<sup>560</sup> The question is where does the process of new evangelization begin?

Ronald Witherup in *St. Paul and the New Evangelization* has elaborated using six points to describe the meaning of new evangelization:

1. It is personal and Christocentric: focused on promoting a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. It strongly calls for a rediscovery of the missionary spirit among all believers.
3. It is not merely oriented outwardly (*ad intra*) but also inwardly (*ad extra*).
4. It is not only targeted to individuals but also to whole cultures.
5. The task of evangelization is not merely intended for missionaries, the ordained, or specialists, but for all Christians.

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<sup>558</sup> GMD 40.

<sup>559</sup> Cf. Michael I. Bochenski, *Theology from Three Worlds: Liberation and Evangelization for the New Europe* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1997), 166.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*

6. It envisions an entire process of Christianization whereby people engage the risen Lord to such a degree that their whole life changes.<sup>561</sup>

### **2.1.12.2 The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization**

The Dicastery of The Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization was created by Pope Benedict XVI to respond to the challenges facing the question of new evangelization. At vespers on the eve of the feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 28, 2010, in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls the Pope said: "...in recent centuries with complex dynamics the secularization process has produced a serious crisis of the meaning of the Christian faith and of belonging to the Church."<sup>562</sup> Then he also announced there the creation of a "Pontifical Council" in order 'to promote a renewed evangelization' to counter 'the progressive secularization' and also to find ways and means 'to propose anew the perennial truth of Christ's Gospel.'<sup>563</sup> Later Pope Benedict appointed Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella and Archbishop Ruiz Arenas as president and vice president of the Pontifical Council.

The Council was officially established on September 21, 2010 through the *Motu Proprio* called *Ubicumque et Semper*. In this Apostolic Letter, Pope Benedict XVI outlined a short history of the call for the evangelization work of the Church, reminding that the Church has the

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<sup>561</sup> Ronald Witherup briefly explains on these points, citing the official documents of the Church. Cf. *St. Paul and the New Evangelization* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press), 2013. 12-15.

<sup>562</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at the Vespers on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, (28 June 2010): accessed October 13, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/2010/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20100628\\_vespri-pietro-paolo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20100628_vespri-pietro-paolo_en.html)

<sup>563</sup> Cf. Ibid.

duty everywhere and at all times to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>564</sup> Some of the highlights of this document are the following:<sup>565</sup>

1. This Council has to pursue its own ends to encourage and reflect on the topic of New Evangelization (Art. 1. § 2).
2. Its work should be carried out in collaboration with other organisms of the Roman Curia and particular Churches where the phenomenon of secularization is more obviously present (Art. 2).
3. Art. 3 talks about some specific tasks: 1) Examine theological and pastoral meaning of new evangelization: 2) Promote implementation of the ideas of the Magisterium in different levels: 3) Support already existing evangelization plans by particular Churches, Religious Orders and Lay Faithful: 4) Foster modern forms of communication: 5) Promote the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for a complete formulation of the content of faith.

Ever since its establishment, the Council has been engaged in various ways to energize the new evangelization efforts of the Church. There were various programs conducted on the levels of Universal Church, Episcopal Conferences, Diocesan and Local Parishes; and the most important event taken up by the Council was the recent celebration of the Year of Faith.

With his Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei* Pope Benedict XVI declared a Year of Faith, beginning from 11 October 2012 to 24 November 2013. This coincided with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

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<sup>564</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Motu Proprio, Ubicumque et Semper* (September 21, 2010), 789: AAS 102 (2010).

<sup>565</sup> Ibid.

of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.<sup>566</sup> The document states the main objective of the Year of Faith:

This year will be a propitious occasion for the faithful to understand more profoundly that the foundation of Christian faith is ‘the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.’ Founded on the encounter with the Risen Christ, faith can be rediscovered in its wholeness and all its splendor. ‘In our days too faith is a gift to rediscover, to cultivate and to bear witness to’ because the Lord ‘grants each one of us to live the beauty and joy of being Christians.’<sup>567</sup>

### **3.1.12.2 Synod on the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith.**

In order to continue the collegiality created at the Second Vatican Council, the Synod of Bishops was established as a permanent institution by Pope Paul VI. It was through a *motu proprio*, *Apostolica sollicitudo* the Synod was instituted. According to Pope Paul VI: “A Synod is a religious meeting or assembly at which bishops, gathered around and with the Holy Father, have opportunity to interact with each other and to share information and experiences, in the common pursuit of pastoral solutions which have a universal validity and application.”<sup>568</sup> There were 12 ordinary assemblies and several special and extra ordinary assemblies prior to the one on new evangelization.

In his homily concluding the Synod on Middle East, Pope Benedict XVI made the announcement that the theme of the XIII General Assembly of the Ordinary Synod of Bishops would be “*Nova evangelizatio ad christianam fidem tradendam* — The New Evangelization for

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<sup>566</sup> Cf. Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith, *Note with Pastoral Recommendations for the Year of Faith*, “Introduction”: accessed on October 12, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20120106\\_nota-anno-fede\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20120106_nota-anno-fede_en.html).

<sup>567</sup> Ibid.

<sup>568</sup> Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone, “Synod of Bishops: Synodal Information”, Vatican, 29 September 2006: accessed on October 14, 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents).

the Transmission of the Christian Faith.”<sup>569</sup> The Synod was conducted from October 7 to 28, 2012. In order to equip the participants of the Synod with the necessary knowledge of the theme of the Synod, a document was released. This document, known as *Lineamenta* (outline), encourages the bishops to invite the participation of everyone at a local level that would enable them to take a pastoral inventory. It is followed by another document, *Instrumentum Laboris* (working document) released shortly before the Synod which provides direction on how the theme might be treated at the Synod.<sup>570</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI presided over the Synod, three other Cardinals<sup>571</sup> were appointed to preside at the daily proceedings in his absence. The *realtor* (chief facilitator) of the Synod was Donald Cardinal Wuerl of Washington DC. Bishops from different parts of the world were able to offer their thoughts on the conditions of the local churches and the kind of new evangelization work needed to revitalize the Church. Small discussion groups, based on language, gathered frequently to formulate ideas on the theme of new evangelization. A final list of 58 propositions has been submitted to the Pope<sup>572</sup> but the official list is in Latin according to the norms in the *Ordo Synodi Episcoporum*. It will eventually be promulgated as a papal document:

In this regard, it is necessary to point out that the *Propositiones* result at a determined moment in the synodal process and may serve in a possible promulgation of a papal document, and do not detract from the richness found in the contents of the *Lineamenta*, *Instrumentum laboris*, the discussion in the synod hall, the *Relatio ante disceptationem*, the *Relatio post disceptationem* and the Message to the People of God

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<sup>569</sup> Benedict XVI, “Homily at the Closing Mass of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East” (24 October 2010), 815: AAS 102 (2010).

<sup>570</sup> For a detailed explanation of the nature and conduct of the *Ordo Synodi Episcoporum*, please visit [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_20050309\\_index-profile\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20050309_index-profile_en.html).

<sup>571</sup> The presidents delegate were Cardinals John Tong Hon of Hong Kong, Francisco Robles Ortega of Guadalajara, and Laurent Monsenwo Pasinya of Kinshasa, of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

<sup>572</sup> An unofficial English version is available online [http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino\\_25\\_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02\\_inglese/b33\\_02.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02_inglese/b33_02.html).

(*Nuntius*). The work of the Small Groups has permitted a consensus at the synod, which took place in a atmosphere of intense episcopal communion *cum Petro* and *sub Petro*, as a result of prayer and listening to each other, even in the those moments of free discussion.<sup>573</sup>

These propositions talk about the nature of new evangelization, the context of Church ministry today, the pastoral responses needed to adopt in today's circumstances, and the agents of new evangelization.

### 2.1.13 Pope Francis and New Evangelization

Pope Benedict's unexpected abdication of papacy in February 2013, and the subsequent election of Pope Francis, raised many questions about the direction of the program of new evangelization in which the Church has been aggressively engaged during recent years.<sup>574</sup> Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was not present at the Bishops' Synod on New Evangelization, and he seldom uses the slogan "new evangelization" compared to his predecessors. But within a short time he has become a 'living embodiment of new evangelization' as his leadership style<sup>575</sup> is giving new meaning and direction to the work on new evangelization. His manner and approach has elicited extraordinary levels of curiosity and good will far beyond the boundaries of the Church.

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<sup>573</sup> Ibid.

<sup>574</sup> The amount of information regarding the positive influence Pope Francis is making in the Church and society at large is enormous. It is an impossibility to access and evaluate all of them. Here, we would be making a brief evaluation of his deeds and words to support our analysis of the Church's call for new evangelization.

<sup>575</sup> His leadership model is considered in tune with one of the important titles of the Pope *Servus Servorum Dei*. This attitude of understanding Church leadership as a service to the people of God was evident when John XXIII and Paul VI promulgated the documents of Vatican II, signing them with the title *Servus Servorum*, which was originally used by Pope Gregory the Great (540 -604). John Paul II in his book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, states that St. Gregory used this title knowing that the Petrine ministry is carried out for the good of the Church and the faithful: —St. Gregory the Great understood this perfectly when, out of all the titles connected to the functions of the Bishop of Rome, he preferred that of *Servus servorum Dei* (Servant of the Servants of God). Cf. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 13.

Pope Francis' choice of name,<sup>576</sup> the simplicity of his life, and his unprecedented accessibility serves as the foremost model for new evangelization. He has become the leading example of *imitatio Christi* and has influenced many people by becoming Christ for them. Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino comments: "The Holy Father instructs with his words, but effectively teaches through his actions. This is his uniqueness and his magnetism."<sup>577</sup> Echoing similar sentiments Cardinal Raymond Burke believes that the Pontificate of Pope Francis should be seen as the radical call to redouble our efforts for new evangelization, in dialoguing with others and with the world: "This call of Christ is the good news of God's love and mercy which our world so badly longs for."<sup>578</sup>

The publication of the Post-Synodal Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) is regarded as the manifesto of Pope Francis' outlook on evangelization. The language is more like a conversation with a captivating pastoral tone, inviting everyone for a conversion. Pope Francis speaks about three ways of carrying out the new evangelization work.<sup>579</sup> In the first place, it is the ordinary pastoral ministry animated by the fire of the Spirit. In the second realm, evangelization is to concentrate on those who no longer experience the joy of faith due to their lack of commitment to the Gospel. Thirdly, we need to turn our attention to the

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<sup>576</sup> Pope Francis is the first Jesuit and South American pope, and the first pope who took the name of St. Francis of Assisi (1181(2)-1226), the patron saint of Italy, who is one of the most revered figures of the Church. St. Francis is known as *Franciscus alter Christus* as his conformity to Christ came to a level of obtaining even the stigmata in his body. He and his companions lived the ideal of evangelical poverty in an extremely realistic *imitatio Christi*, in which their inner experience and outward behavior were barely distinguishable. He has a timeless appeal because of his unique simplicity, grace of spirit, evangelical zeal, consecration to poverty, charity and personal charisma which continue to attract thousands of people. Pope Francis' selection of the name appropriately conveys the direction he intends to go in his Papacy.

<sup>577</sup> Renato Cardinal Martino, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, [ore] (13 December 2013): 7.

<sup>578</sup> Raymond Cardinal Burke, "The Pope's Radical Call for New Evangelization," *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition, No. 8 (February 12, 2014): 6.

<sup>579</sup> Cf. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013): (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), 15. Hereafter, EG.



people who do not know Jesus or have always rejected him: “All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet.”<sup>580</sup>

In his meeting with the young people of Umbria in Assisi, Pope Francis reminded them that the Gospel is the message of salvation to transform the world according to God’s plan. But in bringing the Gospel to transform the world they are to bear witness to the life of Christ.<sup>581</sup> During his historic World Youth Day celebration visit to Brazil, Pope Francis asked the youth to get involved with the reality of the daily lives of the people, imitating Christ: “Dear young people, please don’t be observers of life, but get involved. Jesus did not remain an observer, but he immersed himself. Don’t be observers, but immerse yourself in the reality of life, as Jesus did.”<sup>582</sup>

It is the *evangelii gaudium* that should attract people to Christ through an evangelizing community filled with joy. Such a joyful community “celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization.”<sup>583</sup> Pope Francis elaborates on this method, which is essential for our evangelization work. It is not by proselytizing that the Church needs to grow,

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<sup>580</sup> EG 15.

<sup>581</sup> Francis, “Address of Pope Francis: Meeting with the young people of Umbria,” Pastoral Visit to Assisi (October 4, 2013), accessed March 10, 2014. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20131004\\_giovani-assisi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco_20131004_giovani-assisi_en.html).

<sup>582</sup> Francis, “Address of Pope Francis: Prayer Vigil with the young people at Rio de Janeiro,” Apostolic Journey for XXVIII World Youth Day (July 27, 2013 prayer Vigil at Rio), accessed March 10, 2014. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130727\\_gmg-veglia-giovani\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130727_gmg-veglia-giovani_en.html).

<sup>583</sup> EG 24.

but ‘by attraction’.<sup>584</sup> In his famous interview with *La Repubblica*’s founder, Eugenio Scalfari, Pope Francis says that proselytism makes no sense. Even for evangelizers to convert someone, they should know each other, listen and improve their knowledge of the reality. It might take several encounters to successfully share one’s faith with someone else.<sup>585</sup>

The attitude of indifference toward faith, seeing it as irrelevant for human life, is evident everywhere. In his meeting with the members of the Pontifical Council for New Evangelization Pope Francis says the call for new evangelization is intended to reawaken this lost life of faith in the minds and hearts of human beings.<sup>586</sup> It is to tell everyone that no one is excluded from the love of Christ, especially those who are suffering:

We need the fresh air of the Gospel, the breath of the Spirit of the Risen Christ, to rekindle it in people’s hearts. The Church is the home where the doors are always open, not only because everyone finds a welcome and is able to breathe in love and hope, but also because we can go out bearing this love and this hope. The Holy Spirit urges us to go beyond our own narrow confines and he guides us to the outskirts of humanity.<sup>587</sup>

Pope Francis invites pastors to abandon the complacent attitude of just saying that ‘we have always done it this way’. Instead, they should be creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style, and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.<sup>588</sup> The pastors should have the “smell of the sheep” and the sheep must be willing to hear their voice.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>584</sup> EG 15.

<sup>585</sup> Eugenio Scalfari, “The Pope: How the Church will Change?” tran. from Italian by Kathryn Wallace (1 October 2013), accessed March 11, 2014. [http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/10/01/news/pope\\_s\\_conversation\\_with\\_scalfari\\_english-67643118/](http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/10/01/news/pope_s_conversation_with_scalfari_english-67643118/).

<sup>586</sup> Cf. Francis, “Address of Pope Francis to the Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Promoting the New Evangelization,” (14 October 2013), accessed March 11, 2014. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20131014\\_plenaria-consiglio-nuova-evangelizzazione\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco_20131014_plenaria-consiglio-nuova-evangelizzazione_en.html).

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

<sup>588</sup> Cf. EG. 33.

<sup>589</sup> Cf. EG 24.

He told the participants of the meeting of the Pontifical Mission Societies that the mission that awaits the Church is challenging, but with the guidance of the Holy Spirit it becomes an exciting one: “We all experience our poverty, our weakness, in taking the precious treasure of the gospel to the world. ... We are called to open ourselves more and more to the action of the Holy Spirit, to offer out unreserved readiness to be instruments of God’s mercy, of his tenderness, of his love for every man and every woman and especially for the poor, the outcastes, and those are distant.”<sup>590</sup>

This mission of the Church cannot be disregarded, nor can the Church just continue worrying about its maintenance - forgetting the mission. The missionary enthusiasm of the members of the Church should not allow itself to be robbed by something else. Finally, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis sets forth his dream for the missionary Church:

I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself.<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Francis, “Address of Pope Francis to Participants in the Meeting of the Pontifical Mission Societies,” (17 May 2013), accessed March 11, 2014. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/speeches/2013/may/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130517\\_pont-opere-missionarie\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/may/documents/papa-francesco_20130517_pont-opere-missionarie_en.html).

<sup>591</sup> EG 27.

## **Part Two: The New Evangelization: The Catholic Response**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

The Church is answering the challenges posed by secularism and modernity with the call for a new evangelization in order to renew herself by retrieving the treasures from her store of evangelization. How to be Church - *for* and *in* - the modern world is an important question for the Church to ask and answer. In this endeavor she is in service of God for the world, which is increasingly becoming secular in its nature. As we have seen in the first chapter, the challenges of secularism, modernity, and other issues related to evangelization are not new or unconsidered by Church authority. Evangelization became one of the most important theological and intellectual themes of the papacy of both John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

Charles Taylor's analysis of secularism and secularization has already been discussed briefly at the end of the first chapter. In this section, Taylor's suggestion of the "Matteo Ricci Model" and the reactions by various scholars to his suggestion, especially George Marsden and his "Prodigal Son Model", are discussed in detail as a possible answer to the questions that necessitated the call for new evangelization. Here, Taylor's theory is used as one of the best examples to understand and find an answer to the modernity-related challenges to evangelization from a Catholic philosopher's perspective. Charles Taylor is credible not only because of his clear thinking in this area, but also because he diligently practices the faith. He has not held any ecclesial authority, which would provides an opportunity for a better reception of him in the secular world in addition to the ecclesiastical realm. Another reason for using Taylor's analysis of modernity is his wide acceptance among theologians, who make use of his analysis to support

their arguments on various issues related to modernity.<sup>592</sup> Taylor's work helps us to understand the depth and complexity of the issue of modernity for the Church.

In the present world, which is very diverse with inescapable layers of meaning and significance,<sup>593</sup> Charles Taylor provides a characteristically thoughtful evaluation. He evaluates the complex historical, cultural, and religious developments that span the last several hundred years<sup>594</sup> in his Marianist Award lecture at the University of Dayton.<sup>595</sup> Taylor does not see the rise of secularism as either fully good or bad, as a movement that has saved us from the errors of pre-modern society or as a development that has left religion in the dust. For all the difficulty of religious skepticism, secularity has somehow actually paved a new way for authentic religious belief. The Catholic mission as understood and presented by Taylor is a deepening of true universality through an examination of local culture with openness and readiness to learn in order to see the goodness in it.

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<sup>592</sup> Charles Taylor's influence in this area is enormous. He created a large body of work that is remarkable for its range—both for the number of areas and issues it addresses as well as for the breadth of scholarship it draws upon. His writings have been translated into many languages. Ruth Abbey, an Australian political philosopher currently teaching at Notre Dame University, Indiana maintains a web page on Charles Taylor, which includes numerous articles, books, doctoral dissertations published on a regular basis on the life and thinking of Charles Taylor. Cf. <http://www3.nd.edu/~rabbey1/index.htm>. There are two active blogs, one in Spanish, "On Charles Taylor": <http://oncharlestaylor.wordpress.com/> and another in English, "The Immanent Frame: Secularism, Religion and the Public Sphere": <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/tag/charles-taylor/> where various scholars discuss the issues being raised by Charles Taylor. He is numbered "among the dozen most important philosophers writing today, anywhere in the world". Cf. James Heft, "Introduction" in *A Catholic Modernity?: Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture*, ed. James L. Heft (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xv.

<sup>593</sup> Cf. Nicholas Smith, *Charles Taylor: Meaning, Morals and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 1.

<sup>594</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>595</sup> The Society of Mary, whose members are known as Marianists, is Catholic religious order founded in Bordeaux, France, in 1817; in 1890, its members founded the University in Dayton, Ohio, USA. The university annually recognizes prominent Catholic Scholars, who are invited to the campus and asked to speak about how their religious faith has affected their scholarship and vice versa.

### 2.2.2 What Is Catholic Modernity?

In his aptly titled lecture, “*A Catholic Modernity*,” Taylor deliberately calls the changes happening in the Church “A Catholic Modernity” rather than “Modern Catholicism”. He explains that the word “modern” has numerous connotations, which he wanted to avoid; hence, he labels the project “Catholic Modernity”. He elaborates on why he does so: “I could have called this talk ‘A Modern Catholicism?’ But such is the force of this adjective *modern* in our culture that one might immediately get the sense that the object of my search was a new, better, higher Catholicism, meant to replace all those outmoded verities that clutter up our past. But to search for this would be to chase a chimera, a monster that cannot exist in the nature of things.”<sup>596</sup> He is expressing his displeasure with the traditional formulation of Catholicism when it comes to evangelization. Most often “go and teach all nations” had been used to violate some of the basic demands of Catholicism since some ‘missionaries’ totally changed the cultures they encountered to fit their criteria of Christianity. According to Taylor, redemption happens through Incarnation, which is the weaving of God’s life into human lives and at the same time these human lives are different, plural and irreducible to each other:

Redemption-Incarnation brings reconciliation, a kind of oneness. This is the oneness of diverse beings who come to see that they cannot attain wholeness alone, that their complementarity is essential, rather than of beings who come to accept that they are ultimately identical.... Our great historical temptation has been to forget the complementarity, to go straight for the sameness, making as many people as possible into ‘good Catholics’ – and in the process failing of catholicity: failing of catholicity, because failing wholeness; unity bought at the price of suppressing something of the diversity in the humanity that God created; unity of the part masquerading as the whole. It is universality without wholeness, and so not true Catholicism.<sup>597</sup>

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<sup>596</sup> Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity?” 2.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

Thus true Catholicism must be rooted in the life of the Trinitarian God and our response to the reality of Incarnation, which also accepts human diversity.

When Taylor highlights the issues facing the Catholic Church in his lecture at University of Dayton, he proposes his ideas and solutions from his reading of the history of the mission work of the Church.<sup>598</sup> As a result of this talk, some Catholic as well as non-Catholic intellectuals began to discuss the relationship of Church with modernity and vice versa based on the ideas he presented in his lecture. Four distinguished scholars<sup>599</sup> reacted to Taylor's lecture, and finally Taylor comments on these responses and provides some concluding reflections. Hans Joas comments on the presentation: "Here Taylor is situating himself in continuity neither with the so-called Catholic modernism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries nor with pleas for a 'modern Catholicism'... Rather, he defends the role of Catholicism within modernity, that is, the pluralistic discourse of the contemporary world."<sup>600</sup>

Bill McSweeney already had done some work in this area through his book *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance*. He talks about three distinct periods in the Catholic Church's attitude toward modernity: Until 1878, the Church rejected modernity. Then, from 1878 until 1962, the Church's attitude shifted to one of competition, until finally competition gave way to partnership and cooperation after 1962.<sup>601</sup> Beginning with the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and now Francis, the Church's relationship with modernity has

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<sup>598</sup> He proposes the "Riccian Model", which will be discussed shortly.

<sup>599</sup> They are: William M. Shea (*A Vote of Thanks to Voltaire*), Rosemary Luling Hughton (*Transcendence and the Bewilderment of Being Modern*), George Marsden (*Matteo Ricci and the Prodigal Culture*), Jean Bethke Elshtain (*Augustine and Diversity*). Cf. James L. Heft, ed., *A Catholic Modernity?: Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture*.

<sup>600</sup> Hans Joas, "A Catholic Modernity?" *The Immanent Frame*, 2007: accessed August 5, 2013. <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2007/12/14/a-catholic-modernity>.

<sup>601</sup> Cf. Bill McSweeney, *Roman Catholicism: The Search for Relevance* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1980), 236-239.

entered another phase.<sup>602</sup> In general the Church is no longer seen as entirely opposed to modernity, but as a partner in an evolving modernity.

Anthony Carroll responds to the usage, “Catholic Modernity”, noting that the highly contested nature of multiple discourses on modernity makes it important to locate Catholic Modernity in relation to these debates as a distinctive account of modernity in its own right.<sup>603</sup> Carroll argues that Catholic Modernity from Second Vatican Council onwards is beginning to provide resources of meaning, solidarity, and hope that are in short supply in other programs of modernity.<sup>604</sup> Charles Taylor understands the word *katholou* in two related senses, comprising both universality and wholeness, implying universality through wholeness.<sup>605</sup> He is trying to stress the importance of wholeness and it is not just the process of making people into good Catholics but in recognizing and accepting diversity.

Taylor also suggests that the narrowness of our thinking and understanding should be compensated by the varied forms of Christian life in complimenting our own partiality on our road to wholeness.<sup>606</sup> One of the central ideas of Taylor’s lecture is that Christianity was instrumental in shaping Western culture,<sup>607</sup> which is an important element in finding a

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<sup>602</sup> This phase is mainly marked by the call for new evangelization, which we already discussed in this chapter. John Paul II and Benedict outlining the principles of new evangelization while Francis is more concentrated on the practical side of it (i.e. whatever he does might be seen and interpreted as his way of new evangelization) from seeing the initial impression of his Pontificate.

<sup>603</sup> Cf. Anthony Carroll, “A Catholic Program for Advanced Modernity” in *Towards a New Catholic Church in Advanced Modernity: Transformations, Visions, Tensions*, eds., Staf Hellemans and Jozef Wissink (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2012), 45.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

<sup>605</sup> Cf. Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity?” 14.

<sup>606</sup> Cf. Ibid., 23.

<sup>607</sup> The designation “Western culture” carries a wide-ranging meaning. It could be equated with “Western civilization” or “European civilization” referring to a heritage of social and ethical values, belief and political systems and many other elements associated with Europe. It could be applied to the Americas and Australia – thus going beyond the territory of the continent of Europe.



connecting link to Modernity. But now the secular humanist culture of modernity is trying to separate itself from Christianity. But even in this process it is carrying the core values of the gospel beyond that which was possible in the fusion of the gospel and culture that Christendom represented.<sup>608</sup>

Taylor believes that the modern secularist culture is mingled with authentic developments of the gospel and a closing off to God that negates the gospel. Thus it offers an ironic opportunity: “The notion is that modern culture, in breaking with the structures and beliefs of Christendom, also carried certain facets of Christian life further than they ever were taken or could have been taken within Christendom.”<sup>609</sup> It is possible that the Christian conscience might experience a mixture of humility and unease: “the humility in realizing that the break with Christendom was necessary for this great extension of gospel-inspired actions; the unease in the sense that the denial of transcendence places this action under threat.”<sup>610</sup>

This tension between the Christian elements and the non-Christian elements in modernity should be treated as an opportunity and challenge in answering the call for the new evangelization: “The acceptance of the legitimate autonomy of the secular realm of human freedom in *Gaudium et Spes* 59, which itself built upon the teaching of Vatican I on the ‘two orders of knowledge’ (First Vatican Council, Chapter 4 on faith and reason), grounds the positions of a Catholic Modernity that human freedom is legitimately expressed in building culture and society.”<sup>611</sup> Anthony Carroll admits that Taylor believes the advances of secular

<sup>608</sup> Cf. Carroll, “A Catholic Program for Advanced Modernity.” 52.

<sup>609</sup> Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity?” 4.

<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>611</sup> Carroll, “A Catholic Program for Advanced Modernity,” 54.

modernity over the former fusion of the gospel and culture are not to be traded away by a return to the Western period of Christendom.<sup>612</sup> Because the ability of Catholic Modernity to appropriately situate itself within advanced modernity, while avoiding the dual traps of attempting to colonize it or shrinking to a marginalized corner of Western society, defines the prospective location of this program for advanced modernity.<sup>613</sup>

In *A Secular Age* Charles Taylor answers a commonly held false impression that the origin of the secular lies outside the religious in a scientific or rationalistic mentality. Taylor is of the opinion that secularism itself originated from Protestant and Catholic reform movements. According to Anthony Carroll: “Taylor’s genealogy of secular modern societies is interesting because rather than viewing the secularity of modernity as emerging separate from its religious origins, he ties religious developments and secularity very much together.”<sup>614</sup> The secular age presents a complex epistemic environment in which both religious belief and unbelief are possible, although he admits that in the West the default setting has shifted to unbelief: “Somewhere along the road, this culture ceases to be simply Christian-inspired-although people of deep Christian faith continue to be important in today’s movements.”<sup>615</sup>

### **2.2.3 Elements of a Christian Response: The Proper Relationship of Modernity and Christianity**

The Christian element in modernity is the starting point of our encounter. What Taylor does with his account of modernity is making a historical retrieval to criticize today’s “debased individualism” from the standpoint of its own motivating ideal: “Without an awareness of the

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<sup>612</sup> Cf. Hellemans, “Tracking the New Shape of the Catholic Church in the West,” 30.

<sup>613</sup> Carroll, “A Catholic Program for Advanced Modernity,” 57.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>615</sup> Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity,” 14.

values that lead to the development of Western modernity, we are less sure of the deeper values and meanings embedded in our collective languages and at the centers of our personal identities.”<sup>616</sup> Projecting Christianity in opposition to modernity is a false approach even when it is understandable that many of the developments related to modernity have negatively affected Christianity.

As we have noted earlier there are many positive elements in modernity, some of which had been planted by Christian thinking. Staf Hellemans comments: “On a deeper level, religion is as a social domain – almost by definition – part of modernity, in the same way as politics, the economy, the arts, the sciences, or the family, are part of modernity. Just as the economy and politics have evolved from pre-modern to modern forms, so has religion.”<sup>617</sup>

But the difficulty lies in finding a mutual ground for the progress of humanity when modernity and religion are trying to create a homogeneous society today, ignoring the various kinds of progress. Taylor comments that there can never be a total fusion of faith in with any given society, and the attempt to achieve such a state is dangerous even for faith.<sup>618</sup> That is the main reason he proposes the idea of “A Catholic Modernity” in which modernity becomes the standard for repudiating those parts of tradition that do not suit current tastes: “Yet, so many Christian traditions have fallen into that trap that it is worth underscoring that the project of meeting modernity on its terms often mislead people into letting modernity set the standards.”<sup>619</sup>

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<sup>616</sup> Mark Redhead, *Charles Taylor: Thinking and Living Deep Diversity* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 177.

<sup>617</sup> Hellemans, “Tracking the New Shape of the Catholic Church in the West,” 19.

<sup>618</sup> Cf. Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity?” 5.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

Taylor also argues that just because Christianity was relevant in the past does not give it the right to make the claim that people should accept it forever: “In the past, Christianity was highly relevant: it was woven into the very texture of society and captured both the dreams and fears of the people. Will the future Church be able to do the same?”<sup>620</sup> Here Taylor proposes a method which Matteo Ricci, a Jesuit missionary to China, adopted in his missionary work even when Taylor is aware that it failed to generate the intended result, mostly because of resistance from Church authority rather than external elements.<sup>621</sup> This method could be reintroduced or experimented in our engagement with modernity, which might seem as an alien element to the Christian way of life today. George Mardsen, in his response to Taylor’s lecture, also elaborates on the Riccian Model. The sixteenth-century Jesuit missionary to China approached evangelization understanding the context in which he was evangelizing. Matteo Ricci’s approach to evangelization is helpful since it enables one to see the cultural and religious situation more clearly.

## **2.2.4 Matteo Ricci and The Riccian Model**

### **2.2.4.1 Life of Matteo Ricci**

Matteo Ricci<sup>622</sup> was born in Macerata, part of the then Papal States, on October 6, 1552 and died in Beijing, China on May 11, 1610. His father Giovanni Battista Ricci was a pharmacist, and at the same time occasionally played the role of a public servant. His mother Giovanna Angiolelli was known for her simple and pious life. After his preliminary studies at home, Matteo entered the school that the Jesuit priests opened in 1561 and then set out for Rome

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<sup>620</sup> Hellemans and Wissink, “Introduction,” in *Towards a New Catholic Church*, 8.

<sup>621</sup> The Riccian Method would be used only in so far as it presents one of the excellent ways of reopening the Gospel to a diverse culture as it has helped to spread the Gospel in China.

<sup>622</sup> In an essay written in *Encyclopedia Britannica* Joseph Hsin-san Shih briefly describes the life and works of Matteo Ricci. The summary is from the essay by Joseph Hsin-san Shih: accessed October 10, 2013. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/502216/Matteo-Ricci>.

at age 16 to study law. While in Rome he was attracted to the life of the Jesuits, and on August 15, 1571 he requested permission to join the order. Later, in May 1577, he set off for Portugal where he studied for a short time at the University of Coimbra. In the following year, on March 24, he embarked at Lisbon and arrived on September 13 at Goa, the Portuguese outpost on the central west coast of India. Ricci carried on his studies for the priesthood there, and was ordained in 1580 at Cochin on the Malabar Coast. Returning to Goa, he was ordered to proceed to China. China was closed to missionaries during this time because of previous unpleasant experiences with them. But the missionary strategy of the Jesuits had undergone modification, giving much emphasis on the importance of learning the Chinese language and of acquiring knowledge of the culture. Ricci was called to the Portuguese province of Macau to prepare himself to evangelize China and thus received the honor of founding the Church in China.

In 1589 Ricci moved from Zhaoqing to Shaozhou (now Shaoguan), where he became a close friend of the Confucian scholar Qu Taisu. Ricci taught him the rudiments of mathematics, receiving in return an introduction into the circles of the mandarins (high civil or military officials of the Chinese empire) and of the Confucian scholars. Noting that Ricci wore the habit of a Buddhist monk (which he had adopted upon entering China), Qu suggested that it would be better to dress as a Chinese scholar, a suggestion that Ricci followed immediately after leaving Guangdong.

Encouraged by the reception he received at Nanjing, Ricci made a second attempt to reach Beijing. He entered the city in January 1601, accompanied by his Jesuit colleague, the young Spaniard Diego Pantoja. His efforts to attract and convert the Chinese intelligentsia brought him into contact with many outstanding personalities, among them Li Zhizao, Xu Guangqi and Yang Tingyun (who became known as the “Three Pillars of the Early Catholic

Church” in China). They assisted the missionaries, especially in their literary efforts and Feng Yingjing, a scholar and civic official, was imprisoned in Beijing for helping the missionaries.

Ricci was enormously successful in his missionary endeavors, in part because of his ability to go beyond cultural barriers and befriend men of another race and religion. His remark about his friend Feng Yingjing brings out well the spirit of this great missionary: “He treated the affairs of our fathers as if they were his own and our fathers in turn treated his as if they were ours.” The Jesuits were “to travel through the world and to live in any part of it whatsoever where there is hope of greater service to God and of help of souls.”<sup>623</sup>

Ricci’s correspondence with his superiors reveals how much effort he took in order to understand and appreciate Chinese culture. He wrote to the General Superior of Jesuits in 1952, saying, “In order to gain greater authority, we no longer go about the streets by foot, but we are carried in chairs on the shoulders of men, in the manner to which important persons of consequence are here accustomed.”<sup>624</sup> This was in a way not normal for them to do, but for the sake of the gospel they accepted it. “According to this principle, Jesuit priests were asked to assimilate as much as possible of their hosts’ culture and to adopt the *modo soave*, the gentle method, in their dealings with non-believers. Would-be Jesuits had to be screened for their ‘flexibility’, their ability to adapt to unfamiliar ways of life. Rather than seeking to eliminate local culture, missionaries were encouraged first to study and then to participate in it.”<sup>625</sup>

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<sup>623</sup> Mary Laven, *Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit Encounter with the East*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), 5.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*, 18

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

### 2.2.4.2 The Riccian Model

From his own understanding of the Catholic faith, Taylor moves to the next step of telling the believers and non-believers what it has to offer to the rest of the world. As a result, Taylor is proposing the model of Matteo Ricci at the Marian Award Lecture on how to respond to what it means to be Catholic at this age. Ricci is presented as a great example of inculturation in so far as he could express his Catholic faith persuasively in another culture, which was radically different from his own. Ricci, as an outsider in China, is “providing a spiritual message couched within the values and customs of the foreign civilization.”<sup>626</sup> Ricci is becoming an example by showing that this ‘foreign’ element (Christianity) could be transformed into a ‘domestic’ one.

Taylor, projecting Ricci as his ‘model for evangelizing,’ indicates that an approach of ‘learning a culture’, even one’s own, is an important criterion for moving towards an effective incarnation of true *catholica* in the world, including the culture of modernity.<sup>627</sup> Taylor’s advocacy of a similar kind of discernment to learn from the other by beginning a dialogue to understand both culture and one’s own tradition is the Riccian contribution to Taylor’s thinking: “This becomes, in Taylor’s view, an inculturation of the Gospel or, at the least, ‘an instantiation of the Catholic principle’.”<sup>628</sup> The ‘wholeness’ comes by recognizing the different forms of Christian life, which ‘complement our own partiality’.<sup>629</sup>

This ‘model’ is also an invitation to learn the culture of modernity just as Ricci took an earnest effort to learn the Chinese culture. *Gaudium et Spes* has already acknowledged the need

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<sup>626</sup> Cf. Mark Redhead, *Charles Taylor*, 196.

<sup>627</sup> Cf. Carolyn Anne Sze-Ming Chau, “A Theological Interpretation of Catholic Witness and Mission in a Secular Age: Charles Taylor and Hans Urs von Balthasar on Faith, Church, and Modernity” (PhD diss., University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto, 2012), 24.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>629</sup> Cf. Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity,” 3-4.

to understand the culture in order to serve it better and to provide the Gospel of Christ.<sup>630</sup> Ricci was successful in finding a connecting link in his attempt to go ‘native’, not by rejection and criticism of what he found there, “but with an appreciation of what was great in their civilization.”<sup>631</sup> Taylor’s suggestion comes from his understanding of the “world” and the intellectual inheritance of the West, especially that of Enlightenment and Romanticism: “Taylor’s narrative from within the modern world shows how modern identity in the West is inscribed far less by theistic sources (even less by ecclesial sources) and more by the intellectual inheritance of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Taylor thus helps the Church to understand more deeply one of the key dimensions that form the task of mission, namely, the world.”<sup>632</sup>

George Marsden comments that the Riccian model proposed by Taylor to handle the issues of modernity is an attempt to approach modernity on its own terms, “as much as it is possible for Catholics and other Christians to do so without vitiating the essentials of our traditions.”<sup>633</sup> It is also actually learning lessons from the missionary history of the Church in order to improve our present mission work. According to Taylor it is “taking our modern civilization for another of those great cultural forms that have come and gone in human history, to see what it means to be Christian here, to find our authentic voice in the eventual Catholic

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<sup>630</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* treats this topic in a lengthy manner from numbers 53-62: “May the faithful, therefore, live in very close union with the other men of their time and may they strive to understand perfectly their way of thinking and judging, as expressed in their culture. Let them blend new sciences and theories and the understanding of the most recent discoveries with Christian morality and the teaching of Christian doctrine, so that their religious culture and morality may keep pace with scientific knowledge and with the constantly progressing technology. Thus they will be able to interpret and evaluate all things in a truly Christian spirit.” no. 62).

<sup>631</sup> Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity,” 94.

<sup>632</sup> Sze-Ming Chau, “A Theological Interpretation of Catholic Witness,” 33.

<sup>633</sup> George Marsden, “Matteo Ricci and the Prodigal Culture,” in *A Catholic Modernity?* 71.



chorus, to try to do for our time and place what Matteo Ricci was striving to do four centuries ago in China.”<sup>634</sup>

According to Marsden, Taylor’s approach includes a recognition of the achievements of modernity and using them as the points of contact for presenting the gospel: “Particularly, we can see the great good in rights, which asserts the claims to equal rights among all peoples. Moreover, Christians can affirm the value of the preeminent goal of that culture, which is to promote human flourishing.”<sup>635</sup>

Taylor is also well aware of the fact that Ricci faced an entirely different civilization, which was unaware of the Judeo-Christian revelation. He points out two reasons which carry some weight in cautioning someone who wants to whole heartedly embrace the Riccian Model without a complete understanding of the West: “This is still, in many respects, a Christian civilization; at least, it is a society with many churchgoers. How can we start from the outsider’s standpoint that was inevitably Ricci’s?”<sup>636</sup> In the same tone the modern thought and culture are trying to project the Christian culture as the “other” which needed to be discarded as something of the past in order to implement the flourishing ideas of Enlightenment, liberalism and humanism.<sup>637</sup>

So the Ricci project in relation to our own time looks strange for two seemingly incompatible reasons. On the one hand, we feel already at home here, in this civilization which has issued from Christendom, so what do we need to strive further to understand? On the other hand, whatever is foreign to Christianity seems to involve a rejection of it, so how can we envisage accommodating? Put in other terms, the Ricci project involves

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<sup>634</sup> Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity,” 3.

<sup>635</sup> Marsden, “Matteo Ricci and the Prodigal Culture,” 72.

<sup>636</sup> Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity,” 3.

<sup>637</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

the difficult task of making new discriminations: what in the culture represents a valid human difference, and what is incompatible with Christian faith.<sup>638</sup>

Ricci was preaching to people who are totally ignorant about Christianity, which is a key difference between Ricci and the present day culture. More than that today, the Church must preach not only to an ignorant but also an antagonistic culture, which is totally opposed to the Church. How does the Riccian model account for this? How does the Church respond? As we have noted earlier, Taylor is aware that the Riccian model has many limitations because Ricci was an outsider providing a spiritual message couched within the values and customs of the foreign civilization.<sup>639</sup> But at the same time even though the modern secularist culture appears as an amalgamation of “‘authentic development of the gospel, of an incarnational mode of life, and also a closing off to God that negates the gospel.’ Yet it is precisely because of the latter that modernity can appear at times quite foreign to Christians while conversely leaving many secular moderns to regard contemporary Christians as dangerous voices inspired by a bygone era.”<sup>640</sup>

Like Ricci, we have to make discernment in our encounter with modernity. He wanted to distinguish between those things in the new culture that came from the natural knowledge of God and thus should be affirmed and extended, on one hand, and those practices that were distortions and would have to be changed, on the other. Similarly, we are challenged to a difficult discernment, trying to see what in modern culture reflects its furthering of the gospel, and what its refusal of the transcendent.<sup>641</sup> Taylor believes that “As with Ricci, the gospel message to this time and society has to respond both to what in it already reflects the life of God and to the doors

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<sup>638</sup> Ibid.

<sup>639</sup> Cf. Readhead, *Charles Taylor: Thinking and Living Deep Diversity*, 196.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid.

<sup>641</sup> Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity,” 24.

that have been closed against this life.”<sup>642</sup> It will not be easy for us to discern, as it was not easy for Ricci. Taylor also believes that the ‘Chinese rite controversy’ did a disservice to Ricci and hindered the evangelization work of China<sup>643</sup> and prays that we do better this time with “our own variants of the Chinese rite controversy.”<sup>644</sup>

### 2.2.4.3 Further Clarification on the Riccian Model

There are a few critics who question the validity and accuracy of Taylor’s depiction of Matteo Ricci. George Marsden believes that Riccian model might not be the best since “it does not work very well because the relationship between Christianity and our culture is so different from that between Christianity and sixteenth century Chinese culture.”<sup>645</sup> He also asks the question whether we have to dress our views in terms already acceptable to the contemporary academy like Ricci dressing as a Confucian scholar?<sup>646</sup> Taylor in his “Concluding Reflections and Comments” tries to answer this briefly along with his comments on other reactions to his lecture. In many respects modernity treats Christianity as it came from ‘outside’ and the “Ricci journey is meant to liberate the present from the dead hand of the polemics that its rise has

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<sup>642</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>643</sup> The Chinese Rites controversy covers a wide-array of issues but mainly was a dispute among missionaries over the religiosity of Confucianism and Chinese rituals during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They debated whether Chinese ritual practices of honoring family ancestors and other formal Confucian and Chinese imperial rites qualified as religious rites and thus incompatible with Catholic belief. The Jesuits argued that these Chinese rites were secular rituals that were compatible with Christianity, with certain limits and could be tolerated. Cf. Kathleen Kuiper, (31 Aug 2006). “Chinese Rites Controversy” in “Roman Catholicism”, Britannica Online Encyclopedia, accessed on 13 March 2013. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/112770/Chinese-Rites-Controversy>.

<sup>644</sup> Taylor, “A Catholic Modernity,” 25.

<sup>645</sup> Marsden, “Matteo Ricci and the Prodigal Son Culture,” 74. He proposes the metaphor of the “prodigal son” to deal with modernity, which will be shortly discussed.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid., 75.

generated, and it meant similarly to liberate the past.”<sup>647</sup> Taylor believes that his imagined Ricci is also a time traveler who has “a way of living our age, with its unparalleled knowledge of the past and even fascination with it.”<sup>648</sup>

Another prominent critic of this model is Ian Fraser, who wrote an article on “Charles Taylor’s Catholicism” and then a book *Dialectics of the Self: Transcending Charles Taylor*. He criticizes Taylor for arguing that Ricci’s intention of dialogue was not for mutual understanding but to propagate his faith. Fraser writes that the propagation of faith was ‘fundamental’ for Ricci and the method he adopted was to ‘conquer China’, the ultimate goal of which was subsumption and not a respect for difference as Taylor assumes and so desires as a model for his modern-day Catholicism.<sup>649</sup> In an article “Charles Taylor’s Catholicism” Fraser argues that the Ricci project that Taylor wants modern Catholics to embrace is deeply flawed: “The ‘unity-across-difference’ that Taylor suggests Ricci displays is not only illogical in practice but is also really the ‘unity-through-identity’ approach that Taylor is hostile to. Despite the supposed ‘acculturation’, the ultimate aim for Ricci was conversion and subsumption of Confucianism under the Christian banner.”<sup>650</sup>

Ruth Abbey, a prominent scholar on Taylor’s philosophy, defends the approach of Taylor against Fraser’s criticisms. Abbey argues that in Taylor’s view Ricci embodies not only a style of Catholic evangelization that respects difference, but also a sort of outsider’s standpoint that Catholics should occupy with regard to modernity when trying to access its benefits and

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<sup>647</sup> Taylor, “Concluding Reflections and Comments” in *A Catholic Modernity?*, 96.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid. 97.

<sup>649</sup> Ian Fraser, *Dialectics of the Self: Transcending Charles Taylor* (Exeter, United Kingdom: Imprint Academic, 2007), 52.

<sup>650</sup> Ian Fraser, “Charles Taylor’s Catholicism,” *Contemporary Political Theory*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (August 2005), 249.

disadvantages.<sup>651</sup> Taylor invokes Ricci image to shake his audience out of their complacent assumptions that they already understand modernity, and to encourage them to look at it with fresh eyes.<sup>652</sup> Taylor's interpretation of a Riccian approach to being Catholic means one's willingness and interest to engage seriously with the culture of modernity in order that the gospel might take roots in the culture. In Taylor's own words:

So the Ricci journey is meant to liberate the present from the dead hand of the polemics that its rise has generated, and it is meant similarly to liberate the past. ...there is so much that we need in the past, so many spiritual forms, modes of prayer, devotion, of common life, that could help us revivify the love and service of God in the present. But they will help us only if we 'lift from them the crushing weight of being *the* right answer,' which somewhere got lost and whose existence condemns whatever came after (and also, needless to say, from the burden of being primeval error, which we have finally dispelled).<sup>653</sup>

### 2.2.5 George Marsden and the Prodigal Metaphor

Inspired by Taylor's ideas<sup>654</sup> George Marsden is using the metaphor of the Prodigal Son to argue that Modernity is the prodigal offspring of Christianity (along with many other offspring). Marsden believes that there are many elements in modernity, which are inimical to Christianity. He is making an effort to approach modernity in its own terms "as much as it is possible for Catholics and other Christians to do so without vitiating the essentials of our traditions."<sup>655</sup> This creates a space for us to think that Western modern culture is not a 'foreign'

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<sup>651</sup> Cf. Ruth Abbey, "Turning or Spinning? Charles Taylor's Catholicism: A Reply to Ian Fraser", *Contemporary Political Theory*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (May 2006), 167.

<sup>652</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>653</sup> Taylor, "Concluding Reflections," 96.

<sup>654</sup> George Marsden believes that Charles Taylor's essay is a model of what Christian scholars should be doing. His criticism explicitly reflects on how the faith of Christians provide fresh perspectives for viewing contemporary issues by fully engaged with modern scholarship, yet be openly critiquing the premises of modernity in light of their Christian commitments. Cf. Marsden, "Matteo Ricci and the Prodigal Culture," 71-75.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

culture in which to work, but is born out of Christianity as it bears many of the marks of Christianity.

This metaphor is also not unknown in Western Christian literature. Archbishop Józef Teofil Teodorowicz of Lviv, Ukraine has used this metaphor in 1921 to show the deviations he found in the East European Church:

Our epoch has withdrawn from Christ. Like the prodigal son, it has cast away the warm home of Christian culture in which it was born and raised. Like the prodigal son it has lived off the remains of its paternal fortune; it has lived off the slogans of justice, love, brotherhood and freedom, which it took from the maternal home of Christianity and the Gospels. But it has squandered all that... wasting its parental fortune on all kinds of debauchery. Today it has lost everything.<sup>656</sup>

Marsden is of the opinion that the metaphor of the Prodigal Son also enables Christians to see the marks of the father in the son and see a responsibility for this son's creation; but he is hesitant to attribute the aberrations in modernity to Christianity. Even when we should be critical of the inadequacies of modernity, we should not be hesitant to affirm its achievements: "The key to this balance is to focus on synthesizing the best achievements of modernity with authentically Christian traditions."<sup>657</sup> Carolyn Anne Sze-Ming Chau appreciating Marsden's critique, wishes to invite a deeper openness to a culture that first sees culture with the compassion of the Father and stands with open arms ready to receive the culture, recognizing all the while the manner in which it has strayed.<sup>658</sup>

Marsden's metaphor also supplies what is lacking in Taylor's imagery of Matteo Ricci, especially when modernity is seen as anti-Christian:

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<sup>656</sup> Brian Porter-Szucs, *Faith and Fatherland : Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland: Catholicism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 106.

<sup>657</sup> Marsden, "Matteo Ricci and the Prodigal Culture," 72.

<sup>658</sup> Cf. Sze-Ming Chau, "A Theological Interpretation of Catholic Witness," 223. Chau also comments in the footnote that we should love the culture as the Father loves the world, but we should be clear that the task of the Church is to accompany the world on the way to the Father, to be a handmaid to the Lord in this task.

The image of the prodigal helps clarify another dimension that I think is faithful to what Taylor intends to say. It highlights the deep ambivalence that Christians should have toward modernity. It is not just non-Christian. It is, in part, an anti-Christian rebellion, with all the bitterness that a broken family relationship can engender. Ultimately, it is a rebellion not only against Christianity but also against God's love (even if institutional Christianity often must share the blame for keeping people from seeing God's love). It is, moreover, a rebellion that takes God's gifts that are potentially good and turns them to evil by absolutizing them. In Augustinian terms, it is a rebellion of directing one's most impassioned love toward some limited aspect of creation rather than to the Creator. Such misplaced love is ultimately destructive both of self and of the ability to love others.<sup>659</sup>

This attractive imagery has genuine accomplishments a Christian can admire. Even with so many contradictions, the 'prodigal' (modernity) is also a person of high ideals which provide a contact for dialogue: "Christians must show the prodigal that the only realistic hope for realizing these ideas is by coming home."<sup>660</sup> In this regard, according to Marsden, the prodigal metaphor works better than the Riccian model because it better resolves some of the problems, especially the problem of viewing modern secular humanism as though it were a wholly foreign culture. "It highlights the deep ambivalence that Christians should have toward modernity. It is not just non-Christian."<sup>661</sup> There are many elements in modernity that anyone can appreciate, and there is a partial Christian lineage behind these accomplishments. "This family tie provides a basis for a genuinely loving sympathy, without which we will always be talking past one another. The loving father is going to give the benefit of the doubt to the prodigal."<sup>662</sup>

Rather than totally repudiating and rejecting modernity, Christians should spend their energy in reshaping it. The way to do this is not by running away from it, but by getting involved in it. It is a misconception to assume that the 'end of modernity' might guarantee the

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<sup>659</sup> Marsden, "Matteo Ricci and the Prodigal Culture," 74.

<sup>660</sup> Ibid.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

reemergence of religiosity. Vinod Ramachandra in an article “Learning from Modern European Secularism” writes:

No one whether Christian or non-Christian ... can rejoice in the ‘end of modernity’ chorus emanating from certain quarters of the western world. But we also stand in great need of discernment lest we identify the ‘spirit of age’ with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth who mediates the reality of the risen Lord in the midst of historical change and uncertainty. If, indeed modernity is the prodigal son of the Christian narrative, then what would the return of the prodigal – the ‘recapitulation’ (*apokatalassein*, Eph. 1: 10) of modern society in Christ – involve?<sup>663</sup>

From all this it is undoubtedly clear that a process of redefining and recomposing of Christian faith is taking place. More than ever, it has become the business of everyone including Christians, non-Christians, atheists, philosophers and theologians. This change “represents the consequences of expressivist culture as it affects our world. It has created quite a new predicament.”<sup>664</sup>

### 3.2.6 Conclusion

The missionary history and mission theology of the Church is long and rich, as it has been explained in the first part of this chapter. In a constantly changing world, the emergence of new and unforeseen situations transformed the “Christian centers” into “mission areas” needing new missionaries and new methods to revitalize the Church. A prominent missiologist, Stephen Bevans, is of the opinion that now every church exists in a ‘missionary situation’ and even the expansion of the Church creates a need for more personnel and other resources. But the church in the West finds itself in numerical decline, and recognizes a need to witness and to preach the

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<sup>663</sup> Vinod Ramachandra, “Learning from Modern European Secularism: A View from the Third World Church,” *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (July 2003), 219.

<sup>664</sup> Charles Taylor, *Verities of Religions Today: William James Revisited* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 107.



gospel in new ways and with new urgency in pluralist and secularist societies.<sup>665</sup> Recognition of these situations demands the “missionary Church” to adopt radical missionary ideas and theological methods. This is God’s work and the Church is an instrument, as Antonio Cardinal Tagle of Manila said at the Synod of Bishops, “Confronted with sorrows, doubts and uncertainties of people, she cannot pretend to give easy solutions.”<sup>666</sup>

The reflections of Charles Taylor may not be the only or the easiest solutions to the challenges of modernity. His thinking should be combined with the reflections of other great theological minds that venture into the ‘stormy waters’ of modernity. Taylor provides a fresh and unique approach in dealing with secularism and modernism, which is also deeply rooted in the Catholic mission tradition. The social, cultural, and philosophical thought of Taylor is shedding some light into the historical missionary figure of Matteo Ricci. When other scholars, including George Marsden with his Prodigal Son metaphor, take it further to answer the challenges of modernity, the clarity coming from these reflections may help the Church to retrieve a sense of her personal being and mission. Taylor helps the Church to deepen and simplify her understanding of secularism and modernity. Prominent theologians need to study Taylor further to make his thinking more useful as his philosophical understanding should aid the theological reaction to the needs of new evangelization.

Even with all these ‘suggestions’ Taylor comes to the conclusion that “witness” is the best form of evangelization and he tries to embody this in his personal life. As Carolyn Anne observes: “For Taylor, it is the lives of Francis of Assisi, St. Therese of Lisieux, Bede Griffiths,

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<sup>665</sup> Cf. Stephen Bevans, “Revisiting Mission at Vatican II: Theology and Practice for Today’s Missionary Church,” *Theological Studies*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (June 2013), 274.

<sup>666</sup> Antonio Tagle, XIII Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 7- 28 October 2012, Bulletin, English Edition: accessed October 20, 2013.  
[http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino\\_25\\_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02\\_inglese/](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02_inglese/).

Vaclav Havel, Charles Peguy, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Mother Theresa, and Jean Vanier that lead one to make a confession of faith.”<sup>667</sup> This is the way of being a Christian and a missionary and “perhaps the only irrefutable witness”.<sup>668</sup> These sentiments of the need for true and authentic witness were echoed at various sessions of the Synod on New Evangelization and could be best summarized in the words of Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas of Philippines:

The new evangelization calls for new humility. The gospel cannot thrive in pride... the new evangelization must be done by new saints and we must be those saints... The great poverty of the world now is the poverty of saints... Evangelization is not about something we do but something we are... Evangelization is not about projects and programs and plans but allowing God to work in our lives... new evangelization must be a call for new charity. The proclaiming lips must be accompanied by outreaching hands for service... The charity of the new evangelization must be the gift of Jesus.<sup>669</sup>

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<sup>667</sup> Sze-Ming Chau, “A Theological Interpretation of Catholic Witness,” 86.

<sup>668</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>669</sup> Socrates Villegas, XIII Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 7- 28 October 2012, Bulletin, English Edition: accessed on October 20, 2013.  
[http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino\\_25\\_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02\\_inglese/](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02_inglese/).

**CHAPTER THREE**

**THE MISSIONARY VOCATION OF THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC  
CHURCH AND NEW EVANGELIZATION**

**3.0 Introduction**

The Catholic Church is a communion of Churches, and each *sui iuris* Church in this communion has its own responsibility to fulfill the missionary mandate of the Lord. The second chapter provided the basic principles of evangelization with an explanation on the missionary theology of the Catholic Church. The “age of new evangelization” is nothing but a continuation of what the Church has been doing for two thousand years. History is the best witness to the fact that the Church was always assisted by the exemplary zeal of holy men and women to reform itself to undertake the missionary task entrusted to it. Gregory the Great, Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, Vincent de Paul, Theresa of Liseiux and Mother Teresa are only a few among the long list of such reformers who revived the missionary spirit of the Church in different ways.

Each Individual Church has a story to tell about its own unique approach to evangelization, and later a story of renewal of the Church whenever it was necessary. The recently promulgated 2012 *Code of Particular Canons of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church* (CPCSMCC) reveals the earnestness of the SMCC in reviving its missionary spirit which was a special component of the 1930 reunion: “As our Lord Jesus Christ commanded, as St. Thomas the Apostle proclaimed and celebrated in the liturgy, and envisaged by the Servant of God Archbishop Mar Ivanios, it is the right and duty of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church to announce the Gospel to the whole creation, especially in India its multicultural background.”<sup>670</sup>

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<sup>670</sup> *The Code of Particular Canons of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church (CPCSMCC)*, (Pattom, Trivandrum: Major Archiepiscopal Curia Catholicate Centre, 2012), c. 415.

In this chapter we discuss the role and responsibility of the SMCC in the new evangelization work of the Church. The SMCC is one of the *sui iuris* Churches in the Catholic Church, which means it has equal “right and responsibility” in disseminating the Gospel to everyone with every other *sui iuris* Church.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section examines cultural and religious dimensions of the SMCC. Knowledge of the Indian cultural and religious background, of the catholicity of the faith, and the Antiochean liturgical patrimony of the SMCC is essential in discerning the present phase. The second section is an attempt to locate the call of new evangelization in the Malankara Church. This contextualization revolves around what has been achieved and what needs to be done to gain higher grounds. An analysis of all these factors is essential to the understanding of the SMCC’s evangelization work, and also to formulate its new evangelization potential. The Malankara Catholic Church has a success story to tell with regard to evangelization, and there is ample room for further development, which also depends on its capacity to confront potential obstacles and challenges.

## **Part One: The Cultural, Historical, and Liturgical Background of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church**

### **3.1.1 Introduction**

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church<sup>671</sup> has a unique story to tell. This story begins two thousand years ago with the preaching of St. Thomas the Apostle, continues with the pain of division in 1653 and the subsequent fragmentation into various groups, and finally with the joy

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<sup>671</sup> St. Thomas Christians in India are divided into different sections including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. Whenever we speak of St. Thomas Christians here could be applied to the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in a general sense. A short introduction on the history of the SMCC is provided later in this section of the chapter.

of Catholic communion in 1930. This is a Church, ancient and modern at the same time.<sup>672</sup> Without diluting her ancient liturgical traditions, she ventured into different areas of evangelization work adopting new methods. Thus it created a new dynamism and model among the Eastern Churches. Ancient history and Eastern liturgical traditions, and the cultural fabric of India, which is woven around various social and religious traditions for several millennia, are all part of the evolution of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

Indian culture, Indian Christian history and Oriental liturgical practices contribute to the current make-up of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. Placid Podipara, one of the greatest luminaries of St. Thomas Christians in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, characterized St. Thomas Christians as “Hindu in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship.”<sup>673</sup> After more than fifty years, this statement is still true. However, the word “Hindu” has now assumed a different meaning, signifying religion and not culture, so we may substitute the word “Indian”. We would use a modified version of this phrase with the same meaning intended by Podipara about St. Thomas Christians, but here in reference to the SMCC. Thus the SMCC is: “Indian in culture, Catholic in faith and Oriental in worship.”<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> The SMCC is ancient because it inherits a two thousand year old history and is modern in reference to 1930 reunion.

<sup>673</sup> Placid Podipara, “Hindu in Culture, Christian in Religion, Oriental in Worship.” *Ostkirchliche Studien* 8 (1959), 82-104. This is a frequently used phrase by scholars to characterize St. Thomas Christians ever since Fr. Podipara used it.

<sup>674</sup> The use of the word “Hinduism” to designate religion is of recent origin because of the Western construction of the idea of religion. The term ‘Hindu’ is traced back to the ancient Greek and Persian *Sindhu*, which referred to anything native to the region beyond the river Indus. The term ‘Hindu’ did not ascribe religious unity to various communities and was inclusive of Indian Muslims and Christians. Cf. Marianne Keppens and Esther Bloch, “Introduction,” in *Rethinking Religion in India: The Colonial Construction of Hinduism*, ed. Marianne Keppens (New York: Routledge, 2010), 6-7. Also in Rig Veda, the oldest of the Vedic literature, the idea of *Sanatana Dharma* is explained as एकम् सत् वपिराः बहुधा वदन्तः meaning “Truth is one, sages express it in different ways”. Cf. Stephen Jacob, *Hinduism Today* (New York: Continuum International Publishing, 2010), 131.

### 3.1.2 SMCC is Indian in Culture: Indian Culture and the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

#### 3.1.2.1 Unity in Diversity

The rich cultural diversity of the Indian subcontinent can be called an “ethnological museum.”<sup>675</sup> Besides racial diversity, there exists a great diversity in language,<sup>676</sup> religion<sup>677</sup>, geography, custom, caste and much more. Jawaharlal Nehru in his book *The Discovery of India* digs into the reality of diversity constituting a kind of unity in India:

The diversity of India is tremendous; it is obvious; it lies on the surface and anybody can see it. It concerns itself with physical appearances as well as with certain mental habits and traits...Those who professed a religion of non-Indian origin or, coming to India, settled down there, became distinctively Indian in the course of a few generations, such as Christians, Jews, Parsees, Moslems. Indian converts to some of these religions never ceased to be Indians on account of a change of their faith.<sup>678</sup>

There exists a fundamental unity in the rich diversity of this culture. Otherwise India would have disintegrated into different nations and principalities. Matilal Das in his book *The Soul of India* writes: “India is a vast continent. Her snow-clapped mountains, her arid deserts, her verdant plains are the homes of many peoples, many languages and varied cultures. But behind this varied, behind these apparent divergences, there runs and undercurrent of life-force, which gives to the Indian civilization, a fundamental unity.”<sup>679</sup> The religious leaders and rulers of India

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<sup>675</sup> P. Raghunadha Rao, *Indian Heritage and Culture* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1988), 2.

<sup>676</sup> The Indian Constitution names 22 official languages with Hindi being the official language of the Federal Government in New Delhi. The other languages are Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. English is also an associate official language. Cf. Anjana Motihar Chandra, *India Condensed: 5,000 Years of History & Culture* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International, 2009), 94.

<sup>677</sup> Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism originated in India, and then Islam and Christianity came early on even at the initial stages of their origin, making significant contributions to Indian culture.

<sup>678</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (1946. Reprint, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), 61-62. In its conclusion (p. 562) Nehru again writes: “India is a geographical and economic entity, a cultural unity amidst diversity, a bundle of contradictions held together by strong but invisible threads.”

<sup>679</sup> Matilal Das, *The Soul of India* (Calcutta: Aloka-Tirtha, 1958), 1.

understood this reality in leading the nation into the modern day India. According to Indira Gandhi, the different types of people, the variety of terrain and landscape, languages, dress, diverse food habits and the existence of many religions, make India so diverse: “But these people belong to India. They live together and have respect for each other. They are striving together to make this beautiful country strong.”<sup>680</sup>

### 3.1.2.2 Religious Pluralism in India

One of the major aspects of the diversity of Indian culture is the coexistence of various religions in one country. India is the “land of religions” where Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Christians, Muslims, Parsees and Sikhs coexist as separate and distinct communities.<sup>681</sup> Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism originated in India and predate Christianity in their existence. Sikhism is also a religion from India, which is very much visible on the world stage today with its distinctive characters, even though it has only five hundred years of history. Christianity as well as Islam reached Indian soil at the beginning stages of their formation.<sup>682</sup>

Hinduism is the oldest of the world’s existing faiths and is the third largest religion today after Christianity and Islam.<sup>683</sup> It defies the traditional definition of a religion as it applies to other world religions. Hinduism does not have a single founder, a specific scripture, a theological

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<sup>680</sup> S. K. Dhavan, *Selected Thoughts of Indira Gandhi* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1985), 206.

<sup>681</sup> Cf. Ruma Pal, “Religious Minorities and the Law,” in *Religion and Personal Law in Secular India: A Call to Judgment*, ed. James Larson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 24.

<sup>682</sup> A description of their beginning in India is given later on in this section.

<sup>683</sup> A comprehensive demographic study of more than 230 countries and territories conducted by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life in December 2012 estimates that there are 5.8 billion religiously affiliated adults and children around the globe, representing 84% of the 2010 world population of 6.9 billion. The demographic study – based on analysis of more than 2,500 censuses, surveys and population registers – finds 2.2 billion Christians (32% of the world’s population), 1.6 billion Muslims (23%), 1 billion Hindus (15%), nearly 500 million Buddhists (7%) and 14 million Jews (0.2%) around the world as of 2010. Cf. “The Global Religious Landscape,” (Pew Research Center, December 2012), accessed on 10 January 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2014/01/global-religion-full.pdf>.

system, a single system of morality, or even a central religious organization. It is a group of religious traditions that have evolved in India from 2500 BC, recognizing 330 million gods or goddesses as manifestations of a single Supreme Deity.<sup>684</sup>

Prominent leaders of modern India such as Gandhi, Nehru and Radhakrishnan either explained or embodied the *Sanatana Dharma*<sup>685</sup> in their life, presenting ‘Hinduism’ as unifying and embracing everything. Mahatma Gandhi writes about his view of Hinduism: “If I were asked to define the Hindu creed I should simply say: search after Truth through non-violent means. A man may not believe even in God and still he may call himself a Hindu. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after truth ...Its creed is all-embracing.”<sup>686</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru writes about the all-embracing nature of Hinduism in his book *The Discovery of India*: “In its present form, and even in the past, it [Hinduism] embraces many beliefs and practices, from the highest to the lowest often opposed to or contradicting each other. Its essential spirit seems to be live and let live.”<sup>687</sup> The Indian philosopher and former president Dr. S. Radhakrishnan believes that religion for a Hindu is an attitude of mind, which is not an idea but a power and a life conviction rather than an intellectual proposition.<sup>688</sup>

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<sup>684</sup> Cf. Sukbir Singh Kapoor, *Hinduism An Introduction: History, Scriptures, Prayers and Philosophy* (New Delhi: Hemkunt Publishers, 2005), 11.

<sup>685</sup> The simple meaning of *Sanatana* is ‘eternal’. It denotes, that which always is that which has, neither beginning nor end, that which is eternal in its very essence. *Dharma* signifies that there is an underlying structure of natural law that is inherent in the every intrinsic constitution of ‘Being’ itself – an essential nature. So *Sanatana Dharma* refers to the eternal, natural way, the never beginning and never ending flow of the whole of being. Cf. R. S. Nathan, *Hinduism that is Sanadhana Dharma* (Mumbai: Chinmaya Mission Trust, 2007), 6-7.

<sup>686</sup> Mahatma Gandhi, *What is Hinduism* (Delhi: National Book Trust, 1994), 1.

<sup>687</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, Rev. ed. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), 71.

<sup>688</sup> Sarvepally Radhakrishnan, “Hinduism,” in *A Cultural History of India*, ed., A.L. Basham (Delhi: Oxford university Press, 1975), 63.



### 3.1.2.3 Hinduism's Attitude to Religious Conversion

Hinduism is one of the most welcoming and tolerant<sup>689</sup> religions in the world. A partial answer to the non-expansion of Christianity is contained in the “all embracing nature” of Hinduism. This tolerance and welcoming attitude were major hindrances for Christianity to spread extensively in the Indian subcontinent even after long years of its presence. The claim of Christianity that Christ is the absolute and unique way to God run antithetical to the Hindu way of thinking and living. Bede Griffiths,<sup>690</sup> a British Christian monk who gained a deep knowledge of Hinduism, writes that for a Hindu “the sense of the sacred is something pervading the whole order of nature.”<sup>691</sup> Those who accuse Hinduism of polytheism and idolatry have only a peripheral understanding of this religion. Swami Tejomayananda in his book *Hindu Culture* writes: “All the different forms of Hindu gods and goddesses are but one God expressing in different ways. This one idea should be clear to us and if one studies the Hindu scriptures properly, there will be no doubt concerning it.”<sup>692</sup> Gandhi believed that religions are different roads converging to the same point. According to him, it is an encouraging and welcome sign that there are many paths for humanity to attain this one goal: “What does it matter that we take

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<sup>689</sup> P. Hacker's explanation on the meaning of the word 'tolerance' is significant in this context. He says that it is more of an inclusivistic tendency that accommodates other religious groups by absorbing their basic beliefs as one's own. Cf. Anand Amaladass, “Dialogue Between Hindus and St. Thomas Christians,” in *Hindu-Christian Dialogue*, ed. Harold Coward (Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993), 18.

<sup>690</sup> Bede Griffiths (also known as Swamy Dayananda) was born into a British family in 1906. After leaving Oxford he became a Catholic in 1931 and then a Benedictine monk in 1937, he came to India “to recover the other half of my [his] soul”. He lived for 10 years at *Kurisumala Ashram* in Kerala. Later, he joined the *Shantivanam* in Tamil Nadu, where spent the remaining 38 years of his life. He died on 13 May, 1993. He is considered to be a great mystic who tried to find a way to have dialogue with Christianity and Hinduism. He was also a prolific writer and part of the Christian Ashram Movement. His efforts did not yield a breakthrough as he was ignored by the mainstream Catholics and Hindus always look upon with suspicion to any attempt to imitate their religion by people from other religions. But today there are more people showing interest in his thought from his published writings.

<sup>691</sup> Bede Griffiths and Thomas Matus, *Bede Griffiths: Essential Writings* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 36.

<sup>692</sup> Swami Tejomayananda, *Hindu Culture* (Mumbai: Chinmaya Mission Trust, 207), 48.

different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are many religions as there are individuals.”<sup>693</sup>

Hinduism is very inclusive and has no problem in accepting Christianity as one of the ways of experiencing God. This poses a big problem for the exclusive claims of Christianity that Jesus Christ is the sole savior of humanity. Xavier Kochuparampil in his book *Evangelization in India* writes that the Hindus deeply dislike Christian attempt to convert Hindus. For Hindus “Conversion to Christianity is something unthinkable. At the most they think that Christianity can also contribute to make the role of religion more relevant and meaningful to modern man. But Christianity is not a substitute for Hinduism.”<sup>694</sup> Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, while admiring many of the aspects of Christianity, rejects the exclusivist claims that Christianity alone is the true religion. He writes: “As every religion is a living movement, no one phase or form of it can lay claim to finality. No historical religion can be regarded as truth absolute and changeless.”<sup>695</sup>

St. Thomas Christians enjoyed all the privileges of the high caste in India, in addition to ecclesiastical and social autonomy.<sup>696</sup> They assimilated Indian culture and followed many Hindu customs and were not aware of theological developments or disputes happening in other parts of

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<sup>693</sup> M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1994), 23.

<sup>694</sup> Xavier Kochuparampil, *Evangelization in India: A Theological Analysis of the Missionary Role of the Syro-Malabar Church in the Light of the Vatican II and Post-Conciliar Documents* (Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India Publications, 1993), 214.

<sup>695</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press: New York, 1959), 330.

<sup>696</sup> Indian Church historian Mathias Mundadan writes that during the arrival of the Portuguese in India, the St. Thomas Christians were leading a life full of reminiscences of their past, and enjoying a privileged position in society and an amount of social and ecclesiastical autonomy. They had been leading a life at the core of which was an identity consciousness which, if not expressed in clear-cut formulas, was implicit in their attitude towards their traditions, their social, socio-religious and religious customs and practices, and their theological outlook. Cf. Mathias Mundadan, *Indian Christians: Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy*, vol. 4 (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publishers, 1984), 28.

the Christian world.<sup>697</sup> Later on, when Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries arrived in 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, their mission work didn't impress the Hindus since they were identified as colonizers and considered a form of "western imperialism in a religious garb."<sup>698</sup> Most Hindus feel that Christianity is meant for Westerners and that Hindus should not be converted to it, for Christianity is a foreign religion. Hans Staffner writes that many Hindus, because of the Indian way of thinking, believe that each country has its own religion: "Hinduism is the religion of the people of India, Christianity is the religion of Europe and America. They regard Christianity as a religion which has been imported from outside, and is nurtured and dominated from outside."<sup>699</sup>

A significant aspect of the Hindu attitude is their understanding of conversion from Hinduism to other religions. It is considered by many as a threat to their national identity and attack on the ancient civilization of India. Christians understand conversion mainly on theological terms: something happening as a result of divine intervention for human redemption: "... conversion represents a divine promise and assurance of eternal, everlasting life, life beyond death, and joining one's self and one's family identity with the identity of a community of fellow believers which is global and universal."<sup>700</sup> At the same time Hindus also see conversion in sociological or political terms: "...it has to do with an evil, 'foreign,' and 'hidden' menace, some

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<sup>697</sup> Paul Thenayan writes: "... living in isolation and in the midst of an overwhelming majority of Hindus and separated from other Christian communities, the Thomas Christians were not aware of or concerned with the theological disputes in the other parts of Christendom." Paul Thenayan, *The Missionary Consciousness of St. Thomas Christians* (Cochin: Viani Publications, 1982), 34.

<sup>698</sup> Xavier Kochuparampil, *Evangelization*, 216.

<sup>699</sup> Hans Staffner, *The Open Door: A Christian Approach to World Religions* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1978), 144.

<sup>700</sup> Donald M. Lewis, ed. *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 119.

sinister attempt to undermine and destroy the very foundations of India's cultural and national unity."<sup>701</sup>

### 3.1.2.4 The Presence of Other World Religions in India

India as the "land of religions" not only gave birth to some of the major religions of the world but also embraced many other religions from the time of their origin. Jews are believed to have been living in India from ancient times and remained here without facing any kind of persecution from the Hindus.<sup>702</sup> This historical connection with Judaism strengthens the argument for the coming of St. Thomas to India in the first century. In the same way, historians trace the advent of Islam in India to the very lifetime of Prophet Mohammed through tradesmen from Arabia, much before it became a political power in Northern India.<sup>703</sup> Even though Islam contributed much to the culture, art and architecture of India, its plan of "propagation of faith through sword" created so much tension when it rose to the level of destroying Hindu temples and other worship places.<sup>704</sup>

Buddhism is a religion of Indian origin, but unlike Hinduism had a missionary appeal from the very beginning. It has around 500-700 million adherents in the world, who mainly hold a nontheistic belief with complex traditions. Buddhism emphasizes individual efforts such as meditation based on the essential teachings revealed by Buddha that are timeless and

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<sup>701</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>702</sup> Shalva Weil writes that the Jews came to the Malabar Coast of India as traders around 500 BC and settled down there. Most of them (nearly 2400) Cochin Jews immigrated to Israel in 1954 and only around 50 Jews remained in Kerala. Cf. Shalva Weil, "Cochin Jews," in *Cambridge Dictionary of Judaism and Jewish Culture*, ed. Judith Baskin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 107.

<sup>703</sup> U. Mohammed, *Educational Empowerment of Kerala Muslims: A Socio-Historical Perspective* (Calicut: Other Books, 2007), 14.

<sup>704</sup> Will Durant argues that the Muslim conquest of India is one of the bloodiest stories in history. Cf. Will Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage: The Story of Civilization* (New York: MJF Books, 1935), 459.

unchanging.<sup>705</sup> Xavier Kochuparampil writes that the Buddhists' doctrines of universal friendliness and compassion are very pertinent to the Indian situation of misery and suffering. Their missionary charism and method of work are still models for an effective evangelization in India.<sup>706</sup>

Jainism, another religion of Indian origin, is famous for its insistence on non-violence to all living beings, which along with self-control helps one to achieve one's liberation. Its teaching is closer to Buddhism than to Hinduism since it also rejects the authority of Vedas, the caste system and the practice of animal sacrifice. The attainment of salvation is the aim of a Jain, which is achieved in complete deliverance of the soul from rebirth and reaching the peaceful and blissful abode.<sup>707</sup>

Sikhism, another prominent religion of Indian origin, is described often as the newest and smallest of world religions. Sikhs are 'disciples of the Guru'<sup>708</sup> and are portrayed "as a neat package consisting of a founder (Guru Nanak), a scripture (the Guru Grandh Sahib), places of worship known as gurdwaras"<sup>709</sup> which make up their identity as a religious community. Sikhs strongly object to the view that Sikhism is a combination of Hinduism and Islam even though the

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<sup>705</sup> Edward Irons, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (New York: Facts on File Incorporated, 2008), xx-xxii.

<sup>706</sup> Kochuparampil, *Evangelization*, 221.

<sup>707</sup> Suresh K. Sharma and Usha Sharma, eds. *Cultural and Religious Heritage of India: Jainism*, Vol. 2, (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2004), vii.

<sup>708</sup> Sikh faith and teaching can only be understood in terms of the role of its "Guru". The "Sikh" is the learner and the "Guru" is the teacher. Sikhs explain "'Guru" as a word that means 'remover of darkness'. Whereas the word 'guru' (lower case), is traditionally used in India to refer to a respected teacher, has by extension become current in English for any expert, for Sikhs the Guru (always with a capital in the Roman alphabet) refers to each of a succession of ten spiritual guides, the founding fathers of the Sikh faith. Cf. Eleanor Nesbitt, *Sikhism, A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

<sup>709</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

Gurus had inherited good elements from both religions. Many religious scholars see Sikhism as a protest against and a way to reconcile both Hinduism and Islam.<sup>710</sup>

The existence of St. Thomas Christians along side of this plurality of religions is something unique in the entire Christian history compared to the other parts of the world. In many parts of the world, a close interaction between these religions is a modern phenomenon due to mass migration resulting from globalization and several other factors. But this was something normal to the St. Thomas Christians in India from the very beginning of their existence. Without understanding this situation, and without having a deeper knowledge of these religions, missionary work in India is doomed to fail. When someone is fully engaged in practicing one's religion, fully convinced of its value and even its openness to accept the goodness in other religions, the challenge is far greater than preaching the Gospel to those who have no faith at all. As Xavier Kochuparampil appropriately noted: "...without knowing the basic nature of Hinduism and without having a healthy encounter with it, no evangelization worthy of its name, is possible in India."<sup>711</sup>

### 3.1.2.5 Secularism in Modern India

India is a secular state and the largest democracy in the world.<sup>712</sup> But communal problems are part of the daily lives of Indian society today<sup>713</sup> that call into question the nature of

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<sup>710</sup> Cf. Kedar Nath Tiwari, *Comparative Religion* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1983), 173.

<sup>711</sup> Kochuparampil, *Evangelization*, 223.

<sup>712</sup> The Indian Constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26 November 1949 two years after independence from British colonial rule. The Constitution clearly states that it is a parliamentary form of government for the Union of India with a federal structure. The forty-second amendment of 1976 describes India as a 'Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic.' Cf. David Westerlun, *Questioning the Secular State: The Worldwide Resurgence of Religion in Politics* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 2002), 260.

<sup>713</sup> A report released on 25 September 2013 by the Government of India with the data of communal violence victims shows that 107 people lost their lives from 479 riots in the country. Altogether 1,697 people were injured in communal disturbances in the country this year, of whom 794 were Hindus and 703 were Muslims.

this constitutionally enshrined secularism. It is a very complex situation when religion, politics, castes and other related factors are playing a vital role in defining the secularity of India.

Indian secularism, at least theoretically, is about treating all religions with equal respect, in the West being secular is rather anti-religious to a great extent. Donald Smith in his book *India as a Secular State* gave this definition of secularism as it has been seen in India: “The secular state is a state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion.”<sup>714</sup> But many argue that India cannot be considered as a secular state in the Western understanding of a ‘secular state’ i.e. one which is separated from, unconnected with and not devoted to religion.<sup>715</sup> Ainslie Embree writes: “The theological basis of Indian secularism is not a denial of the claims of religion but an assertion – one can say a profoundly dogmatic one – that all religions are true. Anything that appears to be socially harmful can be abandoned – what is left will be the kernel of truth.”<sup>716</sup>

Secular perception and expression of India have become fragile in recent years, as communal forces have gained momentum. But still, India is definitely a secular state with its virility to achieve what is ‘ideal’ through a democracy, which tries to embrace all sectors of life. The above-mentioned author, Donald Smith believes that a ‘completely secular state’ of his own definition is hard to find. But the ideal is definitely contained in the Indian Constitution and the

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Among the injured this year, there were 200 policemen. Cf. PTI, “Government releases data of communal violence victims, identifies religion” *Firstpost*, Sep 25, 2013, accessed on January 30, 2014. cf. [http://www.firstpost.com/india/govt-releases-data-of-communal-violence-victims-identifies-religion-1132823.html?utm\\_source=ref\\_article](http://www.firstpost.com/india/govt-releases-data-of-communal-violence-victims-identifies-religion-1132823.html?utm_source=ref_article).

<sup>714</sup> Donald Smith, *India as a Secular State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 4.

<sup>715</sup> Cf. Robert Neil Minor, *The Religious, the Spiritual, and the Secular: Auroville and Secular India* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>716</sup> Ainslie Thomas Embree, *Utopias in Conflict: Religion and Nationalism in Modern India* (Barkley: University of California Press, 1990), 44.

nation is struggling to achieve it.<sup>717</sup> The main question is to understand the fact that in India the reality is not divided into two realms like ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ but both are combined into one. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan: “It may appear somewhat strange that our government should be a secular one while our culture is rooted in spiritual values. Secularism here does not mean irreligion or atheism or even stress on material comforts. It proclaims that it lays stress on the universality of spiritual values which may be attained in a variety of ways... This is the meaning of a secular conception of the state though it is not generally understood.”<sup>718</sup>

### **3.1.3 SMCC is Catholic in Faith: A Historical Evaluation of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church**

#### **3.1.3.1 The Apostolic Origin of the Indian Church**

The seed of Christianity had been planted and taken root in India from the preaching of St. Thomas the Apostle, making it one of the ancient apostolic churches in the world. Although there is lack of precise historical evidence to substantiate this claim, there can be no doubt as to the antiquity of the Christian Church in India.<sup>719</sup> Philip Jerkins in his book *The Lost History of Christianity* writes that one of the blessings – that there was no persecution – is the downfall of this community that prevented the Indian Christianity from having primary source materials:

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<sup>717</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>718</sup> Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, “Forward,” in *The National Culture of India*, S. Abid Hussain (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1956), vii-viii.

<sup>719</sup> There are elements of cloud regarding the birth of Christianity in India especially in the Western world and it is clearing up with increased authentic research. Now there are a lot of priests and religious reaching out for the maintenance and mission work of the Church all over the world. Many people assume India’s Christian population is a product of European colonization. There are some writers who wrote to disprove the claim of the Syrian Church’s patrimony to St. Thomas. It is also an unbelievable fact that quite a good number of Catholics are unaware of the fact that there are 21 Oriental churches in the Catholic Church. Thus together with these Churches and the Latin Church they form into one unit and the Catholic Church is a communion of 22 churches. So without knowing this basic fact many accuse other churches which do not exhibit uniformity in liturgy with that of the Latin Church, or because of the different way of celebrating the Mass, that they are not Catholics. There is much need of education in this area especially for the Latin Catholic faithful.



“Unlike other churches, which so often feature in the record of martyrdoms and persecutions, the Thomas Christians were blessed with having very little history to report.”<sup>720</sup>

The presence of a small Jewish community,<sup>721</sup> trade routes to India through sea, and the hospitable attitude of Indians would have facilitated St. Thomas and other later missionaries in a journey to this area.<sup>722</sup> From the first-century onwards, there has been evidence of a small Christian community in the southwestern corner of the Indian peninsula, which today is the modern state of Kerala, formerly Travancore and Cochin and a portion of British Malabar.<sup>723</sup> Thomas was described as Apostle to the Indians by various Church Fathers, including Ephrem the Syrian in 378, Gregory of Nazian in 389, Gaudentius in 410, Jerome in 420, and Paulinus of Nola in 431.<sup>724</sup> Citing historical sources, Benedict Vadakkekara in his book *Origin of Christianity in India: A Historiographical Critique* writes: “This early community, which is a native to Malabar, is known in historiography as Christians of St. Thomas precisely because of its communal belief that its origin goes directly back to Apostle St. Thomas.”<sup>725</sup>

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<sup>720</sup> Jenkins, Philip. *The Lost History of Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2008), 67.

<sup>721</sup> Edna Fernandes argues that even during the time of Solomon, Jews arrived the Kerala shore of India, and then during the destruction of Second Temple in A.D. 70 another wave of immigration happened. Most of them returned to their land after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Cf. *The Last Jews of Kerala: The Two Thousand Year History of India's Forgotten Jewish Community* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008), x-xv.

<sup>722</sup> Cf. J. Valiamangalam, *Indian Christian Spirituality in Hindu Spirituality: Postclassical and Modern*, *An Encyclopedia of Religious Quest*, vol. 7. ed. et al. R. Sundararajan and Bithika Mukerji (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 507.

<sup>723</sup> Cf. E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, ed. Kuriakose Moolayil (Cheeranchira: Mor Adai Study Centre, 2002 [Original Malayalam published in 1908]), 19.

<sup>724</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 52.

<sup>725</sup> Benedict Vadakkekara, *Origin of Christianity in India: A Historiographical Critique* (New Delhi: Media House, 2007), 29.

A long line of scholarship, and also a two thousand year old strong Tradition, trace the origin of Christianity in this region back to the Apostle Thomas.<sup>726</sup> He is believed to have founded seven churches over the course of a twenty-year period beginning in AD 52. These seven churches are Maliankara (near Cranganore), Palyur, Parur (Kottakayal), Gokamangalam, Niranam, Chayal (Nilakal), and Kurakkeni Kollam (Quilon).<sup>727</sup> These Christians were known by many names, including *Nazrani*, Syrian Christians, Malankara or Malabar Christians (for the names of the region) or the Christians of St. Thomas.<sup>728</sup>

These Christians are known as St. Thomas Christians because of the consistent claim that St. Thomas established the Christian Church in India. Participating in a St. Thomas Day celebration in New Delhi, the first president of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, remarked: “Remember, Saint Thomas came to India when many of the countries of Europe had not yet become Christian, and so those Indians, who trace their Christianity to him have a longer history and a higher ancestry than that of Christians of many of the European countries. And it is really a matter of pride to us that it so happened.”<sup>729</sup> During his Apostolic Pilgrimage to India, Pope John Paul II in his speech at Mylapore, near Madras, proclaimed: “According to tradition, at this very

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<sup>726</sup> Benedict Vadakkekara writes: “The claim of the Indian Church Christians has always been one and the same, that the origin of their community goes back to Apostle Thomas. Their sure and certain belief is that it was Apostle Thomas in person who planted their Church in the soil of India. They make no secret of their age-old tradition that they are the lineal descendants of those whom Apostle Thomas had converted to the Christian faith. At the same time, they make over no ancient parchments to the historian by way of substantiating their settled belief. They only aver their traditional belief that Apostle Thomas had converted their forefathers.” Cf. *Origin of Christianity*, 25.

<sup>727</sup> E. M. Philip, *Indian Church of St. Thomas*, 24. This list of Churches is affirmed in other sources though there may be variances in spelling.

<sup>728</sup> Cf. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginnings to AD 1707* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 33. Also Cf. A. E. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas: An Inquiry with a Critical Analysis of Acta Thomae*, (New Jersey: Gorgias Press LLC, 2005), 132-135.

<sup>729</sup> Cf. Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. 1, (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 1983), 9.

place, which is now called Saint Thomas Mount, the great Apostle of India fulfilled his own exhortation. Out of love for Jesus, here in Madras, Saint Thomas died for Christ. He gave his life as a martyr for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.”<sup>730</sup>

It was only at the end of the eighteenth century that the “novel theory that St. Thomas did not visit and could not have visited any part of Peninsular India” was advanced.<sup>731</sup> Proponents of this theory argue that there is no sufficient historical evidence for such a claim. The evidence, according to the Indian Church historian E. M. Philip, may not be sufficient, but the tradition of the apostolic foundation of the Church by St. Thomas comes down as an unbroken succession until the conclusion of the nineteenth century.<sup>732</sup> He presents evidence in favor of Thomas establishing the Church in India, including the traditions associated with the seven churches mentioned and the apocryphal *Acts of St. Thomas*.<sup>733</sup> Philip claims that the burden of proof lies not with those who present this evidence but with those who would argue that this evidence is not sufficient.<sup>734</sup>

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<sup>730</sup> Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, Vol. ix, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1986), 325.

<sup>731</sup> E. M. Philip, *Indian Church*, 30. The author presents a list of Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars who have consistently upheld the apostolic origin of this Church. Cf. George Milne Rae, *The Syrian Church in India* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1892), 27-30.

<sup>732</sup> Philip, *Indian Church*, 31. Cf. Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Syrian Church in India*, trans. Matti Moosa (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2009), 6-8.

<sup>733</sup> It is not the intent of the present work to definitively prove that the Apostle Thomas did in fact preach the Gospel in India before undergoing martyrdom in AD 72 at Mylapore. Rather, the apostolic origin of the Christian Church in India is presumed on account of the extant evidence, the continuous tradition, and the impact that this identification has had on the Church in India. As we will shortly see, it was for no other reason than the claims of an apostolic origin that the Christians of India sought to preserve their autonomy and their traditions against the Portuguese missionaries.

<sup>734</sup> Philip, *Indian Church*, 31-51.

### 3.1.3.2 The Relationship of St. Thomas Christians to the Chaldean Church

The relationship of St. Thomas Christians with the Chaldean Church of Persia is ancient.<sup>735</sup> This hierarchical relation has led to the acceptance of East Syrian liturgy, theology, and spirituality.<sup>736</sup> According to some early records, several Syrian and Jewish Christian families are believed to have arrived in Cranganore under the leadership of Thomas of Cana in the fourth century, and again another group in the ninth.<sup>737</sup> Eventually, there developed a hierarchical relationship between the St. Thomas Christians and the Chaldean Church. The exact origin and nature of this relationship is debated. Adrian Fortescue in his book *Eastern Churches Trilogy: The Lesser Eastern Churches* talks about several possible scenarios on the introduction of East Syrian liturgy in Malabar. The first possibility is the “Katholikos of the East” after the approval of the Synod, sending the bishop of Edessa with Thomas the Merchant who already knew about this Church from his previous visit.<sup>738</sup> The second possibility is that Thomas himself was a bishop who came with a colony of Syrians. A third prospect is the religious and political situation of Persia where Christians were persecuted and fled to a more tolerant Hindu country with which they were already familiar:

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century a body of Christians from Persia arrived on the Malabar coast. There were subjects of the Persian Metropolitan; they brought their language and rites, and had bishops ordained in the East Syrian mother-Church. So Malabar is a very early, perhaps the earliest case of those wonderful missions throughout Asia which are the chief glory of

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<sup>735</sup> This Church is known in history by various names. Pauly Maniyattu writes: “The East Syrian tradition is known also as the Edessan, Mesopotamian, Nestorian, Persian, Assyrian, Babylonian or Chaldean, and is shared by the Assyrian Church of the East, the Catholic Chaldean Church and the Syro-Malabar Church of the St. Thomas Christians. Syriac is the traditional language of East Syrian worship; however, today the vernacular languages are also used.” Cf. “East Syrian Worship” in *New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. Paul Bradshaw (London: SCM Press, 2013), 159.

<sup>736</sup> Cf. Kochuparampil, *Evangelization*, 238.

<sup>737</sup> Cf. Peter Galadza, “Eastern Catholic Christianity” in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* ed. Ken Parry (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 295.

<sup>738</sup> Adrian Fortescue, *Eastern Churches Trilogy: The Lesser Eastern Churches*, (New Jersey: Georgias Press LLC, 2001), 357.

the East Syrian Church. Jews and Hindus were converted; so a missionary Church, dependent on the Katholikos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, was founded.<sup>739</sup>

As a result of the affinity with the Chaldean or East Syrian Church of Persia, the developments in that Church affected the St. Thomas Christians also. One such ontogenesis was the relationship with Nestorianism.<sup>740</sup> St. Thomas Christians occasionally faced allegations that they succumbed to the heresy of Nestorianism.<sup>741</sup> The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* also records that because of the relationship with the Persian Church, Indian Christians of St. Thomas fell into the heresy of Nestorianism: “It was only after the conversion of Sulaka in 1552 that the Chaldeans in part returned to the unity of faith. The truth is that the Malabar Church remained from A.D. 496 up until then in heresy.”<sup>742</sup>

Adrian Fortescue gives a compelling argument saying that the St. Thomas Christians were right when they protested being considered a Nestorian Church. The Indian Church was in existence before the heresy broke out in the East Syrian Church.<sup>743</sup> There are several studies undertaken to even rehabilitate Nestorius saying that Nestorius was not a Nestorian but the doctrinal and theological problem as the result of political and cultural factors between the

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<sup>739</sup> Ibid., 358.

<sup>740</sup> Nestorianism is a Christological controversy over the doctrine of Christ’s person. Nestorius, was the Patriarch of Constantinople from 428-431 and was deposed from there after his teachings were condemned at the Council of Ephesus (and again at the Council of Chalcedon in 451). Nestorianism is a form of dyophysitism (dual-nature), teaching that Christ has two loosely-united natures. Nestorians rejected the characterization of the Virgin Mary as *Theothoks* (Mother of God), arguing that she was the mother of the human being Jesus only – and that to predicate birth (or any other such characteristic) of God amounted to an idolatrous confusion of creature and Creator. Cyril of Alexandria opposed this view saying that it undermined the unity of Christ by implying that Jesus, as a mere human being, could not be worshiped as Lord. Cf. Ian A McFarland, “Nestorianism,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Theology*, Ian A McFarland et al., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 340.

<sup>741</sup> It was mainly the missionaries who came with the colonizers from 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards accused the Indian Church practicing Nestorian. This was because of their ‘earnestness’ in making this ‘heretic church’ a ‘Catholic one’ with the misconception that conformity with Latin traditions were essential to become Catholic.

<sup>742</sup> Adolph Medlycott, “St. Thomas Christians,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company), New Advent, accessed January 16, 2004. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14678a.htm>.

<sup>743</sup> Fortescue, *Eastern Churches Trilogy*, 356.

Alexandrian and Antiochean schools which confused the matters.<sup>744</sup> In his recent doctoral dissertation (2013) entitled “A Search of the Roots of Syro-Malabar Church in Kerala” George Joseph Nedumparambil citing the words of Cardinal Muffei argues that “the Chaldeans (the Church of the East) seem to have had the name of Nestorians without holding any Nestorian error.”<sup>745</sup> John Paul II, referring to the faithfulness of the Syro-Malabar Church in safeguarding the Catholicity of the Church, made the remark: “It is to the glory of this Church that it has not ever been severed from the communion with the Church of Rome in a continuity that the geographic distance has never been able to break.”<sup>746</sup> There may also be vested interests and other reasons that the St. Thomas Christians were projected as Nestorian. As Geevarghese Chediath writes, this accusation was a cunning scheme of the missionaries to destroy the Syriac books and to prevent the further arrival of bishops from the East, in order to enforce Latin hegemony over this Apostolic Church and to merge it with the Latin Church.<sup>747</sup>

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<sup>744</sup> Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkle, *The Church of the East*, 4. Aidan Nichols writes: “The Nestorian schism itself was not organized by Nestorius, who being exiled to a monastery, could do little about it.” Cf. *Rome and the Eastern Churches: A Study in Schism* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 61. Adrian Fortescue writes: “What is the special attraction of Nestorianism for East Syrian? Is there any inherent tendency towards ‘driving Christ’ in the Edessan mind? Hardly.” He also highlights two points 1) the acceptance of Nestorianism in the East and in Persia was largely a corollary of its rejection by the Empire; 2) Monophysism, the extreme contrary heresy, began almost as soon as Nestorianism. A great deal of East Syrian Nestorianism is at first only a vehement denial of Monophysism. Cf. *Eastern Churches Trilogy*, 54. R. Seeberg in his *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* says: “Nestorius offered a presentation of the Antiochean Christology which is the clearest, simplest, and nearest to the Church’s understanding that we possess. There is nothing heretical in his thought... None of the great heretics of the history of dogma bears this name as undeservedly as Nestorius.” Cf. George Joseph Nedumparambil, “A Search of the Roots of Syro-Malabar Church in Kerala” (PhD diss., Julius-Maximilians Universität. Würzburg, 2013), 2.

<sup>745</sup> Nedumparambil, “A Search of the Roots,” 342.

<sup>746</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

<sup>747</sup> Cf. Geevarghese Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church* (Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 2012), 29-30.

### 3.1.3.3 The Bent Cross Oath

The Bent Cross Oath (*Koonan Kurishu Sathyam*) is one of the most significant developments in the two thousand year history of St. Thomas Christians. This event was the first of many splits in the hitherto undivided Church in India. It was a healthy and flourishing Christian community, which existed as a single social entity until the coming of the Portuguese.

#### 3.1.3.3.1 Historical Context

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Portuguese traders and missionaries came to India searching for both soil and souls. According to historian K.M. Panikkar, it was during this time the European nations made the attempt to Christianize Asia.<sup>748</sup> Once they established their influence in trade and religion, the Portuguese missionaries attempted to subjugate the Indian Church.

The Portuguese were initially welcomed by the Christians, who presented Vasco da Gama with the scepter of their king in an appeal to save them from their non-Christian enemies.<sup>749</sup> Both the Portuguese and the Indian Christians treated each other with charity and affection. As Patriarch Ignatius Yacoub III of the Syrian Orthodox Church notes: "... when the Portuguese established foot in India, they proceeded to sow the seed of their Roman faith in the Indian soil."<sup>750</sup> Not only did they attempt to replace the Persian bishops with the Latin bishops, but the Portuguese missionaries also sought to replace the ancient East Syriac or Chaldean Liturgy – the liturgy of the Malankara Church until the 16<sup>th</sup> century – with the Latin Liturgy or a mutilated version of the East Syrian Liturgy. The Portuguese Jesuits failed to understand the Church as a union of diverse traditions celebrating one mystery in Christ; that is, they failed to

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<sup>748</sup> Cf. K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance* 2nd ed., (New York: Collier Books, 1969), 14.

<sup>749</sup> Yacoub III, *History of the Syrian Church*, 29.

<sup>750</sup> *Ibid.*, 30

understand the balance between unity and universality in the Church. Therefore, they failed to respect the autonomy, liturgy, and traditions of the ancient apostolic Malankara Church and sought to subjugate it.

### 3.1.3.3.2 The Synod of Diamper

The most grievous attempt to subjugate the Indian Church occurred at the Synod of Diamper (Udayamperur), convened on June 20, 1599 by Alexio de Menezes.<sup>751</sup> Canons and decrees prepared prior to the meeting by Archbishop Menezes were merely read aloud with no discussion, correction, or approval by the assembly (i.e. by the Indian Christians).<sup>752</sup> The indecent haste of this Synod demonstrates “that this so-called Synod possessed nothing but the outward form of a deliberative assembly, and that its real purpose was to disguise the true nature of the proceedings, to pass without amendment the decrees carefully prepared by the skillful hand of Menezis, and to bind, as he thought, forever, the afflicted Syrian Church to the throne of the triumphant Pontiff.”<sup>753</sup> Despite not having the decrees approved by Rome,<sup>754</sup> there followed a serious, systematic program of latinization. Among the atrocities of the period after the Synod of Diamper were the introduction of Latin to replace Syriac, regulations regarding the clergy, and

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<sup>751</sup> E.M. Philip gives a description of the Synod in his work on the history of the Indian Church. Philip, *Indian Church* 103-106: For the Canonical implication of the Synod of Diamper for the St. Thomas Christians Cf. George Nedungat, *The Synod of Diamper Revisited*, Kanonika Book 9 (Oriental Institute: Rome, 2009).

<sup>752</sup> Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 40.

<sup>753</sup> Cf. Philip, *Indian Church*, 104.

<sup>754</sup> Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 40-41.



the burning of Syriac books.<sup>755</sup> This program of latinization coupled with the continued harsh treatment of East Syriac bishops,<sup>756</sup> was the primary cause of the split of 1653.

Although the Synod of Diamper and the program of latinization represent some of the darkest episodes in the history of the Malankara Church, there is nothing darker than schism. The Portuguese failed to understand the importance of diversity in the Church, and consequently, their ecclesiology lacked a proper balance between unity and diversity (catholicity). As a result of their ignorance and their attempts to latinize the Indian Christians, and the insistence on the part of Indian Christians for autonomy, the Church in India, hitherto undivided, split into many factions.

### 3.1.3.3.3 The Bent Cross Oath

In response to the imposed changes, the latinization, and the harsh treatment of East Syrian bishops, especially Ahatalla,<sup>757</sup> several members of the Malankara Christian community

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<sup>755</sup> Geevarghse Chediath outlines these changes in *Malankara Catholic Church* (39-41), providing many examples, from both during and after the Synod. See also Philip, *Indian Church*, 105-107.

<sup>756</sup> The Portuguese alienated the Persian or Chaldean bishops from the community they served. The last two Persian bishops, Mar Yausep (1556-1569) and Mar Abraham (1568-1597) were treated poorly by the Portuguese missionaries. Despite having personally received letters of recommendation from the Bishop of Rome, Mar Yausep was twice arrested and prevented from exercising his spiritual duties. Similarly, Mar Abraham, who arrived in India in 1568, was detained by the Portuguese despite having letters of recommendation from the Catholic Patriarch Mar Abdiso. Eventually, Mar Abraham escaped and led the Church in India faithfully, even opposing initial attempts of latinization. Mar Abraham passed away in 1597. He was the last of the East Syrian bishop of the Malankara Church. Centuries of cordial relations with the Chaldean (East Syriac) Church were upset by the arrival and intrusion of the Portuguese missionaries. Cf. Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 23-35.

<sup>757</sup> The Syrian Bishop Ahathalla made arrangements to come to lead the Malankara Church; he was prevented from landing in Kerala (via Kochi) by the Portuguese. There arose a rumor that he was drowned by the Portuguese; although, this has since been shown to be inaccurate. That the Syrian bishop was prevented from landing and thereafter disappeared caused great anger among the Malankara Christians; his unfair treatment and possible drowning – for the Malankara Christians at that time were not aware that he did not drown – by the Portuguese was a direct cause of the Coonon Cross Oath and the split in the Malankara Church. Cf. Philip, *Indian Church* 133 -140.; Cyril Mar Baselios, *Malankara Catholic Church* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Alwaye: Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Theology, 1997), 8-15.

took on an oath on behalf of the whole community<sup>758</sup> against the Portuguese missionaries on January 3, 1653, at Mattanchery. This event is known as the *Coonan Cross Oath* (Bent Cross Oath) because the laity present held ropes tied to the four corners of a cross outside a church in Mattanchery and proclaimed an oath against the Portuguese with the clergy who were inside the church with lit candles. Although this was not a protest against the Bishop of Rome or his authority, but against the Portuguese encroachment on the Malankara Church, this event has come to signify the beginning of the schism between a portion of the Malankara Church and the Catholic Church.

This event of *Coonan Cross Oath* has a manifold significance with severe consequences for the Malankara Church. First, the hitherto undivided Church in India was split into several factions. These factions were the Latin Christians; the *Pazhayakuttukar* (old way); and *Puthenkuttukar* (new way). The *Pazhayakuttukar* were Christians who continued to practice the East Syrian Liturgy in a latinized form and remained as Catholics and they eventually came to be known as the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church. The *Puthenkuttukar*, in contrast, were Christians who rejected the authority of the Portuguese and eventually adopted the West Syriac (Antiochene) Liturgy after the arrival of Antiochene prelates, beginning with Mar Gregorios in 1665. These Christians are the Malankara Church in its many forms, including the Malankara Syrian (or Syro-Malankara) Catholic Church.<sup>759</sup>

The initial split occurred in response to the Portuguese missionaries' failure to respect the traditions and autonomy of the ancient and Apostolic Malankara Church in the hope of latinizing

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<sup>758</sup> Cf. Chediath, *Malankara Church*, 52. Though only several thousand people were present at the actual oath, the oath was taken on behalf of the whole community. Geevarghese Chediath explicitly notes that the oath "was made neither by a few individuals nor by a few isolated parishes but by the whole community." Similarly, E.M. Philip argues that the revolt was not local, writing, "every parish throughout the diocese, with the exception of four hundred souls in all cast off the Roman yoke." *Indian Church*, 135.

<sup>759</sup> We will discuss the development of Antiochene Liturgy in Malankara later on.

the Malankara Church. In fact, after initial attempts to personally reconcile the split failed, those under Archdeacon Thomas<sup>760</sup> looked to the Bishop of Rome to restore harmony. In response, two Carmelite delegations were sent to find a peaceful solution; the first delegation was led by Joseph Sebastiani and the second by Hyacinth.<sup>761</sup> However, both Sebastiani and Hyacinth unexpectedly excommunicated the Archdeacon.<sup>762</sup> Then the Malankara Church faced much internal turmoil, resulting in further divisions and external forces that only seemed to further these divisions.

### 3.1.3.4 The Reunion of 1930 as the Crowning of Three Centuries of Reunion Attempts

In fact, several attempts were made to reunite the Malankara Church and the Catholic Church, from which the former had split. From the time of Mar Thoma I (Archdeacon Thomas), that is, from the period immediately following the split, attempts were made to reunite the divided community with the Catholic Church. There were limited successes, such as the brief reunion of one bishop (Mar Thoma VI), but these were short-lived and were not ecclesial but personal in nature.<sup>763</sup> These attempts were meant to be ecclesial reunions, not the reunion of one

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<sup>760</sup> Archdeacon Thomas was the leader of the Puthenkuttukar until the arrival of the Jacobite (West Syrian) bishops. Until the arrival of the Portuguese and the Synod of Diamper, an Archdeacon had been responsible for the temporal administration of the Malankara Church. His episcopal ordination – carried out in accordance with a letter purporting to be from Ahathalla – was never rectified. This letter was a forged by a priest of the community that protested the Portuguese actions. Despite not receiving valid episcopal ordination, Archdeacon Thomas is known as Mar Thoma I. Cf. Philip, *Indian Church*, 135-136; Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 43; 54-55; 67.

<sup>761</sup> Stephen Neil gives a lengthy description of the struggles and reconciliation efforts with Rome especially through the Carmelites who worked against Padroado and Jesuits during this time. They had direct access to Rome and in many instances Rome seems to ignore Padroado to help calm the situation through the Carmelites. Cf. Stephen Neil, *A History of Christianity in India*, 310-331.

<sup>762</sup> Philip, *Indian Church*, 136. ; Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 55-56.

<sup>763</sup> Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 106. The Portuguese were not willing to give authority to Mar Thoma VI for fear that all the Syrian Christians would abandon them in favor of him and therefore created many problems for him. Mar Thoma VI rejoined the Jacobite Church after six months. Cf. Cyril Malancharuvil, "Ecumenism," in *Emerging Trends in Malankara Catholic Theology: Vision and Contribution of Cyril Mar Baselios*, ed. Isaac Thottunkal (Rome: Mar Thoma Yogam, 1995), 193.

person; it was the hope that the entire Malankara community – both the *Pazhayakuttukar* and the *Puthenkuttukar* – would once again be united as one autonomous community within the Catholic communion. The continued interference of the Portuguese missionaries, however, and their refusal to recognize the autonomy of the Indian Church, hindered the reunion process, especially since the Portuguese discouraged the *Pazhayakur* from having contact with the *Puthenkur* community, depicting the *Puthenkuttukar* as schismatics and heretics.<sup>764</sup> The West Syrian Jacobites likewise “tried to inject anti-Roman sentiments in the minds of the Malankara faithful”<sup>765</sup> and in this way they too impeded the restoration of unity in the Malankara Church.

Mar Ivanios’ attempt to reunite with the Catholic Church is not an isolated event in the history of the Malankara Church, because it was preceded by several similar attempts. Despite the many divisions and factions, “the craving for reunion remained alive in the community; several leaders of the various factions of the Malankara Church tried to get the community reunited, as it was before 1653. The Reunion of 1930 was, in fact, the crowning of the reunion attempts of the Malankara community down through the centuries.”<sup>766</sup>

Mar Ivanios’ Reunion is similar to the attempts which preceded it insofar as the requests on the part of the Malankara Christians in all these attempts remained the same. “[In] all their negotiations, the Orthodox Bishops had always wanted a union in which the preservation of their ancient rites and rituals and the retention [of] the Holy Synod and for the individual Bishops,

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<sup>764</sup> Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 107.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid.

<sup>766</sup> Ibid. After receiving all the necessary permission from the Holy See, Mar Ivanios and his companions were received to the Catholic Church on 20 September 1930. Cyril Mar Baselios writes: Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany and his suffragan Mar Theophilos, bishop of Thiruvalla, accepted the decision of the Holy See and thus on 20 Sept. 1930, together with representatives of their followers, were received into the Catholic Church after having made their profession of Faith before Msgr. Benziger O.C.D., bishop of Quilon.” Cyril Mar Baselios, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 164. For a detailed historical description of the events see, Inchachalody, *Mar Ivanios* (Malayalam) Vol.1, reprinted. (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2006), 436-480.

their jurisdiction over their flock.”<sup>767</sup> In other words, the Malankara Bishops, including Mar Ivanios, sought recognition of the Malankara Church as an Apostolic Church having autonomy over its faithful. As the *Coonan Cross Oath* demonstrates, the Malankara Church – both in its undivided and divided states – “strongly resented any attempt to belittle its status or deny its rights as an apostolic church.”<sup>768</sup>

Even though the Malankara Church has continuously been influenced by various foreigners – the East Syrians, the Portuguese, the West Syrians, the British<sup>769</sup>, etc. – it has nonetheless claimed that by virtue of being founded by the Apostle Thomas, the Malankara Church has “inviolable rights based on apostolic faith and traditions”<sup>770</sup>. Thus, Mar Ivanios’ Reunion shares these two elements with those attempts which preceded his own attempt, namely, a common ecclesial understanding of reunion and the same goals. Therefore, Mar Ivanios’ Reunion should be understood as being continuous with these earlier attempts; it cannot be isolated from this larger context. Cyril Mar Baselios writes: “The Reunion of 1930 was the fundamental fruition and response of the reunion efforts of 300 years led by the fathers of the Malankara Church, begun after the division of the church in 1653. On a theoretic basis, with the reunion the ecclesial existence and identity of the ancient Malankara Apostolic Church was recognized within the communion of the Universal Catholic Church.”<sup>771</sup>

The intention of giving a historical sketch of this reunion along with some of the theological and ecclesiological implications is to show that the SMCC is fully Catholic in her

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<sup>767</sup> Baselios, “Ecumenism,” in *Emerging Trends*, 193.

<sup>768</sup> Baselios, “The Reunion Movement: Its Contribution to Christian Heritage,” in *Emerging Trends*, 178.

<sup>769</sup> The British colonized India and it was their presence which brought the Anglican Missionaries to India.

<sup>770</sup> Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 178.

<sup>771</sup> Cf. Baselios, “Reunion Movement” in *Emerging Trends*, 182.

faith practices. Like any other Individual Church in this Universal communion, the SMCC has equal rights and responsibilities in everything especially in reference to our thesis, for evangelization. We will discuss it further in our next session.

### **3.1.4 The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church is Antiochene in Worship: The Liturgical Heritage of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church**

#### **3.1.4.1 Ecclesiastical and Historical Importance of Antioch**

According to St. Luke, it was in Antioch that the followers of Christ were called Christians for the first time (cf. Acts 11: 26). Peter and Paul were the primary evangelizers of this ancient Christian community. It was in Antioch that the conflict between Peter and Paul arose regarding the circumcision of gentile converts, which resulted in the convening of the Council of Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15). Antioch, the “cradle of Christianity”<sup>772</sup> and the “Queen of the East”,<sup>773</sup> was an important city because of its strategic location.<sup>774</sup> It was the capital of the Roman province of Syria and “from the beginning, the Antiochene Church had served as the headquarters for Christian missions to the east and northeast to Mesopotamia, eastern Asia Minor, the Caucasus, Persia and Arabia, Siberia and China.”<sup>775</sup> Because of its ecclesiastical prominence “the Patriarch of Antioch ranked only after those of Rome and Alexandria.”<sup>776</sup> The

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<sup>772</sup> Cf. Raymond Brown and John Mayer, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2004), 12.

<sup>773</sup> Archdale Kin, *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, vol. 1, (New Jersey: Georgias Press LLC, 2007), 61.

<sup>774</sup> The geographical position of Antioch (in particular its accessibility to Asia Minor) was a significant factor in its growing prestige. It was both an important area for commerce and trade, and a critical military base. Cf. Michelle Slee, *The Church in Antioch in the First Century CE: Communion and Conflict* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 1.

<sup>775</sup> Ernst Benz, *The Eastern Orthodox Church: Its Thought and Life* (Piscataway: Aldine Publishing Company, 2009), 78.

<sup>776</sup> Peter Stravinskas, ed. *Catholic Dictionary*, (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2002), 74. Thomas Asbridge also writes: “St. Peter was believed to have founded the Christian Church of both Rome and Antioch. This meant that the authority of both the pope and the patriarch of Antioch could be traced to the same apostolic source.” *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch 1098-1130* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 211.

former Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas writes that St. Peter is the first of its patriarchs to whom the line of succeeding patriarchs can be traced. He also refers to Church historian Eusebius to establish this claim: “In the fourth year after the ascension of Jesus Christ, Saint Peter proclaimed the word of God in Antioch, the great capital, and became its first bishop.”<sup>777</sup> So the Antiochene claim of greater antiquity and fuller apostolicity than any other ancient Christian churches is a legitimate one.<sup>778</sup>

### 3.1.4.2 A Short History of West Syrian Liturgy

The Antiochean liturgical tradition is inherited and shared by West and East Syrians.<sup>779</sup> The Byzantine, Armenian and Maronite liturgical traditions also share the Antiochean liturgical patrimony.<sup>780</sup> The life and faith of the Christian community is expressed through the way it conducted its liturgy. Adrian Fortescue writes that the Antiochean liturgy is “one of the most beautiful in Christendom.”<sup>781</sup> This liturgy is the expression of the faith life of people in beauty and vitality. A. G. Martimort writes that liturgy is source or place (*loci*) from which theology can derive the arguments enabling it to develop a systematic and scientific presentation of the

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<sup>777</sup> Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, *The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch at a Glance* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. Emmanuel Bishmarji (Damascus: Bab Touma Press House, 2008), 30.

<sup>778</sup> Aziz Atiya, *History of Eastern Christianity*, Georgias Eastern Christian Studies 16 (New Jersey: Georgias Press LLC, 2010), 222.

<sup>779</sup> There are a few scholars who dispute this argument. Bryan Spinks writes: “At one time scholars were of the opinion that the Syriac liturgies were branches of a common Antiochene liturgical tradition, with two forks, East and West Syrian. The Maronite rite was seen as a variant of the West Syrian rite. However, more recent scholarship has emphasized that the East Syrian rite was centered on Edessa, not Antioch, and that the Maronite liturgical tradition seems to have blended some elements from the Edessan tradition with elements from Antiochene tradition” “Eastern Christian Liturgical Traditions: Oriental Orthodox” in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, 339.

<sup>780</sup> Cf. Irenee Henri Dalmais, “The Eastern Liturgical Families”, in *The Church at Prayer: Principles of the Liturgy*, ed. A. G. Martimort, vol. 1 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1987), 29-40.

<sup>781</sup> Fortescue, *The Lesser Eastern Churches*, 350.

Christian faith.<sup>782</sup> It is a mystery in action, which brings salvation to the present and is “the most important organ of the church in the ordinary exercise of its teaching office.”<sup>783</sup>

When the Syro-Antiochean liturgy began to be shaped in the urban centers it was mostly celebrated in Greek because of the influence from Constantinople. The translations from Greek and Syriac compositions by James of Edessa (+708) helped ease the transition in Church celebrations, commemorations and daily prayers. The liturgist Irénée Henri Dalmais writes that the Syro-Antiochene rite was gradually enriched with elements of Aramaic origin, especially the poetic compositions attributed to St. Ephraem and James of Sarug.<sup>784</sup> Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I tries to emphasize that Syriac is the language spoken by Jesus and dismisses all attempts to distinguish it from Aramaic:

The Syriac language is the Aramaic language itself, and the Arameans are the Syrians. Whoever has made a distinction between them has erred...After the spread of Christianity, the name Syriac outweighed the Aramaic, because the disciples, the first preachers of Christianity were Syrians linguistically...This language spread far and wide in the ancient world, to the extent that the alphabets of many other Oriental languages were developed from Aramaic.<sup>785</sup>

This rite is rich with liturgical symbols and poetic language along with beautiful Anaphora of the Apostles and of St. James of Jerusalem. According to Ephraem Carr the Anaphora of St. James became the model for the composition of later texts.<sup>786</sup> Robert Taft writes about the

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<sup>782</sup> Cf. Dalmais, “The Liturgy is the Deposit of Faith,” 273.

<sup>783</sup> Ibid., 274. Here Irénée Henri Dalmais is referring to a saying of Pope Pius XI.

<sup>784</sup> Cf. Dalmais, “The Eastern Liturgical Families,” 32.

<sup>785</sup> Zakka I Iwas, *The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch*, 25-26.

<sup>786</sup> Cf. Ephraem Carr, “Liturgical Families in the East,” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies: Introduction to the Liturgy*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 15.



consolidation of Syriac speaking people as a liturgical family in his book *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*:

The West-Syrian Rite is a synthesis of native Syriac elements, especially hymns and other choral pieces, with material translated from Greek liturgical texts of Antiochene and hagiopolite provenance. This synthesis was the work of Syriac, non-Chalcedonian monastic communities in the Syriac-speaking hinterlands of Syria, Palestine, and parts of Mesopotamia, beyond the Greek cities of the Mediterranean littoral. These Syriac speaking Christians were organized into an independent Church under Jacob Baradai (d. 578), which is the reason they are sometimes called “Jacobites.”<sup>787</sup>

Among the Christian Churches, the West Syrians have the richest collection of Anaphoras (nearly eighty) and most of them are modeled after St. James’, of which, a dozen of them are in use at present.<sup>788</sup> The sense of mystery manifested in the Antiochene tradition is expressed through signs, symbols, processions and gestures. An examination of the Anaphora of St. James reveals the authentic Catholic teaching of the people of that time. The prayer after the consecration during the Holy Eucharist says: “We offer this to thee, O Lord, for the holy places, which thou hast glorified by the appearance of thy Christ, and by the coming of thy Holy Ghost, chiefly for the holy and glorious Sion, the mother of all Churches, and then for thy holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church through the world.”<sup>789</sup>

### 3.1.4.3 West Syrian Liturgy in Malankara

The Catholic, Orthodox and some Protestant Churches claim the West Syrian liturgical tradition today. Besides the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, the Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch, the Syrian Orthodox Church in Antioch, The Malankara Syrian Orthodox Churches

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<sup>787</sup> Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning Today* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 239-40.

<sup>788</sup> Cf. Baby Varghese, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology* (Burlington: Agaste Publishing Company, 2004), 2, 6.

<sup>789</sup> Adrian Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press LLC, 2001), 115.

(both *Metran Kashi* and *Bava Kashi* in Kerala), and the Independent Church of Malabar inherited this tradition in various stages of history. The reformed Churches (Mar Thoma and Evangelical in Kerala) also follow this liturgy with changes that suit Protestant theology. There is not much difference between these Churches when it comes to the practice of the liturgy, except, as Emma Loosely points out, “the major issue was the acceptance of the supreme authority the Pope in Rome and the doctrine of the Catholic Church.”<sup>790</sup>

As noted earlier, the revolt against the Portuguese missionaries in 1653 ended up with unintended consequences, especially that of dividing the St. Thomas Christians. East Syrian (Chaldean) liturgical language and tradition were the common patrimony of this community until the *Coonan Cross Oath*. The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church still follows this tradition even though it has been tainted by the latinization of the Portuguese missionaries. The broken away group of St. Thomas Christians (*Puthenkoottukar*) continued with the invalid episcopal ordination of Archdeacon as Bishop Thomas.<sup>791</sup> As a result, succeeding bishops were consecrated invalidly until Thomas VI who validly received episcopal ordination from Mar Gregorios in 1772.<sup>792</sup> Mar Thoma VI assumed the name Mar Dionysius I and according to his

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<sup>790</sup> Emma Loosely, “Peter, Paul and James of Jerusalem: The Doctrinal and Political Evolution of the Eastern and Oriental Churches” in *Eastern Christianity in the Modern Middle East* Anthony, et al., O’Mahony and Emma Loosely (New York: Routledge, 2010), 9.

<sup>791</sup> Chediath writes: “When the Malankara Church was passing through a period of crisis and uncertainty, Ithithoman Cathanar fabricated a document in Syriac and presented it to the leaders of the community as an authentic document from Ahathalla, permitting to ordain a bishop by the imposition of hands by twelve priests. In the light of this fake document, believing that it was genuine, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1953, on the Pentecost day, at Alangatt, twelve priests imposed their hands on the Archdeacon Thomas and called him Bishop.” *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 47.

<sup>792</sup> There are some who argue that Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem, a Syrian Jacobite bishop was brought to Malankara to rectify the episcopal ordination of Mar Thoma I. There is no contemporary evidence to this claim and there was no change of name according to the Syrian Jacobite tradition. Cf. Geevarghese Chediath, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 58. But we have valid historical evidence for the episcopal ordination of Marthoma IV. Cyril Mar Baselios writes: “This in fact was the first episcopal consecration conferred by the Antiochene prelates, of which we have historical certainty.” *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 43.

own testimony: "... in 1772 I receive anew in the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Neranam all the Holy Orders from the tonsure to the episcopal consecration from the Jacobite Metropolitan Mar Gregory."<sup>793</sup> Consequently, the *Puthenkoor* (New Way) group accepted West Syrian liturgy along with valid ordination, autonomy and stability.<sup>794</sup>

Even though the West Syrian liturgy was in use for some time among the *Puthenkoor* community, there was no official proclamation of its acceptance until 1836.<sup>795</sup> Cyril Mar Baselios writes that the "Orthodox Syrians ... proclaimed their allegiance to the Antiochene rite officially and publicly in the synod of Mavelikara."<sup>796</sup> The Synod was convened to curbe the Protestant reform and the control of the seminary at Kottayam, but it ended up confirming the existing bond with the Jacobite Patriarchate of Antioch. With a detailed description of the issues discussed in the Synod the document says: "For this reason we do (would) not follow any faith or teaching other than the Orthodox faith of the Jacobite Syrian Christians, to the end that we may obtain salvation..."<sup>797</sup> After a long historical struggle the Malankara Church was replanted from one branch (Chaldean) to another (West Syrian) in the same tree - of the Syrian Church.

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<sup>793</sup> Neil, *A History of Christianity in India*, 67-68.

<sup>794</sup> Chediath writes: "At the time of Mar Thoma V, there came from West Asia three Jacobite bishops, Mar Baselios, Mar Gregorios and Mar Ivanios. It was these three bishops who tried to introduce the West Syrian Antiochene liturgy in the place of the centuries old East Syrian liturgy. Cf. *The Malankara Catholic Church*, 59.

<sup>795</sup> In a Synod convened by Patriarch Ignatius Pathros IV of the Syrian Orthodox Church at Mulanthuruthy Mar Thoma Church, the Synod makes the statement: "From the earliest ages, the Syrians in Malankara and their churches are under the spiritual authority of the Patriarch of Antioch. Nobody else has any kind of authority." Cf. Malankara Syriac Christian Resources, "Mulanthuruthy Padiyola – AD. 1876," accessed o January 15, 2014. [http://syrianchurch.org/StGG/Centenary/mulunthuruthy\\_padiyola.htm](http://syrianchurch.org/StGG/Centenary/mulunthuruthy_padiyola.htm).

<sup>796</sup> Baselios, "Introduction of the Antiochene Rite," in *Emerging Trends*, 102.

<sup>797</sup> Malankara Syriac Christian Resources, "Mavelikkara Padiyola – AD 1836," accessed on January 15, 2014. [http://www.syrianchurch.org/StGG/mavelikara\\_padiyola.htm](http://www.syrianchurch.org/StGG/mavelikara_padiyola.htm).

### 3.1.4.4 West Syrian Liturgy and Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

Historical providence enabled SMCC to inherit this ancient West Syrian liturgy and the Holy See benevolently allowed the practice of this venerable and sublime tradition of Eastern liturgies. Pope Pius XI sanctioned this with just the one condition to alter any teachings, which is contrary to Catholic faith and morals or inconsonant with ecclesiastical decorum.<sup>798</sup> Again, when the hierarchy of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church was established through the Apostolic Constitution *Christo Pastorum Principi*, Pope Pius XI stated:

Now since the number of these Syro-Malankara faithful of the Antiochene Rite became fortunately and happily greater day by day, and within a short time, the Lord acting, has already reached some thousands, it has appeared opportune and salutary to dispose and ordain ecclesiastical matters in a manner more fitting and more stable by erecting in that country of Malabar an Ecclesiastical Province of the Antiochene Rite.<sup>799</sup>

Thus the SMCC was able to keep the “pure Syro-Antiochene Rite” devoid of the Monophysitic tendencies of the ancient Antiochene rite and also of the reformation ideas that crept into the liturgy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>800</sup> Today it practices a liturgy which fosters deep spirituality, assuring the participation of a maximum number of faithful in every celebration: “It is significant to note that on occasions of common worship, Sundays, feast days, etc., the divine praises are recited by the entire congregation together, namely the priest and the faithful.”<sup>801</sup>

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<sup>798</sup> Cf. Louis Moolaveetil, *The Malankara Catholic Church* (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 1988), 42.

<sup>799</sup> Pius XI, Apostolic Constitution *Christo Pastorum Principi*, AAS XXIV 1932 (June 11, 1932), 289-90.

<sup>800</sup> Cyril Mar Baselios writes that there was a possibility of a twofold corruption in the Antiochene liturgy during the time of Mar Ivanios. 1) The Syro-Antiochene liturgy which occupied an important place among the ancient liturgies of the Catholic Church had been in use mainly among the Monophysites in Antioch and elsewhere and there it could have been corrupted, at least to some extent by heretical additions or mutilations. 2) Because of the long time relationship with Protestants before the division of 1898, a spirit of reformation both in the field of Dogma and liturgy happened. And consequently a twofold purification was also deemed necessary. Thus according to the instruction of the Holy See at the time of reunion, was allowed to retain the “pure Syro-Antiochene rite” which was practiced by them in the Malankara Church, after having it purified from all errors and improper reformation made in it. Cf. *Malankara Catholic Church*, 200 -201.

<sup>801</sup> Kuriakose Kulapurath, “Liturgy as a Means of Union with God” in *The Theological Vision of Mar Ivanios*, ed., Antony Valiyavilayil (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2004), 110.

Malankara liturgy could also be categorized as “the gold mine of its theology”<sup>802</sup> since the “liturgical texts are real sources of theological synthesis.”<sup>803</sup> Frequent reference to biblical passages enables one to make it a source of deep meditation with themes “presenting the mystery of God in a mystical and symbolic way.”<sup>804</sup>

For the Malankara Church this liturgy creates a living link to the ancient Churches of Antioch and Jerusalem (the Church of Peter, Paul and James). This liturgy is also suited to the Eucharistic devotion of Indian culture because of the mystical elements inherent in it. It has been in use for three centuries in Malankara and has already been contextualized and well-accepted in the Indian society - especially in Kerala. Nurturing of this liturgy also shows the resilience of the whole Malankara community, who successfully resisted the latinization efforts. At the same time the SMCC has the added benefit of celebrating it in the Universal Catholic communion. We have come very far in proving that this Church is not just a province of the Latin Church. The Universal Church has also become more beautiful because of the Malankara liturgy, adding to her already adorning ‘liturgical garment of many colors’. As Pope Pius XII says: “Indeed this variety of rites and customs, preserving inviolate what is most ancient and most valuable in each, presents no obstacle to a true and genuine unity.”<sup>805</sup>

### 3.1.5 Conclusion

Situating the SMCC in her cultural, historical, theological and liturgical background helps us to discuss her role and responsibility in evangelization. The cultural background of the

<sup>802</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>803</sup> Varghese Pathikulangara, *Chaldeo-Indian Liturgy* (Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1982), 76.

<sup>804</sup> Louis Moolaveetil, *The Beauty of the House: Spiritual Heritage of the Malankara Church* (Trivandrum: Malankara Seminary Publication, 1984), 56.

<sup>805</sup> Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Orientalis Ecclesiae*, (9 April 1944), 27: AAS 36 (1944).

SMCC consists of many cultures of India. This culture has evolved to its current form during thousands of years of existence. This religious plurality is a blessing, a challenge, and sometimes a hindrance for the development of Christianity, and in this context, the SMCC in India.

Understanding the history of Christianity as it is found in India today needs patient study and openness. It is very complicated for an outsider to grasp all the intricacies and various divisions in the same community. The SMCC is part of this “noble” as well as “complicated” history. What is important for it today is that this Church is part of the Universal Catholic Church, which is the reason for its vitality, dynamism, and growth.

Having the liturgical patrimony of the ancient West Syrian Church is a blessing. It adds to the beauty of the liturgical family of the Universal Church and at the same time the Catholic communion makes this liturgy “pure and holy”.

## **Part Two: New Evangelization and the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church claims to be an exception to the recrimination that the Oriental Churches are only museum pieces, just preserving their fossilized liturgy without any vibrancy of the missionary zeal.<sup>806</sup> The conspicuous growth of this community from five to five hundred thousand in the last eighty some years of reunion history is attributed to a combination of factors, including but not limited to its ardent leadership to faith filled people. Pope John Paul II’s endorsement that the SMCC is the fastest growing of the Catholic communities is a *magnum opus* for the Church since its reverse is said to be the trend in many areas of the Universal Church: “You have become one of the fastest growing Catholic communities in the world, boasting large numbers of vocations to the priesthood and religious

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<sup>806</sup> Editorial, “Mission Theology of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church”, *Malankara: Synodal Acts and Voice of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church*, vol. 5, no. 2 (December 2009), 5.

life, and your *pusillus grex* is home to many educational and welfare institutions. The Law of Christ which compels us to go beyond the boundaries of family, race, tribe or nation is concretely manifested in your generosity to others.”<sup>807</sup> The vibrancy of this ‘small Church’ is seen in every area of its ecclesial life and is a clear sign of the working of the Holy Spirit in order for the Church to become “the salt of the earth and light of the world” (Mt 5: 13-16).

Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop of the Church, considers this appreciation from the leader of the Universal Church as an official recognition for the various missionary endeavors of the SMCC and also of the expected responsibility for more evangelization related work.<sup>808</sup> In this section, as a culmination of the previous discussions, we will analyze the SMCC’s role, challenges, responsibility, and different dimensions of responding to the Universal Church’s invitation to new evangelization.

### **3.2.2 A Brief Look at the Missionary Endeavors of St. Thomas Christians**

Scholars are divided on the extent and nature of the missionary work of the early St. Thomas Christians. The lack of historical evidence contributes much to this confusion. It was unknown and probably unlikely that the first Christian community in India was East Syrian in worship until the migration of the Chaldeans from Persia. This community might just have been “Christian in worship and Indian in culture.” But at the same time it is contrary to the basic tenants of Christianity not to preach the Gospel, especially when the Church is one of apostolic origin. So, it is somewhat safe to say as Church historian Mathias Mundadan writes: “A flourishing community of the St. Thomas Christians existed in Kerala and they definitely played

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<sup>807</sup> John Paul II, “Address to the Bishops of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church on their *ad Limina* visit,” May 13, 2003: AAS 95 (2003), 761.

<sup>808</sup> Cf. Moran Mar Baselios Cleemis, “Pastoral Letter,” 26 January, 2010, Prot No. CPL, 1/2010 (Trivandrum, Catholicate Center, 2010). Later in 2010 a new eparchy has been created in New York for the Malankarites in North America.

at least a limited role in the expansion of the Church in Kerala through missionary effort.”<sup>809</sup> Because of the trade relationship between Persia and the Malabar Coast, there existed the probability of Christians coming into contact with the Syriac language, which paved way for East Syrian liturgy with the Persian Christian migration of the AD 345.<sup>810</sup> We already have discussed the historical background of the St. Thomas Christians, their relationship with the East Syrian Church, the coming of the Portuguese missionaries, and then the introduction of the West Syrian Church in India. Now we briefly look into the missionary vision of Mar Ivanios and the early missionary endeavors of the SMCC.

### **3.2.3 Some Fundamental Aspects of New Evangelization in the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church**

#### **3.2.3.1 The Missionary Vision of Mar Ivanios**

The study of the SMCC’s evangelization history is inherently connected to the missionary vision of Mar Ivanios,<sup>811</sup> the pioneer of the re-union movement in Malankara. The educational and family background of Mar Ivanios had a great role in molding his theological convictions.<sup>812</sup> He was famously known as “M. A. Achen” as he was the first priest of the *Puthenkoor* community to obtain a Master’s Degree. After his education he began efforts to revitalize his community, which was entangled in petty quarrels and forgetting its primary mission. His efforts to bring enlightenment through education of youth, and spiritual renewal

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<sup>809</sup> Mathias Mundadan, *History and Beyond*, (Aluva: Jeevas Publications, 1997), 190.

<sup>810</sup> Cf. Placid Podipara, *The Rise and Decline of the Indian Church of the Thomas Christians* (Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1979), 39.

<sup>811</sup> He was born in the noble Orthodox family of Mallitti-Panikker in Mavelikkara and received excellent education in the local school, then the M. D. Seminary High School and CMS College in Kottayam and finally his Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree from Madras Christian College. For a detailed description of Mar Ivanios’ life, see Thomas Inchachalody, *Mar Ivanios* (Malayalam) 2 volumes, reprinted (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2006).

<sup>812</sup> His teaching carrier at Serampore College, Calcutta enabled him to develop high ideals in life. His frequent visits to *Sabarmathi Ashram* of Mahatma Gandhi and *Shantiniketan of Rebindranath* Tagore influenced him greatly in establishing the *Sanyasa*, modeled after the Indian way of life.



through the establishment of religious orders of ascetic life, did not yield the desired result. The Orthodox community continued their internal fights, which created a lack of spiritual motivation in the Church. Mar Ivanios' work for the spiritual transformation of Malankara Orthodox Church can be seen as a pioneering work of new evangelization in Malankara. His communion with the Catholic Church enabled him to initiate new models of mission work in the Malankara Catholic Church. The missionary vision of Mar Ivanios is the *idee-maitresse* of evangelization for the SMCC.

### 3.2.3.2 Religious Orders, the SMCC and New Evangelization

Mar Ivanios founded the Order of the Imitation of Christ (OIC) for men in 1919 and the Society of Imitation of Christ (SIC) for women in 1925. They are often known as Bethany Fathers and Bethany Sisters since it was the example of Bethany (Cf. Luke 10: 38-42; John 11), which inspired Mar Ivanios to select the names. His Serampore<sup>813</sup> days motivated him to form a group of men who came to be known as the Monks of Bethany.<sup>814</sup> This eventually developed into the first monastic community in the Malankara Orthodox Church, which was established on the pristine hilltop at Ranni-Perunadu. He clearly intended these religious to undertake vigorous evangelization work. The Congregation's desire for the evangelization of India, and the way he aspired them to serve is inscribed in its Holy Rule: "The Congregation aims at following Jesus Christ in his life of prayer and action, realized in Oriental monastic tradition and Indian *sanyasa* which are aimed at the evangelization of India through the spiritual renewal of the Malankara

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<sup>813</sup> At Serampore University Mar Ivanios met Protestant as well as Catholic missionaries, whose missionary ideas inspired him to begin religious congregations to renew his Church in order to evangelize India. Cf. Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 90.

<sup>814</sup> Cf. Margaret Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios (1882 - 1953): Apostle of Church Union*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2002), 39-41.

Catholic Church”<sup>815</sup> It is by adopting the Indian way of a simple and austere life, intense prayer and solitude, a saffron (*Kavi*) habit, vegetarian food and community life, that the Bethany Fathers took up the “All India Missionary Vision”.<sup>816</sup> Bethany missionaries played a significant role in the missionary endeavors of the SMCC and now have greatly expanded into serving the needs of the Universal Church.<sup>817</sup>

The founding of the Bethany Congregation for women had multiple effects, and their charism and way of life are similar to that of Bethany Fathers. Some of the visible effects include: 1) Religious vocations advanced the women of Malankara to a higher level both spiritually and educationally. 2) These religious sisters in turn could help the rest of the women to lead a Christian family life by improving their educational standards through the institutions and other ministries of the sisters. 3) They also became great instruments of evangelization by becoming faithful to their religious charism. In *The Holy Rule of the Sisters of the Imitation of the Christ*, the model of *Bethany* in the New Testament is hailed as the exemplar: “... filled with love of God, a Bethany Sister is obliged to lead a life of prayer like Mary, a life of service like Martha, and life of evangelization and of propagating the faith, like Lazar.”<sup>818</sup> Their charism included the renewal of the whole Malankara Church in addition to welfare of the women. Mar Ivanios writes: “We hope that the women of our homeland would progress spiritually,

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<sup>815</sup> Order of the Imitation of Christ, *The Holy Rule of the Order of the Imitation of Christ* (Kottayam: Bethany Generalate, 2000), Ch.1:4.

<sup>816</sup> Cf. “Order of the Imitation of Christ,” Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, accessed on March 12, 2014, [http://www.malankaracatholicchurch.net/religious\\_men\\_oic.html](http://www.malankaracatholicchurch.net/religious_men_oic.html).

<sup>817</sup> At present Bethany Congregation has nearly 300 hundred members including priests, brothers, seminarians and two bishops. Besides evangelization works in all parts of India and pastoral assistance in the Latin Rite diocese in Europe and USA, the Congregation started two communities in the diocese of Embibir in Ethiopia, Africa. They run a technical college, boys’ home, village development activities in helping the poor for education and farming. Cf. Joseph Ancheril, e-mail message to author, March 12, 2014.

<sup>818</sup> The Sisters of the Imitation of Christ, *The Holy Rule of the Sisters of Imitation of the Christ*, (Malayalam), (Kottayam: Bethany Generalate, 1995), n. 5.

educationally and socially from women having higher education and training in religious life.”<sup>819</sup>

At present, the sisters have extended their evangelization, pastoral, educational and healthcare services in India and abroad, including Africa.<sup>820</sup>

Mar Ivanios also whole-heartedly supported the efforts of Msgr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil (1903-1983) and Mother Mary Kallarackal (1898-1985) in establishing the Daughters of Mary Congregation. This Congregation was established in 1938 and was one of the first indigenous religious women’s missionary congregations, founded by an Indian missionary for the evangelization of India and of the whole world.<sup>821</sup> Their mission also included bringing non-Catholics to the Catholic communion. The Constitution of the Daughters of Mary identifies their charism as “to be pure and poor for the Kingdom of God” with the aim “to evangelize the people, and lead all to unity, especially those who broke away from the Catholic Church.”<sup>822</sup> In 1968 the DM Congregation was affiliated with the order of Franciscan Friars Minor Capuchins and now more than thousand sisters of the Congregation are engaged in evangelization work all over India, the USA, Europe and also with the Melkite Greek Catholic Church in Cairo, Egypt.<sup>823</sup>

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<sup>819</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam* (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2007), 65.

<sup>820</sup> The Bethany Sisters have nearly 900 members and recently they started houses in Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Africa. Cf. “Sisters of the Imitation of Christ,” Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, accessed on March 12, 2014. [http://www.malankaracatholicchurch.net/Religious\\_women\\_sic.html](http://www.malankaracatholicchurch.net/Religious_women_sic.html).

<sup>821</sup> Cf. Ellukunnel I., “Congregation of the Daughters of Mary, which is raised to the Status of Pontifical Right” *Mariadeepam*, (Marthandom: 1989), 7.

<sup>822</sup> “Constitution of Daughters of Mary,” Archives of the Generalate of the Congregation of Daughters of Mary (Kudappanakkunnu: 2003), n. 3.

<sup>823</sup> “Congregation of the Daughters of Mary,” Malankara Catholic Church, accessed on March 12, 2014. [http://www.malankaracatholicchurch.net/Religious\\_women\\_dm.html](http://www.malankaracatholicchurch.net/Religious_women_dm.html).

Besides the Bethany Fathers, Sisters and DM Sisters, many other Religious Orders<sup>824</sup> offer the SMCC their services in evangelization work. It is through their ascetic life, educational institutions, health care ministries, social welfare services etc., that these religious orders continue to be excellent examples of evangelization in Malankara. The underlying spirit of all these missionary endeavors in the SMCC is the missionary vision of Mar Ivanios, as Prabheesh George writes: “His missionary vision is Catholic in vision, human in action, monastic in spirituality, Indian in culture and historical in originality.”<sup>825</sup> These religious orders brought radical changes into the evangelization field of India, and now their work has been extended abroad. Mar Ivanios writes about the need for religious orders in the work of evangelization. It is “...to give the treasure of faith which Christ gave us through St. Thomas, his beloved apostle to the whole of our country and to develop it as local as possible.”<sup>826</sup>

### 3.2.3.3 Caste System, Syrian Christians, SMCC and New Evangelization

Caste is ingrained in the Indian psyche and affects all interactions, religious consciousness, political affiliations, and economic alliance.<sup>827</sup> The ‘pride’ of Syrian Christians belonging to the high caste of the social system negatively affected their attitude towards

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<sup>824</sup> Various Religious Orders serving in the missionary endeavors of the SMCC include Capuchins, Congregation of St. Therese Father, Christ Sanyasa Samaj, Franciscan Brothers, Holy Spirit Sisters, Sacred Heart Sisters, Vincentian Sisters, Snehagiri Sisters, Deena Seva Sabha Sisters.

<sup>825</sup> Prabheesh George, “Missionary Vision of Archbishop Mar Ivanios,” (STL diss., Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, 2010), 55.

<sup>826</sup> Mar Ivanios, Pastoral Letter, 2 November, 1946 (Trivandrum: AMAT, 1946).

<sup>827</sup> Katharine Adeney and Andrew Wyatt write that the practical implications for caste system are enormous. It continues to frame social and economic life in spite of official efforts to diminish its importance. The continuing practice of ‘untouchability’ denies millions of Indians their human rights. Cf. *Contemporary India* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 108.

evangelization of India for many centuries.<sup>828</sup> Mar Ivanios and the SMCC could break the "magic spell" or "a cursed system" hanging over the Syrian community by bringing the Gospel to the backward communities. The Gospel already had taken deep roots among the lower castes through the missionary endeavors of the Portuguese (chief among them was St. Francis Xavier) and later through Protestant missionaries. But in the Malankara Syrian Community it was Mar Ivanios who broke that chain of bondage by opening up missions in all the possible areas.<sup>829</sup> This was also one of the main reasons that he decided to locate the Archbishop's house in Trivandrum, the state capital, where the possibility of mission work among the Nadar and Dalit communities was greater than in the rest of Kerala. Later history proved that this visionary decision was an admirable and successful one.<sup>830</sup>

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<sup>828</sup> The first Chief Minister of Kerala E.M.S. Namboodiripad (1909-1998), who was also a Marxist, writes that the Syrian Christians pride themselves in being the descendants of the high-caste Hindus who were converted by no less a person than Apostle St. Thomas. The non-Syrian Christians were considered to be of a lower order, since they were by and large converted in recent centuries from the lower castes. Cf. *History, Society, and Land Relations: Selected Essays* (Delhi: Naya Rasta Publishers, 2010), 93.

<sup>829</sup> Marthoma Church is another notable Malankara Community who undertook successful missionary endeavors among other communities. But Philip Wickeri writes that a recent study among the Marthoma Church also demonstrated remnants of discrimination against Dalit converts: "Syrian communalism and ethnic exclusivism serve to marginalize the Dalits in both church and society in Kerala... There are Syrian Christians who will not receive communion with Dalits or from a Dalit priest, and who will not even enter a Dalit Church... The 'Syrian' in 'Syrian Christian' has been described as a remnant of the caste system in Christian dress." Cf. "The Mar Thoma Christians of Kerala: A Study of the Relationship Between Liturgy and Mission in the Indian Context," in *Christian Worship Worldwide: Expanding Horizons, Deepening Practices* ed., Charles E. Farhadian (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 90.

<sup>830</sup> This is in reference to the missionary expansion of Malankara Church in and around the state capital and also to Marthandom, which is in Tamil Nadu state but close to Trivandrum. "Dalit Christians form a significant part of the population in the South. The five districts of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum of the Malankara Church gave prime importance for the works of upliftment of the Dalit Christians from the very beginning." Cf. "The Report of the First Meeting of the Synodal Commission for Social Apostolate," *Malankara: Synodal Acts and Voice of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church*, vol. 2, no. 1, (July 2006), 98. Baselios Cardinal Cleemis writes in a Pastoral Letter: "From 1930 the missionary activities of the Malankara Church began spreading the rays of divine love amidst the Dalit and Nadar communities, which were the most backward in the society. Archbishop Mar Ivanios took on the ecclesial vision and apostolic mission, which were, till then, alien to the Mar Thoma Christians. A lot of Dalit and Nadar families, who resided in and around the city of Trivandrum experienced the love of Jesus through him" Cf. Baselios Cleemis, Pastoral Letter, Prot No. CPL 6/2008.

### 3.2.3.3.1 Vijathiya Mission

The most revolutionary of all the changes Mar Ivanios introduced in Malankara was the starting of the *Vijathiya Mission*<sup>831</sup> under the guidance of Bethany Ashram. In his autobiographical book *Girideepam* Mar Ivanios expresses his displeasure with the caste system, which divided society by degrading human dignity: “Self-conceited persons divide mankind into two main groups, the high class and the low class. This theoretical division that demands that one group should serve the other as non-free servants or slaves is from any perspective undesirable.”<sup>832</sup> Even some of those people who converted from the lower castes experienced bitterness and rejection from their Christian brothers and sisters. James Illitharayil writes that Mar Ivanios wanted to reform the existing evil structures and practices by his commiserative actions. So he “regularly visited the slum areas and tried to be with them [the people], and they considered him as a god.”<sup>833</sup> He loved them, walked with them, spoke with them and assured them that he would not allow them to be separated from others.”<sup>834</sup>

The mission among the ‘gentiles’ was intended to open Church doors to all those who had been denied this privilege in India for a long time. At the same time he was careful not to create any delusion in their mind that conversion is meant to bring material prosperity through some ‘generous gifts’ from the Church. He always had the impression that “The mission among the gentiles of *Bethany* never compels anyone to become a Christian. It does not promise any

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<sup>831</sup> ‘Gentile Mission’ was something Mar Ivanios started when he was in the Orthodox Church but continued the spirit of that mission more vigorously after reunion, in opening the doors of the Church beyond Syrian Christians.

<sup>832</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 147.

<sup>833</sup> Such usages are not literal but should be understood in the Indian cultural context where people consider a ‘man of God’ as an incarnation of God since they do what God does.

<sup>834</sup> Illitharayil, “The Pastoral Vision of Mar Ivanios,” 289.

social welfare or any material assistance. But it made arrangements for the training of those who approach the feet of Jesus Christ whole heartedly to become Christian.”<sup>835</sup> The aim of evangelization was primarily the salvation of the souls and the spiritual upliftment of the people. But as a natural consequence the people experienced social, material, and even psychological metamorphosis by embracing the Christian faith. During their *ad Limina* visit, Pope John Paul II admonished a group of Latin Rite Indian bishops on the need to take care of the ‘untouchables’:

At all times, you must continue to make certain that special attention is given to those belonging to the lowest castes, especially the Dalits. They should never be segregated from other members of society. Any semblance of a caste-based prejudice in relations between Christians is a countersign to authentic human solidarity, a threat to genuine spirituality and a serious hindrance to the Church’s mission of evangelization. Therefore, customs or traditions that perpetuate or reinforce caste division should be sensitively reformed so that they may become an expression of the solidarity of the whole Christian community.<sup>836</sup>

The SMCC had been practicing this instruction ever since the beginning of its reunion.

### 3.2.3.3.2 The Progress

As a result of opening up the mission of the Church to the Dalits<sup>837</sup> and the Nadar<sup>838</sup> communities, the SMCC became an instrument in bringing the Gospel to a large number of people. The bishops who succeeded him continued the tradition of Mar Ivanios of vigorously

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<sup>835</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, 148.

<sup>836</sup> John Paul II, “Address of Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of Tamilnadu during their *ad Limina* visit to the Pope,” *L’Osservatore Romano* 48 (26 November, 2003), 5.

<sup>837</sup> The term “Dalit” is popularly understood to be a Sanskrit term meaning ‘crushed, oppressed, broken’ and refers to the state that the ‘Dalits’ find themselves in, on abstract and physical levels equally. Cf. Keith Hebden, *Dalit Theology and Christian Anarchism* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011), 110.

<sup>838</sup> The Nadars, who were also known as Shanars are concentrated in the Southern part of India mainly in certain areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. They were said to be in ‘a social limbo somewhere between the Sudras and the outcaste untouchables’, highly dissatisfied with their position, and intent on improvement. Cf. Duncan B. Forrester, *Forrester on Christian Ethics and Practical Theology: Collected Writings on Christianity, India and the Social Order* (Burlington: Agaste Publishing House, 2010), 75. But their social and economic status has considerably improved in recent times and they are a formidable political and religious force in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

pursuing this goal. The formation of a lay apostolate started at the beginning of the reunion of the Dalit groups and also accelerated the mission work among them: “These lay apostles vigorously set out for missionary works just as those seventy, whom Jesus sent ahead of him. That has occasioned for us to start several mission centres. As a result, the divine splendor shone forth among the Dalit and Nadar communities, who were the most oppressed ones. A lot of people from these communities embraced the Malankara Catholic Church to accept Jesus as their Redeemer”<sup>839</sup>

The SMCC has made tremendous progress in uplifting the spiritual, social, economic and even psychological status of the people belonging to these communities by bringing the Gospel to them. There are still discriminations on the part of government against backward communities solely on the basis of their Christian affiliation. The Synodal Commission for Social Apostolate gives special care to the causes of Dalit communities: “The pastoral care of the Dalit Christians is of great solicitude for the Malankara Catholic Church. The holistic development of this community is of special concern to the Synodal Commission. It endeavors to restore all their rights that are due, from the government. Through appropriate reservation policies, job opportunities in the institutions of the Church are to be reserved for this community.”<sup>840</sup> At the same time the leadership of the Church is aware that “... there is much more to be done for their development and integration into the main stream of the Malankara Church. This would require initiating special programmes. We have, therefore, to develop and mobilize a common and

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<sup>839</sup> Baselios Cleemis, Pastoral Letter, Prot. No. CPL 6/2008.

<sup>840</sup> “The Report of the First Meeting of the Synodal Commission for Social Apostolate,” *Malankara: Synodal Acts and Voice of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (July 2006), 99.



effective policy for the socio-economic and political empowerment of the Dalit Christians. Reservation for the Dalit Christians is one of the important means to achieve the above goal.”<sup>841</sup>

### 3.2.3.4 Reunion, the SMCC and Evangelization Work

There are pastoral and evangelization elements in reunion. Changing ecclesiological and ecumenical understandings add new meaning and challenges to the reunion and evangelization works of the Church. The pastoral element is the continuing revitalization of the whole Malankara Church. As a result the entire Malankara Church should transform itself to become an agent of evangelization in India. The SMCC sees reunion and evangelization as the two fold mission of the Church. Reunion was to reestablish the communion with the Universal Church, which existed for a long time even though the nature of that relationship was different because of historical, geographical, and ecclesiological reasons. From a practical point of view (apart from ecclesiological arguments) the relevance and meaning of reunion can be evaluated by the difference the SMCC makes in Malankara. ‘Reunion’ is understood as the ‘new evangelization’ work in Malankara in the sense of revitalizing the whole Malankara Church with the spirit of the Gospel. Catholic communion and its benefits are the gifts the SMCC offers to Malankara. By coming into communion with the Universal Church, the SMCC became related to the rest of the Individual Churches who are part of this Catholic communion. The editorial of *Malankara*, the official publication of the Malankara Catholic Holy Synod, thus describes mission theology of the SMCC:

...founded on the rock of communion of the Catholic Church strengthening it on two grand pillars, namely, the reunion of all the Malankara St. Thomas Christians and the evangelization of peoples. The former is the reunion of all the St. Thomas Christians of the undivided Syro-Malankara Church. The latter is the bringing of the Good News to all who have not come to the light of the Word of God and the economy of salvation brought about by Jesus Christ. There are the two aims bequeathed to the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

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<sup>841</sup> Ibid., 98.

by the Servant of God Mar Ivanios, the founder of the Reunion Movement. Reunion, in St. Thomas tradition is new evangelization. The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, through its efforts of Reunion aims at a new evangelization.<sup>842</sup>

### 3.2.3.4.1 The Spiritual Meaning of Reunion

The explanation of ‘reunion’ as ‘new evangelization’ is better understood when it is viewed in its spiritual meaning. The 1930 reunion should be understood spiritually: “...reunion was not simply the bringing together of two separate pieces; rather, it was a spiritual fulfillment – something necessary for a more complete or fuller union with Christ.” However, it is clear that the historical Malankara Church lacked and greatly needed “genuine and authentic Christian life built on firm apostolic foundations and lived in communion with the universal Church”<sup>843</sup>; that is, it lacked an authentic spiritual life. Following the split from the Catholic Communion and the failed attempts to reunite, the Malankara Church had become a “place for strife and quarrels,” especially at the beginning of the twentieth century, which contributed to the failure of the Malankara Church “to implant the spiritual life church and its members.”<sup>844</sup>

Mar Ivanios recognized that separation from the Catholic Church and stagnancy in faith were interrelated and that both contributed to the situation of the Malankara Church in the early twentieth century – a situation of bitter and intense fighting among various factions, threatening to once again divide the Malankara Church. Hence, he learned that diversity apart from unity cannot bear fruit because the Church is a communion of believers constituted by Christ, joined to him, and united with him and each other (hence communion) in his Spirit. A visible union of this communion is necessary as an external expression of the internal, spiritual union.

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<sup>842</sup> Editorial, “Mission Theology of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church,” *Malankara*, 9.

<sup>843</sup> Cyril Malancharuvil, “Foreword,” to *The Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, Louis Moolaveetil (Kottayam: St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary Press, 1977), v.

<sup>844</sup> Moolaveetil, *The Spiritual Life*, 18.

Recognizing the “sinfulness of schism”<sup>845</sup> and the painful signs of withering in the Malankara Orthodox Church (quarrels and divisions), Mar Ivanios began a process of spiritual growth renewal, by which he hoped to lift his community spiritually; eventually, this led him into the Catholic communion.

The ‘accusation’ of Orthodox Churches of ‘sheep stealing’ is an age-old problem.<sup>846</sup> Cyril Mar Baselios writes that the Reunion Event is badly understood or inadequately described as a return of repentant individuals to their paternal home. It was neither a refuge nor a desertion of the maternal home but an ecclesial event, and an ecclesial act that happened as the culmination of centuries of efforts by numerous people.<sup>847</sup> Walter Kasper believes that it is an extremely complex and emotionally loaded problem: “The Eastern Orthodox churches view the Catholic Eastern churches in full communion with Rome as anything but a bridge; for them they are rather a wall and a barrier, even an abomination. They accuse them of apostasy and treachery, and reproach them from stealing sheep from their own flock and plundering their own mother churches.”<sup>848</sup> Neither the Universal Church or the SMCC can give up the conviction that the Church of Christ is “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.” Pope Benedict XVI in his address to the Malankara Catholic Bishops reiterates:

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<sup>845</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>846</sup> In his welcoming address to Pope John Paul II at Kottayam during his Apostolic Visit to India, Baselios Marthoma Mathews I of the Orthodox Church in an unexpected way made the request to stop ‘sheep-stealing’ by Catholics. After giving a detailed account of the unity existed in Malankara, he laments: “Alas, who will restore that unity to us? Who will heal these centuries-old wounds? How deeply we yearn for that unity with all Christians! If only all could stop sheep-stealing and abjure proselytism! If only we meet sincerely as separated brethren and talk to each other as brothers and sisters! If only the spirit of Vatican Two would prevail in this land!” Cf. Paulose Mar Gregorios, *John Paul II and Indian Orthodox Church* (Kottayam: Sophia Books, 2005), 12-13.

<sup>847</sup> Cf. Baselios, “The Malankara Catholic Church: Its Ecumenical Role” in *Emerging Trends*, 140.

<sup>848</sup> Walter Kasper, *That They May All Be One: The Call to Unity*, (New York: Burns and Oates, 2004), 86-87.

The apostolic tradition which you maintain enjoy their full spiritual fruitfulness when they are lived in union with the Church universal. In this sense, you rightly follow in the footsteps of the Servant of God Mar Ivanios, who led your predecessors and their faithful into full communion with the Catholic Church. Like your forefathers, you too are called, within the one household of God, to continue in firm fidelity to that which has been passed down to you.<sup>849</sup>

Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches echoes the sentiments of the Holy Father: “The overall experience is that the Malankara Church has acquired a realistic and sensitive understanding of the struggles of non-Catholics in approaching Catholicism. When, however, they look to the Malankara Church, the expectation is that the ‘trials and difficulties’ which they ‘face’ will find a warm and honest welcome.”<sup>850</sup>

The Reunion of 1930 is best understood in the context of Malankara’s prior attempts, especially since this reunion was ecclesial in character. Mar Ivanios initiated the reunion proceedings with the full support of the Synod of Bishops of the *Metran Kakshy*<sup>851</sup>; moreover, he did so on behalf of the entire *Metran Kakshy* – bishops, clergy, and laity.<sup>852</sup> The ideal situation for the SMCC would be “To be exact, we are hoping that once the union is achieved, there will no longer be a united or uniat[e] Eastern Church but simply an Eastern Church, among whose ranks we ourselves shall re-enter as if we had never departed.”<sup>853</sup>

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<sup>849</sup> Benedict XVI, “Address of Pope Benedict XVI during the *ad Limina* Visit of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Bishops” (March 25, 2011), *Malankara*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (July 2011), 49.

<sup>850</sup> Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, “Address of Cardinal Sandri during the *ad limina* Visit of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Bishops” (March 22, 2011), *Malankara*, 56.

<sup>851</sup> Chediath, *Malankara Catholic Church*, 94.

<sup>852</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>853</sup> Maximos IV Sayegh, “Eastern Role in Christian Reunion,” in *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, Maximos IV ed., (London: Nelson, 1963), 58.

### 3.2.3.5 Ecumenism, SMCC and New Evangelization

The spirit of ecumenism in our age is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the divided Churches. Churches begin to realize that the age-old division among Christians is seen as a scandal, contradictory to its message and an impediment to the Christian witness of Christ. There exists an “ecumenism of life” among the St. Thomas Christians because of their feeling of belonging to a single family of faith. As we noted above, many of the Orthodox Churches consider reunion as a hindrance to ecumenical efforts. From an ecumenical perspective, SMCC sees its Catholic identity as a means for a deeper understanding between the Catholic and Non-Catholic communities in Malankara, as it remains a witness to the balance of unity and catholicity. Cyril Mar Baselios writes:

Thus placed within the Universal Church, the Malankara Catholic Church has to witness to the truth of diversity in unity among the Catholics, and being related to the Non-Catholic Malankara communities it has to be before them a persuasive testimonial and witness to the need of unity in diversity. This role is most significant to the promotion of dialogue, mutual understanding and acceptance among the churches envisaged in the ecumenical movement and its activities.<sup>854</sup>

There must, therefore, be on the part of Latin Catholicism a genuine fostering of the authentic spiritual and liturgical traditions of the Malankara Church. On the part of the Malankara Catholic and Orthodox Churches, there must be a recognition of each other as sister churches.<sup>855</sup> “If it [the Reunion of 1930] was the restoration of apostolic heritage and dignity of an apostolic church on the part of the Malankara Church, it was an encounter and dialogue with

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<sup>854</sup> Baselios, “The Ecumenical Role,” 142.

<sup>855</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Note On the Expression “Sister Churches,”* (30 June 2010), nos. 11-12: accessed on March 10, 2014.  
[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20000630\\_chiese-sorelle\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000630_chiese-sorelle_en.html).

an apostolic church on the part of the other individual churches in communion with the Holy See of Rome.”<sup>856</sup> As Patriarch Maximos makes clear:

The [continued] existence of the Eastern Catholic churches is not a trap we set for the Orthodox. They do not represent a transitional stage before final and total latinization, nor a temporary concession to the atavistic forces working in Eastern souls... We must be convinced that Christianity can never accomplish its mission in the world unless it is Catholic; that is, universal not only in law but also in actual fact.<sup>857</sup>

A divided Christian witness is a scandal to non-Christians and damaging to the cause of Christianity. In order to do effective evangelization especially in a country like India, the Christian Churches should give a united witness. The SMCC has a unique vocation to address the wounded Christianity, especially of the Malankara Syrian tradition. As affirmed by John Paul II throughout his encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint*, to materialize this goal a personal conversion is necessary: “The desire of every Christian Community for unity goes hand in hand with its fidelity to the Gospel. In the case of individuals who live their Christian vocation, the Council speaks of interior conversion, of a renewal of mind.”<sup>858</sup> Patriarch Maximos, similarly, argues for the need of conversion on the part of the entire Church. He writes: “some renunciation of self is needed by all churches if they are fully to be what Christ wanted them to be in unity. It is a mystery of renunciation and death, preceding a mystery of renewal and life.”<sup>859</sup> To this end, the SMCC must work for personal conversion and renewal as the constant reference point for ecumenism.

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<sup>856</sup> Baselios, “Ecumenical Role,” 148. Cf. Baselios, “The Reunion Movement,” 178-179.

<sup>857</sup> Sayegh, “Eastern Role in Christian Reunion,” 60.

<sup>858</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Ut Unum Sint* (25 May 1995), 15-17: AAS 87 (1995).

<sup>859</sup> Sayegh, “Eastern Role in Christian Reunion,” 54.

The SMCC sees itself a bridge as well as an instrument of God to work for greater unity in Malankara. It is also the mission of the SMCC to work for the unity of all Churches to give a united witness. Baselios Cardinal Cleemis made this clear in his address to Pope Benedict XVI during the *ad Limina* of 2011: “As an Eastern Church fully living the Catholic communion, we are constantly reminded of our special call to bear witness to the values of our Eastern ecclesial tradition and to the beauty and goodness of our universal communion. This invites us to be in continuous and constructive dialogue with our Eastern Christian brothers and sisters who have not yet been privileged to experience the grace of this communion. Thus ecumenism is one of our major ecclesial concerns.”<sup>860</sup> As noted before, because of the SMCC’s connection with the rest of the Churches in Catholic communion and her identity as an Eastern Church, a synthesis of the realities could be forged through the mediation of the SMCC for the rest of Malankarites.<sup>861</sup>

The Particular Law of the SMCC provides concrete juridical and theological explanations on the need and role of the SMCC in ecumenism. Ecumenism is outlined as a particular vocation of the Church “to foster unity among all Christians especially among the St. Thomas Christians.”<sup>862</sup> The Church also admonishes all its members that they have the right and obligation to be actively involved in the ecumenical apostolate. “This Church relentlessly engages itself to realize the prayer of Jesus, ‘that all may be one.’”<sup>863</sup> The Church also asks, through its working of the Synodal Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious dialogue, to establish ways to promote ecumenical dialogue in the diocesan and local levels. What is most striking in the Particular Law is the recommendation for “A special prayer for the realisation of

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<sup>860</sup> Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, “Address of Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis to Pope Benedict XVI during the *ad Limina* Visit” (24 March 2011). *Malankara: Synodal Acts*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (July 2011), 43.

<sup>861</sup>

<sup>862</sup> *CPCSMCC*, c. 433.

<sup>863</sup> *CPCSMCC*, c. 434.

Church unity shall be included in the daily prayers in our parishes, religious houses, and families.”<sup>864</sup>

The SMCC also actively participates in the working of the Nilackal Eumenical Trust, which is a joint ecumenical effort of the St. Thomas Christians.<sup>865</sup> Nilackal is believed to be one of the Christian communities St. Thomas established, and the site was revived as a place of worship in 1982. This is currently in the reserved forest and the government took special care in granting the site to the Christian community without creating any communal clash, which itself is acclaimed as a great achievement for Indian secularism and democracy. Yet any ecumenical endeavors, in order to yield good results, demand sacrifice and commitment from all those who are involved with it. The WCC, in their report of the New Delhi emphasizes this principle: “The achievement of unity will involve nothing less than a death and rebirth of many forms of church life as we have known them. We believe that nothing less costly can finally suffice.”<sup>866</sup>

### **3.2.3.6 Pluralism, Interreligious Dialogue, the SMCC and New Evangelization**

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church is subject to two kinds of pluralisms in India, namely ecclesial pluralism and religious pluralism. The ecclesial pluralism of India is defined by the existence of three Individual Churches in the Catholic communion.<sup>867</sup> Mutual understanding and

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<sup>864</sup> *CPCSMCC*, c. 422.

<sup>865</sup> Nilakkal St. Thomas Ecumenical Centre Trust works to foster unity among different churches. The Centre is a joint ecumenical project of Catholic, Jacobite, Orthodox, Marthoma and CSI Churches. The Church and the Centre is situated near the famous Sabarimala Shri Ayappa Shrine, in Kerala. The Centre has 40 furnished rooms, conference halls, dining hall and kitchen. It is situated in the middle of forests and is planning to make it an International Ecological Study Centre. For a detailed description of the of the history and functioning of the Ecumenical Trust visit <http://www.nilackaltrust.org/>.

<sup>866</sup> World Council of Churches, *The New Delhi Report: The Third Assembly of World Council of Churches* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 117.

<sup>867</sup> The three Individual Churches in Catholic communion in India are the Latin Church, the Syro-Malabar Church and the Syro-Malankara Church. A common body uniting them in India is The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), which is the permanent association of the Catholic Hierarchy of India, with its head



cooperation between these Churches are needed for evangelization work. But it can pose challenges if conformity and uniformity are considered to be the highest ideal or the mark of meaningful unity. Pluralism is also not a reason to justify divisions in the Church of the past and present.<sup>868</sup> The ecclesial understanding of ‘a Church that breathes with two lungs’<sup>869</sup> is necessary in India for effective evangelization. Mar Ivanios was received into the Catholic Church in a ceremony at the Bishop’s house in Kollam by Bishop Benziger in the presence of the Latin Bishop of Kottar Lawrence Pereira and the Bishop of Changanassery (Syro-Malabar) Mar James Kalassery.<sup>870</sup> This shows that the SMCC became an instrument for being an excellent example of ecclesial pluralism even from the beginning. Once ecclesial pluralism is properly understood, it will lead to healthy results: “Hence the two Oriental Churches too along with the Latin Church can and should take up the task of evangelization with necessary co-ordination among themselves and under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff.”<sup>871</sup>

As religious pluralism is the special challenge facing world religions today,<sup>872</sup> the state of Kerala tries to be faithful to its motto: “God’s own country”<sup>873</sup> - with occasional challenges to it.

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quarters in New Delhi. Its purpose is to facilitate common action of the Hierarchy in matters that affect or are liable to affect the common interests of the Catholic Church in India. The CBCI is at the service of 166 dioceses out of which 29 are Syro-Malabar, 8 are Syro-Malankara and 129 are Latin dioceses. The Catholic Church in India is divided into 30 Ecclesiastical Provinces headed by their respective Metropolitans. Besides, it is divided into 13 Regions which function through the Regional Bishops’ Councils, with a Bishop Chairman, Bishop Secretary and a Priest Secretary. The current president of CBCI is Moran Man Baselios Cleemis, the Major Archbishop-Catholikos of the SMCC. Cf. <http://cbci.in/About-CBCL.aspx>.

<sup>868</sup> Cf. Baselios, “Ecclesial Pluralism and the Mission of the Church in India,” *Emerging Trends*, 113-114.

<sup>869</sup> Pope John Paul II, promulgating the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches wrote: “The Church by God’s providence gathered in the one Spirit, breaths as though with two lungs, of the East and of the West, and burns with the love of Christ in one heart, having two ventricles.” John Paul II, *apostolic constitution Sacri Canonis* (Oct. 18, 1990): AAS 82 (1990), xiv.

<sup>870</sup> Xavier Koodapuzha, *Christianity in India* (Kottayam: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies in India, 1998), 164.

<sup>871</sup> Baselios, “Ecclesial Pluralism and the Mission of the Church in India,” *Emerging Trends*, 128.

<sup>872</sup> Cf. John Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), 88.

Since the SMCC is headquartered in Trivandrum, the State capital, the Church plays a prominent role in keeping this spirit of cooperation among various religions. There exists a *Santhi Samithi* (Peace Council) in Trivandrum operating in a Gandhian model to establish peace through the practice non-violence. The organization conducts programs to create awareness against social injustices such as alcohol consumption, harassment of women, corruption, and communalism.<sup>874</sup> Baselios Cardinal Cleemis is one of the four executive members of this *Samithi*, giving the Church opportunity to actively enter into the pluralistic society in India. It is important for us to have an understanding of religious and cultural pluralism in India, not only for a peaceful co-existence of people of different religions, but also to bring the message of Christ in a friendly manner. Both ‘arrogance’ and ‘ignorance’ on a missionary’s part can hinder our cause of disseminating the Gospel and as it is also not the way of the Church.<sup>875</sup>

The existence of a ‘non-persecuted Church’ in India is a clear sign that St. Thomas Christians had a peaceful existence with their neighbors of different religions by understanding the reality of religious pluralism. But this has been changed and contemporary India is witnessing religious violence in an unprecedented level.<sup>876</sup> Fundamentalism has grown to the level of demolishing of places of worship, vandalizing and looting institutions, disrupting prayer

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<sup>873</sup> Corinee Dempsey, *Kerala Christian Sainthood: Collisions of Culture and Worldview in South India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3.

<sup>874</sup> Express News Service, “Political Parties Urged to Refrain from Violence,” Thiruvananthapuram, (14 June 2012), accessed on March 13, 2014.  
[www.newindianexpress.com/cities/thiruvananthapuram/article542501.ece?service#.Uxb40eddViY](http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/thiruvananthapuram/article542501.ece?service#.Uxb40eddViY).

<sup>875</sup> It is difficult to analyze here all the related issues of religious pluralism because of the complexity and lack space.

<sup>876</sup> The demolition of Babri Masjid and destruction of several Christian churches in the states of Gujarat, Orissa etc. are citable instances. The burning of Australian missionary Staines and his two sons is another instance of communal frenzy. For the list of attack on Christians, Cf. S. Kalidas, “Christians under siege”, *India Today* (June 26, 2000): 30- 31; and Praveen Swami, “A catalogue of crimes,” *Frontline* (February 12, 1999):13-15.

meetings, attacking priests and nuns and killing missionaries and innocent people. In some of the public pronouncements SMCC has already declared that the Church wants to build culturally integrated communities in her evangelization works: “In the context of the cultural pluralism of India, she promotes living one’s faith and ideals in the local cultural situation, so that in conformity with the culture of the land, she becomes a homogenous community. As far as St. Thomas Christians are concerned, their living was always in conformity with the Indian tradition of language, food, clothing, art, architecture, ideas, ethics etc.”<sup>877</sup> Another recognition of the Church playing a greater role in the pluralistic culture of India in maintaining communal harmony is manifested in the recent appointment of Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, the Major Archbishop to the National Integration Council. He was chosen from among the category of prominent public figures, by the Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh.<sup>878</sup>

### 3.2.3.6.1 Inter-religious dialogue

Interreligious dialogue is the right response to religious plurality and it happens on a personal as well as a community level. St. Thomas Christians in India adopted this attitude, knowing that understanding each other is not an option but a necessity. This approach developed from an awareness that we are not alone in this world and that we are called to cooperate with people of other religious traditions. The Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference (FABC) also proposes a ‘triple dialogue’ for the Church to develop a positive relationship with our neighbors in the diverse culture of Asia, especially when it comes to evangelization – dialogue with 1)

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<sup>877</sup> Editorial, “Mission Theology of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church”, *Malankara*, 10.

<sup>878</sup> The NIC was constituted to combat the evils of communalism, casteism, regionalism, linguism and narrow-mindedness as a follow up of National Integration Conference under the then Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in September- October, 1961. First meeting of NIC was held in 1962. The last meeting of the NIC with 148 members was held on September 10,2011. Cf. Press Information Bureau, Government of India. <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=102905>.

religions, 2) cultures and 3) the poor people of Asia.<sup>879</sup> This was always a “living theology” which was part of the evangelization process of St. Thomas Christians for centuries.<sup>880</sup>

The SMCC has a special role and place in the Indian religious context with her strong, genuine, and deep-rooted religious convictions. The Church has a Synodal Commission for attending to the issues related to interreligious dialogue. The Particular Law of the Church states: “Considering the multi-religious context of India, the Synodal Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue shall enter into dialogue with other religions in view of fostering religious harmony. It shall foster unity of action among the different religions, linguistic groups, cultures and other groupings of the society.”<sup>881</sup> It doesn’t mean that the Church has diluted the message of Christ or its proclamation just to make herself more acceptable to others. Her duty to preserve the faith of the Church remains in her interreligious relationships. As bishop Arturo Bastes of the Philippines writes: “It is not true that the uniqueness of Christ as savior is hurtful to other religions. It is our arrogant way of proclamation that turns them off. In dialoguing with others we have to empty ourselves in order to accept the other. Prayer and self-renunciation is integral to the process of dialogue because the truth should go not only from head to head but from heart to heart.”<sup>882</sup>

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<sup>879</sup> Cf. Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference of India (FABC), “For All the Peoples of Asia” (Manila: IMC Publications, 1984), 216.

<sup>880</sup> M. M. Thomas writes: “The criticism one hears so often, that Indian Christians have not yet produced any theology, only means that they have not produced *summae* or *Church Dogmatics*. But living theology, which arises as tools for confessing the faith and fulfilling the mission in specific situations, is often fragmentary and partial in character. It is the raw material for systematic theology. It is foolish to underrate it simply because it has not resulted in systems” M.M. Thomas. “Forward,” in *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Robin Boyd, rev. edi. (Delhi: ISPCK, 2004), vi. Cf. Israel Selvanayagam, “Waters of Life and Indian Cups: Protestant Attempts at Theologizing in India,” in *Christian Theology in Asia*, et al. Sebastian and C. H. Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 41-70.

<sup>881</sup> *CPCSMCC*, c. 437.

<sup>882</sup> Bishop Arturo M. Bastes, “From the Synod for Asia,” in *National Catholic Reporter* (May 4, 1998), accessed on March 13, 2014. [http://natcath.org/NCR\\_Online/documents/synod1.htm](http://natcath.org/NCR_Online/documents/synod1.htm).

During the *ad Limina* visit in 2011 the SMCC bishops reiterated to Pope Benedict XVI the Church's commitment both for evangelization and dialogue: "...presenting the beauty of the Gospel message to these our brothers and sisters with the experiential richness of our personal ecclesial tradition is an equally important concern for us. Hence we are impelled to be in constant dialogue with the various religions and cultures around us. This makes it necessary that our missionary possibilities are not limited by any geographical boundaries in India."<sup>883</sup> This reflection is generated from the conviction that recognizing the positive values in other religions in no way undermines the uniqueness of the SMCC, nor does the uniqueness of our mission undermine the importance of dialogue.<sup>884</sup> Here the Church is pursuing a missionary style in line with the Oriental tradition and the rich cultural heritage of India. "...The Christians enter dialogue with other religions not only to teach but to learn, to learn, possibly, what they had never heard before."<sup>885</sup> The presence of Muslim and Hindu religious leaders and political leaders belonging to different parties in addition to an official delegation from the government of India, at the Consistory ceremony of Cardinal Baselios Cleemis at St. Peters was a clear sign of the SMCC's friendly relationship with the 'wider community' in India. Later, the appointment of Cardinal Cleemis to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue<sup>886</sup> gave the Church not only recognition for what it is doing locally, but an opportunity to apply this on a global scale.

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<sup>883</sup> Cleemis, "Address of Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis to Pope Benedict XVI during the *ad Limina* Visit," *Malankara*, 43.

<sup>884</sup> Cf. Joseph Thekkekarott, "On the Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Church," *Journal of St. Thomas Christians*, vol. 19, no. 1 (January-March 2008): 34.

<sup>885</sup> Paul Knitter, "Catholic Theology of Religions at a Crossroads," *Concilium*: 183 (1980), 102.

<sup>886</sup> Vatican Radio, "New Cardinals Appointed to Vatican Curia," 2013-02-01, accessed on March 14, 2014. <http://www.news.va/en/news/new-cardinals-appointed-to-vatican-curia>.

### 3.2.3.7 Inculturation, the SMCC and New Evangelization

The SMCC, like the other St. Thomas Christian communities, lived with the socio-cultural environment of India. The ‘land of religions and cultures’ can easily accommodate any inculturating elements from Christianity. As we have seen in the first part, Christians in India followed many of the traditions of the country and did not consider this to be in opposition to the faith they practiced. Jose Kakkalil writes:

The architecture of the churches resembled the temples, except for a cross on the top. The manner of worship in the churches, the practices like processions, offerings, the way of praying in the church and at home, the rites and ceremonies connected with marriages, and funerals were all similar to those of their non-Christian countrymen. In short, for the expression of their Christian faith and life they simply drew from their own rich cultural milieu.<sup>887</sup>

The Ivanian model of inculturation, which we have seen briefly before, is conducive for the SMCC as it helped the Church to see the people around it without distinguishing caste, creed and religion. He also adopted many of the ‘unharmful’ elements from the Indian culture and religions in founding his religious orders: “Mar Ivanios in his imitation of Christ’s life of prayers and action, adapted many Hindu customs and practices and Christianized them through his personal observances. Moreover, he introduced such practices of the Indian *Sanyasis* in his newly founded Ashram and this helped the *Bethany* monks for a better evangelization among the Hindu brethren. In this way he succeeded in the establishment of an Indian Christian *ashram*.”<sup>888</sup>

According to Brahma-bandhav (Theophilos), a Hindu convert to Christianity, a reorientation of missionary methods in India is necessary: “the Gospel should be preached in all its purity but liberated from the europeanized garb under which it was being presented to

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<sup>887</sup> Jose Kakkalil, “Funerary Rituals and Inculturation can Cultural Practices for the Dead,” in *Liturgy and Inculturation: Introduction*, J. Lamberts ed., (Leuven: Peters, 1996), 110.

<sup>888</sup> Moolaveetil, *The Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, 156-157.

India”<sup>889</sup> In order for the Catholic Church to prove its universality in India, Mar Ivanios believed “ecclesial leaders have the obligation to enlighten the great and ancient Indian culture with the light of the Gospel... It is our duty to proclaim the Christian faith as familiar and acceptable to others. And they have the right to expect so.”<sup>890</sup> The Holy Rule of the Bethany Congregation says: “The realization of the charism in Indian *sanyasa* is to imbibe and safeguard the inner spirit and lifestyle of Indian spiritual tradition in order that the rich Indian culture and *sanyasa* which tends to union with God might be made perfect in Christ”<sup>891</sup>

When the Gospel encounters certain cultures inculturation happens naturally because of the reaction of ordinary people to it. This should not be something imposed from the top to the bottom : “It is actually the people that create a culture. So, only when the Syro-Malabar [and Syro- Malankara] Church involves herself in the life and struggles of people around her that she begins to acquire and understand new cultural elements.”<sup>892</sup> The SMCC also believes that inculturation starts from below: “The Christian community, when it lives the faith in conformity with the culture of the land, will be a homogenous community in the land. St. Thomas Christians lived in conformity with the Indian traditions of language, food, clothing, ideas, ethics, etc. Inculturation is the way of life of the people and it is not merely a matter of theologising.”<sup>893</sup>

Some people often misunderstand that adopting certain names and religious symbolism from Hinduism is the way of inculturation. Inculturation in India is a difficult process. It is also

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<sup>889</sup> E. Gathier, “An Historical Synopsis of Hinduism,” in *Hinduism; The Faith of the Future*, Ram Prasad Mishra ed., (Rome: Unversita Gregoriana, 1963),197.

<sup>890</sup> Mar Ivanios, *Pastoral Letter*, (12 November, 1946).

<sup>891</sup> Order of the Imitation of Christ, *The Holy Rule of the Order of the Imitation of Christ*, no. 1.4.iii.b.

<sup>892</sup> Cf. Thekkekarott, “On the Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Church,” 34.

<sup>893</sup> Editorial, “Mission Theology of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church”, *Malankara*, 8.

difficulty to distinguish between the elements belonging to Indian culture and those belonging to Hindu religion: “To discern whether a particular belief or practice is really cultural and, therefore, secular or it is really Hindu and, therefore, religious is a formidable task”<sup>894</sup> A Hindu might be very upset and might object to Christians adopting their symbols with a different meaning than they give them, just as Christians would react to anyone using a cross in their religious practice. Still, a careful way of adopting liturgical inculturation, according to Kakkallil, is the way to go: “Regarding the question of liturgical inculturation, what is feasible is that every individual Church in India makes honest effort to indianize its liturgy constantly in order to be fully meaningful, relevant and fitting in the varied contexts of its life. Anand Amaladass, an expert in this area, recommends adding Oriental elements to the process of inculturation: “The Oriental tradition is more of bearing God through praying communities. Hence a new missionary style is to be evolved in line with the Oriental tradition and the Indian tradition.”<sup>895</sup> Such a model is offered by the SMCC through *Kurishumala Ashram* in the Archdiocese of Tiruvalla.

### 3.2.3.7.1 Kurishumala Ashram – A SMCC Model of Inculturation

*Kurishumala Ashram*, the first of its kind among Syrian Christians of Kerala,<sup>896</sup> speaks of a rare success story of inculturation. The monastic way of living (Ashram)<sup>897</sup> is as old as

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<sup>894</sup> Kakkallil, “Funerary Rituals and Inculturation can Cultural Practices for the Dead,” 114.

<sup>895</sup> Anand Amaladass, “Dialogue Between Hindus and the St. Thomas Christians,” in *Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Perspectives and Encounters*, Harold Coward ed., (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993), 22.

<sup>896</sup> Michael Casey (the vocation director for the Cistercian Abbey), writes: “In more ways than one the ashram was *sui generis* monastery, quite unlike anything else then existing in the Church. It was practically independent, coming loosely under the authority of the local Syro-Malankara bishop and the Vatican Congregation for the Oriental Churches” Cf. Michael Casey, “Introduction,” in *A Cistercian Spirituality: An Ashram Perspective*, Francis Acharya (Kentucky: Cistercian Publication, 2011), xvi.

<sup>897</sup> Ashram – from the Sanskrit *asrama*, word which also refers to the concept and practice of the four stages of life (*Brahmacharya*: a period of internship, *Grihasthrama*: the stage of the householder, *Vanaprastha*: the stage of the forest-dweller or hermit, and *Sannyasa*: the life of renunciation or asceticism).



Hinduism and it is a common scene in India, even today, of a ‘guru’ followed by many disciples and devotees. *Kurishumala* is an Ashram, which follows the Syro-Malankara liturgy. It is rooted in the *sanyasa* style of monasticism, but is an attempt to inculturate the Church into Indian tradition. *Kurishumala*, which means ‘the mountain of the cross,’ is a genuine attempt to embrace a Christian monastic life into the depth of Indian *sanyasa*.

Francis Mahieu<sup>898</sup> and Bede Griffith<sup>899</sup> founded the *Kurishumala Ashram* in 1958. Francis was a Cistercian monk in Belgium, but was convinced of his call to go to India to facilitate a Christian and Hindu encounter through *sanyasa*. Paul Collins writes that “... Fr. Francis thoroughly embraced the life of a *sannyasi* and fostered innovative developments in liturgical inculturation as well as understanding the ashram as a context for encounter and dialogue.”<sup>900</sup> For him inculturation is not a matter primarily of behavior but of interior disposition and attitude. He used to say that ‘Incarnation’ is better and stronger than ‘inculturation’; it is what Jesus did. So we must incarnate the spirit of the Gospel in India by inculturation.<sup>901</sup>

The evangelization effort in India evaded mysticism as it concentrated on other means and it took a long time for Indian mysticism to meet Christianity. The rich Cistercian spiritual

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<sup>898</sup> Marthe Mahieau-De Praeter, Francis Acharya’s niece (1912-2002) has written a biography of Acharya. Cf. *Kurishumala: Francis Maheiu Acharya: A Pioneer of Christian Monasticism in India*, Cistercian Studies 214 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications), 2007.

<sup>899</sup> Later on Bede Griffith left the order to lead another Ashram, *Shantivanam* on the bank of river Kaveri, in Tamil Nadu. We have briefly talked about him before.

<sup>900</sup> Paul M. Collins, *Christian Inculturation in Indian Liturgy* (Burlington: Agaste Publishing Company, 2004), 85.

<sup>901</sup> Cf. “Memorable Words of Life by Francis Acharya,” Kurisumala Ashram, accessed on March 14, 2014. <http://www.kurisumalaashram.org/Words%20of%20Life.htm>.

experience of Francis Acharya<sup>902</sup> combined with the Christian mystical background and West-Syrian liturgical tradition provided the Indian soil a unique model of inculturation. His community used Acharya's own translations of Syriac texts for the liturgical celebrations because for him inculturation meant celebrating the liturgy every day in an Indianized Malankara Catholic way. His thirst for authenticity made him travel to Iraq to procure original Syriac prayers of the Antiochean rite (the Penqito). He translated selected portions into four volumes totaling 2300 pages: *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*.<sup>903</sup> Michael Casey writes about Acharya: "At the heart there was a contemplative fascination with the mysterious depths of God a great appreciation of the quasi-sacramental channels by which, over the course of a lifetime, the grace of God softens the heart and increases the peace of conversion."<sup>904</sup>

Francis Acharya's monastic life consisted of three elements. 1) Syrian Liturgy: an oriental and essentially poetic liturgy deeply rooted in the thought and language of the Bible, with a vivid sense of the resurrection. 2) Indian Monastic Lifestyle: inculturated, simple, nature-oriented and austere. 3) Benedictine-Cistercian Spirituality: based on the Rule of Saint Benedict with its emphasis on community prayer, manual labor and *Lectio Divina* (meditative, prayerful spiritual reading).<sup>905</sup> In 1998, a few years before Acharya's death, Kurishumala Ashram was incorporated into the Cistercian (Trappist) Order with the status of an Abbey. The light of Christ reflected in the life of Francis Acharya and Kurishumala Ashram continues to help many people to have an inculturated mystical Christian experience in India.

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<sup>902</sup> Acharya is the name that Fr. Francis Mahieu took when he received Indian citizenship in 1968. *Acharya* in Sanskrit means 'the Master,' the one who teaches the disciples.

<sup>903</sup> Francis Acharya, ed., *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, 4 Vols. (Kurishumala Ashram, 1983).

<sup>904</sup> Casey, "Introduction," in *A Cistercian*, xiii.

<sup>905</sup> Kurishumala Ashram, "Francis Acharya: the Karmayogi of Kurishumala Ashram," accessed on March 14, 2014. <http://www.kurishumalaashram.org/Words%20of%20Life.htm>.

### 3.2.3.8 Social Apostolate, SMCC and New Evangelization

The social apostolate is an indispensable part of the evangelizing mission of the Catholic Church, especially in a country like India. The Indian subcontinent contains the largest number of the poor people in the world. Even though there is a dramatic reduction of the number of poor according to the recent statistics of the Government of India, an alarming number of Indians still remain poor.<sup>906</sup> The Church cannot be indifferent when Christ is personified in the form of so many suffering, poor, sick, and homeless people. Poverty, the wide gap between rich and poor, unemployment, communalism and fundamentalism are some of the major social issues facing the country. Various factors contribute to the high poverty rate in India, but our concern here is not of the existence of the poor but of the elimination of poverty from among them. Failing to make the transition from ‘church for the poor’ to the ‘church of the poor’ doesn’t yield much result. The Gospel must be presented as providing an integral liberation for the poor. The effectiveness of Church ministry in this area depends to large extent on understanding and identifying the social, economic and political conditions of the poor: “For the poor, the Good News or the Gospel is the liberation or deliverance from suffering, marginalization and inhuman discrimination.”<sup>907</sup>

The social apostolate of the SMCC is an invariable part of its evangelization mission. The SMCC is trying to practice Jesus’ saying: ‘whatever you did for one of these least brothers of

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<sup>906</sup> As per the estimates of Planning Commission of India, the number of persons living below the poverty line in the country has declined from 400 million in 2004-05 to 270 million in 2011-12. Considering the growth of the population this is a dramatic reduction and a positive development but still a large number of people are experiencing abject poverty. Cf. PTI, “Poverty in India: Number of Poor Down to 27 Crores in 2011-12,” New Delhi: February 5, 2014, accessed on February 10, 2014. <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/poverty-in-india-number-of-poor-down-to-27-cr-in-201112-says-govt/1223386>.

<sup>907</sup> Jose Madappattu, *Evangelization in a Marginalizing World: With Special Reference to the Marginalised Satnamis in the Diocese of Raipur* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1997), 3.

mine, you did for me' (Mt 25: 40) through its social apostolate. It is not just by 'charity' that we take up the cause of the poor, it is also a question of Christian justice where the poor also have a 'right' to good life, which is often denied without them having any control over the situation. According to Cyril Mar Baselios: "Hence it is justice that is fundamental to man's development and the denial of justice is the basic obstruction to development... In its wider aspect, it is a struggle to construct a just human society in which man can live with dignity and in accordance with his God-given destiny."<sup>908</sup> Social evils, including the 'notorious' caste system existing in Indian society, demands the Church to work for justice, peace, and love – for the Kingdom of God: "The social apostolate of the church, in which the centrality and priority of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God announced by Jesus Christ, calling for a change of heart and metanoia, are emphasized, has then, a rightful place, if not the unique chance, in our struggle for constructing or reconstructing a new human society."<sup>909</sup>

In the Gospels Jesus tries to identify himself with the poor, hungry, marginalized and the abandoned. The SMCC is following this path of Jesus and has made considerable progress. These kinds of works are not actually just an "option for the poor" but also a commitment to continue Jesus' own mission. The hundreds of developmental projects being done by the Malankara Church are nothing but an effort to organize the people into a human community, destined to be the people of God, by effecting a real change in them in terms of their life-style towards growth into the image as children of God.<sup>910</sup> The SMCC has categorically said that

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<sup>908</sup> Baselios, "Social Apostolate: An Integral Part of Our Mission," in *Emerging Trends*, 230.

<sup>909</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>910</sup> *Cf. Ibid.*, 231.

truth, justice and integrity in relation to her vocation as a Church in India characterize the commitment to social apostolate:

In the context of injustice and oppression on various levels in the Indian society, the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church takes the form of a Servant-Church. It is nothing but a commitment to the liberative mission of Christ. She cannot keep silence when persons or communities are deprived of justice. So, on the one hand she takes care of such persons and communities by providing quality education, health care service and charitable activities and on the other hand, she speaks for them in the common forum. In this regard, the social involvement and activities of the Church are characterized by truth, justice and integrity and should be authentic expression of love and service as revealed in Jesus Christ. This aim of the Church is actualized by the social service societies of the eparchies of this Church, which are also recognized as non-governmental organizations.”<sup>911</sup>

Thus, the Church works in cooperation with other Churches and religions to raise the living standards of the people. In a way this cooperation also helps to jointly fight against poverty, communalism, and all related issues. Anand Amaladass writes: “Apart from the theological maturity and growing self-confidence that one perceives among Indian Christians, one can also notice that the social situation of India in the form of poverty and communal violence challenges Christians more and more to join hands with other religious communities as collaborators and to make the concept of dialogue a living reality.”<sup>912</sup>

The SMCC has mission areas in every diocese consisting of very poor people who need economic and educational uplifting. The Church also has social service units in all the dioceses which works within a common mission. At the same time: “There are even rash criticisms against those religious and priests engaged in the institutional apostolates. Surely there is some fire under the smoke. It is high time that the Church evaluates her institutional apostolate and

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<sup>911</sup> Editorial, “Mission Theology of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church”, *Malankara*, 11.

<sup>912</sup> Anand Amaladass “Dialogue Between Hindus and the St. Thomas Christians” in *Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Perspectives and Encounters*, ed. Harold Coward, (New York: Maryknoll, 1989), 25.

finds ways and means to correct what has gone wrong in them.”<sup>913</sup> But on a closer evaluation these accusations are unfounded – mainly because of the services the Christian Church has provided to the people of India through these institutions for many years. The high rate of literacy in Kerala, and the achievements in the fields of welfare and healthcare are mainly because of Church’s dedicated service to the community. One way to overcome this criticism is to commit ourselves totally to the cause of Christ and as Amaladoss writes: 1) Build up and be a community that every movement for social justice wants to create through its struggle; 2) Be a place of training where people who wish to engage in service can be trained in ideals, motivation and methods; 3) Play a leadership role in the promotion of social justice in the community.<sup>914</sup>

Some of the recent social apostolate programs bear witness to the social commitment of the SMCC. A recently started housing project (*Snehaveedu* – loving house) aims to provide 1200 homes for the poor people. Of this 850 are newly built and the rest are being renovated. The SMCC’s efforts to break the barriers of religion and caste are very much evidenced in setting aside 50 of these houses for poor people in Hindu and Muslim families. The poor among the Dalit and Nadar communities also occupy a special place in the social apostolate and 150 houses are allocated for them. There are countless other regular social apostolate activities taken up by the dioceses and religious organizations, mentioning all would be exhaustive here. But it is still worth mentioning *Shehaveedu* (loving home) for the mentally challenged people, and St. John Health Services where leprosy, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS patients are rehabilitated.<sup>915</sup>

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<sup>913</sup> Kochuparampil, *Evangelization*, 489.

<sup>914</sup> Michael Amaladoss, “Ashrams and Social Justice,” *Word and Worship*, Vol. 15 (1982), 376.

<sup>915</sup> For a detailed description of the activities of St. John Health Services, <http://www.stjohnshsp.org/about-us.php>.

### 3.2.4 The Praxis of New Evangelization: Obstacles and Opportunities for the SMCC

#### 3.2.4.1 Ecclesial Pluralism

The ecclesial pluralism discussed earlier is a sign of unity, plurality, and universality of the Church of Christ in India but at the same time this brings certain challenges to the SMCC for evangelization. Because of the jurisdictional restrictions<sup>916</sup> and the consequent denial of the right to *ad gentes* mission, it is posing a big challenge to the mission work. The Catholic Church believes that any restrictions placed on the Oriental Churches in their evangelization activities are against the mandate of the Lord and the expressed teachings of the Church. This is because “... the growth of the universal Church is possible only through the growth of the individual Churches.”<sup>917</sup> Compared to the struggles of a few decades back, considerable progress has been made in recent history, but still much needs to be accomplished. The SMCC bishops in their recent *ad Limina* visit echoed the often repeated sentiments of the past to the Holy See: “In this context, the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Major Archiepiscopal Church humbly requests Your Holiness to take personal care in solving the issue of All India Jurisdiction for the Oriental Catholic Churches in India.”<sup>918</sup> But at the same time, there is a frustrated cry from many quarters as to the slow progress in this area. J. Kottukappally writes: “In spite of the fact that Vatican II took a clear and firm stand in regard to the rights of the

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<sup>916</sup> In a well-documented article, Paul Pallath analyzes the development of territorial jurisdictional claims of the Latin and Eastern Churches. He argues that at present, the Latin Church, which extends all over the globe, transcending all national boundaries and embracing all cultures and civilizations, has no territorial limitation. The Eastern Code has not made any objective criteria for the extension of the territory of the Eastern Catholic Churches, the patriarchs and major archbishops have only the possibility of approaching the Apostolic See with petitions for the modification of the territorial boundaries of their Churches. Any decision with regard to the territorial extension depends fully on the supreme authority of the Church, which is exclusively competent for the matter. Cf. “The Principle of Territoriality According to Eastern Catholic Canon Law,” *Iustitia - Dharmaram Journal of Canon Law*, vol. 2, no. 2, (December 2011), 339-363.

<sup>917</sup> Vatican II, decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, (November 21, 1964) 76-85: AAS 57 (1965).

<sup>918</sup> Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, “Address of Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis to Pope Benedict XVI during the *ad Limina* Visit,” *Malankara*, 44.

Oriental Churches, ever since the departure of Cardinal Tisserant, Rome has been dragging its feet in regard to implementing the Council directives.”<sup>919</sup>

### 3.2.4.2 Pastoral Care of Immigrants

Jurisdictional barriers create problems not only for evangelization but also for pastoral care of the migrants. The SMCC has made significant inroads in this area after her elevation to a Major-Archiepiscopal status in 2006.

There is a new exarchate with a resident bishop in New York, USA and an Apostolic Visitor to meet the pastoral needs of the Syro-Malankarites who live outside the state of Kerala.<sup>920</sup> Still, much needs to be done, especially to take care of the pastoral needs of migrants in the Persian Gulf and outside of Kerala. The Latin hierarchy in Europe and North America show exceptional concern in supporting the SMCC in taking care of her immigrant faithful. This attitude also is an example for others.

### 4.2.4.3 Religious and Priestly Vocations

The Catholic Church in India is blessed with priestly and religious vocations. But the signs of a dramatic reduction of these vocations are already beginning to emerge with religious congregations struggling to replace the aging ones. This is not only a Malankara Catholic issue, but also the SMCC is not immune to the rapid changes happening in Kerala. Any decrease in vocations will have an adverse impact on the existing mission works undertaken by the Churches

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<sup>919</sup> J. Kottukapally, “The Rites Controversy: Should the Stalemate Continue,” *Indian Missiological Review* 9 (1987), 74.

<sup>920</sup> According to Baselios Cleemis: “The dynamic growth of our Church has brought us beyond the boundaries of the Indian subcontinent. Today our ecclesial presence is very vibrant in the countries of America, Europe, Africa and also in the Gulf countries. This poses to us new ecclesial and missionary challenges. In the diverse, over-secularized and fast-changing cultures and value-systems that we are surrounded by in these regions, we as a Church are called to bear witness to the perennial values of the Gospels and of our ecclesial tradition. We are called to instill in these cultures a fundamental God-orientedness, to uphold the sanctity of the family, etc. – values that are very specific to the culture that we have inherited.” “Address of Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis to Pope Benedict XVI during the *ad Limina* Visit,” *Malankara*, 44.



in India. There are various reasons behind this change including the transformation of present day family life. Globalization and other issues discussed in the first chapter play a significant role, since many youths immigrate to other parts of the globe looking for better opportunities in life. Families with fewer children and the increasing anti-Christian attitude, with the emergence of secularizing forces in Kerala, are affecting the Churches in Kerala.

The SMCC is already taking steps to counter this menace by strengthening the institution of the family in various ways, and by encouraging families to have more children. One of the pastoral policies of Baselios Cardinal Cleemis is to officiate at the baptism of the fourth child personally, and his auxiliary bishop Samuel Mar Irenius, officiates at the baptism of the third child. Another policy taken at the Synod is to render financial support to educate the children of the poor families: “‘The Gospel of life’ shall be preached in our families. The work of evangelisation shall highlight the obligation to protect the transmission of life encouraging families to have enough children. The third child born in our families which faces financial difficulties will be given free primary education in our institutions and educational scholarship shall be arranged for their higher education.”<sup>921</sup> These measures would help in certain ways in addition to creating an awareness among the people of the gravity of the situation. Also, the Church considers alternative ways to continue the various mission works of the Church especially by educating the Laity to take up non-sacramental works.

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<sup>921</sup> “A Brief Report of the First Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly,” *Malankara*, 38-39.

#### 4.2.4.4 Religious Fundamentalism

The Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights to all its citizens irrespective of caste, color, and creed.<sup>922</sup> Freedom of conscience, free profession of religious faith, and the practice and propagation of one's religion are protected according to Article 25.<sup>923</sup> In recent years fundamentalism has grown to a level of attacking not only the right to profess and practice the faith but also the 'right to exist' as a Christian community in certain parts of India. Jose Palakeel writes: "It would be suicidal to consider the present anti-Christian threats too lightly. We often boast that Church has grown amidst opposition and persecution. It is, however, good to remember that most of the apostolic Churches, including the East Syrian Church, died out faced with sustained pressures. Keeping alive faith and running on 'safe mode'; is not in the interest of growth. We need to do real soul searching to evolve new strategies and tactics to nourish the missions painstakingly built up by the elder generation of missionaries."<sup>924</sup>

An issue related to this is the denial of the privileges given to Dalits and other backward community from among the Christians by the government.<sup>925</sup> The SMCC is in the forefront of arguing for their rights, and believes that it is essential to regain the deserving rights of the Dalit. Baselios Cleemis writes in a Pastoral Letter highlighting the needs of the Dalit community: "For

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<sup>922</sup> Cf. Rajesh Kumar, *Guide to the Constitution of India* (New Delhi: Universal's Publishing Company, 2011), 11. As per Article 15 of the Constitution of India, discrimination against a citizen on the basis of caste, creed, color, sex, religion or place of birth is prohibited. As per Article 16, equality is assured for government employment.

<sup>923</sup> Cf. Peu Ghosh, *Indian Government and Politics* (New Delhi: PHI Learning 2012), 69-70. There is neither a 'State religion' in India nor the Indian state endeavors to establish a religion of its own or patronizing any particular religion.

<sup>924</sup> Jose Palakeel, "A Panaroma of the Present Syro-Malabar Missionary Involvement: A Critical Appraisal," *Journal of St. Thomas Christians*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (January-March 2008): 12.

<sup>925</sup> Prakash Louis writes: "Right from the time, when the Constitutional provisions were being implemented in this country, discrimination was practiced against all the Dalits except those adhere to Hinduism... Thus, the denial of reservation to Dalit Christians since they adhere to Christianity is totally contrary to the rights provided in the Constitution." Prakash Louis, "Caster Based Discrimination of Dalit Christians and the Demand for Reservation" in *Dalit and Minority Empowerment*, Santosh Bhartiya, ed. (New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, 2008), 371.

the progress of the Dalit community and to ensure protection of justice for them, the ‘Dalit Catholic Maha Sabha’ (DCMS) is organized in our Church. It is known to all that under the leadership of ‘The Centre for Public Interest Litigation’, various Christian Communities have approached the Supreme Court in order to redeem the equitable right of reservation of the Dalit Christians.”<sup>926</sup> These efforts are not done in isolation but in coordination with various Church denominations. Considering the complex cultural, religious, and ecclesial situations in India, the SMCC’s way of work is a dialogical one rather than ‘confrontational’. “Likewise the mounting opposition from Hindu fundamentalists as well as anti-conversion legislations and propaganda necessitates a careful dialogical path to evangelization where the Christians and Indianess need to undergo test of fire.”<sup>927</sup> The ‘foreign’ nature of Christianity from the Colonial era always casts a shadow in rest of the Indians’ approach to St. Thomas Christian’s approach dialogue also.

#### **4.2.4.5 The SMCC Assembly on New Evangelization**

The First Major Archiepiscopal Assembly<sup>928</sup> of the SMCC was convoked from September 21 to 23, 2011 at the Catholicate Center, Pattom, Trivandrum. The theme of the Assembly was *Suvisheshakayaya Malankara Suriyani Katholica Sabha* – “Malankara Catholic Church, the Evangelizer”. Each of the Eparchies and Extraterritorial areas of the Church convened their assemblies prior to the General Assembly. Various seminars were also conducted in different levels including one at St. Thomas Aquinas University (Angelicum) in Rome.<sup>929</sup> This

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<sup>926</sup> Baselios Cleemis, *Pastoral Letter*, Prot No CPL 6/2008

<sup>927</sup> Palakeel, “A Panorama of the Present Syro-Malabar Missionary Involvement,” 10-11.

<sup>928</sup> It is a gathering of the representatives of the cross-section of the SMCC to assist the Major Archbishop and the Synod of Bishops in the governance of the Church (CCEO cc. 140-145)

extensive preparation included the publication, distribution and study of *Lineamenta* and *Instrumentum Laboris*.

The official publication of the Synod, *Malankara*, in an editorial writes that the primary purpose of the Assembly is to renew the spirit of evangelization and to raise the level of motivation of all those who are engaged in evangelization related works in Malankara. It is with a pastoral sense the Assembly approached the theme of evangelization:

The mission awareness should percolate through all the layers of Ecclesial life, parishes, men and women religious, educational institutions, MCCL, MCYM, MCA, *Mathruvedi*, *Pithruvedi* and all the other pious associations. Reflections on the motto of the Assembly, “From Experience to Testimony,” led us to make resolution and helped to formulate a five year action plan. The ecclesial assembly addressed the need of individual reunions and the urgency to preach the Gospel to the Non-Christians.<sup>930</sup>

The convening of the Assembly renewed the venerable evangelizing traditions of the Church. That in turn helped to revitalize the ecclesial life of the whole Church. The Assembly made several recommendations and some of them are worth mentioning here. Even though these recommendations are more generic than concrete, it would help to raise the moral of the people as a whole.<sup>931</sup>

- a. The Church will strive for the spiritual renewal of members of the Church and rededicate itself to the cause of nation building.
- b. The Church will raise RS 100 crore rupees in the next five years for social welfare projects.
- c. The Church will take a strong stand to root out corruption in our society.
- d. The institutions run by the Church will foster greater transparency.

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<sup>929</sup> A. J. Boyd, “ProUnione: Working for Christian Unity from the Heart of Rome,” in *La Vita*, Roma (March 25, 2011), accessed on March 10, 2014. <http://prounione.wordpress.com/2011/03/25/syro-malankara-catholic-bishops-at-the-angelicum/>.

<sup>930</sup> Editorial, “The First Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly,” *Malankara*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (December 2011), 11.

<sup>931</sup> “A Brief Report of the First Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Assembly,” *Malankara*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (December 2011), 48-49.

- e. The Church will seek out the hungry and homeless in the areas of its presence and rehabilitate them.
- f. The growth, happiness and peace attained by the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church following Reunion with the Universal Church will be shared with its sister Churches.
- g. The Church, its institutions and families will reduce ‘extravaganza’ and accept simplicity as hallmark.
- h. The Church will mobilize its resources to get rights restored to the Dalit and Nadar brethren who are an integral part of our Church.
- i. Strong awareness and rehabilitation programs addressing social evils like alcoholism and drug abuse will be organized.
- j. The homes and institutions of the Church adopt green technologies to protect the fragile environment.

The participation of the Laity in the Assembly in the parish preparatory sessions is a commendable achievement, in addition to bringing about a general new evangelization impetus. It gave them an occasion to raise their concerns and voice their opinions in the building up of the Church. Baselios Cardinal Cleemis writes that the Assembly was a testimony that the hierarchy, while taking decisions, has to listen carefully to and understand the voice of the people.<sup>932</sup> Thus SMCC proved that the Church is always a living community of the faithful in checking the ‘danger of institutionalizing’.

#### 4.2.4.6 Suvishesha Sangam

The birth of the *Suvishesha Sangam*<sup>933</sup> is a ray of hope and a positive sign of the missionary future of the SMCC. It came as the fruit of The First Malankara Catholic Assembly and could be considered as an answer to the prayers of the people to revive the missionary spirit in Malankara. By strengthening its work the SMCC will be able to supply to the missionary

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<sup>932</sup> Cf. Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, “The Valedictory Message of His Beatitude the Catholicos at the Twelfth Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church,” *Malankara*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (December 2011), 45.

<sup>933</sup> *Suvishesha* in Malayalam means “good news” (For example the Gospel in Malayalam is *Suvishesham*) and *Sangam* could mean an association, a coming together or a meeting point, confluence or union. *Suvishesha Sangam* could literally mean ‘an association to spread the Gospel’ and in a broad sense a “Missionary Movement”.

needs of the Universal Church, in addition to reviving her own spirit. The *Synodal Acts* published in *Malankara* describe the modalities related to *Suvishema Sangam*. This ‘new movement’ is placed under the guidance of the Synodal Commission for Evangelization adding two more bishops, representatives from religious congregations, priests and lay representatives from each Eparchy to the Commission.<sup>934</sup>

It was during the reunion anniversary in the Pathanamthitta Diocese on September 21, 2013 that 28 members of *Suvisesha Sangam* received their ‘mission’ through a simple imposition of hands by Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis. The unofficial pamphlet distributed to the members describes that the aim of *Suvisesha Sangam* is to revive the prodigious spirit, especially of evangelization, present at the initial years of reunion which somehow seems to be lost with the increasing amount of ‘institutionalization’.<sup>935</sup> The mission ardor of Mar Ivanios should be rekindled and the SMCC institutions must be transformed into agents of evangelization. Now efforts are being made to form units in eight dioceses and ETRI. At present, around four thousand members are undergoing training.

The working of *Suvisesha Sangam* goes to the grass-root level. Two men and two women from each parish are selected for the formation, which is given at the fifty two ecclesiastical district centers. These representatives will take up the working of *Suvisesha Sangam* in their own parishes. After visiting each family in their respective parishes, they form a missionary group in their parish from interested people. The final goal is to reach nearly ten thousand people to

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<sup>934</sup> Report, “Twelfth Ordinary Holy Episcopal Synod,” (25-23 September 2011), *Malankara*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (December 2011), 21.

<sup>935</sup> This pamphlet is not published officially since the structure and working of this organization is still in its developing stage. This was made available for this thesis writing by Baselios Cardinal Cleemis and was in Malayalam. The ideas used here are from it but my own translation. But soon there will be some official publication and would be available at Rev. Dr. Antony Kakkanatt, Executive Secretary, Malankara Suriyani Catholica Suvisesha Sangam, Catholicate Center, Pattom, Trivandrum – 695004, Kerala, INDIA.

become missionaries through this formation to the thousand parishes of the SMCC. A Guideline has been distributed to those who are initiated into the *Sangam* in order to achieve the goal and to live in the spirit. Below is a brief summary of this detailed guideline translated from Malayalam.<sup>936</sup>

It includes: an hour reading of the Gospel on a daily basis, frequent reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, selection a spiritual father, and active participation in the activities of the local parish. As mentioned earlier evening and morning prayer in the family are part of the faith culture of Malankarites. Suvisesha Sangam members are asked to observe these prayers in addition to noon prayers. A daily rosary is recited for the increase of missionary vocations, along with Friday morning fasting, complete abandonment of alcohol and drugs, and spending two hours every week performing a special ministry of one's own interest (such as hospital, school, family and prison). There is no development without some material sacrifice. Each missionary is asked to tithe one's time, talent, and money for evangelization work. The guideline asks the members to observe these instructions faithfully and do an examination of conscience on their efforts.

#### **4.2.4.7 Association of Missionaries of Unity, SMCC and New Evangelization**

'Association of Missionaries of Unity' is a spiritual movement started in the SMCC in 1995 by Rev. Dr. Thomas Kulangara, who was greatly influenced by the Focolare Movement's Spirituality of Unity during his studies in Rome.<sup>937</sup> The Association of Missionaries of Unity (AMU) is the umbrella organization under which the main offshoot might be the Children for

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<sup>936</sup> For more information: Rev. Dr. Antony Kakknatt, Suvisesha Sangam.

<sup>937</sup> The extra-ordinary story of Focolare Movement, one of the relatively recent ecclesial movements of the Catholic Church, begins in the war-ravaged city of Trent, Italy. The Focolare Movement was founded by Chiara Lubich in 1943 and is present today in 182 nations and reaches over five million people. Cf. <http://www2.focolare.org/en/>.

Unity, an integral formation program for the children in the mission areas of the SMCC.<sup>938</sup> This movement, with its wide ranging and integral formation programs, accelerates the new evangelization efforts of the SMCC, with obvious results being detected already. The following detailed description clearly manifests its new evangelization potential and underlines the necessity and inevitability of such movements for the effective implementation of the Gospel values in today's world.

'Children for Unity' envisages a conscientization program based on sharing the experiences of consciously living the Gospel of Christ. The goal of this movement is to impart an ongoing formation to children selected from those poorest families who have embraced the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ in recent years. It was also envisaged to provide direction to the people who became Malankara Catholics through the recent missionary endeavors of the Church, as most of them still remain socially and economically backward. Thus the movement aims to facilitate a transformation of their way of thinking by a systematic and deliberate method of living the Gospel of Christ.

All these training programs are oriented to generating in the minds of children a new culture of sharing. Sharing with much love creates unity. Unity empowers the children to tread the path of integral progress. The children included in the program come from families that are not only poor and socially backward but also are ridden with so many problems, such as centuries-old caste discrimination and consequent psychological complexes, drug addiction, and separation of the parents. This movement provides them with a new identity that they are all

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<sup>938</sup> Much of the information provided here is obtained through emails from Rev. Dr. Thomas Kulangara, the founder of the Movement. There is no published material on the establishment or the working of the movement. I was part of the movement in the initial stages and later in 2008 wrote a paper for a personal testimony on new evangelization experience at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, USA under the direction of Dr. Ralph Martin. Information used in that paper is also included here. For further details: Rev. Dr. Thomas Kulangara, Unity House, Chittazha, Vattappara (P.O.), Trivandrum- 695028, Kerala, India.



children of God, so much loved by the Heavenly Father and that they are called to communicate this divine love to others. They are enabled to grow in the consciousness that God has given them a mission to work whole heartedly for the unity and integral progress of so many brothers and sisters around them who are crushed under caste discrimination, and so many self-defeating and divisive tendencies.

The children and youth who are organized in unity groups come mainly from the parishes of the Major Archdiocese of Trivandrum. At present there are around 70 such groups with about twenty to thirty children in each group. These groups are organized in four zones, namely: Chittazha, Idanji, Ponneduthakuzhy and Karette – each with unity house. Each zone has an animator and a lay missionary appointed by the director of AMU. At present (2014) around 1200 children participate in training programs through these units. The task of the volunteer is to be in constant contact with the children, visit their houses, bring them for unity camps, collect their savings, and conduct the weekly unity meetings. During the unity meetings in their parishes the children read and meditate on the Word of Life for the month, share their experiences of living the word, read and discuss Christian magazines like *Christeen*, make prayers of intercession, sing and play, and also do some activities of service. The children of every unity group are offered three unity camps at the center each year. Usually these camps last for two days and include various formation programs, including personal counseling and career guidance. The camps offer them a wonderful occasion to practice the art of love, to live in mutual love and unity and to form themselves as candidates for universal fraternity.

Living the Word of Life is the basic methodology adopted for the formation of the Children for Unity. The monthly Bible verse, including a meditation on the text and suggestions to live it in their concrete life situations, constitute their basic spiritual formation. Living the

Word of Life in a collective way and sharing the experiences of living it with one another make them realize the special presence of Jesus among them. Thus, Jesus becomes the element of Unity for the Children for Unity. The children try to live the Word of Life by remembering it as often as possible during the day, translating it into concrete actions as occasions arise. Some of the practical assignments for the children include: a) writing a letter to the unity house describing some experiences of living the Word, b) doing as many good deeds as possible during the day and rejoicing over the grace by which these good deeds are done and c) accepting every suffering that comes on the way, embracing Jesus forsaken.

Besides their formation in the parish units, children and youth are given residential formation at the unity centers, in living the spirituality of unity. This year (2014), there are 30 girls (aged between 7 and 19) in the Chittazha unity house, 18 boys (studying in High and Higher secondary Schools) in Unity Ashram, 10 boys (aged between 7 and 13) in Snehabhavan, and 4 youths (technical studies) in Snehadeepa. Up to this point around 150 youths have received technical/professional education, around 100 girls have undergone different vocational courses, and 5,000 children altogether have profited from our training programs. Most of these children are now grown up and serve in their respective parishes in various ways.

#### **3.2.4.7.1 New Evangelization Elements**

‘Learning by doing’ is the methodology of AMU, and in all the unity houses a “bread labor” (Cf. Gn 3: 9; 2, Thes 3:10 and 1 Thes 4:11) program is implemented. It is a conscious attempt to foster the culture of work among youth. AMU aims at liberating these children from poverty and unemployment through this new “culture of work” which is counter-cultural in the society in which they live. The children residing in the unity houses work each day for 1-2 hours

on the farm or in the house. This also has a spiritual dimension, as they are encouraged to maintain a family atmosphere through praying, working, eating, and sharing their lives together.

‘Snehadeepa House’ for the professional training of boys after 10<sup>th</sup> grade is specifically dedicated to skill development programs of the male youth. The present living facility is made available to AMU by the late Major Archbishop Cyril Mor Baselios for technical education of the youth. In this house the youth are given formation in a new culture of work based on Gospel values. It is a form of living out the Gospel, and is a venture of new evangelization. The boys go to the nearby Franciscan Jayamatha ITI for their technical classes, and receive a spiritual and missionary formation from the Snehadeepa House. A missionary couple residing in the house looks after the formation of these boys. The school fees for their studies are given as loan from the unity movement and the accommodation is free. But the boys work for around 2 hours every day and earn the money needed for their food expenses. Many of these boys serve as missionaries to visit and animate our children’s groups in the villages.

‘Youth for New Evangelization’ is a new initiative of AMU began in 2007. ‘Teens for Unity’ volunteers are invited to dedicate themselves as active evangelizers to undertake the various missionary tasks of the unity movement. The members of this team come together on every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday for training in mission theology, spirituality, and praxis. They undertake various missionary tasks such as conducting unity camps in the villages and at the centers, visiting unity groups and evening schools, and serving as a task force for any emerging work.

There are several lay people serving as full time missionaries and this is developing into another branch for AMU. In the past the work of the movement was more dependent on the free and generous service of the sisters of different congregations. In the future these lay missionaries

would take it up in addition to the youth who offer their service as full timers in the unity houses. That process has already begun through these ‘Lay Missionaries’.

There are nearly 30 ‘evening schools’ run by AMU in the villages. They provide much-needed motivation for the children, who mainly come from backward communities, to study. Rather than watching Television in the neighborhood in the evenings, AMU encourages the children to come together and study for two hours under the guidance of a teacher. The program of the school includes reading the Word of Life and some singing and recreation.

On an experimental basis AMU started 20 ‘summer schools’ in 2007, to teach the most deserving children the basic skills of reading and writing. The inspiration for ‘summer schools’ came from AMU’s discovery that many children in primary and middle schools were not able to read and write. The four-hour study program includes a meal, and is considered a success as around 2,000 children have benefited from it.

AMU’s ‘saving and sharing program’ is intended to encourage the children to have a mentality of simple and thrifty living in order to save for the future. Their simple savings are collected on a weekly basis, deposited in their account, and are given back to them with interest at the completion of their schooling in order to use for their future studies. AMU helps them find loans for their future study, depending on the need and nature of their future study.

#### **3.2.4.7.2 Efforts to Establish as an Ecclesial Movement**

The initial directions and permissions to begin the work of AMU were given by bishop Lawrence Mar Ephraem (administrator of SMCC in 1994) and later Cyril Mar Baselios, the Archbishop of Trivandrum. After Baselios Cardinal Cleemis became the Major Archbishop of the Malankara Catholic Church, he suggested the name “Missionaries of Unity” and began efforts to formulate the new statutes of the Missionaries of Unity as per the canons regarding

“apostolic societies” from the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. Some women candidates also arrived, who were attracted to the mission apostolate of AMU and wanted to dedicate their life for Christ and his Kingdom. The Prefect of the Congregation advised Cardinal Baselios to confer alternative status to the women such as “virginis consecrate” (CCEO can 570) or “consociation Christifidelium” (CCEO cc 573-583) because the process to establish apostolic societies is so lengthy. Meanwhile, five candidates who completed the formation program made a promise of chastity, poverty, and obedience before the Major Archbishop on February 28, 2014, during the Mass at the tomb of Servant of God Mar Ivanios. Now they are fully engaged in the ministry of AMU and undergo further training in deepening the spirituality of the movement.

#### **3.2.4.8 Santhi Ashram (A Place of Peace and Holiness)**

*Santhi Ashram* is a small monastic community of Ashram life initiated under the leadership of Swami Crispin Acharya<sup>939</sup> in Marthandom diocese<sup>940</sup> of the SMCC. The Ashram is located near the Southern tip of India (Kanyakumari), a sacred location as three seas merge together here – the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. This is famously known as *Thriveni Sangamam* (confluence of three seas). Crispin Guru, in his Ashram life, also tries to combine Indian Sanyasa with Christian monastic spirituality in contemplation and action.

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<sup>939</sup> Swami Crispin Acharya in telephone discussion with the author, March 14, 2014. Information from a souvenir published on the Golden Jubilee of the Ashram in 2002 is also used here. But that information is specifically cited. For further information: Fr. Crispin Acharya, Santhi Ashram, Mukkadai Dam Road, Boothapandy 629 852, Kanyakumari Dt., Tamil Nadu, INDIA.

<sup>940</sup> The diocese of Marthandom in Tamil Nadu state with seventy-five thousand faithful and a bishop from their own community is the result of intense mission work of the SMCC: “The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in the Eparchy of Marthandom is a fully inculturated, indigenised, and culturally and linguistically integrated Church in Tamil Nadu. As vocations to priesthood and religious life came up from the newly-evangelised, the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in Tamil Nadu became self-supporting and able to undertake new missionary endeavours. The Eparchy has itself become a mother of many missionaries. Today, the Eparchy of Marthandom with over 75000 Faithful is a shining example of a mission Eparchy in the Catholic Church.” Cf. Editorial, “Mission Theology of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church,” *Malankara*, 11.

He believes that the life and spirituality of Martha and Mary of Bethany (Cf. Lk 10: 38-42) could be combined into serving Jesus in the present world.

The life of contemplation is practiced by ‘living in the world’ and in serving those who mostly need the touch of Christ, without attaching oneself to the world. Here, contemplation is an act of total love and surrender to God, and then extending that love to the neighbor by seeing Jesus in them. Thus, the monastic Ashram life is combined with a home for the aged, who are poor, suffering, and abandoned by the society. At present there are 35 people living in the house including Hindus, Muslims, and Christians from all denominations. These are physically and mentally handicapped men who have no one to care for them, and in the many years of service, 58 of them experienced a peaceful death in the Ashram.

There are two other ‘candidates’ (Sachidandanda and Sebastian), who have been with Crispin Guru for many years lead the Ashram life, and at the same time help him in take care of the day-to-day affairs of the house. Besides following a rigorous practice of the liturgical life of the SMCC, the community spends the day before the Blessed Sacrament (6:30 AM to 7:30 PM) as they take turns between ‘work and prayer’. Crispin Guru goes out to the neighborhood after morning Mass to collect the needed food, money, and other necessary materials for the daily running of the house. This mendicant practice has its place both in Christian and Hindu traditions, and is seen as a sign of total renunciation of the world and dependence on God. Their daily donors include Hindus, Muslims and Christians of all denominations, who also occasionally come to the house to help them out. Crispin Guru, in his simple and humble way, says: “I am very much encouraged that the people of this area are so much attracted towards us. It is also a place someone can go without previous information and live peacefully.”<sup>941</sup>

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<sup>941</sup> Swamiji Crispin, “Santi Ashram: A Place of Peace and Holiness,” in *Kaanal Vari: Silver Jubilee Memorial Souvenir (1987-2012)*, George Thavarathil, ed., (Mukkadal, 2012), 30.

Lawrence Mar Ephraem, the first bishop of the diocese of Marthandom (then the auxiliary of Archdiocese of Trivandrum), invited Crispin Guru and gave the initial permission to start his work on February 2, 1987, in Bhoothpandy, Tamil Nadu. Benedict Mar Gregorios gave him a house belonging to the Archdiocese, and a priest from Kottar diocese later gave him a portion of the money to buy the surrounding land. This was a 'dream come true' in the work and prayer life of Crispin Guru. As a young boy he wanted to live for Christ, inspired by the reading of the life of St. Francis Assisi. This was nourished by his teacher, who was a religious sister. He lived with the Franciscan brothers for 15 years in Nalanchira, Trivandrum, and later with Francis Acharya at Kurishumala for 7 years, to deepen his spirituality and grow in contemplative life. He attended formal theological classes at St. Mary Mary's Malankara Seminary before his ordination. According to Crispin Guru: "We started our Santhi Ashram in this place quite and calm mountains and fields, very well suited for our monastic Ashram life; home for the aged and above all; we doing that the people here are very poor, who deserve, our care, attention, spiritual guidance, as well as loving care for their day today life."<sup>942</sup>

The community now follows the Benedictine rule with a Franciscan simplicity and detachment. It is his earnest hope that eventually the community will develop into a pious association in Malankara and even further. It is already turning into another SMCC way of evangelization in India with its contemplative and action oriented mission. Many priests, and people from all religions of the surrounding areas, come not just to commune with God but also to serve the needy people. Of the 35 residents, this year eight of them are being given lessons in the faith as they have expressed their desire to become Catholics. He initially dissuades them to

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<sup>942</sup> Ibid.

make sure that they are making their decision based on their conscience rather than any external factors.

In a simple but a profound manner, Crispin Guru and his Santhi Ashram in the SMCC, bear witness to the love of Christ and carry out his mission. Crispin Guru writes: “They come to our Ashram to listen to us, to get our blessing, and have free talk with us. They invite us to visit their families.”<sup>943</sup> It is a radical way of life but is also the way of Jesus. The people appreciate the life of *Sanyasis* here, not thinking so much of our religion and caste. ‘From the time, we entered this village; we have been experiencing a different atmosphere. They began to love us, and slowly we are well accepted in this village.’<sup>944</sup> According to Karl Rahner: “The Christian of the future will be a mystic or he or she will not exist at all...by mysticism we mean... a genuine experience of God emerging from the very heart of our existence.”<sup>945</sup>

#### 4.2.4.9 Mar Ivanios Missiological - Theological Formation Center

The genesis of the Missiological-Theological Center (MTC) is unique in the history of the SMCC and the only fully missionary oriented formation center in the recent history of the Church, which was started in the year 1998.<sup>946</sup> Its *sui generis* is based on the fact that this missionary movement stems from the deep Christ experience of a person who was formerly a Hindu. MTC also tells a personal story of someone who is carried away by the love of Christ, and then burns with the desire to share that love story with the rest of the world.

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<sup>943</sup> Ibid.

<sup>944</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>945</sup> Karl Rahner, *The Practice of Faith: A Handbook of Contemporary Spirituality (Praxis des Glaubens)* (New York: Cross Roads, 1983), 22.

<sup>946</sup> The information about this movement is gathered from telephone and E-mail conversations of the author with Sr. Namita SIC. She has written nearly ten books in Malayalam but those are mainly for the formation program and don't contain any information on the origin and working of the MTC. For more information: Dr. Sr. Namitha SIC, Mar Ivanios Missiological Theological Centre, Bethany SNagar, Nalanchira PO, Trivandrum-695 015, Kerala, INDIA



Sr. Namita SIC was born in a Hindu family in Mukkola, Trivandrum and was a regular visitor of the Temples in her young age. Even though she lost her parents while she was in college, she continued to study and obtained three Master Degrees (Economics, History and Sociology). She was teaching in a Post-Graduate Study Center before encountering Christ in 1983 at the age of 23. During that time she was staying in one of the hostels run by the Bethany Sisters of the SMCC in Trivandrum for one year. There, she was not ready to imitate her Hindu friends who used to pray in the chapel of the Bethany hostel, rather she used to go to the famous Hindu Temple in Attukal, Trivandrum. Nearly one year after the stay there, she had the experience of Jesus visiting her in a mysterious way and taking her to the chapel. This Christ experience granted her the taste of a mystical union with him. That was just the beginning of the joy she would be sharing for the rest of her life. In her own words: "I have experienced a very personal intimacy, intense love and direct contact with my Lord Jesus. We are always having dialogue and mutual sharing of Love." She testifies that she did not go in search of Jesus Christ, but he came in search of her. Finally, after a long struggle Sr. Namita, together with her four brothers and sisters, joined the Catholic Church by receiving baptism in a parish at Thamalam, in the SMCC.

After receiving baptism the Lord, in spite of her strong resistance, invited her to become a religious sister to spread the Gospel. But the call was so strong that her resistance could not withstand God's power. Her final refusal to join the convent was overcome by another personal encounter with Christ, and the gift of a mystical experience of Christ in 1986. When she decided to join the convent, her life was filled with 'wind and storm' both externally and internally. Finally, she reached a stage in which nothing could withstand her desire to fully embrace Christ.

At the age of 30 in 1989, after long internal deliberations to join many congregations, she finally decided to become part of the Bethany Congregation, attracted also by the ideals of Mar Ivanios. Religious formation in the convent, later mission works, and theological studies led her to dig deeper into the spirituality of the SMCC and the Universal Church. Her superiors and the Bethany Sisters whole-heartedly supported her endeavors. The final conviction to begin MTC came with her doctoral study at St. Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore. She did the research under Rev. Dr. Lucien Legrand MEP on: "A New Paradigm for Evangelisation in the Third Millennium: In the Light of Mission in the Gospel of St. John and the early Upanishads," which propose a holistic-mystical-model of mission. Legrand writes in his 'forward' to her published doctoral dissertation that theological disciplines are fragmented and tend to move in different directions losing the right perspective. So Sr. Namitha's work provides a high level of Biblical competence with missiological and Indological perspective: "The outcome is a work of great originality which opens refreshingly new perspectives as regards both the exegesis of the Gospel and the meaning of mission... Sr. Namita is convinced that the age of mission has not come to an end. A rich blend of scholarship, of enthusiasm and of spiritual depth, her reply deserves all our attention."<sup>947</sup> Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios also echoes similar sentiments:

Amidst the challenges of modernity and in the context of socio-religious pluralism how can we take part in the mission of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, so as to share the fulness of life to humanity? The Proposals of the New Paradigm for Evangelisation may give a genuine response to this question. Sr. Namita is firmly convinced of the need for Christian Mission today... The Holistic approach of Sr. Namita deserves special attention today. It is certainly an initiative that deserves to be noted and pursued.<sup>948</sup>

In light of this study, Sr. Namita developed a mystical model of mission and a formation program based on Scripture, Eastern Christian liturgical and spiritual traditions, Indian

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<sup>947</sup> Namitha, *A New Paradigm for Evangelisation in the Third Millennium: In the Light of Mission in the Gospel of St. John and the early Upanishads*, (Bangalore: St. Peter's Pontifical Institute Publications, 2000), xi.

<sup>948</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

background and the missiological vision of Mar Ivanios. She also discussed this matter with Fr. Tomy Thadathil, a fellow Malankarite studying at St. Peter's who was appointed as the first director of MTC (sadly, he passed away in 2005). The Synaxis of the Bethany Sisters gave permission to start such a formation Center and the former Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios whole-heartedly encouraged it. Thus the MTC was officially begun in 1998 with the motto: "towards the fullness of life in the Triune God".

The courses in the training program are designed to give a deep experience of Christ through a contemplative approach to the study of the Word of God, Oriental Christian liturgical, spiritual and theological traditions, the Mysteries of Christian Faith, and a holistic mystical approach to mission theology and praxis. The main beneficiaries of the training program are religious sisters and the people of the SMCC who are engaged in various missionary activities. A two-year program was designed for religious sisters as a residential program: 50 sisters have benefited from this program. More than 100 people and 50 sisters have taken advantage of the two-year evening courses. Besides this, in the last ten years 500 sisters and 2,000 people have attended various courses and retreats. With the help of the trained sisters and lay people on her team, Sr. Namita has conducted house visits and evangelization programs in 100 parishes of the SMCC. At present about 500 sisters and 1,000 lay people are participating in the formation programs and missionary activities of MTC. Those who participate deepen their relationship with Christ and work to transform all the areas in which they are serving.

The evangelization experience of Sr. Namita is a great testament of God working through a humble person. She is also a witness to the SMCC's evangelization work in the mission areas of the Church. She joyfully shares her personal experience of Christ, and proclaims the Word of God and Christian faith in an experiential way so that all people can understand and benefit from

it. When the rest of the Malankarites can share her joy and enthusiasm in knowing and proclaiming Christ, the new evangelization work of the SMCC will achieve its zenith. Sr.

Namita's life story reminds us of the words of St. Paul:

Consider your own calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. It is due to him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord." (1 Cor 26: 31).

#### **3.2.4.10 Final Reflections**

The SMCC should adopt certain elements of mission in order to be successful:

1. **A Call to Witness:** All the theoretical expositions come down finally to the conclusion that witness is the first and best form of evangelization. The message is transmitted fully when the messenger's life conforms to what has been proclaimed. The missionary's life style should reflect that of Christ. The SMCC should be able to evangelize India by changing it from within through the witness of personal holiness by her people and leadership. In the complex cultural-religious situation of India different approaches should be adopted.
2. **Transform Institutions:** The SMCC is blessed with proud institutions as their pioneers of the reunion movement concentrated on educating not only the Malankarites but also society at large. This provided a 'healthy influence' of the SMCC in the public arena. In recent times there is a tendency to highlight the Church as using these institutions more as means for material beneficence than as a way to serve society. Various factors, including anti-Christian attitudes and religious fundamentalism, play their role in creating this image. Another reason is the economic disparity between various religions and the

fact that it might take great effort and time for many non-Christian communities to build up institutions like those of the Christians. Looking from a critical point of view, it is time for the Church to evaluate the nature of the SMCC's evangelization and witness of values through institutions. A deep-rooted spirituality and a strict commitment to the social teachings of the Church might bring more credibility to the Church's work. Mar Ivanios has warned that in the course of time the practical side of evangelization action has the possibility of losing its vitality. The decline might come when selfishness and a craving for public recognition usurp the hearts of the members of the Church.<sup>949</sup>

3. **Inculturation:** Inculturation is always a 'heated topic' in the Indian Church, and there is a look of 'suspicion' whenever this topic is discussed in ecclesiastical circles. The Church has not moved a lot further since the time of Mar Ivanios in exploring elements of Indian culture especially when it comes to liturgical inculturation. It is true that the SMCC belongs to the Antiochene liturgical family. But at the same time it is primarily the "Indianness" which defines the Church, only then comes the "Antiocheneess". Without stepping into 'syncretism', the Church must appropriate some of the harmless customs and ceremonies of India into its Christian worship. One such example is the frequent use of the word "pooja" (meaning worship or adoration in Sanskrit) to designate *Holy Qurbana* which even Mar Ivanios has used in his Pastoral Letters.
4. **A Call to Conversion:** The SMCC is a small but a dynamic Church with great missionary zeal and potential. Unless proper care should be taken to keep up the momentum, "the sense of sufficiency" can catch up with the Church with her having become a Major Archiepiscopal Church and with the other ecclesiastical honors granted

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<sup>949</sup> Cf. Mar Ivanions, *Girideepam*, 59.

to her by the Universal Church. A way to counter such ‘temptation’ is to undergo constant conversion to commit the Church to the initial missionary spirit of Mar Ivanios and other leaders. This is the new evangelization for the SMCC: The call of the Universal Church is challenging the SMCC to better equip herself for the evangelization of rest of India. Our work will never be completed until the loving message of the Gospel is preached to the people who have not heard it before.

5. **Mission Abroad:** The SMCC has already begun to explore her external frontiers for evangelization work. Her presence in the missionary areas of India, Africa, the Middle East, and other places is a positive sign. It is time to take up more challenges and expand areas of mission work: “One sure way to boost the morale and evict enthusiasm is opening up new frontiers of the Gospel through diversification of ministries through creative and innovative ways.”<sup>950</sup> It was not because of the power or superiority of what the Church preaches, nor because of the presence of massive institutions (even when many people appreciate it) but because of the witness and service of Christians like Mother Teresa and charismatic leaders of the SMCC in Kerala.
6. **Prayer life of families based in Scripture:** The prayer life of a Christian community is the knot that binds them to God and helps them to face challenges on all levels. One of the admirable traditions of the SMCC is the prayer life of the community, especially the daily reading of the Bible along with their evening and morning prayers. “The divine office as an aid to union with God is always held in high respect in the Malankara tradition.”<sup>951</sup> It is the parent or the grandparent who takes the initiative to teach the young

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<sup>950</sup> Jose Palakeel, “A Panaroma of the Present Syro-Malabar Missionary Involvement,” 12.

<sup>951</sup> Kulapurath, “Liturgy as a Means of Union with God” in *The Theological Vision of Mar Ivanios*, 120.

ones the basic lessons of prayer in the family even before maturing to the age of catechism. The recent emergence of Charismatic movements also has strengthened this age-old tradition. This faith formation beginning in the family affects the lives of the people and the Church supports it with catechism. Cyril Mar Baselios writes that this way of faith life is indicative of the quality of the spiritual life of Malankarites: “The great importance we give to the canonical and private prayers recited in common by all the members together in our families, the ecclesiastical fast and abstinence we observe strictly in our families, etc. are indicative of the nature and quality of our spiritual and ascetical life which we should like to cherish in accordance with our religious heritage.”<sup>952</sup> It is not by any ‘compulsion’ that the faith of the Church is transmitted to the next generation, but through tradition. These family prayers are the expression of the faith life of the SMCC at her basic level. The children draw their vitality and vigor from praying together, and they mostly continue this habit as part of their family tradition. Becoming fully aware of this Malankara custom, Pope Benedict admonished the bishops to work towards strengthening this: “I encourage you, therefore, to foster an affection among your priests and people for the liturgical and spiritual heritage that has come down to you, while steadfastly building up on your communion with the See of Peter”<sup>953</sup> So, care must be taken to safeguard this tradition from ‘worldly distractions’.

### 3.2.5 Conclusion

The members of the SMCC have a missionary role to fulfill in India, which they alone can accomplish. Her apostolic origin is a reason for pride, but at the same time it is also a

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<sup>952</sup> Baselios, “Family: A Community of Faith,” *Emerging Trends*, 218.

<sup>953</sup> Benedict XVI, “Address of Pope Benedict XVI during the *ad Limina* Visit of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Bishops” (March 25, 2011) in *Malankara*, 50.

commitment and responsibility. St. Thomas was willing to accept the great challenge of travelling to a distant and unknown land to make Christ known, whom he had ‘touched’ and ‘experienced’ (cf. Jn 20:24-25). St. Thomas Christians are to bear witness to Christ in a predominantly Hindu culture.

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church also inherited the ancient Eastern tradition in the history of events. In the Catholic communion this tradition needs to bear much fruit by practicing her beautiful liturgy with a missionary spirit. Mar Ivanios stands as the ideal example for missionary enterprises in Malankara. The SMCC is deep rooted in the Indian culture, but at the same time due to her ‘small size’ in a heavily populated country, many Indians still think that her existence is the result of colonization. She should take an active role in shaping India’s future destiny in every area like a “little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough” (cf. Gal 5:9).

The recent missionary revival, especially through the establishment of organizations such as *Suvisesha Sangam*, reveals that the SMCC appropriately responds to the Universal Church’s call for new evangelization. Missionary movements that are deeply rooted in the Malankara spiritual tradition are already taking root in the Church. They are to be strengthened and the SMCC must soon be able to provide more missionaries for the evangelization needs of the Catholic Church.



## GENERAL CONCLUSION

God's will is this, that all men be saved and reach full knowledge of truth (1 Tm. 2:2-4). I came that they may have life and have it to the full (Jn. 10:10). Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13: 8).

Jesus Christ brought the message of salvation for humanity and entrusted his disciples that it should be brought to all. The evangelization mission of the Church, i.e. to preach the Kingdom of God and bring the message of salvation to the ends of the earth, is the continuation of the work of Christ. The assistance of the Holy Spirit is assured to the evangelizer in opening the hearts and minds of the people to God. Pope Benedict XVI writes that in the vocabulary of the Roman Emperors, who presented themselves as the lords, saviors and redeemers of the world, "*evangelion*" was good news regardless of the nature of the content: "The idea was that what comes from the emperor is a saving message, that it is not just a piece of news, but a change of the world for the better."<sup>954</sup> Jesus became the living embodiment of what the emperors illegitimately claimed. When *evangelion*, as a "good news" is applied to Jesus, it is not just informative speech but performative—"a message endowed with plenary authority, a message that is not just talk, but reality."<sup>955</sup> The message is the person of Jesus Christ, who is not just information, "but action, efficacious power that enters into the world to save and transform."<sup>956</sup> Giving this message to the world is imparting the person of Christ into every reality, transforming them in Christ. In this process of giving the saving message of Christ, conforming oneself to the message, the giver is also transformed.

Hence, we Christians must start from Christ, from contemplation of Him who has revealed to us in his mystery, the complete fulfillment of the human vocation and its meaning. We need to become docile disciples, to learn from Him, in following him, the dignity and fullness of life. We likewise need to be consumed by missionary zeal, to

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<sup>954</sup> Benedict XVI. *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 47.

<sup>955</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>956</sup> *Ibid.*

bring to the heart of the culture of our time that unifying and full meaning of human life that neither science, nor politics, nor economics, nor the media can provide.<sup>957</sup>

In accomplishing this divinely entrusted mission, the Church is assisted by “The Helper” (Jn 14: 26) i.e. the Holy Spirit, like at the time of her birth, the Pentecost. But ‘living the faith,’ in concrete life situations, requires adopting methods according to the needs of time, situation and cultural context: “Therefore, the challenge of evangelization is constantly seen within the *ad intra* framework of ecclesial activity and how it measures that framework in regard to the *ad extra* requirements of *mission*.”<sup>958</sup> Thus, search with the “Light from Light” helped us to delve into the unique missionary vocation of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in view of the contemporary situation by analyzing the recent magisterial documents and teachings on evangelization and new evangelization.

The first chapter of this thesis helped us to shed some light into the many reasons, which constitute the present day ‘crisis of faith’, and it can be dissected by looking at the ‘signs of the times.’ The cultural and intellectual milieu of new evangelization is complex; but without confronting them the Church cannot harvest further. It is not just the ‘way of God versus the way of the world’ since many of the foundations of the contemporary cultural and intellectual systems are rooted in Christianity. Without understanding them accurately and in their proper context, a meaningful rendezvous with them will remain a distant reality. The first chapter identified many such problems and tried to establish their connection with ‘new evangelization.’ This is done in view of bringing “the *prodigal son* back to the house” – if we may use George Mardson’s analogy from the second chapter.

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<sup>957</sup> Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (Conference of Latin American Bishops), *Concluding Document of the Fifth General Conference of Latin American Bishops* (May 13-31, 2007), no. 41, Aparecedia, Brazil, 2007 [http://www.nccbuscc.org/latinamerica/english/aparecida\\_Ingles.pdf](http://www.nccbuscc.org/latinamerica/english/aparecida_Ingles.pdf) (April 10, 2010). <http://www.celam.org/aparecida/Ingles.pdf>.

<sup>958</sup> James Wehner, James A. Wehner, “The Theological Concept ‘Evangelization,’ 696.

The second chapter attended to the rich evangelization theology and the ostentatious mission history of the Church in view of getting a better understanding of the present call for new evangelization. “What is new in new evangelization?” is an important question to ask. The new evangelization does not consist in preaching a new Gospel or attempting to avoid from the Gospel whatever is difficult for the post-modern world to accept. The Gospel is eternal in character and the “newness” in “new evangelization” is all about the presentation based on the particular situations in which we live. The newness is in attitude, style, effort, planning and an overall awareness of what is *true* and *eternal* in character. Changing times demand that the Christian message reaches people today through new methods of apostolate expressed in language and forms that are accessible and understandable.

The missionary vocation of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church was analyzed in detail in the third chapter. Since the call for new evangelization embraces the entire Church, the challenge and response depends mainly on place, circumstances and culture including that of the Eastern Churches. No one is exempt from this most important task of the Church. The SMCC must continually take measures to bring the Gospel to its own culture, in order to purify and elevate the Indian culture, and above all to open that culture to the newness of the Gospel.

There are numerous bright spots of revitalization found in the recent history of the SMCC. But the Church must be careful not to deviate from the current of path, or be carried away by complacency and other worldly attractions. When the Church is challenged today by new and untold ways, she must rise and give the strongest witness to Christ, and to the people who are yearning to receive *again* and *anew* the message of life and salvation through Christ. In this regard, the SMCC must always “act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8) to have a “fresh encounter with Jesus Christ” in order to generate a “new Pentecost”.

Finally, with the renewed enthusiasm from this “new evangelization” call, the SMCC can become the “light from light” and “the salt of the earth” (Mt. 5: 13-14), for the world in general and India in particular, in fulfilling her missionary vocation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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