IMR

INDIAN MISSIOLOGICAL REVIEW

SPECIAL ISSUE ON REDEMPTORIS MISSIO

Vadakumpadan, P.	:	Paving the Way to RM (A Brief Survey of Missionary Encyclicals.)
Kroeger, H. J.	:	Rekindling Mission Vitality and Enthusiasm
Maliekal, F. F.	:	Redemptoris Missio and Non-Christians
Karotemprel, S.	:	Redemptoris Missio and Evangelization in Asia
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Jala, D.	:	Youth and the Project of Evangelization as Envisaged in Redemptoris Missio
Almeida, J.	:	Missionary Spirituality
S.J. Emmanuel	:	Proclamation Restated and Revitalized
Kroeger, H. J.	:	Redemptoris Missio: A Synthesis
Jozef Card. Tomko	:	Centrality of the Proclamation for the Churches in Asia
Varickasseril, J.	:	The Apostles proclaim JESUS

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Editorial

IMR is happy to dedicate a Special Issue to Pope John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio.* The Encyclical Contains the secret of the Church's continued vitality into the third millennium. "For missionary activity .. revitalizes faith, ... Faith is strengthened when it is given to other! (RM 2). Hence, the Pope does not hesitate to affirm: " I sense that the moment has come to commit **all of the Church's energies** (emphasis mine) to a new Evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes.* No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid *this supreme duty* (emphasis mine): to proclaim Christ to all peoples." (RM 3).

What is the Church for? *Redemptoris Missio* answers it in a concrete manner!

IMR looks at RM from different angles. Dr. Vadakumpadan's brief survey of the Missionary Encyclicals of the past prepares the reader to meet *Redemptoris Missio.* Dr. J. H. Kroeger and Dr. S. Karotemprel offer two insightful commentaries on RM in their articles *"Redemptoris Missio:* A Brief Summary and Evaluation" respectively. Dr. F. Maliekal dealing with RM and *non-Christians* points out that the Encyclical's emphasis on the urgency of the mission *ad gentes* is to be viewed from the Church's nature rather than the addressee, even though the latter is the formal cause of the Encyclical. Archbishop Henry D'Souza of Calcutta and Dr. Karotemprel scan the Encyclical from the Indian and Asian perspectives respectively.

What does RM say to the world of young people? Dr. D. Jala gives a competent answer in his "Youth and the Project of Evangelization Envisaged in RM." "Unless the missionary is a contemplative, he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way (RM 91). Dr. J. Almeida gives a clear and convincing explanation of the essential characteristics of missionary spirituality as outlined in RM in his contribution "Missionary Spirituality". IMR is honoured to include in this special issue on RM, *"Centrality of the Proclamation for the Churches in Asia"* by His Em. Jozef Cardinal Tomko, perfect of the congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. We bring also a scholarly study on proclamation in the Acts of the Apostles by Fr. Jose Varickasseril.

Before presenting a spectrum of opinions on RM from different parts of the world, including that of Dr. R. Keitzar from the Baptist tradition and of Dr. L. Pohsngap from the church-of-God background under the title *What they say about Redemptoris Missio?,* IMR offers its readers "A Synthesis Text" of RM by Dr. J. H. Kroeger. We are sure you will appreciate it.

J. Puthenpurakal SDB
Chief Editor

A Tribute to Fr. Sebastian Karotemprel SDB (Chief Editor - IMR: 1976 - 1992)

In my capacity as President of the Sacred Heart Theological College, let me offer my sincere thanks to my predecessor and senior colleague, Fr. Sebastian Karotemprel, for his remarkable achievement as Founder and Chief Editor of Indian Missiological Review (IMR) for the last 14 years. In today's world, it is no small feat, to have courageously launched a Missiological Review with a vision and kept it going with an unswerving determination despite every obstacle. His achievement is all the more laudable when one realizes that for the first ten years he was also the Dean and President of Sacred Heart Theological College (SHTC) and was involved in a variety of academic and administrative duties. With the collaboration of several individuals and groups, Fr. Sebastian has given a clear orientation to IMR during these past 14 years and found for it recognition among the Theological Journals of the world.

Besides being a Professor of Systematic Theology here in SHTC and Director of our Publications, he is also a visiting professor at the Urban University, Rome, and Executive Secretary of the Evangelization Commission of the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC). Let me place here on record our appreciation and gratitude to Fr. Sebastian for all that he has done for IMR during the past 14 years and for accepting to be the Honorary Editor for the coming years, not withstanding his numerous commitments.

Welcome to
Fr. Joseph Puthenpurakal SDB
(The new Chief Editor of IMR)

Fr. Joseph Puthenpurakal is no "stranger" to IMR. He has been a member of the Editorial Board for many years and has contributed several articles. A graduate of the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome, he did his post-graduate studies in Missiology at the Gregorian University, Rome. After ten years in the mission field in Upper Assam, Manipur and Nagaland, he returned to Rome for his doctoral studies in 1980. He took his doctorate in Missiology from the Urban University, Rome in 1982. On his return, he continued his association with the mission of Nagaland as the closest collaborator of Bishop Abraham Alangimattathil and held various administrative posts in the diocese including that of Vicar General for the last 15 years. Presently Fr. Joseph is Professor of Missiology at Sacred Heart Theological College and Chief Editor of **Indian Missiological Review.** Fr. Joseph's work, **Baptist Missions in Nagaland** has been well received by the public at large. The great merit of a Missiologist like Fr. Joseph Puthenpurakal is that he has spent 18 years in the mission field. We are privileged to have Fr.Joseph as one of our Professors at Sacred Heart Theological College and we welcome him most cordially as the Chief Editor of IMR.

Dr. George Kottuppallil SDB
President
Sacred Heart Theological College.

Introducing IMR's Consultant Editors

Dr. George Kottuppallil was born in 1947. He joined the Salesian society in 1966 and was ordained priest in 1975. He holds a doctorate in Church History from the Gregorian University, Rome, with a *Summa cum laude* for his doctoral dissertation. At present Fr. George is President of Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong and professor of Church History. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the Church History Association of India (CHAI) as well as of History Association of Northeast India. Fr. George is also one of the Executive Members of Northeast India Theological Association. His doctoral thesis was published under the title *History of the Catholic Missions in Central Bengal 1855-1886* (Shillong: Vendrame Institute, 1988). His "A Historical Survey of the Catholic Church in Northeast India," which appeared in the Centenary Souvenir (Shillong: Archbishop's House, 1990) is the best summary so far of the history of the Catholic Church in Northeast India. IMR is privileged to have Fr. George as its consultant Editor.

Dr. Paul Vadakumpadan was engaged in active mission work in North-east India before commencing higher studies in Rome. In 1985 he took his doctorate in Missiology from the Urban University, Rome, with a brilliant thesis on *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. His book entitled *Evangelization Today* is perhaps the only work existing on the integral concept of Evangelization in the light on *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and contemporary trends in the theology of Mission. Fr. Paul is at present Programme Director of the Pastoral Centre, Shillong. He teaches Missiology at Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong and organizes many missionary animation courses/seminars throughout the year. His experience in Parish ministry and his expertise in Missiology are precious for IMR.

Paul Vadakkumpadam

Paving the Way for Redemptoris Missio: A Brief Survey of Modern Mission Documents

Introduction

The missionary thinking of the church is often articulated in certain remarkable mission documents. The Catholic Church has to its credit a series of such documents, that bears witness to her unceasing quest to be faithful to the Lord's missionary mandate. They not only keep alive a tradition but bring it in harmony with the changing world. In this article I would like to make a survey of such documents belonging to the present century, leading to Redemptoris Missio.

Maximum Illud[1]

The first great mission document of the twentieth century is Maximum Illud of Pope Benedict XV. He wrote it in 1919, on termination of the First World War. He wanted to revive the missions from the wreckage caused by that catastrophe[2]. According to the Pontiff the purpose of the missions is the propagation of the catholic faith throughout the world[3]. By spreading the faith the Kingdom of God is extended and men are saved from damnation. The term evangelization is used synonymously with missionary work in this document.

He addresses himself first to the heads of missions. Accent is placed on the extensive aspect of the missions. Christian truth and life must be brought within the reach of all. The work must be extended and brought to completion. The letter exhorts heads of missions to accept the help of apostles, even those not belonging to one's religious order, in order that the work may progress. They are also exhorted to keep in touch with their colleagues in nearby missions. The first preoccupation of heads of missions is to train a local clergy. The future of the church depends precisely on this. Local priests are singularly equipped in communicating the faith to their fellow-men. However, their training should be on par with priests in Europe and by no means should they be considered inferior. When the indigenous clergy is

adequate in number and training, the Church is established and the missionary's work has come to an end. The Pope laments the lack of local clergy in many countries despite the passage of time.

The Pontiff then addresses himself directly to missionaries exhorting them to appreciate the dignity of their work. To measure up to it they should be fully given to it and not be bothered in the least about the interests of their own country. They are ambassadors of Christ, not of their country. The missionary's life must be a living preaching of the Christian faith and of the universality of the Christian religion. The missionary must be well formed. He must be a man of God without whose help his work will be sterile. He must also be learned in matters sacred as well as secular. He must have a command of native languages. The Pope concludes inviting the entire Church to come to the aid of the missions through prayer, personnel and funds.

Maximum Illud is a typical missionary document. The theology underlying it is naturally the theology of the day. To judge it by today's theology is unfair. The Pope's attitude towards non-Christians and their religious traditions appears to be based on the conviction that "extra ecclesiam nulla salus." We have, of course come along way since then. Catholic theology has made an amazing shift in the way it understands non- Christian religions. However, like *Maximum Illud, Redemptoris Missio* repeats a strong conviction of the Church in this regard. Quoting from a letter of his to the bishops of Asia John Paul II emphasizes in his missionary encyclical, "Although the church gladly acknowledges whatever is true and holy in the religious traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam as a reflection of that truth which enlightens all men, this does not lessen her duty and resolve to proclaim without fail Jesus Christ who is ''the way, and the truth and the life....''[4] One notices in *Maximum Illud* an overriding preoccupation for the progress of the missions which is identified with the propagation of the faith, establishment of the church and extension of the Kingdom of God. There is a similar preoccupation in RM although it sees the paths of mission as some what broader than above. *Maximum Illud's* insistence on preaching the christian message through witness of life echoes also in *Redemptoris Missio* but with greater emphasis in the social dimension of such witness.[5]

Rerum Ecclesiae[6]

Pius XI in this encyclical follows very much the thought of his predecessor in *Maximum Illud.* The Pope feels the pressing and urgent need to bring to

the church the numerous people still outside it. More and more missionaries are needed for this task. The motivation for missionary work is charity. Bringing the faith to those who do not have it is seen as the greatest act of charity, the virtue that should characterize the Christian. By sharing the gift of faith with those who do not have it, he shows his gratitude towards God. Every Christian has this responsibility.

The Pontiff underlines the importance of prayer for the success of the missions. The missionary union of the clergy as well as the various organizations to aid mission work are recommended as of considerable importance.

Turning his attention to Vicars and Prefects Apostolic, Pius XI stresses the crying need for a native clergy. Only thus can the church be established. Points touched on in *Maximum Illud* are here developed in greater detail. The founding of religious communities of men as well as of women is a great aid in furthering the success of the missions. Contemplative life in the missions too has a particular value and relevance and is to be whole-heartedly encouraged. The Pope concludes by calling for a better distribution of missionaries so as to cover the entire missionary area, and asking the religious institutes entrusted with missions not to consider them as entrusted to them in perpetuity.

Much of what was said about *Maximum Illud* could be repeated about Rerum ecclesiae, especially regarding its theological basis. Evangelization is clearly understood as missionary activity whereby the faith is spread, church established and men saved. The Pope points out that every Christian has a role in missionary work. This would be developed further by later Missiological thinking. *RM* devotes considerable attention to lay participation in mission[7]. Pius XI speaks of work that is not strictly spiritual in the missions, like medical care. Healing the sick is presented as imitating Jesus. It is for the missionary a way of winning the good will of people. We could see in these observations the small beginnings of what has now become a very relevant discussion on human promotion in the context of missionary activity, liberation and Gospel proclamation. The perspective has changed. The stress has increased. *RM* considers the intimate connection between evangelization and liberation. The Church promotes development by forming consciences.[8] Even as evangelization leads the poor to liberation, it also enables those in whom material wealth has induced a certain moral and spiritual poverty, to liberate themselves. *Rerum Ecclesiae* speaks of Christian culture and civilization, apparently not bothering to distinguish between faith and culture, Christian faith and European culture etc. This issue has

grown to such an extent that today it has emerged as one of the crucial points in missiological discussions. Incarnating the Gospel in peoples, cultures as well as dialogue with our brothers and sisters of other religions are themes of considerable significance in *RM*.

Evangelii praecones [9]

In this encyclical written on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the previous one, Pius XII begins with a very positive evaluation of the progress of missionary work during that period. He underlines the fact that missionary preaching makes for fellowship among all men and is convinced that it is being adapted to the changing conditions of the time.

The Pope speaks about the greatness and sublimity of the missionary vocation. The missionary should love the country where he is working and seek no material advantage whatsoever. He should be prepared spiritually and intellectually for the work. The object of missionary activity is "to bring the light of the Gospel to new races and form new Christians" and its ultimate goal is "to establish the church on sound foundations among non-Christian peoples and place it under its own native hierarchy"[10]. The extent and the geographical aspect of missionary action are stressed.

Missionary work also leads the nations to increased social prosperity. The church's dedication to education is significant in this respect. Great importance must be attached to the establishment of schools and colleges which, of course, also serve to spread the faith. In addition, the Pope calls the numerous initiatives undertaken to care for the sick, the "fairest flowers of missionary endeavour"[11]. The encyclical speaks of the need for social reforms demanded by charity and justice but condemns total state ownership. State absolutism as well as exploitation of private capital can create servitude. True justice can come only through Christ.

The encounter between Gospel and culture is another delicate but important aspect of missionary work. "Let not the Gospel, on being introduced into any new land, destroy or extinguish whatever its people possess that is naturally good, just or beautiful"[12]. Christian revelation serves to perfect and complete. Deep study of various civilisations will help us use elements from them in preaching the Gospel. Christian life and morality can fit into any culture. The Pope concludes by exhorting Christians to help missionary work by prayer, offerings and by fostering missionary vocations.

Pius XII too understands evangelization as strict missionary activity of spreading the faith and of establishing the church. "Catholic" is understood as universal and the obligation of spreading Christianity to every part of the world is stressed. Statistical and quantitative aspects of progress in missionary work are considered significant. *RM* too begins with this consideration.[13] The document notes that "peoples which have not yet received and initial proclamation of Christ constitute the majority of mankind... Population growth in non-christian countries of the South and the East is constantly increasing the number of people who remain unaware of Christ's Redemption".[14] Two themes of great significance in current Missiology, namely Gospel and culture, and Gospel and social justice receive somewhat lengthy treatment in *Evangelii Praecones.* However, Pius XII speaks of social problems against the background of communism. In fact, he condemns Marxist socialism. Today instead, communism is in its death throes. But the question of social justice remains as challenging as ever before.

There is also a remarkable change from his predecessors in the way Pius XII refers to non-Christians and their religions. In *RM* this trend is carried further.[15]

Fidei Donum[16]

Pope Pius XII addressed this encyclical letter to the whole Church on the urgent missionary problems on the continent of Africa. It is an appeal to the universal Church for cooperation in the missionary endeavour in Africa. The church there has grown and continues to grow remarkably. This necessitates a greater flow of men and means. Moreover, the continent is undergoing rapid social, economic and political changes which greatly affect the African society. Atheistic materialism and some other religious concept of life are attracting adherents. Any delay would be harmful, perhaps irreparably. "Twenty more priests in a particular region would make it possible to plant the cross there today, while tomorrow this same land, tilled by other workers than those of the Lord, will probably have become impervious to the true faith".[17] The Pope reminds bishops of their corresponsibility with him in the missionary task. Every particular Christian community must be genuinely interested in the universal Church. Isolation and all forms of collective egoism are harmful. Besides, missionary zeal is a source of Christian renewal for the local community itself.

Fidei Donum is evidently intended to meet a particular need. However, it is rich in valid missiological principles. The call to the local community to

extend its horizon and be truly interested in the universal Church is impressively reemphasised by John Paul II.[18] Referring to *Fidei Donum*, he speaks about its "striking newness" and observes that priests who have responded to it are "a unique sign of the bond of communion existing among the churches. They make a valuable contribution to the growth of needy ecclesial communities, while drawing from them freshness and liveliness of faith".[19]

Princeps pastorum[20]

Princeps Pastorum was written to mark the fortieth anniversary of *Maximum Illud*. John XXIII speaks of the urgent need to continue the work in mission fields, already so successful. Spreading the faith to every corner of the earth is an obligation. Implanting of the church with a local hierarchy remains the ultimate aim of missionary activity. In speaking of the training to be imparted to the local clergy the Pope speaks at length of its various aspects, spiritual, intellectual, missiological etc. Holiness of life comes first. It is through sanctity of life that the Gospel can be most effectively preached. The local community and especially its clergy must be genuinely interested in the universal Church. The Pontiff goes on to show how the laity can play a significant apostolic role provided they receive needed training and education. Quality must be stressed along with quantity. "The profession of the Christian faith has nothing to do with statistics. It is the creation of the new man".[20] Personal and community witness through committed Christian living is of maximum importance.

The emphasis here on witness of Christian life appears also in RM. There is special consideration in the latter on prophetic witness[22] On the question of faith and culture, while Pope John seems to imply that culture is beyond the purview of religion and man's eternal salvation, John Paul II attaches much importance to incarnating the Gospel in peoples' cultures.[23] In this regard the latter also points out certain matters of practical nature for the person of the missionary. On the role of the laity, while the former sees them as auxiliaries of the clergy, the latter sees them as missionaries by virtue of the sacrament of baptism which they have received.

Ad Gentes[24]

The decree of Vatican II on the Church's missionary activity is in many respects a logical consequence of the missionary documents we have studied so far. It deals exclusively with the missionary activity of the Church, that

is, that activity whereby "the Church makes itself fully present to all men and peoples in order to lead them to the faith, freedom and peace of Christ by the example of its life and teaching by the sacraments and other means of grace. Its aim is to open up for all men a free and sure path to full participation in the mystery of Christ. The ultimate aim is the implantation of the church".[25] Thus, after dealing with the doctrinal principles, the decree goes on to treat at length missionary work itself and its fruit, the particular churches.[26] Attention is drawn next to missionaries, their life, formation etc. The last two chapters deal with the organisation of missionary activity and cooperation in mission work. Thus AG while situating mission in the heart of the Church and characterising her as a missionary church, emphasises also the geographical and juridical norms contained in traditional missionary thinking and practice.

RM retains the central themes of *AG*. However, it goes beyond and completes, as it were, the counciliar decree. Thus the christological and pneumatological dimensions of mission are treated in considerable detail. The kingdom theme receives much attention unlike in *AG*. Another area where RM goes beyond AG is in analysing the exigencies of actual mission work in today's world. Moreover, certain themes that are scantily treated in AG like evangelisation in the context of non- Christian religions, and evangelisation and development receive more prominence in *RM*.

Evangelii Nuntiandi [27]

All the documents we have studied so far show great similarity. *EN* makes a qualitative change. It is dedicated neither exclusively nor primarily to the Church's missionary activity. It combines in a splendid manner the wide spectrum of views expressed in the Synod of Bishops 1974 and thus arrives, at a global concept of evangelisation. It is presented as a multi-dimensional, complex and articulated reality, consisting of Christian witness, explicit proclamation of the Good News, celebration of the sacraments as well as total liberation of man. Moreover, in the whole process of evangelisation, attention must be paid to the Gospel-culture encounter and its exigencies,. The comprehensive view of evangelisation is also universally applicable, and correspondingly it may be called the first, the pastoral or the renewed. The first evangelisation would be synonymous with missionary activity.

Conclusion

EN was hailed as a remarkable document. Some saw it as the most important document after Vatican II.[28] *RM* has brought the traditional missionary thinking of the Church in line with *EN*. As such this too deserves a most hearty welcome.

Notes

1. Benedictus PP.XV, *Epistola Apostolica Maximum Illud*, 30 Nov, 1919, *AAS* 11 (1919) 440-455.
2. One of the areas badly affected by World War I was precisely the Assam mission, from where I am writing now. The German Salvatorian missionaries were expelled by the British Government and that was a severe setback for the fledgling mission.
3. 'Missions' is used always in the plural in *Maximum Illud.*
4. *Redemptoris Missio,* 55. Henceforth RM.
5. Cf. *RM* 42.
6. Pius PP.XI, *Litterae Encyclicae Rerum Ecclesiae*. 28 Feb 1926 *AAS* 18 (1926) 65-83.
7. Cf. *RM* 71 , 72.
8. Cf. *RM* 58, 59
9. Pius PP.XII, *Litterae Encyclicae Evangelii Praecones,* 2 June 1951, AAS 43 (1951) 497-528.
10. R.Hickey (ed.), *Modern Missionary Documents and Africa* (Dublin 1982). 83-84.
11. IDEM, 92.
12. IDEM, 97.
13. Cf. *RM* 1.
14. *RM* 40.
15. Cf. *RM* 55.
16. Pius PP.XII, *Litterae Encyclicae Fidei Donum,* 21 April 1957, AAS 49 (1957) 225-248.

17. R.Hickey (ed), op.cit., 113.

18. Cf. *RM* 67, 68, 85.

19. *RM* 68.

20. Joannis PP. XXIII, *Litterae Encyclicae Princeps Pastorum,* 28 Nov. 1959, *AAS* 51 (1959) 833-864.

21. R.Hickey (ed.), op.cit., 148.

22. Cf. *RM* 74.

23. Cf. *RM* 52-54.

24. Henceforth AG.

25. *AG* 5.

26. Cf. *AG* 10-22.

27. Paulus PP.VI, *Adhortatio apostolica Evangelii nuntiandi de evangelization in mundo huius temporis,* 8 Decembris 1975, in AAS 58 (1976) 5-76. Henceforth EN

28, Cf. Vadakumpadan P., *Evangelisation Today,* (Shillong 1990) 304-314.

James H. Kroeger

Rekindling Mission Vitality and Enthusiasm *Redemptoris Missio* : A Commentary

James H. Kroeger, a Maryknoll missionary who holds a doctorate in missiology from the Gregorian University in Rome, has been an Asian missioner for over two decades. Until recently he was based in Manila at the Loyola School of Theology. In January 1991 he began serving a six-year term as the Asia-Pacific Assistant on the Maryknoll General Council.

Mission statistics of the 1990s confront Christian churches in a dramatic and disturbing way. Consider : Christians of all denominations are only one-third of the world's population. Before the year 2000, Islam will claim more followers than Roman catholicism, currently the world's single largest religion; Asia, where 60 percent of the human race lives, is less than 3 percent Christian. More than 23 percent of all peoples have never come into contact with Christianity, Christ or the Gospel.

Why should Catholics want to answer these challenges? While there is much discussion and many publications from the churches, at least 99 percent of these address only Christian interests. Of all foreign missionaries, 91 percent target populations in the Christian world with 90 percent of all evangelization efforts directed toward those who are at least nominally Christian. Only 3 percent of all Christians have contact with people of other faiths. An embarrassing fact is that the Christian world spends 99 percent of its income on itself.

These mission statistics, drawn from respected Catholic and Protestant sources, underscore the urgency behind Pope John Paul II's recent mission encyclical : *Redemptoris Missio* (The Mission of the Redeemer). The Pope asserts : "Missionary activity specifically directed *ad gen*tes (to the nations) appears to be waning". This fact "must arouse concern among all who believe in Christ". Why ? Because ". . . in the Church's history, missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis of faith" (2).

The Pope urges a "fresh impulse to missionary activity", the deepening of "commitment of the particular churches", and the harnessing of "all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization" (2-3). In a word, the focus of John Paul is direct and clear: "I wish to invite the Church to *renew her missionary commitment*" (2).

Capturing the highlights of a lengthy document -- and doing it in inviting language -- is a formidable task. but the effort must be made since the Pope summons, "*Peoples every where, open the doors to Christ* !"(3).

Vision of Evangelization

What view of evangelization emerges from a comprehensive analysis of the encyclical ? Repeatedly, the document speaks of mission, evangelization and salvation in a holistic fashion: "Jesus came to bring integral salvation, one which embraces the whole person . . . "(11); "evangelical witness . . . is directed towards integral human development" (42); "action on behalf of integral development and liberation . . . is most urgently needed" (58).

Integral evangelization, as repeatedly affirmed in the encyclical (20, 41-60), reflects current Missiological thought as well as recent magisterial teaching. Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* clearly encouraged Catholics to view mission holistically. The second chapter of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* speaks of the complexity of the evangelizing action and its various complementary and mutually enriching elements.

Another Roman document, issued by the Secretariat for Non- Christians (now called the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue), Which elucidates the holistic approach to evangelization and salvation appeared on Pentecost Sunday, 1984. Entitled : "The Attitude of the Church toward the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission, "the source affirms that mission is presented "in the consciousness of the Church as a single but complex and articulated reality" (13). The new encyclical echoes this vision: "Mission is a single but complex reality, and it develops in a variety of ways" (41). Again "mission is one and undivided, having one origin and one final purpose; but within it, there are different tasks and kinds of activity"(31).

The vision of mission that the Pope urges remains focused on integral evangelization; it is not a narrow, anti-pagan (much less anti-Muslim) crusade as one early press release charged.

The fifth chapter of *Redemptoris Missio,* titled "the paths of Mission," views mission *holistically.* Key dimensions are: the witness of Christian living, the service of humanity, inculturation and interreligious dialogue, explicit Gospel proclamation, and sacramental - liturgical-ecclesial life. All these elements are part and parcel of the Church's total mission of evangelization and follow the example of Jesus who lived mission in silence, in action, in dialogue, in teaching, and in prayer.

Foundational Mission Theology

This mission encyclical, which commemorates the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Ad Gentes, clearly affirms the foundations of mission theology and the centrality and urgency of mission in the life of the Church.*

The years following the Second Vatican Council were a golden opportunity to explore and debate, renew and clarify the Church's mission; and, it is true that "The Council has already borne much fruit in the realm of missionary activity . . . Above all, there is a new awareness that *missionary activity is a matter for all Christians* (2). Yet at this time John Paul also discerned the need to reaffirm diverse aspects of the Catholic Church's foundational theology of Christian mission.

At least one third of the encyclical (three chapters out of eight) deals with theological questions. Chapter one includes core elements to the dogmatic theology of Revelation and Faith, Christology and Soteriology, as well as Ecclesiology and Missiology. Chapter Two focuses on biblical theology, particularly the Kingdom of God. And, to the delight of Missiology, Chapter Three is completely devoted to Pneumatology, examining the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and its mission.

The following are key emphases in the opening chapter : [1] All mission is centered in God's wonderful, generous loving plan of salvation *(mysterion),* made known through Jesus and accepted in faith. Jesus is the "definitive self-revelation of God" and " the fundamental reason why the Church is missionary by her very nature" (5). [2] While affirming with the Scriptures (I Tim. 2:4) the universality of salvation, "the Church believes that God has established as the universal sacrament of salvation" (9). [3] The Pope unhesitatingly reaffirms these basics of Church teaching, noting that *"Mission is an issue of faith"*(11).

The biblical theme of the Kingdom (*basileia*) is the integrating leitmotif of the second chapter. Preaching the Kingdom and promoting its values are the

missionary tasks of the Church which is "effectively and concretely at the service of the Kingdom" (20). The encyclical offers clarity and interpretation on other dimensions of Kingdom theology: the Kingdom of God and the Christ event are complementary proclamations (16); the Kingdom necessarily has a transcendent horizon (17); the Kingdom "cannot be detached either from Christ or from the Church" (18); theocentrism and ecclesiocentrism demand a nuanced critique which is consistent with Church teaching (17-18).

Currently, the theology of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology) is of particular interest to missiologists and missionaries alike. "The Holy Spirit is indeed the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission. The Holy Spirit's action is pre-eminent in the mission *Ad Gentes* (21). The Spirit's centrality is emphasized because the Holy Spirit's "presence and activity affect not only individuals but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions" (28). Ask any missionary and you will receive an eloquent personal testimony of the presence and power of the Spirit active in peoples, cultures, and religions --- renewing the face of the earth ! The acts of today's apostles continuously write the gospel of the Holy Spirit !

Transmitting the Urgency of Mission

The English title given to John Paul II's mission encyclical is: "On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate." Thus, mission is always and everywhere essential; it is "not considered a marginal task for the Church but is situated at the centre of her life, as a fundamental commitment of the whole People of God" (32). Mission is "the greatest and holiest duty of the church" (63). The Pope's affirmations resonate throughout the work: "I have chosen to travel to the ends of the earth in order to show this missionary concern" (1); "mission *ad gentes* is still in its infancy" (40); "I see the dawning of a new missionary age" (92).

No one seeks to minimize the Pope's assertions about the centrality and urgency of mission; however, it is a valid question to ask about strategies for implementation. Words of exhortation must give way to programs of concrete actualization. In the considered judgment of this author, the encyclical is strong on the *why of* mission, but is only moderately successful on the *how.*

Mission animation - the *how?* of mission --requires continued discussion. While it is best accomplished locally. one can highlight some creative suggestions found within the encyclical.

The Christian family is a key and irreplaceable force in mission motivation (42): this insight is consistent with the teaching of Vatican II which termed the family the "domestic church" (LG. 11). Promoting Christian family life should redound to mission awareness and animation. Material and financial donations are gratefully received, yet families are challenged to offer "a special contribution to the missionary cause of the Church by fostering missionary vocations among their sons and daughters" (80).

John Paul challenges Christians : Do you wish to promote mission ? True disciples are urged to "carry out a sincere review of their lives regarding their solidarity with the poor" (60). As followers of Jesus, "we should reassess our own way of living" (81); "Fight hunger by changing your lifestyle" (59); "We cannot preach conversion unless we ourselves are converted anew every day" (47).

The role of missionary institutes and societies is crucial in mission animation; missionaries themselves should continue their "radical and total self-giving," initiate "new and bold endeavors." and "not allow themselves to be daunted by doubts, misunderstanding, rejection or persecution" (66). Diocesan seminarians and priests "must have the mind and heart of missionaries" (67). The church must seek to expand the spheres "in which lay people are present and active as missionaries" (72). Missionary dynamism should become contagious !

Youth involvement is essential to lasting mission animation. They should be offered opportunities to visit overseas missions, to meet and offer hospitality to non-Christians and migrants within their own country (82). The idealism of youth is a potential resource — their rejection of violence and war, their desire for freedom and justice, their rejection of racism and closed nationalism, their affirmation of the dignity and role of women (86). The vision of Charles de Foucauld (as a "universal brother") can fire the imagination of youth (89). can be a path toward missionary commitment.

Additional Major Emphases

An author seeking to compose a popular synthesis of a papal encyclical faces the challenge of providing a balanced presentation. This writer sees several other major emphases within the work. A paragraph is devoted to each.

Local churches around the world are the central actors in mission today; all evangelization necessarily is harmoniously accomplished in, with, and through the local church which is responsible for the totality of mission. This

is a sea change in the dynamics of mission; both local churches and missionaries alike must explore the ramifications of this new reality. Many leads are found in the encyclical (26, 30, 39, 48-52, 62-64, 71, 83-85, 92).

Missionary activity is not an external imposition which violates human dignity and freedom. Or again, witnessing and proclaiming Christ are not at odds with people's dignity as persons or their freedom of conscience (7-8). Authentic mission does not restrict freedom, but rather seeks to advance it; the document is clear: *"The Church proposes; she imposes nothing"*(39).

Individuals who receive the permanent, life-long vocation to foreign, transcultural mission are a treasured resource of the Church. Their vocation is necessary for the Church (32); it is a unique calling (27, 65); it is the model of the Church's missionary commitment (66); it is to be assiduously cultivated (79, 84), particularly by mission institutes themselves (65- 66).

The encyclical looks positively upon interreligious dialogue, devoting several sections to presenting it comprehensively (55-57). Interfaith dialogue "is part of the Church's evangelizing mission, . . . is not in opposition to the mission of *Ad Gentes,* . . . [and] *does not dispense from evangelization."* This same section speaks of God's call to all peoples and his presence to them "of which their religions are the main and essential expression." The Church's reverence for the followers of other faiths and religions is clearly affirmed by the encyclical; it is not a "turning back the clock" as some critics may purport.

Women receive the Pope's praise and gratitude for their outstanding contribution to mission: "I extend a special word of appreciation to the missionary Religious sisters" (70); 'How can we forget the important role played by women"? (71). "It is necessary to recognize and it is a title of honor that some Churches owe their origins to the activity of lay men and women missionaries" (71).

The process of inculturation and its relationship to mission receives extensive treatment (25, 52-54, 76). Authentic evangelization involves the Church in the inculturation process, an "intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures." This task is never finished and today it encounters new challenges especially in large cities. "where new customs and styles of living arise together with new forms of culture and communication" (37). Mission and inculturation demand fresh initiatives and creativity in the techtronic age of the megapolis !

The entire final chapter of *Redemptoris Missio* treats "missionary spirituality" (87-91). Four elements characterize Jesus' disciples become missionary; the missionary is to be led by the Spirit, to live the mystery of Christ who himself was sent, to love the Church and humanity as Jesus did, and to desire the holiness of saints. In a word, mission spirituality is "a journey towards holiness" and the success of renewing the urgency of the Church's missionary impulse "demands holy missionaries."

Precious details not to be lost

In a work as long as this papal mission encyclical one would expect to find details that demand further reflection. Any synthesis presentation must take note of them.

The personalist philosophy and orientation of John Paul II is manifested throughout the work. The person is always central in diverse mission apostolates, in work for justice (42), in fostering interreligious dialogue (55-57), in promoting development; the human person " is the principal agent of development, not money or technology" (58). In uniquely personalist terms, the missionary is described as "a person of the Beatitudes" (91) and it is love that is always "*the driving force of mission*" (60).

The encyclical profusely expresses the Church's gratitude to its missionaries (2. 57, 60,70). The Church's theologians provide an important service to the cause of mission (36) and should promote the study of world religions and science of missiology (83). The church needs a renewed commitment to ecumenism within mission (50).

In looking at today's world from the viewpoint of evangelization, the document distinguishes three situations: "non-Christian" peoples, Christians requiring pastoral care and the so-called "post-Christians"; all require special approaches (32-34). Geographically, the Pope emphasizes the missionary demands within Asia (37, 55, 91).

The theology of the "implantation of the Church" *(plantatio Ecclesiae)* is specifically mentioned twice (49, 72). This approach is not inimical to mission when read with full ecclesiology of the documents of Vatican II. Its pastoral implementation is served well by the basic Ecclesial communities as a force for evangelization (51).

Significant and surprising is the fact that one unique quote appears *verbatim* no less than three times in the text (6,10,28): "We are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in the Paschal

Mystery in a manner known to God." Certainly, one cannot mistake the Pope's assertion that God's loving plan for salvation includes each and every person !

Mission as "God's work" (24) is clearly affirmed; it is based "not on human abilities but on the power of the Risen Lord" (23). Missionaries are conscious that they owe their faith and vocations "not to their own merits but to Christ's special grace" (11). They must believe that "it is not we who are the principal agents of the Church's mission, but Jesus Christ and his Spirit" (36). A missioner's faith journey "proceeds along *the path* already trodden by the Virgin Mary" (92).

Fifteen years ago Pope Paul VI wrote that "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" (EN 41). This passage is recalled in *Redemptoris Missio* (42). It must continue to remain a central focus if the Church wishes to respond "with generosity and holiness to the calls and challenges of our time" (92). In simplicity and profundity, the entire Church prays with constantly renewed vigor and urgency: *Veni Creator Spiritus.*

Francis F. Maliekal

Redemptoris Missio and the non-Christians[1]

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Vatican II had formulated two of its documents in such a way as to include also the non-Christians in its scope and intention. Thus, both *Nostra Aetate,* which spoke of the non- Christian religions, and *Dignitatis Humanae,* which concerned itself with the general principles of religious freedom, catered to the sentiments of the non-Christians.[1]

Writing on the 25th anniversary of *Ad Gentes* the great missionary document of Vatican II, Pope John Paul II addressed his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* to the members of the Catholic Church, since it deals specifically with the "permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate". However, it is inevitable that in such an encyclical there should be a constant mention of the non-Christians and the non-Christian religions. How much attention does the Pope give to the non-Christians? What are the connotations of the terms he uses? This article is an attempt to answer the above two questions.

1. The Terms used to refer to the non-Christians

Going through the *Redemptoris Missio* one comes across a number of terms used by the Pope to refer to the non-Christians. Thus, in an ascending order we are able to mention "people of good will", "people", "other religions", "those who do not know Christ", "non-Christians" and *ad gentes*".

The terms "people of good will" and "people" occur seven times in the encyclical. However, the term "people of good will" (cf. RM 10)[2] is in a quotation from GS 22. The term "people" *is used with various* adverbs and adjectives such as people everywhere, all people, etc. From the contexts, it is evident that the reference is to non-Christians.

The term "religions" appear 6 times in all[3] usually accompanied by some adjectives. The reference is often to the non-Christian religions, while at

times there is also a reference to members of the non-Christian religions (cf. RM 2).

"Those who do not know Christ" is another of those terms used in the encyclical and it refers to the non-Christians; it appears six times in the encyclical[4]. However, it does not form the centre of attention; instead, it is almost always used in the possessive case. Thus, RM1 mentions the contact that the Pope had with those who do not know Christ, and RM3 asserts that the number of those who do not know Christ is on the increase.

The term "non-Christian" appears 13 times in the encyclical.[5] At times it is used as a collective noun and at other times as an adjective. Thus, RM2 speaks of the weakening of the missionary thrust to the non-Christians, while RM 91 speaks of the Pope's contact with the representatives of the non-Christian spiritual traditions.

"Ad Gentes" is the term that is most frequently found in the encyclical. Thus, it appears more than 38 times in the entire encyclical which has a total of 92 articles[6]. This is almost always in connection with the mention of the mission *ad gentes.*

From a study of the text it appears evident that the term *ad gentes* refers to the non-Christians. Thus, RM 33 gives a definition of mission *ad gentes.* This mission in the proper sense of the word is addressed to peoples, groups and socio- cultural contexts which have not yet received actively the gospel message. (cf. RM 33). Again, we read in RM 34:

> Missionary activity proper, namely the mission *ad gentes,* is directed to "peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ", "who are far from Christ", in whom the Church "has not yet taken root" and whose culture has not yet been influenced by the Gospel. It is distinct from other ecclesial activities inasmuch as it is addressed to groups and settings which are non-Christian because the preaching of the Gospel and the presence of the Church are either absent or insufficient.[7]

Similarly too, RM 2 says: "Missionary activity specifically directed "to the nations" (*ad gentes*) appears to be waning [...]" [8]. From these citations it is evident that the term "ad gentes" clearly refers to the non-Christians. Hence, we can say that on an average every second article of the encyclical makes a reference to the non-Christians.

2. What does RM say of the non-Christians?

From the above analysis we have seen that in the majority of cases, the use of a term which refers to the non-Christians does not really say anything about them; rather, the reference is often to the mission *ad gentes* or to some other idea qualified by the adjective non-Christian.

Nevertheless, there are limited references which say something about the non-Christians. "*Peoples everywhere, open to the doors to Christ!* [....] By accepting Christ, you open yourselves to the definitive Word of God, to the One in whom God has made himself fully known and has shown us the path to himself".[9] This is not only the first active reference in the encyclical to the non-Christians, but one that is positively appealing. Christ, the ultimate revelation, is the revealer of the one true God as also the one who has traced out for everyone the path to God. The appeal is powerful and compelling because there is a definitiveness about the message that the Church offers to every non-Christian.

A second affirmation regards the salvation of the non-Christians. After the affirmation that salvation is only in Christ (cf. RM 5), and the subsequent corollary that this salvation in Christ is offered to all (cf. RM1 10), the Pope explains how this is possible in the case of those who do not believe in Christ, either due to their social, cultural or religious affiliations.

> For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relation to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation.[10]

The most positive reference to the non-Christians appears to be in RM 46. While affirming that preaching should lead to conversion and baptism, the Pope laments the fact that many are now-a-days either questioning this finality of preaching or even passing over it in silence. In this context the Pope says: "What is overlooked is that every person has the right to hear the 'Good News' of the God who reveals and gives himself in Christ, so that each one live out in its fullness his or her proper calling"[11]

This affirmation, we can say, is the highest recognition of the rights of the non-Christians, namely, the right to the fullness of life as human beings. Thus, with this affirmation the entire encyclical can be said to be a vindication of this supreme right of the non-Christian as well as of the supreme duty of the universal Church. This is a credit to their sincere seeking for the

answers to the basic problems which trouble humanity and individuals, questions about the meaning of life, of mankind's activity, and of death.[12]

Another positive mention of the non-Christians comes in the context of non-Christian religions. Thus, the Pope mentions the value of contemplation as found in the non-Christian traditions and draws the conclusion that "the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation".[13] Thus, besides speaking of the good religious dispositions of the non-Christians as individuals, the encyclical acknowledges the positive values found in the non-Christian religions themselves.

3. Conclusion

Just as *Ad Gentes* was primarily addressed to the Church and dealt with her missionary vocation, so too, *Redemptoris Missio* has the same audience and theme in mind. Hence, it would be a misguided effort to study or evaluate it from the non-Christian perspective. The very subtitle of the encyclical, viz., "On the permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate", is a clear indication to all that the entire perspective is internal. However, our analysis of this encyclical has shown that the non-Christians, both as a religious group as well as individuals, form a key element in speaking of the missionary activity of the Church, since this activity is primarily addressed to them. The non-Christians clearly play a prominent role in the Church's missionary activity, precisely because this activity is a response to the inalienable rights of the non-Christians to the fullness of life. Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the non-Christians are the formal cause of the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio.*

Notes

1. Though *Gaudium et Spes* has a greater audience in mind, it does not directly deal with the strictly religious problems facing man. It is for this reason that we speak of only two documents of Vatican II with a directly religious appeal to the non-Christians.
2. We use the abbreviation RM for *Redemptoris Missio,* to distinguish it from the earlier encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (RM).
3. Cf. *RM* 2, 4, 17, 28, 29, 36.
4. Cf. *RM* 1, 3, 31, 37, 40, 55.
5. Cf. *RM* 2, 4, 32, 34, 37, 40, 45, 46, 82, 83, 91.

6. It is redundant to mention the articles since a look at any text of the encyclical is sufficient for its verification. We have not included in our calculation the title *"Ad Gentes"* when it refers to the document of Vatican II.

7. RM 34. The text is taken from *Encyclical Letter Redemptoris Mater of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on the Permanent Validity of the Church is Missionary Mandate,* St. Paul Publications, Bombay 1992.

8. Also cf. *RM* 37.

9. *RM* 3.

10. *RM* 10.

11. *RM* 46.

12. Cf. *RM* 28.

13. Cf. *RM* 91.

Sebastian Karotemprel

Redemptoris Missio and Evangelization in Asia

Introduction

"REDEMPTORIS MISSIO" is one of the most important mission documents of the Church in recent times. It is addressed to the universal Church. Yet, it has a special reference and application to Asia. "Redemptoris Missio" refers four times to Asia specifically (37,55,91). Apart from these implicit references, many of its theological and practical problems of evangelization find an echo in "Redemptoris Missio'.

Asian reality has provided the acid test for evangelization work in the past. Asia with its ancient cultures and religions is still posing the greatest challenge to evangelization.

2. The Asian Situation

The situation of evangelization varies from country to country in Asia both as regards Christian presence and the levels of tolerance and religious freedom based due impart to history and religious fundamentalism or ideologies. The internal ecclesial situation and Theological attitudes to evangelization are also different in each Asian Church.

All these factors make it difficult to speak of evangelization in Asia. There are, on the other hand, several common Asian and ecclesial characteristics. Therefore we may speak of 'Redemptoris Missio' and Asia.

We may here list the major obstacles to evangelization in Asia.

1. Asian religious traditions are centuries or millennia old.
2. Religion and culture are so intertwined that conversion is seen as a loss or betrayal of culture.
3. In many countries fundamentalist regimes are opposed to evangelization work. In others, socio-political ideologies do not allow even minimal religious freedom.
4. Missionaries are not given entry permits in many Asian countries.

5. Within the Asian Churches, the tradition of *missio ad gentes* is only gradually taking roots.

6. In several theological circles, there is a defeatist or negative attitude to proclamation, evangelization and the forming of communities. The concept of evangelization is reduced to some kind of socio-economic and humanistic project unrelated to Christ and the Church.

7. Much of the training, formation and preparation of priests and religious in seminaries and formation centres is not mission-oriented but function-oriented.

8. Traditional apostolates of pastoral care, education and health care absorb much of the Asian Church's resources.

9. Ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences of Churches make it difficult for an adequate exchange of missionaries.

3. Some Practical Applications to Asia

Even the most erudite documents may remain ineffective for ecclesial renewal. In fact, *Ad Gentes* and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* were intended to renew and revitalize the Church's missionary awareness and activity, but they have not. The dawn of a new evangelization visualized by *Redemptoris Missio* might also remain a dream rather than a reality. If *Redemptoris Missio* is to become operative in Asia, a number of theological and attitudinal changes and new priorities in planning and deployment of material, spiritual and human resources must take place.

a) A Supportive Theology

After the Post-Vatican polarization in Mission Theology, we need today a theology of joy, of enthusiasm and hope for evangelization. A defeatist, negative theology of missio can only neutralize the impact of *Redemptoris Missio* on Asia. John paul II clearly speaks of the negative tendency in the encyclical : "Nevertheless, in this springtime" of Christianity there is an undeniable negative tendency, and the present Document is meant to help overcome it." (R.M.2).

In recent years, there has been a tendency to reduce the complex reality of evangelization to one of its elements or dimensions, but without the central cohesive and animating factor, Jesus Christ. To reduce Jesus Christ to one revelation, mediation and salvation event among many revelations, media-

tions and salvation is to destroy the very foundations of the Church and evangelization, however laudable the intentions.

Again, evangelization may not be reduced to a social project for human promotion, human well-being, human liberation, promotion of human values, Gospel values, values of the Kingdom and mutual enrichment but without reference to Jesus Christ and His uniqueness and centrality for God's definitive revelation and mediation of salvation. Relativization of revelation-salvation event in Jesus Christ can only lead to widespread religious indifferentism and withdrawal from liberative involvement in the world.

A positive mission theology needs to be supported by the role bishops play in theological debate by being well-informed about it and clear in teaching about what pertains to the essence of faith. The kind of theology that prevails in seminaries and other centres should be also their concern.

b) Concrete Initiatives

Ecclesial renewal cannot come from documents alone. Renewal is contagious from concrete examples. What is needed today is truly missionary bishops, priest's and religious. At present, with some exceptions, most Church leaders' time energy, planning resources and personnel are spent on final or pastoral administration, personnel administration or on social obligations and very little on evangelization.

If the hopes and expectations of *Redemptoris Missio* are to be realized in Asia, there must be a major shift to an evangelizing Church and Church leaders. At least 50% of the resources, personnel and planning must be set aside for evangelization. Apostolic leadership must be given by the successors of the apostles. Evangelization is the primary duty of the bishops and only then can we say that it is the duty of priests, religious and the whole Church. If the pastor is a missionary the Church will be missionary.

What is said of bishops must be said of priests. Parish priorities need urgently to be re-organized and re-applied. Religious Congregations must give a missionary dimension to their specific charism as Vatican II and other recent documents of the Christian mission and religious life exhort them.

c) Formation to Evangelization

The traditional seminary and religious formation is oriented to fulfilling certain functions or pastoral services and not to evangelization and people. By this I mean, seminarians are trained to be priests, assistants, teachers,

headmasters, etc. There is hardly any emphasis or preparation to be evangelizers. There is very little awareness of being sent to a particular group of people and the need for intense preparation (theological, spiritual, cultural and sociological) for it.

Formation to evangelization, both theologically and practically, is strongly recommended by *Redemptoris Missio:* "Theological training cannot and should not ignore the Church's universal mission, ecumenism, the study of the great religions and missiology. I recommend that such studies be undertaken especially in seminaries and in houses of formation for men and women Religious, ensuring that some priests or other students specialize in the different fields of missiology".

d) The need for a Common Basic Mission Theology

A totally polarized mission theology, whatever the causes, reasons and explanations, cannot generate lasting commitment to people, or missionary enthusiasm and readiness for sacrifice, which are essential for a missionary. The reason for the decline of missionary spirit and enthusiasm in the West is primarily, the loss of faith in Jesus Christ. To relativize Jesus Christ in revelation-salvation will only be suicidal for the Church in Asia. The Church in Asia need not repeat this mistake. Opposition to the Gospel is not peculiar to any place or time. It was bitterly opposed by the vested interests at Jesus' time at the time of the Apostles, and all through history.

The Asian Church must courageously accept *Redemptoris Missio* as a common theological and methodological platform for future mission work, granting adaptations of methods and emphasis required by the Asian situation and realities but not distorting it or draining it of its theological contents while keeping and using its language as some are doing. Several theological articles that have appeared in Asian theological journals while purporting to introduce, adapt or explain *Redemptoris Missio* are twisting the encyclical out of all recognition from its original meaning. They tend to be anti-Church, anti-proclamation of Jesus Christ and the formation of Christian communities. A Christless and Churchless Christianity cannot last long.

The Asian Church, therefore, must gratefully accept *Redemptoris Missio* and make it the source of inspiration, motivation and missionary enthusiasm and rededication for the coming years. It must categorically reject the mistaken and misleading positions of some who would relativize Jesus Christ and the urgency of Christian mission in Asia.

e) Responsive groups

While not neglecting any particular group, special attention should be given to responsive areas and groups of people in Asia who constitute a considerable part of the Asian population. What *Redemptoris Missio* says is true of many responsive groups in Asia: "In proclaiming Christ to non- Christians, the missionary is convinced that, through the working of Spirit, there already exists in individuals and peoples an expectation, even if an unconscious one, of knowing the truth about God, about man, and about how we are to be set free from sin and death." (R.M. 45).

f) Youth Power

There is a great youth potential in Asia and this should be exploited and channelized for evangelization purposes. A number of recent youth evangelization experiments in Asia confirms this fact. John paul II says : "Particular Churches should therefore make the promotion of the missions a key element in the normal pastoral activity of parishes, associations and groups, especially youth groups." (R.M.83).

g) Lay faithful

The whole Church is missionary. But the mere repetition of this phrase will only reduce it to a cliche. There must be a new awareness in the whole Church as a communion and let the lay faithful take their rightful place along with the clerical faithful, as missionaries within and more especially outside the Church. Several Asian examples of lay missionary convince us of this truth. Hence *Redemptoris Missio* exhorts the whole Church to become missionary : "Lay missionary associations, international Christian volunteer organizations, ecclesial movements, groups and sodalities of different kinds - all these should be in the mission *ad gentes* as cooperators with the local Churches." (R.M. 73).

h) Prayer-Contemplation and Holiness

The first and ultimate secret in every mission experiment is prayer, contemplation and holiness of life as *Redemptoris Missio* clearly states. The Asian Churches will become evangelizing Churches if they learn to pray, to strive for holiness and are willing to suffer for the Gospel like the first disciples of Jesus. *Redemtoris Missio* places great emphasis on this point:

> Underlying this missionary dynamism was the holiness of the first Christians and the first communities. I therefore address myself to the recently baptized members of the young communities and young

Churches. Today, you are the hope of this two-thousand-year-old Church of ours : being young in faith, you must be like the first Christians and radiate enthusiasm and courage, in generous devotion to God and neighbour. My contact with representatives of the non-Christian spiritual traditions, particularly those of Asia, has confirmed me in the view that the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation." (R.M.90.91).

S. Karotemprel

Redemptoris Missio: A Brief Summary and Evaluation

1. Introduction

The latest encyclical of John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio,* on the permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate is in a way the culmination of a series of mission documents of the Church's magisterium on mission, beginning with *Maximum Illud* of Benedict VI in 1919. The Church's understanding of mission, salvation and evangelization has travelled a long way from 1919 and evolved into the theology and practice of mission in *Redemptoris Missio.*

2. Situation

From *Ad Gentes* to *Redemptoris Missio* the missionary journey has been a tortuous one with a major debate now taking place in theological academes and in the mission field. This situation has been brought about in the industrialized countries by the extraordinary momentum of secularization, existentialist philosophical trends, the rise of media power and high levels of prosperity and in the non industrialized countries by the emergence of independent, nations, revival of world religions, and awareness of their traditional cultural values.

3. Changes in the Christian Church

The positive approach of Vatican II towards world religions and their salvific value have led many to underestimate or even deny the need for evangelization. The concept of evangelization too has undergone change during the last quarter of this century. The emergence of the theology of liberation, a new theology of religions, the notion of religion as experience of the Mystery, anthropocentric understanding of religion and salvation, social concerns of the world, promotion of justice, human rights, culture and inculturation, complementarity of all religions, mutual encounter and enrichment among religions and the "humanum" as the basic of collaboration among religions, danger of communalism, Kingdom-centred theology-these

and many other factors led some theologians and missioners to question the very need and even validity of Christian mission as proclamation of Jesus Christ and the gathering together of communities of disciples.

Mission debate has also led to the emergence of new Christologies that effectively reduce Jesus Christ to one among many mediators of revelation and salvation. New theologies of the Holy Spirit and his salvific action in the world and the revelations of the world see it as parallel to the salvific action of Jesus Christ. A new ecclesiology too has emerged in the last two decades that would separate the Kingdom from the Church.

4. The task of Christian Mission

In the light of the changes in the world and the Church during the two decades or so, Christian mission is often defined by some as promotion of dialogue, human and spiritual values, Kingdom-values, development, justice, human rights, liberation of the poor and the marginalized and inculturation. This is the new missionary platform on which all can unite and work together and create a truly human world as God wills.

5. The Encyclical

i) Introduction

a) Why *Redemptoris Missio*

Redemptoris Missio is an answer to the missiological debate of the recent times that questioned the very of Christian mission:

Is missionary work among non-Christians still relevant ?

Has it not been replaced by inter-religious dialogue ?

Is not human development as adequate goal of the Church's mission ?

Does not respect for conscience and freedom exclude all efforts at conversion ?

Is it not possible to attain salvation in any religion ?

Why then should there be missionary activity ? (R.M.4).

b) Purpose

The Purpose of RM is to renew the missionary commitment of the Church. (R.M.2). This is required for the renewal of faith and Christian life. Very briefly we may say that the various purposes of RM are the following:

— Renewal of the whole Church;

— Faith not shared becomes stagnant and dies;

— It is the primary service that the Church can give to the world;

— To clear up doubts and ambiguities;

— Foster missionary vocations;

— Encourage theologians to explore various aspects of missionary activity;

— To give fresh impulse to the missionary involvement of particular Churches;

— To assure non-Christians and civil authorities that missionary activity is a service to reveal God's love in Jesus Christ, and that it does not detract from man's freedom and respect for one's own culture;

— To help the Church commit itself to new evangelization *ad Gentes*. (R.M.2,3).

c) Urgency

At the close of the second millennium of the coming of Christ, a long chapter of mission theology, mission methods and mission history is being closed. The third millennium opens up immense opportunities. More than two thirds of humanity has yet to hear of God's offer of life and salvation in Jesus Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit. Hence the urgency of Christian mission which is still only at its beginning as we stand at the threshold of the third millennium.

(ii) The Centrality of Jesus Christ in Revelation-Salvation Event

Redemptoris Missio is both theological and practical. The first three chapters and parts of chapters four and five deal with the contemporary mission debate. It faces the controversy honestly and seriously.

The universality of salvation in Jesus Christ is central to the New Testament Church and the entire ecclesial tradition. Such revelation and salvation are

trinitarian in character. It is God's offer of new life to the whole of mankind. All other mediations of revelation-salvation, therefore, have meaning and fulfilment only in Jesus Christ. This revelation-salvation event reaches its culmination in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection. Participation in this saving mystery is offered to all in ways known only to God. Jesus Christ is the definitive self- revelation of God and the fundamental reason for the missionary activity of the Church. Mission is a matter of faith in Jesus Christ.

(iii) Jesus and the Kingdom

God's Kingdom is his reign, his rule in the hearts of people. It was prepared for in the Old Testament, but initiated and proclaimed in word and deed by Jesus. Its characteristics and demands are visible in the life, words and deeds of Jesus and finally in his death-resurrection and the giving of the Spirit. Jesus is the Kingdom concretely and personally. It is not an abstract term or set of values.

Proclamation of Jesus Christ is, therefore, nothing else than the proclamation of the Kingdom and the Church is the community of those who accept Jesus as the pattern of their obedience to God. Hence the Kingdom is inseparable from Jesus Christ. The Church is the inchoate and visible manifestation of the Kingdom and seeds to grow into the fullness of the Kingdom and is at the service of the Kingdom.

(iv) The Holy Spirit and Christian Mission

The Holy Spirit was at the source of the sending of Jesus by the Father into the world. The same Spirit accompanies Jesus in his life and ministry. By his death-resurrection Jesus became the dispenser of the Spirit. The Spirit is the Spirit of mission, who accompanied the disciples in their mission to the world. The same Spirit is also at work in the world, in history, and in the hearts of all peoples. Thus the mission of the Redeemer is not unrelated to the mission of the Spirit. They are not parallel missions, independent of each other. The universal activity of the Spirit is never separated from his particular activity in the Church. The two activities lead to each other.

(v) Vast Horizons of Mission *Ad Gentes* and its Urgency

Mission is the very life of the Church. Non-mission is suicidal for the Church. And today totally new horizons for Christian mission are opened

up in the dechristianized West, in large and anonymous urban areas, among migrants, among refugees, among peoples who have not yet heard of Jesus Christ. Nearly every socio-cultural situation is a missionary situation for reevangelization, new evangelization or evangelization. Mission *Ad Gentes* is still the priority for the Church, for mission is still in its infancy.

(vi) Paths of Mission

Christian mission is all about God's plan of salvation manifested and carried on in history. But today it is understood as a complex reality and mission treads different paths to realize it. Some of these paths are traditional, while others have new connotations and emphasis.

Christian witness is the primary path of mission. Along with witness, explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ hold a permanent priority today. Mission is to lead to conversion of heart to God and baptism and the formation of local Christian communities and ecclesial basic communities. Other paths of mission are ecumenism, inculturation, dialogue, promotion of human development, and above all Christian charity.

(vii) Agents of Christian Mission today

Missionary mandate of Jesus is for all his disciples. Among them, the Apostles and their successors have primary responsibility for mission. Particular Churches, Bishops' Conferences, missionary and religious institutes, diocesan priests, and all the sections of the faithful of Christ, especially catechists and youth are co-responsible for mission. The coordination of missionary activity is done by the Congregation for the evangelization of peoples, particular Churches and Bishops' conferences.

(viii) Cooperation in Missionary Activity

It is perhaps the first time that a papal encyclical on Mission devotes a whole chapter on missionary spirituality. Being on mission demands a specific type of spirituality. Its main elements are docility to the Spirit, living out the mystery of Christ in his self-emptying, love for the Church, solidarity with all peoples, apostolic charity, striving for holiness, contemplation, poverty, meekness, and acceptance of suffering.

(x) Conclusion

The Church stands at the dawn of the third millennium of Redemption and encounters a new world with immense opportunities and problems for continuing to cooperate in the work of the Redeemer. We need to respond to them like the apostles and disciples of Jesus, transformed and guided by the Spirit of Christ.

6. An Evaluation

(i) Responses

An encyclical, like any other human endeavour, is subject to human limitations in the formulation of concepts, doctrine and expression. No papal document can please everyone. No wonder that there have been criticisms about *Redemptoris Missio* also, particularly in some countries and in some theological circles that have become allergic to eveangelization as explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ. But that is because they tend, even if with good intention, to reduce evangelization to one or other of its essential elements like Dialogue, Human Promotion, Kingdom Values, Human Well-being, etc.

Negative reactions to *Redemptoris Missio* may be summed up in the statement of Fr. Arnold Camps, OFM. He calls the encyclical "a tremendous step backward." If proclaiming Jesus Christ is a step backward, and to believe in the mandate of Jesus Christ is to be "too dogmatic" , then certainly the encyclical is also too dogmatic and a step backwards. Then we must confess that the Gospel is a a step backwards. It was folly to some of the Greeks and a scandal to some of the Jews of the time of Jesus and the the Apostles.

Many Churches, however, have welcomed *Redemptoris Missio* as a very timely, necessary and useful document in general for the whole Christian Church. The Latin American Missionary Congress (COMLA) held in Lima, Peru, from 3-8 February, 1991, echoing the sentiments of the whole of Latin American Church says:

> We are most conscious that the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* has been a providential gift to the Church, just a week before our meeting began. Each day it has enlightened with its contents and dynamism our prayers and discussions, and though it has confirmed our mis-

sionary anxieties, it has helped us to plan future activity. (Final Message of COMLA To the Church 1991, NO 8.)

Similarly, the meeting of the Chairmen and Secretaries of the Evangelization/Proclamation Commissions of all the Bishop's Conferences of Asia, organized by the FABC commission for Evangelization, held in Hus Hin, Thailand from 19-22 May, 1992, in its concluding statement of Recommendations, says:

> We receive with joy the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* as a very timely gift to the Church, and we recommend its translation and distribution in as many languages as possible. We also recommend study editions of *Redemptoris Missio* that can be used easily by parish and particularly youth groups (No.1, cfr. UCA News No. 667/A, June 15-17, 1992).

(ii) Some Characteristics

a) Positive and Optimistic

Redemtoris Missio is a positive and optimistic document meant to lead, guide, encourage and challenge the whole Church to a renewed commitment to Mission to Reevangelization and New Evangelization (R.M.1,2,3,86). There are no condemnations of errors. They are confronted and answered but not condemned.

b) Biblical

The whole encyclical is deeply biblical, making use of the best and up-to-date biblical scholarship. In fact the first three chapters contain a good summary of the contemporary biblical theology of mission.

c) Ecumenical

Being eminently biblical, RM is applicable and acceptable to all the Christian Churches both in the theology of mission and in its methods. Scholars and missiologists have expressed their appreciation for RM.

d) Existential

Mission is presented not merely from a theological abstract speculative point of view. It is an answer to man's deepest aspirations and search for wholeness and authenticity (R.M.28). Mission in no way curtails human freedom for Christ is presented as responding to human "expectations" for wholeness (R.M.45).

e) Motives for Mission

The compelling motive for mission is no longer damnation without the Gospel. The urgency of mission arises from God's mission of the son into the world, that the world may have life. The Incarnate Son offers man newness of life. The Trinitarian, Christological and anthropological foundations of Christian mission are emphasized rather than the motive of saving "souls". Mission is a matter of saving the whole man and the integral wholeness of men and society (R.M.5,7,52).

f) Personal and Societal Transformation

Mission is more than saving souls. Its ultimate purpose is the inner transformation of the individual and the society so that both become the "Kingdom of God" (R.M.20).

g) New Insights

Redemptoris Missio re-affirms the validity and urgency of explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ, or mission to "peoples", namely, Evangelization of non-Christians. But it deals also with Reevangelization. It does not refer to any wishful thinking for the "restoration of a Christian Europe" as some facile critics have concluded. It means re- evangelizing peoples who have lost their Christian faith.

RM also speaks of New Evangelization. One age of mission with its traditional theoretical foundations and practical methods has come to an end. The Church needs to search for new ways of evangelizing a culturally new society (R.M.33,34).

Areas of evangelization are no longer territorial only but human and cultural groups within the same territory, like migrants, displaced persons, the world of media, art, entertainment, science, business, etc.

h) Mission as Giving and Receiving

RM understands mission as mutual exchange between the Gospel and cultures, between the Churches and peoples. This is true also of particular Churches among themselves and with the universal Church. RM excludes any sense of superiority in mission. There ought to be a universal *Koinonia* (R.M.85). This new attitude of RM is bound to have far-reaching consequences for Christian theology, worship and spirituality.

i) Call to Mission

RM makes a strong plea to young Churches, the laity, youth and ecclesial basic communities to become missionary. They ought to be the "Sending Churches" of the future. Thus Religious Institutes, Missionary Institutes, Diocesan Clergy, Laity, etc., are called to be missionary (R.M.65,66,67,69,71).

j) Conclusion

RM is a lengthy document and this fact may keep many Christians from making it their own. Though there are several (at least five) references to Asia, the encyclical does not refer to African or Asian Church documents directly. FABC documents have much to say about many mission problems. On the other hand, RM refers to Puebla document of Latin American bishops more than once (No. 58,60,64). Thus the voice of Asian and African bishops finds no echo in RM.

An encyclical is an articulation of the faith of the Church. It is not a personal document in the sense that it is an expression of the personal faith or theological opinion of the Pope apart from the Church. On the other hand, an encyclical bears the imprint of the personality of the Pope who issues it.

In the above sense, *Redemptoris Missio* sums up the faith conviction of the New Testament, the twenty centuries of the faith and life of the Church, the great missionary documents and encyclicals of this century *Maximum Illud* of Benedict XV, 1919, Rerum Ecclesiae of Pius XI, 1926, *Evangelii Praecones*, 1951, and *Fidei Donum of Pius* XII, 1957, *Princeps Pastorum* of John XXIII, 1959, *Ad Gentes* of Vatican II, 1965, and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Paul VI, 1975).

RM reflects also the personality and concerns of John Paul II, his understanding of the various continents, peoples and their religions and cultures, his vision of the world and the Church, the new world that is emerging after the collapse of atheistic ideologies and his earlier encyclicals and Apostolic Letters such as *Redemptor Hominis, Catechesi Tradendae, Dominum et Vivificatem, Dives in Misericordia, Slavorum Apostoli, Christifdeles Laici and Centesinus Annus.*

Redemptoris Missio is the Church's document. It is the articulation of our faith convictions and the programme of action for the entire Church, for each Christian and especially for those who have a specific mission vocation. It is the Good News for the Church and the world and her mission to the world during the next decades, centuries and millennium.

Archbishop Henry D'Souza

Redemptoris Missio - an Encyclical for India?

Archbishop Henry D'Souza of Calcutta is also Secretary of the Central Secretariat of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC).

Redemptoris Missio is written with a vision. The Holy Father sees "the dawning of a new missionary age," (RM 92). The reason is that "today as never before, the Church has the opportunity of bringing the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nations" (RM 92).

Asia - A Special Continent for Evangelization

The Holy Father singles out Asia in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*. He mentions Asia four times. It is interesting to note the reasons for the special reference to this continent.

While recalling that in recent years there has been the creation of a great number of new churches, the Holy Father cautions against complacency, as the territories entrusted to these churches are immense and that there are vast regions still to be evangelised, "particularly in Asia, but also in Africa, Latin America and Oceania" (RM 37). Further in the same number, he draws attention to the smallness of the Christian communities. "Particularly in Asia towards which the Church's mission *ad gentes* should be chiefly directed, Christians are a small minority, even though sometimes there are significant numbers of converts and outstanding examples of Christian presence" (RM 37).

Later on in the Encyclical, the Holy Father notes that the presence of many religious traditions in Asia does not diminish the need for proclaiming Christ. He quotes from the letter to the 5th Plenary Assembly of Asian Bishops Conference (23 June 1990):

> Although the Church gladly acknowledges whatever is true and holy in the religious traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam as a reflection of that truth which enlightens all men, this does not lessen her duty and resolve to proclaim without fail Jesus Christ who is 'the way, and the truth and the life'... The fact that the followers of other

religions can receive God's grace and be saved by Christ apart from the ordinary means which he has established does not hereby cancel the call to faith and baptism which God wills for all people (RM 55).

In the chapter on Missionary Spirituality, once again Asia gets remembered: "My contact with representatives of the non- Christian spiritual traditions, particularly those of Asia, has confirmed me in the view that the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation. Unless the missionary is a comtemplative he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way." (RM 91).

The Special Reasons apply to India

All the factors mentioned above are specially relevant to India. Vast regions where Christ is not known at all and a small minority of Christians among millions of peoples of other faiths are characteristics of the Church in India, especially in Northern India. It is also readily accepted that the living religions are the source of spiritual nourishment for the vast majority of Indians, many of whom even follow the contemplative and ashram way of life. One could therefore say that the four references to Asia in the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* are specially valid for India.

Indian Theologians and Evangelization

It is in this context in fact that Indian theologians have been reflecting on the nature of mission and the implications of the Kingdom. The Kingdom concept has become very attractive to Indian theologians. They find in it an appropriate and consoling truth to explain the salvation of millions - the followers of other religions who do not know Christ and may never do. The challenges for evangelization in India emerge particularly from the very characteristics of Asia mentioned by the Holy Father.

In the Reflections held at Calcutta from 24 to 26 January, 1987 to commemorate the centenary of the establishment of the hierarchy in India, a theologian wrote that in the 16th century "A shift was made from "no salvation outside" to "no salvation without" the Church. All grace was conceived as oriented to the Church. In the twentieth century the thinking went further. Not only the baptism of desire but all forms of salvation were included in the Church-so that the soul of the Church was larger than the institutional hierarchical Church. He concludes

> "In more recent years a new step was taken. Many have moved away from a Church-centered view of salvation history and religions, and

adopted a Christ-centered view. So, no salvation outside Christ, or without Christ. All grace is grace won by Christ; it bears the Christ mark, and is oriented Christward. Those engaged in actual dialogue, however, felt that this Christ had to be a reality much larger than Jesus of Nazareth. Christ has been thought of a universal transcedent cosmotheandric reality hidden in all religious traditions, and not exhausted by or in any particular historical reality or religion. Further praxis of dialogue forced a change here too: the move now is from a Christ-centered view of religions and salvation to one that is wholly centered on God. Jesus' own experience and teaching was theocentric."

In line with this view is the article in Vidya Jyoti :

> "Mission is realized when the Kingdom is realized and the Kingdom is realized in the final transformation of human beings into childlike harmony with the divine will. This is the matter of conversion and such transformation is involved in the dialogue-conversion. We have already pointed out how the conversion that dialogue brings about leads to a genuine renewal of life without necessarily implying a horizontal movement from one group or community to another. The dialogue- conversion is to be situated in the context of the Divine Mission which cannot be confined to the Church alone" (Jacob Kavunkal, *"Dialogue and Conversion"*, in Vidya Jyoti, April 1990, p.186).

At the meeting of the Chairmen and Secretaries of the Commissions for Proclamation of the Episcopal Conferences of Asia, held at Hua Hin Thailand from 18th - 12th May, 1992, the Secretary of the CBCI Commission for Proclamation gave a position paper. He concluded that there is need for an alternative model of mission for India:

> By providing a vision of life, world and society the Christian mission should continue to challenge the Indian society as it did in the past. That is her prophetic role which many, perhaps, due to their minority character, are afraid to exercise... Forming Christian communities and human communities which worship one God, Father/Mother of all humankind, in spirit and truth, will go hand in hand. Dialogue with people of different religious traditions and cultures should help to overcome ethnocentrism, including certain type of ecclesiocentrism and superiority, to heal historical wounds, to enrich mutually by one another's spirituality and thus prepare the ground

for universal brotherhood and sisterhood. All these together will lead many more Indians to salvation, i.e., fullness of life, love, and light, which Jesus promised". (Augustine Kanjamala "Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio and Mission in India*", Hua Hin, Thailand, 18-24 May 1992, Mimeographed.)

The Primacy of the Kingdom

It is true that the Kingdom is central to the message of Jesus. Soon after his baptism in the Jordan, Jesus said "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:14). He even declared that the proclamation and the establishment of the Kingdom is the purpose of his mission. (Lk 4:43). Pope Paul VI in the Encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* calls the Kingdom of God so important that by comparison everything else becomes "the rest" which is "given in addition". Only the Kingdom therefore is absolute and it makes everything else relative". (EN 8). *Redemptoris Missio* in Chapter two talks about the Kingdom of God and its various implications.

> Working for the Kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God's activity, which is present in human history and transforms it. Building the Kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms. In a word, the Kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God's plan of salvation in all its fullness (RM 15).

The Doctrine of the Encyclicals vis-a-vis the Problems

The same Pope who emphasised the absoluteness of the Kingdom also said: "For this Jesus who declared "I must preach the Good news of the Kingdom of God" is the same Jesus of whom John the Evangelist said that he had come and was to die "to gather together in unity the scattered children of God", (EN 12). The link between the Kingdom and the Church is clear. Those who seek the Kingdom and build and live it, make "a community which is in its turn evangelizing" (EN 13). And so "there is a profound link between Christ, the Church and evangelization". It follows therefore that the attitude is misguided which would claim "to love Christ but without the Church, to listen to Christ but not in the Church, to look for Christ but outside the Church" (EN 16).

In *Redemptoris Missio* the problems are faced again, but in a more direct way. Several theories are mentioned:

1) There is a form of "anthropocentricsm", in as much as salvation and mission are focused on a person's earthly needs. Such an approach leads to "programmes and struggles for a liberation which is socio-economic, political and even cultural, but within a horizon that is closed to the transcendent" (RM 17).

2) There is also a 'Kingdom-centered" approach. "The church should not be immersed in itself; it is a church for others, just as Christ is the man for others. Such a position will promote the values of the Kingdom as peace, justice, freedom and brotherhood, as also dialogue between peoples' cultures and religions (Cf. RM 17).

3) Some are silent about Christ and talk of a "Theo-centric" Kingdom. They justify their position because many people cannot understand Christ, but easily accept Kingdom values and the divine reality. They would therefore want to avoid an "ecclesio-centricism", which they say was the approach of the past (Cf. RM 17).

4) Some call into question the need of conversion and suggest that "it is enough to help people to become more human or more faithful to their own religion; that it is enough to build communities capable of working for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity" (RM 48)

Redemptoris Missio addresses these positions directly. Without denying the importance of promoting human values, it recalls that "the Kingdom of God is not of this world, is not from the world" (Jn 18:36). In the same way it clarifies the limitations of a Kingdom-centred approach, that would minimize the role of the Church and Christ. *Redemptoris Missio* is clear that the Kingdom cannot be detached from Christ or the Church. (cf. RM 18).

The Kingdom is made manifest in Jesus. It is not a concept or doctrine or programme, but a person whose name is Jesus. "If the Kingdom is separated from Jesus, it is no longer the Kingdom of God which he revealed." (RM 18).

Similarly the Kingdom cannot be separated from the Church. While the Church is at the service of the Kingdom, "she is its seed, sign and instrument". The Holy spirit dwells in the Church. It is also operative outside the Church's visible boundaries. Hence in ways known to God alone, persons are saved by the action of the Holy Spirit. But the Church has a special relationship with the Holy Spirit, which gives her the gifts and charism for sanctifying, guiding and renewing her life (cf. RM 18)

As regards "Conversion and Baptism, *Redemptoris Missio* reaffirms, that "... every person has the right to hear the Good News." (RM 46). And that it was Christ himself" who desired that the Church should be the "place" where they would in fact find him." (RM 47). After giving the Church's doctrine on the command of Christ to baptize and after recalling the statement of Jesus to Nicodemus "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5), the Holy Father states: "All this needs to be said, since not a few people, precisely in those areas involved in the mission ad gentes, tend to separate conversion to Christ from Baptism, regarding Baptism as unnecessary."(RM 47).

An Encyclical for India

There is, therefore, enough evidence that *Redemptoris Missio* has taken into account the special conditions in Asia, including India. Guidance is also given on points about which some theologians in India have been exercising their minds, and on which theological reflection is going on and new theories are being propounded in the country. *Redemptoris Missio* tries to clarify the exact meaning of the Kingdom of God as proclaimed by Jesus. It states emphatically that the Kingdom implies both Jesus and the Church, and cannot be reduced to a mere human society, in which social transformation and universal brotherhood would permit the flowering of the virtues of love, peace and light. It also insists that conversion and baptism in the Church should be the natural outcome of the evangelizing mission.

Dominie Jala

Youth and the Project of Evangelization Envisaged In Redemptoris Missio

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Introduction

"Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel !" That exclamation of St. Paul, uttered centuries ago seems to be the underlying thrust of the papal Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio.*[1] The letter is addressed to all sections of the Church, as a renewed and emphatic call for active missionary activity *ad gentes.* Many such sections are addressed by the encyclical. In this reflection, we seek to highlight one which does not feature too prominently in it; namely, the one of youth[2]. In the present day world youth are entering into more and more pivotal roles in society. It is therefore important to read the Pope's address also in the context of the youth.

The Youth Context [3]

Till the beginning of this century, youth did not feature as an active subject in society. This was because of their limited number and because of the control exercised over them by society with solid ethical and juridical frames of reference. Youth became an active force after the 1920's. A large number of them participated in revolutionary campaigns and in social agitations. In our own country, the struggle for independence in the late 1940's employed a large number of youth.

In the developing world (=the South?), the emancipation from colonial rule, the lack of appropriate social and economic transformation, the high birth rate dependence on political and financial centres together with a number of sociological, political, and economic factors led to a sort of polarization

into two strata: those who enjoyed the opportunities of good education and reached high levels of qualification and those who hardly reached high-school level of education or who dropped out at the primary level of education or never got the opportunity for even the basic forms of education and so remained illiterate and exploited. The former usually entered into influential roles while the latter got marginalized and exploited.

Youth emerged as a strong entity in society first in Europe during the 1960's. It was a time of reaction against war, against underdevelopment, 'Third World' dependence, racial discrimination. The period is usually marked as an age of contestation against authority and established institutions. It was a time of demand for participation in shaping the future of society. Youth became more noticeable as a critical group in society.

In the late 1970's, the world youth scene spotted aberrations such as 'permissiveness', narcissism as a faked search for identity; indifference which grew out of search for tolerance and pragmatism which came from a degeneration of the need for reasonableness in the face of idealism. Some would speak of the disintegration of the youth world into subjectivism, search for the transient and the here and now, regression towards possessive attitudes. "Private, withdrawn and lacking a progressive mentality-" were terms used to depict general youth tendencies.

In the present decade youth is characterized by a new set of problems. Among them is fragmentation. There is no one single type of youth with uniform questions, possibilities and problems. Further, entering later into the world of work, young people tend to experience marginalisation in society. Or else, they become easy prey of unscrupulous forces that drag them into irresponsible roles in social and political struggles. From another angle, the search for identity might also aptly describe youth of the 1990's. In the face of multiple opportunities open before them, it becomes also difficult for a young person to commit oneself permanently to something. At the same time, opportunities offer the young person ample scope for manifesting generosity. Finally, we can say, young persons are faced with a world that grows in complexity. From family ties to the larger social networks, the simplicity of former rural life has given way to a complex web of relationships.

In the religious domain, youth manifest a wide range of differences. [4] There are those far from the Church, those who are open to religious discussion, those who 'practise' religion, the committed youngsters, young people of other Christian Denominations and young people who profess other

religions. This shows the complexity of the world of youth even when considered from the religious point of view.

According to available sources, the youth population in India, [5] in general, and in the North East, in particular, comprises around 30% of the total population. Youth here is normally understood to consist of those between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The majority of the youth again, is found in the rural areas. Of special relevance is the rate of school dropouts which in N.E. India reaches an alarming level of more than 85%. At the same time, however, we notice that every year the number of tribal youth flocking to institutes of higher education keeps on increasing.

It is not easy to gauge what exactly the youth of North East India is looking for today. Of those who enter the educational institutions, there seems to be a growing ambition to make it to a lucrative career, possibly in government departments. Those who do not have the fortune of pursuing higher studies or who drop out from school, do not seem to manifest any spectacular ambitions. Most of them carry on the traditional family agricultural pursuits or seek other means of living in urban centres. This is often further combined with the fact that marriage comes early in the life of tribal boys and girls. Many of them seem to have missed the period of adolescence.

The political and cultural movements that we have witnessed in the recent past have been spearheaded mostly by young students. We have constantly heard the youth voicing their concerns about the future of the people and about their cultural identity. Different events have shown that youth want to be able to have a say in the orientation of society. Some would see even political involvement not only as not outside their domain but also as necessary expression of their concern for the future.

It is not easy for youth themselves to spell out the direction in which they want to take themselves and their society today in the midst of all the socio-political turmoil that beset us. There can be elements that may mislead youth. In the midst of a more and more complicated society, there is a deep-felt need for committed guides to accompany youth in the difficult process of building themselves and society.

What does *Redemptoris Missio* say to this world of young people? The encyclical does not address them directly. But we can speak of young people, vis-a-vis evangelization under two aspects: Young people as the evangelized and Young people as evangelizers.

Youth as Evangelized

While speaking of the parameters of mission *ad gentes, Redemptoris Missio states:*

> Speaking of the future, we cannot forget the young, who in many countries comprise more than half the population. How do we bring the message of Christ to non-Christian young people who represent the future of entire continents? Clearly, the ordinary means of pastoral work are not sufficient: what are needed are associations, institutions, special centres and groups, and cultural and social initiatives for young people. This is a field where modern ecclesial movements have ample room for involvement (RM, n. 37, P.64).

The encyclical realizes that to meet the complex World of youth for the purpose of proclamation of the Good News of Christ and of inviting them to participation in his life, the 'ordinary means of pastoral work' will not suffice. What can the Christian communities and particularly the missionaries to young people do? It is not easy nor is it possible to provide a generic and universal answer. We can point out certain possible avenues.

The first and foremost step is that outlined by the Word of God itself. 'Meet the Young where they are.' This was the method Jesus himself used when he went in search of the Samaritan woman, when he sought out sinners and publicans. This is the very heart of the mystery of the Incarnation. God comes to search for lost humanity by coming and dwelling with them, by pitching his tent among them. In an atmosphere that is continually being bombarded by all kinds of messages and counter messages, young people may not be the first to take the step to search for the light of Christ. The missionary has to go into the midst of young people.

While going to meet the young, the missionary moves with the faith that God and His Spirit, gifted us by Jesus is already at work. (RM. n. 28, PP. 46- 48). Young people, with the questions they tend to raise, with the particular openness to newness are a fertile field in which the Spirit can be alive and active.

In mission to the young the need to inculturate is of special importance (See Rm. nn. 52-54, PP. 89-94). This task of inculturation does not merely embrace entry into various anthropological or ethnological groups, customs and traditions. It also speaks of the Gospel's entry into socially identifiable groups like that of the young. We have pointed out above some of the characteristics of what could be called the 'young context.' The task of

making the Gospel relevant to this context demands much more, perhaps, from the missionary. The missionary individuals and communities cannot effectively bring the Good News through a generation gap which would therfore mean a cultural gap between the young and the rest.

This missionary attitude is summed up in the call to the evangelizer to walk along with the young in the journey of faith.[6] This means that what the Gospel proclamation and the Christian invitation offers is not a prize on a platter. It is, rather, a journey to be made. This journey takes the young person through mutually present dimensions of human maturity, meeting the person of Jesus Christ, growth into ecclesial communion and commitment for the Kingdom. This pattern of the journey of faith reflects what *Redemptoris Missio* teaches about mission. It is addressed to the human person in his/her freedom in order to offer the fullness of human existence in knowledge and acceptance of Jesus Christ. The missionary task, building on the model of Christ and the early Church, leads to the formation of ecclesial communities which do not close in upon themselves. Such communities express their life and revitalize themselves in active commitment both to the spread of the Gospel message and to the transformation of human society and of the world.

Youth as Evangelizers

The aim of evangelizing young people is to lead them to active and dynamic life in the ecclesial community. The task of evangelization is a responsibility of each and every one of the baptized. This holds good and true also and in a particular way for young people. The proof for this is in the mission history particularly in areas like North East India. Perhaps here we find a rather glaring lacuna in the encyclical. Youth as evangelizers do not feature in the discussion. Considering the particular characteristics of youth and the special contribution they have made to mission *ad gentes,* special mention of them is in place.

The Young Evangelizer

Youth is not merely a quiet preparatory stage for adult life of a Christian. Youth is a period in which faith seeks to mature. It is a transitory stage in which, the permanent task of evangelization begins in an active way. This flows from the very nature of youth itself. It is a time of idealism, a time of questioning, of seeking and launching out to new avenues. We can say youth

is a time of giving, of generosity, of dedication to a cause that challenges.[7] This makes the young person a fitting evangelizer.

Ways of Youth Evangelizing

a) Witness

Redemptoris Missio, in speaking of 'The Paths of Mission', points out that "The first form of Evangelization is Witness" (RM, n. 42-43, pp. 72-74). Young people are especially sensitive to the value of witness and to the authenticity of witness. They are, in particular, sensitive to those forms of evangelical witness which appeal to the world: concern for the poor and the marginalized, commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion. They can fearlessly take "courageous and prophetic stands in the face of the corruption of political or economic power." (RM, n. 43, p. 74)

b) Active Proclamation

"Proclamation is the permanent priority of mission." (RM. n. 44, P.74). Young people, given the right motivation and orientation, will have the necessary courage, resourcefulness and creativity for an effective proclamation of Jesus Christ. But in order to come to this, the Church has to be concerned about evangelizing youth. The journey of faith that the missionary proposes to young people, and along which he/she accompanies the young person, has to constantly bear fruit in active commitment, by the young, in evangelization of others. It is seen in frontline mission contexts how young new Christians, take up the challenge of carrying the faith further to others who have not come to know and accept Jesus Christ. One does not wait for a growth into adulthood in Christian belief in order to be an evangelizer.

(c) Dialogue and Ecumenism

The encyclical points to two important dimensions of missionary life in the Church: Dialogue with other religions and unity among Christians (RM, nn. 55-57, pp. 94-98; n. 50 pp. 85-86). Young people, in particular constantly encounter youth of other faiths in their study, their work and in various social meetings. Youth will have to be formed to be able to engage in dialogue, while never forgetting their obligation to extend the invitation to accept Christ. Further, young people are also in a position to enter into ecumenical collaboration especially with young people of other Christian groups. This

is seen as of special importance today, in the face of the spread of para-Christian sects.

d) Experience of ecclesial life

Evangelization eventually leads to and includes the formation of ecclesial communities (RM. nn. 48-50, pp. 82-87). In the journey of faith that the evangelizer of youth proposes, an important dimension is that of the experience of ecclesial community.

Young people naturally and easily knit themselves into groups and movements of various types. The group is an open, non structural type of venue where young people find acceptance and scope for fulfilment. In this ambience, the young person meets a society that is not so complex and large as that into which he is born and has to grow. In it, he learns to 'socialize'.

All this makes the experience of ecclesial life in the group an excellent means for the work of evangelizing by young people addressed to other young people. The group can be an open invitation to those who want to undertake the journey of faith from search for Christ to commitment to His Kingdom. Young members of Church participate in a variety of groups having various aims and objectives. Their presence in these groups can become a most effective proclamation of the Good News.

Further, a sizeable number of young members of the Church belong today to various traditional and newer groups within the Church. If the Christian community and the Church leaders seek to infuse into the spirituality of these groups a strong commitment to the task of evangelization a transformation can take place. When an ecclesial youth group takes up the task of evangelization as a prime commitment, its vitality is renewed. *Redemptoris Missio* puts it, "For in the Church's history, missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis of faith" (RM, n. 2, p. 5).

The Group, especially the more formative and intense ones, can be the "Ecclesial BasicCommunities." The encyclical describes such communities thus:

> These are groups of Christians who, at the level of the family or in a similarly restricted setting, come together for prayer, Scripture reading, catechesis, and discussion on human and ecclesial problems with a view to a common commitment (RM, n. 51, p. 87).

Church youth groups, when seen as basic ecclesial communities "become a means of evangelization and of the initial proclamation of the Gospel, and a source of new ministries." (RM. n. 51, p.88).

The group also becomes a venue for youth prayer and youth liturgies for the spread of God's living message of salvation in Christ. Through the group, the prayer can also grow into active commitment. It is also in the group which is nourished by the word and by prayer that a missionary youth spirituality can grow.

e) Evangelizing the 'Areopagus' of Communications

Among the many elements that form the parameters of mission, is that of the world of communications which the encyclical calls "the first Areopagus of the modern age" RM. n. 37, p. 65). The means of social communications have become indispensable for life in society. It forms and educates people, it shapes their mentality and their attitudes. "In particular, the younger generation is growing up in a world conditioned by the mass-media. To some degree perhaps this Areopagus has been neglected." (RM.n.37, 66).

As the encyclical points out, in the Gospel proclamation, other means of preaching the Gospel and of faith education have usually been given preference. The mass-media, instead was left to individual initiatives. There is a need now not merely to use the media to support and strengthen proclamation, but especially to "integrate the message into the 'new culture' " (RM, n. 37,p.66). This new culture emerges from the existence of new means of communication, new languages and techniques and a new psychology.

This is a world that the young people are very much at home in. It is one which they themselves can also be helped to influence. Helped by the church communities, they can develop a positive and critical attitude to the various forms and languages of the mass-media. They can also be led to contribute by shaping these forms and languages of the media along evangelical lines.

f) Young Evangelizers and Inculturation

The process of incarnating the Gospel into various cultures involves every baptized Person (RM. n. 54,p.93). This is true in a particular way to the young members of the Church. They are active recipients of a culture into which they are born. They not merely accept what is handed over, but also

actively interact with the traditional values, since they are open to a wider cultural complex. They question tradition, contrast it with other cultures and values that they encounter. When they are properly led and guided, young people can become positive bearers of evangelical values to their own cultures.

g) Commitment through Missionary and Religious Institutes

The Church has never lacked young people who are generous in serving the Kingdom through various forms of missionary proclamation. But today the call for a permanent and life-long commitment resounds with even more urgency. Young people have to be helped to stay attuned to the voice of God inspiring and calling them to active and permanent commitment to mission *ad gentes* through becoming members of missionary and religious institutes that are dedicated to mission. This is a special calling "patterned on that of the Apostles. It is manifested in a total commitment to evangelization, a commitment which involves the missionary's whole person and life, and demands a self-giving without limits of energy or time" (RM. n.65 p.111).

The Pope repeats to young people the same call that Jesus once made to his followers:

> I ask young people themselves to listen to Christ's words as he says to the what he once said to Simon Peter and to Andrew at the lakeside: 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men' (Mt 4:19). May they have the courage to reply as Isaiah did: 'Here am I, Lord ! I am ready ! send me !" (cf. Is 6:8). They will have a wonderful life ahead of them, and they will know the genuine joy of proclaiming the 'Good News' to brothers and sisters whom they will lead on the way of salvation (RM. n. 80, pp. 132-133).

Conclusion

The encyclical of Pope John Paul II is a timely one, especially in this decade of preparation for the third millennium. The call to active missionary commitment is particularly significant for the youth who will then be at the helm of affairs in society and in the Church. The seed that is sown today will be the harvest that will be reaped tomorrow. A growing faith, an enthusiastic hope based on the presence of the Spirit of the Lord in our midst and in the world, living bonds of love in the communities and in society, these can transform the world of young people into effective bearers of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

NOTES

(1) John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter, 'Redemptoris Missio'* on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate, (St. Paul Publications, Bombay 1991).

(2) By youth in this paper, we intend to include those between 15 and 24 years of age.

(3) For a global description of the youth phenomenon or youth problem during this century, see John E. Vecchi, *Towards a New Phase in Salesian Youth Pastoral Work*, (New Delhi: Don Bosco Youth Animation - India, 1989), pp. 5-17. The following summary is based on his reading of youth history.

(4) The 23rd General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco sought to identify the various manifestations of youth attitudes to religion. See *Educating Young People to the Faith: Documents of the 23rd General Chapter of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales* = Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, n. 333, May 1990 (Rome : Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, 1990) pp. 52-57.

(5) Though the final results of the 1991 census are not yet published, the 1981 census itself is indicative of youth population and tendencies. On interpretation of the 1981 census, see S. Saraswathi, *Youth In India,* (New Delhi: ICSSR, 1988).

(6) The 23rd General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco dealt with this theme of Journey of Faith. Though the context is more of what RM would call 'new evangelization', the concept of journey is applicable especially to the proposal of faith made to youth of other faiths. See *Educating Young People,* pp. 71-99.

(7) A positive evaluation of youth by the Church can be found especially in John Paul II, Apostolic Letter "To the Youth of the World", in *L'Osservatore Romano,* n. 13 (879), 1 April 1985,pp. 1-9.

Almeida, J.

Missionary Spirituality

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The foundation of the missionary spirituality lies in Christian Spirituality. By Christian spirituality we understand that the Holy Spirit takes the initiative in the personal conversion of man who adheres to the Word of God and responds positively. Hence we say that Christian spirituality is nothing but fidelity to live according to the Spirit (Cf. Romans 8:5) and to live as the Spirit dictates (Cf. Romans 5:4). So if Christian spirituality is a response to the word of God in order to live the new life of the Spirit in Christ, then there must necessarily be a continuous proclamation of the Word. And we know that action flows from contemplation, so too, a life in the Spirit urges us to venture out in proclaiming the mission of Christ.

Although the concept of missionary spirituality is an integral part of the Christian spirituality nevertheless we find it being highlighted only from 1965 in *Ad Gentes* and the subsequent magisterial documents.[1]

In our effort to understand the missionary spirituality in *Ad Gentes* we find that it described missionary spirituality in detail specifying its virtues and concrete attitudes (AG 23-24) insisting on the continuity of the spiritual formation of the missionary (AG 25). Whereas *Evangelii Nuntiandi* pointed out what should be the interior attitude of the missionary (EN 74-80).[2]

Twenty-five years after *Ad Gentes* and fifteen years after *Evangelii Nuntiandi, Redemptoris Missio* in a big way touched that integral aspect of Christian spirituality, viz, missionary spirituality. In its eight chapters the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* attempts to renew the missionary vision of the Church as she stands at the threshold of the Third Millennium. John Paul II promptly but inspiringly says: "I sense that the time has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes.* No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples" (RM 3, 33).

The whole document *Redemptoris Missio* is worked out in eight chapters. Chapter III speaks of the pneumatological significance to understand missionary mandate of the Church. It is preceded by two chapters that deal with the Christological and ecclesiological dimensions of the mission of the Church. Chapter IV highlights the sociological perspective of mission and chapters V - VII present missiological themes on inculturation, inter-religious dialogue, missionaries and mission institutes. Chapter VIII explicitly treats of the missionary spirituality of the missionaries.

The pneumatological dimension is stressed as the first important dimension in missionary spirituality. It calls for a fidelity to the Holy Spirit. We read thus; "This spirituality is expressed first of all by a life of complete docility to the Spirit. It commits us to being moulded from within by the Spirit, so that we may become ever more like Christ." (RM 87). "This docility then commits us to receive the gifts of fortitude and discernment, which are essential elements of missionary spirituality." (RM 87). This docility to the Spirit is so essential because "today, as in the past, that mission is difficult and complex, and demands the courage of light of the Spirit." (RM 87). Therefore it is only by pondering on God's mysterious way and allowing the spirit to lead us we can become missionaries of today. The stress is on the virtues of fortitude and discernment in the missionary spirituality which are the gifts of the Spirit.

Again we read: "An essential characteristic of missionary spirituality is intimate communion with Christ. We cannot understand or carry out the mission unless we refer it to Christ as the one who was sent to evangelise" (RM 88). Here we see another dimension of missionary spirituality in the Christological perspective. The thrust is towards the personal relationship with Christ which leads to an experience of *kenosis* and prepares the missionary for the mission with maximum availability. In the measure that a missionary has encountered Christ in the same measure is he strengthened to carry out his mission even in moments of difficulties that are insurmountable. In these moments there lingers in his mind the constant presence of Christ in his life (Cf. Acts 18:9-19).

Another slant in the missionary spirituality highlighted in this chapter consists in the missionary's love for the Church. It is attractively articulated when it says: " Those who have the missionary spirit feel Christ's burning love for souls; and love the Church as Christ did" (RM 89). To love the Church as Christ did means to have set out with a missionary mandate and never looking back. The missionary with this frame of mind carries within

him the apprehension for the Church with a constant reference to Christ as it is commendably stated as a "fidelity to Christ cannot be separated from fidelity to the Church" (RM 89). The ecclesiological perspective is therefore another peculiarity of missionary spirituality in *Redemptoris Missio.*

The same chapter of the documents, it further goes to stress the pastoral charity as still another attribute of the missionary spirituality. It impressively states. "Missionary spirituality is also marked by apostolic charity" (RM 89) and speaks of Christ the Good Shepherd as the model of every missionary who has to manifest concern, tenderness, compassion, openness, availability and interest in people's problems. (Cf. RM 89). The pastoral charity is therefore oriented towards others with its liberating mission irrespective of race, caste or ideology. Hence we see an anthropological perspective in missionary spirituality qualified with pastoral charity.

Finally this missionary spirituality takes into account a sociological situation of men who are struggling to find an answer to their various problems. The document puts it as "a desperate search for meaning, the need for an inner life, and the desire to learn new forms and methods of meditation and prayer. Not only in cultures with strong religious elements, but also in secularized societies, the spiritual dimension of life is being sought after as an antidote to dehumanization." (RM 38). In the light of this realistic world situation of people, the eighth chapter of *Redemptoris Missio* underlines that the holiness of the missionary is the only fundamental answer to this challenging problem. Therefore, no amount of time spent in updating courses either of theoretical or technical nature in view of mission work has any meaning if a missionary fails to meet God in contemplation (Cf RM 90). Hence we see great importance given to the theme of contemplation in missionary spiritual theology. We could summarize missionary spirituality by recalling the theme of *Lumen Gentium* chapter five: every member of the faithful is called to holiness and to mission.

As the Church prepares to usher in the Third Millennium of our redemption she is conscious of Lord's mandate to go to the whole world and preach the Good News of Salvation and baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Even after two thousand years of her existence, there still emerge areas where this message of the Good News has not yet reached to a vast majority of the people. On the other hand, the areas that were once evangelized have lost the Gospel values. Pope John Paul II in this important encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* appeals to the Christian conscience, and to its duty to be faithful to the Lord's mandate to the Church.

The Church therefore needs missionaries to carry out the work of first and second evangelization. For such an important task it presupposes an attitude of greater availability which is possible only if the missionary lives a contemplative dimension of his life in order to bring the world into contact with the Gospel values.

Notes

1. In *Ad Gentes* we read: "This congregation should itself promote missionary vocations and spirituality, as also zeal and prayer for the missions" AG 29. Other themes that go to highlight the missionary spirituality are dealt in the same documents such as; the missionary vocation, AG 23; the missionary virtues, AG 24; missionary formation, AG 25-26; and the missionary institutes, AG 27. Again in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* chapters one and three speak of the missionary spirituality as a life style of the missionary as a response to the nature of the mission and (chapters four and five) to the mission itself. The entire chapter seven of the same document is devoted to missionary spirituality entitled as "the Spirit of evangelization".

2. The interior attitude to the missionary should be one of fidelity to his vocation (AG 74), fidelity to the Holy Spirit (AG 75), authenticity and witness (AC 79-80), unity and fraternity(AG 77), service of truth (AG 78) and apostolic charity (AG 79-80).

S. J. Emmanuel

Proclamation Restated and revitalized in relation to new apostolates

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1. A Church open to God and His World, commits itself to new apostolates of the one Evangelization.

At the Second Vatican Council, the Church opened herself to God and His world in many new ways and experienced an outpouring of the Spirit for the renewal of the Church and her mission. The openness to the world of religions and cultures, to new peoples and to the realities of their life in the modern world, opened up naturally *new challenges and opportunities for a new evangelizing mission of the Church.*

Consequently the Church was led to an irreversible *commitment to new apostolates* such as human development, liberation from oppressive realities, evangelisation of cultures, inculturation of churches, intereligious dialogue etc. These apostolates, no doubt, were understood in Vat. II as part of the one evangelizing mission of the Church. From then on the magisterium has continued to encourage and further these apostolates by its teachings and by the creation of the necessary structures at all levels of the Church.

2. Obstacles to missionary activity coupled with an euphoria for new apostolates had adverse effects on proclamation

Although Vat.II has firmly stated the commitment of the Church to proclamation and building of local churches (A.G.6e,f) some post- Vat.II developments tended to have adverse effects on proclamation.

In the decades following vat. II, exaggerated criticisms of the old missionary methods and their colonial attitudes, the conversion method as well as their

alienating consequences discouraged many of the younger generation of priests and religious from direct missionary activity. On the other hand, the rise of post-colonial governments in the new nations of Asia and Africa accompanied by the resurgence of fresh nationalism helped the revival of old religions and cultures and even earned special privileges for them. Worse still, some of the new nations of Asia and Africa rejected foreign missionaries and restrained, or even prohibited, missionary activities such as conversions, opening of new churches or mission- centres etc.

These were particularly true of the younger churches of Africa and Asia. Living in a context of inhuman poverty and under development, and at the same time blessed with ancient religio-cultural richness, they took up the new challenges and opportunities in the evangelizing mission of the Church with a post-Vat.II euphoria. Many of the "foreign missionaries" left behind in the younger churches as well as the younger indigenous clergy emerging in those places have preferred to channel their missionary zeal into new missionary apostolates such as human development, inculturation and intereligious dialogue.

Besides these obstacles, or rather on account of them, the euphoria and enthusiasm for the new apostolates was on the increase. These developments had a cumulative effect on the traditional missionary activities. Because these new apostolates in some way impinge and collide with the main missionary task of proclamation, the excessive euphoria and enthusiasm coupled with the obstacles unfortunately led to adverse consequences for the direct proclamation of Jesus Christ and His Gospel.

3. Need for theological clarifications

In order to rectify such devious tendencies harmful to the fundamental mission of proclamation, it is important go back to the basis and intentions as given by Vat. II for these new apostolates, clearly restate their place in the total evangelizing mission of the Church and also clarify their relation to explicit or direct proclamation of Jesus Christ, His message and His Kingdom. Such theological clarification between these connected elements of the "one single but complex reality" of the evangelizing mission of the Church, will put each apostolate on a firm foundation, bring out clearly the proclamatory dimension of each and maintain the primacy of direct proclamation in the evangelizing mission of the Church.

If the *new Evangelization* envisaged by John Paul II on the eve of the Third Millennium, both in the older churches of the west as well as in the younger

churches of the southern hemisphere is to be a reality, theological clarity about their indispensability, interrelation and order is urgent. "Today the Church must face other challenges and push forward to new frontiers, both in the initial mission *ad gentes* and in the new evangelization of those peoples who have already heard Christ proclaimed." (R.M. 30)

4. Euphoria for intereligious dialogue impedes proclamation

Intereligious dialogue has its firm basis on the recognition and appreciation given by the Church in Vat.II to salvific truths and values in other religions (L.G.16; N.A.1,2). The magisterium has consistently promoted this dialogue in various forms (Paul VI set up Secretariat for Non-christians; 1984 Plenary Assembly document: The attitude of the Church towards the followers of other religions; John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio,* 55-57; D.P.).

In the case of churches which are minorities amidst a strong multireligious environment, one of two things were happening. Some priests and religious, discouraged by the obstacles to direct proclamation,have retreated to mere pastoral care of the "older parishes" and almost abandoned any efforts at breaking new ground for Jesus Christ and His Church. While others, still a minority, are gradually increasing their enthusiasm for the new apostolate of intereligious dialogue.

As a sum effect, of this enthusiasm for dialogue on one side and of discouragement for proclamation on the other, the genuine concern for those outside the Church and the urgency for proclaiming Jesus Christ and His gospel to them has suffered a set back. Hence the alarming concern of the mother Church in recent times to restate more forcibly the permanent validity of the mandate to proclaim Jesus Christ and His Gospel to all the Peoples *(ad Gentes).*

5. Restatement of the missionary mandate to proclamation and dialogue

Happily the theological clarification needed for Proclamation and Dialogue has been well done by the recent Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* of John Paul II (issued with the assistance of the Congregation for the Evagelization of Peoples) and the document called *Dialogue and Proclamation,* issued by the Pontifical Council for Dialogue in collaboration with the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. They have jointly gone a long way to

dispel darkness and doubts about Proclamation and Dialogue and to establish their necessity and mutual relationship. Further, they have refunded and reoriented the two important and absolute elements of the one evagelizing mission of the Church in a new and stronger way, in the directions and intentions of Vatican II.

The sum effect of these two documents is to boost up in a new way "the post-Vat.II missionary activity" of proclamation and dialogue. There is no option for one or the other (D.P.6), there is only an emphasis of one or the other according to places and times.

Proclamation and Dialogue, done with a genuine attitude of openness to the Spirit, love of Jesus Christ and His Gospel and a sincere concern, respect and appreciation for the others(D.P.14), cannot be contradicting one another. *They are the two authentic, necessary and legitimate elements of the one evangelizing mission of the Church, intimately related but not interchangeable* (cf.R.M.55; D.P.2,77). Dialogue neither should pretend to constitute the whole mission of the Church, not can it simply replace proclamation, but remains oriented towards proclamation (cf.D.M. 82).

6. Other new apostolates also impinge adversely on Proclamation

But there are other apostolates too which when misunderstood or exaggerated impinge adversely on proclamation. We mention them briefly.

6. 1. Euphoria for human development detracts interest on proclamation

Although service to humanity has been recognized in Vat.II,in the Synods and in the Papal teachings as part of the *integral evangelization* of peoples, still this social dimension of the evangelizing mission is not to stifle, least of all replace, the primary task of proclamation of the Gospel. Proclamation of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom remains as the specific mission of the Church while preparing the way for the coming of the Kingdom by way of human development is a general task open also to interreligious collaboration. The classic option of the Apostles of the early Church for the preaching of the word in preference to serving at tables must not be forgotten.

"A commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion is also a witness to the Gospel when it is a sign of concern for persons and is directed towards integral human development." (Paul VI, *Pop.Progressio,* 21,42).

But the same Pontiff firmly reminds us that "Evangelization will always contain - as the foundation, centre and at the same time the summit of its dynamism - a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ ... salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy" *(Ev.Nuntiandi, 27)*

6. 2. Euphoria for inculturation clouds proclamation

The Church is committed to incarnate Jesus Christ and His message in the language and culture of the people as well as to evangelize and bring to perfection the positive values in these cultures (Cf. A.G.22). Consequently there has been a growing consensus in the Church, that the local churches in order to fulfill their evangelizing mission have to inculturate themselves in keeping with the religio cultural heritage of the regions. But unfortunately an over enthusiasm for inculturation has resulted in a confusion of means with the end. The "wonderful exchange between the churches and the riches of the nations" should not cloud our vision of the fundamental mission of the Church, namely, the missionary mandate to proclaim Jesus Christ and His Gospel. In fact all our efforts at inculturation must aim at making Jesus Christ and His message more understood and appreciated by the people as well as their cultures to be effectively illumined, purified, strengthened and ennobled by the light of the gospel" (Cf.L.G. 13b; A.G.22d).

With respect to these apostolates of human development and inculturation too, there arises the urgency for more theological clarification which could be done again by collaboration between the respective organs of the magisterium. But theological clarification alone would not suffice for effective proclamation of Jesus Christ and His Gospel in the new evangelisation program. Something more profound is still needed.

7. Proclamation out of faith and courage nourished by prayer

For proclamation to retain its due place as "foundation, centre and summit of evangelization" amidst the other necessary elements of evangelization, besides the theological clarification it requires *a strong and personal faith nourished by prayer.*

An unquestionable faith is the basic need - in Jesus Christ as Saviour of the world, in His Kingdom as the ultimate plan for the salvation of all, in His Church as the necessary agent for this mission. Such a faith, indispensable for proclamation, cannot be the product merely of theological clarity. It is a gift of God obtained and sustained by prayer - incessant and personal prayer.

The well - spring of one's fervor for proclamation and zeal for the building of the Church is in one's faith sustained by prayer. More than anything else, it is the modern lack of personal faith and missionary courage sustained by persevering prayer that dampens direct proclamation.

Only a man of faith and prayer can generate that missionary courage of St. Paul (Acts 18.9-16) and the necessary attitude for proclaiming Jesus Christ to brethren of others faiths. By her proclamation the Church has no intention of denigrating or denouncing religions and their heritages(Cf.N.A. 5C). She constantly and clearly expresses her profound respect and appreciation of truth and sanctity in them. But moved by a deeper conviction of the mandate she received from God and by that Pauline courage that she has something specific of the Spirit to offer to people of other faiths (Acts 19.1-8), she proclaims and does it in season and out of season, always and everywhere.

Her proclamation is not directed against religions, religious heritages and cultures. It is directed against the elimination of evil, dispelling the darkness of sin and promoting the salvation of all (cf. L.G.16d). This is not an easy attitude to develop nor an easy task to be accomplished (D.P. 89) because it is based on the mysterious plan of God for the salvation of humanity. We who are called by revelation in Jesus Christ must rely on our faith and our living contact with Him in prayer. And for this reason, we conclude that theological clarity is necessary for our faith vision of the mysterious plan of God, but it is faith sustained by the grace of prayer (D.P.89) that can revitalize and en-courage us to proclaim Jesus Christ and His message of salvation to the world around us.

"Today, as in the past, that mission is difficult and complex and demands the courage and light of the Spirit... Now, as then, we must pray that God will grant us boldness in preaching the Gospel;..." (R.M. 87d).

James H.Kroeger

Redemptoris Missio: A Synthesis

Introduction

1. The mission of Christ the Redeemer, entrusted to the Church, is far from complete it is still only beginning. The Spirit impels us, like Paul (I Cor. 9:16), to focus on the *urgency of missionary activity.* Basing the Church's "missionary nature" on the Trinity, the Second Vatican Council sought to renew the entire Church in light of the needs of the contemporary world (Jn. 17:21).

2. Among the many fruits of the Council, a new awareness has grown: *missionary activity is a matter for all Christians.* However, some difficulties exist and missionary activity *ad gentes* (specifically directed "to the nations") appears to be waning. Is this a crisis of faith?

Thus, in continuity with *Ad Gentes* (1965) and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), this encyclical invites the Church to *renew her missionary commitment* because *faith is strengthened when it is given to others.* Missionary evangelization is the primary service the Church can render to modern humanity. All mission has but one purpose: to serve people by revealing God's love made manifest in Jesus Christ.

3. In full respect for every people, culture, and religion, the Pope extends the invitation: *Peoples everywhere, open the doors to Christ.* In our times momentous changes continue to unfold; these provide God-given opportunities for the Church to sow the Gospel and promote a new evangelization, to proclaim Christ to all peoples.

I. Jesus Christ, the Only Savior

4. The Church's fundamental and continuous function is to direct all humanity toward the mystery of Christ. This task is born of faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, it is only in faith that the Church's entire mission is adequately understood. Faith will be central in answering many aspects of the questions: Why should there be missionary activity? *Is missionary work among non-Christians still relevant?*

5. The early Church as well as the entire New Testament affirms the universality of salvation in Christ (Acts 4:10, 12; I Cor. 8:5-6; Jn. 1:9, 18; 14:6). In Jesus, God's revelation becomes definitive and complete (Heb. 1:1-2; 4:14-16; I Tim. 2:5-7). This revelation of *who he is* places Jesus at the foundation of the Church's missionary identity. Therefore, other participated forms of mediation acquire meaning and value only from Christ's own mediation; they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to Jesus Christ's mediation.

6. It is contrary to Christian faith to separate Jesus from the Christ, to detach a "Jesus of history" from the "Christ of faith." This uniqueness of Christ is abundantly clear from Scripture (Jn. 1:2, 14, 16, 18; Mt. 16:16; Col. 1:13-14, 19-20; 2;9; Rev. 22:13); he has an absolute and universal significance. Christians legitimately explore the various aspects of the rich mystery of Christ, the one center of God's unified plan of salvation(Eph. 1:10).

Christological faith also demands that "we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in the Paschal Mystery in a manner known to God" (GS 22); [note that this quote is used verbatim three times in the encyclical: RM 6, 10, 28].

7. The urgency of missionary activity derives from the *radical newness of life* brought by Christ. God lovingly offers humanity this gift of new life; it is freely given. It is also accepted or rejected through one's human freedom. Faith in Christ is always directed to humanity's authentic freedom.

8. Any true vision of humanity cannot focus on the horizontal dimension alone -- without an openness to the Absolute. The Second Vatican Council promoted an authentic "new humanity" which includes safeguarding freedom of conscience. Thus the Church's mission of proclaiminig Christ and bearing witness to him, when done in a way that respects consciences, does not violate freedom. In fact, human dignity is promoted through proclaiming the riches of the mystery of Christ.

9. Christ dwells within the Church and carries out his mission through her. The Church is both sign and instrument of salvation; she believes that God established Christ as the one mediator and that she herself is the universal sacrament of salvation. To understand the one mystery of salvation, it is necessary to keep two core truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all humanity and the necessity of the Church for

salvation. Or again, salvation remains the Holy Spirit's gift but requires human cooperation.

10. Grace and salvation are universally offered to all people. Whether formally part of the Church or not, all have a relationship to the Church by Christ's grace and the Holy Spirit's action. The centrality of the Paschal Mystery is operative universally; thus, (for the second time in the encyclical) it is asserted that "we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this Paschal Mystery in a manner known to God" (Cf. RM 6, 28).

11. In response to objections regarding mission *ad gentes,* Christians continually reaffirm their faith in Christ; in this they imitate Paul (Rom. 1:16) and the Christian martyrs of all times. Convinced that the Gospel always remains "Good News," they believe that true liberation consists in opening oneself to Christ's love and peace (II Cor. 5:14; Eph. 2:14).

Many answers can be given to the question: *"Why mission" ?* Fundamentally, *mission is an issue of faith,* an accurate indicator of our faith in Christ and his love for us. In affirming that Jesus came to bring integral salvation, the Church-in-mission heralds the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8). She remains faithful to the Lord's mandate and the presence of God's life within her. It is her privilege to continue bearing witness to the faith and to the Christian life all as sincere service to peoples everywhere.

II. The Kingdom of God

12. Christ is the incarnate revelation of God who is "rich in mercy." The Father's love is freely given in Jesus through the Spirit thus...., God's kingdom is unfolded. The kingdom, prepared for in the Old Testament, is inaugurated by and in Christ, proclaimed to all peoples by the Church as she works and prays for its full realization. God's kingdom action in the Old Testament is accomplished through his chosen people (Gen. 9:1-17; 12:3; Dt.4:37; 7:6-8; Is.2:2-5; 25:6-8; 43:1-7; 60:1-6; Jer.3:17; 16:19).

13. Jesus of Nazareth, the fulfillment of God's plan, had as his mission the proclamation and establishment of the Kingdom. All the evangelists illustrate how Jesus in his person makes the Kingdom present: Mark (1:14-15; 3:13-19; 14:36), Mathew (4:17; 6:10; 7:21; 11:4-5; 12:25-28; 20:1-6: 23:9), Luke (4:14-21, 43;11:2; 15:3-32), John (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). Jesus is the Kingdom in person; the "Good News" is Christ!

14. Through his words, his actions, and his own person, Jesus gradually reveals the characteristics and demands of the Kingdom (Lk. 4:18; 5:24, 30; 6:20; 7:34; 15:1-32; 18:42-43; Mt. 12:28). Two special gestures are characteristic of Jesus' mission: healing and forgiving: through these and other signs Jesus manifested the emergence of God's reign.

15. The Kingdom seeks transformed human values and relationship based on love, service, and forgiveness. The law of love must dominate all relations with one another and with God (Mt. 22:34-40; LK. 10:25-28; Jn. 3:16; 13:34; 15:12-13). Working for the Kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God's activity and plan of salvation in all its fullness.

16. In the risen Christ God's Kingdom is fulfilled and proclaimed, giving a universal scope to Jesus' message, his actions and whole mission (Mt. 28:18; Acts 2:36; Eph.1:18-21). The disciples continue preaching Jesus Christ risen, with whom the Kingdom is identified (Acts 8:12; 28:31; Eph. 5:5; II Pt. 1:11; Rev. 11:15; 12:10). The Church today necessarily unites *the proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (the content of Jesus' own kerygma) and *the proclamation of the Christ-event* (the *kerygma* of the apostles); these two proclamations are complementary.

17. Any presentation of the Kingdom must be consonant with the Church's thinking; reductive views that are secularized and closed to the transcendent easily become an ideology of purely earthly progress. The promotion of 'kingdom values' and dialogue between peoples, cultures, and religions can truly be positive if they incorporate Christ and the mystery of redemption in its fullness. God's Kingdom is not limited to this world (Jn. 18:36).

18. The Kingdom of God simply cannot be detached either from Christ or from the Church. Jesus is the Kingdom in person and its final goal (Mk. 10:45; I Cor. 15:27); before all else the kingdom is a person with the face and name of Jesus of Nazareth. Likewise, the Church is intimately ordered toward the Kingdom of God of which she is the seed, sign, and instrument.

19. The foregoing comprehensive perspective is necessary for understanding the reality of the Kingdom. It prevents one from falling into any form of "ecclesiocentrism." Following the lead of Paul VI, the Church continually explores the profound links between Christ, the Church and evangelization.

20. Concrete and effective service of the Kingdom remains the Church's task. She calls people to conversion (Jn. 1:12), establishes faith com-

munities, promotes " Gospel values" in the world, and opens peoples' horizons to the works of the Spirit (Jn. 3:8).

These tasks seek to strengthen the foundations and purposes of missionary activity. As a dynamic force in humanity's journey, the Church becomes the sacrament of salvation for all humankind. She never compromises her eschatological vision and awaits the time when Christ "delivers the kingdom to God the Father" and "God will be everything to everyone" (I Cor.15:24,28).

III. The Holy Spirit: The principal agent of Mission

21. John Paul II wrote in his encyclical on the Holy Spirit (DV 42) that "At the climax of Jesus' messianic mission, the Holy Spirit become present in the Paschal Mystery in all of his divine subjectivity." Thus, the Spirit now continues the salvific work of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. True, Jesus missions the apostles and the Church, but the Holy Spirit remains the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission. The Spirit's permanent action is clearly seen in the early Church (Acts 10; 15; 16:6 ff.).

22. All four Evagelists record resurrection encounters between the risen Christ and the apostles and conclude their narratives with the "missionary mandate" (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-18; Lk.24:46-49; Jn. 20:21-23). Christ, who was sent by the Father, sends his own into the world in the power of the Spirit. All mission becomes *a sending forth in the Spirit.*

23. Two common elements found in all versions of the "missionary mandate" are the universalism of the mission task (Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8) and the assurance of the Lord's continual presence (Mk.16:20; Mt. 28:20). The unique or particular emphases found are the following: Mark presents mission as proclamation or *kerygma* (8:29; 15:39; 16: 15); Mathew has an ecclesiological emphasis (16:18; 28:19-20); Luke sees mission as witness (24:48; Acts 1:8, 22); John emphasizes the sending/mandate aspect of mission (17:3, 18, 21-23; 20-21). Mission admits of pluralism (in charisms, circumstances, and peoples within the overall unified task.

At its core, the mission of the disciples always emanates from Christ's mission. Not based on human abilities, mission relies on the power of the

risen Lord. We are first missionaries because of *what we are* (in Christ's love) even before becoming missionaries *in word or deed.*

24. The mission of Jesus and the Church is the work of God and the Spirit. Pentecost transformed Jesus' followers into *witnesses* and *prophets* (Acts 1:8; 2:17-18), empowered with serene courage and "boldness" to go to the ends of the earth.

Six model "missionary discourses" are recorded in Acts (2:22-39; 3:12-26; 4:9-12; 5:29-32; 10:34-43; 13:16-41). The Spirit also moves mission to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-48) and guides the first Church Council (Acts 15:5-11, 28).

25. The evangelization of the Gentiles demands "dialogue " with peoples' hopes and expectations, their anguish and sufferings, their cultural and religious values (Acts 14:15-17; 17:18, 22-31). This process unfolds examples of inculturation of the Gospel. And, it is always the Spirit who directs this truly universal mission.

26. The Spirit's action enabled the early Christian community to live in "fraternal communion" *(koinonia)* and to be of one heart and soul (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35). The example and life-style of the community in Acts verify the truth that even before activity, mission means witness and a way of life that shines out to others.

27. The whole Church, which is missionary by the Spirit's action, moves into mission on many levels. Mission, first directed to Israel, expands to the Gentiles. Mission is lived by Peter and the Twelve, by the community of believers (Acts 2:46-47), and by special envoys (Acts 13:1-4). Mission as a community commitment and responsibility of the local church is presented by Luke in Acts as the normal outcome of Christian living.

28. The Spirit's special manifestation in the Church and her members does not exclude or limit the active presence of the Spirit in every time and place. As noted by the Vatican Council II the Spirit works in everyone's heart through the "seeds of the Word" found in human initiatives-- including religious ones. Once again it is said: "We are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in the Paschal Mystery in a manner known to God" (Cf. RM 6, 10). And, the Spirit's presence and activity affect not only individuals but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions.

29. The wide expanse of the Spirit's activity (Wis. 1:7; Jn. 3:8; 16:13) necessarily guides interaction with all peoples; the interrreligious meeting in Assisi manifested this fact. In approaching the followers of other religions, the Church always respects the person as well as the action of the Spirit in each person. Two principles apply: the work of the Spirit is harmoniously linked to Jesus the Christ; the universal activity of the Spirit is never separated from his particular activity within Christ's body, the Church. The same Spirit is at work; his presence must continually be discerned by the Church.

30. As seen in humanity's history, contemporary events are major turning points and demand a resurgence of the Church's missionary activity. In our own time new horizons are opening; missionary activity is only beginning. Today all Christians, the particular churches and the universal Church, are called to listen to the Spirit's voice; he is the principal agent of mission!

IV. The Vast Horizons of the Mission *ad gentes*

31. In the apostles, the Church received a universal mission-to bring fullness of life and God's love to all nations (Jn. 10:10). This mission is one and undivided, although within it there are different tasks and activities. Never can the Church withdraw from her *permanent mission of bringing the Gospel* to the multitudes, her mission *ad gentes.*

32. When considering today's complex and ever-changing religious picture, one observes phenomena such as urbanization, migration, refugees, de-christianization, the proliferation of messianic cults and religious sects. These difficult challenges are to be balanced by noting the fruits of mission work, particularly the well- established young churches. Should the "language of mission" be modified to speak of a *single missionary situation?* Is it still appropriate to focus on *specific missionary activity?*

Raising these questions has had positive results: missiology has been inserted into *ecclesiology;* the Trintarian emphasis within mission has provided fresh enthusiasm. Yet, distinctions remain important. Affirming the missionary nature of the whole Church does not preclude either the existence of a specific mission *ad gentes* or the requirement for the specific vocation of life-long missionaries *ad gentes.*

33. The diversity of activities *in the Church's one mission* is factually clear. From the viewpoint of evangelization, *three situations* can be identified: (1) situations in which Christ and his Gospel are not known (here mission *ad*

gentes applies-- in the proper sense of the term); (2) contexts where there are healthy Christian communities (they require pastoral care); (3) areas where many baptized have lost a living faith-sense (here a "new evangelization" or "re-evangelization" is needed).

34. While the boundaries between *pastoral care of the faithful, new evangelization,* and *specific missionary activity* are not clearly definable, there should be no lessening of the impetus for mission ad gentes to the "non-Christians." Certainly, mission *ad gentes* retains its value; it gives essential meaning to the Church's missionary identity.

A growing *interdependence* among the three situations of evangelization is noted today. Ideally, the result should be that missionary activity *ad intra* (inwardly) becomes a credible, stimulating sign for missionary activity *ad extra* (outwardly), and vice versa.

35. The Church's mission *ad gentes* faces a great challenge: to go to all peoples even in spite of difficulties. The task seems disproportional to the Church's human resources. However, mission is not a merely human enterprise. Thus, faith-filled missionaries confidently approach such *difficulties* as refusal of entry, laws forbidding evangelization and worship, presumed irrelevance of the Gospel, and the misinterpretation of conversion.

36. As Pope Paul VI noted, *difficulties* also exist *within* the People of God. The most serious of these is "a widespread indifferentism" which is characterized by "a religious relativism." Some even try to claim support for such attitudes in the teaching of the Council. Renewed "thinking with the Church' *(sentire cum Ecclesia)* is needed. Pessimism should be avoided because of our faith in Jesus Christ and his Spirit as the principal agent of the Church's mission. We are enthusiastic co-workers and servants-- doing our missionary duty (Lk. 17:10).

37. While asserting that mission *ad gentes* is universal and knows no boundaries, it is important to discuss various parameters of the Church's mission activity.

(a) *Territorial Limits.* The criterion of geography, while not totally precise, helps focus the task of mission within vast regions still to be evangelized-- particularly in Asia, but also in Africa, Latin America, and Oceania.

(b) *New Worlds and New Social Phenomena.* Today's rapid and profound transformations in the world (especially urbanization in massive cities) demand a re-imaging of mission *ad gentes.* While not neglecting small

groups of people, mission efforts need to the concentrated on the big cities where the future of younger nations is being shaped. These cities are home to many youth, migrants, refugees and poverty is often rampant.

(c) *Cultural Sectors: the modern equivalents of the Areopagus.* Paul's preaching of the Gospel in the Areopagus of Athens (Acts 17:22-31) has its contemporary parallels; examples are: the *world of communications,* mass media, peace and development movements, human rights (especially for minorities, women, and children), ecology, scientific research and international relations. In all these fields, mission seeks to bridge the split between Gospel and culture.

38. Our momentous times contain many ambiguities: consumerism and materialism on one side with a search for meaning and the need of an inner life on the other. This phenomenon (the so-called "religious revival") represents an opportunity for the Church to announce Christ as "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6).

39. All forms of mission must faithfully follow Christ-in both death and resurrection. And, the Church insists on her right to proclaim Christ and God's plan in an atmosphere of religious freedom. Proclamation and mission respect human rights and freedom; *the Church proposes; she imposes nothing.* To all peoples the Church repeats: *Open the doors to Christ!* Openness is also demanded of all particular churches--an openness to missionaries, an openness which overcomes cultural and nationalistic barriers and avoids isolationism.

40. Even as the end of the second millennium of the redemption approaches, missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the Church. In fact, mission *ad gentes* is still in its infancy and directs out attention toward the South and the East. Apostolic concern and enthusiastic outreach always remain an integral dimension of every Christian's faith.

V. The Paths of Mission

41. Missionary activity is centered on manifesting God's salvific plan and its fulfillment in the world and in history. Mission is a single but complex reality, and it develops in a variety of ways.

42. Following the model of Christ, the "witness" *par excellence* (Rev. 1:5; 3;14), Christian living and concern is the first form of all mission, a form particularly appealing to people today. *The very life of the missionary, of the*

Christian family, and of the ecclesial community must reveal a new way of living. This evangelical witness (sometimes the only possible way of being a missionary) takes many forms but its concern is always for people and is directed toward integral human development.

43. Christians are called to be signs of the integration of the Gospel with their native land, people and national culture, while remaining open to universal brotherhood. Their witnessing to Christ calls them to courageous and prophetic stands in the face of corruption and to use resources to humbly serve the poorest of the poor.

44. Explicit Gospel proclamation remains the permanent priority of mission: it always contains as its foundation, center, and summit a clear focus on universal salvation in Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:3-9; Col.1:25-29). Though mission is a complex reality, all its forms are directed to this proclamation of "Good News"--- Christ crucified and risen. In this proclamation the Spirit is at work. Missionaries strive to contextulize this Gospel message within peolple's lives and daily situations.

45. Proclamation, never a merely personal act, is profoundly linked to the evangelizing activity of the whole Church. It is necessarily faith-inspired and results in enthusiasm, courage *(parrhesia)*, and fervor (I Th. 2:2; Eph. 6:18-20).

In their proclamation missionaries acknowledge the pre-existing action of the spirit--raising people's expectation and openness to God's truth. The Spirit of the Father speaks through evangelizers (Mt. 10:17-20; Lk. 12:11-12; Acts 5:32; Rom. 1:16). The martyrs of history and of today are *par excellence* the heralds and witnesses of the faith.

46. The proclamation of the Word of God had *Christian conversion* as its aim. Conversion is a gift and work of the Trinity (Jn. 6:44; I Cor. 12:3). It is total and radical, a dynamic and lifelong process; it means living in the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-13) and accepting, by a personal decision, the saving sovereignty of Christ.

The Church calls people to conversion, as did John the Baptist (Mk. 1:4) and Jesus himself (Mk.1:14-15); *repent* and believe in the Gospel. Though questions are raised about conversion, the Church affirms the right of everyone to hear and respond to the "Good News" as did the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:10, 15).

47. Peter and the apostles, prompted by the Spirit, preached conversion and baptism (Acts 2:37-38; 3:19). Baptism and conversion are intimately linked in the Church's practice by the will of Christ himself (Mt. 28:19) and by intrinsic need (Jn. 3:5). Conversion to Christ cannot be separated from Baptism; Baptism remains necessary. Thus, local ecclesial communities must devote themselves to this double task, remembering that each baptized convert is a special gift to the Church. We, as Christians, frequently recall that we cannot preach conversion unless we ourselves are converted anew every day.

48. Because conversion and baptism give entry into the Church community, mission *ad gentes* seeks to found and develop Christian communities. When these local communities are mature, the whole mystery of the Church is contained in each particular church (cf. *Ad Gentes* 19-22). These churches, in turn, also become missionary.

49. The establishment of Christian communities everywhere *(plantatio Ecclesiae)* still remains an unfinished task-- the responsibility of every church, missionary by its nature as well as both evangelized and evagelizing. To be a church-in-mission requires radical conversion; it is also the clearest sign of a mature faith. Missionary personnel, working in communion with their local counterparts, actively encourage a dynamic missionary sense within the particular churches, following the solicitude of Christ the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:16).

50. In the process of forming local churches, their should be emphasis on *missionary activity* and *ecumenical activity.* Division among Christians weakens their witness; reconciliation is needed to augment their communion which, though imperfect, does exist among the baptized. Ecumenical witness can address the confusion sown by Christian and para-Christian sects--a clear threat for the Church today.

51. The expanding phenomenon of "ecclesial basic communities" in many young churches is a welcome force for evangelization. These local groups gather for prayer, Scripture reading, catechesis, and discussion on human and ecclesial problems; they become a true leaven in Christian life; within them individuals experience Christian community (Acts 2:42-47). As they function in communion with their pastors, they are cause for great hope in Church life.

52. The need to incarnate the Gospel in peoples' culture is particularly urgent today. Inculturation signifies "the intimate transformation of authen-

tic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures." Through this lengthy and profound process both the church and the Christian message are mutually enriched. Inculturation enables the Church to be a more effective instrument of mission and to better express the mystery of Christ.

53. Missionaries immerse themselves in their new cultural milieu so as to better bring people the knowledge of God's mystery (Rom. 16:25-27;; Eph. 3:5). The developing local ecclesial communities strive to translate the treasures of the faith into legitimate, inculturated expressions.

54. The inculturation process is guided by two principles: "compatibility with the Gospel and communion with the universal Church." Culture must be treasured but not overestimated; as a human creation, it needs to be "healed, ennobled and perfected." Inculturation allows the Christian "mystery" to grow within the genius of a people; it involves the whole people of God and maturely reflects their authentic *sensus fidei.*

55. Interreligious dialogue with our brothers and sisters of other religions is part of the Church's evangelizing mission; it is not in opposition to mission *ad gentes.* The Council acknowledged God's presence to individuals and entire peoples through their spiritual riches, of which their religions are the main and essential expression. These assertions do not detract from the fact that *salvation comes from Christ and that dialogue does not dispense from evangelization.*

Proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue are not in conflict. The availability of God's grace and salvation to all does not negate the *need for the Church.* Thus, dialogue proceeds with the conviction that *the Church is the ordinary means of salvation* and that *she alone* possesses the fullness of the means of salvation.

56. Dialogue is founded on deep respect, not tactical concerns or self-interest. It seeks to uncover the "seeds of the Word" and to bear fruit in the Spirit. All dialogue partners must be both consistent with their religious convictions and genuinely open to the other believers. True dialogue leads to inner transformation and is spiritually fruitful.

57. The field of dialogue is vast with many forms and expressions. All Christians- -especially the laity --are called to dialogue in their daily lives. Missionaries should persevere even when the difficult path of dialogue is their only avenue of bearing sincere witness to Christ. Dialogue will

certainly be fruitful, even if the Father alone knows the times and seasons (Acts 1:7).

58. Today mission *ad gentes* continues. Frequently missionaries are recognized as *promoters of development* and integral liberation. As noted in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, the Church's contribution promotes development by forming people's consciences. In brief, "authentic human development must be rooted in an ever deeper evangelization." The Church's focus is always the person, not material or technological growth: *the human being is the principal agent of development.*

59. Church involvement in development promotes human dignity and seeks a place for everyone in God's plan. Its foundation is the biblical perspective of the "new heavens and a new earth" (Is.65:17; II Pt. 3:13; Rev.21:1). It hopes to lead people to God and avoid "soulless development." It calls for conversion: "Fight hunger by changing your lifestyle." In short, such *missionary activity* seeks an "integral development" open to the Absolute.

60. To be the Church of the poor and to live Christ's Beatitudes are the Church's sincere desire. Thus, in her mission the poor deserve preferential attention, and their evangelization is *par excellence* the sign and proof of the mission of Jesus. Disciples of Jesus need to sincerely review their lives regarding their solidarity with the poor. Missionaries deserve gratitude for their work for the integral development of individuals and of society. The Church's many "works of charity" reveal that *love* remains *the driving force of mission.* Or again, charity is the source and criterion of all mission.

VI. Leaders and Workers in the Missionary Apostolate

61. Without missionaries there is no mission activity. So Jesus chooses and sends his witnesses forth to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The Twelve, the "collegial subject" of mission, go forth (Mt. 10:6); James, John and, above all, Peter are witnesses (Acts 2:14; 37); Paul's work extends to the nations (Gal. 1:15-16); the local Church at Antioch becomes an evangelizing community (Acts 13:2-3).

62. The mission activity of the early Church retains all its validity and urgency today; *the Church is missionary by her very nature.* Young churches--even with a clergy shortage--should begin sharing in the Church's

universal missionary work. Younger and older churches mutually need each other' strength, witness and riches.

63. As the risen Lord missioned Peter and the College of the Apostoles, their successors have primary responsibility for missionary activity. Pope John Paul II views his travels as journeys of faith for proclaiming the Gospel. Bishops, collectively and individually, should pay special attention to missionary activiry, the greatest and holiest duty of the Church.

64. Bishops, Episcopal Conferences, and all particular Churches must be generous--even from their poverty and deficiencies --and send missionaries *ad gentes.* Following Church *norms* regarding clergy distribution, all churches are invited to share the Pope's concern and promote missionary vocations.

65. The mission decree *Ad Gentes* devoted a special chapter to "missionaries" and emphasize their fundamental importance and special task in evangelization. Missionaries and religious institutes keep mission *ad gentes* as their "special vocation"; their commitment involves their whole person and entire life.

66. Missionary institutes, faithful to their founding charism, exist for the Church and cooperate with *Propaganda Fide* for the spread of the faith and the founding of new churches. Such institutes remain "absolutely necessary." Likewise, the special vocation of missionaries *"for life"* retains all its validity; it is the model of the Church's missionary commitment.

67. All priests must have the mind and heart of missionaries--open to the needs of the Church and the world. *The true Catholic spirit* always promotes *the most universal and all embracing mission of salvation* that extends to earth's ends. Such a universal vision demands great maturity of priests in their vacation.

68. Pope Pius XII, with prophetic insight, encouraged diocesan priests (*"Fidei Donum* priests") to serve the universal mission of the Church. Such service, though temporary, is a valuable contribution to the growth of needy ecclesial communities.

69. Inspired by the Spirit, *Institutes of Consecrated Life* have borne much missionary fruitfulness and have rendered outstanding service. *Institutes of Contemplative Life,* through their presence in the young churches, highlight the value of contemplation and asceticism. Institutes of Active Life do

immense charity work, extend God's Kingdom, and bear effective witness by their total self-gift in chastity, poverty, and obedience.

70. Missionary religious sisters deserve a special word of appreciation. Their "gift of self with love in a total and undivided manner" is an indispensable evangelical sign-- particularly where women still have far to go on the way to full liberation.

71. Recent popes and their writings (e.g. *Christifideles Laici*) have stressed the responsibility and importance of the lay faithful in missionary activity. All the laity are missionaries by baptism and their participation in mission has been affirmed by the Second Vatican Council. The important contribution of women and the role of the laity in founding some churches must not be overlooked. Laity's particular competence lies in seeking the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs.

72. The sphere of lay presence and activity is very extensive. The recent growth of "ecclesial movements" is God's gift both for new evangelization and for missionary activity properly so-called. Those laity involved in mission *ad gentes* are cooperators with the local churches in the "planting of the Church" *(plantatio Ecclesiae)*.

73. Among the evangelizing ministries in the Church, catechists have a place of honour. Churches that are flourishing today owe much of their progress to the ministry of catechists, who are specialists, direct witnesses, and irreplaceable evangelizers. The difficult ministry of catechist will always be necessary; their educational and personal needs should be properly addressed.

74. Besides catechists, a wide variety of ministries serve the Church and her mission. All the laity are invited to devote some time to the Church as a sign of living their faith authentically.

75. In an ecclesiology of communion in which the entire Church is missionary, coordination is necessary for fruitful mission activity. The competent Church body directing mission efforts is the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Unity which Christ prayed for (Jn. 17:21) should characterize the Mystical Body; all Dicasteries, Episcopal Conferences, major religious superiors and lay organizations should strive to coordinate their worldwide efforts for mission *ad gentes*.

76. Episcopal Conferences help coordinate missionary activity and inculturation on national and regional levels and within other bodies of the same

Conference; this effort avoids relegating mission concerns to one sector alone. Various missionary institutes should promote joint initiatives and cooperative structures for missionary activity.

VII. Cooperation in Missionary Activity

77. As baptized Christians, all members of the Church share responsibility for mission; this community duty is termed "missionary cooperation." It is rooted in personal union with Christ (Jn. 15:5) and is manifested in holiness of life and mature faith. It flows over into prayer for the missions and missionary vocations as well as the assistance and welcome extended to missionaries in imitation of the first Christian communities (Acts 14:27).

78. The first form of missionary sharing is spiritual cooperation through prayer, sacrifice and Christian living. Prayer promotes effective proclamation. Sacrifice affirms the redemptive value of suffering in union with Christ (Col. 1:24). These truths enable the sick and suffering to become true missionaries. Pentecost--the beginning of the Church's mission--can be celebrated as a "Day of Suffering for the Missions."

79. Promoting missionary vocations is a key form of cooperation in mission. The Church reaffirms that *a full and lifelong commitment to the work of the missions holds pride of place.* The Gospel is preached above all by men and women who are consecrated for life to this work. This *concern for missionary vocations* requires analysis of vocation realities and prospects today: Where are the signs of the Church's vitality?

80. Promoting mission vocations is a serious challenge, as Pope John Paul II has noted. He appeals to parents and families to foster vocations among their children. He asks youth to listen to Christ's call (Mt. 4:19) and to respond "Here I am, Lord! I am ready! Send me!" (cf. Is. 6:8). A life dedicated to proclaiming the "Good News" will be filled with genuine joy.

81. Material and financial needs are many--especially in poor mission countries. Generous contributions and sacrifices that show love are genuinely appreciated. Our spirit of sharing should include both giving a contribution and participating in mission work itself. Inspired by faith, Christians realize that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). *World Mission Day* teaches an important lesson: to make an offering to God, in the Eucharistic celebration and for all the missions of the world.

82. The phenomenon of mobility has opened new forms of missionary cooperation. International tourism enables mutual cultural enrichment and direct exposure to missionary life--especially by the youth. There are opportunities to meet and bear witness to the followers of other religions--both abroad and at home; these are occasions to practice hospitality, dialogue, service, sharing, witness and direct proclamation. Increasing world interdependence affords additional opportunities for missionary cooperation.

83. The promotion of missionary awareness and formation among the People of God is a central task of each local church; it is a key element in the normal pastoral activity of parishes--especially among youth groups. Mission publications and audio-visual aids facilitate this awareness. Priestly formation should not ignore the Church's universal mission, ecumenism, the great religions and missiology. Such efforts seek to present an integral picture of mission which proclaims salvation in Christ and aims to satisfy the hunger of the poor for God.

84. The leading role in promoting a universal missionary spirit among the People of God belongs to the *Pontifical Mission Societies;* the Missionary Union fulfills the same task among all priests and religious. Their motto is: all the churches united for the conversion of the whole world. Thus, they foster worldwide, national, and local cooperation in harmony with the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. The Pope also recommends that they focus efforts on fostering lifelong vocations *ad gentes.*

85. Mature missionary cooperation is open to mutuality, both giving and receiving benefits. In this spirit the Pope exhorts all the churches: *be open to the Church's universality.* Temptations to provincialism, exclusiveness, and isolation can be strong. Older churches may think their mission is now at home; younger churches, concerned with their own inculturated identity, may close their doors to missionaries. All churches must avoid isolationism and obey God's will (Acts 5:29).

86. As the third millennium of the redemption approaches, we can see hopeful signs that God is preparing a new Springtime for the Gospel. People every where are refocusing on gospel ideals and values (e.g. rejection of war, violence, racism; respect for human persons and women's dignity). We are sustained by Christian hope and prayer (Mt. 6:10). We are committed to a new missionary advent --a time for enthusiasm--an opportunity to announce the love of God in Jesus to waiting millions.

VIII. Missionary Spirituality

87. Being in mission demands a specific spirituality. It is complete docility to the lead of the Spirit that enables missionaries to bear witness to Christ with fortitude and discernment. By the Spirit's power the apostles were transformed into courageous witnesses and enlightened heralds. Like the first Christians, evagelizers today face challenges (Acts 4:26) and must allow themselves to be led by the Spirit (Jn. 16:13).

88. The key to comprehending mission is linking it to Christ the one who was sent to evangelize. Mission spirituality, therefore, demands an intimate living of the Mystery of Christ. It is a path of total self-emptying (Phil. 2:5-8) and always leads to the foot of the cross. It demands poverty, brotherhood and solidarity (1 Cor. 9:22- 23), as well as confidence in the Lord's presence (Acts 18:9-10).

89. Apostolic charity is another hallmark of mission spirituality. It reflects Christ's charity (Jn.11:52) and burning concern for his sheep (Jn.10). The profound love of Jesus (Jn.2:25) transforms the missionary into a person of charity, a "universal brother," and a sign of God's all-inclusive love in the world. Like Christ, the missionary must love the Church (Eph. 5:25) and be solicitous for her (II Cor. 11:28).

90. Every Christian has a double vocation: *the universal call to holiness* which is closely linked to *the universal call to mission.* Thus, to be missionary means journeying toward holiness; the true missionary is, in a word the saint. Renewing mission demands holy missioners; updated pastoral approaches and theology, while beneficial, must result in a new "ardor for holiness" among evangelizers. We should also recall the dynamism of the first Christians who preached Christ crucified (1 Cor. 1:23).

91. In a particular way young communities and young churches are the hope and leaven of the Church--if they walk the path of holiness. Missionaries, too, should reflect on the duty of holiness required of them and become "contemplatives in action." In this way they can credibly proclaim Christ (I Jn. 1:1-3)--particularly in the Asian context. Finally, in imitation of Jesus, the missionary is a person of the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:1-12; 10) and proclaims "Good News" with the joy of one whose true hope is Christ.

Conclusion

92. On the eve of the third millennium, the Church has a unique opportunity of bringing the Gospel to the world; a new missionary age is dawning. It calls for a response like that of the apostles (Acts 1:14) --one filled with generosity and holiness. It demands living more intensely the mystery of Christ and following the exemplary *path* of Mary, the Church's Mother and model.

Pope John Paul II concludes his message by entrusting the Church to Mary's mediation and extending his apostolic blessing in the name of the Trinity. The encyclical is dated December 7, 1990 on the twenty- fifth anniversary of the Conciliar Decree *Ad Gentes.*

CAUTION: This is an unofficial summary of a lengthy papal document. It is provided to popularize and disseminate the important ideas of this mission encyclical; its translation into other language is encouraged. Although care has been taken to provide a "faithful summary," any formal discussion of mission and evangelization should use the complete official text.

Jozef Cardinal Tomko

Centrality of the Proclamation for the Church in Asia

Josef Cardinal Tomko is the Prefect of the Congregation of Evangelization of Peoples in the Vatican

It is with great joy that I participate in your meeting for Chairmen and Secretaries of the Evangelization Commissions of the Bishop's Conferences of Asia. In the Episcopal Conferences of the various countries, your Commissions, and therefore you, have an extremely important role: that of promoting the understanding and even more the practice of evangelization in the context of the integral mission of the Church. We were reminded of the centrality of this essential and primary task of the Church by the Holy Father, whose greetings and best wishes I transmit to you with joy. "All forms of missionary activity are directed to this proclamation, which reveals and gives access to the mystery hidden for ages and made known in Christ (.....). Just as the whole economy of salvation has its center in Christ, so too all missionary activity is directed to the proclamation of his mystery" (RM 44).

Your Episcopal Conferences have been committed for some years to this way of reflection and animation. It suffices to mention the last two meetings: the *All-Asian Conference on Evangelization* held in Suwon in Korea (August 24-31, 1988) and the *Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences* held in Bandung in Indonesia (July 17-27, 1990). To promote the reflection a theological consultation was also held in the month of November of last year in this same pleasant Thai place (Hua Hin, Thailand, November 3-10, 1991). I congratulate you on these initiatives which are at the centre of your Churches and your episcopal, personal and collegial task (cfr. RM 63-64).

1. The Kairos of Evangelization

The whole Church is living in a period of rediscovering evangelization in its integrity and essence which is proclamation itself. It is a *Kairos*, a favourable time connected with the approaching third millennium, but even more so it is a call of the Spirit who wills to renew the life and mission of

the Church through the presentation of evangelization as a response to the needs and expectations of today's humanity.

The Church does not fail to respond to this invitation of the Lord. The European Synod in last November centered its reflection and orientations on new evangelization, as likewise the IV General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate to be held next October in Santo Domingo, is being prepared in the same direction, and subsequently the African Synod. Asia cannot fail in this dynamic movement of the Church.

The Holy Father has been the guide and animator along this path. He continually gives us an example by his journeys and teachings. He has wished to gather his teaching in the Encyclical *Redemptories Missio*, a "cry" from the heart of a pastor, the "magna carta" of the mission, regarded by theologians and pastors as one of the most important documents of the present Pontificate. One year after its publication, Cardinal Danneels affirmed that: "there is no doubt that the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* is one of the most important pontifical writings of the close of this century". Various Bishops, who have come to Rome for their "ad limina" visits and more than fifty members of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples convened for the Plenary Assembly at the end of April, wished to collegially thank the Holy Father. All affirmed that it is an encyclical with long term effects. In May 1991, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples together with the Pontifical Council for interreligious Dialogue published a compelling and important document particularly for your Asiatic context, entitled "Dialogue and Proclamation".

The Church in Asia, in fact is confronted in a special manner with the challenge of the message of Christ to the peoples of that continent. One could say that more than the *Kairos* of the time, Asia is also a context of space which is calling for Christ. Here is the majority of the world's population and the greater majority of persons and nations never reached by the Gospel. In this context of developed religious traditions, great cultures and of poverty shared by the majority of the nations, proclamation is also confronted with the challenge of interreligious dialogue, inculturation and human promotion. A small flock, even if renewed by the resurrection of Christ, has the tendency to be enclosed within the cenacle of your churches and institutions, rather than going out on the streets, in the highways, market places and the Areopagus, to witness to the great "mystery of God's love, who invites it to establish a personal relationship with him in Christ" *(Ad Gentes 13)*.

Also Inculturation, dialogue and human promotion can become excuses and pretexts for departing from the task of proclaiming the Good News to all mankind. Certainly we must deepen the connection between each of these necessary tasks everywhere but in particular among you by means of proclamation. It is even more necessary to move towards the realization of dialogue, inculturation and promotion. But these would be endless ways without a goal if they did not lead to the proclamation of Christ and were not rooted in the experience of the Spirit, the principal agent of mission and ecclesial life.

2. Central Role of Proclamation

"Mission is a single but complex reality, and it develops in a variety of ways", as John Paul II stated at the beginning of the chapter dedicated to the paths of mission in the present conditions of the Church and the world (RM 41). Among the means of particular importance he reminds us of and deepens the role of witness, initial proclamation, conversion, formation of local Churches and basic Christian communities, incarnation of the Gospel in peoples' cultures, dialogue with our brothers and sisters of other religions and development. All that is to be found in love, the source and "sole criterion for judging what is to be done or not done, changed or not changed" (RM 60). And at the same time "in the complex reality of mission, initial proclamation has a central and irreplaceable role (...). Faith is born of preaching, and every ecclesial community draws its origin and life from the personal response of each believer to that preaching. Just as the whole economy of salvation has its centre in Christ, so too all missionary activity is directed to the proclamation of his mystery" (RM 44).

The other mission tasks draw their urgency and motivations from proclamation. They are in some way complementary requirements. Thus Inculturation emerges from a penetration of the Message into the life of the community and by a continuous proposal of it to those who are strangers and afar.

> Through inculturation the church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community. She transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within"(RM 52). If the Church does not diffuse the message within its communities and *ad extra* by the means of proclamation, she does not "become a more

intelligible sign of what she is, and a more effective instrument of mission (RM 52).

The proclamation of Christ and interreligious *dialogue* are not in opposition. "These two elements must maintain both their intimate connection and their distinctiveness; therefore they should not be confused, manipulated or regarded as identical, as though they were interchangeable" (RM 55). By its very nature, dialogue consists in "a witness given and received for mutual advancement on the road of religious inquiry and experience" (RM 57).

One must not forget that we are speaking about the dialogue of *salvation.* "Dialogue should be conducted and implemented with the conviction that the Church is the ordinary means of salvation and that she alone possesses the fullness of the means of salvation" (RM 55). The Document "Dialogue and Proclamation" illustrates well the relationship between the two ways of mission when it affirms: They are both oriented towards the communication of salvific truth" (DP 2).

Certainly "dialogue does not dispense from evangelization" (RM 55), it is in accord with proclamation. "The presentation of the gospel message is not optional for the Church. It is her duty, by command of the Lord Jesus. . . . It is in that way that faith comes from hearing and that means hearing the word of Christ" (Rom 10, 14 ff). It is fitting to remember also those other words of Paul: "For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel (1 Cor 9, 16)" (DP 66; cfr EN 5). The use of dialogue does not replace the need and urgency for proclamation (cfr DP 82).

Proclamation has in itself a promoting and developing force.

> "Through the Gospel message, the Church offers a force for liberation which promotes development precisely because it leads to conversion of heart and of ways of thinking, fosters the recognition of each person's dignity, encourages solidarity, commitment and service of one's neighbour, and gives everyone a place in God's plan, which is the building of his Kingdom of peace and justice, beginning already in this life. This is the Biblical perspective of the new heavens and a new earth, which has been the stimulus and goal for mankind's advancement in history. Man's development derives from God, from the model of Jesus - God and man - and must lead back to God. That is why there is a close connection between the proclamation of the Gospel and human promotion" (RM 59).

> For the Church proclamation is the primary way for renewal; it is the first duty assigned to it by Christ; it is also the first service which it can render humanity. The reasons for the missionary encyclical are principally these. "The present Document has as its goal an interior renewal of faith and Christian life. For missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others (. . . .). But what moves me even more strongly to proclaim the urgency of missionary evangelization is the fact that it is the primary service which the Church can render to every individual and to all humanity in the modern world" (RM 2; cfr. 34, 58).

Proclamation which calls for conversion "is the first and fundamental way of serving the coming of the Kingdom in individuals and in human society" (RM 20). "Proclamation is the permanent priority of mission. 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" (RM 44).

3. Prospective of the Kingdom

Inculturation, dialogue and human development promote the Kingdom of God, on the understanding of which your churches have reflected during these years and on which the Pope has dedicated an entire chapter of the missionary Encyclical. It is a theme of utmost importance not only for theology, but also for the pastoral activities in your Asian context. The Kingdom, which we know from Revelation, cannot be separated either from Christ or the Church, even if "the inchoate reality of the Kingdom can also be found beyond the confines of the Church among peoples everywhere, to the extent that they live Gospel values and are open to the working of the Spirit who breathes when and where he wills. But it must immediately be added that this temporal dimension of the Kingdom remains *incomplete* unless it is related to the Kingdom of Christ *present in the Church and straining towards eschatological fullness"* (RM 20).

Towards the end of Chapter II, John Paul II underscores the complementarity of the finality of the Christian mission to the service of the Kingdom.

> "The Church is effectively and concretely at the service of the Kingdom. This is seen especially in her preaching which is a call to conversion. Preaching constitutes the Church's first and fundamental way of serving the coming of the Kingdom in individuals and in human society. . . . The Church, then, serves the Kingdom by

establishing communities and founding new particular churches. (. . . .). The Church serves the Kingdom by spreading throughout the world the Gospel values which are an expression of the Kingdom and which help people to accept God's Plan (. . .). The many dimensions of the Kingdom of God do not weaken the foundation and purposes of missionary activity, but rather strengthen and extend them. The Church is the sacrament of salvation for all humankind, and her activity is not limited only to those who accept her message" (RM 20).

The Kingdom cannot and must not be conceived as a "super-religion" of the unity of mankind to which all religions, including the Church must tend. We know on the other hand that the Church is "the most valid source of unity" (LG 5) " a kind of sacrament, a sign and instrument, that is of communion with God and unity among all men" (LG 1).

4. Collaborators of Christ and the Spirit

"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" (RM 36; cfr. 23). In all our discussions and diverse forms of activities we must not lose sight of the fact that the sole *initiative, center* and *end* is Jesus Christ, the Son of God who "for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. . . . suffered death and rose again" (Credo), He the "alpha and omega".

The first three chapters of the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* on Jesus Christ, the only Savior, the Kingdom of God, and the Holy Spirit, have regard in a particular way to the problematic discussed in Asia but also in America and Europe. Therefore Cardinal Danneels affirmed that:

> "above all, the first three chapters are of capital interest. . . all that has been said there applies in the same way to the evangelization of the first world. In our regions there is always an ever increasing fundamental doubt on the uniqueness of Christ the Saviour. As a result of this it said that all all religions are equal: they are only diverse ways of leading to the same God. . . . There is then a second tendency: that of separating evangelical values from the person of Christ himself. . .".
>
> And the Cardinal comes to the triple conclusion:
>
> evangelization at the close of this century will be first of all proclamation of Christ, the only Savior;

it is not sufficient to limit evangelization to simple promotion of evangelical values taken in themselves: there is need of preaching Christ, because the Kingdom of God, according to the Gospel, is not space or time, but a living Person;
and finally:

the aim of evangelization is not to generate a theist people, who leave Christ behind them, as if he were perhaps only the first stage, henceforth useless and expended, of a missile propelled towards God. Christ himself is the ultimate end of our religious ascent, being Son of the Father and with the Father 'breathing forth' the Holy Spirit. Christians are not simply theists, they are trinitarians !! (G.Danneels, *"Ad un anno dalla 'Redemptoris Missio', II Sabato, 1992, 5-7).*

The theological problematic of the mission in Asia is not therefore an isolated one; nevertheless it has its own field and also its own accents. Therefore the encyclical does not fail "to encourage theologians to explore and expound systematically the various aspects of missionary activity" (RM 2).

John Paul II dedicated the whole of Chapter III to the *Holy Spirit,* the principal agent of mission. The Spirit in fact sends forth, directs and programmes (cfr. RM 21-27). Of particular interest for the Asiatic environment are the reflections on the Spirit "present and active in every time and place" (RM 28-30).

> This Spirit is the same who was at work in the Incarnation and in the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus, and who is at work in the Church. He is therefore not an alternative to Christ, nor does he fill a sort of void which is sometimes suggested as existing between Christ and the Logos. Whatever the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions serves as a preparation for the Gospel and can only be understood in reference to Christ, the Word who took flesh by the power of the Spirit so that as perfectly human he would save all human beings and sum up all things" (RM 29).

We can enter this trinitarian mission, to which we have been associated, through faith and trust in the active presence of our Lord. "All the Evangelists stress that the mission of the disciples is to cooperate in the mission of Christ (. . .). Mission, then, is based not on human abilities but on the power of the Risen Lord" (RM23). On account of which at the basis of our missionary commitment lies faith in him, in his mandate and in his presence. "The universal mission of the Church is born of faith in Jesus Christ (. . .).

It is only in faith that it finds its basis" (RM 4). "Mission is an issue of faith, an accurate indicator of our faith in Christ and his love for us" (RM 11).

Faith gives rise in our hearts to the prayer which the *Redemptoris Missio* indicates as one of the finalities and ways of mission:"The Church serves the Kingdom by her intercession, since the Kingdom by its very nature is God's gift and work, as we are reminded by the Gospel parables and by the prayer which Jesus Christ taught us" (RM 20). And perhaps we should, above all, continually ask for our conversion to his plan and his mission. "Like the Apostles after Christ's Ascension, the Church must gather in the Upper Room together with Mary the Mother of Jesus in order to pray for the Spirit and to gain strength and courage to carry out the missionary mandate. We too, like the Apostles, need to be transformed and guided by the Spirit" (RM 92; cfr. 87).

To be the co-workers of the Lord and of the Spirit, we must be in harmony with those who are the principal agents of mission. The Pope referred to it in the last chapter of his encyclical, a text of high missionary spirituality. "It is not enough to update pastoral techniques, organize and coordinate ecclesial resources, or delve more deeply into the biblical and theological foundations of faith. What is needed is the encouragement of a new ardor for holiness among missionaries and throughout the Christian community" (RM 90). "The call to mission derives of its nature from the call to holiness (. . .). The universal call to holiness is closely linked to the universal call to mission. Every member of the faithful is called to holiness and to mission" (RM 90).

5. Formation and Animation

The whole Church is called to mission in all its necessities, a mission which adopts the ways of Christ and allows itself to be guided by the Spirit (cfr. RM 87-88). This essential requirement of the Church from the beginning of its history (RM 26) is not always well understood and perhaps is still less put into effect. On account of this the Pope developed in chapter VI the motives for and demands of the missionary commitment of each Church, each community and each ecclesial category. The Bishops, missionaries, priests, religious, laity, and in particular the catechists, all have tasks in view of mission (cfr. RM 61-74). For our Churches to be renewed, revitalized in the faith and Christian identity, and to acquire new enthusiasm and new motivations, a *new missionary conscience,* with all its demands, is required (cfr. RM 2). For this, formation and animation are needed.

> Missionary formation is the task of the local Church (. . .). Particular churches should therefore make the promotion of the missions a key element in the normal pastoral activity of parishes, associations and groups, especially youth groups (. . .). Activities aimed at promoting interest in the missions must always be geared to these specific goals, namely informing and forming the People of God to share in the Church's universal mission, promoting vocations *'ad gentes'* and encouraging cooperation in the work of evangelization" (RM 83).

As Bishops we should be examples of missionary commitment and involve all the members of our communities, as the missionary decree of Vatican Council II *(Ad Gentes)* clearly indicates and which was recalled by the Pope (cfr. RM 63-64). It is a collegial and personal duty (cfr. RM 76).

> The evangelizing activity of the Christian community, first in its own locality, and then elsewhere as part of the Church's universal mission, is the clearest sign of as a mature faith. A radical conversion in thinking is required in order to become missionary, and this holds true both for individuals and entire communities (. . .). Only by becoming missionary will the Christian community be able to overcome its internal divisions and tensions, and rediscover its unity and its strength of faith" (RM 49).

Obviously, formation and missionary animation must first of all be addressed to the clergy, seminarians, religious and catechists. For each of these categories, we will find some very fine points in the encyclical.

6. To the Young Churches and Asia

The young Churches, in particular those of Asia are close to the heart of the Holy Father. Already in the motivations for the encyclical there was indicated his desire "to give a fresh impulse to missionary activity by fostering the commitment of the particular churches, especially those of recent origin, to send forth and receive missionaries" (RM; cfr. 39, 62, 67, 85).

> "I therefore address myself to the recently baptized members of the young communities and young Churches. Today, you are the hope of this two-thousand-year-old Church of ours: being young in faith, you must be like the first Christians and radiate enthusiasm and courage, in generous devotion to God and neighbour. In a word, you must set yourselves on the path of holiness. Only thus can you be a sign of God in the world and re-live in your own countries the missionary epic of the early Church. You will also be a leaven of missionary spirit for the older Churches" (RM 91).

The Holy Father called the attention of the Church some four times to Asia. Asia has been pointed out to the whole Church by reason of its truly missionary situation. "Particularly in Asia, towards which the Church's mission 'ad gentes' ought to be chiefly directed, Christians are a small minority, even though sometimes there are significant numbers of converts and outstanding examples of Christian presence" (RM 37). Then follows the message sent to the Fifth General Assembly of the FABC in 1990, in which it was emphasized that the recognition of the value of the traditional religions "does not lessen her duty and resolve to proclaim without fail Jesus Christ" (RM 55). And in the context of spirituality, it indicates how he also has been enriched by his contact with Asia. "My contact with representatives of the non-Christian spiritual traditions, particularly those of Asia, has confirmed me in the view that the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation. Unless the missionary is a contemplative, he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way" (RM 91).

The Church in Asia is close to the heart of the Pope, in his esteem and preoccupations. You are not alone in your difficult and urgent missionary task. With the presence of the Lord you also have the spiritual support of the universal Church and its pastor.

Also to the Church in Asia applies the Pope's call to have missionary courage even in the midst of difficulties or in a hostile or indifferent environment: "Proclamation is inspired by faith, which gives rise to enthusiasm and missionary fervor. . . *parrhesia*, a word which means to speak frankly and with courage". The missionary "knows that he is not proclaiming a human truth, but the "word of God", which has an intrinsic and mysterious power of its own (cfr Rom 1:16)" (RM 45 and cfr. DP 63-65).

Conclusion

I conclude my discourse by reflecting on all those who in your continent are witnessing to Christ with their lives, accepting suffering and persecution. "Throughout Christian history, martyrs, that is 'witnesses' have always been numerous and indispensable to the spread of the Gospel. In our own age, there are many Bishops, priests, men and women religious, lay people, often unknown heroes who give their lives to bear witness to the faith. They are 'par excellence' the heralds and witnesses of the faith" (RM 45). They are a sign of hope for the future of the continent.

Varickasseril Jose

The Apostles Proclaim Jesus

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I. Introduction

"We strictly charged you not to teach in this name" (Acts 5: 28a).

In Acts 5: 28b we have an extraordinarily vivid scene. The Scene is the apostles standing in front of the High Priest. They are being questioned. They are taken to task for what they are doing. To be more precise, they are going to be punished because they are preaching. Who has commissioned them to preach? What were they preaching? Where did they preach? Why did they preach? About whom were they preaching?

These are some of the questions which arise in the mind of anyone reading the Acts of the Apostles.

The Apostles who stood before the High Priest had filled Jerusalem, preaching in the name of Jesus.

Answering some of the questions mentioned above, there will emerge the figure of the person of Jesus Christ as presented in the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

A detailed study of the entire book of the Acts is not within the purview of this article. However, an effort is made to point out at least the most important elements presented about the activity of the apostles so as to have an understanding of who Jesus was and what his functions were.

II. The proclamation about Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles

A. Who were preaching about Jesus?

Reading the Acts of the Apostles, one becomes aware that it is not only Peter who preached about Jesus. No doubt, Peter as the representative of the Apostles had an important, nay prominent role in proclaiming Jesus Christ (cfr. Acts 2; 3; 4; 5; 10; 11).

The other 11 apostles do proclaim the Good News. And many others joined them gradually in proclaiming the salvific ministry of Christ through their witnessing and preaching. Thus we have Stephen (ch.6:7)[1]; Philip (8:26-40); the believers who were scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria were proclaiming the Good News (8: 2-4); Barnabas and Saul (13:5 ff, chapters 13-28). Silas too was associated with Paul in the work of making known Jesus (16:29).

Timothy and Erasmus are two of Paul's helpers (19:22), who stay behind in Asia for a while (19:22), evidently to consolidate Paul's work, as he goes back to Jerusalem. Similarly, Aquila and his wife instruct Apollos into the faith (18:24-28).

The Apostles began preaching and witnessing to Jesus at the Pentecost. However, more and more men and women were associated with them to continue in space and time the task of presenting Jesus to the world.

B. Where was Jesus proclaimed ?

In spite of threats (4:3,7 18, 21), in spite of flogging (5:40), the apostles and along with them many others were teaching, preaching, proclaiming about Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified and who rose again. They did this wherever possible. In Jerusalem (chapters 1- 5), in Samaria and Judea (chapters 6-12) and unto the ends of the earth (chapters 13 -28)[2].

Those who proclaimed the Good News were so enthusiastic and so convinced about the intrinsic worth of their message that they did not limit their proclamation to a particular place or time. Instead they were bearing witness to their faith in the Risen Lord in the temple (3:8ff, 5:21ff); in the houses (2:46; 9:17; 10:25; 20:21); on the road (8:26); in the synagogues (9:21; 13:5; 14: 11; 19:8); in the countryside (13:39); in the towns (14:6); by the riverside (16:13) and in the prison (17:25). Every possible opportunity was made use of to proclaim to peoples about the person of Jesus Christ.

C. When was Jesus Proclaimed ?

The good news was proclaimed at dawn (5:21), in the afternoon (3:1), at night (20:31), nay it was proclaimed during night and day (20:31).

And the proclamation was open for all. No one was deprived of the message. Partiality was not shown (cfr. 10:34). The Good News was proclaimed to the Jews (11:19: 20:11), to the Greeks (11:20), to the pagans (11:18: 13:47: 20:21: 22:21).

There must have been something extraordinarily spectacular regarding the contents of the proclamation. Those who proclaimed about Jesus were uneducated common men (cfr. 4:13). However, those who welcomed their message were many. In large numbers, people came over so as to belong to 'the way' (9:2; 18:26). Luke mentions several times this all important fact of 'large numbers' coming over and believing in the name of Jésus (cfr. 2:41; 2:47; 6:7; 8:6; 11:24; 12:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:12; 18:8; 21:20).

And Luke insistently repeats that those who believed and accepted the person and message of Jesus were filled with 'joy' (cfr. 8:8; 8:39; 11:23; 13:52; 15:3; 16:34).

It is true that some, particularly the religious authorities of the day, the custodians of the Law of Moses rejected the teachings of the Apostles. Nevertheless, on the whole, the message met with favourable response. It was Jesus who was being proclaimed as Lord and Christ. And there always has been a charm about him and a fascination for him.

III. What was Preached about Jesus ?

In the preaching and the *kerygma* of the apostles and of the early Christian community what was most striking about their teaching and witnessing was the fact of the Resurrection. "The disciples, shattered in spirit, had been scattered at the rejection, arrest and crucifixion of Jesus... without his leadership they had no hope. But within three days (after his death) they were electrified by meeting the risen Christ." [3]

Now the preoccupation and concern of the twelve apostles were to present Jesus alive. They wanted to tell the people in Jerusalem and outside that the same Jesus whom they had crucified was risen (2:23- 24). And that he was the Lord and the Christ (2:36, 5:42).

In order to have an understanding of what was preached about Jesus, we will have a brief look at the titles used for Jesus in the book of the Acts. Secondly,

we will examine briefly the contents of some of the speeches that are found in the same book.

A. Titles for Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles

Foakes Jackson refers to a number of titles [4] which Luke uses to describe the person of Jesus in the book of the Acts. Some titles are frequently used, others less.

Jesus is presented as the Nazarene. There is repeated use of this title (cfr. 2:2; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 22:8; 26:9). This title is given to Jesus not only to show his provenance, but the more important that Jesus whom the apostles are proclaiming 'as risen' is the very same Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified.

Jesus is the Christ. It is a title rather than a name. Christ is the equivalent term used in the New Testament for the Old Testament Hebrew word Masiah. And this term referred to the Promised Saviour.[5]

Luke uses this above mentioned title over twenty times. One of the most significant usages of this title is in Acts 2:36, where Peter affirms that Jesus has been made the Lord and the Christ. A second equally significant usage is in the context of the conversion narrative of Saul. Paul, soon after his conversion, confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving to them that Jesus was the Christ (cfr. 9:22). Similarly, in Thessalonica, Paul argues out from the Scriptures and convinces his hearers that Jesus is the Christ (17:1-4).

Jesus is *the Lord*. This the most important title that is given to Jesus in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. This title occurs as "subject of belief, or testimony or preaching." [6]

The title occurs 719 times [7] in the New Testament. And of these, 105 times[8] we have the title in the book of the Acts.

In the New Testament, the title 'the Lord' (o Kurios) is the translation of the Hebrew 'Adonay'[9]. This is a direct and clear reference to the Divinity of Jesus. Psalm 110 in particular has influenced some sections in the New Testament writing. Applying the title 'Lord' to Jesus the early Christian community intended to say that Christ was God[10] on account of his resurrection. *Kúriós* was also the equivalent for YHWH[11] . And therefore, when using the title 'the Lord' for Jesus, they were declaring the identity of Jesus. Jesus is Lord and God (cfr. Hebrews 1:1-4; Romans 1:1-4; John 20:28). In affirming the Lordship of Jesus, his resurrection was decisive. On account

of the Resurrection, Jesus was at the right hand of God and it became the "basis of their faith" [12] as well.

Other titles used are *'king'* (17:17), *'Son of Man'* (7:56), 'Son of God'(9:20), *'the Just One'* (3:14; 7:52, 22:14). They indicate the dignity and status of Jesus which should lead to a response from the part of those who accept the *kerygma.*

Another oft-repeated title used by Luke to refer to Jesus is *'the Servant'* (Pais). The title is found in 3:13; 3:26; 4:25; 4:30. Twice this title is used in a liturgical setting. And the liturgical usage [13] is a pointer to the Divinity of Jesus.

'Leader' (3:15; 5:31) is another title that Luke uses for Jesus. The leader par excellence in the Old Testament is Moses. Jesus is someone far greater than Moses (Cfr. Heb. 3:1-6).

Another highly significant title used to describe the function and mission of Jesus is *'Saviour'* (cfr. 5:31; 13:23). This title too is used on purpose by Luke to remind the listeners about the Divinity [14] of Jesus. Jesus is called saviour from the earliest preaching. Salvation in the New Testament was bringing to perfection the Old Testament notion of YHWH as Saviour [15].

Jesus is also referred to as *'Prophet'* (3:22; 7:37), 'the One Coming' (19:4), and as *'Head of the Corner'* (4:11).

These various titles show the understanding of the person of Jesus by Luke and the early Christian community. Luke by using these titles, was confirming the faith of Theophilus (1:1) as well as all readers of their faith in Jesus and their commitment to him.

B. Luke Presents Jesus through the Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles

In the book of the Acts of the Apostles, Luke makes use of a unique literary devise - the speeches. He used them masterfully to communicate to his readers his understanding of the mission, work and actions of Jesus.

According to Dibelius, "the speeches are freely composed"[16]. They are not verbatim sayings of Peter, Stephen, James or Paul. Luke adapted them to suit his purpose and intention in writing the Acts of the Apostles. For him the Speeches were instruction and teaching [17].

According to Dibelius, the structure of a speech in the Acts of the Apostles has the following elements: [18]

1) Jesus' life, passion, death and Resurrection;
2) "We" (the apostles) are witnesses;
3) evidence from the Scriptures;
4) exhortation to repentance short.

When a speech is very hort, the above mentioned structure is summarized or reduced to fewer elements.

Again, according to the same above quoted author, the speeches in Acts are to be understood less from historical situation than from the context of the book as a whole in which their function becomes evident [19].

The speeches in the Acts are twenty four in number [20]. And the speeches occupy roughly 300 of the book's 1000 verses [21].

The speeches are composed by Luke for the most of it. Haenchen is of this opinion [22]. Luke had the rare capacity to transform a simple report into action and wave it into a speech so as to convey to his listeners what he thought was the kernel of the message [23].

The speeches are mostly attributed to Peter and Paul [24]. This is evident as one reads the book of the Acts.

In our examining the speeches, we will choose for our consideration besides the speech at Pentecost, one speech each of Peter, Paul, Stephen and James.

We will begin with the speech attributed to Peter on the day of Pentecost, but evidently, chiselled and shaped by Luke.

The speech at Pentecost (2: 14-40) :

[21] And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

> [22]"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know - [23] this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. [24]But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. [25]For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for his is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; [26]therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will dwell in hope. [27] For thou will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see

corruption. [28] Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou will make me full of gladness with thy presence.'

[29] "Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. [30] Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, [31] he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. [32] This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. [33] Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear. [34] For David did not ascend into the heavens but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, [35] till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.' [36] Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him. [40]"And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."

The speech at Pentecost begins in verse 14 of chapter two and goes upto verse 40. However, we have quoted above from verse 21, which is the last verse of Joel's prophecy which Peter takes as his point of departure in addressing the people gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.

The truths that Luke puts into the mouth of Peter are the following:

— Salvation comes through and in the name of Jesus (v. 21);

— the Jesus we preach is the very same Jesus of Nazareth (v.22);

— Jesus has been put to death according to the plan and fore knowledge of God (v. 23);

— God raised Jesus from the dead (It is in fulfillment of the prophecy of David - vv. 42ff);

— Jesus is now at the right hand of God (v.33);

— Jesus is Lord and Christ (v.36);

— Repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus are the conditions for forgiveness and salvation (v. 38).

The events described by Peter, viz., the passion, death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus are the 'Magnalia Dei' - the great events, the wonderful events which are bringing about salvation.

The passage which Peter cites from Joel is appropriate for the occasion. What Joel has spoken of, years ago, is taking place before the very eyes of the people that are gathered in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost. They are thus beholding the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy. And the fulfillment of the prophecy is in the person of Jesus.

The shameful death of Jesus on the cross was "stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles" (cfr. 1 Cor. 1:23). Hence at the very outset of his preaching, Peter (or rather Luke) makes it clear that the death of Jesus was willed by God.

It was in the plan of God. It was in accordance with the prophecies found in the Old Testament (cfr. also Luke 24:25ff).

Jesus has been raised from the dead. This is God's approval of the death willingly accepted by Jesus. Now, he is at the right hand of God. This phrase carried across to the audience the idea that Jesus was on a par with God. The meaning of the phrase was not lost sight of.

Luke then solemnly declares that Jesus is the Lord. He is the Christ. He is reaffirming the divinity of Jesus. And the consequence follow immediately. There is an invitation to 'commitment'. They are to believe in Jesus. They are to repent. Repentance is not only for the one single act of having put to death Jesus, but a repentance which implied a new way of life; a turning away from the old ways of sin.

Baptism is to be accepted in the 'Name' of Jesus. And this name is of crucial importance. Acceptance of Baptism in the name Jesus was acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus over them, and commitment to him. To the Jews, for whom 'Nomen est Omen' (the name is an omen), the significance of the words of Peter was not lost.

The speech of Peter created a deep impression. The results were sensational. A large number accepted the Lordship of Jesus, and received baptism (2:41).

The Speech of Stephen (Acts 7: 2-60)

> 54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth against him. 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." 57But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. 58Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 "And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The speech of Stephen is one of the longest speeches recorded by Luke in the book of the Acts.

We have quoted here the last part of Stephen's speech. Stephen traces the history of the offer of Salvation to the Jews, from the time of Abraham down through the centuries, through the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. However the offer of salvation was systematically and constantly being rejected but the people of Israel whom Stephen brands as "stiff necked, uncirumcised in heart and ears, always resisting the Holy Spirit (7:51).

The last prophet whom they now reject is the Messiah, 'the Son of Man'.

Verses 55, 56, 59-60 are of great importance for us to understand Luke's aim in presenting the speech of Stephen in the given form. In verses 55-56, there is a reference to the speech at Pentecost (2:33). Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God. Stephen thus affirms the divinity [25] and equality of Jesus with the Father. The enemies of Stephen clearly understood the meaning of the words uttered by him, and they stoned him for blasphemy because he said:

> Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (7:56).

The last words of Stephen are a prayer, declaring twice through this prayer, the Lordship of Jesus. He asks Jesus the Lord to forgive his enemies who are stoning him. Haenchen has this observation while commenting on this verse:

> Stephen's words in verse appear modelled on a short Jewish evening prayer taken from ps. 31:5. Here, though, we find it addressed not to God but to the 'Lord Jesus'. Thus we encounter a specifically Christian devotion which is already so centred on Jesus that it is his name which is invoked in the hour of death.[26]

In sum, Luke presents the last moments of Stephen's life in a most dramatic manner. Stephen runs his course. But in his death, he proclaims that the one whom the Jews had rejected, the one whom they had put to death is risen, is alive, is at the right hand of God. And He is Jesus the Lord who can forgive and can receive his life.

The Speech of Peter in the House of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-43)

[34]And Peter opened his mouth and said: "truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, [35]but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. [36] You know the word which he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), [37] the word which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: [38] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. [39] And we are witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree ;[40] but God raised him on the third day and made him manifest;[41] not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.[42] And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead.[43] To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes forgiveness of sins through his name."

This is one of the stories in the Acts, to which Luke attaches great importance. Well nigh two chapters are allotted by him for the description of the events leading to the conversion of Cornelius and his household.

A mere glance at the speech suggests the similarities of this speech to the one at the Pentecost, to which we have referred above. J.C.O'Neill says that the "speeches in Acts fulfill many functions, but not the least important is that of repeating over and over again the framework of the Christian faith as understood by Luke and his Church[27].

Among the most important truths expounded by Peter in this speech are the following:

— Peter affirms that Jesus is Lord of all (v.36);
— they are proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth (v.38);
— the public ministry of Jesus is referred to (v.38);
— Jesus was put to death, but God raised him.(v.40);
— we are witnesses (vv. 39, 41,42);
— the prophets bear witness to Jesus (v. 43);
— belief in his name brings forgiveness of sins (v.43).

The essential structures of the speech, about which we have spoken earlier are clearly set forth in this speech. The passion, death and glorification through resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is proclaimed in very clear terms. The word "witness" occurs four times - once as verb and three times as a noun in this speech. This word appears, we may say, like the leit motif of the entire speech.

Peter ended his speech, inviting Cornelius and his household to repentance and forgiveness[28], which according to Haenchen is a reference to Luke 24:47:

> Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

With the preaching of Peter in the house of Cornelius, the Church was beginning its salvific activity among all 'nations' (1:8).

The Speech of James (Acts 15: 13-21) is as follows:

> 13 After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brethren, listen to me. 14 Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, 16 'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up, 17 that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, 18 says the Lord, who has made these things known from of old.
>
> 19 Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, 20but should write to them to abstain from

the pollutions of idols and from unchastity and from what is strangled and from blood. 21 For from early generations Moses has had in every city those who preach him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.

The historical background of the Council of Jerusalem, the problems discussed and the solutions arrived at are not within the purview of prevent our examination of the speech of James, which Luke presents us with, towards the middle of the book of the Acts. There is one important idea which Luke tries to convey, and which should be taken note of. James is to the core a Jew. However he is prepared to modify his Jewish pattern of thinking in view of the pagans who are beginning to accept Jesus in large numbers now. A. Beardslee says that the New Testament references to James show that he was devoted to the old Jewish tradition, yet willing to modify it in the light of the newness of God's action in Christ. [29.]

James sees in the person of Jesus the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. For James, the fallen tent of David is the Jewish race. And Jesus is the one who has come to rebuild and restore this house. Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed one, whom the people of Israel looked forward to .

James has quoted from the last chapter of the book of Amos. The prophet speaks of the days when the gentiles will call upon the name of Yahweh. The time has come now, when the Gentiles are calling upon the name of Jesus. And this precisely is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. The gentiles have accepted the Lordship of Jesus.

In verse 19, referring to the Gentiles who have been turning to Jesus Christ, James equates them with, as having turned to God. Thus, once again, the divinity of Jesus is affirmed.

The details found in other speeches, mentioned so far are not found here. However, this way of presenting would not surprise Theophilus (1.1) or the readers for the Council was an assembly primarily of the Apostles and a few others who had accepted Jesus as Lord and who had proclaimed him as such to the nations.

Paul's Speech in Athens (Acts 17.22-31)

22 So Paul, standing in the middle of the Are-op-agus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What

therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything, in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. 26 And he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us, 28 for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.' 29 Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man. 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead.

In Athens, the centre of Hellenism and the symbol and light house of Culture[30], Paul comes to proclaim Jesus Christ. In the synagogues, he addressed his fellow Jews. And in the market square, the Epicureans and Stoics listened to Paul with curiosity, wonder and consternation.

The highlights of Paul's speech in Athens are the following:

— the Athenians worship an unknown God (v.23);
— Paul proclaims the Lord of heaven and earth (24);
— Paul invites the Athenians to seek God who is very near to us(27);
— he invites them to repentance (30);
— One has been raised from the dead (31).

Paul is going to proclaim to the Athenians Jesus. And on purpose,

the point of departure in the opening words of his speech are from the inscription that he noticed on the Altar, 'To an unknown God'.

Paul then refers to the Lord of heaven and earth. He does not mention immediately the name of Jesus. However, it is quite evident that the Athenians understood that Paul was referring to Jesus himself, for he had already spoken a number of times in the market and in the synagogue as

verses 16 and following suggest. And it was they themselves who had invited Paul to speak. Paul then continues his speech, where he makes reference to a very concrete personal, and we may add a 'historical' God, in whom all men can live and move and have their existence.

The 'now' (vov) in verse 30 is pregnant with meaning. Paul refers back to the Resurrection event, to the time after this event and the already introduced eschatological moment when one ought to find salvation by repentance and acceptance of Jesus the Risen One. [31]

In verse 31, the speech of Paul has an abrupt ending. Or perhaps, we may say that Paul has ended his speech at the most appropriate place, having climaxed it with the all important doctrine of the Resurrection which is the proof of his divinity and the right to forgive those who turn to him, those who accept him, those who commit themselves to him.

Paul knew that the doctrine of Resurrection was a stumbling block [32] for many in his audience on the Areopagus scene of Athens. In spite of that, fearlessly he proclaimed the Resurrection. Paul could not possibly overemphasize the fact of the resurrection for a commitment to Jesus made sense only in the light of the resurrection.

IV. Conclusion

It is not easy to give a terse and concise conclusion. Repetition would be superfluous. However in the light of what has been discussed above, the opening verses of the Gospel of Luke produce greater significance and depth of meaning. Luke tells Theophilus (1.1) that "To them (to the Apostles) Jesus presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days.... 1:3). And in the concluding verses of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells his disciples, "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-47).

That Jesus the Nazarene had been crucified and put to death was common knowledge all over Jerusalem. However, the fact of his 'Rising from the dead' was not known to all. Or rather, it was a very close circle of privileged few who had seen Jesus the Risen One.

For Luke, Apostles were the ones who had a real intense experience of the Risen Lord. And Jesus had left to them the task and privilege of making known to the world the fact of Resurrection which had already begun to

radically change their lives. And along with the proclamation of Resurrection, the Apostles were also to announce repentance and forgiveness for herein we have the point of departure and point of arrival of Salvation history wrought by Jesus. An authentic and genuine belief in the Resurrection of Jesus should lead believers to appreciate the extraordinary gift of faith and salvation. This should in turn evoke constantly sentiments of repentance in the heart of the believer. And everyone who truly experiences the inward peace and joy that the Risen Lord brings will no doubt feel an inward compulsion to share the same with others through active witness and earnest proclamation of Jesus to the world.

Notes

1. The Scriptural quotations will refer to the book of the Acts, unless otherwise specified.
2. Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles,* SCM Press, London, (1973), p. 193.
3. Floyd V Filson, *A New Testament History,* SCM Press, London, (1983), p.148.
4. F.J.Foakes Jackson, (Ed.), *The Beginnings of Christianity,* MacMillian and Co., London, (1933), p. 357ff.
5. L.Hartman, Christ, in : *New Catholic Encylopedia,* New York, Vol.III, p. 627.
6. F.J.Foakes Jackson, (Ed.), *The Beginnings of Christianity,* MacMillian and Co., London (1933), p. 360.
7. Nestle -Aland, Computer Concordance to the Novum Testamentum Graece, De Gruyter, Berlin (1985), pp. 1079-82.
8. Ibidem.
9. J.M.Gonzales Ruiz, Signore in: Ency. della Bibbia, Elle Di Ci, 1971, vol. 6, pp. 453-455.
10. Ibidem.
11. B.W. Anderson, *Lord,* in: The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, Vol.3, p. 150.

12. Foerster, Lord in Later Judaism, in: Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Kittel Gerard (ed.), WM B. Eerdman's Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, (1982), Vol. III, p. 1094.

13. F.J.Foakes Jackson, (Ed.), *The Beginnings of Christianity,* MacMillian and Co., London (1933), p. 365.

14. Ibidem, p. 371.

15. Cfr. H. Kistner, Saviour in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia,* New York, 1966, Vol. 12, p. 1105.

16. Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles,* SCM Press, London (1973), p. 141.

17. Ibidem, p. 166.

18. Ibidem, p. 165.

19. Ibidem, pp. 174-175.

20. Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles,* SCM Press, London, (1973),p.150.

21. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford, (1982), p.104.

22. Ibidem, p. 104.

23. Ibidem.

24. Ibidem.

25. William Mordaunt Furneaux, *The Acts of the Apostles,* Clarendon Press, Oxford, (1912), p. 101.

26. Ernest Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford, (1982), p. 296.

27. J.C. O'Neill, *The Theology of the Acts in its Historical Setting,* SPCK, London, (1970), p. 179.

28. Ernest Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford, (1982), p. 353.

29. W.A.Beardslee, *James* in: *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* Abingdon, Nashville, (1962), p. 793.

30. La Bibbia, Marietti, Torino, (1980), Vol.III, P. 515.

31. Cfr, *La Bibbia,* Marietti, Torino, (1980), Vol.III, P.516.

32. Ernest Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford, (1982), p.530.

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Hubert D' Rossario

Redemptoris Missio: Its timeliness

Archbishop Hubert D'Rosario of Shillong is also a member of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of India Special Commission for Evangelization.

Redemptoris Missio of his Holiness Pope John Paul II is a remarkable Encyclical for more than one reason. While carefully going through it, I was as much inspired and encouraged by its content as by the timeliness of the Encyclical. It is addressed to and is relevant for the entire church. This is what prompts me to recommend an indepth study of RM by everyone, especially those in charge of animation of communities, priests, sisters, catechists, teachers and lay Church leaders. It is my firm belief that faithful adherence to the numerous precepts the encyclical puts forward can prove to be a great incentive to the work of evangelization we are all involved in.

I see the letter is timely because of the increasing number of people who have not been approached by the evangelizer and thus remain ignorant of Christ and the Gospel message. The letter comes as a source of joy and encouragement. It is an approval of the evangelizing work the Church is actively involved in, in different parts of the world.

It is indeed heartening to note that the Holy Father attaches great significance to the role of catechists, leaders (RM 7, 73, 74) and sisters (RM 70) in the work of evangelization. They have a vital role to perform in the field of evangelization (R M 75) as it has been our experience in North-East India. In article 60, the Pope lauds precisely the areas and types of work we have been undertaking: schools, health-care centres, leprosaria, house for the handicapped and the elderly and similar endeavours. It is as if the Holy Father was himself approving the methodology we have adopted in our work of evangelization. We certainly have reason to be happy and to plunge headlong into the various evangelizing projects we are involved in.

I would like to underline some of the teachings of the Pope which can surely spur us on to greater involvement in and commitment to the all important task of evangelization:

First, the Pope affirms that conversion and baptism are among the aims of proclamation (RM 46, 47). Rightly does he give also a biblical basis for his affirmation. He cites Acts 2, 37-38; Mt 28, 19; Jn 3, 5 (cfr. RM 47).

Second, personal, renewal, conversion of the heart and individual witness of life are assigned the centre-stage in this programme of evangelization (RM 42, 47, 61).

Third, there is a great need for persistence in the messenger in his task of communicating the word. Undaunted by opposition and initial failure which are sure to come his way (RM 23, 39), the evangelizer must carry out his mission with ardour and unflagging zeal. The word of the Pope, "To those who for various reasons oppose missionary activity, the Church repeats: Open the doors to Christ" (RM 39) should be a source of inspiration for us.

Fourth, the proclamation of the Good News should be characterized by enthusiasm, energy and dynamism in the one who proclaims (RM 24, 45).

Fifth, the Good News brings along with it numerous blessings. Some of them can be identified as follows: it helps overcome divisions and tensions (RM 49), it is a means of restoring the dignity of people (RM 37), it initiates integral development (RM 59), it encourages care of the sick, the illiterate, the poor and the helpless (RM 60), and the Good News introduces human beings to a life of unity and fellowship (RM 26). These precisely being the challenges that state us in the fact everywhere in the world.

Six, in article 53 the Pope draws our attention to the wealth of local cultures. He invites everyone to study the language. He points out the need for understanding, appreciating, fostering and evangelizing the culture (RM 53). The diversity and richness of our region in this respect is both a challenge and an opportunity for the evangelizer.

Seven, the encyclical also focuses on initial mission (RM 30, 44), new evangelization of the Christian communities (RM 30), and pastoral care of the non-practising (RM 37).

Eight, the Pope invites us to put aside every form of provincialism, exclusivism and feelings of self-sufficiency and receive from other communities personnel and resources (RM 85)

Nine, the encyclical emphasizes the obligation every Church has to give (RM 62, 81), despite acute shortage of personnel and material resources, We should not forget our obligation to give the Church in other parts of the world personnel and resources. To the extent that we are prepared to send

missionaries we shall obtain labourers to work in the vineyard of the Lord in our regions.

I would like to conclude reminding ourselves that problems we shall always have. But that should not discourage us, for as the Pope himself points out, "ours is not a merely human enterprise" (RM 35). And the fact that we have the opportunity of bringing the Gospel (RM 92) should be seen as a sign of God's blessing and predilection for us.

Let us resolve to become enthusiastic bearers of the Good News to peoples everywhere, and our names shall be "written in heaven" (Lk 10, 20).

Alan De Lastic

My Reflections on Redemptoris Missio as an Indian Bishop

Archbishop Alan de Lastic of Delhi is also Vice Chairman of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) Commission for Laity and Family.

The Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* is one of the most important documents on the Church, and is in my opinion a development of the teaching of the Church contained in the Second Vatican Council especially *Ad Gentes,* and *Evangelii Nuntiandi.* I would like to share a few reflections on the encyclical viewed from a pastoral angle.

I have also selected a few themes which I considered more relevant for India.

India is a unique country. No other country can claim that it gave shelter to so many world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism and Sikhism. It is also a multi- ethnic, multi-cultured nation. No other nation has such a variety. We must accept the reality of this pluralism. Moreover India is a young nation in world history, having obtained independence from colonial rule 46 years ago. It is still politically one and we Indians enjoy more freedom than many others who have likewise obtained their freedom from foreign domination. India is also a developing country with the second largest population in the world. We are proud to be called the largest democracy on earth. We have made giant strides in science and technology, but we still have a long way to go to see that the fruits of progress reach out to more people.

This is a brief glimpse of this country in which the Catholic Church is placed. The situation of the Church varies considerably and some generalisation may be pardoned. There is the Church in the south, in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, parts of the West coast and Goa. Here one could say that the Church is fairly well established in comparison with the other parts of India. Then there is the large concentration of Catholics in the large cities like Bombay, Madras, Bangalore, Delhi and Calcutta. In the north east and in the Chotanagpur areas I would like to believe that "new churches" are springing up with youthful vitality, making real and visible the doctrine of *Ad*

Gentes, Chapter III. The rapid growth of these ecclesial realities is an authentic sign of the power of the Holy Spirit, and a great consolation to all of us. Then there is the "Church of the diaspora" small Catholic communities spread out over vast areas, living among people of other faiths: North India, especially UP, Bihar, W. Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu Kashmir are examples, Finally one must not forget the ecclesial ritual realities within the Catholic Church.

I believe this encyclical will bring them closer together in a great missionary thrust.

The encyclical must be viewed with these cultural, social, ethnic and ecclesial realities in mind. For a start, I was very encouraged by the insistence on *Christ being the centre of our proclamation.* There can be no authentic missionary activity without this. The repeated declaration that Christ is the only Saviour, the only way to the Father strengthens our faith and encourages us not to compromise this fundamental truth just to please others or to solve a vexing theological problem. The official teaching of the Magisterium approves a lot of theological research after discernment and gives sure guidelines for further within given limits. The Magisterium is the only sure guarantee for the freedom of theological investigation.

The emphasis on the *entire "local church" being responsible for* 'mission' reminds one of the early centuries when the local churches sent out missionaries are a community, a communion, formed by the Holy Spirit in the bonds of faith, hope and love. The goal of missionary activity is to form "local churches", and this implies formation of communities through Baptism. Once this "communio" is present then the whole community as one agent embarks on mission, and so the process continues. I find this very relevant for our Indian situation.

The above-mentioned themes could be treated separately and more at length, but I mention them because they are very relevant for India. As I am the vice chairman of the CBCI Commission for Laity and the Family I would like to conclude with a few observations on these.

After stating that "the witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission" the Holy Father continues: "The first form of witness is the very life of the missionary, *the Christian family,* and of the ecclesial community. "Our Indian families, noted for their traditional atmosphere for family prayer and authenic Christian living should be encouraged to continue this life of witness. Very often we forget that the family is the 'domestic

Church' and the first missionary community. In a later chapter, the Holy Father emphasises the importance of the role of the laity in missionary activity. The mission of the Church must be shared by All in different ways: "Whereas the foundation of a new Church requires the Eucharist and hence the priestly ministry, missionary activity which is carried out in a wide variety of ways is the task of all the Christian faithful" (RM 71).

After outlining the role of the laity, as individuals - families and groups in missionary activity, the Holy Father praises the role of *women* in a special way: "How can we forget the important role played by women; their work in the family, in schools, in political, social and cultural life, and especially their teaching of Christian doctrine? Indeed, it is necessary to recognise-and it is a title of honour-that some Churches owe their origins to the activity of lay men and women missionaries" (RM 71). The Holy Father points to the need of establishing lay missionary groups within the local churches to serve as agents of proclamation. I conclude with his own tribute: "In this way the *growth of a mature and responsible laity* will be fostered, a laity whom the younger Churches are recognising as 'an essential element in *the* plantatio Ecclesiae."

The encyclical is indeed a charter for the lay missionary in India.

James H. Kroeger

Expanding our Mission

Fr. James H. Kroeger, a Maryknoll missionary, holds a Doctorate in Mission from the Gregorian University, Rome. He has been an Asian missioner for over two decades. Until recently he was based in Manila at the Loyola School of Theology. Presently he is the Asia-Pacific Assistant on the Maryknoll General Council, New York.

Choosing a unique and significant feature of a lengthy mission encyclical is a difficult challenge. Probably, the "Pneumatological Christocentrism" of the document is one of its distinctive features. An entire chapter (I) treats Christology; another timely chapter (III) expounds Pneumatology. These two sections must be seen as complementary, inseparable perspectives in Christian mission. While affirming the "uniqueness of Christ" as the "definitive self-revelation of God" (5,6), the encyclical gives needed emphasis to the Spirit of Jesus as the "principal agent" of all missionary activity (21, 30).

Most interestingly, the entire encyclical employs only one quote more than once; it is found exclusively in the chapters on Christology and Pneumatology. In RM 6, 10, 28 one reads that, as Christian believers, "*we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the Paschal mystery.*" Its origin is the Second Vatican Council (GS 22). Pope John Paul II has referred to it repeatedly (RH 8, 13, 18; DV 53; Assisi 4; CA 47). Two key documents from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue cite it consistently (DM 24, 37; DP 15, 28, 68).

This one quote and its unique emphasis in the encyclical invite missiologists and field missionaries to explore the action of the spirit as it reveals the encounter with Jesus through the paschal mystery. This writer believes that this "Christ-Spirit-centered" approach to mission and theology is uniquely important for contemporary missiology. A short comment as given here is not more than a signpost directing our attention towards a great task and responsibility yet to be fulfilled: developing a "Pneumatological Christocentrism" at the service of mission and the Kingdom in the Asian context.

Julian Saldanha

Response to Redemptoris Missio

Fr. Julian Saldanha, SJ., is the Provincial Superior of the Jesuit Province of Bombay. He has a Doctorate in Missiology. Fr. Julian has several publications to his credit, especially his two books: Conversion and Indian Civil Law, and Patterns of Evangelization in Mission History.

The Encyclical focuses sharply on "missionary activity", rather than on the broader concept of "evangelization" as Paul VI did in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (33, 34, 37/a).[1] Then, EN had warned against the tendency to reduce man to his horizontal dimension. This caution is repeated in RM and continues to be very relevant today. The temptation persists, among some evangelizers, to reduce Christianity to "a pseudo- science of well-being" and to secularize salvation (8, 11). Timely is the Pope's reminder that the Church serves the Kingdom, not only by her preaching and the promotion of Gospel values, but also "by her intercession, since the Kingdom by its very nature is God's gift and work, as we are reminded by the Gospel parables and by the prayer which Jesus taught us" (20).

I wish to draw attention, first to some new elements in the encyclical, and then to certain points which require greater clarity and further development.

1. Something New

The encyclical contains some welcome elements, which are not found in EN and which complete it.

1.1. Among the signs that God is preparing "a great springtime for Christianity" is the universal attraction for *"Gospel values"* or *"values of the Kingdom"*. These phrases have been current in missiological circles for a number of years, under the influence of liberation theology. They appear here for the first time in a missionary encyclical. The Church is described as "the sign and promoter of Gospel values" (20). Some of these are listed in several parts of the encyclical: peace, justice, freedom, brotherhood, concern for the needy, respect for the human person and for human rights, the dignity and role of women (3, 17, 19, 20, 86).

1.2. Important elements of a *theology/spirituality of development* are spelled out in nos. 58-60. Missionaries would do well to reflect on these perspectives, with a view to integrating them more fully into their activity.

1.3. The section (55-57) on inter-religious *dialogue* makes up for the glaring omission of the same in EN. Whereas EN had described the other religious traditions as mere natural religions, RM paves the way for a more positive appreciation of them by acknowledging in them "the signs of Christ's presence and of the working of the Spirit". The Pope also admits that dialogue can lead to mutual enrichment and to "mutual advancement on the road of religious inquiry and experience". In other words, missionary activity is not meant to be a one-way project.

1.4. In the same spirit, the Pope affirms, that through *inculturation* "the universal Church herself is enriched" in various areas of her life, including liturgy and theology. Wise also is the observation, that "inculturation must involve the whole people of God, and not just a few experts" (52-54).

1.5. Especially to be welcomed is the recognition of the problems connected with *conversion.* Particularly in India, the Pope's observations will be warmly received as expressive of special sensitivity to the peculiar situation prevailing here. Today, as in the past, many people do not accept the Gospel revelation or enter the Church, because "the social and cultural conditions in which they live do not permit this, and frequently they have been brought up in other religious traditions... in some places sociological considerations associated with baptism obscure its genuine meaning as an act of faith ... many profess an interior commitment to Christ and his message yet do not wish to be committed sacramentally, since, owing to prejudice or because of the failings of Christians, they find it difficult to grasp the true nature of the Church as a mystery of faith and love" (10, 47).[2]

1.6. The Pope's comments on the *importance of evangelization in the 'megalopolises' or big cities* are stimulating and challenging (37/b). It is here that "new customs and styles of living arise together with new forms of culture and communication, which then influence the wider population". The option for the neediest" should not blind us to the fact that "individuals or small groups cannot be evangelized if we neglect the centres where a new humanity, so to speak, is emerging, and where new models of development are taking shape. The future of the younger nations is being shaped in the cities."

1.7. Among the Religious Institutes, the Pope singles out *Missionary Institutes of Sisters* for a special word of appreciation (70). By their example and activity, especially on behalf of the very poor, they are "an indispensable evangelical sign among those peoples and cultures where women still have far to go on the way towards human promotion and liberation".

2. Areas for Greater Clarity

2.1. *Goal of Mission:* On the one hand it is stated that "the Church is effectively and concretely at the service of the Kingdom" (20), of which she is "the seed, sign and instrument" (18). On the other hand, it is asserted that "the proclamation of the word of God has Christian conversion as its aim (46).... This must be our motto: All the Churches united for the conversion of the whole world" (84). And: "The mission *ad gentes* has this objective: to found Christian communities..." (48). All these elements have their place in missionary activity. However, it is important to be clear about their mutual relationship in the context of the goal of mission. This has practical, pastoral consequences for the conduct of missionary activity. It is up to us to work a synthesis out of the rich material provided in the encyclical. [3]

2.2. *Christ and Gospel values:* In chp. 2 the Pope makes an admirable effort to clarify the relationship between Church - Christ - Kingdom. These notions are at the heart of mission theology, and partial, one-sided conceptions are to be shunned. The encyclical adopts a balanced approach. However, an area which requires greater clarity is the relationship between our faith in and proclamation of Christ on the one hand, and our promotion of Gospel values on the other hand. This is a great lacuna in present-day liberation theology and missiology.

2.3. *Fullness of Revelation:* The Pope speaks of the Church as having "the fullness of Revelation" (56) and "the fullness of the truth" (5). Such notions make dialogue difficult and need to be nuanced. In fact theology today has not yet found a suitable way of expressing what the Pope is trying to get at[4]. Unfortunate also is the description of the Church as "the ordinary means of salvation" (55). Such terminology lays itself open to the same criticism which was made of the distinction drawn by Paul VI in EN between Christianity as the "ordinary" way of salvation and the "extraordinary ways" by which God can save non-Christians[5].

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the balance is decidedly in favour of *Redemptoris Missio* as a document which encourages missionary activity,

while striving to maintain a balance between the various elements which comprise this area of evangelization. The quest must go on!

Notes

1. Numbers in brackets refer to RM.
2. I have written at length on this topic in two of my books: *Conversion and Indian Civil Law* (TPI, Bangalore, 1981) and *Hindu Sensibilities towards Conversion* (ATC, Bombay, 1981).
3. This is what I attempted in my commentary on EN, in Ind. Miss. Rev. (IMR), 1979, No. 1, pp. 23-43.
4. I outlined some points towards a solution, in IMR, 1985, No. 4, p. 365.
5. See my comments, in IMR, 1979, No. 1, pp. 37-38.

Paul Vadakkumpadan

Redemptoris Missio

Redemptoris Missio has answered a need. There was considerable amount of confusion and uncertainty in the minds of many with regard to mission. Certain view-points advanced, challenged even the basis of mission. This, not being limited to theological circles, was bound to have a negative influence also on the missionary in the field. The Papal document has helped clarify matters. I would point out in particular issues such as the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, meaning of the Kingdom, relevance of proclamation, the call to conversion and baptism.

Evangelii Nuntiandi (1975) was hailed as a most significant and welcome document. It continues to be much appreciated and made use of. *Redemptoris Missio* has brought the traditional missionary thinking of the church in line with that memorable apostolic exhortation. While holding fast to what is perennial in the Church's missionary thinking and praxis, it points to a way whereby that can be made relevant in our modern world, on the eve of the third millennium of Christianity. RM deserves a hearty welcome.

Renthy Keitzar

Redemptoris Missio - An Appreciation

Dr. Renthy Keitzar is the Academic Dean of Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam. He is from the Baptist Christian tradition.

The Encyclical Letter "Redemptoris Missio" (1990) by Pope John Paul II challenges the Church to renew its missionary commitment in the modern world. It is an invitation to the whole Church, both to the Roman Catholic Church and, as I understand, to the Protestant churches as well. Indeed, it comes to us as the permanent validity of the missionary mandate of the Christian Church. It has its goal as a spiritual (interior) renewal of faith and Christian life. The encyclical will remain as an important document on the missionary mandate of the Church for the whole People of God for many days to come. "For missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive" (RM 2).

The encyclical envisages the situation in the Church today, especially after the Vatican Council II, which is marked by a decline of the missionary spirit in all the churches. Hence, an urgency of missionary activity has become a must "for all dioceses and parishes, Church institutions and associations" (RM 2).

The encyclical is mainly concerned with the faith in Jesus Christ as basis and inspiration for the missionary activity of the Church. It begins with a theological basis, "Jesus Christ, the only Saviour." So the primary function of the Church in every age "is to direct man's gaze, to point the awareness of humanity towards the mystery (of salvation) in Christ. ... The redemptive event brings salvation to all, "for each one is included in the mystery of Redemption and with each one Christ has united himself for ever through this mystery." It is only in faith that the Church's mission can be understood and only in faith that it find its basis" (RM 4). Jesus Christ is the "one Mediator" (I Timothy 2:5), "the Alpha and Omega of all things" (Revelation 22:13). And, thus, the encyclical is supported by the relevant scriptural proof-texts from the New Testament, making the Church's missionary mandate fundamentally biblical.

The purpose of Jesus' mission is the message of the Kingdom of God which "aims at transforming human relationships" and to bring "all human beings with one another and with God" (RM 15). The Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ are inseparable, and the Church is entrusted with the task of "the mission of announcement and inaugurating among all peoples" (RM 18). And God's plan of salvation is not limited to Christians only, but it "is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all" (RM 10).

The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of the mission. Though Jesus entrusted his mission to the Apostles and the Church, it is, however, "in and through them the Holy Spirit remains the transcendent and principal agent for the accomplishment of this work in the human spirit and in the history of the world" (RM 21). But, this Holy Spirit is the spirit of Jesus Christ who is at work in the Church and he is to be seen even outside the Church to bring others, that is, the people of other faiths, to the faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus Christ sent his apostles, and also sends missionaries today, to every person, people and place on earth. The Church received a universal mission; it was sent by Christ to reveal and communicate the love of God to all people and nations (RM 31). The missionaries are sent to a complex world of social and religious realities in the world today. "Nevertheless, care must be taken to avoid the risk of putting very different situations on the same level and of reducing, or even eliminating, the Church's mission and missionaries *ad gentes*... but (it) actually requires that there be persons who have a specific vocation to be life-long missionaries *ad gentes*" (RM 32).

In fact, there is diversity of activity in the Church's one mission. Looking at today's world, three situations can be distinguished. First, the Church's missionary activity must be addressed to the situation of peoples, groups and socio- cultural contexts in which Christ and His Gospel are not known. The Church's mission is directed to the people of other faiths. This is mission *ad gentes* in the proper sense of the term. Secondly, the Church's ministry and pastoral care in the Christian communities with adequate and solid ecclesial structures. And, thirdly, there is the intermediate situation, especially in the so-called Christian countries and occasionally in the younger churches as well, where a sense of Christian living is lost and the Christians live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In such a situation a "new evangelization" or a "re-evangelization is needed (R.M. 33). The pastoral care of believers, new evangelization or reevangelization and specific missionary activity are all essential in the Church, but the mission *ad gentes* is needed most even in the Church today. There are yet many to be

evangelized. "Hence missionary activity *ad intra* is a credible sign and a stimulus for missionary activity *ad extra*, and vice versa (RM 34).

An important aspect of mission can be derived from the world of communications. This lies in the cultural sphere and the encyclical speaks of this as the Areopagus, to proclaim the Gospel in a language appropriate to and understandable in the surroundings. The immense "Areopagus" of culture, scientific research, and international relations which promote dialogue and open up new possibilities must characterize an important dimension of missionary activity. "Christians who live and work in this international sphere must always remember their duty to bear witness to the Gospel (RM 38). So the encyclical affirms: "The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission: Christ, whose mission we continue, is the witness *par excellence* (Rev. 1:5; 3:14) and the model of all Christian witness. The Holy Spirit accompanies the Church along her way and associates her with the witness he gives to Christ" (RM 42, cf. Jn 15:26-27).

Then, who will be responsible for the fulfillment of the Church's mission? The encyclical says, "The mission ... is incumbent upon the entire People of God" (RM 71). The Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio,* of Pope John Paul II invites the entire People of God, the Christian Church for that matter, to renew the missionary commitment. Now as the Church approaches the third Millennium, the entire People of God as one community of faith reach out to all fellow humans, so that all may become one in Christ as members of his Body, the Church, as Jesus Christ, our Lord, prays in his priestly, prayer, thus: "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21; cf. Romans 12:4-5; I Corinthians 12:12).

L. Pohrugap

Redemptoris Missio: A Response from a non-Roman Catholic Perspective

Introduction

A remarkable letter that bares the greatness of a man and his heart for the lost world. Pope John Paul II is a bridge to the past, especially that of the Vatican Council II in helping us see the meaning, need, source, history etc. of mission *ad gentes*. Of the 178 quotations he cited, most of them are from the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. Yet using his predecessors especially that of the said Council, as a springboard the Pope is on his own powerfully and inspirationally challenging the Church to see the importance and the ever widening field of mission.

The letter has one *agendum - The Urgency of Mission*. There are many issues that lead to this *agendum*. First to hasten the pace of missionary activities set by the Vatican Council II and to reap more fruits in mission. Second to deal with problems of mission both within and outside the Church, and thus counteract the tendency to take the mission *ad gentes* lightly. This really is the call to the Church to renew its missionary commitment. Third to renew the Church. When the Church involves in missionary activities it often revitalizes its faith and its ministry overall. Fourth, to remind the Church that its primary service is to the world and thus to encourage it to use all aspects of its ministry to missionary activities. Fifth, the field of mission is ever expanding and widening. Immense portion of humanity is unevangelized. Sixth, with the changing scenes of the world's situations, politically, socially, economically, etc., there are new opportunities for mission. The Pope called it the "The Springtime for the Gospel." Centering his thought on the *agendum* of his letter he writes, "I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes*."

The Papal letter will stand as a lighthouse of mission for the Catholic Church in particular and for the whole of Christian world in general. I have benefitted greatly from the letter and I agree with many of his views. As an outsider to the Catholic tradition, however, I have a few points in the letter to debate about, which points arise I believe out of my ignorance of the said tradition or even a lack of the overall understanding of missionary activities at all levels. I hope the debates will lead to an indepth reflection of mission to the readers. Before we look at the points for debate, I would like to give the substance of the letter, especially for those who do not have time to go through it in detail.

Redemptoris Missio - In a Nutshell

After the general introduction, giving the reasons for the letter, the Pope started the letter by pointing to the foundation of mission. Jesus the universal savior is the reason for the universal mission. The Church is endowed with this responsibility of reaching out to the world proclaiming freedom through faith in Christ's death and resurrection. The *purpose* of mission is to extend God's Kingdom which Jesus has inaugurated, offering Kingdom's values of healing, forgiveness and transformation. This is important in view of the fact that some have tried to champion an anthropocentric Kingdom without room for Christ and the Church. One should realise that there is no kingdom without Christ, and the Church is called to extend this kingdom through preaching, establishing communities, spreading Gospel values and intercession through Christ's name.

The *Principal agent* of mission is the Holy Spirit. Believers do not do mission alone or on their own strength and abilities but on the power of the Holy Spirit. He is the director, the impeller, the opener of the Gospel to the nations and He gives shape to the way mission is run. He is active throughout the ages.

The *vast field* of mission that includes mission *ad gentes* and mission inside the Church is lazed with different problems — cultural political, division, indifference, etc. The parameters of mission keep changing with the changes in the political territories, new world and social orders and cultures. One common thread winds through this vast field which mission has to give an answer and that is the tension between material prosperity and the search for life's meaning. The *how* to do mission is important and the Pope tells us in this letter that mission is carried on through witnessing, proclamation, calling people to conversion and baptism and forming local churches.

Mission does not end with planting a Church. The Church must form basic communities to incarnate the Gospel in People's culture. Then we must also dialogue with the non-church humanity, though care must be taken here never to compromise the Christian faith. The Church must also involve in development by awakening people's conscience not only *to have more* but *to be more*. But above all, charity is the most powerful means of mission.

Mission is the responsibility of the *Whole Church*. That means, mission is not the prerogative of the priests alone, but that of the laity too. It is the responsibility of the old and the young Church, the rich and the poor Church, the institutes and the individuals. There is a need for cooperation among the many different mission agencies.

All the programmes and activities of mission will be of no use without missionary spirituality. Missionaries must be led by the Spirit, live the life of the Spirit, love the Church and humanity and lead the life of holiness.

Points of Debate

Point 1 : Understanding of a Church

The statement, "The first beneficiary of salvation is the Church" (p.17), sounds as if the Church existed before the means of salvation provided by Christ's death. But the Church is the outcome of Christ's offering. Therefore, the first beneficiary was a part of humanity who believed and accepted Jesus, sacrificial death to form a Church. This is a continuing process of becoming a part of the Church.

I am glad to see that catholic unity includes others who believe in Christ besides the Catholic faithful (pp. 17-18). But are they part of the Church? Is the Church a visible entity with its headquarter in Rome? Or is it an invisible entity formed by all those who believe in Christ? Would these "others who believe in Christ" (Protestants, I presume), be considered part of the Church or only have a mysterious relationship with the Church? (p.19). If they are not part of the Church, then they are not in mission since mission belongs to the Church. How should we look at the great protestant missionary movement?

Point 2 : Salvation and the Kingdom

In pages 18 & 19 the Pope says that salvation is granted even to those who do not believe in Christ explicitly. The reasons given are the lack of opportunity to hear the Gospel, the social and cultural prohibitions to accept

Christ or simply because they grew up in other religious traditions other than Christianity. This is a dangerous proposition. Does not this concept defeat mission? Why one needs to proclaim the Gospel? Will this lead to a conclusion that Christ is hidden in other religions?

Can we dichotomize salvation and entry into the Kingdom? I doubt it. If so, the Pope contradicts himself when he says, "entry into the Kingdom comes through faith and conversion (cf. Mk 1:15), and not merely by reason of ethnic background." (p. 25). Is not faith and conversion an explicit belief? Quoting the SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, the Kingdom of God is a person with the face and name of Jesus of Nazareth. If so, salvation and entry into the Kingdom comes only through knowing Him.

Point 3 : Conversion, Faith and Baptism

Baptism "is the Sacrament which signifies and effects rebirth from the Spirit, establishes real and unbreakable bonds with the Blessed Trinity, and makes us members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church." (pp. 80-81). As a separated brother, this is difficult to understand. In page 25, which has already been referred to above, entry into the Kingdom comes through faith and conversion. Even if conversion is joined to Baptism as argued in page 80, it does not help much. In a way, I find it more difficult since the rite of baptism is given to a child who would not understand conversion nor exercise faith.

Point 4 : Dialogue

The Pope did well to exhort for a dialogue with the non- believers (p.43, 94ff) and cooperate with the separated brethren (p86). If the first is important, the latter is paramount for I agree with the observation in the letter: "The fact that the Good News of reconciliation is preached by Christians who are divided among themselves weakens their witness." (p.86). Therefore, we need to dialogue; the Catholic faithful and the Protestants. True, there have been dialogues but these remain at the higher level and do not reach down where it effects the day-to-day ministry. On the contrary, we seem to be bend on the idea of building our own kingdoms rather than the Kingdom of Christ.

Point 5 : Preferential Treatment for the Poor

While this expresses our Christian charity (pp. 102-104) and may be biblical, are we not being uncharitable toward the rich who equally need the Gospel?

By following this line of thought in mission, have we been successful in reaching out to the periphery of the society and lost the centre the place that otherwise influences social, cultural, political and religious decisions? Could this be one of the reasons why "conversion is seen as a rejection of one's own people and culture?" It is possible if those who are converted are people who have no say whatsoever among their own people and in their culture. I am in no way arguing for neglecting the poor but for being fair to everyone according to one's need.

(References to RM are from RM St. Paul Publications, Bombay, 1991)

Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh

Redemptoris Missio: God's Timely Intervention in History

Fr. Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh, SDB., is a Khasi from Meghalaya. He has a Master's Degree in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome. He has been teaching Scripture from 1961. At present he teaches in Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, and is engaged in publishing Scripture commentaries in Khasi.

Once again God has timely intervened in history. After reading the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio,* we cannot but exclaim with joy: "Truly Jesus Christ has never abandoned His Church and He has kept his word 'Behold, I am with you till the end of time.' At the right time Jesus Christ has waken up, so to say, from his sleep in the stern of our ship of history. He has rebuked the wind and a great calm and serenity has come on all those who truly believe in Jesus Christ.

Undoubtedly, along with the encyclical *Humanae Vitae,* the impregnable wall that defends our human life, the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio,* the bulwark of the divine life in the human race, will ever remain great and immortal for all times and places. For, it is a clarion-call clear and precise to all Christians who take Jesus Christ seriously as their be-all and end-all.

It is a clarion-call that has awaken us up from our two kinds of slumber: that of *complacency* and that of *despondency,* two dangerous attitudes for any Christian in the world.

For many good and valid reasons, which it would take too long to enumerate, some of us did become *complacent* with the achievements of the Church. We thought we were alright as regards our number and our influence in the human race. Hence, we have tended to sit back with folded arms. There were others instead, who had met with great difficulties and failures too, due to a wrong method in work or lack of means. These became despondent and were imperceptibly led to think that theirs was a hopeless task and hence to be given up and unwittingly agreed to join the maninstream of indifference and loss of interest.

At this juncture of our history, the encyclical's clarion-call comes to the two groups of us: to the complacent and to the despondent. It comes to us who are complacent and it rouses us up from our unjustifiable slumber with these words: "The fact remains, however, that the ends of the earth to which the Gospel must be brought are growing ever more distant. Tertullian's saying, that the Gospel has been proclaimed to all the earth and to all peoples, is till very far from being a reality. The mission *ad gentes* is still in its infancy" (RM 40). These are strong words that should shake up all Christians of good will. Yes, the mission *ad gentes* is still in the early hours of its history, to use the words of Radhakrishnan, one of India's great writers and philosophers. It is still in the early hours of its history and it has not yet come to its dawn, leave alone its noon day. Hence, at this clarion-call of the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio,* we cannot be anymore complacent when we consider the ever increasing and expanding human race, for we hear these other words: "In other places, indigenous Christian communities are so small as not to be a clear sign of a Christian presence; or they lack the dynamism to evangelize their societies or belong to a minority population not integrated into the dominant culture of the nation" (RM 37).

Then the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* comes to the rescue of the despondent and the discouraged with these words: "God is opening before the Church the horizons of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel. I sense that the moment has come (emphasis mine) to commit all the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes*" (RM 3).

These are more than consoling words. They are a convinced profession of faith in humanity, of which the Church, just like God himself, is not yet tired! Nay, contemplating the human race as it is now, the Church cries out with God: "Behold, it is very good!" (Gen 1, 31). "I sense", the Pope says, "that the moment has come" what a beautiful sentence, full of meaning! It is a short, very short hymn to human race. Here we see that the Church is convinced of the fundamental goodness of human race in spite of its sins and malice! God is opening the horizons," the Encyclical says, "and the human race is more fully prepared than ever before!" Hence, this century of ours is the right time, the propitious moment, a century that promises a very rich harvest. And this is bound to happen because, according to the encyclical, "all people are searching for the Good News, albeit at times, in a confused way, and have a right to know the value of this gift and to approach it freely (RM 11). Such being the case, there is no more place for despondency and discouragement in the Church as regards evangelization to be carried out in these coming years.

Angeline Mao

Laity in the wake of Redemptoris Missio

Sr. Angeline belongs to the Mao Naga tribe of Manipur in North East India. She is a member of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians. She has a Master's Degree in Missiology from the Urban University, Rome. At present she is on the Team for Formation of her Congregation in Shillong.

Each Christian shares in the missionary character of the entire people of God. The pilgrim Church by nature is missionary!

These two small sentences from Vatican II are enough to revolutionize the whole theology and the work of every member of the Church. But even after more than 25 years since the closing of the Council, the missionary fire lit by it is yet to become ablaze! Pope Paul VI stirred up the smouldering embers with his historical Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* in which we read among others: "Evangelization... is the Church's deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (EN 14). And Pope John Paul II realizing that the number of those who do not know Christ has doubled since the end of the Council (cf. RM 3), and that proclaiming Christ is the best service which the Church can render to mankind (cf.RM 58) highlights the urgency of mission *ad gentes* in his most timely Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio.* Both *Evangelii Nuntiandi and Redemptoris Missio* are the two strongest reminders as the world steps into the third millennium. The laity who forms the largest portion of the People of God, the Pope mentions at the beginning of the Encyclical, through their commitment, have changed ecclesial life (cf. RM 2). Pope defines the laity as Missionaries by Baptism in RM 71 and 72 and devotes a place of honour to Catechists in 73. The invitation to convert all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes* (cf. RM 3) takes on a new significance when we realize that it is the laity who represents a biggest part of the Church's energy and resources.

Of course to awaken the laity to its missionary responsibilities is the task of both lay leaders and the Pastors. The future of evangelization in the third millennium will depend to a very great extent on the animation of laity all over the world. Only then will the missionary nature of the Church and the missionary character of the entire people of God will become more evident.

Paul Vadakumpadam

Questions on Redemptoris Missio for Personal and Community Reflection

1. "My direct contact with peoples who do not know Christ has convinced me even more of the urgency of missionary activity..." (RM 1). Do we as individuals and as a community feel this urgency? If so how is it manifested? If not what is the reason?

2. "Missionary activity specifically directed to the nations, *ad gentes* appears to be waning" (RM2). Does this apply also to us: to ourselves, to priests and religious in our local church, to the laity?

3. "Faith is strengthened when it is given to others" (RM 2). Can we bear this out with our personal experience? Do we have examples of communities where fervour and growth go hand in hand?

4. "It is only in faith that the Church's mission can be understood and only in faith that it finds its basis" (RM 4). Why do I feel bound to preach the Good News? How can I describe my missionary motivation?

5. "..For all people - Jews and Gentiles alike - salvation can only come from Jesus Christ" (RM 5). Am I deeply convinced of this truth?

6. What do we primarily proclaim?

-God, Christ or the Church?

-the history of salvation or the catechism?

-is the person of Jesus or the Christian community to be more stressed?

7. "In the modern world there is a tendency to reduce man to his horizontal dimension alone" (RM 8). Is there a danger that in our apostolate we may undervalue the religious dimension and over- emphasize the aspect of social work, thereby becoming only social workers than missionaries of Jesus Christ?

8. "The Kingdom aims at transforming human relationships, it grows gradually as people slowly learn to love, forgive and serve one another" (RM 15). Do we through word and example teach our people to love, forgive and serve one another?

9. "The Holy Spirit is indeed the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission" (RM 21). Are we Spirit-filled and led by him? to whom is the Spirit leading us now? Can we hear his voice speaking to us?

10. "To say that the whole Church is missionary does not preclude the existence of a specific mission *ad gentes...*" (RM 32). Do we give priority to contacting non-Christians in order to lead them to Christ? Is there tension between making new Christians and improving the present ones?

11. Which are the groups/areas/villages most responsive to the Gospel proclamation in our diocese?

12. "The difficulties seem insurmountable and could easily lead to discouragement, if it were a question of a merely human enterprise" (RM 35). What difficulties do we face in fulfilling our missionary vocation?

13. "People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories" (RM 42). Is the example of our life, as individuals and as community an effective witness? Are there shortcomings in this regard that could be pointed out?

14. "Only by becoming missionary will the Christian community be able to overcome its internal divisions and tensions, and rediscover its unity and its strength of faith." (RM 49). What is our experience in this regard?

15. "A rapidly growing phenomenon in the young churches...is that of ecclesial basic communities...which are proving to be good centres for Christian formation and missionary outreach" (RM 51). Do such communities exist in our parishes/dioceses?

16. "Properly applied, inculturation must be guided by two principles: compatibility with the Gospel and communion with the universal Church" (RM 54). Are there certain elements in our local culture that are not compatible with the Gospel?

17. "No one witnesses more effectively...than those who profess the consecrated life in chastity, poverty and obedience, in a total gift of self to God and in complete readiness to serve human being and society after the example of Christ" (RM 69). How are religious effective instruments in the hands of Christ for the evangelization of the world?

18. "I extend a special word of appreciation to the missionary religious sisters, in whom virginity for the sake of the Kingdom is transformed into a motherhood in the spirit that is rich and fruitful. It is precisely the mission

ad gentes that offers them vast scope for the gift of self with love in a total and undivided manner." (RM 70). Do we appreciate and promote the missionary apostolate of sisters?

18. " I exhort all the Churches... to be open to the Church's universality, and to avoid every form of provincialism or exclusiveness, or feelings of self-sufficiency" (RM 85). How are we to understand this in our context?

19. "What is needed is the encouragement of a new ardour for holiness among missionaries..." (RM 90). Do we and our people take the call to holiness earnestly?

Clarification of Terms according to Redemptoris Missio

Mission ad gentes or Missionary activity proper

It is directed to peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ, who are far from Christ, in whom the Church has not yet taken root and whose culture has not yet been influenced by the Gospel. It is distinct from other ecclesial activities inasmuch as it is addressed to groups and settings which are non-Christian because the preaching of the Gospel and the presence of the Church are either absent or insufficient. It can thus be characterized as the work of proclaming Christ and his Gospel, building up the local church and promoting the values of the Kingdom. The specific nature of this mission *ad gentes* consists in its being addressed to "non-Christians" (RM 34)

Pastoral Care of the Faithful

It is the activity of the Church in Christian communities with adequate and solid ecclesial structures. They are fervent in their faith and in Christian living. They bear witness to the Gospel in their surroundings and have a sense of commitment to the universal mission (RM 33).

New Evangelization or Re-evangelization

Here the Church addresses an intermediate situation (between the above two), in which entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. This happens particularly in countries with ancient Christian roots, and occasionally in the younger churches as well (RM 33).

Statistics

- If situations do not improve, some 50% of world population will be living in absolute poverty by the year 2050.
- At present there are over 1230 million people in the world. who have not heard anything about the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- There are some 2360 million people in the world who are in contact with the Christians and who know something about the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- Of the Christian population in the world:
  - — 97% of the Christians have no contact with non-Christians;
  - — 99% of their income is spent on itself;
  - — 98% of their activities are addressed to themselves.

BOOK REVIEW ARTICLES

Dr. F. S. Downs

Christianity and Northeast India

During the last fifteen years or so a number of studies on the history of the various Christian Churches and Christianity in Northeast India has been published. But they are all sectional histories that deal with Christian Mission carried on by particular churches. They also tend to be ecclesiastical histories. So far no comprehensive study of the history of Christianity has been made. Frederick S. Downs' book HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA Vol.5, part 5, NORTH EAST INDIA IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES, just published by Church History Association of India (Bangalore: CHAI, 1992, pp. xvi +236), therefore, is a very welcome addition to books on Northeast India. HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN NORTH EAST INDIA is a substantially revised and enlarged version of Dr. Downs, earlier book CHRISTIANITY IN NORTH EAST INDIA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES which was published in 1983.

The book has seven chapters. The first two chapters give the geographical, political and secular context into which Christianity was introduced. Chapters three and four deal with what we may call the traditional ecclesiastical history in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Christianity was brought to Northeast India by the American Baptist and the Welsh presbyterian Missionaries in the 19th century. They were followed by the Anglican, Lutheran and the Catholic missions. During the course of a century and a half several other Churches, both foreign and indigenous, have established missions in Northeast India.But the dominant Churches, both in numbers, influence and social impact are the Baptist, Presbyterian and the Catholic.

Chapters five and six, following the general pattern and philosophy of history of Christianity in India, laid down by CHAI, analyse the impact of Christianity on society in Northeast India. The final chapter is a brief one, in fact too brief for a book of 236 pages, and serves as a general conclusion to the book.

This is a very welcome and substantial contribution to the History of Christianity, the Churches, and their impact upon the society in Northeast

India, little known to the rest of the Church and society in India. The book is very readable, well written, and makes absorbing and rewarding reading.

It is astonishing how Dr. Downs has kept track of every detail of the progress of the Christian Churches in Northeast India, even though being away from the scene of action for over 20 years.

By and large the book is very objective, scholarly, and interpretation impartial. There are, however, some areas where this reviewer has a few differences with the treatment of the history of Christianity in Northeast India.

The first is with the basic assumption or thesis of Dr. Downs. According to Downs, the reason for large numbers of people in Northeast India embracing Christianity was that it helped them to adjust themselves to the entirely new situation created by the coming of the British administration and the consequent imposition of new value systems. Hence Christianity has served an important social function (p.209).

No one will deny this fact. But it may be debated whether this is the only or the main factor at play. Obviously Dr. Downs is too meticulous a scholar to say that it is the only factor. Yet the reader is left with the impression that it is the main reason. If the above assumption is true, then why is it that the Assamese society has not embraced Christianity, which also had to adjust itself to changed political and social situations. Again, the same phenomenon of tribals embracing Christianity is taking place in Arunachal Pradesh right now.

Perhaps the connaturality of tribal and Christian values, the search for wholeness, the emphasis on community in Christian and tribal ways of life, space for freedom in matters of food, comparatively democratic ways of functioning, emphasis on basic dignity and equality of persons without the burdens of a caste- ridden society, myths and legends similar to biblical myths about the origin, fall, and redemption of man and human community, the absence of centuries old theological, philosophical historical, and architectural mooring and expressions in tribal religions, and above all the person and figure of Jesus Christ may account better for the fact of Christianization of Northeast India than the hypothesis of Dr. Downs. Surprisingly, the name of Jesus Christ figures hardly in the text and not at all in the Index.

Sociological interpretation of history, important as it is, has also its inherent weaknesses. Any religious phenomenon, such as the spread of Christianity

in a given area, needs to be interpreted from different angles and with different hermeneutical tools.

Dr. Downs seems to be aware of this problem when he deals with tribal legends regarding written language and ancestral manuscripts, now lost (pp. 193-195). He admits that the relationship between conversion to Christianity and the similarity of creation-fall-redemption legends "has seldom been examined" (p.194). One wonders why Dr.Downs has not carried his research on the history Christianity in Northeast India along these lines.

There is another thesis in Dr. Downs' book that may be challenged by scholars and probably by the verdict of time. Dr. Downs states, "The primary agent of change in the North East, the only agent with the necessary power to force change, was the British government (and its successor). Christianity was not so much a primary agent of change as an agent of acculturation" (p. 144). One may dispute whether Christianity was the only or the primary agent of social change. But it is beyond doubt that it was one of the primary agents of change in Northeast India. Christianity brought about a new world-view, created new political consciousness, has been the primary agent of education, health care, etc. Whoever or whatever introduces such elements of change cannot but be one of the primary agents of social change any where in the world ! To say that the only agent of change in political power is to deny the obvious. History is replete with such examples as was the case of the Roman empire and the Gospel and in our own time the Communist empire in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Hence we would say that the role of Christianity was not only to be an agent of acculturation, to cope with change but also of inculturation and "reculturation", that is, to be a powerful agent of creating a new society (cfr. Sebastian Karotemprel "The Impact of Christianity on the Tribes of Northeast India" MSS, Sacred Heart Theological College, to be published in a forthcoming two volume book on Northeast India.)

We may also point out a few other problems raised by the book. The book suffers from an inevitable weakness: access to original sources and documents, especially in an area where the oral traditions are strong. This is due to two or three factors : some sources, especially Roman Catholic, are in European languages and found only in ecclesiastical archives in India and abroad; little has been written on a number of smaller Churches that came into existence during the last fifty years or so; lack of acquaintance with the numerous local languages. These, no doubt, are some of the most formidable obstacles to any historian who writes on the development of Christianity in

Northeast India. Even though one is writing on the social impact of Christianity in Northeast India, acquaintance with the sources would certainly change our historical evaluation.

The addition of a map to situate Northeast India is useful. So is the glossary of ecclesiastical terms. Statistical data about the relative position of the various churches would have been extremely useful to locate areas of impact of Christianity. One would have liked to see a critical evaluation of the role of Christian churches and the impact of Christianity on society in Northeast India. Some areas of impact such as changes in family structures, laws of inheritance role of the male in society, technical education, introduction of vocation-based and service- oriented ways of life could also have been discussed. The phenomenon of significant numbers joining Religious Orders, committed to the pursuit of human and Christian perfection and service will have radical effects on society in the long run.

More attention should have been given to the impact of tribal way of life upon Christianity. As a result we may say a tribal Christianity is arising with its positive and negative aspects as in all human endeavours.

In this connection the idea or principle of liminality could have been examined. Any society that opts for a set of new religious values, beliefs, and worship forms goes through a period of transition during which it continues to hold the old and new values, beliefs, life patterns, etc. From this it may not be concluded, as sociologists like Menkekar do, whom Dr. Downs quotes, that the acceptance of Christianity is only superficial (pp. 165-167). Any living organism changes and takes on new forms of life only gradually with an intermingling of the old and the new. This is what we call liminality. In this regard, the remark of Christoph von Fuerer-Heimendorf that the tribals became Christians for superficial reasons, "dazzled by the prestige of the white man" (p. 171) is itself baseless. What would C. von Fuere- Heimendorf say when he sees sufficiently large groups accepting the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Arunachal Pradesh now where there are only brown missionaries ! Tribals like any one else have also wisdom, intuition and good judgement.

A few statements in the book are generalizations that may not be valid for all the churches in Northeast India. Some of them may be valid for the churches of Protestant tradition and not for the Roman Catholic tradition or vice versa.

There are some glaring proof reading errors which mar the quality of the book (pp. 106, 119, 144, 175, 182). In general the quality of CHAI publications, considering that they find their way into many countries abroad, leaves much to be desired. We may make one more remark about the CHAI project for an eight volume history of Christianity in India. A project that started in 1973 is still less than half completed even after nearly twenty years. Such unpardonable delay kills the interest and enthusiasm of those eagerly waiting to see in print all the volumes promised. Many will have to sing their "Nunc dimittis . . ." without seeing them !

Finally, Dr. Downs must be sincerely thanked and congratulated for the immense pains he has taken with love and dedication to give us an extremely valuable and scholarly guide to the history of Christianity in Northeast India. It should be on the bookshelf of Church leaders, pastors, students and all educated Christians in Northeast India and all those who are interested in the history of the Church and society in India.

Sebastian Karotemprel, SDB

A.Pushparajan

Ecological world-view for a just society,

I.S.P.C.K., Delhi 1992, pp. 75 Rs. 30/-

As the title suggests, liberation theology today cannot turn a Nelson's eye to contemporary man's depredation of the environment and the excessive exploitation of mother earth's material resources. When the exploiters have been converted and the exploited have been conscientized, will there remain a bountiful nature that could afford all men and women a decent living if man's rapine goes unchecked? Hence "the newer liberation theology calls for a holistic world-view covering not only the interaction of human beings among themselves but also the interaction of humans with Nature" (p. 18). The book is very sympathetic to anyone approaching the comparatively new subject of ecology for the first time, so that no concept in this particular domain is mentioned without an explanation. This is the book's basic asset. The rapacious plundering of non-renewable energy sources, the pollution of soil, air and water, and the weakening of nature's resilience are explained scientifically and in so ominous a detail that one perceives an almost surreptitious sense of moral responsibility rising within and dictating one's intentions for the future in the course of the reading itself. As a scientific essay, the book pin points the causes of the crisis, explaining with brief sufficiency how the human interference with nature's balance, especially through the destructive character of modern technology, has brought the "oikos" of man to this pass. The book does not pretend to expatiate theologically on the points, invokes no Scripture or Church authority but simply allows, so to say, the problem or the ravaged earth to speak for itself. Though most references are to sources in the '70s and'80s, the author's initiative and insights have thrust the book into the present decade, and, apart from a few slips in syntax, it should enter honorably the expanding and vocal literature on the ecological discourse of today.

Mervyn Carapiet

J.A.G. Gervius Van Leevwen

Fully Indian - authentically Christian

A study of the First Fifteen Years of the NBCLC (1967 - 1982), Bangalore, India, in the Light of the Theology of its Founder, D.S.Amalorpavadass.

Uitgeversmaatschappij J.H.Kok - Kampen 1990. pp.357

This two part dissertation bulks big with information, conveyed in simple, unpretentious prose, about the theological content and orientation of the mind of the late Fr. D.S.Amalorpavadass, founder-director of the National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, Bangalore. The book's leit-motiv is the authenticity of Christian life with the symmetrical awareness of the giftedness of being Indian with a task. The first part is a handy dossier - almost encyclopaedic in its proportions - of the reports, resolutions and minutiae of meetings and seminars up to 1982, together with substantial descriptions of proposed catechisms and liturgical formulations. Such goings-on elicited the vast potential of the Christian community in India while also serving to underline the psycho-spiritual conditioning of the Indian Church. Whereas Vatican II called for a genuine renewal in which all people should be involved, the Indian Church did not evince a high opinion of itself, one reason being the meagre and marginal participation of its members. Agreed on all hands that Christ alone spells salvation for India, the preparation for such an event must be through relevant biblical, catechetical-moral and liturgical renewal, which must include ecumenical and inter-religious approaches, and the collaboration of other religious persuasions like Islam, Buddhism and particularly Hinduism. While there is a problem of the relation between cult and culture, with all that goes into the definition of the latter in India, the understanding is that the liturgy of the future will be influenced most by Hinduism and its myriad symbols. In this connection an inter-denominational liturgy commission was mooted. Indianisation and liberation emerged as the two main areas of concern today, while the seminars boiled down basically to questions and answers about prayer experience and the leadership crisis. Subjects such as these testify to the realism and relevance of the work of NBCLC. Women's ordination, at least to the diaconate, was demanded, and the possibility of their priesthood hinted at. Greater freedom in the sacramental life of the individual and the avoidance of the herd mentality in the area of auricular confession could be cited as instances in detail. A pointer for the Church in India: "The Church's denunciation of evil should also include its own structures and institutions:

the Church in India should not be over-dependent on Rome with regard to the solution of its local problems" (p. 160).

If theologising in India is in context, as it ought to be, it must accept theological pluralism as inevitable, and, on the practical level, the decision-making process needs to involve the whole community for effectiveness. This is the opening gambit of D.S. Amalorpavadass' Indianisation in action. The Church is no mere word processor detached from where the action is, but articulates itself in terms of the community's experience, centered on the human as the language of the divine, making no distinction between evangelization, Christianization and humanization, and even ready for structural reform on a par with the radical changes in society. High ideals, indeed, whereas the still foreign character and institutionalization, heavy with its pressures born of juridical authoritarianism make it into an alienating and marginal body. Such a constitution finds it hard to stomach the universal existentialism of Hinduism and lacks and maturity to exercise its autonomy out of an exaggerated loyalty to Rome. By that much the movement of inculturation is hindered and the liturgy is tied down to universal signs instead of revelling in the pluriformity that Indian culture can provide. After all, a Hindu is not saved by Hinduism any more than a Christian is saved by Christianity, but both are saved by God in Jesus Christ, the only Saviour who has assumed all humanity and creation; for what matters ultimately is the fundamental option of openness to God, and this can be accessible through other scriptures which are manifestations and means of salvation, too. This does not detract from the Church's being the adequate means, whose vigour is also shown by its dialoguing with other faiths, centered on the God experience. It was precisely because D.S.A. was the soul of dialogue that he could confidently propose the grand lines of an Indian Christian spirituality that intergrates such elements as interiority and pilgrimage which could enrich the fiduciary relationship of Church to Christ. Christianity in India does indeed need enriching to bring out its liberative power despite its impoverishment for having supported unjust structures, like other Indian religions have done. Contending that secularity should aim at a just society and foster a sense of the spiritual makes it easy for him to define evangelization as essentially the sharing of the experience of the God in the cave of each human heart. The uniqueness of Christ, in fact belongs here basically as a faith experience rather than a theological conclusion. Thus, it is easy to understand that apart from the mandate of Christ, the Church's missionary activity is motivated by the desire to restore

to Christ, all the truth and value of the other religions and to reveal Christ as the perfect paradigm of humanity.

The reader must admire this competent and courageous priest theologian even as he sees the titles of his books and articles cascading down nine pages of closely printed bibliography. Popular biases hang tough, like persistent viruses; yet D.S.A.'s ideas will hopefully forge their way into such consciousness to make them understand that he had no truck with the alien herbs of heresy or with self-multilating compromises.

Author-editor, Gerwin van Leeuwin hardly intrudes upon the ideas of his protagonist, except once or twice to venture an interpretation, for example, on the "uniqueness" of Christ. With unfeigned obsequiousness he stands witness like by the theological fluency of his hero, Fr.D.S.Amalorpavadass - idea man and verbal athlete.

Mervyn Carapiet

Roger E. Hedlund

Evangelization and Church growth: issues from the Asian context.

CGRC, Madras 1992, pp. 260; Price not mentioned (Further details contact No. 55, Ave., Mylapore, Madras - 600 004).

The phenomenon of Church growth which is evangelism in quantifiable terms, has acquired a significant place in missiology and missionary parlance. It has emerged as the major foci of cross-cultural evangelism and Church planting. But, despite its prevalence the concept is still clouded in ambiguity. Literature available is scant. This thoroughly researched and evenhanded written volume has come to fill this long felt gap.

Dr. Hedlund has demonstrated his great skill in being pointed, clear and succinct. The 260 pages of the volume are divided in five parts with seventeen chapters adequately supported by exhaustive lists of references and footnotes.

Part one of the book comprehensively covers theology and missiology of Church growth, with conceptual clarity. It makes amply clear that Church growth is not mere pragmatism derived from social sciences, carries a dynamic theological view which takes seriously the human context as well as Biblical context. The use of statistical data from Asia and Africa, gives the book authenticity. It is fascinating to note that 78,000 Christians are added daily in His Kingdom and 1,000 new congregations are formed weekly in Afro-Asia alone (p35).

Part 2 of the book is the heart of the treatise from the Indian perspective. The Evangelization issues keeping in view the typical Indian social scenario are comprehensively covered. It is important for every missionary and Church planter to know what "a group is" in order to reach the "target Peoples" as "significantly large grouping of persons having a common origin (race or ethnicity) and a shared culture, language, religion and other traits" Dr. Hedlund confirms the validity of 'People group approach" by saying" It is theologically correct, therefore, for the church in India to see it mission in terms of multiplied nations (People) of the Land" (p48). He also attempts to clear many prevalent conceptual distortions in evangelical

terminology. Terms like *reached, unreached, unchurched,* etc., are scientifically defined. The unique feature of the present treatise is its practical orientation based on sound theology. This book conveys that the task of evangelization is not child's play. He suggests a proper strategy for success. There is a need of meticulous caution and action. To quote him "knowing the people is the first requisite. . . . We have to understand their outlook, world view and needs" (p 55). The book also reflects his personality as a missionary evangelist who has a passion for lost souls. He challenges, in today's India, the era of foreign missionaries has passed. The Indian churches themselves should rise to the challenge of cross-cultural mission (p33). This section contains a bird's eye view of evangelistic efforts in the selected states of India, which will have immense value for church planners. Many will enjoy reading the debatable "Conversion" issue which is discussed in detail in a separate chapter.

In Part 3, the author has raised contextual questions with Macro perspective. The burning issues, viz, "Christian Freedom and Third World Realities" and "Social Action and Church Growth" etc., However, to me, "Caste and the Bible" which contains excellent missiological information, looks misplaced. It should have found a place in Part 2 preceding chapter five, as caste is a typical Indian phenomenon. Nevertheless, his treatment and understanding of Christian leadership is superb. He has rightly chided the "centralised tendencies" at the cost of "grass root" congregational leadership. He has rightly depicted how the privileged few have captured top places for themselves.

Part 4 of the book exclusively deals with Urban Mission. Amidst the rapid world-wide urban explosion, this looks timely. It especially has great potential in the Indian subcontinent. He offers a sound theological basis from case studies of six selected cities of India. The statistics confirm that Roman Catholics still out number Protestants. However, it is surprising to see phenomenonal growth of Pentecostal churches. Some of its branches have shown an astonishing high growth rate (p 147). Are our cities going to repeat the Korean Miracle ? This calls for a separate study of the Pentecostal movement in India.

The Fifth and last part of the book divided into four chapters is of immense practical value. The author has emphasized the role of researching in evangelization. Because of our neglect of this important aspect, we have failed to hit the target accurately. That is why our missionary ventures have ended in a fiasco. The chapter "Church Growth Indian Style" depicts the

topsy-turvy picture of our evangelical scenario. The book concludes with a much needed chapter "Training for Mission" which tells how, what and where to study with special focus on India. However, the common reader will grope for the full forms of abbreviations used, viz., BBI, CDTI, COTR, ETS, GUST, etc. (pp 257 and 258).

In a nutshell, you will enjoy reading Hedlund at his best. Despite few short comings like inadequate data from North India, Southeast Asia and West Asia, the book is going to help church planners and planters to formulate proper evangelistic strategies. Academically, the book will answer many burning issues and will pave the way for further researchers with focus on North India. Practically, it will serve as a handycompendium for those who are carrying the great commission of preaching, teaching and discipling. The book is ideally suited as a textbook for various missionary oriented theological programmes. The reviewer concurs heartily and commends this work as deserving the widest possible reading.

Dr. Ashish K. Massey

Gregory D' Coara

The Practice of Love, The Challenge of the Spiritual Exercises

Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, P.B. 70,
Anand, Gujarat 388 001. Rs. 70.00 $10.00

This book is a collection of essays by six authors, three Jesuit and three lay, who endeavour to present a Christ-salvation lifeline suited to the intellectual, social and religious milieu of India. As each author argues from a different platform, the book does not pretend to have a developing line of thought, thereby obliging the critique to the discrete with each presentation.

The first paper, "Salvation in the Indian Context", in by Saguna Ramanathan who sees the essence of the Christian experience as something relevant to human experience anywhere. More, the experience of Hinduism and Buddhism offers a corrective to that of the Christian who is in danger of being lulled into the false security of his church's human structures that he uncritically takes to be permanent and divine. Competing eschatologies are dished out by the author, the reader keeping his fingers crossed until the Christian brand comes out the winner by a hair's breadth. The Christian incarnation steals a march on the Hindu variety, bound as the latter is to the "dharma", the cosmic moral rule underlying the universe. "The final picture is of a sad and isolated Krsna, alone in the forest, his heel fatally pierced by a hunter's arrow." (p. 36) Christ's incarnation is central to faith and spearheads a radical criticism that crashes through pretentious power institutions to create the new society of a resurrected humanity. The ultimate power of the Incarnation, says the author, is its powerlessness, proved on the Cross by Christ's refusal to come down from the infamous gibbet. The author's contention that Christ is not necessarily the only mediator and that truth is broader than Christ may be a highly intellectually detached notion until one encounters Jesus Christ personally to realise how uniquely universal a mediator he is. "The Hindu notion of complete self-realization, of 'moksa' attainable by the human person through human effort, is a vigourous, corrective addition to the Christian picture of salvation through a redeeming saviour." (p.49) Such a reflection on Christianity's merits is gratuitous, especially if one remembers Christ's call to each one to take up his cross and follow him, of Paul's programme of making up in his body what was

wanting in the body of Christ, and of Peter's admonition to work at one's salvation in fear and trembling. Also to be remembered that, with the elevation of nature by the historical Incarnation, there is no purely human effort in the natural sense. Nirvana as extinction (p.51) is good enough for a cockroach; but if Christian love substantiates the self, then more of this instead. The author's linking of love to justice is a tenuous one, and even though self-dispossession is an integral factor, it need not hint at forgetting the name of God or Christ (p.58), rather, recalls it more strenuously.

In the 2nd. paper, "Sisyphus the Phoenix: Reflections of an activist", Sarup Dhruv contrasts the serenely triumphalistic joy of a Jesuit celebration to the shattered picture of contemporary Indian society, and reflects how the activist can help make the parallels meet, how Sisyphus can yet be the resurrected Pheonix. The Sisyphuses are divided into the victims (oppressed and unhelped by theories of Karma and Dharma) and the fighters (inured to suffering but animated by hope). Sisyphus' necessary stillness is instinct with resolve, which leads to transformative praxis - the deed and sign manual of Phoenix. The reader then resonates with sensitivity with Saroop Dhruv's personal testimony of conversion in depth. "The blindfolds drop, facades break down. Disillustionment...but the resulting pain, the anger were not just mine. It was the anger of many silent victims. Our commitment become stronger." (p.91) Here was Phoenix, indeed, though still alternating with the torture of Sisyphus, the staple of every activist's sustenance.

The victimization of women and children is the theme of the 3rd. essay by Sarvar V. Sherry Chand, who shows how childhood metaphors are carried over into adulthood for purposes of control. Women and children are defined in reference to the adult male as the standard of humanity. The Gospel's respect for women was overwhelmed by the thinking of Sts. Paul and Augustine, which was all of a piece with the patriarchal prejudice of the time, which considered the Virgin Mary as its ideal of womanhood. the author goes to great lengths and detail to explain the origin and working of such oppression - sexual, familial, societal and economic, adding that one's present day education fails to offer a limb for self-liberation; in fact, it perpetuates the system of the oppressed becoming in turn the oppressor, as evidenced in the mother inculcating in the child the impoverishing tenets she herself was brought up on. After such a vast and scientific exposè of the problem, the author's solution by way of the recovery of true, i.e. New Testament based childhood sounds tinkling thin. Childhood rediscovery is certainly one of the operatives but within a developmental momentum which includes the reorganisation of society and reformation of all structures

to which a disproportionately small amount of thought is given. The material tethers on imbalanced leverage, with the child acting as almost the sloe fulcrum.

"Following Jesus is Poverty" is then pursued by Jesuit author, Fr.Franco, who argues from the firm roots of the "Spiritual Exercises" that the intrinsic links between poverty and the following of Jesus spells out the practical terms of the option for the poor, which in turn demands one's becoming personally poor and never delinked from the commitment to justice. Poverty is the hermeneutic of the "Spiritual Exercises" in context. Franco divides his paper accordingly into four sections: the contextual clarification of poverty in the "Spiritual Exercises", option for the poor, personal poverty, and Jesus' resurrection as the paradigm of freedom for the poor. He aptly brings out the continuum of impoverishment due to socio-economic-political structures which are manipulated by a few who control the allocating of the surplus between consumption and investment. The poor, on the other hand, provide the backbone of the biblical definition of God, and the liberation of the oppressed in the literal material sense is an essential biblical value which must be at the core of one's intimacy with God. Freedom to be one's self is to be free from Mammon (symbol of power) in order to be free for God - to become poor. Like Jesus, the disciple must give up the success of his mission and be seemingly abandoned by the "Abba". The author quite admirably takes the reader to the ultimate poverty that is beyond the realm of words. Very appropriately, Pope John Paul II's theme for his next World Day of Peace (1 January 1993) is: "If you want peace, reach out to the poor".

The next author, Gregory D'Costa, goes to great lengths deriving an ethic of "becoming human" from the "Spiritual Exercises". As the quintessence of the moral endeavour, humanization must journey through the stages of consciousness, creative freedom, and relationality as the components of the truth of one's self-worth (call to dignity) that does not count on behaviour, status or usefulness. Such truth is assumed into divine faith that can and must move the mountains of society's crushing structures. Personal and societal sin cannot hide behind the excuse of "conditioning", but must confront the totally free person, called Jesus Christ, who leads the project of humanization through the mill of self-emptying, captioned as the 3rd. degree of humility of which he was the protagonist by his total stripping of self, God and human support on the Cross. "The human Jesus may have died but 'the Christ' continues to live where true love flows, where truth breaks through, and where true freedom emerges..." (p.247). Gregory D'Costa has demonstrated, very commendably, how the moral imperative of general

humanity can work out through the pedagogy of the "Spiritual Exercises" into the mastery of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

In the 6th. and last essay, M.Irudayaraj offers suggestions for "doing the Spiritual Exercises in India." There is no difficulty in seeing how. Since St. Ignatius deals with the essence of the reality of God, self and world, one would expect that any statement about context would find the "Exercises" relevant, and that very especially in India where God as "divine pathos" would readily be understood and accepted. Through a co-naturality with Jesus by way of contemplation, one need but attach herself to this God only to discover the power of her inner resources flowing out in praxis to the poor and oppressed. Despite his feeler not to claim exclusivity for Jesus as Saviour, Irudayaraj contres on Jesus most intimately through out his paper, even contending that Jesus is relevant to India in an "essential way". If words mean what they say, this statement is powerfully soteriological and precisely how St. Ignatius would have desired it, particularly in the 3rd. degree of his charter of humility where the Absolute Imperative is accepted as the "sole factor in one's life." (pg.287) It is at this point that the six essays ascend to a felicitous convergence: India needs God, acting through self-dispossessed men and women, and extending the paradigm that is Jesus. The reading may at times trundle heavily under scholastic verbiage, but the book's message is much needed and challenging. An upbeat endeavour in an updated Jesuit dynamic.

Mervyn Carapiet

BOOK REVIEW

Luis M. Bermejo, S.J.

Church, Conciliarity and Communion,

Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Pp. 361, Rs. 65.00/$ 10.00

After discussing the meaning of "The Church of Christ subsists in the catholic Church", the inerrancy of the body of the faithful, and the ecumenicity of the councils, the author embarks on the consideration of the reception of the teaching of Vatican I. He divides his study between immediate and subsequent reception. Immediate reception concerns only the bishops who were present at the Council, while reception today covers the magisterium, the theologians and the laity. Bermejo then dares to argue historically a number of very significant reversals of solemnly proclaimed doctrines held close to the heart of popes and councils. Popes (some a squalid lot) rejected Councils and vice versa.

The sharpest focus of the book is on Vatican I which Bermejo re- examines with the help of as much documentary evidence as is available (or released) to date, the purpose being not to discredit the Council, but to open the idea of reception to questioning. Is reception an once-for-all infrangible seal of approval granted to a doctrine or is it a protean entity that can be shaped by the tortuous turns and unexpected twists of history, largely engineered by the decisions of subsequent Councils and political convenience of popes ? Doctrines can have unforeseen outcomes : they can as slowly take root as imperceptibly shrivel up and blow away.

The heart and entrails of the book are contained in Chapters III and IV: "Vatican I Revisited" and "The Reception of Vatican I", and it is a visitation indeed, characterized by the author's scathing honesty.

The effects of Vatican I seem perceptible in today's ecumenical deadlock and the present pope's embodiment of that council, particularly by the prominence of papal jurisdiction over infallibility. Quoting Hassler's massive study of Vatican I, the author shows how an overpowering pressure

could have extinguished the freedom of the council fathers, resulting in the invalidity of the council's decrees.

Other-than-Catholic historians unanimously maintain that this was so. "As unfree council is a useless, discredited council", and burying uncomfortable historical evidence is no solution, any more than pius IX's goof, "I am the tradition".

Bermejo quotes Newman wherever relevant : in the matter of moral unanimity, absenteeism, protests, etc. . . . These were so many barriers to the decree's validity, as Newman himself concluded. "But while that bar continues, I cannot hold the dogma by virtue,of the vote in session." Apart from Questioning the wisdom of dogmatizing a doctrine, the author sees no historical crisis that could have precipitated the definition, no compelling reason for something that very few suggested as dogma. "Pastor Aeternus", the document proclaiming definitively the pope's personal infallibility and supreme jurisdiction, utilises an exegesis that is extremely weak and makes assertions that have been proved wrong by history, besides lacking foundations in tradition. One wonders how such a definition could have gone through in the face of 130 negative votes.

If moral unanimity was not attained, how does one address the problem of post-conciliar reception ? Bermejo presents his assessment by eliciting the reaction, respectively, of the magisterium, the theologians, and the laity, a reaction divided chronologically soon after the Council and today. Of the laity, on a global statistic, one observes utter ignorance of ordinary religious truths, leave alone that of papal infallibility. Indifference is a greater killer of reception than the overt opposition evinced in 47% of Christendom.

The author contends that soon after the Council the minority bishops expressed their reception not out of faith but out of obedience, but here, too, not the obedience based on holy scripture. Ecclesial reception should be the fruit of a communion that is deeper than juridical submission. As an ongoing process, reception is at best ambiguous, and "Pastor Aeternus" (the decree in question) does not seem to dovetail with Vatican IIps field restrictions on papal infallibility. Present day bishops do not question the principle of papal jurisdiction, only its method. It is worth noting that the oriental churches have never accepted such jurisdiction. The theologians, the author states, are in turmoil, engaging in critical questioning without risking heresy. Can Vatican I not be reduced to the status of a synod of the West ? What is the status, anyway, of the double dogma, even if it contains some truth ? Could

the very dogma turn out to be erroneous ? Could Vatican I have been a colossal disaster ? Therefore, is reception always irreversible ?

Bermejo does not answer with a definite "yea", but traces the histories of doctrines that have ended up by being reversed or rejected by the highest ecclesiastical authority. The temporal power of the popes, "outside the church no salvation", the authority of the councils over the popes, have ended in rejection. The institutions of slavery and torture, sedulously upheld, have been put against the wall and shot to hell.

What cannot be blasted to perdition are the seried ranks of unskewed historical facts that the author, dispassionate and cool, sends marching forward against fondly held perceptions. The facts speak for themselves, the author has no axe to grind. What does one do with such a writer in an era bereft of the Inquisition, torture and burning at the stake ? Throwing his book back at him is no rejoinder after the data are read, and they stick. The only counterstroke possible is another book with equal power to provide an opposite persuasion. Who, with a calibre on a par with Bermejo's, will pick up the gauntlet ? Some may consider this book an unwary footfall starting an avalanche, but I believe it is a bountiful mine of information, rendered in prose that never grows grey or shallow, with hardly a purposeless word or printing error throughout its 361 pages. Reading it is more than a mildly spectator sport for one who has the heart of the Catholic Church at heart. It leaves the reader not dazed and puzzled at the smoke and fire of it, but well-informed and so much the wiser.

Mervyn Carapiet

INDIA CHRISTIAN HANDBOOK'S NATIONWIDE SURVEY BEGINS

(Pune, Maharashtra, October 1992) — The most comprehensive single-reference volume on Christianity in India, the **India Christian Handbook,** will be released in early 1994. Dr. Saphir P. Athyal, former Principal of Union Biblical Seminary, is the editor.

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The staff includes 31 part-time researchers dispersed through the 25 states and 7 Union Territories, two regional coordinators, and five central staff based in Pune. Contact **India Christian Handbook,** P.O. Box 1426, Bibvewadi, Pune 411 037, Maharashtra, Phone: 0212-425382, Fax : 0212-436451.

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