

EVANGELIZATION
Sharing the Joy of the Gospel

One World Theology
(Volume 9)

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Edited by
Klaus Krämer and Klaus Vellguth



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Preface

To mark the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of *Ad Gentes*, the decree on the mission activity of the Church, at the end of the Second Vatican Council on 8 December 1965 this volume in the *One World Theology* series is devoted to the subject of evangelization. Authors from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, approaching the topic from their own particular perspective, examine the different epochs of evangelization, explore the relationship between mission and evangelization, look at the driving forces for evangelization, address Christian witness in a multi-religious world and discuss attitudes to Christian evangelization.

Michael Sievernich sets the scene by taking a short look at the long history of evangelization and the various epochs into which it can be divided. He deals with the times and spaces of evangelization, analyses the reaction to it in Late Antiquity and turns his attention to early Christianisation in Europe and Asia before investigating the mediaeval mission in Asia and evangelization in the Early Modern period. He subsequently explains Africa's response to Christianity and ends with some remarks on the relationship between globalisation and evangelization. He points to a "shift in the balance of power in the Church to the southern hemisphere", the consequences of which are not yet foreseeable, although "an ever more closely interwoven inter-culturality and an ever more intensive inter-religious dialogue" will gain in significance.

In his contribution entitled "Revisiting Evangelization Work in Colonial Philippines" Daniel Franklin E. Pilario examines the beginnings of missionary work under Spanish rule and looks, in particular, at the methods of evangelization employed. In his view, the colonial attempts at evangelization formed part of a special arrangement between politicians and the Church (Patronato Real). Pilario probes into the methods of proclaiming the Gospel to see how

they were exploited by social, political and economic forces at the time. His study takes due account of the standpoint of Pierre Bourdieu who talks of “double truths” and looks into the connection between “structured structures” and “structuring structures”.

In “*Ad Gentes* in the Context of the Epochs of Evangelization” Laurenti Magesa takes a creation theology approach, saying that “the good news must be advanced for the entire creation by the church.” He describes evangelization after Constantine’s conversion to Christianity and proceeds from there to the evangelization of the regions outside Europe from the 15th century onwards. Coming on to the present, he points to the missiological tenets formulated by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* and underlines the importance for evangelization of the option for the poor.

Manuel Gómez Mendoza divides the epochs of evangelization in Latin America into the colonial era, independence and the period of renewal marked by the impetus of the Second Vatican. He splits the epoch of evangelization into a phase of formation and a phase of consolidation. He comes to the conclusion “that proclamation was subject first to the politics of the Spanish crown, then undergoing processes of political and national consolidation until it found its own place, its own expression and its own voice in the wake of the impetus from Vatican II, demonstrating its vitality and its capacity to become a part of the life of the faithful.”

The articles in the second chapter comment on the relationship between mission and evangelization. In her contribution on “Mission as evangelization, or: Everything begins with Jesus” Hildegard Wustmans highlights the challenge posed by the poor and notes that ultimately evangelization means changing reality for the better. This, she says, requires self-evangelization and using the signs of the times to find the way forward. Mindful of the need for a missionary attitude in the spirit of Jesus, she writes: “Evangelization in his name, in his mission exists only in the mode of solidarity and affection, of respect and humility towards all people in today’s world.”

In her paper on “Mission as Evangelization” Kirsteen Kim explores the relationship between mission and evangelization from an ecumenical perspective. She begins by pointing to the success achieved in 1961 by the International Mission Council in the World Council of Churches

in overcoming the dichotomy of home and overseas mission. She then deals with the understanding that the Evangelical movement has of evangelization, which is reflected in the 2010 Cape Town Commitment. Moving on from there, she examines the concept of evangelization mapped out in the policy statement entitled *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, published in 2013 by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. Having looked into the development of the Catholic understanding of mission in the 20th and 21st centuries, she comes to the conclusion that evangelization and mission are synonymous in the discipleship of Jesus. “Mission as evangelization is both a witness, which makes known this person and event, and at the same time a continuation of the work of Christ in the same Holy Spirit.”

Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi focuses on the relationship between evangelization and education in Africa and makes it clear from the outset that “to educate is to evangelize or to evangelize is to educate.” Mvumbi delves into the Church Fathers’ understanding of education and – at one with Johannes Chrysostomos – points out that education in Africa could profit from their ideas since “they not only taught solid knowledge and right skills but also evangelized.” He warns of the risks of an educational concept that puts great emphasis, sometimes too much, on knowledge and skills. Instead, he advocates an approach inspired by the Church Fathers: “Education and evangelization should concomitantly take place in our universities.”

Roberto Tomichá Charupá examines the relationship between mission and evangelization from a Latin American vantage point. He surveys the understanding of evangelization set forth in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and draws attention to the views expressed in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* published 15 years later. With regard to the future viability of mission he cites Pope Francis and his call for a “Church that goes forth, a Church which should not exist only in sacristies but which ventures out into towns and into the diverse settings of the world.” Tomichá points to the “joy of the Gospel” as a criterion for evangelization and concludes by showing that no culture may be identified with the Gospel, but that interaction, listening and dialogue are needed for a plural Christianity, “which represents the diversity of peoples and traditions present in the world and whose own local churches develop their own theologies.”

The next chapter is headed “Impulses of Evangelization”. In his paper entitled “Charisms as signs and instruments of Evangelization” Klaus Vellguth introduces “Gemeinsam Kirche Sein” (“Being Church Together”), the pastoral letter issued recently by the German bishops. He notes that the letter takes the universal call to holiness as its starting point and emphasises that pastoral ministry guided by charisms is a key aspect of evangelization in Germany. A pastoral ministry of this kind is distinguished by a strong Christ-centredness as well as the realisation that all Christians are called to the priesthood of all believers by virtue of their baptism. This essential characteristic outweighs any other differences and implies that evangelization must go hand in glove with a participatory pastoral ministry, which in turn has consequences for the Church’s concept of leadership.

Mary John Mananzan then looks at the impulses of evangelization in the recent pontificate. She draws attention to the gestures, actions and symbols of Pope Francis and the new face they have helped to give to the concept of evangelization. She points out that evangelization must rise to social challenges in particular. “Evangelization today necessarily includes tackling the social issues that are causing great misery and suffering for peoples.”

Nathanaël Yaovi Soédé discusses the Church’s universal mandate to evangelise and Christianity in Africa. He looks, on the one hand, at the speech given by Pope Paul VI in Kampala in 1969 and, on the other, at the post-synodal exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*. Having analysed the two documents, Soédé establishes that Pope Paul VI spoke of an “African Christianity”, whereas John Paul II used the term “Church in Africa” in his post-synodal exhortation. This nuance expresses a difference in understanding between African local churches and the universal Church as reflected in the thinking of Paul VI and John Paul II. Soédé concludes by saying: “The relationship established by *Ecclesia in Africa* between the Church of Africa and the universal Church constitutes a regressive step as compared with the ecclesiological position espoused by Paul VI.” Soédé pleads for the promotion of an African Christianity that can participate in evangelization on the African continent and beyond.

This chapter closes with an article by Juan Richar Villacorta Guzmán, who points to the links between human experience, religious sciences and theology. In the context of a return to John the

Baptist he presents four key issues for evangelization: the presence to overcome facticism; the certainty of initiation into what is equal but different; the need to recognise the other; and learning to disappear. In conclusion, Guzmán concerns himself with love as the ultimate experience of faith, explores the tension between searching and owning, and draws attention to the necessary uncertainty in faith and the need for a Gospel.

In the following chapter the authors turn their attention to Christian witness in a multi-religious world. Klaus Krämer’s contribution on “The practice of mission in ecumenical responsibility” briefly outlines how the document “Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World” came about. He notes that the rooting of mission in Trinitarian theology, the designation of mission as a core characteristic of the Church, the reference to the exemplary nature of Jesus’s preaching and an emphasis on the dialogical character of mission constitute the document’s basic theological statements. But it also contains important principles for the conduct of Christian witness. These range from respect for the inviolable dignity of others and their personal freedom via people’s specific living conditions to the essential requirement of respect for other religions and cultures. In addition to the substantial statements made in the document the article draws attention to the fact that the ecumenical document “Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World” “formulates a basic standard for the practice of the Christian mission, which is accepted by the Christian churches to a hitherto unprecedented degree.”

Jacob Kavunkal makes a study of Christian witness in a multi-religious world from an Asian point of view. He begins by establishing that there is only one God, regardless of by whatever name that God is addressed, that God reaches to humans only through one mystery, which Christian tradition identifies as the Person of Jesus Christ. He pleads for recognition of the salvific role of non-Christian religions and for the proclamation of the Gospel in a spirit of harmony and complementarity. He talks of “a fresh approach with regard to other religions in our thinking, seeing, feeling, talking and living: a thinking that is formulated in the light of the bible, a feeling that participates in God’s feeling, seeing things from the contemporary perspectives and acting and living in collaboration with the followers of other religious traditions.”

Observing Christian testimony in a multi-religious world from an African vantage point, Pius Rutechura points out that love, respect, kindness and tolerance are “the foundational gist of Christian witness in a multi-religious world.” He calls for a culture of inviting and welcoming and underlines the importance of inculturation, which “would witness transformation of different levels of its life, laws, customs, moral values and its worldwide view in the light of the gospel message.” With regard to inter-religious dialogue, which is at the heart of Christian testimony in a multi-religious world, he demands “courage and skills of strengthening our own identity and faith while seeking to deepen knowledge and understanding of different religions.” Priority must always be given here to solidarity in action.

In his article on “The need to heed reality” Norbert Strotmann analyses the demographic development of Catholicism as well as of Christianity and looks at the extent to which the Pentecostal churches can provide adequate answers to the questions posed by the modern world. In his view, the Pentecostal form of Christianity does not provide satisfactory answers for people living in advanced social systems. Nonetheless, he is in favour of learning from the Pentecostal movements. This recommendation is directed, in particular, at the Catholic Church which is often out of touch with the fundamental questions and problems raised by life in society. Strotmann advocates new forms of evangelization which have an ecological dimension, a Christological / personal dimension, a pneumatological / universal community dimension, and a preferential dimension.

The contributions in the final chapter are devoted to the manner of Christian evangelization. Mariano Delgado shows that mystagogical evangelization can draw on the theology of Karl Rahner as well as on the mysticism of Saint John of the Cross. He points to the importance of an inner link with Jesus in present-day society with its emphasis on pluralism and religious freedom: “Mystagogical evangelization’ in the spirit of mysticism attempts to put forward both rational and emotional arguments to motivate people to accept Jesus’ invitation.”

Peter C. Phan discusses the goal of Christian mission in Asia and shows that, right up to the recent past, conversion and baptism were the objective of the *missio ad gentes*. In view of his experience in Asia he calls for a *missio inter gentes* as a process of mutual evangelization: “The ‘evangelizers’ become ‘evangelized’ and the ‘evan-

gelized’ become ‘evangelizers,’ in mutual respect and appreciation, in open honesty and genuine friendship, correcting one another when necessary, and always reaching out to greater truth and goodness.” In addition, Phan highlights the significance of a *missio cum gentibus*, which is of particular significance for Christianity in the position of a radical minority. To pave the way for the Kingdom of God in Asia Christians need to work closely together with representatives of other religions to ensure an effective contribution to justice, peace and reconciliation.

In “Entering and going forth” Anne Béatrice Faye starts by examining the transmission of the faith in the context of the Church in Africa. She then goes on to look at the rhythm of change and the witness required of all Christians. From there she turns to the saving power of the poor and, in conclusion, outlines some helpful attitudes of the Church and Christians, which match the missionary momentum of entering and going forth.

Finally, Thomas Fornet-Ponse deals with the relationship between evangelization and fundamental theology. He concerns himself with the “inside” and the “outside” of the Church after the Second Vatican Council and explains that the “outside”, seen in systemic terms, is on a par with the “inside”. He draws attention to the fact that, while fundamental theology and evangelization cannot be equated or reduced to one another, they are nevertheless inseparable because they are so closely connected: “Evangelization can be understood as practical fundamental theology: although fundamental theology as an academic discipline needs to meet scholarly standards, such as rationality and a coherent and plausible line of argument, it has an important point in common as its object of enquiry – the Christian hope which eludes any purely academic approach and therefore needs to be supplemented by the testimony of faith, bearing witness to one’s experience of this hope.”

As in the previous volumes of the *One World Theology* series the articles in all five chapters of this edition come from African, Asian, Latin American and European theologians. The outcome is an array of different views which do not necessarily concur and, as such, reflect the fascination that emanates from the universal Church. The different articles in this volume illustrate the vibrant dialogue going on within the universal Church. For this we owe a debt of gratitude to the

authors but also to many others who have contributed to the success of this exchange. Our thanks go to Michael Meyer and Dr. Marco Moerschbacher as well as to Christine Baur, Martina Flachskampf, and Andrea Biermanns for the careful preparation of the manuscripts and their attentive proofreading.

Klaus Krämer

Klaus Vellguth

Epochs of Evangelization

Epochs of Evangelization.

A short look at a long history

Michael Sievernich

Christianity was able to become a world religion because the Gospel was universally addressed to all peoples and cultures and could therefore transcend all boundaries of the kind normally drawn by geography, language, race, culture and social stratification. The road to the universal Church began back in biblical times, since – with the translation of the Gospel into the tongues and cultures of the world – it had witnesses at “the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This propagation of the Christian faith by example and the word has lasted over two millennia and continues in the present, nowadays in the processes of inculturation and interculturality, in which Christianity deals with cultures and religions on a global scale, thus permitting us to speak of a globalisation of the Gospel.

The modes of evangelization, as the mission of the Church is called today, underwent many changes of method in the course of their long history.¹ But from the very beginning two basic methods became firmly established and had a lasting effect. On the one hand, there arose what might be called a meticulous, capillary dissemination of the faith by personal example. It was spread by word of mouth among families and relatives, in neighbourhoods and among friends, through associations and mobile trades, among men and women, young and old, rich and poor, scholars and the pious. This gave rise to connections, networks, groups and communities in the ancient cities and vast expanses of what was then the Roman Empire.

On the other hand, professional missionaries set out to spread the word and preach their faith. They addressed god-fearing sym-

¹ For an overview cf. Sievernich, Michael, *Die christliche Mission: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Darmstadt 2009; Mulders, Alphons, *Missionsgeschichte: Die Ausbreitung des katholischen Glaubens*, Regensburg 1960.

pathisers, adherents of contemporary mystery cults, worshippers of state-supported gods and inhabitants of multi-faith cities. This was the method practised by Paul, who set off after his conversion and, taking advantage of the good land and sea routes of the Empire, travelled from town to town setting up little communities wherever he went. Among them were Philippi and Ephesus, Corinth, Thessaloniki and Rome, to which he wrote letters that testify to his proselytising work.

Both methods, the capillary and the professional, were successful and still are to this day, albeit under different circumstances. Bearing witness by example, spreading the word, forming small communities, organising joint services and charitable assistance for one another and for others in need, providing mutual assistance in the face of persecution – all these are typical activities in which the shared faith is still present and exercises an attraction. Just as the city gained special significance as a living space for the early Christians,² the urban space is of crucial importance nowadays as the urbanisation of the world proceeds apace.

The two-thousand-year spread of Christianity to all corners of the earth has been described in various ways. In biblical times people spoke of evangelization or the proclamation of the Gospel. Later on, other terms were added such as sermon to the peoples, conversion of the unbelievers, apostolate or founding of a church. But in the Early Modern period, in a borrowing from Jesuit usage, the term “mission” gained acceptance and is still in use today, even by other confessions. However, in the decolonisation period of the mid-20th century the term “mission” became discredited. While it has now regained its respectability, it still evokes criticism and so the preferred form today is “evangelization”.

Although this key concept has biblical roots, above all in Lucan (Acts 5:42) and Pauline theology (1 Corinthians 1:17), in the Catholic world it was only through the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965) that the term “evangelization” (*evangelizatio*) came back into use and has since had a broad public career. Thus the *Ad Gentes* decree on missionary activity found that the Church, in view of its Trinitarian

² On the urban space as origin cf. Ebner, Martin, *Die Stadt als Lebensraum der ersten Christen: Das Urchristentum in seiner Umwelt*, Göttingen 2012.

mission, “is missionary by her very nature”³ and that the “work of evangelization” (*opus evangelizationis*) is a “basic duty of the People of God”.⁴ Other Council documents also make frequent mention of evangelization and evangelising (*evangelizare*), which means the “announcing of Christ by a living testimony as well as by the spoken word.”⁵ Thus evangelization requires linguistic, existential and cultural translations of the message, which for their part are able to enrich the forms of expression of the faith. This breakthrough by the Council led to a worldwide reception of the evangelization concept, beginning with Pope Paul VI’s Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), continuing with the documents of the Latin American continental synods in Puebla (1979) and Aparecida (2007) and leading on to Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013).

Times and settings of Evangelization

The abstract view of the mission’s methods and terminology says nothing about the epochs and settings in which these developments took place. The periodisation we use in Europe distinguishes between Classical Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Modern Age. The dividing line between Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages is associated with such events as the *Völkerwanderung* (migration of Germanic and other peoples in Europe during the later Roman Empire and the early Middle Ages), the fall of the (Western) Roman Empire and the baptism of the Merovingian King Clovis (499). The transition from the late Middle Ages to the Modern Age is put at around 1500, a time which saw the invention of printing with movable type (Gutenberg), the Western voyages of discovery (Columbus, 1492) and their Eastern equivalents (Vasco da Gama, 1498), the emergence of humanism in Europe and church reform. All epochs with a light and a dark side are of great importance for the history of evangelization.

However, if we try to match the epochs to the Christian denominations, misinterpretations are inevitable. An example of this is to be found in the well-known work of the South African theologian, David Bosch (1929-1992), who assigns the mission paradigm of the Eastern Rite to Greek antiquity, the mission paradigm of the Catholic Church

³ AG 2.

⁴ AG 35.

⁵ LG 35.

to the Middle Ages, and that of the Protestant Reformation to the Modern Age. This denominationalist view insinuates a kind of evolutionary interpretation and suppresses the fact that the mission of the Catholic Church characterised all epochs, especially the Early Modern period, when the focus was on America and Asia.⁶

A chronological view of the great epochs of evangelization begins with Late Antiquity. This is the period in which, in the reign of Augustus Caesar (Octavian), Jesus of Nazareth was born in Palestine, preached the message of the Kingdom of God, was crucified and, having risen from the dead, gave his apostles and disciples the mission of continuing to preach his message. In the periodisation of the missionary epochs we distinguish the propagation of the faith (1) in Late Antiquity, (2) in the Middle Ages in Europe and Asia, (3) in the Early Modern age in America and Asia, (4) in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century dominant in Africa, and (5) in the most recent period from decolonisation and the Second Vatican Council to present-day globalisation. The epochs of evangelization should not, however, be regarded in isolation, but in the broader history of Christianity, so that the cross references become clear and errors of judgment of the kind mentioned above are avoided.⁷

In the period of Late Antiquity

Round about 180 A.D. Christians were still a small and often persecuted minority in the Roman Empire. The tolerant religious policy of the Roman emperors Constantine (313) and Theodosius I lay far in the future (380). Christianity gained ground steadily through the efforts of itinerant missionaries, but even more so in a capillary manner by means of Christian merchants, officials, soldiers or serfs and small communities. At this time Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons, a native of Asia Minor, wrote of the proliferation on the three continents known at the time: "The churches in Germania believe and pass on their wisdom no differently, neither do those in Iberia [Spain] nor do those among the Celts [Gaul], nor do those in the Orient or those in Egypt, Libya or in the centre of the world [Jerusalem]. Like the sun,

⁶ Bosch, David J., *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission*, Maryknoll NY 1991.

⁷ Cf. Xaver Bischof, Franz et al., *Einführung in die Geschichte des Christentums*, Freiburg im Breisgau/Darmstadt 2012.

God's creation is one and the same throughout the world; the light with its message of truth shines everywhere, especially on all those who seek the truth.⁸

Here the bishop describes the core of a development that in Late Antiquity was to lead to the Christianisation of the Roman Empire and of the successor German kingdoms. The original centres of Christianity lay in Jerusalem, the site of the early Christian community, and in Antioch, Syria, the point of departure for Paul's missionary expeditions.

The missionary activity of Paul and his followers gave rise to Christian communities, first in Asia Minor, then in Greece and Italy. The attractiveness of the new religion lay in its hope-based faith and its moral seriousness, its charitable activities and its mysteries (services). External factors, such as the infrastructure of the Roman Empire and the mobility of many professions, also facilitated the spread of the "Good News" (Gospel) of Jesus Christ.

The decisive factor for its proliferation in the then known world was the decision of the Council of Apostles to recognize heathens as addressees of the Gospel (cf. Acts 15:1-35). A propitious factor was the choice of widespread colloquial Greek (Koiné) for the translation of the New Testament, the Old Testament already being available in Greek translation (the Septuagint). The new version in a later Latin translation (Vulgata) soon found its way into all the provinces of the Empire and even reached Arabia and Ethiopia, Persia and the Caucasian nations of Armenia and Georgia, which had already adopted Christianity in the fourth century. According to recent calculations, about half of the at least 50 million inhabitants of the Empire were Christians by the middle of the following century. While the Emperor shifted the political centre to Constantinople (now Istanbul), Rome increasingly came to be the religious centre of Peter's successors. In order to clarify doctrine and resolve disputes, ecumenical councils were held, such as those of Nicaea (325) and Chalcedon (451), at which Christological and pastoral questions were decided and the creed formulated. This first epoch of evangelization saw the appearance of the great works of the Greek and Latin Church Fathers,

⁸ Von Lyon, Irenäus, *Adversus haereses/Gegen die Häresien* I, 10, 2, translated and with an introduction by Brox, Norbert, Freiburg 1993, 201.

who pursued their theological reflections on the Christ event on a very high literary level.

Among them were Doctors of the Church (Eastern rite) such as Basilus, Gregory of Nazianzus and Johannes Chrysostomus, and Latin Doctors of the Church such as Augustine, Ambrosius, Hieronymus and Pope Gregory the Great. In spatial terms this epoch – with the above-mentioned exceptions – mainly coincided with the geographical dimensions of the Roman Empire, which at that time stretched from the Iberian Peninsula to the Euphrates and from the English and Germanic limes to North Africa.⁹

Christianisation in Europe and Asia

The Christianisation of all Europe, the second epoch of evangelization, covered the entire Middle Ages, i.e. a period of about 1,000 years.¹⁰ It built on the Christian beginnings in the Graeco-Roman culture and continued with the *Völkerwanderung*, as the Germanic peoples moved westward from the north and east, creating new kingdoms on the way, like the Ostrogoths in Italy and the Visigoths in Spain. The Goths were the first to adopt the religion of their Christian captives, producing the first translation of the Bible into Gothic (Wulfila, died 383). The Germanic peoples adopted Christianity in its Arian form, though they later converted to Catholicism. In a process lasting almost a thousand years all European peoples came to accept Christianity and found their way – despite all the ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences – via their common faith to a new, Christian-inspired unity, which was also known as “Christendom” (*Christianitas*). This new unity combined Christian tradition with the Jewish legacy and the scientific and artistic legacy of classical antiquity as well as with the legal institutions and administrative skills of Rome, the dynamism of the young Germanic peoples and with Jewish and Muslim elements on the Iberian Peninsula.

The conversion of the Merovingian Clovis in Rheims (499) ushered in a dynamic process of evangelization. Pope Gregory dispatched missionaries to the British Isles, while Ireland and England

⁹ Marksches, Christoph, *Das antike Christentum: Frömmigkeit – Lebensformen – Institutionen*, Munich 2006.

¹⁰ Cf. Brown, Peter, *Die Entstehung des christlichen Europa*, Munich 1996; Von Padberg, Lutz E., *Die Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter*, Stuttgart 1998.

sent their monks to the continent from Europe’s Western periphery. Their missionary pilgrimages (*peregrinatio*) left their mark on France. Among their number were Anglo-Saxon missionaries, such as Germany’s apostle Winfried Bonifatius (died 754) and the scholar Alcuin (died 804), who advised Charlemagne not to proceed against the Saxons with fire and sword. Typical of this period of the Gentile religion was conversion from above, in which vassalage played a decisive role. Expansion and mission often went hand in hand. The work of linguistic and cultural translation was carried out by poets such as Otfried von Weissenburg, who rendered the Biblical gospels into an Old High German “Gospel Book”. The spread of the faith to Scandinavia was not only the work of merchants and mendicant orders, but also of monarchs changing their faith, to which Danish rune stones and Norwegian stave churches still attest. Iceland chose the parliamentary route to Christianity by a resolution of the Althing in the year 1000, although the traditional religion was also tolerated.

The Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe mainly came into contact with Christianity through Bavarian monks and missionaries from Byzantium, as represented by Cyril and Methodius, who devised an alphabet (Glagolitic) for the Slav languages. Grand Duke Vladimir had himself baptized in Kiev in 988, a change of religion that brought the huge territories of Kievan Rus into the Christian fold. The period of the Ottonian emperors witnessed the Christianization of Poland and Hungary. The turbulent Christianisation of Europe drew to a close in the late Middle Ages with the change of religion of the Baltic peoples, which was by no means always non-violent, and the re-Christianization of the Iberian Peninsula after over 700 years of Islamic rule.

Mediaeval mission in Asia

As the Christianisation of Europe proceeded into its second epoch there were also missionary forays into an Asia that was largely unknown.¹¹ Individual Western travellers – mendicant friars, Franciscans and Dominicans, set out along the Silk Road to Asia to explore the diplomatic and missionary prospects on behalf of

¹¹ Cf. Gillman, Ian/Klimkeit, Hans-Joachim, *Christians in Asia before 1500*, Abingdon/New York 1999.

the popes and European rulers. A certain fame was acquired by two Franciscans: one was Wilhelm von Rubruk of Flanders, who in the mid-13th century travelled to the Mongolian royal capital of Karakorum, where he conducted inter-religious dialogues before the Great Khan; the other was the Italian Giovanni da Montecorvino who in 1307, during Mongol rule in China (Yuan dynasty), was appointed the first Archbishop of Khanbaliq (now Beijing).

Of the Near Eastern churches mention must be made of the Apostolic Church of the East with its headquarters in Baghdad, as this mission church brought Christianity, now a strong movement, all the way to Central Asia and China, where it founded numerous dioceses, communities and monasteries. The presence of the East Syrian Christians in the Middle Kingdom can still be seen today from the inscription on a stele, which was put up in 781 under the tolerant Tang dynasty in the capital Sian-fu (now Xi'an) and harmoniously combines lotus blossoms and a cross. The Christian expansion died out in the face of growing political oppression by the Chinese Ming dynasty and Mongol rule.¹²

Thus the Middle Ages witnessed two large parallel missionary movements, each of which lasted about a millennium: one in Europe conducted by the Western Church based in Rome, the other in Asia headed by the Assyrian Church of the East in Baghdad. Christianity was to put down permanent roots among the peoples of Europe, whereas in Asia it would be only sporadically present.

Evangelization in the Early Modern period

The extended period of the Middle Ages ended with the whole of Europe accepting the Christian faith. At the beginning of the Modern Age it, therefore, assumed missionary responsibility for the other peoples of the world in east and west. This made the Early Modern period (16th to 18th centuries) the third epoch of evangelization, which originated in Europe, especially in the Iberian Peninsula, whose kings retained their patronage over the Church and hence over the mission as Christianity expanded towards America and Asia. This ambivalent relationship between State and Church may have promoted the

¹² Cf. Lange, Christian/Pinggéra, Karl (eds.), *Die altorientalischen Kirchen: Glaube und Geschichte*, Darmstadt 2010, 21–40.

building of local churches overseas, but it also limited the Church's freedom of action.¹³

The mission in America began with the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus, whom the Catholic monarchs – Ferdinand and Isabella of Aragón and Castile – had sent to India by the Western route in 1492. The purpose of the voyage was not only to gain political and economic advantages, but also to propagate the faith. The goals of conquering and converting the New World became intertwined. Yet despite this ambivalent combination of sword and cross, many missionaries fought for the recognition of the native peoples and cultures as well as for their rights.

When the Europeans set foot in what for them was a New World, they discovered strange Indian cultures, ranging from the nomadic hunter and gatherer societies to the two ancient American cultures: the Empire of the Aztecs in Mexico under King Montezuma, and the civilization of the Incas in the South American Andes under the Inca Atahualpa. There the Spaniards set up political structures (vice-royalties and dioceses). These were subject to the royal patronage (*patronato*), which also coordinated and financed the work of the missions, which was performed by the orders, especially the Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians and Jesuits.¹⁴

For the Church's moral position on the *Conquista* and the *encomienda* (system of exacting labour and tribute from the Indians) we have mainly two Dominicans to thank: one was Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas (died 1566), who fought for the rights of the Indians and was probably the first man to explicitly (1552) use the term "human rights" (*derechos humanos*), more than 200 years before the Declaration of the Rights of Man in the USA (1776) and in France (1789). In his papal bull *Sublimis Deus* (1537), Pope Paul III confirmed a Magna Carta of dignity and freedom, to the effect that the Indians and all other peoples should not be robbed either of their freedom or of their possessions and that they should not be enslaved but enjoy all these rights.¹⁵ A no less important role was played by the theologian Francisco de

¹³ Cf. Gründer, Horst, *Welteroberung und Christentum*, Gütersloh 1992.

¹⁴ Cf. Sievernich, Michael et al. (eds.), *Conquista und Evangelization: 500 Jahre Orden in Lateinamerika*, Mainz 1992.

¹⁵ De las Casas, Bartolomé, *Missionstheologische Schriften* (Werkauswahl No. 1), ed. by Delgado, Mariano, Paderborn 1994, 246f.

Vitoria (died 1546), who argued lucidly against the discrimination of the Indians and stressed their rights to freedom and property, for a man should always be a man to another man (*homo homini homo*). He pleaded for symmetrical relations between peoples through communication, freedom of movement and trade, and even for missionary activity, thus laying the foundations for a universal system of international law.

South America's most famous mission project were the 'reductions' among the Guaraní in the up-river area of Paraná and Uruguay. In this area the Jesuits made an attempt to protect the semi-nomadic indigenous populations in an anticolonial Utopia designed to oppose enslavement and colonial exploitation as well as to encourage a sedentary existence in their own settlements (reductions). The basic idea was the unity of evangelization and integrated human development that would also incorporate indigenous culture, language, art and the economic system. The reduction settlements, whose ruins now have World Heritage status, were laid out on a grid-iron pattern. The reductions facilitated a "symphonic" meeting of cultures and formed a joint Indian-Christian community, which unfortunately ended with the political expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767).¹⁶ In the northern part of the American continent, which in the 17th century was a French colony but is now Canada, the Jesuits organised mission projects among the local Indians (Hurons), while further south on the East coast Protestant projects were instigated by the Puritans in Massachusetts and the Quakers in Pennsylvania.

While the Christianisation of America proceeded apace, the Portuguese Patronate (*Padroado*) was also engaged in numerous mission ventures in Asia. As the Portuguese only maintained trading posts and had no great territorial ambitions, the work of evangelization was freer and more independent, but it also involved greater engagement with the advanced civilisations.

The first great missionary of the Early Modern period in Asia was the co-founder of the Society of Jesus, Francis Xavier (died 1552),¹⁷ whom Ignatius Loyola sent to India in 1540 with a papal and

¹⁶ Cf. Caraman, Philip, *Ein verlorenes Paradies: Der Jesuitenstaat in Paraguay*, Munich 1979; Hartmann, Peter Claus, *Der Jesuitenstaat in Südamerika*, Weissenhorn 1994.

¹⁷ Xaver, Franz, *Briefe und Dokumente 1535–1552*, ed. by Sievernich, Michael, Regensburg 2006.

royal commission containing the word "mission", which was to set a considerable precedent. Xavier was faced with a steep learning curve in the intercultural and interreligious fields: in Indian culture he encountered Hinduism; on the Moluccas he discovered Southeast Asian Islam; and in Japanese culture, for which he had a high regard, he found varieties of Buddhism, with whose representatives he held discussions. Before he could continue his missionary activity in China – which he saw as the most important country in Asia – he died on an island off the Chinese coast. He was buried in the Indian state and former Portuguese colony of Goa, where he is still the centre of a multi-religious cult.

What Xavier had not lived to see was granted in full measure to the Jesuit missionaries who followed him. In 1583, after making a study of the language, Italian missionaries managed to penetrate the xenophobic Middle Kingdom. One of them was Matteo Ricci (died 1610), who appeared in the silken robe of a Confucian scholar, began by discussing the intellectual world and was accommodating in his mission. This involved adhering to such things as the Chinese language, customs and culture. For communication at the personal level he relied on friendship and at the material level on the sciences (mathematics, astronomy, cartography). Ricci's famous work, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (Tianzhu shiyi), written in Chinese with the help of his friends, offered a Christian philosophy in Chinese garb. He adapted his map of the world to the Chinese projection of the "Middle Kingdom" by placing America on the right-hand side of the map.¹⁸

Ricci was followed by numerous European missionaries to China, such as Adam Schall von Bell of Cologne and Ferdinand Verbiest from Flanders, whose imperially endowed grave steles in Beijing are today part of the cultural heritage. The European Christians could not have worked so successfully if Chinese scholars and friends such as Xu Guangqi (1633) had not prepared the way and lent their support. In any case the project fell through following the "rites dispute" of 1704, when Rome forbade the worship of ancestors as a religious rite, whereas the missionaries had allowed it as a civil rite.

¹⁸ Brockey, Liam Matthew, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China (1579–1724)*, Cambridge/London 2007.

Christianity also came to other countries of Asia. It was particularly successful in the Philippines in the 16th century, as it was in Korea at the end of the 18th century. There the Christian faith came as a kind of self-evangelization, i.e. at the initiative of Korean scholars who had come in contact with the Christian doctrine in China and were now practising it in their own country. An important caesura in the early modern history of the mission was the founding of a Roman congregation for the propagation of the faith (1622), which wanted to withdraw the mission from the patronage of the state and make it more subordinate to the Church. Over and above this aim the Congregation issued *De Propaganda fide*, an important instruction for the missionaries in Asia (1659), which stressed inculturation as against Europeanism.¹⁹ After the Second Vatican Council it was renamed the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

Africa's response to Christianity

The fourth epoch of evangelization coincides time-wise with activities in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. European colonialist and imperialist developments resulted in a geographical reorganisation of the mission in numerous countries of Asia and in denominational Christianisation on the archipelagos of Oceania (Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia), in which, on the Catholic side, the missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word featured prominently. Above all, however, this epoch was marked by the evangelization of Sub-Saharan Africa. It is true that in Late Antiquity there was a flourishing Christianity in North Africa, as there was in Nubia on the lower Nile, but the churches there were unable to withstand the Islamic onslaught. The Ethiopian Church, on the other hand, has survived to this day. In Black Africa, Portuguese influence led to the Christianisation of the Kingdom of Congo in the 16th century and the appointment of the first black bishop. But systematic Christianisation of the Dark Continent did not begin until the 19th century, albeit under colonial auspices and with competition between denominations.²⁰

¹⁹ Cf. Koschorke, Klaus/Ludwig, Frieder/Delgado, Mariano (eds.), *Außereuropäische Christentumsgeschichte (Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika 1450–1990)*, Neukirchen 2006, 28f.

²⁰ Baur, John, *Christus kommt nach Afrika: 2000 Jahre Christentum auf dem Schwarzen Kontinent*, Freiburg 2006; Sundkler, Bengt et al., *A History of the Church in Africa*, Cambridge 2000.

In the colonially dominated 19th century the European colonial powers, above all the French and the British, divided Africa almost entirely amongst themselves, regulating these matters at the Berlin Congo Conference in 1884/85.²¹ But even before the colonial claims arose numerous missionary initiatives had been taken. The sponsors on the Catholic side were, on the one hand, classical missionary orders like the Jesuits (SJ) and, on the other, new communities such as the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), the Pallottines (SAC), the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), the Congregation of the Holy Ghost (CSSp), the White Fathers and other international missionary societies, to which Rome assigned mission territories; thus the German Pallottines got Cameroon and the French White Fathers the largely Muslim Sudan. They were joined by over 300 women's congregations, as a result of which the mission finally acquired a female face. Today's African mission is no longer financed by princes, but largely by lay people working through mission associations in the home countries, such as the Kindheit-Jesu-Verein and the Xaverius-Verein in Aachen and the König-Ludwig-Missionsverein in Munich, which gave birth to today's pontifical mission society "missio".

At the same time numerous Protestant mission societies became active with the aim of spreading Christianity overseas, especially in Africa and Asia. The Basel and Berlin missionary societies are examples from the German-speaking countries. At any event the mission ventures, whether Catholic or Protestant, did not proceed harmoniously or in an ecumenical spirit but led to competition and feuds, so that the credibility of the proclaimed message was undermined. To this must be added the complicating factor of Africa's Christianisation coinciding with the colonialism of the competing European powers, which only ended with the long process of decolonisation in the mid-20th century. The fact that Africa, despite these difficult circumstances, still opened up to the Christian faith, accepted it and gave it an African face, is not least a sign of the quality of a holistic mission concept that combined preaching with the promotion of schooling, opportunities for learning manual trades, health services, and charitable services.

²¹ Cf. Reinhard, Wolfgang, *Kleine Geschichte des Kolonialismus*, Stuttgart 1996.

Today Africa's Catholicism shows an enormous growth, while Europe's is shrinking alarmingly. Christianity in Africa is a dynamic force. Christians make up around 45 percent of Africa's total population of around 800 million. Behind the peaceful façade, however, Christians face persecution in numerous countries, especially in Africa's Sahel region, where Christianity and Islam confront each other and, as in Nigeria, for example, Islamist terror groups ply their bloodthirsty trade.²²

The fifth epoch: Globalisation and Evangelization

The decisive step to this epoch of evangelization was taken in the mid-20th century, when decolonisation began and every colonially compromised mission came to an end. On the other hand, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was held, ushering in a new concept of mission. In the document *Dignitatis Humanae* the Council bindingly formulated the principle of religious freedom. Another document – *Nostra Aetate* – clarified relations with the non-Christian religions. A new Pastoral Constitution – *Gaudium et Spes* – explained the role of the Church in the world of today, while the decree *Ad Gentes* on the missionary activity of the Church was the first time that a World Council decided on the renewed task of evangelization in a universal Church that regards itself as part of a single humanity.²³

The Christian faith is now spread all over the world. At the beginning of the 21st century there are two billion Christians, which makes Christianity the world's largest religious community, accounting for roughly a third of the world's population. Nevertheless, it has split over the years into various denominations, above all Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants. To these must be added free churches and other flourishing groups, such as Pentecostals and Evangelicals, who feel the wind in their sails. The Catholic universal Church alone comprises about 1.2 billion members and is present in all the world's regions and cultures.²⁴ However, a closer look at these figures reveals

²² Breuer, Rita, *Im Namen Allahs? Christenverfolgung im Islam*, Freiburg 2015.

²³ On the individual documents cf. Wenzel, Knut, *Kleine Geschichte des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, Freiburg im Breisgau 2005.

²⁴ On the quantitative dynamic cf. Froehle, Bryan T./Gautier, Mary L., *Global Catholicism: Portrait of the World Church*, New York 2003; on the substantive change cf. Linden, Ian, *Global Catholicism: Diversity and Change since Vatican II*, London 2009.

major differences. The American continent is home to almost half of all Catholics (50 percent), while at least a quarter lives in Europe (26 percent), the remaining quarter being divided between Africa (13 percent) and Asia (12 percent). The momentum differs greatly, however, since in Europe the Catholic Church, not least because of demographic trends, has entered a quantitative decline, while the most populous continents, Asia and Africa, are experiencing dynamic growth.

The religious landscape has changed a great deal since the Council, globalisation having played its part as an intensifier of space and time. The perception of religion has also changed considerably. The secularisation model which prevailed for so long, according to which religion as a pre-modern phenomenon would disappear with increasing modernisation, is no longer tenable. On the contrary, the role of religion is making itself increasingly felt, often – alas – in the form of violence, as in the case of Islamism. Following “derailing secularisation”, there is now talk of a post-secular society “which is bracing itself for the continued existence of religious communities in an increasingly more secularised environment.”²⁵ Moreover, the perception of Christianity is spreading beyond Europe and North America to the cultures of other continents, which in turn respond in a religious way. Europe as a missionary one-way street has long been succeeded by mutual movements of evangelization, which are sharing out the spiritual treasures among themselves on a new basis, thus contributing to the transformation.

Meanwhile, there has been a shift in the balance of power in the Church to the southern hemisphere, the consequences of which are not yet foreseeable. There is no dispute, however, about the principle of an ever more closely interwoven inter-culturality and an ever more intensive inter-religious dialogue. For, as Pope Francis says: “All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet.”²⁶ A globalisation of Christianity will present

²⁵ Habermas, Jürgen, *Glauben und Wissen: Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels*, Frankfurt 2001, 12.

²⁶ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* on the proclamation of

evangelization with new challenges that will certainly include serving the causes of human freedom and the truth of God.²⁷ This cannot be done on an authoritarian basis, but only in the form of a dialogue. As Hans Joas so aptly puts it: “The globalisation of Christianity and increased, migration-fed religious diversity in Europe will enhance the significance of inter-religious dialogue and of cooperation between the Christian Church and non-Christian religious communities. The discussions between believers and unbelievers on the basis of their traditional religious constellations will also have to be conducted in a new way as well.”²⁸

Regardless of whether we talk in biblical terms of preaching or apostolate, in more theological terms of mission or evangelization, or in more technical terms of accommodation or inculturation, we are concerned with one and the same thing and have been down the ages: that the Church was sent by Christ “to reveal and to communicate the love of God to all men and nations”; only in this way can the Church be the “universal sacrament of salvation”, as is stated in the Council’s decree *Ad Gentes* on the mission activity of the Church (nos. 10 and 1).

Revisiting Evangelization Work in Colonial Philippines

The Ambivalence of Missionary Methods

Daniel Franklin E. Pilario

The Philippines is said to have lived “300 years in a Catholic convent and 50 years in Hollywood.”²⁹ The description refers to the two longest colonial rules in the Islands – first under the Spaniards (1521-1898) and second under the Americans (1898-1946). “*El servicio de ambas Majestades*” (the service of both Majesties) – a phrase present in many official documents – explains the relationship between Church and politics during the Spanish colonial regime in the Philippines. The great Filipino Jesuit historian, Horacio de la Costa, writes:

This is what claimed the entire allegiance of Spanish subjects everywhere, from the highest to the lowest, from Manila to Madrid: in the temporal order, the majesty of the King, and in the spiritual order, the majesty of God. The Church was primarily concerned, of course, with the service of God, the State with the service of the King; but it would be a great mistake to imagine this meant a division of labor or of powers. In the constitution of Spain and the Spanish empire each served both Majesties, God and King, Church and State might be distinct, but they were not divided. They were integral parts of one massive structure, which might be viewed either as a civilizing Church or a missionary State.³⁰

The evangelization project made possible by the *Patronato Real* was both missionary and civilizing. The friar’s task was both evangelical and political. At once, he was the empire’s civil servant

the Gospel in today’s world, No. 14, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (14.03.2016).

²⁷ Allen Völkern sein Heil: Die Mission der Weltkirche (Die deutschen Bischöfe 76), Bonn 2004, 37–53.

²⁸ Joas, Hans, *Glaube als Option: Zukunftsmöglichkeiten des Christentums*, Freiburg im Breisgau 2012, 199f.

²⁹ Karnow, Stanley, *In our Image: America’s Empire in the Philippines*, New York 1989, 9.

³⁰ De la Costa, Horacio, *Readings in Philippine History*, Makati 1992, 58.

and God's missionary. But even at the demise of this religio-political structure in the post-Hispanic era, the same discourse can be found. The American colonization program in the Philippines was both God's business and good business. President William McKinley tried to impress on a group of American Methodist pastors how his decision to annex the Philippines was an inspiration of God's spirit.³¹ This collusion of spiritual and imperial powers in these two colonial epochs in the Philippines has had crucial consequences to the Church's task of evangelization.

This article will only deal with the first – the missionary project under the Spanish regime. It attempts to examine and evaluate the methods of evangelization by the Spanish missionaries. First, I will contextualize the colonial evangelization efforts through a specific politico-ecclesiastical arrangement called the *Patronato Real*. Second, I will elaborate on some methods of spreading the Gospel employed by early Spanish missionaries. Finally, I will try to assess these methods based on their complicity with socio-political and economic powers of their times. Against ecclesiastical historians who easily glorify the Spanish missionary efforts, on the one hand, and the “anti-friar” literature that demonizes them, on the other, this article argues that the Spanish evangelization process was at best ambivalent. It eschews neither an easy veneration nor a generalized condemnation of these missionary efforts. Each event or practice needs to be considered through a critical reading of existing historical sources vis-à-vis other socio-political factors. This essay realizes that understanding a historical event or assessing a historical project requires not only a comprehension of the conscious intentions of human agents vis-à-vis other social forces but also of its reception by others and its unintended consequences.

The *Patronato Real* and the Spanish Missions

³¹ “And one night late it came to me this way – I don't know how but it came: (1) that we could not give them back to Spain – that would be cowardly and dishonourable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France or Germany – our commercial rivals in the Orient – that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves – they were unfit for self-government, and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could for them, as our fellowmen and for whom Christ also died.” *Ibid.*, 219.

The work of evangelization in the Philippines during the Spanish regime can be understood within the framework of Church-State relations called the *Patronato Real de las Indias* – “a series of agreements entered into by the Holy See and the Spanish monarchy... [later] developed by Spanish jurists and theologians into a body of law and of standard practices and procedures which remained in force until the dissolution of the Spanish empire in the late XVIII and XIX centuries.”³² In brief, Spain would promote, maintain and defend the Catholic religion in all its colonies (that is, to support the whole work of evangelization) in exchange for being recognized by the Holy See as the “patron” of the Church of the Indies (that is, to possess “just title to the colonies it had conquered”). This entitled the monarchy to certain rights in ecclesiastical administration. Some of these privileges were the following: (1) the right to assign religious congregation the territories for them to evangelize; (2) the privilege to approve missionaries to be sent or be retained in the colonies; (3) the right to nominate bishops with the understanding that these nominations were *pro forma* which the Holy See should automatically accept; (4) the right to approve the parish priests appointed to parishes by their local bishops; (5) the right to censor communication between the Holy See and the Church in the Indies; communications were to be coursed through the King's Council to the Indies which had the power “to allow or not to allow such communications to be forwarded to those to whom they were addressed”; (6) the right to assign civil functions to parish priests, that is, compiling a tribute list, supervising elections or public works and others.³³

This arrangement consequently generated tension between the bishops/priests and the agents of the monarchy in the colony. One such area of tension was on ecclesiastical appointments made by bishops which governors-general would claim power to approve or revoke. For example, the governor Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera (1634-1639) demanded that Fray Hernando Guerrero, the Archbishop of Manila, submit to this policy. When the latter refused, Corcuera ordered that Guerrero be arrested. The soldiers came to implement the order but the Archbishop prevented them to touch him by holding

³² For this, we follow De la Costa, Horacio, “Church and State under the Patronato Real”, in: *idem*, *Selected Studies in Philippine Colonial History*, comp and ed. Paterno, Roberto, Quezon City 2002, 50–65.

³³ *Ibid.*, 51–52.

the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament in it as his shield. The soldiers had to wait for hours until he became tired and had to let go of the monstrance. The Archbishop was later exiled to the island of Corregidor off Manila. But before leaving, he placed the whole city under interdict. This meant that no Masses could be said, no other sacraments celebrated, no funerals done, until the interdict was lifted. The governor had to give in to the pressure from the people and released the Archbishop in less than a week's time.³⁴

The tension happened not only between church and government but also between politics and economy. A dramatic event that occurred in October of 1719 proved to be a culmination of the long tension between Governor Fernando de Bustamante (1717-1719) and the Manila merchants whom the former accused of graft and corruption. When these business people ran to the churches for sanctuary, Bustamante had the churchmen arrested and, in the end, the old Archbishop Cuesta himself. Upon hearing the news, all people rose up in arms. As they stormed the palace, the governor did not relent. Instead, he had his soldiers – and himself – fire their artillery at them. But the people charged and killed him and his son. “Then, all that multitude with one voice raise a cry that was heard throughout the city: ‘The tyrant is dead! Long live the faith!’.”³⁵

Colonial Evangelization Methods

In the midst of this tension-filled arrangement, the Church continued in its mission of preaching the Gospel. The difficulty of this task was eloquently expressed by De la Costa: “The soldiers and seamen who came to win the Philippines for Spain were accompanied by missionaries who came to win it for the Christian religion. It was easy enough, in theory, to reconcile these aims of colonial policy; in practice, conquest made conversion difficult. What natural attraction, in fact, could the religion of their conquerors have for the conquered? How is it possible to spread the Gospel of Christ with the sword? And yet, the fact remains that the Spaniards *did* convert the Filipinos to Christianity.”³⁶ The intentions of Spanish missionaries were focused on the “spiritual conquest of the minds and hearts of the natives”

³⁴ Ibid., 55–56.

³⁵ De la Costa, Horacio, *Readings in Philippine History*, Makati 1992, 62–63.

³⁶ Ibid., 24.

which in their assessment is the only “ultimate justification for the military conquest.”³⁷ How did they do this gigantic task? What ways and methods did they use? Some historians give us a hint at these evangelization motives and methods. For purposes of brevity, let me categorize them under several headings: reconfiguration of space, education in the faith, sacraments and conversion, inculturation and integral evangelization.

Reconfiguration of Space

Located in scattered spaces within the more than 7000 islands, the native population was described by the Spanish chroniclers as living “without polity” (*sin policia*).³⁸ For the Spaniards, civilization is connected with the city – a concept that harks back to the existence of the Greek *polis*. To be without polity is to be a barbarian. Thus, to spread civilization and to facilitate the “spiritual conquest”, the dispersed population needed to be congregated, “reduced” into compact villages. People were enticed to live “*bajo de la campana*”, that is, within hearing of the church bell. *Reducción* was the term used to describe the same project in colonial Mexico and Peru. This administrative reconfiguration of space was also implemented in the Philippines from 1580s to 1590s. There were many factors that led to the reduction project being vehemently resisted by the Filipinos. First was economic. Since Filipinos were subsistence farmers, there was no reason for them to leave their small farms and transfer to compact villages. Secondly, new congregated villages became easy targets of Moro raids especially in the Visayas area. Though military coercion was sometimes employed to force people to relocate, the colorful ritual celebrations of the Church on Holy Week, Christmas, or patronal feasts were mainly used to attract them to come to the center (*cabecera*). With it developed the elaborately vibrant popular Catholicism and religiosity which are prevalent up to this day. But since these celebrations were only occasional, people still went back to their farms and would come back for the next liturgical season – making the Philippine version of *reducción* project quite unique with the existence of *cabecera-visita* complex. The *cabecera* was the center (most often

³⁷ Phelan, John Leddy, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses*, Madison 1959, 53.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 44–49.

in the lowlands) where the parish priest resided; the *visitas* were small chapels at the outskirts which he would visit occasionally most often during the annual patronal feasts. This parish structure is still recognizable in our times. How successful was this project? Phelan comments: “The results certainly were not as sweeping as the missionaries wanted, but prequest decentralization was sufficiently reduced so that Filipinos were brought into some social contact with Hispanic culture”³⁹ and the Christian faith.

Another missionary space reconfiguration was the distribution of religious congregations to the dispersed islands and socio-linguistic groups.⁴⁰ Earlier in the Spanish era, missions had to be abandoned due to obvious difficulties – dispersed population, shortage of church personnel and people’s diverse languages. For a more strategic evangelization process, each of the four original missionary groups divided the reachable space among themselves. The central Tagalog region was shared by all groups but the larger area went mainly to Augustinians and Franciscans who arrived in these places earlier. The Jesuits got a smaller part while the Dominicans took care of the Chinese in Parian. Outside of Manila, the Augustinians took Pampanga and Ilokos; the Franciscans went to Bikol; the Dominicans took care of Pangasinan and Cagayan Valley; the Jesuits and the Augustinians divided the Bisayan islands among themselves. The Jesuits also went to Mindanao and remained the only group who worked there until the coming of the Recollects. The Augustinian Recollects who only came in 1606 got some few parishes scattered all over the islands but took over the Jesuit areas during the Jesuit expulsion. This ethno-linguistic distribution of missionary groups was also practical as it facilitated their learning of distinct languages since the evangelization process was to be done in the native tongues. The friars learned local languages and were the first to write grammars and dictionaries, printed catechisms, sermons and *confessionarios*.

Education in the Faith

Doctrina Christiana (1593) written by Fray Juan de Plasencia was

³⁹ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁰ The official division of the provinces among the religious orders came with the Royal Cedula of 1594. For a more accurate account of the missionary work of these orders, cf. Fernandez, Pablo, *History of the Church in the Philippines, 1521–1898*, Manila 1979, 19–27.

the first book printed in the Philippines in both Spanish and Tagalog languages.⁴¹ It is a catechetical book which contains the basic prayers (the Our Father, Hail Mary, Creed and Salve Regina); the articles of faith, seven sacraments, seven capital sins, Ten Commandments, five commandments of the Church, and the acts of general confession. Despite the long literary history in the Philippines (e.g., the baybayin script has been in use long before the coming of the Spaniards), the *Doctrina* was not meant for general distribution due to the high cost of printing materials. It mainly served as a catechetical guide for parish priests. Catechetical classes were mainly oral. Chronicles narrate how, after the Sunday masses, the children are made to recite the contents of the *Doctrina* in the church. Creative adaptations followed. The Jesuits, for instance, translated it into Bisayan verses adapted to the local traditional chants for planting and rowing.⁴² But since Filipinos learned the doctrines in recitative parrot-like manner, many missionaries also doubt the depth of the believers’ comprehension of the tenets of the faith.

It is in this context that the schools became necessary. Another Jesuit church historian, John Schumacher, writes: “The missionaries realized the difficulties of securing great depth in understanding among the older people and often had to content themselves with merely a basic knowledge of Christian teachings and the memorization of fundamental prayers. But the younger generation could not only be thoroughly grounded in the faith from their childhood, but the work of the schools with them also served to attract and teach their elders. Though the schools seem to have been an ordinary adjunct of the parishes, in the large towns the so-called *seminario de Indios*, or boarding schools, were set up for the boys from neighboring districts, where they lived together and received a thorough foundation in Christian life and doctrine.”⁴³ Like their European medieval counterparts, boarding schools in the Philippines not only taught

⁴¹ The cover page reads: *Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Espanola Y Tagala corregida Reglos por Los Religiosos de las Ordenes Impressa con Licencia en (San) Gabriel de las Orden de (Santo) Domingo. En Manila, 1593* (Christian Doctrine in Spanish and Tagalog Language, with correct rules for the Religious Order. Printed with Licence (Imprimatur) in Saint Gabriel of the Holy Dominican Order. In Manila 1593).

⁴² Cf. Phelan, John Leddy, op. cit., 58; cf. also Bernad, Miguel, “The Beginnings of Evangelization and the First Church in Mindanao”, in: idem, *The Great Island: Studies in the Exploration and Evangelization of Mindanao*, Quezon City 2004, 49.

⁴³ Schumacher, John, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, Quezon City 1987, 48.

the Catholic faith but also reading, writing, music and other arts. And like the medieval boarding schools, they were also connected to a *convento* – a word which originally meant a monastery since the first Spanish parish priests mostly belonged to monastic religious orders. Thus, “even if occupied by only one priest, and even if not belonging to a friar order”, all parish houses and rectories are also called *conventos* even to this day.

Conversions and the Sacraments

Conversion to the new faith was not a spontaneous response to the foreign missionaries' incursion into the indigenous population. Distrust, violent resistance and indifference characterized these initial encounters. Missionaries often discovered their huts burned, their belongings stolen or the source of their drinking water poisoned. Thus, they did not forcibly impose the faith upon the indigenous people. They resorted to more creative strategies other than coercion and violence in order to attract people to the faith. For instance, baptism was projected not only as purging the soul of its sin but also healing the body of its ailments.⁴⁴ Chronicles in fact narrated of miraculous healings brought about by the baptismal waters. Since healing is always a fundamental need, people started to request for baptism. They also asked from parents and elders that their children be entrusted to their care. The school became a central tool for catechetical classes. Once the children were indoctrinated, the chieftains and elders also became curious and were persuaded. “With the conversion of the leaders of the community, the baptism of their followers came as a matter of course.”⁴⁵ Though there were instances when baptism was hastily celebrated with little preparation, most missionaries were careful in administering the sacrament and, in some cases, even postponed them. One example is this standard policy for Jesuit missions: “Let there not be so much concern for the number of baptisms as for their being well-prepared, and for the newly baptized living like Christians. Even though they are few, they should be good examples in their villages.”⁴⁶ This made post-baptismal catechesis

⁴⁴ Phelan, John Leddy, “Prebaptismal Instruction and the Administration of Baptism in the Philippines during the Sixteenth Century”, in: Anderson, Gerald (ed.), *Studies in Philippine Church History*, Ithaca/London 1969, 22–43.

⁴⁵ Phelan, John Leddy, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, Madison 1959, 55.

⁴⁶ Schumacher, John, op. cit., 42.

and ongoing education in the faith very important. The catechetical recitation of the *Doctrina* in the *cabecera* on Sundays helped; so with the boarding school training for the younger converts.

There were many cultural obstacles to receive the sacraments – polygamy, divorce, usury, slavery, sexual practices, drunkenness, etc. – customs traditionally practiced by pre-conquest Filipinos.⁴⁷ Missionaries were careful not to admit to baptism those who have not fully imbibed the tenets of Christian faith and morals. This policy was found among the Dominicans: “It would have been a bad idea to baptize any while they were still in this doubt and danger of leaving the newly baptized without a teacher in the midst of so many pagans. For it was morally certain that they would soon return to their diabolical rites if they left them alone, not only because of the pressure which the other pagans would put on them, but also because of the weakness of those recently born in the faith and their little spiritual and natural energy. For they were all corrupted by with their many evil customs with which they have been born and lived all their life.”⁴⁸ If these obstacles were present for baptism, it was also true for the sacraments of marriage and penance. It was an uphill climb to convince the population to give in to the demands of the new Catholic morality, let alone live by them. In general, some parts of the population were converted; the majority remained in their traditional ways. John Leddy Phelan has this conclusion: “As the 17th century wore on, the inadequacies of the missionary effort became increasingly apparent. Three sacraments – confirmation, extreme unction and holy orders – were of slight importance in the spiritual life of the Filipinos. In the case of penance and the Eucharist only the minimum requirements established by the Church were met... Yet the Filipinos were Christianized in the face of severe handicaps of a shortage of priests and a dispersed population speaking a bewildering variety of languages.”⁴⁹

Inculturation and Integral Evangelization

Inculturation and integral evangelization are post-Vatican II words. Yet reading the accounts of Spanish chroniclers and mis-

⁴⁷ Ibid., 61–74.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 43.

⁴⁹ Phelan, John Leddy, op. cit., 71.

sionaries, we can glean some heroic efforts along these contemporary evangelization ideals. First, there was the decision to use the native languages in order to spread the faith. The *Doctrina Christina* was trilingual – Spanish, Romanized Tagalog and Tagalog in *baybayin* scripts. Theological categories were also rendered in local languages except those which have no equivalents or those which caused confusion – *Dios, Espiritu Santo, sacramento*, etc.⁵⁰ The missionaries became the first masters of local languages producing dictionaries, grammars and religious books. Second, substitution with and accommodation to the local culture proved effective for the understanding of the faith. Thus, people came to consider the holy water as substitute to the shamans' materials for healing; the cross was sent to be touched to the patients' body to be cured; some old practices as ritual dancing were retained but replaced with a new object of veneration like the Santo Niño (Christ child); some indigenous structures were also adapted in the parish level, e.g., the local chief was appointed to be the parish fiscal, and many others. In contemporary terms, inculturation was practiced not only in the level of thought and practices but also in the realm of structures. Third, the missionaries did not only preach by word but also by action. They engaged themselves in building roads and bridges, the improvement of agriculture, and hospital work. One lay Franciscan lay brother, constructed the roads in Laguna "with his own hands, diverting waters, filling swamps, and making roads, some a half league, others a league in strength, carrying on his own shoulders the rocks and other materials with the help of some Indios."⁵¹ Another famous Franciscan friar, Fray Juan de Clemente, dedicated himself to healing peoples' diseases through indigenous herbs and constructed a hospital despite meagre material resources.⁵²

Fourth, the missionaries bravely fought against the *conquistadores* and defended the rights of the natives against slavery. In the forefront of this struggle was the Dominican Bishop Domingo de Salazar, the first bishop of Manila. The first Synod of Manila (1582-1586), which he himself presided upon his arrival, tackled the thorny issue of the right

⁵⁰ Cf. Schumacher, John, op. cit., 75.

⁵¹ Ibid., 50.

⁵² Cf. "Fray Juan de Clemente, O.F.M.," <http://ofmphilarchives.tripod.com/id23.html> (01.10.2015).

of the Spanish Crown on a conquered people.⁵³ Finally, the witness of the life of many missionaries themselves persuaded the Filipinos on the sincerity of their purpose. While younger missionaries who can learn the languages did the preaching, the older friars merely accompanied them to far flung areas to do the other tasks. Here is one account:

At times they went from one village to another by sea in small boats, but frequently it was necessary to pass through swampy and muddy country, so that they considered it was better to go barefoot and bare-legged. On arriving the place they were going, soaking wet and covered with mud, immediately they began to hear confessions or baptize as the need might be. They asked for nothing more than rice boiled in water and occasionally some small fish, if perchance the Indios had such for their food. The floor of the house of the Indio was their bed, and their wet clothing their covering, without anything anymore. Thus they acted and continued to give the Indios to understand that all those trials they were undergoing had no other purpose than to gain their souls for God.⁵⁴

How effective were these methods to the program of Christianization of the Philippines? Phelan identifies three periods of the colonial evangelization project.⁵⁵ The first phase is the exploratory phase (1565-1578) where church personnel were few and many were still learning the language. The second phase (1578-1609) consists of the "golden years" of the evangelization process. With more missionaries coming from Spain, the apostolic endeavours progressed in zeal and enthusiasm. The third phase was set around the 17th century onwards when "the zeal of the first generation missionaries gave way to the spirit of apathy, routine and discouragement."⁵⁶ It is difficult to

⁵³ Cf. Schumacher, John, "Bishop Domingo de Salazar and the Manila Synod of 1582", in: idem, *Growth and Decline: Essays in Philippine Church History*, Quezon City 2009, 1–21; De la Costa, Horacio "Bishop Salazar and the Colonial Episcopate," in: idem, *Selected Studies in Philippine Colonial History*, comp. and ed. Roberto Paterno, Quezon City 2002, 66–92. For an accessible account of the first Synod of Manila, cf. Schumacher, John, op. cit., 28–35.

⁵⁴ Schumacher, John, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, Quezon City 1987, 60–61.

⁵⁵ Cf. Phelan, John Leddy, op. cit., 70.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 71. For a more nuanced view, cf. Schumacher, John, "A Golden Age of the Philippine Church, 1700–1768", in: idem, *Growth and Decline: Essays in Philippine Church History*, Quezon City 2009, 23–68.

generalize but the first missionary ideals of Domingo de Salazar to protect the natives from the exploitation by the *encomenderos* were sidelined; these abusive systems ironically became the prevalent practice of some individual friars and missionary communities that later led the Filipinos to rise against Spain.

The “Double-Truth” of Colonial Evangelization

From which standpoint can we read the individual missionary accounts and evangelical methods in colonial contexts? There are several dominant perspectives in the re-reading of colonial history in the Philippines. On the one hand, the Hispanophiles – mainly Catholic writers – argue that the Spanish missionaries and their evangelical methods brought “civilized ways, salvation, and unity to the island.”⁵⁷ To use the words of Pablo Fernandez, a famous Dominican church historian: the missionaries “were able, at [the] cost of so much sacrifice, to keep them for Christ and for Spain.”⁵⁸ On the other hand, the nationalists argue that Christianity in the hands of the Spanish friars was employed as an effective ideological weapon of domination. This view which started from the revolutionary era against Spain is not without basis. However, it also possesses the tendency to demonize the systems and actors – missionaries included – of the Spanish regime. Beyond these readings, I argue that all practices – colonial practice included – possess a “double-truth”. In the words of Pierre Bourdieu, practices are both “structured structures” and “structuring structures”.⁵⁹ Just as these practices are products of their socio-political contexts, they can also be creative and innovative within the bounds of their own historical limits. Thus, to understand these historical events and missionary methods, there is a need to be open to their ambivalence – their dual truth – as these practices also contain unintended “surplus of meaning” beyond the conscious intentions of their historical agents. Let me elaborate this below.

⁵⁷ Ileto, Reynaldo, “Rizal and the Underside of Philippine Revolution”, in: idem, *Filipinos and their Revolution: Event, Discourse and Historiography*, Quezon City 1998, 32.

⁵⁸ Fernandez, Pablo, op. cit., 26.

⁵⁹ Bourdieu, Pierre, *Pascalian Meditations*, London 2000, 188–205. For its application in theology, cf. Pilario, D. F., *Back to the Rough Grounds of Praxis: Exploring Theological Method with Pierre Bourdieu*, Leuven 2005.

Church and State, Gospel and Politics

By placing itself “at the service of both Majesties” – of God and of the king – the colonial Church already located itself at the crossroads of potential tension between two contending powers. On the one hand, this dual loyalty gave the Church the possibility of defending the conquered peoples from the unconscionable subjugation by the *conquistadores*. Since it had access to institutions of power, it could shape the priorities of the system towards the defense of the natives. On the other hand, this location also automatically made the Church complicit with imperial power. The rights granted to the monarchy over the church affairs by the *Patronato Real* not only announced future conflicts but also real collusion with colonial intentions. The last right, for instance, “the privilege of assigning civil functions to church personnel, especially parish priests, such as that of drawing the tribute lists, supervising municipal elections, and directing public works,”⁶⁰ made the priest a direct vassal of the Crown, thus, making his missionary work, no matter how well-intentioned, an ambivalent accessory to the colonial project.

Many Spanish missionaries who worked in the Americas already denounced the cruelty and the tyranny of the colonizers. The Dominicans Antonio de Montesinos (c. 1475-1545) and Bartolome de las Casas (1484-1566) were in the forefront of defending the rights of the Indians in the New World. The school of Salamanca with its famous theologians, Francisco de Vitoria (1480-1546) and Francisco Suárez (1548-1617), fought for the natural rights of indigenous peoples anticipating the contemporary discussion on the international human rights of all peoples. This group of thinkers put into question the right of monarchs to colonize peoples even for missionary purposes. Domingo de Salazar, the first bishop of Manila, belonged to this school and was a faithful student of Vitoria.⁶¹ Thus, from the years he first stepped on the islands to the time of his death, the bishop defended the rights of the Filipinos against Spanish sovereignty, particularly against slavery and extortion of tribute. After a long fight with colonial rulers in the Philippines, he went back to Spain in

⁶⁰ De la Costa, Horacio, “Church and State under Patronato Real”, in: idem, *Selected Studies in Philippine Colonial History*, comp. and ed. Roberto Paterno, Quezon City 2002, 52.

⁶¹ Cf. Schumacher, John, “Bishop Domingo de Salazar and the Manila Synod of 1582”, in: idem, *Growth and Decline: Essays in Philippine Church History*, Quezon City 2009, 1–21.

1591 to put his lifetime advocacy in front of the King: “It is clear then that the dominion over those Islands could not have come to belong to the King our lord either by title of election or of just war.”⁶² Before the issue was resolved, he died; and the same cause was taken on by another Dominican, Miguel de Benavides, his successor, who was with him on the trip.

But earlier than Salazar or Benavides, the first Augustinian friars who came with Legaspi in 1565 were already opposed to the conquest of the Philippines in the name of the Spanish monarchs. Foremost among them was Fray Andrés de Urdaneta who did not want Legaspi’s expedition to continue. When he and his companions arrived in the islands – they were only told of their final destination while sailing on the high seas – they were constantly updating the King on the abuses of the colonists. The envoy they sent to represent them to the King, Fray Martin de Rada, categorically stated: “I have taken all the opinions of all the Fathers who were to be found here. They unanimously affirm that none among all these islands have come into the power of the Spaniards with just title.”⁶³

Despite this courageous and conscious defense of indigenous rights by church people, the Church’s location in the imperial structure establishes its complicity with colonial oppression. The exaction of tribute, forced labor, military service, and *bandala* (annual quotas to sell products to the government at lower prices) were direct instruments of exploitation and pacification. While it is true that the friars were not directly in charge of their implementation, they were closely connected with the system as they were increasingly entrusted with civil duties – inspector of schools and taxation, of health units and public works, certifier of *cedulas*, auditing and partitioning of lands, among others.⁶⁴ Despite being monks who could not own properties, the Pope exempted them from this monastic rule so that they could administer the parishes in the absence of the secular clergy. Canonical collation – the act of bestowing ecclesiastical posts with a fixed amount of property or income – proved to be one source

⁶² Schumacher, John, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, Quezon City 1987, 36.

⁶³ Aragón, J. Gayo, “The Controversy over Justification of Spanish Rule in the Philippines”, in: Anderson, Gerald (ed.), op. cit., 7.

⁶⁴ Constantino, Renato, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Pre-Spanish to 1941, No. 1), Manila 1975, 76.

of corruption among the friars.⁶⁵ This arrangement transformed the friar-missionaries into landowners gradually amassing large tracts themselves – some through confiscation of mortgaged lands, others through outright land-grabbing. These properties came to be called in Philippine history as “friar lands” which, together with other friar abuses, fuelled the Filipino revolution against Spain.

Translation, Conversion and Reducción

Instead of teaching natives the Spanish language, the first missionaries who were few in number decided to use the native languages in order to preach the Christian faith. Translation was the first act. The Spanish-based *Doctrina Christiana* was translated into Tagalog in its Romanized and *baybayin* scripts. Local terms had to be found to express theological categories. Creative adaptations of the tenets of faith, for instance, through songs and chants, made the learning and appreciation of doctrines easier and more effective.⁶⁶ Through these, we appreciate the zeal and creativity of the first missionaries who became the first authorities of diverse local languages with their dictionaries and grammar books. Long before the word cultural adaptation and inculturation found itself into our sociological and theological vocabularies, the friars were already effectively doing it in the field.

But Vicente Rafael also alerts us to the semantic relationship between *traducción* (translation), *conversión* (conversion) and *conquista* (conquest). “To translate” is synonymous with “to convert”. Conquest means both an aggressive entry into another’s territory and winning over the other’s confidence and affection. “Conversion [also]

⁶⁵ In 1872, the Bishop of Jaro wrote to Governor Izquierdo: “Inasmuch as I am religious, I have had the occasion to read documents in which the laxity of many individuals of regular clergy is attributed in large part to canonical collation. For because of that there remains no apt means to correct a bad parish priest except and expediente which never of only rarely results in giving evidence of the excesses of a parish priest.” Cf. Schumacher, John, op. cit., 242.

⁶⁶ The Jesuit missionary Pedro Chirino wrote: “Thanks be to God, the entire river population wishes to be baptized. And in the entire village and in the houses nothing else is heard except the mission songs, and these they sing while working, while paddling their boats, while walking. I go to all the houses without exception and distribute the boys who know the songs, so that while working, the people sing and learn the Christian doctrine... There are houses of the principal residents where they don’t stop singing day and night.” Chirino, Pedro, *Relación de las Islas Filipinas* (1604), cited in: Bernad, Miguel, *The Beginnings of Evangelization and the First Church in Mindanao*, 49.

literally means the act of changing a thing into something else; in its more common usage, it denotes the act of bringing someone over to a religion or practice. Conversion, like conquest, can thus be a process of crossing over into the domain – territorial, emotional, religious or cultural – of someone else and claiming it as one’s own.”⁶⁷ Translation and conversion thus are ambivalent realities. On the one hand, they make the foreign Christian faith accessible to ordinary Filipinos and the local culture accessible to the foreign missionaries. It is through these acts that we receive the faith. On the other hand, as we were converted, we were also “conquered”, as it were. Spain has converted our identities to serve its colonial interests. “For a conqueror consolidates his position over the people he has conquered to the degree that he persuades them to defer to his interests – converts them to the view that they serve their own interests when they serve someone else’s.”⁶⁸

What occurs in the semantic level becomes clearly visible in the socio-political sphere. Just as the Tagalog language needed to be translated and converted through the Castilian grammatical rules, the dispersed population and native bodies also needed to be “reduced” into the imperial grid so that it would be easier for the ruling body to subjugate. On the one hand, the time-tested missionary strategy of the *reducción* adopted from the experience of the New World proved helpful for easier transmission of the Christian message. The few available missionaries necessitated such pastoral strategy. Moreover, to live away from the town – recounted one Spanish friar – generates “much spiritual and temporal damage” because in those dispersed places natives often live with “too much liberty of conscience.”⁶⁹ On the other hand, Rafael argues that this reconfiguration of space also made it easier for colonizers to convert them “into arbitrary elements that could be made to fit into divinely sanctioned order characterized by the hierarchization of all signs and things in the world”. The missionaries arrogated unto themselves the privilege and obligation to regulate “the placement, location, and movement of the converted populace with reference to the larger concerns of evangelization and

⁶⁷ Rafael, Vicente, *Contracting Colonialism, Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule*, Quezon City 1988, 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

colonial administration.”⁷⁰ In other words, just as translation converts and adjusts the local language into a foreign configuration of grammar, tenses and declensions making it ready for colonial consumption, so does the reduction of the population into town centers (*cabeceras*) prepares them for easier management and supervision by the ambassadors of God and the King.

Indoctrination and Resistance

Post-baptismal catechesis, reception of other sacraments, and liturgical celebrations were intended to inculcate into the minds and bodies of the natives the demands of the newly received Christian faith. Beyond baptism, the reception of other sacraments also provided real occasions to strengthen the living out of Christian life. Since polygamy and divorce were rampant, matrimony would only be celebrated if the couples deny these practices and uphold the Christian ideal. Phelan thinks that the acceptance of matrimonial demands “represents one of the most enduring achievements of the Spanish religious.” With the work of the missionaries, “a new standard of premarital and marital morality was set up. Like all such norms this one was not always observed, but it was a standard destined to exercise continuing influence through the coming centuries.”⁷¹ Another occasion for the indoctrination process toward the new Christian morality was the sacrament of penance. Converts were enjoined to confess once a year. *Confessionarios* – detailed guides to the examination of conscience – were given to priests as they tried their best to elicit the ‘truth’ from penitents through some sort of question-and-answer interrogation process. Once accustomed to the practice, Filipinos needed no prompting as they literally flocked to the confessionals with eagerness and enthusiasm sometimes to the point of begging the priest on their knees – as many missionaries attested.

But there is more to this eagerness and enthusiasm than what appears on surface. While some missionaries were happy about this “rush to the confessional”, others were more skeptical. Murillo Velarde complained about the Filipino’s tendency toward “quibbling and contradictions [that] created labyrinths which confused even the most

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁷¹ Phelan, John Leddy, *op. cit.*, 65.

experienced confessors.”⁷² Instead of strictly following the *confessionarios*, the penitents turned this event into something else as they confessed not their own sins but the sins of their husbands or wives, their mothers-in-law or those whom they considered enemies. Does this mean that the natives did not have the capacity to understand the theological intentions of this sacrament? Or was it a different game altogether? Vicente Rafael’s reflection might give us some hint to what really is happening.⁷³ The Tagalog word for asking for forgiveness in confession is *tawad* which also means “to bargain, to haggle, and to use evasions (in Castillian *regatear*)”. In other words, the practice of confession which was used by colonial authorities to control minds and bodies was also effectively employed by the natives to bargain with totalizing hegemonic power – the most accessible representative of whom is the parish priest. Against the colonial intention of reducing bodies into imperial designs through confession, the natives “responded by performing token payments designed to appease the figure of authority and deflect the force of hierarchy... What emerged was a confession without ‘sin’, conversion in a state of distraction.”⁷⁴ In this reading, the truth of the practice contains a “surplus” that goes beyond the original intentions of its agents – both the confessor and the penitent, the colonizer and the colonized – and overflows toward its unintended social consequences within the highly hierarchical colonial contexts.

As with confessions, so it was with other sacraments and religious devotions in times of colonial domination. Another example is the recitation of the *Pasyon* (from the Passion of Jesus Christ) – a Tagalog extended verse form of salvation history from Genesis to Revelation chanted by people in their homes during the Holy Week. On the one hand, this activity can be viewed as an attempt by the colonizers to form the colonized minds into submission in the emulation of Jesus’ resignation to suffering and death. On the other hand, Reynaldo Ileto – another Filipino historian – thinks that the peoples’ chanting of the *Pasyon* had provided a narrative which served as a rallying symbol for their hopes and aspirations of liberation. Beyond the intentions of the

⁷² Velarde, Pedro Murillo, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la compañía de Jesus*, Manila 1749, 5, cited in: *Ibid.*, 66.

⁷³ Cf. Rafael, Vicente, *op. cit.*, 132.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

colonizers, the *Pasyon* contains a double-truth which, to their surprise, was ingeniously and dexterously utilized by popular leaders to foster solidarity among the oppressed. As these unlettered masses dutifully chanted the narrative of the suffering of Jesus during Holy Week to the pleasure of the missionaries, these popular revolutionaries were also given the language and vision to articulate their longings for an alternative world far from what the colonizers had ever imagined.⁷⁵

Conclusion

As conclusion to his celebrated book, the Jesuit historian, Miguel Bernad, writes: “The achievement of Spain and of the missionaries was a substantial one. First of all, they made of these islands one nation, fusing the various regions and the innumerable barangays into one people sharing a common national identity and a common faith. Secondly, despite all the obstacles, natural and man-made, they succeeded in creating a Christian nation that eventually overthrew Spanish rule without rejecting the Christian faith. In the theological view of history, that is an achievement that could not have been accomplished without the abundant help of divine grace.”⁷⁶

However, another Filipino historian, Renato Constantino argues differently. He writes: “the attitude of the natives to the Church in the course of its economic and political ascendancy changed from initial obedience due to awe and fear; to loyalty and subservience arising from acceptance of the Catholic religion and experience with the power of priests within the colonial hierarchy, but accompanied by personal resentments; to generalized and group hostility because of the common experience of economic exploitation by the friars; and finally, to the violently anti-friar sentiments of the masses during the Revolution... It is very clear that this transition in the realm of consciousness was a response to a material stimulus – that transformation of the Church from a colonial accessory to the principal apparatus of colonial appropriation and exploitation.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Cf. Ileto, Reynaldo, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910*, date? Quezon City 1979. Also cf. Pilario, D. F., “The Craft of Contextual Theology: Towards Conversation on Theological Method in the Philippine Context”, in: *Hapag* No. 1 (2004), 5–39.

⁷⁶ Bernad, Miguel, *The Christianization of the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives*, Manila 1972, 348.

⁷⁷ Constantino, Renato, *op. cit.*, 81–82.

These two conclusions are not without basis. But taken in isolation, each assertion sounds like a swift generalization that neglects other socio-historical details which do not fit one's ideological straightjacket, thus, also overlooking the *doublé-verite* of practice. It might be more helpful to heed a warning from another great historian, Horacio de la Costa: "It serves no useful purpose to conceal the fact that the record of the Church in the Philippines is a spotted one. It accomplished great things; it was also subject from time to time to great abuses."⁷⁸

Ad Gentes in the Context of the Epochs of Evangelization

Laurenti Magesa

"God saw that it was good."

The activity of "evangelization" is founded on the act of creation. The phrase "And God saw that it was good," found several times in the first creation account of the Old Testament (Gen. 1), is significant. Although the phrase is not conventionally used in the sense of foundational evangelization, it should connote, if understood from the Christian-faith point of view, the process of assuming everything, creation in its totality, into the embrace of God. This is what evangelization ultimately implies.⁷⁹

In the New Testament, the good news means Jesus's message of reestablishing the divine order of creation. The current phrase "evangelization" echoes Jesus's Great Commission to his disciples to preach this good news to all nations and creation (Mt. 28:19-20, Acts 1:8). Its meaning is, therefore, the human activity of assisting creation to conform to the gospel. In a word, evangelization consists in the divinely-inspired, ongoing effort to construct goodness in the world, one that is consistent with what at creation God saw was good. Evangelization entails re-fashioning the physical and moral magnificence of the universe. In a sense, it entails being co-creators with God.

Before the fall, the biblical story of creation tells of how humanity was charged with this responsibility by the very telling divine instruction:

⁷⁹ Cf. Pope Francis's 2013 Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel, EG), is an excellent exploration of this idea. For text see http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (14.03.2016).

⁷⁸ De la Costa, Horacio, op. cit., 56.

“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen. 1:28). After the fall, this responsibility became even more urgent. The mystery of the incarnation indicates it: God Jesus himself is the Good News, the original Goodness that intended from the foundation of the world (Jn. 1:1-4). He is the model of how to obtain it (Jn. 1:46). Conforming to Jesus’s life and teaching re-generates our present universe towards God.

The message of the New Testament is that the good news must be advanced for the entire creation by the church. It is reductionist to limit to humans only the consequences of Jesus’s commission to evangelize. Properly understood, evangelization is ultimately intended for the entire universe. According to Paul, the emancipation of humanity from its original rebellion against God implies also the liberation of creation “from its bondage to decay” unto “the glorious freedom of the children of God.” Together with human beings, “the whole creation” groans inwardly in anticipation of the “glorious freedom of the children of God,” a new paradise (Rom. 8:20-24). Even though the practical expressions of evangelization have varied from epoch to epoch, this Pauline understanding has always inspired different movements in the history of evangelization.

The Constantinian Epoch

Almost three hundred years after the birth of Christianity, the Roman Emperor Constantine (c. 273-337) changed the face of the church more drastically than perhaps any other individual in history. Constantine moved the expression of the Christian faith away from being basically “salt” or “light” (Mt. 5:13-16) acting quietly and imperceptibly to transform persons and communities from within to giving it the status of a clear and imperial structure. The teaching of Jesus and that of the Apostles after Pentecost, however, was of a different nature. It was about orienting people into a new inner way of life in line with the life of Jesus himself, “the Way.” In fact, the original and enduring designation for the followers of Jesus, even after they acquired the name “Christians” at Antioch (Acts 11:26), was “Followers of the Way” (Acts 9:2). Thus, before the post-apostolic period, faith in Jesus was confessed in small “informal” settings, called house or city churches, each with its own elders, known as bishops or presbyters. The church

was not organized in any form of a mega-scale institution that was to emerge by the fourth century.⁸⁰

Constantine and his immediate successors consolidated the status mono-episcopacy that had already started developing before him. He put an end to the persecution of “the sect of the Nazarene,” as Christians were categorized (Acts 24:5). By his pro-Christian legislation he elevated Christianity into the religion of the Empire with privileges for the clergy and faithful in general. A striking example is that Christians, who as a matter of principle of faith had previously rejected military service and participation in war, following the example, as they saw it, of Jesus’ non-violence even when facing the cross (Mt. 26:52, Jn. 18:11). For this stance they had suffered persecution and death. But now, except for a small minority, they enthusiastically embraced both as a privilege. Some Church Fathers even encouraged Christians to do so. Athanasius, for example, “declared that it was not only lawful, but praiseworthy, to kill enemies in war.”⁸¹ By 416 pagans became excluded from the army *de jure* in favor of Christians!

The imperial dispensation affected methods of evangelization from then on. As the Church perceived itself more and more as a privileged and powerful institution, the approach to evangelization became conversion, less to an inner new way of life, and more to visible affiliation to an institution called Church. Thus the reception of the sacraments, especially Baptism, came to symbolize much more this extrinsic, social view. In the so-called “mission lands,” the trend towards religious “persecution” became reversed: those who did not belong to institutional Christianity now became potential targets of psychological or actual physical violence at the hands of some agents of Christian evangelization. This was the case for several centuries during the missionary movements from the fifteenth century in Latin America and Africa. St. Pope John Paul II did not hesitate to apologize for this period of the church’s activity in his Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (TMA) of 1994.⁸²

⁸⁰ Cf. Grant, Robert M., *Augustus to Constantine: The Thrust of the Christian Movement into the Roman World*, New York 1970, 53–68.

⁸¹ “The Early Christian View of War and Military Service”, <http://www.heraldmag.org/olb/Contents/doctrine/ecvowams.htm> (14.06.2016).

⁸² For the full text of the document, cf. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/

In the words of the Pope, a “painful chapter of history to which the sons and daughters of the Church must return with a spirit of repentance is that of the acquiescence given, especially in certain centuries, to *intolerance and even the use of violence* in the service of truth.” According to him, nothing can

exonerate the Church from the obligation to express profound regret for the weaknesses of so many of her sons and daughters who sullied her face, preventing her from fully mirroring the image of her crucified Lord, the supreme witness of patient love and of humble meekness. From these painful moments of the past a lesson can be drawn for the future, leading all Christians to adhere fully to the sublime principle stated by the Council: “The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it wins over the mind with both gentleness and power.”⁸³

As the Pope implied, acts of physical or psychological coercion, however well-intentioned, are contrary to the mandate of Jesus Christ of bringing all creation to himself. The best image of Church is not that of Empire, Crusade, and Power, but self-giving, humble service (Mt. 20:27-28, Mk. 10:44-45). By rescuing the Church from persecution, Constantine unwittingly led it towards a path that Jesus would undoubtedly not have approved.

The Era of Missionary Evangelization in the Global South

What happened in the process of the evangelization of the regions outside of Europe or the Global South from the fifteenth century onwards? The period illustrates aspects of the “painful chapter” of the history of evangelization that the Pope John Paul was referring to in the above mentioned letter. The weight of over one-and-a-half millennia of Constantinian structuring of the Church fell heavily on these regions with missionary evangelization. In Africa, for example, this happened particularly during “the third encounter of Africa with the gospel” after

apost_letter/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_10111994_tertio-millennio-adveniente_en.html (14.06.2016). Before this, see also, though much more timidly and apologetically, Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (PP), No. 12. The Pope also accedes that in their evangelizing mission, “The missionaries sometimes intermingled the thought patterns and behavior patterns of their native land with the authentic message of Christ.” For the full text of PP, cf. http://www.vatican.va/encyclicals/documents/ht_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html (15.05.2015). A warning against this is also sounded by Pope Francis in EG, No. 116–118.

⁸³ Pope John Paul II., *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, No. 35.

the very early centuries of Christianity and the period of the Slave Trade from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ From Greece and Rome, the gospel had first come to Africa. But it is in Europe that it was nurtured most decisively as the object of an institution. In Europe the Church became profoundly marked by an imperial stamp in outlook and performance. From Europe it was carried to other parts of the world already clad in some inflexible linguistic expressions and symbols. We might call this epoch of evangelization the “period of dogma” or the “era of orthodoxy.”

Conformity to pre-established ways of expressing and living faith in Christ which were exclusively European characterized this period, and evangelization was expected to inculcate these habits. That exterior compliance to formulas of the faith (such as acceptance of the Nicene Creed), and observance of rules and obligations (such as attending Mass on Sunday) became the criteria of conversion that was instilled in Christians. But didn't this relegate to the background the more fundamental Christian requirement of a life mirroring that of Christ, even if this manifested itself in religions other than Christianity (see Nu. 11:24-9, Lk. 9:50, Mt. 9:39, also Mt. 12:30, Lk. 11:23, and 1 Cor. 12:3)? The story is well known: during this era, African religiosity was all but demonized, with epithets such as animism, heathenism, and paganism liberally attributed to it. No effort was made to try to find the divine in the cultures and religiosity of Africa. By extension, the African person was himself/herself similarly condemned, with dubious justifications from the scriptures (Gen. 9:20-27). This negative aspect of evangelization and the concurrent colonial movement reinforced each other everywhere in the Global South, though with different intensity in different places.

As a consequence of this approach to evangelization, forms of unequal relationships between the churches of the North and those of the South were consolidated. A distinction was made between the “sending churches” and “receiving churches” in terms of missionary activity and financial largesse. The northern churches were the donors; those of the South were categorized and structured as “mission territories” under the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. One of the aims

⁸⁴ Baur, John, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, Nairobi 2009, 99–240.

of the Congregation was to counter the spread of Protestantism.⁸⁵ For a long time, the churches of the North continued to consider themselves in relation to those of the South as “mother churches,” implying that the latter were not only “young,” but immature. Inevitably, a pervasive complex of superiority and inferiority developed in both regional churches. It slowed down the development of the three main dimensions of a mature local church, identified as self-governance (local leadership), self-ministering or propagating (being “missionary to yourselves” in the expression of Pope Paul VI⁸⁶), and self-reliance (especially in matters of finance).

In evaluating this epoch of evangelization, a sense of proportion must be maintained, however. Peter Kanyandago notes with reference to Africa, that this epoch is not marked exclusively by missionary rejection of non-European peoples and cultures. There were some instances of missionaries and colonialists who tried to affirm the humanity and dignity of non-European peoples. They encouraged their divine endowments, something that in true Christian evangelization should have been the rule, not the exception. Pope Paul in *Populorum Progressio* encourages his readers to keep this in mind. Without minimizing the destructiveness of colonialism, he advises that in the interests of fairness, “we must also reserve a word of praise for those colonizers whose skills and technical know-how brought benefits to many untamed lands, and whose work survives to this day.” Offering concrete examples, he says: “The structural machinery they introduced was not fully developed or perfected, but it did help to reduce ignorance and disease, to promote communication, and to improve living conditions.”⁸⁷

⁸⁵ “Founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV’s bull *Inscrutabili Divinae*, the body was charged with fostering the spread of Catholicism and with the regulation of Catholic ecclesiastical affairs in non-Catholic countries [...] At the time of its inception, the expansion of colonial administrations was coming to be largely in Dutch and English hands, both Protestant countries intent on spreading these religious doctrines in the wake of commercial empire, and Rome perceived the very real threat of Protestantism spreading in the wake of commercial empire. By 1648, with the end of the Thirty Years War, the official religious balance of established Christianity in Europe was permanently stabilized, but new fields for evangelization were offered by vast regions of Asia, Africa and the Americas then being explored.” <http://www.economicexpert.com/a/Congregatio:de:Propaganda:Fide.htm> (16.05.2015).

⁸⁶ Pope Paul VI, “To the Inaugural 1969 SECAM, Kampala”, in: Okure, Teresa, et al. (eds.), *32 Articles Evaluating Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*, Eldoret 1990, 33.

⁸⁷ Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, No. 7.

The same can be said of these missionaries in terms of establishing some educational and medical facilities. While acknowledging all this, Kanyandago and many other thinkers of the Global South nevertheless contend that these efforts were few and far between. They were unable to “mobilize sufficient political and social force to reverse or correct the negative trend and the effects of the humiliation of the African [person].” Still, they constituted “a sign of hope.” The task ahead is to “promote” and “multiply” them.⁸⁸

Ad Gentes and the Contemporary Period

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* captures accurately the new spirit and method of evangelization articulated by the Second Vatican Council in *Ad Gentes* (AG) when he outlines his dream for a new approach to the task. In his view, this new approach can no longer “be deferred”:

I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming *everything*, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself ... “All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion.”⁸⁹

Central to this new vision lies respect for “cultural diversity” and the “legitimate autonomy” of every culture, according to the Pope. The expressions of Christian life must be situated in this diversity of cultures. In each culture, “the specific way in which its members relate to one another, to other creatures and to God” cannot be ignored. This diversity which must be encouraged in the process of evange-

⁸⁸ Kanyandago, Peter, “Rethinking African Ecclesiology: Challenges from People’s Rights and Participation”, in: McGarry, Cecil/Ryan, Patrick (eds.), *Inculturating the Church in Africa: Theological and Practical Perspectives*, Nairobi 2001, 95–96.

⁸⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 27.

lization as inculturation, does not threaten the unity of the Church. On the contrary, it is a movement consonant with “the logic of the incarnation” and manifests an inner, powerful uniting force of the Holy Spirit,” Pope Francis writes. Accordingly, in this new vision of evangelization, “it is not essential to impose a specific cultural form, no matter how beautiful or ancient it may be, together with the Gospel.” This may lead to the danger of “a needless hallowing of our own culture, and thus show more fanaticism than true evangelizing zeal.” It is therefore contrary to the spirit of true evangelization to “demand that peoples of every continent, in expressing their Christian faith, imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history.” It is clear to Pope Francis that the Christian faith “cannot be constricted to the limits of understanding and expression of any one culture ... no single culture can exhaust the mystery of our redemption in Christ.”⁹⁰

These are views deeply rooted in *Ad Gentes*.⁹¹ They are also the insight of *Lumen Gentium*, on the nature and activity of the Church whose fundamental *raison d'être* is, of course, evangelization.⁹² As the Council historian John W. O'Malley notes, *Ad Gentes* did not have an easy passing in the Council. Its first draft was rejected by a huge margin of votes, but after emendation and expansion, it was overwhelmingly approved (2,394 votes in favor to 5 opposed).⁹³ Emboldened by the movement for political independence in their regions, the Council Fathers from the Global South called for some autonomy for their churches, particularly from undue control of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. ⁹⁴Although not yet particularly strong, the feeling among them of appreciating aspects of their cultures as possible carriers of the gospel was palpable. They wanted a relationship not of “mother/daughter” but of “sister/sister” between

⁹⁰ Ibid., Nos. 115–118.

⁹¹ The full text of the document can be found, among other places, in: Abbott, Walter M., (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, New York 1966, El Monte 1966, 584–630.

⁹² Introductory comment to *Ad Gentes* by Alexander, Calvert, “Missions”, in: Abbott, Walter M., (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, El Monte 1966, 580–583.

⁹³ O'Malley, John W., *What Happened at Vatican II*, Cambridge 2008, 238, 268–269, 287.

⁹⁴ Curiously, AG No.29 seems to retain the centrality of this “Curial office” in organizing the affairs of the churches of the South as “both an administrative instrument and an agency of dynamic direction.” As well, the use of the controversial description “mission lands” to characterize the regions of the South was retained in the document.

the churches of the North and the South. In other words, the self-definition and identity of the churches of the South were clearly issues on the agenda and could not be ignored.

Ad Gentes affirmed that true evangelization must make the Church “fully present to all men and nations.” The purpose of the “esteem” and “love” of various peoples’ cultures which *Ad Gentes* enjoins on missionaries is to enable the evangelizer to find the “seeds of the Word which lie hidden in them.” Evangelizers as disciples of Christ should strive after his example to be in close touch with people wherever they are so as to “learn by sincere and patient dialogue what treasures a bountiful God has distributed among the nations of the earth.” According to AG, “anyone who is going to encounter another people should have a great esteem for their patrimony and their language and their customs.” It is only in this way that they can in turn evangelize these nations without any hint of coercion. AG is clear that, contrary to the perception of a previous (Constantinian) era, the catechumenate period that should form part and parcel of the process of primary evangelization “is not a mere expounding of doctrines and precepts, but a training period for the whole Christian life,” an “apprenticeship” of joining the catechumens “to Christ their Teacher.”⁹⁵

The requirements for the existence of a local church that we have enumerated above as self-governance, self-ministry, and self-reliance are clearly articulated in AG. “From the very start,” the document says, “the Christian community should be so formed that it can provide for its own necessities insofar as this is possible.” They should evangelize by inserting themselves among the people and institutions of their nations and transform society by the example of their faithfulness to the exemplary life of Christ. Among themselves, they should foster vocations of catechists, “to whom missionary work among the nations owes so very much” as well as to the priesthood and religious life. These constitute ministries and institutions which are necessary if the People of God [in any locality] are to live and develop its life under the guidance of its own bishop.”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *Ad Gentes*, Nos. 5, 11–14, 22, 26.

⁹⁶ Ibid., Nos. 15, 17, 19.

Prospects: The Church as Yeast in the Dough

Writing in 1971 from the Philippines, John Schumacher asserted that the growing self-realization and self-affirmation that the world's Southern Hemisphere demonstrated at the Council fundamentally changed the global Church's self-perception and its view of its missionary activity and evangelization. This happened in four main areas. According to Kwame Bediako, Schumacher pointed out that by affirming the identity and worth of their own cultures, Christian communities in the Global South asserted first, that "no longer would it be taken for granted that the manifestation of Christian presence would merely replicate patterns and forms in the West." There was, secondly, also a new awareness that there could be found in non-Christians religions as well "true religious values which perhaps have been obscured in the Western-Christian presentation or formulation of God's Word to man." Thirdly, the original servant, rather than imperial status of the Church became once again accentuated as its desired model. And finally, a more comprehensive understanding of mission and evangelization began to take root in the Church. Together with the indispensability of "the ministry of Word and sacraments," evangelization now also implied the Church's "active involvement in economic and all human development' and the struggle for justice in the world."⁹⁷ How have these dreams shaped or might shape the Church?

An example is Pope Paul VI's counsel to the churches of Africa, one that has been taken up by subsequent Popes and applied to other regions of the world. Addressing the Bishops of Africa in 1969, Pope Paul explained in a now classical paragraph that

The expression, that is, the language and mode of manifesting... [the] one Faith [in Christ], may be manifold. Hence it may be original, suited to the tongue, the style, the character, the genius and the culture of the one who professes this one Faith.

From this point of view, a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable. An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favoured by the Church. The liturgical renewal is a living

⁹⁷ Bediako, Kwame, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*, New York 2004, 108–109.

example of this. And in this sense, you [Africans] may, and you must, have an African Christianity. Indeed, you possess human values and characteristic forms of culture which can rise up to perfection, such as to find in Christianity, and for Christianity, a true superior fullness, and prove to be capable of a richness of expression all its own, and genuinely African.⁹⁸

This is the view that has been taken up by Pope Francis in his dream of a new way of evangelization. The Pope applies it not only to African Religions but to other religions of the world generally, including Judaism and Islam. Remarkably, Pope Francis endorses sincere and deep rapprochement with non-Christian Religions. He validates the idea that "Non-Christians, by God's gracious initiative, when they are faithful to their own consciences, can live 'justified by the grace of God', and thus be 'associated to the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ.'⁹⁹" This deep sense of evangelization goes right back to the logic of creation where God embraces everything in love. Although, understandably, while Francis does not hold other religions' ritual expressions to the same standards as efficacious means of grace as the Christian sacraments, he accepts that they can be an inspiration to Christian life. In this age of fundamentalism which often leads to inter-religious religious intolerance and even violence, dialogue, when sincerely undertaken, is a way of evangelization that leads to the peace of Christ in the world.¹⁰⁰

Recently (2013), Pope Francis has also taken significant steps to show ecumenism as an integral dimension of evangelization. For example, he met with Patriarch Youhanna X Yazigi of the Syrian Greek Orthodox Church and has requested a meeting "anywhere" with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill. He has publicly commended Pentecostal ways of praying and, like Pope John Paul before him, did ask for forgiveness for any attitudes of condescension by Catholics. Visiting with Pentecostal leaders in Caserta, Italy (2014), he "apologized for the persecution suffered by Pentecostals under Italy's fascist regime in the 1920s and ,30s and urged Christians to celebrate their diversity and unity." He admitted that "Catholics were among

⁹⁸ Pope Paul VI, "To the Inaugural 1969 SECAM, Kampala", 35. We have omitted the italics in the original.

⁹⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 254.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, Nos. 250–254.

those who persecuted and denounced the Pentecostals, almost as if they were crazy,” and added: “I am the shepherd of the Catholics and I ask you to forgive my Catholic brothers and sisters who did not understand and were tempted by the devil.”¹⁰¹ According to Pope Francis, true evangelization must be based on the fact that all human beings are created as brothers and sisters.

Perhaps the central dimension in Pope Francis’ programme is the concern for the poor. For him “the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one.” When he talks about “the new evangelization,” he explains, its essence is the acknowledgement of God’s saving power in their [the poor’s] midst. It is a call “to put them at the centre of the Church’s pilgrim way.”¹⁰² It is this awareness, he says, that inspired his choice for a papal name, desiring to follow the example of St. Francis of Assisi. As he tells it:

I had next to me the archbishop emeritus of Sao Paulo, Claudio Hummes, a great friend of mine ... When things became a bit dangerous, he comforted me, and when the vote for me reached the two-thirds majority, a moment in which the cardinals started applauding because they had chosen a Pope, he hugged me, he kissed me and he said “don’t forget the poor”. That word, the poor, lodged in me ... It was then that I thought of St Francis. And then I thought of wars and about peace and that’s how the name came to me – a man of peace, a poor man ... and how I would like a church of the poor, for the poor.¹⁰³

As a theological category, poverty implies that the Church will go about fulfilling the Lord’s imperative of evangelization with firm determination, undeterred by whatever obstacle she might and will necessarily encounter on the way. In the footsteps of Jesus himself, the Church must do so without pomposity or any unhealthy claim to

false superiority. She evangelizes best by acting quietly as salt or yeast in the dough, as light to the world. This is what makes the new evangelization demands.

¹⁰¹ <http://www.charismanews.com/world/44817-pope-francis-apologizes-for-persecution-of-pentecostals> (29.07.2014).

¹⁰² *Evangelii gaudium*, No. 198.

¹⁰³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/the-pope/9934596/Pope-Francis-says-he-chose-his-name-because-he-wants-a-Church-of-the-poor-for-the-poor.html> (16.05.2015). Cf. also Bergoglio, Jorge Mario/Skorka, Abraham, *On Heaven and Earth: Pope Francis on Faith, Family and the Church in the 21st Century*, London 2013, 165–175; Valley, Paul, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, London 2013, 171–187.

Epochs of Evangelization: A Review of the History of Latin America

Manuel Gómez Mendoza

In terms of chronology, evangelization falls into three epochs: the colonial era, independence and the period of renewal marked by the impetus of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Borges, Pedro, *Métodos misionales en la cristianización de América: Siglo XVI*: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas: Departamento de Misionología Española, Madrid 1960; Borges, Pedro, *Historia de la Iglesia en Hispanoamérica y Filipinas (Siglo XV–XIX)*, Madrid 1992; Calzavariini, Lorenzo, *Nación Chiriguana: Grandeza y ocaso*, Cochabamba 1980; Calzavariini, Lorenzo, *Presencia franciscana y formación intercultural, en el sudeste de Bolivia, (1606–1936) según documentos del Archivo Franciscano de Tarija, IV Centenario de la fundación del Convento de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles, Colegio de Propaganda Fide 1755–1918 de Tarija (1606–2006)*, No. I–III, Santa Cruz 2004, and No. IV–VII, Santa Cruz de la Sierra Bolivia 2006; Dussel, Enrique, *Die Geschichte der Kirche in Lateinamerika*, Mainz 1988; Dussel, Enrique, *Historia general de la Iglesia en América: Tomo I: Introducción general a la Historia de la Iglesia en América Latina*, Salamanca 1983; De Egaña, Antonio, *Historia de la Iglesia en la América Española: Desde el descubrimiento hasta el siglo XIX*, Madrid 1964; Hertling, Ludwig, *Historia de la iglesia*, Barcelona 1981; Hernández, Francisco Martín, *La Iglesia en la historia, No. I–II*, Madrid 1990; Meier, Johannes, *Zur Theologiegeschichte der dritten Welt*, in: Azzi, Rolando (ed.), *Theologiegeschichte der Dritten Welt*, München 1993, 17–20; Meier, Johannes, *Religiöse Entwicklungen in den Chiquitos-reduktionen (Bolivien) seit der Ausweisung der Jesuiten*, in: Koschorke, Klaus, “Christen und Gewürze”: *Konfrontation und Interaktion kolonialer und indigener Christentumsvarianten*, Göttingen 1998, 117–131; Meier, Johannes, *Die Franziskanermissionen der Frühen Neuzeit – ein Überblick*, in: Delgado, Mariano, *Christus in den Armen und Leidenden suchend: 800 Jahre franziskanische Mission*, in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, No. 91 (2007), 298–308; Meier, Johannes, *Conquista und Mission: Die Christianisierung Lateinamerika*, in: Kranemann, Benedikt, *Mission: Konzepte und Praxis der katholischen Kirche in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Würzburg 2009, 107–122; Saranyana, Josep Ignasi, “Métodos de catequización”, in: Borges, Pedro, *Historia de la Iglesia en Hispanoamérica y Filipinas (Siglo XV–XIX)*, Madrid 1992, 549–555; Saranyana, Josep Ignasi, *Teología en América Latina*, No. II/1, escolástica barroca, Ilustración y preparación de la independencia (1665 – 1810), Madrid/Frankfurt 2005; Saranyana, Josep Ignasi, *Breve historia de la teología en América Latina: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos*, Madrid 2009; Sievernich, Michael, *Conquista und Evangelization: 500 Jahre Orden in Lateinamerika*, Mainz 1992; Sievernich, Michael, *Wandlungen in der “Theologie” der Konquistadores Zur “Historia verdadera” des Bernal Díaz del Castillo*, in: Fomet-Betancourt, Raúl (ed.), *Theologien in der Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte Lateinamerikas: Die Perspektive der Armen*, No. 2: *Theologien in der Praxis von Mission und Kolonialisierung, Ethnizität und nationale Kultur*, Eichstätt 1993, 28–53; Sievernich, Michael, *Die christliche Mission: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Darmstadt 2009; Sievernich, Michael, “Von der Akkommodation zur Inkulturation: Missionarische Leitideen

Before looking at the historical themes, some basic epistemological requirements should be noted in order to understand ecclesiastical history in the Latin American context.

First, we note the guidelines for reading Church history given by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. The Pope starts from the premise that it is the task of the Church to evangelise and that this task, which happens over time, must be remembered from the perspective of faith, much like the “deuteronomic” memory of Israel.¹⁰⁵ In this way, we are able “to see that the Church’s history is a history of salvation, to be mindful of those saints who inculturated the Gospel in the life of our peoples and to reap the fruits of the Church’s rich bi-millennial tradition, without pretending to come up with a system of thought detached from this treasury, as if we wanted to reinvent the Gospel. At the same time, this principle impels us to put the word into practice, to perform works of justice and charity which make that word fruitful”.¹⁰⁶

Secondly, we must consider historico-theological reflection as it has been forged in Latin America and the Caribbean, which adopts this “deuteronomic” memory from its own hermeneutic standpoint. To understand the history of evangelization, we must first recognise the strength of a tradition that came from Europe and developed its own special character in the New World; and in the second place, we must view the process of evangelization within the ecclesiastical history of Latin America as a moment within the “single history of salvation”, which is the history of liberation, as an existential event because it reveals itself to be a “theological space”; in other words, it is a point in time that cannot be dissociated from theology as a whole, which requires a critical reading of history from the point of view of the subject and informed by the voice of the oppressed, of the poor.

Moreover, in the current context in which indigenous peoples are recognised as the oldest population on the continent and are at the

der Gesellschaft Jesu”, in: Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft, No. 86 (2002) 4, 260–276.

¹⁰⁵ Pope Francis, Apostolic letter *Evangelii Gaudium* about the promulgation of the gospel in today’s world (announcement of the apostolic seat, No. 194), ed. by the office of the German episcopal conference, Bonn 2013, No. 13.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 233.

root of Latin American identity,¹⁰⁷ we must adopt a critical attitude so that we can “*decolonise minds, knowledge, regain historical memory, strengthen intercultural and relational spaces*” in order to advance towards “*the full citizenship (Catholicism) of these peoples*”.¹⁰⁸ In this way, we can arrive at a new understanding of the Gospel from a post-colonial perspective.

Based on these premises, evangelization can be seen as taking place over three epochs: colonial, republican and modern.

The colonial or Spanish epoch extends from the arrival of Europeans in America to the early years of the 19th century, when the movements for independence emerged. The republican period, as defined by a number of authors, continues from the independence movements until today. The period of renewal posited by this essay stretches from the Second Vatican Council, which instigated some significant changes, up to the Aparecida Conference in 2007.

The Colonial Epoch

The Church in America and the history of evangelization in the region were associated from the outset with the Spanish conquest. The protagonists were, on the one hand, the indigenous peoples, documented in the literature as “*indios*” (or Indians) and, on the other, Europeans imbued with a national identity strongly influenced by the Catholic religion.

In 1492 the Spanish King and Queen concluded a military campaign that had lasted 700 years, to reconquer Granada from the hands of the Muslims. They asserted a national and religious unity founded on triumphalism and pride. From Pope Innocent VIII the monarchy obtained royal patronage over the Church of Granada, which meant they were consulted about all appointments to ecclesiastical functions, including bishops.

On 12 October that same year, Christopher Columbus reached the “new” continent, not because he had intended to discover or conquer it, but because he was looking for an alternative maritime route to the

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Outcome document of the V. General Assembly of the bishopric of Latin America and the Caribbean in Aparecida 2007, No. 88.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 96.

Indies. It was a geographic discovery that gave a decisive turn to the history of humanity. In 1493 the King and Queen, who had financed Columbus's voyage, obtained a concession by dint of Papal Bulls in which the Pope granted them these new lands. The *Inter Coetera* bulls dated 3 and 4 May and the *Eximiae Devotionis* bull dated 3 May made them overlords over the newly discovered territories and their inhabitants with the express obligation to make the "natives" members of the Church and beneficiaries of the Gospel. Thus the process of Spanish expansion began with two interlinked objectives: political domination and the Christianisation of the peoples.

These Rights of Patronage allowed the Spanish monarchy to establish dioceses and parishes, i.e. they had the power of decision to assign personnel throughout the ecclesiastical sphere. One might say that, given the duties imposed by the Papal Bulls, evangelization became a *raison d'état*, for this was the foremost legal title, justifying Spanish rule in the new territories, radically changing ecclesiastical geography and giving new meaning to "ecclesial universality".

These concessions had their antecedents in Portugal, which was the first country to acquire such benefits. The Holy See recognised its rights of possession and patronage over territories in Africa, giving rise to a new colonial and missionary model. In addition to these antecedents derived from Rights of Patronage there was the medieval model applied to the conquest and evangelization of the Canary Islands begun in 1418.

We can break down the colonial era of evangelization into two phases: formation and consolidation.

The formative phase began following the discovery of America and had very cruel consequences, on the one hand because the Spaniards annihilated many American civilisations. Indeed, they crushed political and military structures, destroying their elites and the pre-Hispanic educational and religious institutions. The result was an indigenous community decimated by epidemics, abuse and war. On the other hand, Christianity, having set out with a missionary vocation to try bringing the good news, the kerygma, to the "*indios*" who were ignorant of the Christian faith, found it difficult to establish a dialogue at the level of existential understanding. This was because the Christians were unable to identify suitable partners for

this dialogue, since there were no spokespeople for the indigenous people. Besides, the multiplicity of cultures, regions and different stages of development prevented a systematic response. For this reason, evangelization threw in its lot with early colonisation.

The experience of the Franciscans in the early period of evangelization was interesting, since they subscribed in Mexico to a millenarian, providentialist perspective, where they were known as the "twelve Apostles", one of whom was Brother Toribio de Benavente, better known as Motolinia. They instigated a "spiritual conquest" in which Saint Francis was the captain who guided the missionary effort. From this mind-set, the savagery of the conquistadors was condemned in terms of the biblical allegories of the plagues of Egypt. The new circumstances persuaded the missionaries that evangelization should follow the ideal of the "early church".

After this initial experience, the Church began a process of institutional consolidation by means of imperial expansion, with missionary activities in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the course of its consolidation the Church established and organised itself with the economic and ideological backing of Spain which, under the terms of the Rights of Patronage, gradually asserted more privileges as the need arose. This facilitated the task, and evangelization was therefore in many cases more of a Christianisation with institutional overtones.

The Crown, which exerted its influence by creating dioceses and assigning ecclesiastical roles, consolidated the geographical reach of the Church, stretching to the North and to the South. By establishing a presence in the Caribbean from 1492 and in Mexico from 1519, the Church expanded as an institution. In the Caribbean: Santo Domingo, Concepción de Vega and San Juan de Puerto Rico in 1511; Santiago de Cuba in 1518/22; then in Mexico: Puebla in 1525, Mexico City in 1530, Oaxaca in 1535, Michoacán in 1536, Chiapas in 1538; the coast of Panama, Coro (Venezuela), Comayagua (Honduras) and León (Nicaragua) in 1531; Guatemala, Cartagena de Indias and Santa Marta in 1534. Cuzco was the first Southern diocese, founded in 1537, with 17 new bishoprics created by 1540 and another 11 by 1570. All these new jurisdictions were subject to the Archbishop of Seville in Spain.

The colonial ecclesial world was under the influence of the Tridentine Catholic doctrine (1545-1563). The mandate granted to Felipe II in 1568 by the “Junta Magna” gave a strong impetus to the application and adaptation in America of the dispositions of the Council of Trent. On the one hand, it was a factor in consolidating the Catholic hierarchy, reforming the religious orders, and defining orthodox doctrine, the catechism and the teaching methods used in the community, especially in rural areas. On the other hand, it was a political instrument, since the Crown wished to adapt the Council’s views for its own political and ideological purposes and to standardise social behaviour. This brought about a counter-reformation without Protestantism, reinforcing a new style of Catholicism marked by the presence of religious orders and a structure of colonial society informed by Catholic norms and imagination. It was in this context that the social services, schools and universities acquired their institutional hallmarks.

The Crown’s obligation to spread the Gospel was a task that brought various responsibilities. The Crown took care of selecting, training and dispatching missionaries and supported the activities of the religious orders who set sail to found missions in the New World. A fundamental role was played by the following religious orders: Franciscans (1493), Order of Mercy (1493), Dominicans (1510), Augustinians (1533), Jesuits (1566), Recollect Augustinians (1604) and Capuchins (1647), because they combined personal and institutional duties in proclaiming the Gospel in the territories of the indigenous peoples, despite their problems with the colonial authorities who did not always honour their institutional commitments to this work. In many cases conflicts arose.

In various ways the Gospel spread from the Spanish parishes, the indigenous parishes, *encomiendas* and missions. The Spanish parishes functioned under the auspices of a secular cleric, and natives who had converted to Christianity also lived among them.

The indigenous schools or parishes were former missions that became new legal entities, “parishes” within an ecclesiastic jurisdiction. Some were under the charge of a secular cleric, while others remained under the jurisdiction of religious orders.

The *encomiendas* were set up from the beginning of the conquests.

A group of natives would be entrusted to a Spaniard, who would take care of their needs in terms of food, health and religious instruction in exchange for the payment of the tribute they owed as subjects of the King. The system rewarded those who had collaborated in the conquests and voyages of discovery. This type of evangelization persisted over time but did not come up to expectations.

Missionaries reacted against this system from the start, raising their prophetic voices to denounce the injustices committed in the process of colonisation. Worthy of note in this regard are the Dominicans, Pedro de Córdoba and Antonio de Montesinos, with their famous sermon on the fourth Sunday of Advent, 1511 in the Española Church (Santo Domingo). In 1512, the Dominicans succeeded in having the “Laws of Burgos” passed, which were more favourable to the indigenous peoples. Another iconic figure in the defence of the native was Bartolomé de las Casas, who fought for indigenous rights and who, following his protests, was named “Protector of the Indians” by King Carlos V. From 1544 onwards he was bishop of the town of Llanos de Chiapas. Despite this, he was unable to achieve the abolition of forced Indian labour. Protests like these caused theologians, moralists and lawyers to question Spanish colonisation and the morality of the conquest in what was called the Valladolid Dispute, when Francisco de Vitoria, who had never set foot in America, argued that the *indios* were free to make treaties with the Spaniards and that the Pope had no right to grant native lands to the monarchy.

Another form of evangelization was the “reduction” model. These settlements were quite extraordinary in the way they constructed socio-politico-religious communities among indigenous peoples. This model was instigated by Fr. Luis de Bolaños OFM and was completed by the work of the Jesuits and the Franciscans together with various indigenous communities on the continent.

The Jesuits became the vanguard of an evangelization which surpassed all historical experience since the expansion of the Roman empire. They did this thanks to their successful missions, for example in Paraguay, Chiquitos and Moxos (now Bolivia), where they achieved a great degree of development, not only religious but also social, economic, cultural, musical and architectural. Right up to the present day, the missionary music of the 17th and 18th centuries has remained part of the living culture of Chiquitos and Moxos.

The Franciscans, from their role in Mexico as the “twelve Apostles” to their Colegios de Propaganda Fide (colleges for the propagation of the faith), made a successful contribution to the missionary model, consolidating their own brand of missionary “Franciscanism” from their base in the Colegios. These institutions were autonomous and inspired by the founding spirit, and they managed to adapt themselves to the missionary needs of every era. They developed with the help of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, created in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV to lay an institutional basis for missionary renewal. After the first college was founded in Queretaro, Mexico, in 1665, they spread across every region of Latin America. Franciscan activities fell into two spheres of evangelization: first, ordinary missions that were set up among the Creole and Spanish population using a method of education that involved the order’s temporary presence in communities, with preaching, processions, theatre and the teaching of doctrine in the form of musical verse (“coplas”); second, in their missions among the indigenous populations they set out to form communities where religious, political and economic training was available along the lines of “general schools”. The active presence of the Franciscan order, in many places from the beginnings of colonisation until today, has allowed its theology of the poor to build socio-cultural links with the rural and indigenous populations.

The method of the missionaries, Jesuits and Franciscans alike, was inspired by the first apostles. The early days were always difficult since they were obliged to make inroads into indigenous territory. They were often accompanied by troops when making the first contact, and the faith came to be associated with violence and injustice. On the strength of these experiences many of those in religious orders refused to go in with soldiers. The effects of peaceful expansion varied, depending on the period, the place and the local culture; the acceptance and/or rejection of missionaries gave rise to a great number of Christian martyrs.

Once accepted, they faced the challenge of overcoming the language barrier. So they learned native languages, of which there were a great variety. They managed to deduce grammatical rules, documenting them in formal grammar and vocabulary books and translating Christian doctrine and catechism into these languages. Alongside this, the missionaries learnt the native culture in order to

make use of certain elements in their transmission of the Gospel. In the process they destroyed many indigenous symbols, considering them anti-Christian or the work of the devil.

Another important question was what aspects of faith should be taught in the missions. In response, little catechisms were written according to the guidelines of the Council of Trent. Some texts included earlier native beliefs and guided them towards aspects of the Catholic faith; others used signs, for example, the pictographic catechism or the “quipus” in the Andean region for presenting and transmitting the word of the faith.

Missionary methods were formalised from the beginning. One example is the work of Fr. José de Acosta SJ entitled *de procuranda indorum salute*, dated 1588. It expounds a missionary theory for the evangelization of America and defines a mission as any journey into indigenous territories to proclaim the Word of God. The author emphasises the pivotal importance of proclaiming the Gospel. The consolidation of missionary methods focussed on systematic training for missionaries, who would specialise in such methods and in the native languages and cultures.

The missionary model of the religious orders was understood as “spiritual conquest”, after the Franciscan Paul of Trinidad used the term in his report on the missions in Asia in his “Spiritual Conquest of the Orient” (1636), and the Jesuit Fr. Antonio Ruiz de Montoya SJ wrote the “Spiritual Conquest of Paraguay” (1639). In the latter work the author relates the missionary process and the political, economic and religious vicissitudes that affected the missions, quite independently of the social model of the settlers.

The reductions adopted an education model that foresaw teaching the Gospel alongside the arts, music and languages in schools and workshops. This explains, for example, why traces of this approach still remain today in the popular cults of rural communities which were formerly missions.

An important group in the colonisation process were the “negroes”, despite the fact that the law did not make much provision for them and their legal status did not give rise to any ethical discussions about their slave status. Furthermore, little has been documented in history in this regard.

At the end of the colonial epoch most of the continent had been occupied and conquered. The Church found itself in the midst of a society now marked by Enlightenment influences from Europe, and rational anti-clerical debates gained ground in American circles. In addition, the Church suffered the consequences of the vacuum left by the expulsion of the Jesuits from the kingdoms of Portugal in 1759 and Spain in 1767.

The policies of Carlos III brought about a new form of administration, adopting a centralised colonial logic which benefited urban centres and not the periphery.

In this context the Church was an institution with great influence in the formation of a social conscience, in establishing norms of social behaviour and in condoning or condemning specific practices. Furthermore, internally, it was feeling the effects of the divisions in society, with some supporting the king and others in favour of revolution, as the Spanish Peninsula suppressed thinking that favoured the natives, the blacks, those of mixed race and the creoles. Socially, the Church gradually lost its initial prestige. Liberal ideas expanded rapidly in groups and sectors of society increasingly critical of its rationale.

The Era of Independence

The epoch of evangelization from the time of independence is complex because it is set in the context of new institutional relations between the Church and the republics, where new socio-political movements and currents of ecclesiastical renewal played an important role. In theory, the old system of Royal Patronage, in which the monarchy exerted a powerful influence over ecclesiastical affairs, had come to an end, but in practice the Crown continued to expect privileges similar to those afforded by the former system.

From this period on, the Church as an institution became oriented towards Rome. This paved the way for links with Europe and the wider world. In contrast, there was a rising tide of liberalism that was sometimes anti-clerical. Evangelization continued its development against this polarised backdrop.

A first phase might be identified between 1807 and 1831. During the War of Independence, the Church assumed a sometimes

favourable, sometimes antagonistic attitude to the movements for liberation and was therefore left without a unifying axis. As the ecclesiastical structure weakened, this had consequences for pastoral activities and missions. Bishops named under the Royal Patronage system were removed, leaving the hierarchy much reduced with many vacant posts and provoking disarray amid institutional unity.

Life in the religious communities disintegrated and was at times ideologically conflicted. The clergy, being the most educated sector of the population, played a fundamental part in the ideological discourse of the revolution. Many of them led emancipatory movements and found themselves playing political roles. That is why early governments took no immediate steps towards secularisation. Now and then the clergy were persecuted, with the effect that they could not engage in pastoral care. Priests who had engaged in military or political activity found it difficult to return to their pastoral duties. All this had consequences among the congregations as the parishes were neglected, religious communities were decimated and theology teachers were lost to universities. Many missionaries were persecuted, and missions were destroyed and sacked as much by royalists as by patriots.

There were two distinct facets to the lives of Christian men and women. On the one hand, the popular faith was unaffected by political change since it was deeply rooted in colonial Catholic practices as well as being valued politically for reinforcing regional and national bonds and identity. An important role was played by lay brotherhoods and tertiary orders, who helped the faithful maintain a relatively organised religious life. On the other hand, the Creole elites and traders linked with the Anglo-Saxon world, and influenced by liberalism, were known for their religious beliefs with enlightened, anti-clerical and individualist influences.

Relations between the Church and the State underwent change, and in its transformation the Church became oriented towards Rome. In February 1831, Pope Gregory XVI initiated an institutional process by naming six resident bishops for Mexico. In August the same year he published his papal encyclical *Sollicitudo Ecclesiarum* in preparation for, and recognition of, the new states on the American continent.

Missions ended up abandoned and the sparse missionary personnel could not count on the support of the State as they had

done in colonial times. There were some attempts at renewal. Among these was the work of Brother Andrés Herrero, who restored the colleges of the Propaganda Fide in Chile, Peru and Bolivia. The missionary spirit of the European religious orders was reflected in activities in Patagonia, the Amazon region and the Andes, especially in the colleges of the Propaganda Fide in Bolivia and Peru.

Church hierarchy was reinforced with the creation of the Colegio Pio Latino Americano in Rome in 1858. It was here that priests, many of them future bishops, studied under the guidance of Rome. The Latin American church united thanks to the impetus supplied by Pope Leo XIII who, in 1899, convened the First Plenary Council of Latin America. This encouraged the renaissance of collegial awareness among the bishops and the establishment of criteria for church unity. The Council proposed 998 articles, whose intention to maintain, defend and protect the faith was more influenced by Canon Law than missionary action. This was despite its treatment of matters that were specific to Latin American pastoral affairs such as paganism, superstition, religious ignorance, socialism, the press etc. It had the effect of creating a new Rome-leaning direction in the Church, previously marked by the tradition and inheritance of Iberian religion, and of transforming the pastoral model. Furthermore, the sense of belonging was reinforced in order to confront the trend towards liberalism and anti-Catholicism.

The Church was facing new social situations: from 1880 onwards there was another huge wave of European migration – Spaniards, Italians, Germans and British – which changed the demographics, presenting new challenges for pastoral care. Many were baptised with insufficient catechism. The migrants were being integrated into a new religious system, and the Church found it impossible to attend to their care. This phenomenon of migration was overlaid by that of rural exodus to the cities and a growing working class that lacked parishes and pastoral support. Religious congregations assumed actions of service, depending on their charism, thereby significantly increasing the number of schools and works of social assistance.

At the end of the 19th century more universities were in the hands of positivists and under a liberal influence. Ecclesial experience had no clear response to confront the dominance of positivism and the new capitalist trends.

Another characteristic of this period was the rise of specific devotions such as that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Virgin, which combined with familial and social practices, reinforcing popular religious expression and holding ideological and secular attitudes at bay. Moreover, many associations of the faithful were founded to serve spiritual and social objectives, while others of an international complexion, such as the Daughters of Mary, were encouraged by Rome and helped to cater for the spiritual needs of Christian men and women at the time.

The Catholic Action group played an important role in the movement towards renewal. Its origins dated from the 19th century, Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) began to highlight the need for secular clergy and lay people to collaborate in the apostolic mission of the Church. Pius X laid down the lines along which this should be organised in his encyclical *Il firmo proposito* of 1905, and Pius XI absorbed the participation of the laity into the apostolic hierarchy. In this way Catholic Action was characterised by its links to the apostolic mission of the Church and its dependence on the hierarchy. Following an Italian model, male, female and youth sections were created and quickly became known, such as the YCW (Young Christian Workers), YCS (Young Christian Students), MIJARC (International Movement of Agricultural and Rural Youth) and various associations of academic Catholics, etc. All this pursued a notion of “new Christianity”. These groups were the source of resistance to liberal and lay tendencies. Over time, Catholic associations were able to organise at national level and they brought with them valuable opportunities to reflect on and experience the meaning of Catholicism in different social settings, which was taken on board by the bishops via their conferences.

Despite the diversity of regional contexts, these organisations were consolidated throughout Latin America and were an important lever for episcopal conferences.

A Period of Renewal

In the 20th century the episcopate was systematically structured to respond to the challenges of evangelization in the wake of great global transformations such as those at the end of the Second World War, which set its stamp on future political and economic trends. Latin

America saw a period of industrialisation with multinational corporations exerting a powerful influence.

In 1955 the Latin American Episcopate came together to hold the first General Conference of Rio de Janeiro. It was a significant step towards fostering ecclesial unity and renewal. An important outcome was the creation of CELAM (Latin American Episcopal Conference) as an organised body for networking and study, with its seat in Bogota. Its theological motivation was to renew the mission of the Church and to continue the mission of Jesus Christ in the world.

The Second Vatican Council was an important event for the Church in Latin America. During this council, the bishops contributed their practical experience, providing significant input for the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. The leadership of Msgr Helder C  mara, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Msgr Manuel Larra  n, Bishop of Talca, Chile, and Msgr Le  nidas Proa  o, Bishop of Riobamba in Ecuador, among others, should be noted in this regard. Their reflections on “the church of the poor” influenced concepts developed at the Council and brought about the “Pact of the Catacombs”, led by Msgr C  mara, which was an invitation for bishops to lead the life of the poor in order, as a Church, to serve the poor.

With the support of Pope John XXIII the Church in Latin America turned towards the model of reflection and analysis formulated as “see, judge and act” (*Mater et Magistra* 236), observing the reality of Latin America and constructing a new form of pastoral life.

After the Council, CELAM faced the challenge of pushing for Council reforms in the Latin American context via the various conferences that were held, highlighting the shift in theological paradigms. In this way a new Christian thinking took root in and for Latin America, recognised and welcomed on other continents – as it was, for example, in various African countries. In 1966 the missionary department of CELAM initiated its “indigenista” pastoral programme, which came to be known as an “indigenous” pastoral project and involved the participation of indigenous theologians. From the late 20th century CELAM itself fostered the qualitative contribution from so-called “Indian theology”.

In 1968, the Episcopal Conference was held in Medell  n, Colombia. Its theme was “The Church in the current transformation of

Latin America in the light of Vatican II”. Apart from the Second Vatican Council document, reference was made to the recent encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967) by Paul VI. The main thrust was its option for a poor Church (Ch. XIV), applying a socio-theological method of reflection based on the principle “see, judge and act”, as reprised from the Young Christian Workers in Belgium by John XXIII.

At this point, it is worth signalling the contribution of Clodovis Boff, who proposed a methodology for reflexion in three phases: the first, listening to faith (hermeneutic), which gathers the *intellectus fidei*; the speculative phase, which consists in explaining the faith (theory); and the practical phase, the point of arrival, which seeks to make faith real or to project it into (practical) life, responding to the demands of current history in order to transform reality in this light. In Medell  n the Church was furthermore designated as “a people of God”.¹⁰⁹

Conclusions were drawn in turn around three themes: supporting humanity and its peoples, an appropriate education in the faith, and the renewal of personnel and organisational structures. This document was called “prophetic” since it managed to capture the reality of life on the continent and it embodied the “option for the poor”. This conference, in the midst of the stern dictatorships of Latin America, marked a fundamental shift in the work of the Church on the ground: many orders and religious congregations moved to the peripheries of large cities to care for the impoverished and oppressed proletariat. This conversion of the Church brought about new conflicts not unlike those of the first era of colonisation, between the defenders of the poor and of indigenous peoples and the conservative forces.

During the period of military dictatorships, where human rights were swept aside, the third Episcopal Conference was held in Puebla, Mexico, in 1979. Some reorientation was required in the face of the critical situation, remaining faithful to Medell  n and also to the guidance of the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Paul VI. Its conclusions were: to denounce instances of institutionalised violence, to call Christians to the option for the poor and the oppressed, to demand respect for human rights, to provide guidance for understanding “liberation theology”, and to reaffirm the option for youth in the spirit of Medell  n.

¹⁰⁹ Lumen Gentium, No. 9.

The Conference of Santo Domingo was held in 1992, marking the quincentenary of the evangelization of America. In addition the military dictatorships had come to an end in the preceding years, as had the disputes over liberation theology. In this context, the bishops included in their reflection the theme of “inculturation”. Given the need to face the realities of the faith of the indigenous peoples, the blacks and those of mixed race, it was deemed necessary to initiate a dialogue between the Gospel and the various cultures. At this 4th CELAM conference, the “see, judge, act” approach was abandoned, prompting criticism of the final text.

The fifth general episcopal conference, held in Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007, tackled the issue of confronting with faith the challenges and aspirations of the new century, in order to live out a new Pentecost that would fuel a much more missionary evangelization and promote a permanent continental mission.¹¹⁰

These conferences traced the process of ecclesiastic renewal and the construction of doctrinal and ecclesial unity. The reception of council doctrine was interesting in the Latin American context, illustrating how local realities could generate a theology specific to the Church in Latin America.

In the light of this whole process, we should not ignore how “liberation theology” contributed to Latin American theology. Gustavo Gutiérrez, one of the exponents, proclaimed through his writings the existence of a new theological language in Latin America based on the affirmation that history as we live it on earth is the only history.

In the wake of Rome’s prudent attitude to liberation theology, Pope John Paul II, in a letter to the Bishop of Brazil in 1986, stated his opinion that “liberation theology is not only timely, but also useful and necessary”. In 2014, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Gerhard Ludwig Müller, published his book “On the Side of the Poor” with a foreword by Pope Francis. This was a way of recognising the significant contribution of liberation theology to the modern era.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Outcome document of the V. General Assembly of the bishopric of Latin America and the Caribbean in Aparecida 2007, No. 213, 215.

Conclusion

We have briefly covered what was a long process down the eras of evangelization in Latin America from 1492 until almost today. Over this period the Gospel was proclaimed in various ways and in different circumstances, subject first to the politics of the Spanish crown, then undergoing processes of political and national consolidation until it found its own place, its own expression and its own voice in the wake of the impetus from Vatican II, demonstrating its vitality and its capacity to become a part of the life of the faithful.

This history needs to be read within a “long-term” logic that reveals the vitality of the Gospel along this historical process in which the evangelization project took shape, reflecting both institutional hierarchies and the diversity of missionary initiatives which drew on the Gospel as their source. This enables us to see that the kerygma, proclaimed in the early days of the Spanish conquest with a European voice and face, resonated with and found expression through local communities, where people – indigenous, black, of mixed race and marginalised – live the Gospel teachings from their experience of faith. This invites us to look closely at the past so that we can build a future in the light of the Gospel, with an attentive gaze and a heart open to the single history of salvation.

Mission as Evangelization

Mission as Evangelization, or: Everything starts with Jesus

Hildegard Wustmans

The term “mission” is probably one of the most controversial theological terms both inside and outside the Church. That is due, in part at least, to the missions conducted with violence and coercion in God’s name, which makes it all the more urgent to examine this concept and confront its history. This means avoiding two extremes: jettisoning it too hastily and applying it naïvely. A “new” approach in this sense is offered by the *Ad Gentes* decree on the missionary work of the Church, which shows that the activity of spreading, or proposing, the faith is part of the essence of the Church to which all the faithful are invited, indeed called upon, to take part. It is in this activity that “concern for the world”¹¹¹ manifests itself and reveals how it is to become good news. Through the manner in which witness is borne to the Gospel in the mission “[the Church] insures its position by virtue of the answers it gives to the world’s questions.”¹¹² This is probably the most effective kind of insurance against a patronising attitude, arrogance and violence in the name of God, as it always leads the faithful back to him who stands at the outset – Jesus.¹¹³

Christians believe in Jesus and profess their faith in him. He is the reason why Peter and Paul, the Irish-Scottish monks, Francis of Assisi, Dorothy Stang and many others gave their lives a new

¹¹¹ Wenzel, Knut, *Kleine Geschichte des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 2005, 223.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 224.

¹¹³ Cf. Klinger, Elmar, *Die franziskanische Prophetie in der Kirche*, Rome 2009, http://ex.ccfmc.net/www.ccfmc.net/wDeutsch/ccfmc/bibliothek/franz_klara_theol/Franziskanische_Prophetie.pdf (12.09.2014).

direction. They entered the service of the Kingdom of God which Jesus had proclaimed. For “what he says and does, what he prays for and what he suffers for, the struggle he wages, the decisions he takes, the hopes he cherishes and the horizons that he opens, each and every one of these things concerns the Kingdom of God”.¹¹⁴ Hence it is only natural that he should send others forth, likewise charged with placing themselves in the service of the Kingdom of God and proclaiming it (Matthew 10:5-10). Those who are sent forth do so in the name of Jesus, who not only proclaimed the Kingdom of God, but also personified it. “He is the man of the Kingdom of God [...]. The Kingdom of God, as lived and preached by Jesus, [...] is the foundation for a new order of coexistence, its principle of primacy, whose validity it is a constant challenge to uphold. The lower comes before the higher, the small before the great, the poor before the rich”.¹¹⁵ His life is mission. “One cannot separate it from the cause that it serves.”¹¹⁶ What is said here of Jesus applies in principle to all those baptised in his name, for they stand in direct relation to Jesus. “Jesus not only brought [the Gospel], but lived it. He not only showed the way, he followed it. He is the Gospel in person, but also the person of the Gospel, the person who shows everybody what to do and how they should conduct themselves in order to find this path and follow it.”¹¹⁷

The good news of the Kingdom of God carries an obligation to speak and act. Whoever believes in Jesus and hopes for the Kingdom of God must proclaim the fact. This mission is called evangelization. It means “bearing witness to the Kingdom of God under present conditions”.¹¹⁸ For this reason all God’s people can and should take part in this project.¹¹⁹ Evangelization is a task concerning the Church as a whole wherever it happens to be.¹²⁰ Spreading the news of the

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 7.

¹¹⁹ On the specific significance of the laity in this regard the reader is referred to *Lumen Gentium* No. 35 and to Elmar Klinger, who constantly stresses this aspect. Klinger, Elmar, *Armut: Eine Herausforderung Gottes: Der Glaube des Konzils und die Befreiung des Menschen*, Zurich 1990, 129–131.

¹²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 131.

Kingdom of God is entrusted to the Church so that it can pass the news on and share it with everyone. “That is the missionary aspect of evangelization.”¹²¹

Evangelization and Mission

Those who believe in the Kingdom of God act as part of a mission. They are envoys in the service of the Kingdom of God. A description of this mission is to be found in *Gaudium et Spes* 1: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.” This is the focus of all mission work and evangelization in the name of Jesus.¹²² But it would be a mistake to see in this an aspiration to restore something from the past. On the contrary, mission and evangelization are provoking something new. “Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: “We have always done it this way”.¹²³ We are talking about the Kingdom of God, which has its origins in the past and makes it “an issue in the present to shape the future. [...] Under the conditions of the present it reminds us of the past in order to open up the path to the future”.¹²⁴ In this sense evangelization is critical and provocative, particularly since it directs our gaze towards those for whom God has a special love – the poor.

¹²¹ Sander, Hans-Joachim, “Evangelisierung: Eine Emmaus-Überraschung”, in: *Pastoralblatt für die Diözesen Aachen, Berlin, Essen, Hildesheim, Cologne, Osnabrück*, No. 65 (2013) 3, 81–88, here 83.

¹²² Cf. Sander, Hans-Joachim, “Mission und Religion – unentrinnbar ein Dispositiv der Gewalt? Von der Not und dem Segen einer missionarischen Kirche”, in: Sellmann, Matthias (ed.), *Deutschland – Missionsland: Zur Überwindung eines pastoralen Tabus (Quaestiones Disputatae, 206)*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 2004, 121–145, here 121. It is a good idea to read Pope Francis’s *Evangelii Gaudium* in this context. As illustrative of the approaches to the text one might refer at this point to the “*Evangelii Gaudium*” Forum in *Zeitschrift für Missions- und Religionswissenschaft*, No. 98 (2014), 127–147 with contributions by Paulo Suess, Felix Wilfred et al.

¹²³ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* on the proclamation of the Gospel in today’s world, No. 33, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (14.03.2016).

¹²⁴ Klinger, Elmar, *Die franziskanische Prophetie in der Kirche*, Rome 2009, 1.

Challenged by the poor

The Good News is not neutral. The message from the Kingdom of God privileges the poor and supports the cause of justice. It is accompanied by a reminder of the need for self-criticism and humility, since the message of the Kingdom of God is as incompatible with religious arrogance as it is with economic and social exploitation. What we have to do is walk in the path of Jesus, who goes among men, who lets himself be touched by them and seeks to improve their lives (cf. Mark 5:25-34; Matthew 9:1-8).

Given this state of affairs, we can say that the content of the Christian mission is something that is objective and verifiable by the manner in which evangelization takes place. Its content is not just a matter of prevarications and promises, but a summons to act. It is concrete and directs our gaze towards God, who loves mankind. This God is the just King, of whom we read in Psalms 72:2-4 and 12-14:

“... may he rule your people with justice, and your poor with fair judgement. / He will judge the poor of the people, he will save the children of the needy and crush their oppressors. [...] / For he rescues the needy who calls to him, and the poor who has no one to help. / He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the needy from death. / From oppression and violence he redeems their lives, their blood is precious in his sight.”

With this God the situation can change for the better. In this sense the poor are a kind of litmus test for every mission and evangelization. “If that which is preached is not what is good for the poor, we are not dealing with the gospel of Jesus.”¹²⁵ This is the attitude that distinguishes those who propagate the faith.

Changing reality for the better

It is a remarkable fact that those who propagate the faith only really discover what their beliefs and hopes are at the moment that they pass them on. This shows that those who believe are not automatically evangelised. For it is also an incontrovertible fact that not everything that is believed serves the Kingdom of God. “Those who

¹²⁵ Cf. Moreno, Juan Ramón, “Evangelisierung”, in: Ellacuría, Ignacio/Sobrinho, Jon (eds.), *Mysterium Liberationis: Grundbegriffe der Theologie der Befreiung*, No. 2, Lucerne 1996, 789–808, here 797.

believe have not undergone evangelization. Those who let themselves be evangelized have a surprisingly different kind of belief.”¹²⁶ In human encounters new, liberating aspects and themes crop up that can no longer be evaded.

Another pointer in this direction is the Second Vatican Council, which also stands for a new relationship between the pastoral and the dogmatic. In the words of the Second Vatican Council, evangelization as the exercise of pastoral ministry is not “a place for the application of dogmatic principles. [...] Pastoral ministry is itself a place of discovery for Church doctrine...]. Since the Second Vatican Council pastoral ministry means the Church’s active, gospel-governed relationship with the world as a whole. [...] Pastoral ministry is not the external appearance of the Church, but its power to act in a temporal dimension.”¹²⁷

If those who preach the gospel of Jesus are to be consistent they cannot ignore the existential situations and problems people face in whatever place they occur. They see what is most urgently needed and act accordingly. However, this proclamation, whether in word or deed, has always been hazardous. It characterised the history of the martyrs. But the latter knew that, if they wanted to interest people in the Christian message, they had to place themselves in the service of such people, and that holds true even today. It is literally a way of exposing oneself and recognizing that the world is a *locus theologicus*.¹²⁸ “The presence of [...] human beings is a place where one can speak of the presence of God.”¹²⁹ Consequently, changing reality for the better is just another way of saying evangelization. A person’s life should reveal whether this message is really good news, that it is

¹²⁶ Sander, Hans-Joachim, “Evangelisierung: Eine Emmaus-Überraschung”, in: *Pastoralblatt für die Diözesen Aachen, Berlin, Essen, Hildesheim, Cologne, Osnabrück*, No. 65 (2013) 3, 81–88, here 82.

¹²⁷ Bucher, Rainer, “Ziemlich irrelevant – spätestens heute: Eine pastoraltheologische Lektüre des Synodenbeschlusses ‘Ehe und Familie’”, in: Bucher, Rainer, *An neuen Orten: Studien zu den aktuellen Konstitutionsproblemen der deutschen und österreichischen katholischen Kirche*, Würzburg 2014, 67–86, here 79.

¹²⁸ Cf. Sander, Hans-Joachim, “Theologischer Kommentar zur Pastoralkonstitution über die Kirche in der Welt von heute: Gaudium et spes”, in: Hünermann, Peter/Hilberath, Bernd Jochen (eds.), *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, No. 4, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 2005, 581–886, here 726; Klinger, Elmar, *Ekklesiologie der Neuzeit: Grundlegung bei Melchior Cano und Entwicklung bis zum 2. Vatikanischen Konzil*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 1978.

¹²⁹ Sander, Hans-Joachim, loc. cit., 726.

not only meaningful, but also significant. Anyone who preaches the gospel in the name of the Lord loves both God and humanity.¹³⁰ In words and deeds, and with regard to Jesus, he receives not only the content of his message, but also its format.

Self-Evangelization and conversion

The importance of self-evangelization is made clear in the New Testament. Even Jesus could not evade self-evangelization, as is shown, for example, by the encounter with the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15: 21-28), who converted him to the heathen mission. This tradition suggests that self-evangelization was a necessary condition for the evangelization of the Church, as it addresses the issue of what significance the Gospel has for those who already believe in it.¹³¹ This leads on to another unavoidable aspect – conversion. Without conversion, without a spiritual, theological and geographical change of scene, evangelization is unthinkable, unbelievable and unconvincing. For the Gospel is a life-changing fact. It is a discovery of life in life. It promises the Kingdom of God, which in turn requires conversion.¹³² This inevitably entails a readiness to put up with uncertainty, questioning and irritation, which includes a degree of patience with oneself and with others. Whoever believes in the Gospel must be able to await the proposal of the faith. This requires perseverance, humility and trust in God. Evangelization is always a spiritual process in the lives of all concerned. For this reason, too, the Gospel is not just something in the possession of the Church, but something that she too must also rediscover for herself. What there is to discover, stands in her way, so to speak. These are the issues of the day – the signs of the times.

A close look at the signs of the times

The signs of the times set standards. They form the framework for the process of evangelization. They must make clear what can be believed and what can be hoped for. Consequently, the starting

¹³⁰ Cf. Klinger, Elmar, *Die franziskanische Prophetie in der Kirche*, Rome 2009.

¹³¹ Cf. Sander, Hans-Joachim, “Evangelisierung: Eine Emmaus-Überraschung”, in: *Pastoralblatt* für die Diözesen Aachen, Berlin, Essen, Hildesheim, Cologne, Osnabrück, No. 65 (2013) 3, 81–88, here 82.

¹³² Cf. *ibid.*

points of evangelization are: being there and listening closely. Only in the interplay of these two dimensions does it become clear what the comforting word and the liberating deed are. Evangelization is not something that is generated by activism and takes place exclusively through words. Both are soon exhausted, because the staying power is lacking and there is no possibility of verification. The significance of the good news can only be grasped through human contacts and not independently of them, depending as it does on what is needed at a specific place and whether the faith can offer a liberating perspective. These challenges were written into Christianity from the very start, and how we are to meet them may be deduced from studying Jesus' actions. Jesus approached other people with friendly respect. Not only that, he gave them an opportunity to say what ailed them and helped them to overcome it. Very much in this spirit is the formulation used by the Latin American bishops in the Puebla document, in which they wrote: “Therefore the Church should look to Christ if she wants to know what her evangelising work should be like.”¹³³ Jesus “refers ... merely to the truth of his existence [and says, for example, to the paralytic]: ‘I order you: get up, pick up your stretcher, and go off home.’¹³⁴ (Mark 2:11). The people who come and ask him to do something for them are already believers as far as Jesus is concerned.¹³⁵ To the woman suffering from a haemorrhage (Matthew 9:22) he says: “Courage, my daughter, your faith has saved you.” The following is reported of the centurion in Capernaum who asked for his servant to be healed (Matthew 8:5-13): “When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those following him, ‘In truth I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found faith as great as this’.” (Matthew 8:10)

Jesus' practice proves that God is there before the missionary.¹³⁶ This shows that the Church did not create mission for its own sake or for the sake of the institution, but for the sake of the people (“I have

¹³³ Latin American episcopal conference, *Die Evangelisierung Lateinamerikas in Gegenwart und Zukunft*, Puebla 1979, No. 1141, http://www.iupax.at/images/Dokumente/pdf_Soziallehre/1979-celam-puebla-die-evangelisierunglateinamerikas-in-gegenwart-und-zukunft.pdf (12.09.2014).

¹³⁴ Bacq, Philippe, “Für eine Erneuerung vom Ursprung her: Auf dem Weg zu einer ‘zeugenden Pastoral’”, in: Feiter, Reinhard/Müller, Hadwig (eds.), *Pastoraltheologische Impulse aus Frankreich* (Bildung und Pastoral No. 1), Ostfildern 2013, 31–55, here 52.

¹³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

¹³⁶ Cf. Boff, Leonardo, *Gott kommt früher als der Missionar: Neuevangelisierung für eine Kultur des Lebens und der Freiheit*, Düsseldorf 1991.

come so that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). The Church's mission enables people to discover and develop their own faith. It is not just a question of passing on the faith, but of the surprises experienced in connection with a discovery when it is being passed on. Evangelization means looking at something familiar with fresh eyes.¹³⁷

However, there is no guarantee that such discoveries will take place automatically. If that were the case, one would not need to worry about ways and means of spreading the faith. Mission and evangelization can also fail. That this is the case is shown, for example, by the fact that for many people the term "mission" has negative or banal connotations. This is a fact that cannot just be brushed aside. The dark and violent side of the Christian mission is a reality that any talk of mission or evangelization has to face up to.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, every failed mission can be of importance if it helps us to see our errors and explore new paths. In this sense failure is an important theological and spiritual basis for understanding; it shows us in what mode the Church and those active in it configure themselves and whence they take their bearings. Do they act in the power mode of the *societas perfecta* or in the authority mode of the Second Vatican Council?¹³⁹ Do they act on their own initiative, without regard to the circumstances, the time and the place, or are the circumstances, the time and the place the starting point for what is said and done because it is impossible to evade them? What is at stake is no more and no less than the relevance of the world for the Church and her mission. She shows herself in the attitude which she usually shows to the world.

The above remarks set the stage for one of the first and most significant missionaries of Christendom – Saint Paul. He can teach us to distinguish between mission and evangelization, since he, more

¹³⁷Hans-Joachim Sander draws attention to this connection in his interpretation of the Emmaus story (Luke 24:13-35), where the closing procedure of the abduction strongly supports a theological and revelatory view. Cf. Sander, Hans-Joachim, loc. cit., 84–87.

¹³⁸ Cf. Sander, Hans-Joachim, "Mission und Religion – unentrinnbar ein Dispositiv der Gewalt? Von der Not und dem Segen einer missionarischen Kirche", in: Sellmann, Matthias (ed.), *Deutschland – Missionsland: Zur Überwindung eines pastoralen Tabus (Quaestiones Disputatae 206)*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 2004, 121–145.

¹³⁹ Cf. Sander, Hans-Joachim, "Theologischer Kommentar zur Pastoralverfassung über die Kirche in der Welt von heute: Gaudium et spes", in: Hünermann, Peter/Hilberath, Bernd Jochen (eds.), *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, No. 4, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 2005, 581–886, here 601, 649.

than anyone else, incorporates both the violent and the liberating side of mission.¹⁴⁰ Paul shows that evangelization always leads via the extent of conversion. He does not deny his violent mission and can therefore lay claim to the authority due to a missionary of Christ. In his Epistle to the Galatians he writes: "You have surely heard how I lived in the past, within Judaism, and how there was simply no limit to the way I persecuted the Church of God in my attempts to destroy it" (Galatians 1:13). But the story does not end there. God revealed himself and showed Paul his grace. Thus Paul writes in the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "But what I am now, I am through the grace of God, and the grace which was given to me has not been wasted. Indeed, I have worked harder than all the others – not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). That became evident in his mission, and people will later say about him: "The man once so eager to persecute us is now preaching the faith that he used to try to destroy. And they gave glory to God for me." (Galatians 1:23).

The God that revealed himself to him taught him something essential – faith in him, God, was only attainable in unshakable solidarity with humankind and the rest of creation: God becomes man, born the son of a virgin (Luke 1:31), he empties himself and dies on the cross (Philippians 2:5-11). Paul experienced God's solidarity. He was imbued by it. It became the mode of his mission. It is the core of his evangelization and it makes him strangely free to approach everyone in the same way.¹⁴¹ He is all things to all men. "So though I was not a slave to any human being, I put myself in slavery to all people, to win as many as I could. To the Jews I made myself as a Jew, to win the Jews; to those under the Law as one under the Law (though I am not), in order to win those under the Law; to those outside the Law as one outside the Law, though I am not outside the Law but under Christ's law, to win those outside the Law. To the weak, I made myself weak, to win the weak. I accommodated myself to people in all kinds of different situations, so that by all possible means I might bring some to salvation. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, that I may share its benefits with others." (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Sander, Hans-Joachim, "Mission und Religion – unentrinnbar ein Dispositiv der Gewalt? Von der Not und dem Segen einer missionarischen Kirche", in: Sellmann, Matthias (ed.), *Deutschland – Missionsland: Zur Überwindung eines pastoralen Tabus (Quaestiones Disputatae 206)*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 2004, 121–145.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 143.

Paul met a God who did not let himself be led astray by Paul's past. He met a gracious and kindly God. Given this background, Paul's mission strategy is not an attempt to curry favour with the aim of turning as many people as possible into Christians. He knows that he does not possess the power to do this. He cannot save everyone, as he himself writes. What he can do, however, is make friends with everyone he encounters and so use them as a sounding board for the goodness and kindness of God. Paul's mission is not concerned with himself, but with giving people the opportunity to get to know God. And for this very reason he not only accepts, but exploits the fact that it is those who [formulate] the concerns to whom he submits and in whom his own message is present".¹⁴²

Human concerns – always a crisis

As human beings and their concerns are critical for Paul's mission, he points out a decisive and definitive factor for every evangelization project: that the concerns and issues should be heard at the place in question and the existing strengths there inspected. There is no point in harping on about the weaknesses shown by others, even though the initial impression created might be that one is better, stronger, and more secure.¹⁴³ Paul does not seem to need that any more. He does not define others in terms of their weaknesses. He "encounters those under the law, but not as someone outside the law who identifies them with problems that are naturally caused by the law. He encounters the weak, but not as a strong man who wishes to make them suffer in the awareness of their weakness, so as to make them dependent on his strength. He encounters the Jews, but not as a Christian who disputes their own Jewish path to God. He encounters all that makes them human and religious, among men and before God, so that they can approach God, each with his own peculiar strength. He makes them the *sujet* of their religious and human strength."¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Cf. Sander, Hans-Joachim, "Identitäten im prekären Plural: Eine Ortsbestimmung für die Christen in nachmoderner Zeit", in: *Kirche und Israel*, No. 20 (2005), 4–7, here 7.

¹⁴⁴ Sander, Hans-Joachim, "Mission und Religion – unentrinnbar ein Dispositiv der Gewalt? Von der Not und dem Segen einer missionarischen Kirche", in: Sellmann, Matthias (ed.), *Deutschland – Missionsland: Zur Überwindung eines pastoralen Tabus (Quaestiones Disputatae 206)*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 2004, 121–145, here 143f.

Paul's missionary practice is more than just a clever strategy, for it strengthens what evangelization is concerned with – the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, the beginnings of which are already in place. To this day it remains a challenge for all those who believe in what the Kingdom of God personifies – Jesus. Evangelization in his name, in his mission exists only in the mode of solidarity and affection, of respect and humility towards all people in today's world.

Mission as Evangelization

Kirsteen Kim

Evangelization is a biblical term that can be traced back to the proclamation of the angels at Jesus' birth and to Jesus' declared intention at the outset of his ministry to bring 'good news' or the gospel (*euangelion* in Greek). The New Testament refers to the gift of evangelist after apostles and prophets (Eph 4.11). The verb to 'evangelize' fell out of use soon after New Testament times. Although reference was frequently made to 'the four evangelists' – the writers of the gospels, there was no office of evangelist or ministry of evangelism. In modern times the terms evangelization and evangelism have been revived and used by different traditions in varied ways. These differ markedly in the scope given to the terms and in the ways they are related to 'mission'.¹⁴⁵ In this chapter, we will analyse some of this variety to clarify some of the points at issue.

Protestants, Evangelicals, Evangelization and Evangelism

After the Reformation, Protestants used the term 'Evangelical' to describe their churches as under gospel authority but the 'Evangelical Awakening' which began in the eighteenth century in the Church of England used the term more narrowly to refer to a particular pietistic expression of faith. This movement spawned 'evangelicalism'. One of the main characteristics of this form of Protestantism is activism to bring about evangelization. The response to the gospel is understood as conversion – or being 'born again' – from a life of sin, belief in the Bible as the only authority for faith and conduct and a focus on Christ's death on the cross as of central significance for human salvation.¹⁴⁶ From the eighteenth century revivals onwards there have been famous 'evangelists' who have used the latest forms of com-

¹⁴⁵ For a more extensive discussion, see Bosch, David, *Transforming Mission*, New York 1991, 409–411.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Bebbington, D.W., *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, London 1989, 2–17.

munication to reach mass audiences with such a message. From the twentieth century particularly, Evangelicals have mobilized members for 'evangelism' of friends and family members on a one-to-one basis and in a personal way.

Use of 'evangelization' to refer to the core activity of mission was revived by late nineteenth-century English-speaking Protestants, particularly through the Student Volunteer Movement from the 1880s.¹⁴⁷ The reports of the Ecumenical Missionary Conference in New York in 1900,¹⁴⁸ for example, referred frequently to the goal of missions as 'the world's evangelization', to role of 'evangelists' (usually local people) and to various forms of 'evangelistic agency' or method. When the World Council of Churches (WCC) was formed in 1948 it set up desk for 'evangelism' that understood the term primarily as the part of the 'home mission' activity of the churches concerned with presenting the Christian message.¹⁴⁹ In 1961, when the International Missionary Council was merged into the WCC, mission and evangelism were put together in a new 'division' – later 'commission' – as part of an agenda to overcome the dichotomy of home and overseas mission and recognise that participation in the mission of God (*missio dei*) is the responsibility of all churches everywhere in their own locality as much as overseas.¹⁵⁰ From the beginning the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) tended to focus on 'mission' rather than evangelism, which it defined in a broad sense as the mission of God (*missio dei*).¹⁵¹ The reluctance to address the 'evangelism' part of its mandate was mainly because of the word's association with aggressive converting activity. The Orthodox churches complained their people had been subjected historically by Western missions to an 'evangelism' that amounted to 'proselytism', which was condemned as a 'corruption of Christian witness' in which 'cajolery, bribery, undue pressure or intimidation is used – subtly or openly – to bring about seeming conversion'.¹⁵² Post-colonial theologians also saw evange-

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Stanley, Brian, *The World Missionary Conference*, Grand Rapids 2009, 88.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *Ecumenical Missionary Conference*, New York 1900 (No. 1 and 2), New York 1900.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Neill, Stephen C., "Evangelism and the World Council", in: *Christian Century*, No. 66 (April 1949) 15, 460–62.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. for example, Fiers, A. Dale, "The Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches", in: *Midstream*, No. 1 (May 1962) 2, 22–25.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Flett, John G., *The Witness of God*, Grand Rapids 2010.

¹⁵² World Council of Churches, "Christian Witness, Proselytism and Religious Liberty in the

ling as damaging to the Christian cause, especially in India where anti-conversion laws had been passed in several states.¹⁵³ To avoid the colonial associations of evangelism and mission, 'witness' became the preferred term.

However, Evangelical leaders expressed their alarm at the apparent lack of concern in the WCC to preach the distinctive message of the gospel and call for a response, for example at the conference on mission and evangelism in Bangkok in 1972-1973, when 'salvation today' was redefined as comprising economic justice, human dignity, solidarity, and 'hope in personal life', without any explicit reference to Jesus Christ or eternal life.¹⁵⁴ At their own conferences, Evangelicals condemned such language and accused the World Council of Churches of 'betraying' those who had never heard the message of Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁵

However within parts of the Evangelical movement, particularly among Latin American theologians, there was growing concern that, in its focus on verbal proclamation and salvation of souls, Evangelicalism was neglecting the poor.¹⁵⁶ The 1974 Covenant of the Lausanne Commission for World Evangelization expressed regret for the separation of 'evangelism' from 'social concern'. It affirmed that 'socio-political involvement' is part of the Christian duty to love one's neighbour, and that God's kingdom begins in this world. However, the Lausanne Covenant maintained a distinction between 'evangelism' as preaching the gospel and 'social action'. These were seen as twin aspects of the church's mission but evangelism was 'primary'.¹⁵⁷ The rationale behind this included the following reasons: that the conversion of individuals will change behaviour and improve society; the belief that faith in Christ not only helps a person temporally but secures a an eternal destiny;

Setting of the World Council of Churches", in: *Ecumenical Review*, No. 9 (October 1956) 1, 48–56.

¹⁵³ Cf. Kim, Sebastian C.H., *In Search of Identity*, New York 2002.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Bosch, David, op. cit., 382–386.

¹⁵⁵ For example, Graham, Billy, "Why the Berlin Congress", presented at the World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin 1966. Downloaded from: www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives (20.05.2015).

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Langmead, Ross, *The Word Made Flesh*, Lanham 2004, 94.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *The Lausanne Covenant* (1974). All Lausanne documents downloaded from: www.lausanne.org (20.05.2015).

and that, whereas any human being can engage in social action, evangelism is a uniquely Christian activity.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, a strong strand within the Lausanne Movement continued to seek an ‘integral’ understanding of mission which keeps together good words and good deeds.¹⁵⁹ In the 2011 *Cape Town Commitment*, evangelism is defined as proclamation within a broad understanding of ‘evangelization’, which frames the document, as ‘the whole Church taking the whole gospel to the whole.’¹⁶⁰

For its part, the World Council of Churches tended to limit ‘evangelism’ to the prophecy against injustice that accompanied a social gospel.¹⁶¹ Only in 2013 did the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism produce an extended statement on evangelism. The final main section of its new policy statement, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, focuses specifically on evangelism as bringing ‘good news for all’. The document understands that ‘Evangelism is mission activity which makes explicit and unambiguous the centrality of the incarnation, suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but without setting limits to the saving grace of God. It seeks to share this good news with all who have not yet heard it and invites them to an experience of life in Christ’ (paragraph 80). The document states clearly that ‘Evangelism is not proselytism’ because ‘it is only God’s Spirit who creates new life and brings about rebirth’ (82). Rather, ‘Evangelism is the outflow of hearts that are filled with the love of God for those who do not yet know him’ (81). Evangelism takes place in the context of dialogue and ‘with the expectation of meeting God who has preceded us and has been present with people within their own contexts’ (94). It involves not only announcing good news in Christ but also affirming and discerning the wider presence and activity of the Holy Spirit ‘wherever life in its fullness is affirmed’ (24). The document continues WCC stress on evangelism as ‘a prophetic vocation which involves speaking truth

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, “‘Evangelism and Social Responsibility’”, in: Lausanne Occasional Paper 21 (1982), 24–25.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Yates, Timothy, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge 1994, 221–223.

¹⁶⁰ Cape Town Commitment, I 10 B and Preamble.

¹⁶¹ Cf. for example, the first CWME policy statement, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (1982), especially paragraph 34. All WCC documents downloaded from: www.oikoumene.org (20.05.2015).

to power in hope and in love’ and denouncing idols of wealth, consumerism and similar life–negating forces (91).

The WCC statement drew partly on *Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*, which was adopted in 2011 jointly by the WCC, the World Evangelical Alliance and the Roman Catholic Church. This document takes the condemnation of proselytism further by making positive statements about how Christians can proclaim the word of God ‘according to gospel principles, with full respect and love for all human beings’ (Preamble). Because it is ‘communicating the truth in love’ (cf. Ephesians 4:15), ‘authentic evangelism’ is both by word and by deed and ‘The love for one another is a demonstration of the gospel we proclaim’ (paragraph 86). Evangelism requires self–emptying (*kenosis*; Philippians 2:7) and vulnerability on the part of the evangelizer, and simultaneously filling with ‘power from on high’ in order to be witnesses to Christ in different contexts today.

Evangelization in the Catholic Church

In the early twentieth century, the Catholic Church was using the term ‘evangelization’ particularly to refer to the work of preaching to and teaching people outside Christendom and bringing them into the church.¹⁶² In 1951, Pope Pius XII chose to express his encyclical *Evangelii Praecones* on foreign missions in terms of preaching the gospel and evangelization.¹⁶³ The Second Vatican Council prompted a re-thinking of mission and the former Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide) was renamed the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. In 1975 Pope Paul VI, drawing on the third synod of bishops, produced the apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, which re-grounded mission in the work of Jesus Christ in proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God (EN 6-13). This had several important corollaries. First, mission as evangelization was no longer limited to the mission *ad gentes*. Europe and the West could now be included among the countries in need of an evangelization that embraced ‘all the strata of humanity’ and all cultures everywhere (EN 18-20). Second, evangelization became the

¹⁶² Cf. Bevens Stephen B./Schroeder, Roger P., *Constants in Context*, New York 2004, 171–238.

¹⁶³ All Roman Catholic documents are downloaded from: www.vatican.va.

work of the whole Church – not only professional missionaries – in continuing Christ’s mission (EN 14-16). And third, mission was defined holistically to encompass good news to the poor and oppressed (EN 31-39) as well as proclamation of the gospel message and church planting. Evangelization was related not only to The Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes* but also to The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* and even to the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. Rather than ‘preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people’, Paul VI laid emphasis on depth of evangelization and its transforming effect not only on individuals but also on cultures (EN 19-20) and societies (23-24).

John Paul II returned to ‘mission’ rather than ‘evangelization’, partly to address a misunderstanding that the latter superseded the former.¹⁶⁴ However, his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) is replete with references to preaching the gospel and the transforming power of ‘gospel values’. While attending the nineteenth general assembly of the Latin American Bishop’s Conference in 1983, John Paul II used the term ‘new evangelization’ to refer to ‘a commitment... new in its fervor, in its methods, and in its expression’.¹⁶⁵ In Latin America, new evangelization signalled primarily a departure from the methods of the first evangelization from Europe to more fully embrace the particular challenges and distinctive socio-cultural context of the context.¹⁶⁶ In *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II developed the term to refer to a renewed evangelization or ‘re-evangelization’ (RM 33) of those peoples who have already heard Christ proclaimed’ (RM 30) and of the ‘the non-practicing’ (RM 37) in ‘Christian countries’ (RM 83).

Pope Benedict XVI identified the ‘abandonment of the faith’, especially in societies and cultures which had seemed for many centuries to be ‘permeated by the Gospel’, as the primary challenge for evangelization today. On 21 September 2010, he established a new dicastery of the Roman Curia: the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization to foster ‘a renewed missionary impulse’ arising from

¹⁶⁴ Anekwe Oborji, Frances, *Concepts of Mission*, New York 2006, 7–11.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Boff, Leonardo, *Good News to the Poor*, New York 1992, XII; Grogan, Paul/Kim, Kirsteen (eds.), *The New Evangelization*, London 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Boff, Leonardo, op. cit., XII–XIV.

‘a profound experience of God’ (*Ubicumque et Semper*. Prologue) ‘to re-present the perennial truth of the Gospel of Christ’, in those regions, where the process of secularization had led to an ‘eclipse of the meaning of God’.¹⁶⁷ The new dicastery was mandated to address the problems of secularization in ‘territories of Christian tradition’ but in which the original message had been so forgotten or distorted that they could no longer be described as ‘evangelized’ (US 2).

The Thirteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on 7-28 October 2012 was dedicated to ‘trace new methods and means for transmitting the Good News’ today (Preface).¹⁶⁸ The *Lineamenta* in preparation for the Synod emphasized the duty to evangelize in obedience to the missionary mandate of Mark 16.15 and Matthew 28.20 (paragraphs 11, 18) and the primary model of the evangelist appeared to be the Apostle Paul who preached the Gospel with urgency and whether or not it was requested.¹⁶⁹ The new evangelization was described as the ‘fundamental mission’ of the Church (10) born out of personal encounter with Jesus Christ (11), grounded in the Tradition and manifested in the Church’s life (12). It depended on faithful proclamation of the Word of God (13), renewed emphasis on catechesis and the catechumenate (14), the agency of local churches (15) and the ability of Christians to give an account of their faith (16). However at the synod, the bishops resisted any limitation of evangelization. The Propositions coming out of the Synod¹⁷⁰ set new evangelization in the context of the mission of Church as it originates in the sending activity of the Trinity and by the grace of the Holy Spirit who enables enthusiastic and courageous ‘witness’ (paragraph 4). They related evangelization more positively to culture by encouraging inculturation of the faith (5) and a more rounded anthropology (17). The Synod identified the new evangelization as just one form of evangelization and it insisted that ‘each particular Church must have the freedom to evangelize according to her own traits and traditions’ (7). In addition, it strengthened the connection of the new evangelization to other challenges such as globalization

¹⁶⁷ Vatican Information Service, ‘Pope Creates a Dicastery for New Evangelization’ (28 June 2010). Downloaded from www.vis.va (20.05.2015).

¹⁶⁸ Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta* (2 February 2011), Prologue.

¹⁶⁹ See the texts chosen to head each section of the *Lineamenta*.

¹⁷⁰ Synod of Bishops, Final List of Propositions (27 October 2012).

(13), conflict and violence (14), and violation of human rights (15) and religious freedom (16). Most noticeably, the propositions called strongly for serious commitment to life and justice as part of the new evangelization (19, 24, 25, 31-32, 56).

The resignation of Pope Benedict left Pope Francis to reflect on the synod in his first year through the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. Francis chose to treat new evangelization as including ordinary pastoral ministry, as well as re-evangelization and mission *ad gentes* (paragraph 15). So he based his exhortation on *Lumen Gentium* and included in discussion of evangelization a number of pastoral issues in the life of the Church (17). Francis went back to Paul VI's gospel foundation for evangelization. He described evangelization as the 'missionary impulse' which would focus the church outward rather than on its own survival (27). He declared that it was integral to being Church: 'missionary outreach' to all who do not know Christ, wherever they are, is '*paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*' and, quoting his fellow Latin American bishops, he called for a general move to a '*missionary pastoral ministry*' (15; italics original). Throughout Pope Francis emphasized that 'realities are greater than ideas' (233) and that evangelization should put the word into practice. He envisaged 'a Church whose doors are open' (46), that 'goes forth with joy' (24) and that is engaged with the world, even if that means it is 'bruised, hurting and dirty' (49). While he affirmed preaching and instruction as essential parts of evangelization, in his discernment of the context, he began not with secularization but with economic injustice, oppression and exclusion (52-75). The Pope construed the new evangelization as the renewed sharing of the good news and, as such, the very *raison d'être* of the Church that continues the mission of Jesus Christ. He offered an incarnational model of the Church's mission that stresses engagement with those beyond the Christian community, the diversity and interconnectedness of the world Church and its dialogical approach to other traditions.

Evangelization and mission

The relationship between evangelization (or evangelism) and mission has been construed in a number of different ways by different church and mission bodies. Sometimes evangelization has been seen to encompass mission (for example in EN) and in other cases mission

has been regarded as the broader term with evangelism or evangelization being reduced to verbal proclamation of a message or to a call to embrace a particular expression of faith. Evangelization properly understood encompasses the whole work of bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. In other words, it is a synonym of mission. However, it particularly draws attention – in a way that 'mission' alone does not – to the distinctive heart of Christian mission as a following in the way of Jesus Christ. His preaching of the good news was transformative both intellectually and holistically, both personally and also of families, communities, societies and even the whole creation. Mission as evangelization is both a witness, which makes known this person and event, and at the same time a continuation of the work of Christ in the same Holy Spirit.

Church Fathers' Vision of Education Avenue for Evangelization of University Students in Africa

Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi

“Having children is a matter of nature; but raising them and educating them in the virtues is a matter of mind and will. By the duty of raising them I mean not only not allowing them to die of hunger, as people often limit their obligation toward their children to doing. For this, is needed neither books nor rubrics, for nature speaks of it quite loudly. I am speaking of the concern for educating children’s hearts in virtues and piety – a sacred duty which cannot be transgressed without thereby becoming guilty of the children’s murder, in a certain sense.” (Lessons by John Chrysostom on education)

Africa has not lost hope for its integral development even though new challenges thrive, maybe more than ever. For instance policies on education have been strengthened on the assumption that Africans will be much more equipped to know, control and predict their future. However, this critical shift in educational sectors needs to be challenged, maybe by the word “evangelization”. It seems to me that education and evangelization are both part of God’s command although we do not state that to educate is to evangelize or to evangelize is to educate because that could be an unwholesome blending. However, without separating them, we advocate for a distinction that consecrates the following *modus operandi*: “We can evangelize through education and educate through evangelization”. Maybe our goal is to bring evangelization into classrooms not as a course where traditional preaching is done but as a making of an attitude which flows from the process of acquiring knowledge and skills. The example of the Church Fathers as teachers is a blueprint of this endeavor; it needs to be known and understood by students in African universities for more responsibility and true citizenship. From “*modus operandi*”, we could, then, move to a “*Modus Vivendi*”.

Now it is well that we should clearly apprehend this example of Church Fathers and benefit from it as we reflect on the initiative of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Kenya. Indeed, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, particularly the Faculty of Education, introduced in its Doctoral programme a course titled Patristic Education (ED 701) where students are instructed in the views and perceptions of the Church Fathers on Education. This is probably a compendium of what could be used as an evangelization tool at the university level but on different levels since the course is offered to students of different backgrounds, denominations as well as religions. In a concise summary, the Church Fathers are presented as having placed great emphasis on virtues as well as on knowledge and skills thereby promoting evangelization through education but on another level. Patristic Education lead the students to the house of Humanity where they revisit not really what is but what ought to be as far as education is concerned.

Again, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa reckons “witness of life” as among its core values; it is, perhaps, the most important in the minds of many because of its nature that is expected to be observed in all its operations: community service, teaching, research, customer service... It should flow in all administrative and managerial activities as well. This aspiration coincides with the orthodoxy and the holiness of life that Christians in antiquity recognized in the lives of the Fathers of the Church. This underlines what emerges from patristic education and suggests it to all Catholic Universities, as another level of evangelization not as a conversion to Christian faith but as glorious way of living life in Africa; a way of responding to true and authentic citizenship in Africa; a new way of living our humanity.

Revisiting Humanities

Indeed, one day in the storehouse of humanities is a great achievement because spending time questions our being where we are and draws a roadmap for good citizenship. Today’s Evangelization in Africa should be directed to genuine citizenship where teaching of values precedes other components of education. Hence, “Values, first, then knowledge and skills” is almost the most concise summary of what we get from the Church Fathers’ views on education. We are tempted to say that no person, even if he/she is a renowned scholar, should be allowed to teach when his/her life shows minimum indi-

cations of what personhood ought to be. If we have to reap only what we sow, we also have to uproot what compromises our education. Education should be directed towards evangelization. The Fathers of the Church could, perhaps, assist in carry out both related exercises. Hence the whole course on Patristic Education is a study of Church Fathers’ views and overviews on education; they are found both in their life and in their works.

The purpose of writing this text is both a modest activity and a motivated effort of a reviewer, for it is written as a guide and an essay as well. As a guide, I hope the text will be of great use to educators because I intent to offer them a significant reference that could enhance on-going discussions and provide a tool that may possibly influence the order and ipso facto the content of education in Africa for another level of evangelization of our students. I, therefore, endeavor to construct another educational theoretical framework that educators could comfortably use as they carry out research in various aspects of education. As an essay, it is a text that is far from being extensive in the sense that it is an on-going research. Again, given the volume of the Church Fathers’ writings on one hand and the difficulties in finding systematic texts of what they might have said concerning education, on the other, make this text an essay in which I attempt to make a case. Hence, the conclusions I make are steps in search of another paradigm in education cum evangelization.

Generally, the concept “Education” -I am strictly talking about formal education at all levels- is not a concept that someone can afford to ignore, for it speaks loudly. The Universal Human Right, for instance, proclaims it in its article 26¹⁷¹ and today many African nations refer to it as a right. Even parents who do not have formal education know somehow the place of education in all departments. But people need to be trained to perform certain duties; maybe to perform them more efficiently and effectively. More importantly, people

¹⁷¹ Cf. Article 26: (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

need to be trained to become authentic citizens in their respective countries. Although the concept is not always understood in the same way or, perhaps different people have different considerations or put emphasis on different issues/themes/, education is a journey that most parents would like their children to take for a noble reason. From my observations, education which corresponds to the concept “training” underline the following parameters: (1) the trainer, (2) the trainee, (3) the content of the training, (4) the environment and (5) the goals of such or such training. Etymologically, “*educare*” means “to train”. This tells us that to educate is to take someone and move her/him from point A to point B; thus, actions such as teaching, learning, tutoring, instructing, experiencing, schooling, edifying, culturing, take place or should take place between point A and point B. The trainer and the trainee meet in many ways and communication of the content is done. This needs a comprehensive agreeable environment. The processes of knowing, getting skills and embracing new attitudes are initiated and continue until death.

The church is very much aware of this reality right from its beginning as it is said in what seems to be its charter insofar as education is concerned:

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshipped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, all power in heaven and on earth had been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28, 16-20).

From this passage, we understand that the Disciples’ mission was to baptize and to teach; and the content of this command has no limit except in the limits that Jesus had commanded. Hence, commenting on these verses, Jerome wrote:

The Church acts in virtue of the commission that Jesus has receive, a commission that is without limit. By his authority, they may make disciples of all nations...Their work is to baptize and to teach... The object of the teaching is all I have commanded you.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Cf. Brown, Raymond E. et alii (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (The Apostolic Commission [28:16-20]), New Jersey, 1968.

If it is almost impossible to write down the details of this command, it is possible to state that Jesus’ command embraces all aspects of human life since he willed that all people be saved. For this reason, the Church holds high all dimensions of education; in fact, the words “baptizing” and “teaching” echo the fact that the whole being, in all its aspects, should be educated; and this is not an option but a command that any reasonable person can embrace. Jerome says that “The word ‘command’ does not affirm the establishment of a new law, but of a new way of life, just as the new law of Moses established a new way of life.”¹⁷³

It is this “charter” that guided the Church Fathers as they opened both people’s souls and minds through their life and writings as well. In their own ways and with different tones, the Church Fathers interpreted, explained and commented on Jesus’ command to his disciples, for this also became the command they obeyed with delight. For instance, Gregory the Great testifies:

I confess that I receive and revere, as four books of the Gospel... These with full devotion I embrace, and adhere to with most entire approval; since on them as on a foursquare stone, rises the structure of the holy faith; and whosoever and, of whatever life and behavior he may be, holds not fast to their solidity, even though he is seen to be a stone, yet he lies outside the building...¹⁷⁴

In the same line but with great enthusiasm, Pope Leo XIII wrote in his Encyclical Letter “On the restoration of Christian philosophy according to the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas”:

The Only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father appeared on earth to bring salvation and the light of wisdom of God to the human race. As he ascended to Heaven he bestowed on the world a blessing, truly great and wondrous, when, commanding his apostles to “go and teach all nations”, he left a Church, founded by himself, as the universal and supreme mistress of all people.¹⁷⁵

For Pope Leo XIII, the Church mandate to teach all nations is not only a command but a marvelous blessing (brings good things) and

¹⁷³ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Wills, John R. (ed.), *The Teachings of the Church Fathers*, New York 1966, 37.

¹⁷⁵ Pope Leo XIII, *Enzyklika Aeterni patris*, Rome 1874.

a consecration that makes the Church mistress of the whole educational enterprise. The Church ought to build principles of education, administer the processes, manage its structures and give proper leadership to all stakeholders of education. Hence, with the greatest earnestness, the church, as a whole and up-to-date continues to cherish education in its twofold aspects; and to educate persons and create structures that abide with Jesus' command and blessing: J. W. Donohue states:

The basic educational tasks of Christians, consequently, was twofold: to provide religious instruction that would initiate their children and converts into Christian doctrine, way of life, and worship; and, as some Christians judged desirable, to synthesize their Christian life with the best of the secular culture embodied in the rhetorical and philosophical studies of the pagan schools.¹⁷⁶

Religious and secular disciplines should be taught in a way that they build the entire human person to know and to live a life worthy of praise. Although this could be considered as an early Christian education testimonial, it still flows into the Church throughout history, but with some changes either in the structures or in the management. Vatican II Document on Christian education is, perhaps, the most authoritative text that summarizes what the church has been, what it still does and what it plans to do as education is concerned. This is where we find a need to talk about another avenue of evangelization.

The Church Fathers on Education: Sight and Insight

It is not an easy task to establish the vision and the perception of what the Church Fathers taught with reference to education but we endeavor to do so by exploring their personal writings and, of course, the comments written by many prominent historians. Thus, we have to admit that we are faced with four major difficulties. These are highlighted here in order to alert our readers about the shortcomings that might occur in our critical interpretation of the data before us.

The first difficulty is historical, for the epoch of these Fathers of the Church is far away from us. We are studying here the life and acts of people who lived during the Christian Antiquity which began

right from the first century of Christian era and ended, according to many scholars, in the 8th century. We are almost 12 centuries away from them; and this reminds us of a historical distance -language and culture in particular- that could easily become an intellectual obstacle towards understanding some of their ideas.

The second concerns the immensity of their writings, for many of them wrote extensively. Those who are familiar with the writings of the Fathers of the Church will bear witness to the numerous texts written or attributed to them. It requires, therefore, patience and attentiveness to get a wide and proper overview of their major thoughts.

The third is thematic. Although scholars group their writings into what we refer to as history, doctrine, theology and spirituality, the Fathers of the Church wrote on many issues and developed many themes that explain Christianity.¹⁷⁷ While it is more or less straightforward to identify their theological and doctrinal positions, it is rather complex to pinpoint their views on education since distinctive treatises on education are rarely found in their works. Education is a topic that is not easily referenced. However, we recall that John Chrysostom and Augustine of Hippo wrote brief but significant treatises on education. We shall analyze them in the course of this essay.

The fourth originates from some issues related to the primary addressees of their teachings. First of all, the study of the life and the writings of the Fathers of the Church (Patristic and Patrology) is a branch of theology; and this is taught to students in theology. So the students in theology are the primary recipients of the study of the Fathers of the Church. The point I have in mind is well explained by F. Cayre A.A in his work "Manual of Patrology and History of Theology and Johannes Quasten under the title "Patrology". For instance, F. Cayre A.A said: "The work has been written, however, above all and directly, for the future priest, the theological student in the seminary or study house."¹⁷⁸ Even though we magnify nowadays "interdisciplinary approach", it is still tough to convince some students of different fields of knowledge, for instance students in the faculties of education, Arts and Social Sciences, that this is neither time nor knowledge wasted.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Cayré, Fulbert, *Manual of Patrology and History of Theology* (No. 1), Roma 1936, 3–6.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Donohue, John W., *Articles on Education in New Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York 1967.

Nevertheless, these complexities though significant in the whole analysis, do not prevent us to pinpoint and reflect on Church Fathers' perception to formal education. A few of the manifold aspects of education, either in their content or form, can still be revealed to us and we can benefit from them. We should, however, keep in mind that values and formation of good conduct of people are paramount in the teachings of the Church Fathers. This is exactly where we find that this course – Patristic Education: (ED 701) – could serve as evangelization at another level.

A statement on Church Fathers

In a nutshell, the Fathers of the Church were faithful people of God, renowned Church leaders, witnesses of God's love, lovers and teachers of the truth and orthodox writers of the first eight centuries of the Church. They were holy people who dedicated their lives to preaching and teaching what Jesus had commanded. Jesus' command to his disciples "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teach them to observe all that I have commanded you (Matthew. 28, 16-20)", consecrated not only his immediate disciples but also their successors to the teaching mission of the Church. These were called "Fathers of the Church", for as Johannes Quasten wrote:

In ancient times the word "Father" was applied to a teacher; for in biblical and early Christian usage, teachers are the fathers of their students. Thus, for instance, St. Paul, in first letter to the Corinthians (4, 15), says: For although you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel, I have begotten you.¹⁷⁹

So the Fathers of the Church were first and foremost the Bishops because of their exclusive teaching role. But Johannes Quasten added: "The use of the term "Father" became more comprehensive, for it was extended to ecclesiastical writers in so far as they were accepted as representatives of the tradition of the Church"¹⁸⁰ and that they also assumed the teaching role of the Church. With this development, Christian writers of the early Church were called Church

¹⁷⁹ Quasten, Johannes, *Patrology*, Maryland 1992, 9.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

Fathers". While it is true that the title "Fathers of the Church" was given to Early Christian writers, it was not given to all since orthodoxy to the doctrine – the teaching of the Church – holiness of life, ecclesiastical approval and antiquity were still the necessary qualifications. Cayre asserts:

It is evident then, that the title of Father connotes orthodoxy. Patrology is not concerned with every Christian author who has written on religious subjects...In order, therefore, that an author may be regarded as a Father of the Church; he must have lived during the first ages of the Church, fulfilled the required conditions of orthodoxy and the holiness of life and merited the approval of the Church. This title, nevertheless, has been conferred on certain early writers who fulfilled only partially the last three of these conditions. Tertullian, Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea may be cited as an instance to this.¹⁸¹

Still this title "Fathers of the Church" is not identical to "Doctors of the Church", for some "Doctors of the Church" never lived in antiquity. But we should sincerely remember that conjunction of "orthodoxy of doctrine, holiness of life and ecclesiastical approval" is the key qualification of the two categories of the Fathers of the Church¹⁸² As we reflect on all of them, particularly in reference to their lives, we shall give more attention to John Chrysostom and Augustine of Hippo, for they have well systematized treatises on education.

Highlights of the church fathers' perceptions to education

Tertullian (160-220): an exemplary teacher

Although little is known about Tertullian's life, Justo L. Gonzalez, in his book entitled "The Story of Christianity" (vol.1) places Tertullian among the teachers of the Church. He said:

But towards the end of the second century the challenge of Marcion and Gnostics required a different response. The heretics had created their own systems of doctrine, and to this the church at large had to respond by having some of its teachers offer

¹⁸¹ Cf. Cayré, Fulbert, op. cit, 2–3.

¹⁸² Cf. Wikipedia (The Free Encyclopedia), Art. "Church Fathers", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Fathers#Latin_Fathers (25.05.2015).

equally cogent exposition of orthodox belief. Precisely because the speculations of the heretics were vast in scope, the response of Christian teachers was equally vast. This gave rise to the first writings in which one can find a fairly complete exposition of Christian truth. These are the works of Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Origen.¹⁸³

Moreover, from imminent patrologists we learn that he was an African from Carthage; and that he received very good education which included studies in law and rhetoric.¹⁸⁴ Tertullian had the fear of God and respect for human beings. Speaking about him, Cayre says:

The predominant trait of his character was his will power... All his life he fought for the truth, good and right, or at least what he thought was such... Tertullian was given excess in everything, even in his reasoning. He was a brilliant and vigorous mind, endowed with rare powers of penetration and a wide culture... he gave great care to his composition; his writings are all well planned, and even in his widest digressions, he never loses sight of his goal.¹⁸⁵

From the testimony of Cayre, we learn that Tertullian was a man who always sought the truth, goodness and righteousness; these were the foundation of his life. He not only taught people to become truthful, good and righteous but his very life gave testimony to truth, goodness and righteous. As a preacher and teacher, he took care of his work that he remained always focused of the idea he puts across. He was creative in all his endeavors. He hardly taught his people what he had not planned because he knew that planning puts in perspective what he intended to communicate, the materials to be used and the best method of communication. That is why Berthold Altaner described him as a man who had a penetrating intelligence. He said:

Tertullian is one of the most original, and until Augustine the most individual of all Latin ecclesiastical authors. He combined Punic fervor with Roman practical sense. A religious enthusiast, he had

¹⁸³ Gonzalez, Justo L., *The Story of Christianity (The Early Church to the dawn of the Reformation, No. 1)*, New York 1984, 67–68.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Altaner, Berthold, *Patrology*, Freiburg 1960, 166.

¹⁸⁵ Cayré, Fulbert, op. cit., 232.

a penetrating intelligence, passionate eloquence, ever-ready wit and extraordinarily well-versed in all department of knowledge.¹⁸⁶

His multidisciplinary spirit made him accept and defend rationality as one of the sources of knowledge, although, in the process of knowing, faith precedes reason (*Credo, ut intelligam*). Hence he advanced difficult topics and defended the opinion that the existence of God and of the soul can be known by rational inquiry.¹⁸⁷ We can say that those who reflect on the Tertullian's life and works can approach education differently and see how education works not only for enlightenment but also for salvation of souls.

Cyprian (200-258): administrator of a classroom

Like Tertullian, Cyprian was also from Carthage. His integrity is shown throughout his life and as a Bishop and a leader, he never became proud of his privileged position in his diocese; instead, he influenced other leaders to follow his example. Tixeront remarks:

He was a man of government and authority before whom all inclined, even those he did not command... During his nine years of his episcopate, saint Cyprian, without constraining anyone, without any encroachment on the rights of his colleagues, by means of his personal influence and skills, was able to group around him the hundred of bishops who govern the African Churches...¹⁸⁸

We may and should understand that Cyprian influenced people not by the force of his writings or his authority as a bishop or his words as a preacher but simply by his personality and talents that carried human values which people longed to embrace. We can learn from him how teachers can govern a classroom without violating the rights of each but by being an authentic image of a teacher. Moreover, Cyprian was always enthusiastic in clarifying issues that seem to be obscure. F. Cayre A.A testifies that

Saint Cyprian contributed to the clarification of certain consequences of the principle of the Roman primacy, which he himself

¹⁸⁶ Altaner, Berthold, op. cit., 166.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 179.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 256.

had presented as the basis of catholic unity, not only in the order of faith, but also in that of hierarchy and government.¹⁸⁹

Those who recall the complexity of the issue concerning the Roman primacy –the Place of the Bishop of Rome vis-à-vis other bishops- and the consequences that have gone along with this set of guidelines, could tell how important although difficult it is to make a coherent statement that moderates views and opinions of many people. This is to say that a teacher should strive to shed light on complex issues for more clarity. Cyprian was not a great thinker but his sense of morality gained him many disciples; he actually led his people to what is virtuous and, showed an example of the practice of charity. There are real opportunities of instructing people on virtues, particularly on the practice of charity, when comprehensive education takes place.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430): master and disciple

Here is another Church Father, Augustine of Hippo, who gathered and combined, without confusion, different qualities of many of his predecessors. Berthold Altaner commented:

The great bishop united in himself the creative energy of Tertullian and the breath of spirit of Origen with the ecclesiastical sensitivity of Cyprian; the dialectical acumen of Aristotle with the soaring idealism and speculation of Plato; the practical sense of the Latins with the spiritual subtlety of the Greeks. He was the greatest philosopher of patristic era and, without doubt, the most important and influential theologian of the Church in general...¹⁹⁰

It is still very important to mention what Vernon J. Bourke says about Augustine because it serves as a link between what scholars of his time and of his immediate period said on one hand, and what modern and contemporary scholars say about him, on the other. So writing on his influence, Vernon J. Bourke says:

Among modern and contemporary philosophers, Augustine is read by people of widely diversified interests. We have seen how many of his works are printed, both in Latin and in the ver-

¹⁸⁹ Cayré, Fulbert, op. cit., 266.

¹⁹⁰ Di Bernadino, Angelo (ed.), *Patrology*, Maryland 1986, 351.

naculars, through this century. Existentialist, phenomenologists, philosophers of history, actionists, idealists, introspective psychologists, representatives of a dozen other movements, find or think they find a patron in St. Augustine.¹⁹¹

Angelo Di Bernadino adds:

Departing from the evidence of his knowledge of himself, he expounded on the themes of being, of truth, and of love, and contributed much to the understanding of the problems of search for God and the nature of man, of eternity and time, of liberty and evil, of providence and history, of beatitude, of justice and of peace...Augustine was a master who nevertheless considered himself a disciple and decided that all be disciples with him of the truth which is Christ.¹⁹²

For Augustine of Hippo, a good master must be a good disciple; as a master, he never found his self-knowledge sufficient enough to teach his people but gathered more adequate information from various scholars of different fields. Hence, he was able to transmit knowledge that could cut across borders to the extent that the margins of his message were extended to various disciplines that could meet the demands of his complex and versatile audience. He was well-rounded and, without confusion, he could bring together the search for divine knowledge and human knowledge for the truth of the matter to be clearly identified. Berthold Altaner declared that

Augustine's reputation for scholarship and piety was even then very great, thus when, in 391, he entered the Church quite unsuspected...With this, his spiritual and intellectual development entered a new stage. His hitherto predominantly philosophical interest and his occupation with the liberal arts gave way to a purely theological orientation and practical activities in the service of the Church.¹⁹³

Augustine's life reminds us of the responsibility of a teacher to become one with the students in order to meet their demands. It is noteworthy to mention here that his love for people, search for justice

¹⁹¹ Cf. in the introduction of Portalie, Eugene, *A guide to the thoughts of Saint Augustine*, London 1960.

¹⁹² Cf. Di Bernadino, Angelo, op. cit., 351–353.

¹⁹³ Altaner, Berthold, op. cit., 491.

and his all-embracing knowledge worked for the attitude that the Church has so admired in him. A.J. Ennis wrote:

Augustine was a man of brilliant genius, whose profound humanity transformed the already declining rhetoric and philosophy into new and distinctive and made him a precursor of modern times... He marks all that he treats with personal quality that is a product of a nature that exceptional sensitive, of an experience that is, exceptionally lucid and, above all, of a love that is exceptionally profound.¹⁹⁴

As education is concerned, Augustine of Hippo edified his audience on the necessity of having personal qualities, knowledge of subjects and the right method of teaching them. For example, in studying Scriptures, he said: "There are two things necessary to the treatment of the Scripture: a way of discovering those things which are to be understood, and a way of teaching what we have learned."¹⁹⁵ Hence, he took time to write many essays on philosophy and Liberal Arts where he exalts arts and eloquence with a remarkable simplicity. This is where we find the necessity of studying his educational theory and his influence in education as exposed in his treatise on the Teacher.

Brief comment on his Treatise on "The Teacher"

The essay on "The Teacher" is a dialogue between Augustine and his son Adeodatus in which Augustine instructs him on the existence of two teachers -the outward and the inward- but also on the credit of the interior teacher. It is true that the purpose as well as the distinct value of words and signs uttered by the outward teacher cannot be overemphasized because, for Augustine, we should only speak for the purpose of teaching and learning. Words and signs are both important when we speak since teaching and learning take place through words and signs.¹⁹⁶

However, it seems that we do not learn through the words which sound outwardly, but through the truth which teaches inwardly. He says:

¹⁹⁴ Ennis, Arthur J., Art. "Augustine", in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (No. 1), New York 1966.

¹⁹⁵ Saint Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, translated by D.W. Robertson, New York 1958, 7.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Oates, Whitney J. (ed.), *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine*, New York 1948, 361–387.

To give them as much credit as possible, words possess only sufficient efficacy to remind us in order that we may seek things, but not to exhibit the things so that we may know them. He teaches me something, moreover, who present to my eyes or to any other bodily sense or even to my mind itself those things which I wish to know. By means of words, therefore, we learn only words or rather the sound and vibration of words, for if those things which are not words, even though I have heard a word, I do not know that it is a word until I know what it signifies. So when things are known the cognition of the words is also accomplished, but means of hearing words, they are not learned. For we do not learn the words which we know, not can we say that we learn those we do not know unless their signification has been perceived; and this happens not by means of hearing words which are pronounced, but by means of the cognition of the things which are signified. For it is the truest reasoning and most correctly said that when words are uttered we either know already what they signify or we do not know, then we remember rather than learn, but if we do not know, than we do not even remember, though we perhaps [are] prompted to ask...But referring now to all things which we understand, we consult, not the speaker who utters words, but the guardian truth within the mind itself, because we have perhaps been reminded by words to do so. Moreover, he who is consulted teaches; for he who is said to reside in the interior man is Christ, that is the unchangeable excellence of God and his everlasting wisdom, which every rational soul does indeed consult.¹⁹⁷

This long illustration underlines the importance of two issues for true learning to take place. Inasmuch as we cannot afford to neglect words and signs in the process of learning, we should listen to what the interior man, Christ, teaches, for it is he who teaches; words and signs remind us of what is taught. Students should, therefore, submit to God, the teacher of the truth. It appears that the "two teachers" in Augustine's *Treatise on the Teacher* correspond to education and evangelization respectively. Neither is to be neglected or ignored for their distinct roles are complementary for the whole truth to come out. The result is that teachers or lecturers who embrace the two

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 389–390.

“Teachers” will be able to educate and evangelize, particularly those who claim to be educated.

John Chrysostom (344-407): eloquent master of moderation

John of Constantinople, later called John Chrysostom (Golden Mouthed because his eloquence in preaching), one of those counted among the Greek Fathers of the Church, was from Antioch where he initiated reforms in the clergy. The words of Johannes Quasten inspired our choice when he said:

None of the ancient Christian writers has had many biographers and panegyrists as he, from the oldest and best writings before 415 by bishop Palladius of Helenopolis down to the last in late Byzantine times.¹⁹⁸

Then, commenting on his writings, Johannes Quasten added:

Among the Greek Fathers none has left so extensive a literature legacy as Chrysostom. Moreover, he is the only one of the older Antiochenes whose writings are almost entirely preserved. They owe this preferred treatment to the personality of their author as well as their own excellence. None of the Eastern writers has won the admiration and love of posterity to such a degree as he.¹⁹⁹

As a young boy, John Chrysostom received a wonderful education from renowned teachers; but what is more interesting here is that he was receptive and cooperative to what was taught. Moreover, he applied all that he learned with prudence and moderation. It is these qualities namely receptivity and cooperation, prudence and moderation²⁰⁰ which with we can link his life to education because, effective learning and helpful teaching certainly requires a good dose of these qualities. We, therefore, learn from him that, in learning/teaching, both students and teachers need receptivity as a disposition to receive what is taught or said, cooperation as mutual involvement in the subject, prudence as forethought for genuine

¹⁹⁸ Quasten, Johannes, *The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature* (Patrology, No. 3), Maryland 1992, 424.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 429.

²⁰⁰ Cf. the introduction of Saint John Chrysostom's book titled: *Commentary on Saint the Apostle and evangelist*. Homilies 1–47, translated by sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin, New York 1957, IX.

selection of what is delivered and received, and moderation as a control measure. In his sermon on Priesthood, for instance, John Chrysostom said:

Therefore the bishop needs great prudence to withdraw the people from foolish questions, and at the same time to keep himself clear of the aforesaid changes...Because he who is appointed to correct ignorance of others, and give warning of the approach of the war waged by the devil, cannot plead ignorance and say: 'I did not hear the trumpet, I did not foresee the war.'²⁰¹

There is something persuasive in his life, for although he was very eloquent as a teacher and preacher, he taught and preached through his life. Justo Gonzalez says:

But for John Chrysostom the pulpit was not simply a podium from which to deliver brilliant pieces of oratory. It was rather the verbal experience of his entire life, his battlefield against the powers of evil, an avoidable calling that eventually led to exile and to death itself.²⁰²

Consequently, many people of his audience became not only his listeners but his disciples; they became very much attached to him. This is also the result of his careful plans, unity in all that he said and the avoidance of deviation in his preaching method, his sincerity and the depth of the content and the clarity of his language.²⁰³ His method of teaching/preaching goes beyond his eloquence; it is worthy to be imitated as it is stated in the same introduction:

Nevertheless, however gifted as orator, St. John Chrysostom was pre-eminently the teacher, and not infrequently he made sage observations on methods of teaching. He spoke of the advisability of imparting new knowledge a little at a time, which explained his very gradual unfolding of St. John's Gospel in the homilies. He was clearly aware of the truth of the principle: '*repetitio mater studiorum*', for he repeated the same texts many times in the same homily. Probably another motive for this was the desire

²⁰¹ Cf. Barry, Colman J. (ed.), *Reading in Church History* (3 volumes in 1), Maryland 1985, 116–117.

²⁰² Gonzalez, L. Justo, *The Early Church to the dawn of Reformation* (The Story of Christianity, No. 1), New York 1984, 194.

²⁰³ Saint John Chrysostom, *op. cit.*, XII.

to increase the familiarity of his listeners with Scripture and [to] compensate for the lack [of] multiple copies and the prevailing lack of literacy.²⁰⁴

In the mind of John Chrysostom, education should neither neglect eloquence nor moderation; and these should come through a gradual exercise which leads the speaker and the listener to a world of effective cooperation. But more importantly, John Chrysostom, without neglecting knowledge and skills, shows great concern on the ethical aspect of education²⁰⁵; therefore, in his treatise on *“Vainglory and the Right way for Parents to bring up their children”*, he exhorts parents to bring up their children in the proper way.

Brief comment on “Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to bring up their Children”

In the form of a homily, John Chrysostom speaks of child education and insists on the need of ethical facet of education as the foundation of authentic personhood; he calls parents to teach moral values to their children because these make them gentle and sober. Hence, parents ought to instill in their children these values when they are still tender but also warns parents who excite their children with things of less value:

The man-child has lately been born. His father thinks of every means, not whereby he may direct the child’s life wisely, but whereby he may adorn it and clothe is in fine raiment and golden ornaments...Implanting in him from the first an excessive love of wealth and teaching him to be excited by things of no profit...²⁰⁶

He, then, proposes a new approach to education:

And as you remove what is superfluous and add what is lacking, inspect them day by day, to see what good qualities nature has supplied so that you will increase them, and what faults so that you will eradicate them. And, first of all, take the greatest care to banish

²⁰⁴ Ibid., XVII.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Saint John Chrysostom, *Introduction on “Vainglory and the right Way for Parents of bringing up their Children”*, translated by Laistner, Max L. W., Stuttgart 1951.

²⁰⁶ Saint John Chrysostom, *Vainglory and the right way for parents to bring up their children*, paragraph 16, translated by Laistner, Max L. W., Stuttgart 1951.

licentious speech; for love of this above all frets the souls of the young. Before he is of age to try it, teach your child to be sober and vigilant...²⁰⁷

Furthermore, John Chrysostom compares the child’s soul to a city that must be built on solid foundation and protected from all vices for the child to grow in wisdom and understanding. He wrote:

The child’s soul then is a city, a city but lately founded and built, a city containing strangers with no experience as yet, such as it is very easy to direct...draw up laws then for the city and its citizens, laws that inspire fear and are strong, and uphold them if they are being transgressed; for it is useless to draw up laws, if their enforcement does not follow.²⁰⁸

As the Greek cities had protected doors, the doors of the child’s soul, that is all the senses, ought to be protected by an early comprehensive education that is based on morals. Thus, he recommended that the child be taught to be fair and courteous; he should be punished whenever he loses the way to sanctity.²⁰⁹ In the same way, the spirit also ought to be molded in order to beget rational thoughts.²¹⁰ Of all these, however, John Chrysostom believed that wisdom is the principle of control. He, therefore, concluded with the following invitation:

Let us then implant in him this wisdom and let us exercise him therein, that he may know the meaning of human desires, wealth, reputation, power, and may disdain these and strive after the highest.²¹¹

For John Chrysostom, education is the highest and holiest task of parents; it should not be for a period but for eternity.²¹² Educators of our time have certainly a lot to take from Chrysostom’s pedagogy for knowledge and skills to be grounded on virtues and to be guided in the right direction.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., Paragraph 22.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., Paragraph 25.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., paragraph 31.

²¹⁰ Ibid., paragraph 75.

²¹¹ Ibid., paragraph 86.

²¹² Cf. Quasten, Johannes, *Patrology*, Maryland 1992, 466.

Conclusion

All is about education and Evangelization that should go hand in hand in our universities; or perhaps, it is about how comprehensive education could also include evangelization at another level. We know that right from the beginning, Jesus gave to his disciples an example that is a paradigm for education and evangelization as well. Love one another as he loves us is more of a “modus Vivendi” This same example is embodied by Church Fathers as we have glimpsed in their lives and works above and we have endeavored to figure out what it is since it has stood a great sign of healthy relations between masters and disciples, teachers and students. Moreover, this pattern is a blueprint of this present reflection; so it is well that we clearly apprehend it and make known to students in African universities for more responsibility that builds up true citizenship. From “modus operandi”, we could, then, move to a “Modus Vivendi”.

Hence two very important issues were underlined in the course of this reflection: (1) Education as evangelization and (2) Evangelization as education. This state of affairs meets what John Chrysostom proposes as education of children when he says: “I am speaking of the concern for educating children’s hearts in virtues and piety.” Our current education has a lot to learn from the lives and works of the Church Fathers who, not only taught solid knowledge and right skills but also evangelized. Today’s education puts great emphasis, sometimes too much, on knowledge and skills; values are mentioned in appendices. Hence, knowledge and skills are most probably acquired but values seem to be wanting. Africans, university students in Africa should not become like the judge described in Luke 18, verse 2: “There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being”. On the footsteps of the Church Fathers, education and evangelization should concomitantly take place in our universities.

Mission as Evangelization: Self-critical Witness and a Move Out to the Fringes

Roberto Tomichá Charupá

The *Ad Gentes* decree of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) was approved in Rome on 7 December 1965. It gave back to the concept of “mission” all the depth of its biblical-theological significance with its ultimate basis in the Trinity: “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father”.²¹³ This concept of mission helped overcome the church-centred nature of missionary activity to incorporate a renewed vision of evangelization as the Good News for all peoples, each in their own particular situation, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Son.

“The reality of Evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism”

The Church, sent by God as “a universal sacrament of salvation”,²¹⁴ is called to continue over time and in particular contexts the *unique mission*: that of the Son of God. In this way the actions carried out by “the heralds of the Gospel, [...] of preaching the Gospel and planting the Church”, where she does not yet exist, is known as “missionary activity” or simply “missions”, the objective of which is “preaching the Gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ”.²¹⁵ This has meant that missionary activity is conceived of as being constrained within the theological sphere of the Trinity, and evangelization (or the preaching of the Gospel) to all is one of the objectives of missionary activity that is incumbent upon

²¹³ AG 2.

²¹⁴ AG 1; LG 48.

²¹⁵ AG 6.

every baptised individual:²¹⁶ the “basic duty of the People of God”, especially towards “non-Christians”.²¹⁷ The biblical foundation lies in the mission of Jesus, who was sent “to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind,” (Luke 4:18).

Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of 8 December 1975 can be seen to be at the forefront of the concept of evangelization, giving it a more global meaning, practically as a substitute for the term “mission”. It is to be used “always to signify a certain way in which someone was sent; never their activity”²¹⁸: sent by the Son, the Holy Spirit, by the apostles and by the Church.²¹⁹ This understanding renders “the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism”;²²⁰ “a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative”, all elements that “are complementary and mutually enriching”.²²¹ For the Church, evangelising “means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new”.²²²

Referring to the presence of the Church in contexts of injustice and oppression, especially in the southern hemisphere, the document maintains that “between evangelization and human advancement – development and liberation – there are in fact profound links”.²²³ In this way evangelization is intended as an example of “charity towards all, especially towards the lowly and the poor”.²²⁴ Furthermore, it respects and values the diverse religious traditions but “keeps the missionary spirit alive”²²⁵ as well as the desire to “reveal Jesus

²¹⁶ Cf. AG 14, 20, 23, 30, 38, 39.

²¹⁷ AG 35, 39.

²¹⁸ Rzepkowski, Horst, *Diccionario de Misionología*, Estella (Navarra): EVD, 1997, 222.

²¹⁹ Pope Paul VI., Apostolic Letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi* about the evangelization in the todays world, 8 December 1975, No. 6, 12, 75, 77, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/de/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html (16.06.2015).

²²⁰ Ibid., No. 17.

²²¹ Ibid., No. 24.

²²² Ibid., No. 18.

²²³ Ibid., No. 31.

²²⁴ Ibid., No. 76.

²²⁵ Ibid., No. 53.

Christ and His Gospel to those who do not know them”.²²⁶ In these conditions a certain style of evangelization is clearly emphasised: “the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness”,²²⁷ a personal, inner witness, of both community and Church, which should in turn inform the character of that ecclesiastical community. Indeed, the Good News itself is the enlivening, reconciliatory and healing presence of Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, “led by the Spirit” (Matthew 4:1) to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord (Luke 4:18-21), the kingdom of God.

In the light of the above, evangelising constitutes “the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise”,²²⁸ an affirmation which is in line with that of Vatican II: “the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature”.²²⁹ This close link between missionary activity and evangelization has, as we have already noted, a solid basis in theology: the mystery of the Trinity. In both terms can be discerned a “comprehensive and integrative meaning”²³⁰, even though “mission” is above all *missio Dei*, which is embodied, expressed and validated in specific and concrete circumstances of life as missionary activity or, in the terms of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, evangelization directed to all humanity. This evangelization is such insofar as it becomes visible and credible as the Good News that each Christian community lives, proclaims and shares with those around it. In other words, the Good News represents the charter for presentation, content and style of an ecclesiastical community called to be “a universal sacrament of salvation”²³¹ in the eco-socio-ecclesiastical context or setting where the news of Jesus Christ is lived and proclaimed. Following on from this we understand the importance of the living example as the existential springboard for any evangelization, a witness that springs from the meaningful, profound and transformational, paradigmatic encounter with the Son of God himself.

²²⁶ Ibid., No. 51.

²²⁷ Ibid., No. 21.

²²⁸ Ibid., No. 14.

²²⁹ AG 2.

²³⁰ Nunnenmacher, Eugen, “Evangelizzazione”, in: *Dizionario di missiologia*, Pontificia Università Urbaniana, Roma 1993, 245–252, here: 249.

²³¹ AG 1; LG 48.

The new Evangelization: “Go out and meet them, in remote places”

In his 1983 speech to the assembly of the Episcopal Council of Latin America (CELAM), held to launch the celebrations commemorating 500 years since the arrival of Christianity on the American continent, Pope John Paul II coined the term “new evangelization”. This term signified the commitment of the Church not to “re-evangelise” but to carry out a “new evangelization. New in its ardour, its methods, in its expression.”²³² One of the fundamental aspects of this new evangelization is the concern for “the place of the laity in the Church and in society”. This theme was repeatedly taken up by the Church’s Magisterium, although not always put into practice in local churches. By this token evangelization was new when it focused on renewing and revitalising the inner spirit and the passion for the Kingdom on the part of the baptised, such that their lives shone in different ways with the light of the Good News of Jesus Christ. In other words, in the face of a more socio-cultural way of Christian living it became vital to have a more personal or inner encounter with Jesus, obviously with the idea of evangelising others.

It was also John Paul II who, in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio* of 7 December 1990, mentioned three distinct situations for evangelization: a) the mission *ad gentes*: “peoples, groups, and socio-cultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel are not known, or which lack Christian communities [that are] sufficiently mature”; b) pastoral activity: “Christian communities with adequate and solid ecclesial structures. They are fervent in their faith and in Christian living”; c) new evangelization: “entire groups of the baptised have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church”.²³³ In fact, faced with the ever faster pace of the changes the world was going through, it became urgent to revive, reactivate and even reformulate the Christian faith itself based on the continual experience of encountering the living Jesus Christ. In this way the calling is extended to the “churches in traditionally Christian countries, [which] cannot be missionaries to non-Christians in other

²³² Pope John Paul II., Speech to the assembly of the Episcopal Council of Latin America (CELAM), Port-au-Prince (09.03.1983).

²³³ Pope John Paul II., Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* about the continuous significance of the missionary assignment, 7 December 1990, No. 33, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_ge.html (20.05.2015).

countries and continents unless they are seriously concerned about the non-Christians at home. Hence missionary activity *ad intra* is a credible sign and a stimulus for missionary activity *ad extra*, and vice versa”.²³⁴

The new evangelization, according to Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of 24 November 2013 and in agreement with the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (2012), is to be lived in three categories, aligned with the RM encyclical: ordinary pastoral life, with the new move to include “those members of the faithful who preserve a deep and sincere faith, expressing it in different ways, but seldom taking part in worship”;²³⁵ the baptised who “lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith”, and “those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him”, although “many of them are quietly seeking God, led by a yearning to see his face”.²³⁶ For the foregoing reasons the new evangelization will be the new name of the Christian mission in both the traditional and new settings that make up our current reality.

In concrete terms evangelization begins at home but is always open to the whole world. It is not so much about activities and works but about a way of living and breathing the scent and perfume of Jesus, the Good News, felt by people gathering in the roads, town squares, supermarkets, sports stadia... Understood as consistent with this objective is the invitation of Pope Francis to be a “Church that goes forth”,²³⁷ a Church which should not exist only in sacristies but which ventures out into towns and into the diverse settings of the world, carrying a “personal involvement on the part of each of the baptised”.²³⁸ In urban communities “this challenges us to imagine innovative spaces and possibilities for prayer and communion which are more attractive and meaningful for city dwellers”.²³⁹ “It must reach

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 34.

²³⁵ Pope Francis, Apostolic letter *Evangelii Gaudium* about the promulgation of the Gospel in the today’s world (announcement of the apostolic seat, No. 194), ed. by the secretariat of the German Episcopal Conference, Bonn 2013, No. 14.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 17, 20, 24.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 120.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 73.

the places where new narratives and paradigms are being formed”.²⁴⁰ In fact, it helps to point out that this evangelical “going forth”, to use John Paul II’s expression, includes not only “ardour”, strategies and expressions, but also new scientific methods which can help us to grasp reality in more tangible ways as well as such things as complexity, cross-disciplinarity or post-colonialism.²⁴¹

**An encounter with Jesus Christ: “It was about the tenth hour.”
(John 1:39)**

The premise of all evangelization, as we have already affirmed, is the encounter with Jesus Christ which personally touches the mind and the heart of everyone, each in their own human situations, their relationships and their communities... to transform them existentially from within. Whoever has “an openness to letting Him encounter them”²⁴² is on a journey, an itinerant, a nomad, someone who is uneasy, attentive, open, seeking to give a profound meaning to their life. Just as He did for the first disciples, men and women (cf. John 20-21), today the same Jesus Christ still appears in the midst of our existence and daily tasks to invite us to experience an inner, ultimate, definitive encounter which will mark our lives. As Pope Benedict XVI said in his first encyclical, “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”²⁴³ In fact all communication in an evangelical life comes from a unique, personal, “intimate experience” with the risen Jesus Christ, Son of God incarnate, since “thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God’s love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption”.²⁴⁴

The encounter with the risen Jesus Christ, open to the Spirit, reveals the Mystery of Father-Mother God, a ministry of ineffable,

²⁴⁰ Ibid., No. 74.

²⁴¹ A theological essay with a cross-disciplinary perspective on Latin American reality: Bustillos, B.C. Caero/Charupá R.C., Tomichá (eds.), *Urbes: A theological approach to urban impermanence*, Ilamis 2013.

²⁴² *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 3.

²⁴³ Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus caritas est* (25 December 2005), No. 1; V General Episcopal Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean, *Aparecida Document* (29 June 2007) 11 and 243; *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 7.

²⁴⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 8.

absolute love (K. Rahner),²⁴⁵ fusing with each human being in their relationship with the community and the cosmos; it is the ultimate, “cosmo-theandric” (R. Panikkar) experience of the Trinity: “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you [...] Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20, 21-22).

Thus this full, concrete, reconciling encounter has a date and a time and, for this reason, remains part of the *life memory* of the disciple, whether man or woman, a grateful memory, which will forever keep fresh established myths, ideals and utopias and, in this way, strengthen trust in God. It is a memory which allows us to keep alive Jesus’s plan: the kingdom of God in this world, which is expressed in the comprehensive liberation of marginalised and excluded peoples and in universal brotherhood, which respects Mother Earth and all creation as a gift from God himself. As Pope Francis says, “Memory is a dimension of our faith which we might call ‘deuteronomic’, not unlike the memory of Israel itself. [...]. The apostles never forgot the moment when Jesus touched their hearts: ‘It was about four o’clock in the afternoon’ (John 1:39)”.²⁴⁶ We can ask ourselves: do we remember the day and the hour when Jesus first touched our hearts and our inner world? How much does the story of our lives transform itself into a grateful, reconciling, healing memory? How do we express it in words, gestures and actions with those around us?

The experience of being forgiven: “Earth, exult! Mountains, break into joyful cries!” (Isaiah 49:13)

The renewed encounter with our memory allows us to see ourselves as we are in our inner selves, confronting us with our own frailty, our limitations and our sins. If we attain a deeply personal sincerity, or if we look at ourselves in the mirror with transparency, we will certainly see that our discipleship contradicts what we intend to live out. As Paul said, “the good thing I want to do, I never do; the evil thing which I do not want – that is what I do.” (Romans 7:19). When this happens, we avoid all despondency or dejection, we rather turn our gaze towards God, who is goodness, mercy and tenderness: “God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking

²⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 111, 117, 178.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 13.

his mercy”;²⁴⁷ “the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end”;²⁴⁸ we are “the object of God’s infinite tenderness, and He himself is present in [our] lives”.²⁴⁹ It is precisely from the lived experience of love, mercy and tenderness of God that we can be carriers of tenderness, following the example of the “Son of God [who], by becoming flesh, summoned us to the revolution of tenderness”.²⁵⁰

In fact, “nobody can go off to battle unless he is fully convinced of victory beforehand. If we start without confidence, we have already lost half the battle and we bury our talents. While painfully aware of our own frailties, we have to march on without giving in, keeping in mind what the Lord said to Saint Paul: ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Cor 12:9)”.²⁵¹ The awareness of frailty and of sin, redeemed in the free forgiveness of God, allows us to experience evangelical happiness, the visible sign of every Christian person and a criterion of evangelization. It is an experiential, inner happiness that necessarily must be expressed within one’s surroundings, not only in our human environment (family, ecclesiastical, religious community, and society) but also with the rest of humanity and the cosmos. In this way creation itself manifests the beauty of reconciliation: “Shout for joy, you heavens; earth, exult! Mountains, break into joyful cries! For Yahweh has consoled his people, is taking pity on his afflicted ones.” (Isaiah 49:13). Or as Saint Francis of Assisi expressed it: “Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures”.

Evangelical happiness is an important criterion in all evangelical action, coming from the experience of encountering the Crucified One, because without crucifixion there is no resurrection, without death there is no life. It is the Paschal mystery, lived by men and women in their daily, family, relational and working lives, that generally not only goes unnoticed by the media and is not diffused by social networks, but also is not understood by people who are close to us. In this situation all that is left is trust and abandonment to the Life plan of YHWH-God, like the Son on the cross: “Father, into your hands I

²⁴⁷ Ibid., No. 3.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., No. 6.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., No. 274.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., No. 88.

²⁵¹ Ibid., No. 85.

commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Only from this experience can come “true joy”, the Good News that can be shared with others.

Self-critical Evangelization: overcoming “excessive clericalism” and seeking an “incisive female presence”

The joy of evangelization comes across in a concrete form and touches people in their deep inner reality. Indeed, “news is accepted when it is heard from a reasonable and accredited source. Individuals and groups who are coherent in what they say and do, and who are consistent, attract belief. If it is good news, the evangeliser must be a credible, authentic witness.”²⁵² In the case of the Christian community, every man and woman is sent to *communicate and share a full, harmonious authentic life*,²⁵³ because our “Life grows by being given away and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others”²⁵⁴ with the sincerity and humility of those who believe in the force of the Spirit. However, “this does not mean we should postpone the evangelising mission”.²⁵⁵

This evangelising mission begins at home with a great sense of communal and institutional self-criticism, overcoming dominant, colonial mindsets which have not always helped us to live healthy, respectful, fraternal attitudes to evangelising. Hence the pressing need to rid ourselves of some shadows, such as sociocultural male chauvinism,²⁵⁶ which at the “ecclesial level” becomes male chauvinism squared or, in the words of Pope Francis, an “excessive clericalism”,²⁵⁷ still very present in our individual churches.²⁵⁸ What is

²⁵² Floristán, Casiano, “Mission activity/evangelization”, in: Tamayo, Juan José (ed.), *Nuevo Diccionario de Teología*, Madrid 2005, 604–611, here: 610.

²⁵³ Cf. John 10:10; 20:21; *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 10.

²⁵⁴ Final document of the V. General Assembly of the episcopacy of Latin America and the Caribbean in Aparecida 2007, No. 360.

²⁵⁵ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 120.

²⁵⁶ Final document of the V. General Assembly of the episcopacy of Latin America and the Caribbean in Aparecida 2007, No. 461.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., No. 102.

²⁵⁸ Pope Francis, Address to the Leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America during the General Coordination Meeting, Rio de Janeiro (28.07.2013). Fourth Edition of the Aparecida Document (No. 109), approved 31 May 2007, highlighting clericalism and discrimination against women among the problem areas of the continental Church.

behind this male chauvinism and clericalism? Fear, insecurity, status, power...? It is vital to work hard from the start of Christian training to “overcome this clericalistic tendency, [present] also in [religious] training centres and in seminaries”.²⁵⁹

As a counterweight it is essential “to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church”,²⁶⁰ so that “the feminine genius” – that creative, integrative, welcoming style in the service of others, found in both men and women – can also be expressed “in the various other settings where important decisions are made”,²⁶¹ similar to what is happening in society. In this respect, says the Pope, we still have to develop “a profound theology of women”: “I fear the ‘machismo-in-skirts’ solution, because women have a different make-up from men.”²⁶² As a consequence one evangelical priority today is to “decleralise” a certain Christian way of living which impedes the participation of the laity, and of women in particular, in order to foster a Church that is co-responsible and focused on ministry. In other words, it is a priority of evangelization for every baptised man and woman to be able to live their ministry as service, without careerist or functionalist considerations, promoting creative styles with greater male-female reciprocity resting on solid, renewed biblico-theological foundations.

Towards a *truly* plural Church: “A single culture cannot contain the entire mystery of Christ”

Evangelization includes the self-criticism of ecclesiastic renewal and, at the same time, the attempt to encounter and welcome people who are far removed from, or unaware of, the Christian proposition. This proposition is certainly communicated through the consistent witness of life at the personal, community and institutional levels, but also with a decoded message in symbols and language comprehensible to the men and women of today. That is why it is so important

²⁵⁹ Spadaro, Antonio, “Wake up to the world!” Discussion with Pope Francis about religious life, 8 (original: La Civiltà Cattolica, 165 [2014/I]), http://www.laciviltacattolica.it/articoli_download/extra/Despierten_al_mundo.pdf (25.05.2015).

²⁶⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 103.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, No. 104.

²⁶² Spadaro, Antonio, The interview with Pope Francis, 28.September 2013, http://www.stimmen-der-zeit.de/zeitschrift/online_exklusiv/details_html?k_beitrag=3906412 (25.05.2015).

to try “expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness”.²⁶³ Or, in the words of two popes: “one thing is substance [...] the other a way of expressing it”²⁶⁴; “the expression of truth can take different forms. The renewal of these forms of expression becomes necessary for the sake of transmitting to the people of today the Gospel message in its unchanging meaning”²⁶⁵. Let us ask ourselves, therefore, to what extent our language and religious symbols are received and understood by men and women who do not frequent our ecclesiastical spaces. To what extent do they express and reveal the Person of Jesus Christ and His plan for a full Life? What image of God are we communicating?

The process of evangelization takes into account people in each sociocultural context with its own symbols, obeying the same principle of incarnation, according to which the Word of God redeems Man with total acceptance of his humanity (history, culture, traditions, languages...). In this regard, Gregorio Nacianceno says “what has not been accepted has not been saved; what is united with God is redeemed.”²⁶⁶ Or, according to Vatican II: “what has not been taken up by Christ is not made whole”.²⁶⁷ In this way “the faith cannot be constricted to the limits of understanding and expression of any one culture. It is an indisputable fact that no single culture can exhaust the mystery of our redemption in Christ”.²⁶⁸

It is essential, therefore, to avoid identifying Christianity as, or reducing it to, a single cultural expression, even one that is as ingrained as the Western culture: “We would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous. While it is true that some cultures have been closely associated with the preaching of the Gospel and the development of Christian thought, the revealed message is not identified with any of

²⁶³ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 41.

²⁶⁴ John XXIII, Address on the occasion of the solemn opening of the Most Holy Council (11. October 1962), <http://www.erzbistummuemchen.de/Page024379.aspx> (25.05.2015).

²⁶⁵ John Paul II., Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint* (25.May 1995), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_ge.html (25.05.2015).

²⁶⁶ Wittig, Michael, *Gregor von Nizanz: Briefe*, Stuttgart 1981, Letter 101.

²⁶⁷ AG 3.

²⁶⁸ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 118.

them; its content is transcultural".²⁶⁹ This gives rise to the need for interaction, listening and dialogue between the "differing currents of thought in philosophy, theology and pastoral practice", which is only possible when they are "open to being reconciled by the Spirit".²⁷⁰ So there exists a *plural Christianity*, which represents the diversity of peoples and traditions present in the world and whose own local churches develop their own theologies. To what extent do we listen and learn from these experiences of faith as expressed by non-Western languages and symbols?

The Holy Spirit: "Soul of the missionary Church"

Missionary activity, according to Vatican II, emanates from the Trinity: the charity of God the Father, that "fount-like love", from whom the Son is begotten, with the Holy Spirit proceeding through the Son, creating us freely in surpassing and merciful kindness and graciously calling us to share with Him His life and His glory²⁷¹ and to form together a People of God. From this Trinitarian mission is born the meaning of missionary or evangelical activity in its various spheres. What is intended is an activity centred with certainty on Jesus Christ, but with a strong impetus from the Holy Spirit, "the principal agent of evangelization"²⁷² "indeed the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission",²⁷³ because "he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel".²⁷⁴

Today, therefore, we need "spirit-filled evangelisers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit", "to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (*parrhesia*) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition".²⁷⁵ The Holy Spirit pushes the Christian community to "move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast",²⁷⁶ since "it is not by proselytising that the

²⁶⁹ Ibid., No. 117.

²⁷⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 40.

²⁷¹ AG 2.

²⁷² *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 75.

²⁷³ *Redemptoris Missio*, No. 21.

²⁷⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 261.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., No. 259.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., No. 24.

Church grows", but "by attraction".²⁷⁷ One dimension of proclaiming the Gospel is precisely this search for unity that respects diversity and recognises plurality: "The same Spirit is that harmony, just as he is the bond of love between the Father and the Son".²⁷⁸

Definitively then, the Spirit moves believers to be bold and "take the initiative"²⁷⁹, which means taking personal risks with energy and creativity, involving themselves in the vicissitudes, situations and problem scenarios of the people we meet in streets, on buses, in town squares and supermarkets, for "the Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk".²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Ibid., No. 14.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., No. 117.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., No. 14.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., No. 3.

Impulses of Evangelization

Charisms as Signs and Instruments of Evangelization – Being Church Together

Klaus Vellguth

On 23 September 2015 Germany's Roman Catholic Bishops published a joint statement entitled *Gemeinsam Kirche sein* ("Being Church Together"). The message, which was about renewal in pastoral ministry,²⁸¹ was inspired by a nationwide five-year dialogue forum, called *Im Heute Glauben* ("Having Faith in Today's World"). This forum had come to an end in Würzburg in September 2015, and in the course of the exchange it was said that the Church should increase its inward and outward communication, that it should be involved more deeply in people's needs and concerns, particularly those on the fringes of society, and that as many Christians as possible should have a share in shaping Christian life. The resulting document, which was still very fresh, also included several working hypotheses contributed by the Clergy and Laity Advisory Council which had resulted from a joint meeting between the German Bishops' Conference and the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZDK).

The hypotheses had been published in a paper entitled "Interaction between Charisms and Ministries among the Priestly, Prophetic and Royal People of God".²⁸² The authors also picked up thoughts presented in a *Letter to Priests*²⁸³ (published in 2012) to which they added theological depth and a specific pastoral dimension. And of course the authors also re-read and were inspired by several influential Council papers, particularly the Dogmatic Constitution on the

²⁸¹ German Bishops, "Gemeinsam Kirche sein": Wort der deutschen Bischöfe zur Erneuerung der Pastoral, Secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference (eds.), Bonn 2015.

²⁸² <http://www.zdk.de/veroeffentlichungen/erklarungen/detail/Das-Zusammenwirken-von-Charismen-und-Diensten-im-priesterlichen-prophetischen-und-koeniglichen-Volk-Gottes-203u/> (20.10.2015).

²⁸³ http://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/diverse_downloads/presse/2012-166a-Anlage-Brief-Bischoefe-an-Priester.pdf (20.10.2015).

Church *Lumen Gentium*²⁸⁴ and the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*²⁸⁵ – half a century after the Second Vatican Council.²⁸⁶ “What we wanted to do,” said Franz-Josef Bode when he presented the document, “was to use the theological and spiritual perspective of the Church, as presented to us by the Council, so that it could then bear fruit for the pastoral ministry of our present-day Church, its responsible bodies and its activists.”^{287 288}

The title *Being Church Together* is also a reference to another document that forms an implicit basis for the German Bishops’ pastoral message. In 2000, the German Bishops had published a widely read paper entitled *Zeit zur Aussaat – Missionarisch Kirche sein* (“Time to Sow – Being a Missionary Church”) in which they called for a new missionary awakening in pastoral ministry.²⁸⁹ In this document, which clearly bears the signature of Bishop Joachim Wanke, the Bishops wrote: “Something is missing in our Catholic Church in Germany. It is not money. Neither is it the faithful. Our Catholic Church in Germany lacks the conviction that it can win new Christians. This is currently its most serious deficit.” In this pastoral letter the German Bishops expressed the view that the most crucial challenge in today’s pastoral

²⁸⁴ The passages quoted verbatim in “Gemeinsam Kirche sein” are LG 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18, 28, 31 and 33.

²⁸⁵ Only GS 1 is quoted verbatim in “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”.

²⁸⁶ The German Bishops had already agreed in 2011 that they would re-read the Council documents with a view to its forthcoming anniversary. The Commission for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Laity (IV) and the Commission for Pastoral Care (III) of the German Bishops’ Conference then conducted a thorough re-reading of “Gaudium et Spes” and “Lumen Gentium” for their respective areas of specialisation.

²⁸⁷ Franz-Josef Bode at a press briefing for the presentation of the document “Being Church Together: A Message from the German Bishops on the Renewal of Pastoral Ministry” in Fulda on 23. September 2015.

²⁸⁸ It took several years to compile the sources for the document “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, a task that was undertaken by the Commission for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Laity (IV) and the Commission for Pastoral Care (III) of the German Bishops’ Conference.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Bünker, Arnd, “Missionarisch Kirche sein in Deutschland”, in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, No. 94 (2010), 243–254, here: 248–250; Vellguth, Klaus, “Sag mir, wo die Christen sind: Studie zum Milieuhandbuch ‘Religiöse und kirchliche Orientierungen in den Sinus-Milieus 2005’”, in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 115 (2006) 10, 29–41; Bünker, Arnd, “Deutschland – ein Missionsland: Zwischenrufe zu einer pastoralen Strategiedebatte”, in: *Orientierung*, No. 69 (2005), 40–44, here: 41f.; Armbruster, Klemens, “Zeit zur Aussaat: Missionarisch Kirche sein: Anliegen, Inhalt und Struktur des Schreibens der deutschen Bischöfe”, in: *Erzdiözese Freiburg* (eds.), “Zeit zur Aussaat”: Missionarisch Kirche sein: Ermutigung zu einer missionarischen Pastoral, Freiburg 2001, 7–9.

ministry is the need to return to the Church’s missionary nature. When the letter was presented in December 2000, Karl Lehmann, the Chairman of the German Bishops’ Conference, emphasised one point in particular: “A basic concept of Church life is coming back – the word ‘mission’. If I’m not completely mistaken, we are currently experiencing a renaissance of this word and, more importantly, of mission itself.”²⁹⁰

Rarely had a pastoral letter from the German Bishops attracted so much attention and been so well received as the document *Time to Sow – Being a Missionary Church*. It is therefore no coincidence that the recently published letter of the German Bishops on the renewal of pastoral ministry bears a similar title to that of the earlier document published in 2000. The authors state their intention at the very beginning of the paper, in the preface, where they say they want to show how the Catholic Church can be transformed from a *Volkskirche*, a national church (literally “people’s church”), into a *Kirche des Volkes Gottes*, a “church of the people of God” – a church which emphasises the shared baptismal calling of all the baptised. *Being Church Together* invites us to adopt a dynamic review of baptism and of being Christians; it encourages us to be a ‘church that is becoming the Church’.²⁹¹

We do not need to save the Church

In their introduction to the document the Bishops point out that the Christian faith does not centre around the Church but around Christ and that the aim should therefore not be to preserve the Church as such. They say: “We cannot create the Church and we do not need to save the Church either.”²⁹² They go on to say that this view of the Church should ease the burden enormously and that it represents a

²⁹⁰ The German Bishops, “Zeit zur Aussaat”: Missionarisch Kirche sein, Secretariat of the German Bishops’ Conference (eds.), Bonn 2000.

²⁹¹ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 7.

²⁹² “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 11. Felix Genn said at the press briefing in Fulda on 23 September 2015, when the pastoral message was presented: “In the creation of this message the words ‘We do not need to save the Church’ are associated with an experience that may well be the most crucial of all: addressing people’s questions, needs and concerns with humility and courage and thus also with far less anxiety, and – with Jesus behind us, alongside us and in our hearts – boldly envisaging a fresh start.” (Felix Genn at a press briefing for the presentation of the document “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”: A Message from the German Bishops on the Renewal of Pastoral Ministry in Fulda on 23. September 2015.)

major opportunity.²⁹³ They stress that it is important always to point to Christ. They expressly link this idea to Pope Francis's first Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, in which he sets the scene at the very beginning: "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives all who encounter Jesus."²⁹⁴ It shows that the authors of *Being Church Together* were substantially inspired and influenced by the Apostolic Exhortation.²⁹⁵

Being Church Together starts with six key questions which are of major importance for all the subsequent reflections as well as for the structure of the message:

- What is the vision of the Church as presented in *Lumen Gentium* when it talks about the common calling of all within the Church?
- How can the Church as the one Body of Christ with all its many charisms be experienced in the celebration of the Eucharist despite a shortage of priests?
- How does our approach to today's people change when we view the Church as a sign and instrument of union with God and unity between people?
- What strength can we derive for our mission as the Church from the common priesthood of all believers and from the indispensable ministry of the priest?
- How can we ensure that the leadership talents of so many men and women bear fruit for the Church and its ministries?
- How can we shape a parish and the life of a local church in such a way that clergy and laity mutually enrich and strengthen one another in their different ministries and charisms?

Each person is called to holiness

When the document *Being Church Together* was being prepared, the Chairman of the Commission for Pastoral Care, Franz-Josef Bode, suggested that the starting point should be the working hypotheses,

²⁹³ "Gemeinsam Kirche sein", 7.

²⁹⁴ EG 1.

²⁹⁵ The passages quoted verbatim in "Gemeinsam Kirche sein" are EG 1, 28, 130, 201 and 267.

which had been worked out with the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK), entitled *Interaction between Charisms and Ministries among the Priestly, Prophetic and Royal People of God*. The purpose was to re-identify and clarify the theological foundation for voluntary work within the Church. "In this way," says Franz-Josef Bode, "we refocused on concepts such as calling, charisms, holiness and mission and their special relevance to the pastoral ministry. It was a matter of clearly spelling out the participation of all Christians in all three basic manifestations of the Church: preaching, liturgy and charity."²⁹⁶ This background to the German Bishops' message is clearly in evidence, a background which led them to focus, in particular, on the baptismal dignity and common priesthood of all believers: All the baptised are jointly called upon to be Church together and to be responsibly involved in fulfilling the mission of the Church. The most distinctive Christian element is primarily baptism, as it expresses the shared calling of all Christians.²⁹⁷ It is the sacramental bond between all Christians and something that unites us straightaway before we can start thinking about differences in callings, charisms, ministries and offices. Baptism is a dynamic event which has a focus on the apostolate and is reinforced through confirmation. Within this context our willingness to be involved in the Church and in the world is a "sign and instrument" of the Church's mission.

It is with a view to this dynamic perspective of being a Christian that the Bishops point out in their pastoral message that all Christians are called to holiness. In doing so, they establish a connection with the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* which in Chapter II and Chapter IV speaks of the "universal call to holiness" of all Christians. Felix Genn describes the statement "Everyone is called to holiness" as the "hermeneutical key with which the Council messages were read, especially *Lumen Gentium*."²⁹⁸ He goes on to say that there can be no distinction between holiness for the clergy, on

²⁹⁶ Franz-Josef Bode at a press briefing for the presentation of the document "Being Church Together": A Message from the German Bishops on the Renewal of Pastoral Ministry in Fulda on 23. September 2015.

²⁹⁷ Cf. Lenz, Hubert, "Die Pastoral von der Taufe her erneuern: Bischofswort 'Gemeinsam Kirche sein'", in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 124 (2015) 10, 29–32, here: 30.

²⁹⁸ Felix Genn at a press briefing for the presentation of the document "Being Church Together": A Message from the German Bishops on the Renewal of Pastoral Ministry in Fulda on 23. September 2015.

the one hand, and holiness for the laity, on the other. Instead of such “two-level ethics” one can only speak of holiness as a basic calling of all the baptised, which then takes different forms in people’s lives.²⁹⁹ *Lumen Gentium*, too, emphasises the calling of the laity, encouraging them to use the spiritual authority they have received through baptism and confirmation.

Based on the concept of holiness, *Being Church Together* then stresses the central New Testament concept of *ecclesia* as something which expressed an awareness among the Early Christians that they were the community of the baptised who had been called and sanctified by Jesus Christ. In fact, this is what prompted the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans to refer to them as “all God’s beloved in Rome, called to be his holy people” (Romans 1:7). The Apostle, who was instrumental in paving the way for the missionary work of the Early Church, saw the Church as “the community of those called to be saints”, based on the Church being “rooted in Christ as the original sacrament”.³⁰⁰ This rootedness in Jesus therefore means that all the baptised are rooted in the prophetic, priestly and royal office of Christ. Yet holiness must not be confused with casuistic observance of specific commandments. Rather, it grows out of a “focus on the person of Jesus Christ”.³⁰¹ This Christ-centredness of faith and of the Church’s mission was expressed very concisely by Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*: “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but an encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”³⁰²

When the Bishops point out that the holiness of Christ manifests itself above all in love – with the highest priority given to God’s will, on the one hand, and love within the fellowship of one’s brothers and sisters in Christ, on the other – this is a reflection of Paul’s theology of charisms. In his theology the decisive criterion of a charism is precisely

²⁹⁹ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 17.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 16; cf. Lenz, Hubert, op. cit., 31.

³⁰¹ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 16.

³⁰² “Deus Caritas Est” of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithful on Christian Love, Announcement of the Apostolic Seat, No. 171, Bonn 2005, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html (15.03.2016), No. 1.

whether it helps to build up the Church.³⁰³ The Bishops therefore point to Paul’s understanding of charisms (see 1 Corinthians 12:7) and Pope Francis’s exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* where he picks up this theology and says: “A sure sign of the authenticity of a charism is its ecclesial character, its ability to be integrated harmoniously into the life of God’s holy and faithful people for the good of all.”³⁰⁴ The Church can only realise its original commission when individual Christians recognise and accept their call to holiness.³⁰⁵ Holiness, however, must not be seen as a status which a person achieves, but as a lifelong programme which, ultimately, can never be attained in full. This, according to the Bishops, is an important paradox: “You are holy because you are still aiming to be holy.”³⁰⁶ Christian holiness is in fact characterised by two elements: a day-to-day relationship with God and a loving relationship with others. These are two different facets which cannot be separated but must be seen as belonging together: “Interpersonal love and solidarity are always closely intertwined with God’s love towards people and people’s love towards God.”³⁰⁷

A multitude of charisms is the wealth of the Church

In their pastoral message *Being Church Together* the Bishops emphasise that the charisms of Christians are the real wealth of the Church.³⁰⁸ It is therefore the central function of pastoral ministry, they say, to discover those charisms, to encourage and recognise them and to give space to their positive development for mission in the Church and in the secular world.³⁰⁹ It must never be a matter of recruiting people for specific tasks and establishing them in honorary positions. That would be a “recruitment-focused pastoral ministry”, based on a

³⁰³ Cf. Leimgruber, Stefan, “Was ist eine charismenorientierte Pastoral? In der Pastoral von Paulus lernen”, in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 123 (2014) 6, 11–13; Kasper, Walter, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter: Schriften zur Ekklesiologie* (WKGS 12), Freiburg 2009, 185–187; Küng, Hans, “Die charismatische Struktur der Kirche”, in: *Concilium*, No. 1 (1965), 282–290.

³⁰⁴ EG 130.

³⁰⁵ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 18.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ Cf. Leimgruber, Stefan, op. cit.

³⁰⁹ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 19; cf. Seip, Jörg, “Die Ordnung der Charismen: Anmerkungen zu einer charismenorientierten Pastoral”, in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 123 (2014) 6, 20–23.

demand-led approach.³¹⁰ After all, the reason why people want to be involved is not because there is a need, but because a given activity matches their personality, and so there has to be a greater focus on charisms, i.e. resources. Moreover, charisms are not just natural human gifts. Theologically, they must be understood as “signs and instruments of evangelization”.³¹¹

This wording automatically prompts us to associate charisms with the sacramental concept of the Church which the Council Fathers highlighted in their description of the Church as a “sign and instrument”. Yet the word “instruments” was chosen not so much in an instrumental or utilitarian sense, which could easily be misunderstood, but with a focus on hands-on action. Moreover, charisms, the Bishops say, form part of that state of tension between one’s relationship with God and loving one’s neighbour. “Just as charisms are expressions of praise and gratitude in our relationship with God, they create circumstances in people’s lives through relationships with them – circumstances marked by solidarity and help, by an encouragement towards faith in God and by the creation of communities.”³¹²

Charisms have an ecclesiological quality: whereas, on the one hand, bearers of charisms are sent out to their fellow-human beings to serve them,³¹³ they also enable the Church to come together as *ecclesia* in all its diversity – a community of Christians who all have totally different charisms, so that the Church becomes a place where God’s Spirit and His work can be experienced by everyone together. After all, it is only through the fellowship of the Church that charisms can develop – gifts which are not based on the merits of individuals, but which are continually brought into play by the Holy Spirit.³¹⁴

When the Pastoral Commission met for its consultations on the draft wording for *Being Church Together*, one central question raised was that of the Eucharist: Where and how should it be celebrated, so

³¹⁰ Cf. Kröger, Elisa, “Das Unplanbare einplanen: Charismenorientierung als Fundament einer pastoralen Strategie”, in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 123 (2014) 6, 14–19.

³¹¹ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 20.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 21.

³¹³ Cf. Wustmans, Hildegard, “Die Vielfalt der Charismen im Volk Gottes zulassen und fördern: Ein möglicher Weg aus der Bedrängnis”, in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 123 (2014) 6, 5–9.

³¹⁴ Cf. Lenz, Hubert, *op. cit.*, 31.

that the Church can truly show itself as “a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race”³¹⁵? Based on the understanding that charisms are ecclesiological in character and that they develop within the entire community of the Church, the pastoral message *Being Church Together* also highlights the celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays in the face of Germany’s declining numbers of priests. First of all, the Bishops say, there is a mutual dependence and complementarity between charisms in the Church, and any Church unity is very much the effect of the Holy Spirit at work within it. They go on to emphasise that the Eucharist is a celebration of sacramental fellowship with the local Church and the universal Church. This idea picks up on the theology of charisms, presented in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, which specifies that “every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself”.³¹⁶ Charisms do not develop outside the community of the Church. No one can walk the path of faith on their own; everyone is dependent upon the fellowship of the Church as a context for the development of their charisms.

In some parts of Germany the pastoral situation for Roman Catholics is that of a diaspora, as a consequence of which Church members are unable to celebrate the Eucharist regularly every Sunday. Under these circumstances they are encouraged not to abandon their Sunday meetings but to come together for prayer. The Bishops expressly support the commitment of those who facilitate the (priestless) Liturgy of the Word every Sunday without a priest: “We would therefore like to thank all men and women who ensure that God can continue to be praised in local churches which no longer have a priest.”³¹⁷

Subsequently, however, the authors also point out that fewer priests are now available in Germany who might “maintain a national Church structure which has become so familiar and dear to us.”³¹⁸

³¹⁵ LG 1, cf. also Franz-Josef Bode at a press briefing for the presentation of the document “Being Church Together”: A Message from the German Bishops on the Renewal of Pastoral Ministry in Fulda on 23. September 2015.

³¹⁶ LG 33.

³¹⁷ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 26.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

They express their understanding that the Church's social structures, which arose in and reflect specific historic periods, must not be confused with the essence of the Church. On the other hand, however, we can also see relics of a focus on "professional priests" here, an emphasis which the pastoral paper otherwise seeks to overcome. Another point that appears problematic is the authors' use of the term "liturgical substitutes". After all, the problem that can be observed in Germany is more an overemphasis on the Eucharist and not so much an excessive cultivation of a wide variety of liturgical celebrations. Furthermore, the impression may be raised that "liturgical substitutes" are any liturgies which are not presided over by a priest.

The document *Being Church Together* presents an almost "reflex-like" response to the possibility of a theological misinterpretation of such wordings. This impression is created when the authors reiterate that, for Christians, the very basis of being the Church is the sacraments, i.e. Christians are the Church through baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist, and that this is a gift of God which cannot be enhanced any further – even by the Sacrament of Holy Orders.³¹⁹ They therefore expressly invite the reader to put "renewed trust in the charisms of every Christian"³²⁰ – charisms which express themselves in a wide diversity of offices, ministries and callings. One particular function which the authors define for priests and full-time church workers is that of encouraging Christians to contribute their personal charisms to the life of the local church. The pastoral staff are therefore no longer seen as "doers", but as those who should identify charisms and give them space within the local church. This approach reflects certain elements of French pastoral theology, in particular, as it emphasises two aspects of pastoral work: inviting others³²¹ and bearing witness³²².

³¹⁹ Ibid., 28.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Cf. Dagens, Claude, Proposer la foi dans la société actuelle: rapport présenté par Mgr Claude Dagens à l'assemblée plénière de Lourdes, Paris 1994. On German responses to this French approach cf. Müller, Hadwig/Schwab, Norbert/Tzscheetsch, Werner (eds.), *Sprechende Hoffnung: Werdende Kirche: Proposer la foi dans la société actuelle: Den Glauben vorschlagen in der heutigen Gesellschaft*, Ostfildern 2001.

³²² Cf. Bacq, Philippe, "Für eine Erneuerung vom Ursprung her: Auf dem Weg zu einer zeugenden Pastoral", in: Feiter Reinhard/Müller, Hadwig, *Frei geben: Pastoraltheologische Impulse aus Frankreich*, Ostfildern 2012, 31–55; Bündgens, Johannes, "Zeugungspastoral: Die Ruhe nach dem Sturm", in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 119 (2010) 10, 5–9; Müller,

Jesus Christ becomes visible through the life of the Church

The Council Fathers of Vatican II had already done something similar when they structured the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*. They did so by ensuring that their starting point was not clerical functions, i.e. offices, or indeed a possible distinction between clergy and laity, but statements about the nature of the Church as the salvific sacrament of Jesus Christ in the world. *Being Church Together* is based on the same premises and therefore starts by quoting the key message of *Lumen Gentium* that "the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race".³²³ Both the existence and the essence of the Church can be derived exclusively from the incarnation which makes fellowship with God accessible to all mankind.³²⁴

The basic tenet of *Being Church Together* is that the Church cannot be imagined as anything other than Christ-centred, as it owes its existence to "the incarnation of Jesus from his birth to his crucifixion, his resurrection, his sending of the Holy Spirit and his witnesses, the Apostles".³²⁵ This centrality of Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit had already been pointed out repeatedly by the Council Fathers in their ecclesiological thoughts when they described the Church as "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit"³²⁶ and as the "Temple of the Holy Spirit" or the Body endowed with "heavenly gifts".³²⁷ It was also important to the authors of *Lumen Gentium* to emphasise in their imagery that the Church has certain personal characteristics, e.g. the Church as a "flock"³²⁸, "our mother"³²⁹, a "bride"³³⁰, etc.

Hadwig, "Leben zeugende Pastoral: Leben erzählende Pastoral", in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 119 (2010) 10, 11–14; Gilbert, Christine, "Relecture: Wenn seelsorgliches Handeln noch einmal angeschaut wird", in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 119 (2010) 10, 15–18.

³²³ LG 1.

³²⁴ "Gemeinsam Kirche sein", 29.

³²⁵ Ibid., 30.

³²⁶ LG 4.

³²⁷ LG 8.

³²⁸ Cf. John 10:11.

³²⁹ Cf. Galatians 4:26.

³³⁰ Cf. Ephesians 5:26; Revelation 21:2.

After characterising the Church primarily as Christ-centred and incarnational, the authors then proceed to specify an anthropological component, quoting *Redemptor Hominis*: “This man (...) is the basis of all the other ways that the Church must walk because man – every man without any exception whatever – has been redeemed by Christ.”³³¹ For the second time within several paragraphs the authors quote the Church as being a “sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.”³³² This key message in *Lumen Gentium* is followed by a quotation from another Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Gaudium et Spes*, where the key message is: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”³³³

Having thus specified two focal points – the Church and the world – the authors go on to say that the life of society – and thus the laity – is the developmental space of the Church’s Gospel message. Although they admit that evangelization is not something which the Church carries outside, into the world, they nevertheless establish a relationship between the two, as the mutual interdependence between the Church and the world hits “the nerve of the calling of the laity within the Church and for the world.”³³⁴ The Church, they say, is “existentially present within the world” through baptised and confirmed Christians. Considering that, in their previous point, the authors made such an effort to emphasise the Church’s mission, based on the sacrament of baptism, it would have been a major gain if, at this point, they had focused not on a specific calling of the laity, but on a specific calling of all the baptised who are commissioned in this way to manifest the Church in the world. After all, it now remains an open question what the function of an ordained Christian – a “professional priest” – might be, if it is not to be present within the world. We would do well to remind ourselves of the thematic focus in an issue of *Concilium* where an article bore the very apt title “Extra mundus nulla salus”.

³³¹ RH 14.

³³² LG 1.

³³³ GS 1.

³³⁴ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 33.

However, this passage expressly concludes with a warning against any form of ecclesiastic triumphalism, saying that the Church must move along the path of penance and renewal.³³⁵ This path must be the way of ecumenism and kenosis, with an awareness that the Church’s path of renewal will involve risk-taking. Taking risks, however, should be acceptable – “even if it means that mistakes might be made”.³³⁶

The Church as a priestly people

The Church is the sacrament that manifests the life and dedication of Christ in the world. All Christians participate in this sacramental concept of Church through baptism. The Spirit of God is at work within the Church. He is the one who commissions all God’s people and thus the priesthood of all the baptised. In their pastoral letter the German Bishops emphasise that, through baptism, Christians have a share in the priesthood of Christ and that the priestly dignity of all the baptised cannot be “enhanced or outdone by any offices, ministries, callings or appointments of individual Christians”. This wording is more than the rejection of some kind of clericalism that might favour “priesthood as an office” (or “priesthood as a ministry”, as expressed in the pastoral letter). It also questions ecclesiastical structures in Germany which, as a distinctive mark, occasionally create the impression, on the one hand, of a “caste” of full-time Christian workers in the Church – people with sound theological training, resources and expertise – and, on the other, of a “caste” of volunteers who are not subjects but all too often still objects of a pastoral ministry which is dominated by full-timers, even in the 21st century. Again, the Bishops point to the priestly dignity of all the baptised, a dignity which cannot be “enhanced or outdone by any offices, ministries, callings or appointments of individual Christians”.

In their pastoral message, the Bishops show particular appreciation for the diversity of different roles, functions, ministries and charisms in the Church as an expression of a sacramental reality in Christ. The way these different charisms must work is not alongside each other, but by “serving one another” within the one Body of the

³³⁵ LG 8.

³³⁶ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 34.

Church. The authors expressly warn against any thinking in terms of power logic. “Wherever the relationship between, say, priests and laity or men and women becomes a matter of power, it contradicts the very theological foundations of relationships within the Church as derived from the Church’s sacramental character.”³³⁷

It is obvious that the pastoral letter was written by individuals who work within a highly differentiated and professionalised local church. However, we can also see that the drafting of this document was partly the work of Commission IV of the German Bishops’ Conference which focused, above all, on the changing roles and profiles of pastoral and local church advisers within the newly formed church districts. Several passages were implicitly written against the background of conflict between clergy and laity, between full-time and voluntary church workers and between men and women.³³⁸ The authors express their appreciation that, in a society with a high level of functional differentiation and thus a tendency towards professionalisation in the Church, there are full-time theologians and other specialists who work in various different segments of society. Yet at the same time the authors also recognise that such differentiation and professionalism within the Church involve the risk of “removing independent thought or causing alienation between full-time workers and volunteers”. In fact, I would see this tendency in the German Church as being at least as dangerous as an excessive clericalism. Perhaps the dichotomy between a “Church of full-time professional Christians” and a “Church of Christian volunteers” (as well as a Church of Christians who have long lost any rapport with their denomination) may well be the most crucial challenge facing the German Roman Catholic Church today.

In this context the authors highlight the importance of a ministry of enablement that aims to develop the baptismal dignity of the baptised. They warn against exaggerating or understating its importance within the Church, although they also point out that the ministry of the priest is indispensable in the Church. Interestingly, having focused on the idea of a ministry of enablement, they then speak about “priesthood as a ministry”, not “priesthood as an office”. What characterises

³³⁷ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 36.

³³⁸ Cf. Franz-Josef Bode at a press briefing for the presentation of the document “Being Church Together: A Message from the German Bishops on the Renewal of Pastoral Ministry” in Fulda on 23. September 2015.

the ministry of a priest is that he should lead the baptised towards a deeper understanding of the love of Christ, and thus their shared priestly calling or their share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Jesus Christ.³³⁹ In the same context the authors also refer to the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* which specifies that the common priesthood of all believers and the priesthood as a ministry are not a matter of degree, but of essence, although they do of course relate to each other.³⁴⁰ The authors emphasise the unity of the Church’s mission³⁴¹, on the one hand, and every Christian’s joint share in the priesthood of Christ, on the other.³⁴² To ensure that their remarks about these differences in essence – shared priesthood and priesthood as a ministry – are not just left “dangling in the air”, they then attach a certain quality to the priesthood as an office: the quality of acting *in persona Christi capitis*.³⁴³ They briefly outline the theological background of this thought, but without developing it in any depth, so that it lacks conviction for any sustainable and differentiated specification of the common priesthood and the priesthood as a ministry. Nevertheless, in a later chapter, the document does in fact deal critically with the idea of acting *in persona Christi capitis*, stating that the concept does not “describe any immunising authority of the priest” in the sense that others might be excluded or that the priest might be beyond criticism.³⁴⁴ This may well be an area for future research in ecclesiology or in clerical theology.

The authors conclude this part of the paper by talking about a “change in mindset” which Benedict XVI implied when he pointed out that lay people “must no longer be viewed as ‘collaborators’ of the clergy”, but must be “truly recognised as ‘co-responsible’ for the Church’s being and action”.³⁴⁵ In particular, they point out that,

³³⁹ Cf. AA 2; AA 10; AG 15.

³⁴⁰ LG 10.

³⁴¹ AA 2.

³⁴² LG 10.

³⁴³ Cf. Kasper, Walter, *Die Kirche und ihre Ämter: Schriften zur Ekklesiologie* (WKGS 12), Freiburg 2009, 189; Schillebeeckx, Edward, *Christus: Sakrament der Gottesbegegnung*, Mainz 1960, 61f.

³⁴⁴ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 44.

³⁴⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome, 26. May 2009 – https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2009/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20090526_convegno-diocesi-rm.html (07.03.2016).

elsewhere in the universal Church, some interesting experience has been gathered about the way one might rethink the combination of ministries and charisms and then turn this combination into something fruitful. Essentially, being Church can only succeed if all the different charisms relate to one another and work together, rather than being in confrontation with each other.

Interestingly, later on in the document, the Bishops talk about the mutual benefit of full-time ministries and voluntary work. They mention the possibility that full-time ministers may sometimes mainly function as providers of instruction and professional support, while leadership functions can be fulfilled by Christians working as volunteers.³⁴⁶ They point to experiences elsewhere in the universal Church where leadership functions can be held by individuals who do not “exercise functions as a matter of gainful employment”.³⁴⁷

Leadership has many faces in the Church

Chapter 5 of the pastoral message *Being Church Together* is about issues of leadership, and we can clearly see that this part of the document touches upon a highly sensitive area within the German Church. The authors point out that, in the history of the Church, different forms of leadership were always occasioned by their historical context. They list a variety of leadership concepts, such as *pastor*, *episcopos*, *presbyter*, *kybernetes*, *munus regiminis*, abbot/abbess, prior(ess), provincial, superior general, spokesman/spokeswoman³⁴⁸, *primus inter pares*, chairman/chairwoman³⁴⁹, *cura animarum* (pastoral care), *delegado de palabra*³⁵⁰, contact³⁵¹, *équipe d’animation* etc. The last term shows again that the authors of the pastoral document were (partly) inspired by French pastoral theology.³⁵²

³⁴⁶ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 49.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Speaker of a team.

³⁴⁹ Chairman/chairwoman of a decision-making body.

³⁵⁰ Person instructed to preach God’s Word in a basic community.

³⁵¹ Contact in a parish or congregation.

³⁵² Cf. Feiter, Reinhard/Müller, Hadwig (eds.), *Frei geben: Pastoraltheologische Impulse aus Frankreich*, Ostfildern 2012; Müller, Hadwig, “Seelsorge im säkularisierten Frankreich: Befreiende Orientierung an der Gegenwart und am Evangelium”, in: *Theologisch-Praktische Quartalsschrift*, No. 153 (2005) 3, 256–262; Müller, Hadwig, “Solidarität und das Glück, wir selber zu werden”, in: Krockauer, Rainer/Körber; Manfred (eds.), *Glaubenszeugnisse in*

The document clearly emphasises that leadership skills include working on one’s own attitudes and abilities so as to set an example for others. This implies the ability to see oneself in perspective and to change directions.

Whenever Christians have leadership functions in the Church, they must never use theology to obscure Christ as the real leader of the Church. Any form of ecclesiology therefore needs to be Christ-centred. Even though the pastoral document displays a fair amount of caution when talking about the leadership ministries of “office holders”, one might ask whether it was really theologically wise to talk first about the leadership ministry of an office holder and only then about the leadership ministries of men and women within the Church. It might even have been theologically interesting to abandon the distinction of leadership ministries by “estates” altogether and not to classify them at all. Yet, in view of Church practice, it also seems plausible to show a measure of pragmatism and to make specific statements about “callings within the Church”. The authors underline that priestly ministry must be a “ministry towards salvation and one that facilitates freedom, orderliness and everybody’s combined efforts”, something which is only possible if a priest discovers charisms, encourages commitment and also supports Christians in their apostolate within the Church and for the world. In particular, they emphasise that “concepts such as ‘ministry’ and ‘being in ministry’ must be reflected in the way that leadership is perceived.”³⁵³

But what are the essential distinctive features?

The specifics of the priesthood as a ministry, the Bishops say, is the irreplaceable ministry of celebrating the sacraments, on the one hand, and their special responsibility of passing on Scripture and tradition. In addition, the priest is also responsible for maintaining unity among Christians within the universal Church (sic!) and for finding ways in which God’s people can realise their mission in the world in a way that is appropriate to a given context and time. In view of national church traditions in Germany and the numerous representative commitments a parish priest has, the authors point out in particular – and indeed

sozialer Arbeit und Diakonie: Impulse für Kirche und Gesellschaft, Berlin 2008, 97–115.

³⁵³ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 44.

with a wholesome emphasis – that priests must rid themselves of complex management functions and representational duties. These are jobs which are not genuinely part of their priestly ministry and should therefore be delegated to others – men and women who work either full-time or on a voluntary basis.

However, the document also addresses the leadership ministries of non-ordained men and women in the Church, pointing out that lay people already have leadership ministries in so many spheres of Church life. When it comes to fleshing out leadership ministries, the authors highlight the wealth of experience that has been gathered in religious orders and which should encourage us to develop innovative leadership structures where a given office may sometimes only be held for a limited period of time. Furthermore, the Bishops point out that “leadership can ultimately only be exercised collectively”³⁵⁴ and that this is an area where synods, councils and other consultation processes are vital within the Church.

Self-renewal of pastoral ministry in the Church

Next, the Bishops comment on the changing pastoral situation in Germany where traditional territorial parishes are developing into “parishes of a new type”. These have been described as “church districts”, “pastoral care districts”, “communities of parishes” and “communities of communities”. Also at issue are structures in pastoral ministry.³⁵⁵ But before saying anything about the transformational processes within a parish, the Bishops quote three statements made by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* in the hope, as it were, of first building up some “encouraging theological momentum”. Pope Francis describes the local parish as “a centre of constant missionary outreach”.³⁵⁶ In view of the current changes that can be observed in Germany’s church districts, the Bishops also quote Pope Francis’s description of the local parish not as “an outdated institution”, but as something that “possesses great flexibility”³⁵⁷ because it is “the

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 48.

³⁵⁵ Cf. Felix Genn at a press briefing for the presentation of the document “Being Church Together”: A Message from the German Bishops on the Renewal of Pastoral Ministry” in Fulda on 23. September 2015.

³⁵⁶ EG 28.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.”³⁵⁸ It is good to see the appreciation with which the Bishops emphasise that different areas of church life – or parish life – take different forms, and that they must nevertheless be closely networked among themselves and stay connected with Christ as their real centre.

Particularly in view of the current social situation in Germany, with its movements of migration and immigration, it is good to hear of a fundamental solidarity among the baptised and confirmed in this context and of a “spirituality of hospitality”. When the authors say at this point that, by exercising hospitality, the Christian faith must be “offered in a convincing manner”, this shows again that the document was inspired by pastoral input from France. This influence can also be seen subsequently, when the Bishops talk about new forms of participation and responsibility and when they describe the priest as an “obstetrician” in this process. What we can see here is an understanding of pastoral ministry as a “procreation” activity.³⁵⁹ Finally, basing their thoughts on the *motu proprio Ministeria Quaedam* (1972), the Bishops point out that, when it comes to coordinating diaconal, catechetical and liturgical ministries, specific responsibilities might be given to people for limited periods of time.

Being Church together for all humanity

The document concludes by referring back to the six key questions that were asked at the beginning. Based on the reflections presented, the authors formulate the following goals for the Church in Germany:

- Increase awareness among all Christians that they are called to holiness and that they can deepen this holiness through friendship with Jesus and serving their brothers and sisters.
- Allow scope for the wealth of charisms and keep receiving the gift of this unifying diversity through celebrating the Eucharist.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Cf. Bündgens, Johannes, “Zeugungspastoral: Die Ruhe nach dem Sturm”, in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 119 (2010) 10, 5–9; Müller, Hadwig, “Leben zeugende Pastoral: Leben erzählende Pastoral”, in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 119 (2010) 10, 11–14.

- Ensure that fellowship between and among the clergy and the laity fully enables the Church to serve all humanity .
- Understand the wide range of callings and functions in the Body of Christ not as a matter of ranking above or below one another, but as multiple expressions of the one mission.
- Ensure that the largest possible number of men and women all have a fair share in the Church's different leadership ministries.
- Support our parishes in developing into communities of communities with many different forms of participation.

Interestingly, the compositional structure of *Being Church Together* concludes with the “era of two Popes”. In their last sentence the Bishops say: “We trust that wherever people allow themselves to be gripped by the joy of the Gospel, the Church grows and faith has a future.”³⁶⁰ This thought unites Pope Francis’s programmatic words about the joy of the Gospel³⁶¹ and a dictum by Pope Benedict XVI which expresses two core concepts – a “growing Church” and “faith that has a future.”³⁶²

New stimuli for Evangelization

The Bishops’ message *Being Church Together* picks up core ideas from *Lumen Gentium* and – like *Gaudium et Spes* earlier on – accepts the challenges of the present and identifies important key concepts of evangelization in the 21st century. The two most crucial components are the calling of all humans to holiness and the centrality of Christ. Both aspects are signs and instruments of the promised salvation and unfold as such particularly clearly in the sacrament of baptism. Baptismal dignity is the essential criterion of a person’s life as a Christian³⁶³, while all further distinctions must remain relatively insignificant. In line with this is a charism-focused pastoral ministry that is primarily geared to people and not models. In

³⁶⁰ “Gemeinsam Kirche sein”, 56.

³⁶¹ EG 1.

³⁶² Pope Benedict XVI, sermon in Mariazell on 7.September 2007.

³⁶³ A few weeks before the pastoral message “Gemeinsam Kirche sein” was published, the Roman Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Bochum held a conference together with missio and KAMP, entitled “Baptismal Dignity and Leadership”, which was attended by 350 pastoral theologians from Germany. The good turnout shows that clarifying the issue of baptismal dignity and leadership is currently recognised as an important challenge for the Church in Germany.

view of the reorganisation of church districts, *Being Church Together* presents a beneficial way forward in opening up horizons, yet without prematurely establishing definitive paths. This is good, because we are going through a time of profound transformations – a time when the pastoral ministry is very much in need of (sometimes tentative) searching, rather than hastening the establishment of models. When it comes to evangelization in Germany, the document abandons any adherence to (fondly cherished but) outmoded social forms within the Church, while encouraging us to be Church together in a way that allows new forms of participation.³⁶⁴ In many regions of the universal Church, Christians have already gained a substantial amount of positive experience with new forms of being Church. The pastoral message *Being Church Together* encourages us to think of evangelization in Germany in future as including the following categories: participation, a focus on charisms and experimental pastoral ministry – yet without forgetting the centrality of Christ as the crucial element of any evangelization.

³⁶⁴ Cf. Hennecke, Christian (ed.), *Kleine Christliche Gemeinschaften verstehen: Ein Weg, Kirche mit den Menschen zu sein*, Würzburg 2009.

Impulses of Evangelization in the Recent Pontificate

Mary John Mananzan

One of the most important events of the year 2013 was the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope Francis. Since then he has not ceased to amaze not only Catholics but the whole world. I, for one, who in the past years was wont to say to my friends that I am very happy as a Sister but am a bit uneasy being a Catholic, can now say I am very proud to be a Catholic because of what Pope Francis has effected in the Church in such a short time. It is not as if he has overturned the doctrines of the Church. In fact doctrinally he is very orthodox. However, he is very radical in his practice of the Gospel. And this has brought back so many disillusioned Catholics while it also amazes and inspires atheists, unbelievers and skeptics who now think that there must be something in the Catholic Church if there is such a pope as Francis.

Although Pope Benedict and not Pope Francis was the one who launched the call to new evangelization, the election of this recent Pope is a great impulse in its concretization. In his words and especially in his actions, people have begun to understand what the new evangelization is and what it can be.

The Gospel (Evangelium) according to Pope Francis

Before I share my reflection on what I think Pope Francis' understanding of the Gospel is, I would like to point out some of his actions that speak louder than words. First of all on his election, as he stood still quite dazed on the balcony together with cardinals on his first appearance as Pope, he humbly bowed his head to be blessed by the people! We know that he still lives in Sta. Martha and not in the Papal palatial residence. We know that he does not wear Ferragamo shoes and that his car is a tiny Ford. Then we all know that on the

first Holy Thursday as Pope, he chose to wash the feet of youth offenders, two of whom were women and one was a Muslim. I saw a picture where a couple put the hand of the Pope on the womb of the pregnant wife to feel the new life growing there. And he did so without embarrassment or squeamishness but with genuine interest. And who could forget the picture of that little boy hugging the legs of the Pope while he was addressing the crowd on a family day celebration. He even let the boy sit on the Papal Chair and kept his hand on his head while he continued talking. Unbelievable! I also cannot forget how he tenderly hugged the man whose face and body were disfigured by horrible disease that covered him with ugly, mottled skin. There was no disgust or revulsion on the Pope's face—only tenderness and compassion.

When one looks at these, one cannot say he is doing extraordinary things. Someone said he is only introducing “the scandal of normalcy” in the Vatican.

These for me is the Gospel according to Pope Francis which he learned from no other than his teacher, Jesus Christ. And I think this is the direction that the new evangelization is taking. And this has got to do with Pope Francis' vision of the Church who is primarily responsible for this task.

Pope Francis' vision of the Church.

In my opinion the vision of Pope Francis is expressed best not only in his encyclicals but in the talks that he gives to live audiences or in interviews. One of the statements that expressed this most was when he said that the task of the Church is not so much in making doctrinal and moral pronouncements but in healing the wounds of people. “I see clearly, that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful.”³⁶⁵

Pope Francis explains his view of the Church in an exclusive interview by Fr. Antonio Spadaro, S,J on September 30, 2013:

The church's pastoral ministry cannot be obsessed with the transmission of a disjointed multitude of doctrines to be imposed

³⁶⁵ Spadaro, Antonio: *Das Interview mit Papst Franziskus*, 25.09.2013, cf. http://stimmen-der-zeit-de/zeitschrift/online_exklusiv/details_html?k_beitrag=3906412 (26.05.2015).

insistently. Proclamation in a missionary style focuses on the essentials, on the necessary things: this is also what fascinates and attracts more, what makes the heart burn, as it did for the disciples at Emmaus. We have to find a new balance; otherwise even the moral edifice of the church is likely to fall like a house of cards, losing the freshness and fragrance of the Gospel. [...]

The church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules. The most important thing is the first proclamation: Jesus Christ has saved you. And the ministers of the church must be ministers of mercy above all. [...]

This church with which we should be thinking is the home of all, not a small chapel that can hold only a small group of selected people. We must not reduce the bosom of the universal church to a nest protecting our mediocrity.”³⁶⁶

“I believe I have already said that our goal is not to proselytize but to listen to needs, desires and disappointments, despair, hope. We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace.”³⁶⁷

In summary, Pope Francis expresses his vision for the Church thus: “I dream of a church that is mother and shepherdess.”³⁶⁸

Pope Francis as a prophet

A prophet is usually defined as one” who preaches the good news and denounces the bad news.” In the course of time the word prophet has become synonymous with someone fortelling future events usually catastrophic, and so the phrase: a prophet of doom. Pope Francis is far from being a prophet of doom. He is actually a prophet of joy!

Announcing the good news, of the Gospel means bringing to people the good news of God's Reign. This redounds to total and

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Interview with Eugenio Scalfari and Pope Francis, *Auf einmal erfüllte mich ein großes Licht*, 03.10.2013, <http://www.zenit.org/de/articles/auf-einmal-erfulgte-mich-ein-grosses-licht-zweiter-teil> (26.05.2015).

³⁶⁸ Spadaro, Antonio, op. cit.

concrete salvation, not only of the soul but the whole person, not only from sin, hell and death but from all that oppress a human being and prevent one's full growth as a person. It is not only in the hereafter but begins with the here and now. In this aspect, the evangelizers could ask themselves what "good news" they preach, whether it is relevant to peoples' total well being or just lulls them either towards complacency or confirms them in their apathy. Another factor in this first aspect of prophetic response is that one has already to mirror in oneself whatever it is he/she preaches to others. Here is where the credibility of the bearer of the good news is tested.

The second element of prophecy is denouncing the bad news. This means to make a clear stand after thorough analysis of the situation. It is to make moral judgments. It means fearless resistance to evil, to oppressive or exploitative acts or policies.

Pope Francis in such a short time has shown that he truly preaches the good news, the Gospel, not only by his words but by his acts. Consider the following prophetic actions:

1. He appointed an advisory council of eight cardinals from different continents.
2. He ordered the investigation of Vatican Bank; has hired secular consultants and set up a special commission to oversee the Vatican Bank.
3. While he has spoken infrequently on clerical sexual abuse, he has appointed a special commission to investigate cases.
4. He suspended an extravagant-living German bishop.
5. He is breaking up power groups like the ring of conservatives centered in the city of Genoa.

Evangelii Gaudium – the blue print for the new evangelization

It is in his first encyclical, *Evangelii Gaudium*, that Pope Francis systematically puts together a blueprint for the new evangelization. It is where one can find great impulses in concretizing it.

First of all: the title: Gospel of joy! That indeed is good tidings. It expresses the end result of evangelization: joy, bliss. His first paragraph is self explanatory:

"The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter

Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come."³⁶⁹

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, who presented the document at a Vatican press conference, summarized its main message this way:

"If we were to sum up Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium* in a few words, we could say that it is an Apostolic Exhortation written around the theme of Christian joy in order that the Church may rediscover the original source of evangelization in the contemporary world."³⁷⁰

Although every section sends an impulse to the task of the Church, I will highlight those I think are most significant.

The importance of the Evangelizer

Everyone knows that one cannot give what one does not have and that the message is the messenger. And so one of the first things the Pope emphasizes are the qualities of the evangelizer. **Zenit**, a Vatican digital publication, summarizes succinctly what the Pope says about this matter:

"The Pope indicates the temptations which affect pastoral workers (77): individualism, a crisis of identity and a cooling of fervour (78). The greatest threat of all is the grey pragmatism of the daily life of the Church, in which all appears to proceed normally, which in reality faith is wearing down (83). He warns against defeatism (84), urging Christians to be signs of hope (86), bringing about a revolution of tenderness (88). It is necessary to seek refuge from the spirituality of well-being detached from responsibility for our brothers and sisters (90) and to vanquish the spiritual worldliness

³⁶⁹ Pope Francis, Apostolic letter *Evangelii Gaudium* about the promulgation of the Gospel in the today's world (announcement of the Apostolic seat (No. 194)), ed. by the Secretariat of the German Episcopal Conference, Bonn 2013.

³⁷⁰ Akin, Jimmy, "Pope Francis' new document, *Evangelii Gaudium*: 9 things to know and share", in: *National Catholic Register* (26.11.2013), <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/jimmy-akin/pope-francis-new-document-evangelii-gaudium-9-things-to-know-and-share/#ixzz32sYxnAJM> (16.05.2015).

that consists of seeking not the Lords glory but human glory and well-being (93).³⁷¹

Evangelizers must have experienced conversion themselves; the Pope himself includes the conversion of the papacy itself. The evangelizer must in fact be a prophet – one who preaches the Good News and denounces the Bad News. In a very short time Pope Francis has done exactly that which is why he warns Bishops not to be “airport bishops” intent more on their career than evangelizing. He tells the priests to go out of the sanctuary and go to their sheep and in fact to “smell like their sheep”. He exhorts religious women not to live empty lives as “old maids” (he apologizes for his politically incorrect language”) but to live their celibacy fruitfully.³⁷²

Evangelization is a communal endeavor

The Pope emphasizes that evangelization is not done by individual heroic persons but as an evangelizing community. And this involves every one—lay, clergy, religious, women, youth. We are an evangelizing community. We are all missionaries: In the Pope’s own words.

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized..... Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus.”³⁷³

The focus of Evangelization is the human person

It is so heartwarming when Pope Francis many times, in different words, and on different occasions, emphasizes the worth of the

³⁷¹ *Evangelii Gaudium: Revolution of the tender love*. Official summary of the apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, Vatican City, 26.11.2013, <http://www.zenit.org/de/articles/evangelii-gaudi-um-revolution-der-zartlichen-liebe> (26.05.2015).

³⁷² Harangue of Pope Francis to the participants of the plenary assembly of the international association of the General Superiors (U.I.S.G.), 8.03.2013.

³⁷³ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 120.

human person. Evangelization is not so much about the proclamation of doctrinal and moral prescriptions but “the healing of wounds and the warming of the hearts of the faithful” His regard for the human person is very clear:

“In every way that matters to God, human beings are completely equal and completely loved. They can’t be reduced to ethical object lessons. Their dignity runs deeper than their failures. They matter more than any cause; they are the cause.”³⁷⁴

This focus on the human person inspires the Pope to suggest a “new” or at least not usually regarded form of evangelization which he calls person-to person evangelization:

“Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet, whether they be our neighbours or complete strangers. This is the informal preaching which takes place in the middle of a conversation, something along the lines of what a missionary does when visiting a home. Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey.”³⁷⁵

The homily as a vehicle of Evangelization

Anyone who has sat during an unprepared homily where the priest takes off and spouts a lot of motherhood utterances and platitudes and does not seem to know how to land even after many “take offs”, knows how people can be turned off and scandalized or even angered by a bad homily. The Pope himself says: “We know that the faithful attach great importance to it, and that both they and their ordained ministers suffer because of homilies: the laity from having to listen to them and the clergy from having to preach them!”³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ Cf. Gerson, Michael, “Pope Francis is the troublemaker”, in: Washington Post (23.09.2013), http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/michael-gerson-pope-francis-the-troublemaker/2013/09/23/19084384-2481-b75d-5b7f66349852_story.html (26.05.2015).

³⁷⁵ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 127.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 135.

And yet the homily is a distinctly direct means of evangelization. It is or should be the actual preaching of the Gospel. “The homily can actually be an intense and happy experience of the Spirit, a consoling encounter with God’s word, a constant source of renewal and growth.”³⁷⁷ So he warns against lengthy homilies and advises that a homily should not be a lecture or a speech but be like a mother’s loving words to her children. Priests should really take to heart the admonition of the Pope to really and conscientiously prepare their homilies.

Popular religiosity

Another impulse for the new evangelization which has not been taken seriously in the past, in fact, is often regarded with suspicion are the forms of popular religiosity that develop in countries especially with pre-Christian belief systems. It is true that there are possibilities of these degenerating into superstitions but the Pope recognizes their potential in the new evangelization. He writes:

“Underlying popular piety, as a fruit of the inculturated Gospel, is an active evangelizing power which we must not underestimate: to do so would be to fail to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit. Instead, we are called to promote and strengthen it, in order to deepen the never-ending process of inculturation. Expressions of popular piety have much to teach us; for those who are capable of reading them, they are a locus theologicus which demands our attention, especially at a time when we are looking to the new evangelization.”³⁷⁸

Option for the poor

I think the most important impulse to the new Evangelization that Pope Francis has emphasized are the many ways of concretizing the option for the poor. Admittedly, it is not new and has been the focus of the Church since Vatican II. But it has gained a new meaning because of the actions and words of Pope Francis, who though he may not call himself a liberation theologian was nurtured and nourished in his theological formation in the context of Latin American Liberation Theology

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., No. 136.

at the height of its popularity and effectiveness. It is therefore to be expected that the Pope emphasizes the social dimension of the new evangelization.

It deserves a fuller and separate section in this paper.

The social dimension of the new Evangelization according to Pope Francis

The importance of the social context

Pope Francis devotes a long section – Chapter Four – to the social dimension of evangelization. He definitely discards the purely vertical relationship with God. He asserts that religion is not only a personal matter but is communal and societal. True to his liberation theologian upbringing his theology is down- up and not up –down. His theology of evangelization starts from the concrete situation of the human being. It begins with the analysis of society. He points out clearly the social dimension of evangelization:

“Reading the Scriptures also makes it clear that the Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God. Nor should our loving response to God be seen simply as an accumulation of small personal gestures to individuals in need, a kind of “charity à la carte”, or a series of acts aimed solely at easing our conscience. The Gospel is about the kingdom of God (cf. Lk 4:43); it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society.”³⁷⁹

And again:

“It is no longer possible to claim that religion should be restricted to the private sphere and that it exists only to prepare souls for heaven. We know that God wants his children to be happy in this world too, even though they are called to fulfilment in eternity, for he has created all things “for our enjoyment” (1 Tim 6:17), the enjoyment of everyone. It follows that Christian conversion demands reviewing especially those areas and aspects of life “related to the social order and the pursuit of the common good.”³⁸⁰

³⁷⁹ Ibid., No. 180.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., No. 182.

The economic system

The most important context of evangelization from the perspective of the poor is the economic system that is the cause of their poverty and misery. Pope Francis has many things to say about this system.

“As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved by rejecting the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation and by attacking the structural causes of inequality, no solution will be found for the world’s problems or, for that matter, to any problems.”³⁸¹

“Just as the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?”³⁸²

Option for the poor

Reiterating the stance of the Church, Pope Francis puts at the heart of evangelization the option of the poor as befits the followers of Christ who opted for the poor:

“Our faith in Christ, who became poor, and was always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society’s most neglected members.”³⁸³

“Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid.”³⁸⁴

Religious Congregations’ General and Provincial Chapters, Bishops’ synods have made the option for the poor the subject of

³⁸¹ Ibid., No. 202.

³⁸² Ibid., No. 53.

³⁸³ Ibid., No. 186.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., No. 187.

their deliberations. The challenge today is to develop new strategies and creative ways of concretizing this option for the poor.

The “poor” to Pope Francis as the focus of evangelization is not an abstract poor or derived “poor” as in “spiritually poor”. It is really the economically poor, the marginalized and oppressed poor. The Pope identifies these different kinds of poor groups having their own needs and concerns. In this regard, I would like to concretize this concern for various groups of poor in the particular context of Asia, specifically of the Philippines.

The unemployed/underemployed – the plight of workers

The Pope writes: “My thoughts turn to all who are unemployed, often as a result of a self-centred mindset bent on profit at any cost. The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty.”

In the Philippines, in spite of so-called economic growth, there is still a great percentage of people who are unemployed or underemployed. Many corporations do not give even the minimum wage. They resort to contractualization. Workers are given contracts for 5 months to avoid the law that obliges employers to make permanent those who have completed 6 months of work. So workers have to look for work every 5 months and cannot even re-apply in their places of work. Can one imagine the uncertainty and insecurity of bread-earners who are never sure if they can find a means of livelihood after 5 months. Because of this practice there is also what is termed “safe labor” meaning, the virtual impossibility of forming unions and consequently of using strike as a method of strategy.

It is difficult to evangelize the poor unless one gives them also hope or means of providing for their basic necessities. And yet ironically, many of them cling to their religion in the midst of their misery and suffering. It is imperative that evangelization of the poor be accompanied by so-called social action projects and funding agencies should not make a difference between “social action” and “pastoral” work because they go together.

Migrants and refugees

Because of lack of employment in their home countries many go to other countries as refugees, as migrant workers, as permanent

migrants. There are about 10 million Filipinos all over the world as migrant workers, many of them working as domestics even if they have finished college degrees. Aside from loneliness living away from their loved ones, they experience exploitation and oppression. Women are raped. Some are murdered and some commit suicide in desperation. Meanwhile, the family of the migrant worker disintegrates. Husband and wives get other partners and children are psychologically affected and become very insecure. Truly the social cost of migration has not yet been seriously considered. The Pope has concrete suggestions towards the solution of this problem:

“A change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization – all typical of a throwaway culture – towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world.

The creation of opportunities for employment in the local economies will also avoid the separation of families and ensure that individuals and groups enjoy conditions of stability and serenity.”³⁸⁵

For the Church in countries where migrants, refugees and migrant workers abound, this is a great challenge to launch new forms of evangelization for these new poor among them. Religious congregations need to assign personnel and use their material resources for this apostolate of hospitality to strangers in their midst who need not only their material but also their spiritual and psychological support. Actually in the case of Filipino migrants who are generally religious, the Churches in the host countries experience a new spurt of life and growth, a resurgence of lively and inspiring liturgy in their midst. It is a case of reverse evangelization from the South to the North.

Victims of human trafficking

Today there is a lucrative multi-billion dollar industry – the trafficking of human beings for different purposes. Migrant workers are

³⁸⁵ Pope Francis, Message of Pope Francis to the world day of the migrants and refugees (2014), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_wordlmigrants-day.html (26.05.2015).

often victims of human trafficking. Women and children are victims of sex trafficking not only locally but internationally. A new form of human trafficking today is the organ transplant trafficking. Some years ago an article in a Philippine daily reported how a 12 year old girl was almost kidnapped by an agent of this form of trafficking. She was plucky enough to bite his hands and so she could escape but not before she saw two other children lying down in the van drugged unconscious. The human traffickers have no qualms in killing these children taking their eyes, their kidneys which they sell for organ transplant. It is very difficult to fight against the giant cartels and Mafia-like syndicates that are behind human trafficking. It takes massive education programs, vigilance and courage to take up the advocacy against it.

Pope Francis is specially angered and saddened by this phenomenon. He considers it “an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ”.³⁸⁶

He appeals: “Human trafficking is a crime against humanity and must be stopped. We must unite our efforts to free victims and stop this crime that’s become ever more aggressive, that threatens not just individuals, but the foundational values of society,” international security and laws, the economy, families and communities.”³⁸⁷

The UISG or Union of Superiors General has taken seriously the fight against human trafficking and has launched the Talitha Cum all over the world partnering with the Association of Major Religious Superiors in many countries in all continents giving seminars on the nature, prevention and advocacy regarding human trafficking and strategies and ways of helping its victims. Indeed Religious Congregations all over the world count this among the significant forms of new evangelization that they have committed themselves to.

The woman question

I would like to classify the current issues of women into three: 1) inequality and discrimination, 2) violence against women, 3) traf-

³⁸⁶ International Conference on Human Trafficking, Rome April, 9.–10. 2014.

³⁸⁷ Pope Francis, Harangue of Pope Francis to a group of new ambassadors at the Holy Seat (12.12.2013), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/speeches/2013/december/documents/papafrancesco_20131212_credenziali-nuovi-ambasciatori.html (26.05.2015).

ficking of women into prostitution, mail order bride trade, and overseas women contract work.

Although the equality of men and women before the law is provided in some constitutions there is no country to my knowledge where there is actual equality of women and men in practice. This may vary in degree from country to country but it is safe to say that in the home, society and the church, women are still second class citizens.

The incontestable proof that there is as yet no real equality among men and women anywhere is the prevalence of violence against women. Studies have shown that about 90 percent of violence against women and children happen in their homes. Incest, which has been a taboo topic for ages is now coming out and it points to fathers, brothers, brothers-in-law, cousins, uncles, and even grandfathers as perpetrators. Marital rape was not recognized as such until recently when laws were promulgated penalizing it. Many women are subjected to verbal and psychological and physical abuse by their husbands ranging from insulting words to actual assault and murder. The daily newspapers report cases of rape-murder, and many and varied forms of violence against women and children.

In Third World countries, to escape the perennial economic crises, women and children are prostituted. There is no tourism program in Third World countries that does not include prostitution even if those countries consider prostitution illegal. Foreign military bases stationed in a country will occasion the rise of prostitution cities around them. There is the phenomenon of so-called mail-order brides, surrogate mothers, victims of the human transplant business. The result is the spread of venereal diseases, AIDS, corruption children, hole in the wall abortions causing death, unwed mothers, fatherless children, so forth and so on, and the overall degradation of women.

Pope Francis has a high regard for women, is at ease with women and wishes the women to have more active roles in the Church short of ordination:

“Women are asking deep questions that must be addressed. The church cannot be herself without the woman and her role. The woman is essential for the church. Mary, a woman, is more important than the bishops. I say this because we must not

confuse the function with the dignity. We must therefore investigate further the role of women in the church. We have to work harder to develop a profound theology of the woman. Only by making this step will it be possible to better reflect on their function within the church. The feminine genius is needed wherever we make important decisions. The challenge today is this: to think about the specific place of women also in those places where the authority of the church is exercised for various areas of the church.”³⁸⁸

However he is far from being feminist. In fact he has expressed warning on feminism as an ideology. I don't think the Pope is aware that there are many forms of feminism. Maybe in this regard he needs to encounter more feminists from third world countries whose principles, thoughts and actions do not fall under the Pope's interpretation of feminism which he warns about. We in the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians define feminism as 1) awareness of the woman question or the fact that there is a discrimination, oppression, subordination and exploitation of women as women and it is an ideological, structural and global problem. 2) commitment to change the situation towards the comprehensive empowerment of women. I cannot imagine the Pope objecting to this.

Pope Francis is not perfect. And maybe this is an area where the Holy Spirit still has to enlighten him.

Actually for the Church as a whole genuine gender equality is still far from being self-understood. It seems to be the last frontier. And therefore it is still a very rich field for the new evangelization.

In this regard religious women should be at the forefront. Religious women educators have to examine how they might have a role in the perpetuation of the woman question by the system of education and especially by religious education that can justify and perpetuate the discrimination and subordination of women and the entrenching of her stereotyped roles.

How much of convent resources are used to conscientize both men and women about their social conditioning and to give service to victims of violence?

³⁸⁸ Spadaro, Antonio, op. cit.

The elderly and people with disabilities, modern lepers

In this age of youth, health, and conformism, there are people who are marginalized because of age, disabilities or socially unacceptable characteristics. The elderly suffer loneliness and isolation. All that had given them self-esteem – youth, beauty, power, position, prestige have all been relegated to the past. Many are left to die alone. People with disabilities are treated as if they were retarded even if their disabilities are physical. They are dependent on others sometimes for their mobility. If the disability is psychological, their fate is even worse. There are also people, for example with sexual orientations that are not in conformity with the general norms of society (lesbians and gays) who suffer discrimination, made fun of and sometimes are deprived of jobs which they are capable of doing. Some have committed suicide because of rejection by their families. What comfort and consolation can we offer them?

Pope Francis has not forgotten them. He includes them as special concerns of the new evangelization.

“A person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: ‘Tell me: when God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?’ We must always consider the person. Here we enter into the mystery of the human being. In life, God accompanies persons, and we must accompany them, starting from their situation. It is necessary to accompany them with mercy. When that happens, the Holy Spirit inspires the priest to say the right thing.”³⁸⁹

The Youth

With many years of their lives before them, young people should be full of zest for life. And yet we hear of suicides by very young people in their teens or twenties. Many belong to dysfunctional families that have failed to provide them with a healthy childhood, good examples and moral values. Many are confused and we know how many get into drugs, into crimes, into meaningless lives. They cry out for love, for guidance, for a meaning in life. How do we reach their hearts,

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

how can we take hold of their outstretched hands and guide them to responsible adulthood? They are also often victims of domestic violence of human trafficking of child abuse, of exploitation as child workers and child warriors.

In Brazil, Pope Francis has this message to the youth:

“What do I expect as a consequence of the Youth Day? I expect a mess. There will be one. There will be a mess here in Rio? There will be! But I want a mess in the dioceses! I want people to go out! I want the Church to go out to the street! I want us to defend ourselves against everything that is worldliness, that is installation, that is comfortableness, that is clericalism, that is being shut-in on ourselves. The parishes, the schools, the institutions, exist to go out! [...]”³⁹⁰

The ecological crisis

One crucial problem of the world today is the ecological crisis. Overproduction has not only depleted our unrenewable natural resources but it has caused pollution that has taken away people's livelihood and has caused a lot of infections and diseases.

Logging and mining have caused denudation of forests which not only has depleted wood supply, but also caused erosion which has resulted in flash floods that kill thousands of people in a matter of minutes. The destruction of coral reefs and mangroves and destructive fishing methods like dynamite and cyanide fishing as well as the use of giant fishing trawlers have seriously affected the life-resources that seas once offered to people.

Use of ecologically unfriendly energy fuel like coal and nuclear energy has not only caused pollution but has caused destruction of life and property like in the Chernobyl, Three Mile Islands and the Fukushima incidents. It has brought about the so-called global warming that has disastrous effects on ecology.

Calamities like supertyphoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, tornados, volcanic eruptions, sea surges, sinkholes etc. occur in ever increasing

³⁹⁰ Harangue of Pope Francis, Encounter with young Argentinians at the World Youth Day, Brasil (25.07.2013), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130725_gmg-argentinirio.html (26.05.2015).

frequency and in unprecedented proportions causing—death, homelessness, destruction of crops and properties, etc.

If human beings can no longer turn the tide of ecological deterioration we will become extinct as a species.

Pope Francis has this to say:

“Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude.”³⁹¹ (Audience May 21, 2014)

And again:

“Even if ‘nature is at our disposition’, all too often we do not ‘respect it or consider it a gracious gift which we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations’. Here too what is crucial is responsibility on the part of all in pursuing, in a spirit of fraternity, policies respectful of this earth which is our common home. I recall a popular saying: ‘God always forgives, we sometimes forgive, but when nature – creation – is mistreated, she never forgives!’ We have also witnessed the devastating effects of several recent natural disasters. In particular, I would mention once more the numerous victims and the great devastation caused in the Philippines and other countries of South-East Asia as a result of typhoon Haiyan.”³⁹²

How many church people have taken seriously the challenge of the ecological crisis? What do they do to conscientize the students, parishioners, and the people they work with regarding these matters? How do they reconcile their consumeristic tendencies with their ecological advocacy? What concrete projects have they done to return to the earth what humans have taken from it? What kind of spirituality have they developed to re-establish the human being’s relationship with nature? This is a real challenge to the new evangelization.

³⁹¹ Pope Francis, Audience, Rome (21.05.2014), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140521_udienza_gernale.html (26.05.2015).

³⁹² Pope Francis, Harangue at the New Year Reception to the members, which diplomatic Corps were accredited by the Holy See (13.01.2014), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/speeches/2014/january/documents/papa-francesco_20140113_corpo-diplomatico.html (26.05.2015).

Quest for a just peace

The September 11 event and the subsequent US War on terrorism made me feel that there should be a renewed effort for a just peace in our times. This culture of violence and death manifests itself in various forms of violence: economic, racial, political, military, ecological and domestic. That is why the United Nations has declared a decade for the development of a culture of peace and the World Council of Churches has likewise launched decade for overcoming violence.

The Pope condemns violence: “War is madness. It is the suicide of humanity. It is an act of faith in money, which for the powerful of the Earth is more important than the human being.”³⁹³

By peace, we don’t mean just an absence of war or conflict; we don’t mean an unprincipled peace or peace at all cost. It is the peace of Christ that the world cannot give and is based on truth, justice, and interconnected well-being both on the personal and societal level. On the personal level, this calls for a personal conversion, reconciliation with one’s fellow human beings, with the planet, and with God. It is an effort to be men and women of peace, to create an oasis of peace wherever one is and to contribute to the development of a culture of peace in the greater society. This latter includes working for economic, justice, empowerment of women, sustainable development, preservation of the environment, political participation of peoples in governance, constructive conflict resolution and interfaith and intercultural dialogues.

Conclusion

Living in our times is a great challenge for the Church. It is a special challenge for us to concretize the prophetic dimension of our life. Evangelization today necessarily includes tackling the social issues that are causing great misery and suffering for peoples. Priests, religious and Church workers have actually involved themselves in many of these issues. However, whether the factors are external or internal, the lack of tangible, long-lasting success in many struggles for transformation is enough to discourage the fainthearted. And yet in spite of all these constraints, the frustration, and disappointments, we

³⁹³ Morning meditation of the Holy Father (02.06.2013).

must remain steadfast and never lose hope. This hope is not floating in the clouds but is based on small victories – a violent retaliation prevented, overwhelming manifestation of global solidarity with victims of catastrophe like the Yolanda typhoon victims, witnessing the miracle of forgiveness from someone whose whole family was massacred. Hope is anchored in one's memory of God's fidelity, of unexpected, unplanned intervention of the Holy Spirit in seemingly hopeless situations. Being elected at a time when the Church has lost so much credibility causing hopelessness and helplessness among its members Pope Francis in his actions and words provides us with such hope!

The Church of Africa: African Christianity and the Universal Mission of the Church: Progress or regression in the teachings of Paul VI or John Paul II?

Nathanaël Yaovi Soédé

Today it is generally accepted that the world is united. Humanity has created what is termed a 'global village'. The means of social communication and various forms of solidarity and conflicts with repercussions reverberating around the world remind us of this every day. It is a situation which confronts theology with the challenge of promoting a harmonious, organic relationship between the universal and the particular in order to ensure that this type of global unification does not lead to uniformity. The universal thus has the scope to affirm and construct itself within the particular, drawing the latter out of itself and opening it up to the transcendence in which all its manifold features are fulfilled. The theology of a united world emerges as a locus of verification, confirming that the unity of diversity and the communion of difference do not, in the context of the universal Church, signify uniformity or the imposition of a model of Christianity on each specific Church.

This article seeks to ascertain whether, since the Second Vatican Council, the popes' teachings regarding the mission of the Church of Africa have attached as much importance to evangelization *ad intra* aimed at promoting African Christianity as they have to evangelization *ad extra*. The following analysis will be limited to Paul VI and John Paul II and to two of their chief publications: the homily delivered at the closing mass of the first meeting of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)³⁹⁴ and the post-synodal exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*³⁹⁵.

³⁹⁴ Herder Korrespondenz, "Dokumentation: Die Afrikareise des Papstes", in: Herder Korrespondenz, Monatshefte für Gesellschaft und Religion, No. 23 (1969) 9, 422–424.

³⁹⁵ Pope John Paul II., Post synodal Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia in Afrika* about the church in

Paul VI's homily was chosen as it includes the famous phrase "and in this sense you may, and you must, have an African Christianity", words on which, broadly speaking, the Church in Africa has based its mission of evangelization for around forty years. *Ecclesia in Africa* resulted from a synod held in response to the requests made by the Church of Africa in the wake of Paul VI's proclamation regarding African Christianity. We think the exhortation should be considered in connection with the pontifical document to which it relates.

Paul VI and the mission of evangelization in the Church of Africa

A number of martyrs were canonised in Kampala, Uganda, in 1969. At the end of the first general assembly of SECAM held on this occasion the Pope celebrated a mass on 31 July, during which he gave a homily relating to the mission of evangelization within the African Church.

In his homily (H), entitled "The Church of Africa at its African Hour" (H 1)³⁹⁶, Paul VI presents himself as "a Brother, a Father, a Friend, a Servant" (H 4), the Pontiff of the Catholic Church reuniting "All the Churches of Christ" (Rom 16:16), the first pope to travel to Africa. He sends greetings to the "Catholic fraternity" (H 4), to the priests and the faithful of the sister Church of Africa (H 4-5). He expresses two sentiments: firstly, the communion and the joy of being in Africa and the happiness that, in the Church, "we are one Body, one Spirit..." (Eph 4: 4-6) and, secondly, respect for the Africans, their persons, their land and their culture (H 6-7).

Paul VI considers the Church of Africa to be a mature Church upon which he seeks to impress that the communion which unites the Catholic Church and the Successor of Peter does not suffocate but rather nourishes the originality of the Africans' personal, ecclesial and even civil personality (H 7). The Pope also confirms that his ministry serves their interests and even the realisation of the desires and ini-

Africa and her evangelization order in view of the Year 2000, 14. September 1995, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/opst:exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-in-africa_ge.html (26.05.2015).

³⁹⁶ The Pope's homily is a text consisting of seventeen unnumbered paragraphs. In order to direct readers straight to the sources cited, we have numbered them from 1 to 17, starting with the title. The letter H, for homily, precedes the number in Arabic numerals in the case of each reference.

tiatives of the African Church, united within the framework of SECAM: "Not Our interests, but yours, are the object of Our apostolic ministry" (H 7).

In view of the commendable reflections to which the SECAM meeting gave rise, the Pope asks the bishops to coordinate their efforts at evangelization within SECAM by means of "clear and concordant ideas" in an awareness of their "great task: that of building up the Church!" (H 8). The importance of forward-looking, coherent and concise theological and pastoral reflection is at issue here, to be developed by SECAM in a spirit of internal cohesion and unity in accordance with the mandate of the Church. If this reaches beyond the dioceses and the African continent as a whole, it will both build itself up and be made manifest.

The Pope recommends that the bishops renounce the *status quo* in favour of promoting evangelization in a methodical and courageous manner (H 8). With the canonisation of the martyrs of Uganda and the creation of SECAM, the African Church has arrived at an "historic moment" and must take account of some "general aspects of African Catholic life" (H 9) and rise to the challenges they present. Paul VI focuses on two of these.

Missionaries to yourselves

The first challenge concerns the mission in Africa – in the present and the future. The Pope outlines this challenge in direct, precise and concise language, explaining to the Africans what they must know and become henceforth, now that "Africa's hour has come" – the hour of evangelization: "By now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves" (H 10). The Pope reminds his listeners that the Church of Christ was 'planted' in Africa by missionaries. The duty to recall and acknowledge this requires Africans to emulate the faith of the missionaries and make the local Church authentic, "apostolic". It is "a drama of charity, heroism and sacrifice, which makes the African Church great and holy from its very origins" (H 10). The Pope then states: "Missionaries to yourselves": in other words, you Africans must now continue, upon this Continent, the building up of the Church" (H 10). From now on, then, Africans are aware of the direction evangelization in Africa should take and must continue the work done by the missionaries without losing sight of the use and value of the latter's contributions.

The challenge is thus to build up in the African Church an awareness that the impulse to do so springs from two forces: the local hierarchy and the Holy Spirit. The African Church must avail itself of the local hierarchy and listen to the Holy Spirit as it speaks to the Churches, welcome its grace and develop its own charisms in response to the demands of evangelization (H 11).

The fulfilment of this dream depends on the preparation and training of all the members of the African Church so that they can become missionaries to themselves. Since “the Church, by her very nature, is always a missionary Church”, the Pope states optimistically that “one day, we shall no longer call your apostolate a “missionary” apostolate in the technical sense, but rather a native, indigenous apostolate, all your own” (H 11). According to Paul VI, Africans are the “local elements, these choice workers of the People of God, (on whom) will depend the vitality, the development, and the future of the African Church.” It is Christ’s plan that “brother must save brother (...) qualified brothers (are) the ministers, the servants, the spreaders of the good news and of grace and charity, in favour of their other brothers, who will themselves be called in turn to cooperate in the common work of building up the Church” (H 12).

Paul VI continues his examination of this issue by addressing the burning question of inculturation, referred to at the time as “the adaptation of the Gospel” (H 13). He will go on to explore this topic in more detail five years later when investigating the relationship between faith and culture in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. As far as “adaptation” is concerned, Paul VI affirms that it is his duty to encourage and bless the development of the African Church (H 12). However, he emphasises that the African Church which seeks to foster its own identity “must be first of all Catholic (...), entirely founded upon the identical, essential, constitutional patrimony of the self-same teaching of Christ, as professed by the authentic and authoritative tradition of the one true Church” (H 13), and avoid all religiousness contrary to this aim.

Constructing African Christianity

In respect of the second challenge the missionary Pope asks whether the Church of Africa should be European, Latin, Oriental or, indeed, African. He initially notes that we are the custodians and not

“the inventors of our Faith” (H 13) and that the ministers called as messengers of the Word of God may interpret “the thought of God, according to the apostolic teaching authority established by the sole Master, Jesus Christ” (H 13). He subsequently makes it clear that “the expression, that is, the language and mode of manifesting this One Faith, may be manifold; hence, it may be original, suited to the tongue, the style, the character, the genius, and the culture, of the one who professes this One Faith” (H 14). More explicitly: “From this point of view, a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable. An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favoured by the Church. The liturgical renewal is a living example of this” (H 14). The missionary Pope concludes: “And in this sense you may, and you must, have an African Christianity” (H 14).

Paul VI informs his listeners that it will take time to achieve this aim. He assures them that it is a goal which can be accomplished, since Christianity expresses the One Faith in a context of cultural diversity. Africa, he continues, has furnished proof of this in the past. It has supplied theologians, ministers and doctors whose thinking and works have enriched the Western Church. Furthermore, it has cultural values receptive to Christianity and the ability to spread the ‘genius’ of the faith among its people, following the example of the West, which skilfully capitalised on Christianity in becoming what it is today (H 14). The Pope also recommends that the clergy and the faithful

- should not refuse, but rather eagerly desire to draw from the patrimony of the patristic, exegetical and theological tradition of the Catholic Church (H 14),
- permit an exchange between the African Church and the Western Church which, in the past, made use of the resources of African writers, such as Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine,
- elicit an “incubation of the Christian “mystery” in the (cultural) genius of your people (Africans) in order that its native voice, more clearly and frankly, may then be raised harmoniously in the chorus of the other voices in the universal Church” (H 14),
- endow Africa with centres of contemplative and monastic life, centres of religious studies, centres of pastoral training,
- should avoid turning the “Christian profession into a kind of local folklore, or into exclusivist racism, or into egoistic

tribalism or arbitrary separatism” in order to “remain sincerely African even in (the) interpretation of the Christian life” (H 14),

- “formulate Catholicism in terms congenial to (the African) culture (in order to) bring to the Catholic Church the precious and original contribution of “negritude”, which she needs particularly in this historic hour” (H 14).

These recommendations culminate in an invitation to actively promote education and comprehensive development. The African Church is confronted with “an immense and original undertaking” (H 15), charged with establishing a cohesive balance between traditional and modern life, moulding and educating the people in the “new forms of civil organization”, promoting “individual and social virtues: those of honesty, of sobriety, of loyalty” for the public good, especially the schools and the assistance of the poor and sick (H 15).

In conclusion, Paul VI states that the African Church must “help Africa towards development, towards concord, towards peace” (H 15). This responsibility constitutes, in addition to those preceding it, “duties (which) are great and always new” (H 16), which the Church is called upon to fulfil. In the closing words of his homily the Pope reassures Africans faced with the demands of these time-consuming endeavours by saying: “You have the strength and the grace necessary for this, because you are living members of the Catholic Church, because you are Christian and you are Africans” (H 16).

Published on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Kampala homily, does *Ecclesia in Africa* (1995) represent a step forward or a step back in the recent papal teachings concerning evangelization in Africa?

Pope John Paul II: How has teaching on Evangelization in Africa progressed?

The principal, ground-breaking teaching of Paul VI was to define the African Church’s mission of evangelization in terms of its right and duty to promote an African Christianity, a Christianity which expresses the One Faith – without altering it – in the language, the social, economic and political institutions and in every sphere of life of the African people. How does John Paul II interpret this in *Ecclesia in Africa*?

Continuity and distinctive points of a teaching

The synod which resulted in *Ecclesia in Africa* (*EA*) was held in response to requests from theologians and bishops who, in the wake of Paul’s visit to Kampala, had returned again and again to the idea of the convocation of an African Council. This idea, which goes back to the time of the Vatican Council, was revived in 1978 and 1980. The desire for an African Council had been expressed to John Paul II on several occasions.³⁹⁷ Hence the publication of *EA* represents a positive development as regards the interest of the Successors of Peter in the preaching of the Gospel in Africa. The Pope did not explore these questions in the form of a homily. John Paul II gave these issues unprecedented attention, culminating in a Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops of the Universal Church in 1994.³⁹⁸

In *EA* John Paul II undertakes a more thorough analysis of certain points touched on briefly by Pope Paul VI in his homily, some of which had a long history, such as the significance and the foundations of evangelization, the missionaries of the Gospel, the issue of Christian witness, the training of pastoral workers, “adaptation”, development, etc. He deepens the teaching of his predecessor in Kampala and places it in a new context. One reads with interest of the use of the concept of inculturation, which captures the relationship between faith and culture more accurately than the word “adaptation”; of the pneumatological and Christological cornerstones of inculturation and evangelization as well as their holistic dimension;³⁹⁹ of the universal mission of the African Church;⁴⁰⁰ of the ecclesiology of the Church as the Family of God;⁴⁰¹ of the current challenges facing Africa;⁴⁰² and of the challenges in training pastoral agents.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁷ Cf. Mveng, Engelbert, “The Historical Background of the African Synod”, in: African Faith & Justice Network/Maura Browne, *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, New York 1996, 22.

³⁹⁸ Cf. *Ecclesia in Afrika*, No. 1, 15, 17, 19, 114.

³⁹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 55–71.

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 127–139.

⁴⁰¹ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 84f.

⁴⁰² Cf. *ibid.*, No. 39–41, 74–78, 115–126.

⁴⁰³ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 53f.

EA is based on the conciliar texts of the Second Vatican Council and on the thoughts of Paul VI.⁴⁰⁴ It extends, but remains dependent on, the pontifical documents of Paul VI, notably his encyclical *Africae Terrarum* (1967), the homily at Kampala and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975). In anthropological terms, the pastoral option of the Church as the Family of God is in keeping with Paul VI's invitation to use the language of the African 'cultural genius' in order to create a better understanding of, and live out, the faith on the continent.

The original ideas in *EA* derive their distinctiveness, on the one hand, from their contextual resumption of Paul VI's prophetic thoughts on evangelization and its relationship with the particular Church, culture and Christianity, and, on the other, from the somewhat traditional approach to them. We see this distinctiveness specifically in the link *EA* establishes between the African Church (particular Church) and the universal Church, and between the duties of African Christianity and the mission *ad extra*.

In attempting to ascertain the validity of these ideas it is helpful to explore the thoughts Paul VI expressed in the homily outlined above. After introducing himself as the Pontiff of the Catholic Church, Paul VI expresses his esteem and respect for the cardinals and bishops gathered within SECAM. He extends to them greetings from "all the Churches of Christ", as did Saint Paul at the Church of Rome (Rom 16:16). In paragraphs 4 and 5 he conveys his sentiments of communion and hope (Eph 4:4-6). The remainder and the conclusion of the text of the homily (H 8-17) are devoted to the mission of the African Church. Paul VI calls the Church to which he addresses his thoughts "the Church of Africa", "the African Church". These designations are repeated seven times, while "the Catholic Church" appears four times (H 4, 14, 16) and "the universal Church" once.⁴⁰⁵ Having emphasised that "the Church, by her very nature, is always a missionary Church" (H 11), the Pope immediately adds that he is waiting for the day when the word "missionary" will signify a native, indigenous apostolate constituting the Africans themselves (H 11). The Pope stresses that it is his role to

⁴⁰⁴ Of the 272 footnotes 28 derive from the Second Vatican Council and 26 from the writings of Paul VI.

⁴⁰⁵ The Mystical Body of Christ in His Church appears once (H 6), the Church of Christ twice (H 4, 10), the Church as an abbreviation for the Church of Christ or the Church established by Christ eleven times (H 4, 6, 11, 13).

encourage Africans in their desire to express their faith in accordance with the realities experienced by their people without neglecting to elucidate the requirements which go hand in hand with such a request. He thus also made African Christianity the focus of his teaching.

These thoughts are not developed in *EA*. John Paul II convened the Synodal Assembly of the Universal Church on the African continent in response to the request of the Africans, which Paul VI dealt with in his address in Kampala. Significantly, *EA* emphasises several times that the synod is not being held for the sole benefit of the bishops of Africa, but for all the bishops within the universal Church under the Pope's authority.⁴⁰⁶ Such insistence would suggest that the ministers of the African Church are not being encouraged to hold independent discussions amongst themselves, in communion with the universal Church *cum et sub Petro*, about the long-standing problem of evangelization on their continent. Is *EA* thus regressive when compared with the thoughts expressed by Paul VI? The words it addresses to the African Church would have represented genuine progress in pontifical teaching had they been stated in the wake of a meeting of African cardinals and bishops convened to promote African Christianity in accordance with the recommendations of the missionary Pope. Then we would have had what we have yet to experience: a second "meeting of Kampala"...

Does a universal Church synod permit adequate examination of the issue of evangelization within the African Church in the wake of Paul VI's statements on African Christianity? Does *EA* reveal approaches indicating progress in the teaching on African Christianity?

The paradigm of "African Christianity" in *EA*

The paradigm of African Christianity cited by Paul VI does not appear in *EA*. Reference is made to "Christianity in Africa"⁴⁰⁷ and there is confirmation that "Christianity is relevant to Africa".⁴⁰⁸ The words "you Africans are missionaries to yourselves" are included primarily to attract the attention of Africans, in particular, to the mission *ad extra*: "For its part, the Special Assembly strongly stressed Africa's responsi-

⁴⁰⁶ Cf. *Ecclesia in Afrika*, No. 1, 17, 19, 114.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 1.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 127.

bility for mission “to the ends of the earth” in the following words: “The prophetic phrase of Paul VI, ‘You Africans are missionaries to yourselves’, is to be understood as ‘missionaries to the whole world’. [...] An appeal is launched to the particular churches of Africa for mission outside the confines of their own Dioceses”.⁴⁰⁹ No further mention is made of the challenge arising from Paul VI’s exhortation to the Africans to be missionaries to themselves, i.e. to build up their own African Christianity.

But can the creation of African Christianity not be combined with the mission *ad extra* or, at the very least, with the deliberations concerning inculturation?⁴¹⁰ What is the reason for the lack of any explicit mention of African Christianity? Why is the principal focus placed on mission “to the ends of the earth”?⁴¹¹ How can this emphasis in *EA* be justified when the embedding of the Gospel in African culture has not yet succeeded in responding to the theological and pastoral duties or in promoting the development, concord and peace ascribed by Paul VI to such an inculturation?

EA could have enriched the existing teaching on evangelization even more if it had taken stock not just of Western missionary work⁴¹² but also, and in particular, of Christianity in Africa. The latter having become, under Paul VI, the new horizon of the mission in Africa, it would have been more appropriate to analyse whether evangelization has maintained its *status quo* since 1969 or whether it has progressed towards the anchoring of the faith in all areas of African life. Indeed, Paul VI warned the African Church of the risk of stagnation as regards lasting efforts to promote African Christianity.

Mission of the African Church and the universal mission of the Church

EA consistently describes the identity and vocation of the Church in Africa with reference to the universal Church and its mission, which extends to the ends of the earth.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., No. 129.

⁴¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 78, 87.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., No. 130.

⁴¹² Cf. *ibid.*, Nos. 30–38.

⁴¹³ This is particularly evident in sections 15, 17, 19, 20, 24, 28, 53, 54, 55, 72, 88, 94, 97, 105, 106, 122, 128, 129, 132, 133, 135, 137 and 138.

The advantage of this teaching is that it does not consider Africa solely as an area for mission. John Paul II acknowledges Africa’s missionary maturity by reference to its participation in the mission *ad extra* of the universal Church. However, we must not forget that the universal mission of the Church shows its mettle in particular historical contexts.⁴¹⁴ All evangelization, indeed evangelization *per se*, is a response by the Church, in specific areas, to the call to spread the Good News around the world. It is an act, or a series of historical acts. Performed as an act, it reveals the particular dimension of the universal mission of the Church, constitutes the locus of its realisation and opens it up to the manifold aspects it seeks to join in unity.

In this sense the universality of the Church is both already present and yet to come insofar as it partakes, in eschatological terms, of the Kingdom made manifest in Christ which it receives and to which it bears witness. In this respect Eboussi demonstrates in his work *Christianisme sans fétiche* that this universality is a work in progress, which has not yet been entirely accomplished, let alone brought to a conclusion.⁴¹⁵

Christianity is associated with a particular Church which embraces the Gospel and, in an institutional sense, sets a seal of welcome on the values, beliefs and practices of its people in receipt of its message. The type of Christianity or Church with its various laws, institutions, theology and pastoral perspectives, which is widespread in the world today, especially in Africa, has its roots in the West.

This brings us to the question of the extent to which *EA* insists that the African Church should involve itself in the mission of the universal Church. Which Church is the text referring to when it discusses the universal Church? Which Church is meant when the question of the

⁴¹⁴ Here we touch on the controversial issue of the relationship between the particular Churches and the universal Church; for more on this topic cf. De Lubac, Henri, *Les Eglises particulières dans l’Eglise*, Paris 1971; Pope John Paul II., “Address to the Roman Curia”, in: AAS, No. 83 (1991), 745–747; Congregation for the doctrine of the faith, Letter about some aspects of the church as communion, 28.Mai 1992 (cf.: www.doctrinafidei.va/documents/rc_con_faith_doc_28051992_communionis-notio_ge.html); McDonnell, Kilian, “The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: The Universal Church and Local Churches”, in: *Theological Studies*, No. 63 (2002), 227–250; Madaku, Ignace Ndongala, “Centralisation romaine et consistance propre des Eglises locales: La catholicité en question”, in: *Revue Africaine de Théologie*, No. 55 (2004), 21–29; Nisius, Alain, *L’Eglise comme communion et institution*, Paris 2012.

⁴¹⁵ Cf. Eboussi Boulaga, Fabien, *Christianisme sans fétiche: Révélation et domination*, Paris 1981.

universality of the Church mission arises? Is it the Church, the one Church, i.e. the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church or one of its manifestations, i.e. a specifically Western Church? One may well assume that the latter is being referred to, particularly in light of the fact that the post-synodal exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (*EE*) does not define the mission of the Church in Europe or the Church of Europe as a whole in relation to the mission of the universal Church. Reference is made to tasks concerning the Church of Europe or challenges specific to the latter.⁴¹⁶ If *EE* acknowledges that specific questions exist, to which the Church of Europe must formulate responses as a matter of priority, why does *EA* fail to endow the Church of Africa with the same responsibility rather than constantly reminding it of its duty to undertake the mission of the universal Church?

In Kampala, Paul VI demonstrated that the universal Church can be built within a particular Church if the latter remains authentic. In addition, he invited his listeners to develop an African Christianity which is Catholic above all else and requires, in keeping with Christ's purpose, that brothers should evangelise their brothers and other brothers... (see above).

The relationship established by *EA* between the Church of Africa and the universal Church constitutes a regressive step as compared with the ecclesiological position espoused by Paul VI. It challenges us to analyse how the unity and diversity of expression of the One Faith can be promoted without imposing on a particular Church – for fear of the dissolution of the universal within the particular – a Christianity which does not stem from the embedding of the Gospel in its own culture (cf. Ga 2:2-16). The African Church is also confronted with the challenge of addressing and advancing the 'project of Christianity' in a way which does not create mistrust among other particular Churches or elicit caveats from the Successor of Peter.

The African Church or the Church in Africa?

While Pope Paul VI uses the expression "the African Church" in his teaching at Kampala, John Paul II favours "the Church in Africa"

⁴¹⁶ Pope John Paul II., Postsynodal letter *Ecclesia in Europa* to the topic "Jesus Christus, der in seiner Herrlichkeit lebt – Quelle der Hoffnung für Europa", 28. Juni 2003, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/de/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp_ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa.html (16.06.2015), No. 2, 3, 20, 30, 45–50, 58, 60.

in *EA*, mirroring *EE*, which speaks of the Church in Europe and, in *Ecclesia in Asia*, the Church in Asia.

In *EA*, "the Church in Africa" appears 63 times in relation to the mission of the Church/the universal Church, ecclesial communion, etc. "The Church of Africa" and "the Church of Africa and Madagascar" appears twice, the "particular Church" 19 times, the "local Church" seven times and the "Diocese" 26 times.

So why does *EA* opt for the term "the Church in Africa"? Does this enable it to indicate that Africa constitutes a particular Church or a group of particular Churches along with those of other peoples and that, taken together, they form the universal Church which transcends them at the same time as affirming itself through them?

In its consistent references to "the Church in Africa" *EA* surely implies the universal Church which is taking shape, manifesting itself and exercising its ministry in Africa. Thus, when it emphasises that the mission of the Church in Africa is that of the universal Church and must include the mission *ad extra*, putting an end to the discussion at this point, it is stressing just one of the functions of the universal Church. This latter function does not relate explicitly to those concerned with the confirmation or contextualisation of the Gospel which must be spread to the ends of the earth, a task which provides the framework for realising and bearing witness to the universality of the Church.

With this in mind, one may ask whether the expression "the Church in Africa" does full justice to the category of the particular Church which goes hand in hand with that of the universal Church. Both are of divine institution. Pope Francis confirmed this in his address to the Synod of Rome on 6 October 2014: "The universal Church and the particular Churches are divine institutions".⁴¹⁷

Moreover, whenever the use of the term "Church" relates to the concept of a specific territory and to the mission of evangelization which its brothers and sisters are called upon to fulfil, this usually refers to the particular Church and not to the universal Church. Clarification of this matter would be helpful.

⁴¹⁷ Cf. also: <http://www.zenit.org/fr/articles/aux-cotes-du-rapporteur-du-synode-six-nominations-d-autres-continentes> (15.03.2016).

In order to avoid a non-holistic ecclesiological approach and eliminate any ambiguity in the use of these different paradigms, we propose that greater use be made of the terms “the African Church”, “the Church of Africa” or “the particular Church of Africa” as opposed to “the Church in Africa”. Saint Paul underlines the importance of an ecclesiology of this nature when, in his first letter to the Thessalonians, he writes “the Church of Thessalonica” and not “the Church in Thessalonica”: “Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church of Thessalonica... Grace to you and peace” (1 Thes 1:1). Similarly, “the Church of Antioch” is mentioned in Acts 13:1. These observations also apply to the terms “the Church in Europe”, “the Church in Asia”, etc.

Conclusion

The message of evangelization is the same throughout the world. However, the salvation it proclaims in the name of the Son of God incarnate ensures it is a Word which loses nothing of its truth and uniqueness when applied to the plurality of expectations, contexts, challenges and cultures of peoples. Indeed, it reveals itself as a message of universal salvation extending ever further to the ends of the earth. It unifies the world, one which is already bound together by the web of relationships and human solidarity, new forms of information technology and economic, faith-based and ideological exchanges as well as those relating to prevailing cultural, political and religious practices. In consequence, evangelization represents an opportunity for this type of world if it helps to liberate it from the dangers of homogenisation, the aim being to unite it in an affirmation of the diversity which is one in Christ, in whom, by whom and for whom everything was created. Ministers have the task of turning all the particular Churches into places for the construction and manifestation of the universal Church, from which they receive their identity, their vocation and their mission.

While the homily delivered by Paul VI at Kampala invites us to consider the evangelization of Africa as the building of African Christianity, the teaching in *EA* does not develop this perspective.

Although it refers to the issues of inculturation and the Church as the Family of God and their realisation,⁴¹⁸ it fails to relate these two

options for evangelization in 21st century Africa to the promotion of African Christianity in keeping with the homily of Kampala.

Do the pastoral options of inculturation and the Church as the Family of God really have a future in the light of the above? It seems to us that the Church of Africa cannot truly build itself up as a Church as the Family of God or carry out inculturation if it does not do so in the context of African Christianity. The latter guarantees the effectiveness of all efforts to ensure an African re-appropriation of the Faith.

Furthermore, the Church of Africa must also make African Christianity its first priority and not inculturation or the Church as the Family of God. African Christianity incorporates the latter and constitutes the framework within which they can emerge and develop in an organic, harmonious manner with all the elements inherent in the life of a mature Church. The gaps in *EA* sparked a second synod and the publication of *Africae Munus*, but can they be fully redressed if ministers and the faithful fail to rediscover the richness of the prophetic thoughts expressed by the missionary Pope in his words “you may, and you must, have an African Christianity”?

⁴¹⁸ Cf. *Ecclesia in Africa*, Nos. 55–71.

Pulse and impulse: The joy of being Catholic

Juan Richar Villacorta Guzmán

Defining the essence of the ideas put to us by *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, or rather by the Pope who came to Rome from afar, seems an audacious venture today, but we can use the text simply to join in a reflection upon the Good News that has been innovated by Pope Francis, who invites us personally to be Catholic in new ways. This paper is merely an attempt to do that. For all its coherence it does not set out to be an eminently academic work. It sets out to bring together the religious sciences, with a little input from theology, but above all to address the relationship between society, commitment and religion, while not falling into a denominational stance, even if this author identifies with an experience of faith that is Catholic⁴¹⁹.

Pulse and impulse today

The word “pulse” is predominantly used in the medical world. It signifies a pressure in the arteries, sometimes called the heart rate, and it serves as an indicator for other measurements which are expected to remain within a constant range: a new-born infant, for example, will display a reading from 70 to 190. Even if it seems incidental here, I am struck by that word “to”, because apparently the number is not so constant and uniform after all. It fluctuates from birth onwards, and will depend on our context, motivations, dreams and hopes, not to mention many other factors which influence how much – always within a universal (Catholic) experience – the “faith” factor enables us to recognise the presence of the Trinity, in all its pluriversity, within the space and time of everyday life.

⁴¹⁹ Cf. *St Augustine of Hippo, Comentario sobre la primera carta de San Juan*, Salamanca 2002; Assman, Hugo, *Curiosidade e prazaz de aprender: O papel da curiosidade na aprendizagem*, Petrópolis 2004; Segundo, Juan Luis, *El dogma que libera*, Santander 1989; Marx, Karl, *El capital*, Argentina 2002; Klein, Naomi, *No LOGO*, Barcelona 2001; Hirschman, Albert, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*, Princeton 1977.

Feeling the pulse of what gives impulse to our lives takes us back to that wonderful passage about the First Community of the Apostles (Acts 2:42 ff.), for if we have never felt that heartbeat, if we have not sensed that healthy rebellion of setting out on a quest rather than staying put within our certainties, we will not be able to understand the other path chosen by the disciple, the path taken by those who listen out for the other, the different, and hence encounter new ways of sensing the presence of the God of Life, and learning to open the doors and windows (cf. John XXIII) of a universe transformed into a pluriverse of hopes, for all the apparent triumph of the “logo” (cf. Naomi Klein) and the exclusive, excluding words of the idols of death and oppression.

What pulse and what impulse do we feel today? That is a fundamental question. Firstly, there is without doubt our *interioridad*, our awareness of our inner depths (not to be confused with *intimismo*, the expression of our private sentiments). This *interioridad* is an ability to follow a path, to contemplate, reflect and substantiate the experience of resurrection amid the everyday distractions, amid the dazzling lights of ill-invested powers. It means re-reading the disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) and understanding that we do not set out on the road or share the way purely by chance, but because we are of a mind to be the Sons and Daughters of God, with this earthly identity of those who know they are not masters of the universe, but Sons and Daughters of the God of Life, within a pluriverse of constant innovation, in which we human beings are co-creators, within a fraternity, of hope and fidelity.

This prospect enables us to discover the impulses we can draw from a positive experience of faith, which is triggered not by mere proclamations of belonging, but by opening up in new ways to the central reason for living an experience of faith amid the unreasoned rationalities of those who deny the probability of a genesis, confusing this with self-justifying generic explanations, and creating a ground zero not for searching out the truth, but for owning the truth.

We then realise that the pulse of our innermost self must derive from the dynamic posture of a “prying” mind, and that although, from a rationalist perspective, there is a distinction between faith and life, at least in everyday living, this is merely a key to understanding, not to living our everyday lives. It is in this that we all walk together united,

in the knowledge revealed to us in Genesis, that “in the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1). That is what draws us to the dynamism of a pulse, which emits fresh impulses and generates new forms of hope.

Today the motivating impulse can be found in many places and it depends on the tint in the spectacles through which we look upon life. But it depends too on our attitude of belonging to and engaging with the wonderful experience of resurrection, defined by our vital force, which is the Holy Spirit for Catholics who know they are the owners and administrators of the grace of belonging to the fellowship.

The “fetish” and the “factish”: Questionable questions

The term “fetish” has been used in different ways down history. One of the earliest notions occurs in the thoughts of Marx, who talks about commodity fetishism (see Marx, *Capital*, “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret thereof”), but from our own perspective we will not dwell on fetishism through the Marxist lens, but will observe rather through the lens of how empowerments take shape and how they seek to shore themselves up by means of institutionality, and then to seek legitimation on the basis of pigeonholed views derived from whatever vision underlies this particular appropriation of reality. This assemblage, while constraining economic power, also entails a range of elements which demonstrate how, within the aforementioned pluriverse, the new fetishes are often invisible to human beings, assuming mimetic dimensions and messianic attitudes and presenting themselves to neo-millennialisms and neo-centennialisms as a threat of ultimate disaster if their creeds are rejected.

Among the many options, from day-to-day experience, I believe that the “*factish*” (a neologism to signal activism) is one of the new phenomena we need to analyse, as it has managed to enter the various spheres of everyday life, where its presence lends it an immediate transcendence that seems to promise easy ownership. Its presence is founded on a real presence, achieved by manipulating education, employment, socio-political experiences, and even a new presence in the social networks, a stage for demonstrating to us the necessity for those domineering and dominating “*facts*” that constitute the supreme truth of the fetish.

John the Baptist, the first Catholic

Firstly, the implications of faith, of a return to John the Baptist, can be structured around four central points: the presence to overcome *facticism*, the certainty of initiation into what is equal but different, the need to recognise the other, and learning to disappear.

Overcoming *facticism* inevitably leads us to a new way of being in the world, shattering that old distinction between theory and practice, or between passive and active activism, enabling us to understand that life's deep meaning is to pursue some form of constant activity, be it employment, physical exercise (such as the culture of the body), the culture of the image, or the simple fact of having something to do.

The experience of faith since John the Baptist invites us to explore our desert lands, to learn to eat what we find there, not merely to consume things we must "import" even at the cost of our own food security, while forgetting the unintended side effects of the plundering and death we may cause.

The certainty of initiation into what is equal but different refers us to the baptism of Jesus, but also to our own baptism and to various kinds of initiation that enable us to belong and help us to understand our identity within this belonging. This is not just a matter of reciting mantras of membership, but allows us to become part of this pluriverse within a Song of Songs committed to the experience of the resurrection.

Only those who have had the experience of the resurrection can grasp what it means to recognise the other in its difference, other cultures, other, new, emerging identities, in other words to understand and not to assume that the experience of faith implies an experience of solidarity and that the experience of solidarity implies an ethical or political experience of commitment to the creation, and this invites us to engage in a labour that is co-creative and does not destroy the other, or to believe we own the world rather than simply administering its benefits.

Finally, learning to appear and disappear is the most wonderful Christian experience, a challenge in today's world where, amid the flow of apparent information, everyone can feel certain of being the

centre of the world, which is why we have even put God to one side, making our personal institutionalised experience the one and only option for "salvation" in an appropriation of "*extra ego nulla salvatio*".

With all this we return to John the Baptist as the first Catholic, for he recognises not the individual, but the One as the basis for the new Salvation project, a radical epistemological break that overcomes all the absolutist centrism of contemporary society.

I do not want you to be like me: Only for us to walk and dance together

Throughout the history of the religions and from a broad perspective we encounter a great many indications as to how to go about conversion. We come across these in every kind of literature, from religious to scientific of various types.

In this dialogue, where the break with the traditional vision sparked by the French Revolution acquires a religious complexion, and through glasses of this tint, it is not only experiences of the sacred that adopt messianic postures, allowing these postures to throw up a range of illegitimate legitimations, an attempt to draw closer to divinity, based on an anthropocentrism that in turn denies the possibility of walking in fellowship, which is the central key to the experience of faith in general and Christian faith in particular, more specifically in the founding experience of Catholicism, the unexpected acceptance by the others in the meeting of the Areopagus of the experience of Logos and the Seeds of the Word.

It is the experience of faith that prompts us to wonder whether conversion implies making all of us equal, hence the importance of discovering walking together as a humanising alternative that sets out to meet the cosmic Christ, opening up pathways for sharing the Good News.

Walking together means asking ourselves whether we truly love and how, for love as the ultimate experience of faith must pass by divine filiation, understood not as something magical, but as existing alongside every child of God who knows that he or she is a co-creator and an integral part of the tissue of fellowship that is born out of the experience of faith.

A recurring theme: Searching or owning, the challenge of unity and uniformity

The Contented Society is an economic paradigm for analysing how humans pursue “maximum return for minimum effort”. This attitude helps us to understand the appropriation of religion not only by the market, but from different angles of participation in life, in order to justify the death of innocence.

There is no doubt that this perspective enables us to understand new expressions of the sacred and the presence of God in everyday life, and hence the tension between owning the truth and rejecting the truth, which is to say that if I own the truth I am rejecting all opportunities to search for the truth, because the experience of love denies complicity. St. Augustine tells us, after all:

“Love and do what you will. If you keep silent, keep silent by love; if you speak, speak by love; if you correct, correct by love; if you pardon, pardon by love; let love be rooted in you, and from the root nothing but good can grow.”

The search is an important element in the presence of Truth. It is the need to search that prompts me to reflect and to refute any absolutism about ownership as if it were the sole alternative. Thus any system, be it social, psychological, political or other, must remain encapsulated by mere ownership, doubting any project that seeks to impose uniformity.

I think this is very important today, especially in Latin America, because it is from this perspective of rejecting the search that we observe a concentration of anthropocentric powers asserted from dominant perspectives that manipulate “little truths”, brooking no dissent among those who were known in Church history as the faithful but who in present society, to adopt parallel terminology, are denied by the religions but have become fanaticised by perspectives founded on partialist views, asserting that certain views are irrefutable because the supreme truth is derived from pseudo-sacred books that have never been read or approved.

Which brings us to the last part: how many of us talk of unity as if it were synonymous with uniformity, so that by building on such an appropriation we can then justify the presence of a false inter-

culturality or the negation of new identities, constructing murderous identities that have no qualms about presenting themselves publicly as prophets of the system.

Based on the experience of faith, there is a need to revisit unity amid diversity, a need to define the transcendental essence that is being operated and shared, which is why unity implies the metaphor of the body offered to us by Paul (1 Cor 12:27 and Col 1:18).

From loving to beauty: The questioning need for faith

Much has been written about the word “love”. I would say it all has its place, but the notion of “beauty” also implies a radical break with the term “contemplation”, because to many of us the latter is passive, watching as life passes by, with the suggestion of a monastic lifestyle, and so we would like to include beauty with its dual connotations: the physical aspect and the experience of faith.

In physics today there is a tension between rational models and models referred to as natural. Within this tension *homo sapiens* unfolds, a faithful companion to *homo demens*, which is to say that the so-called perfect models created by our reason evolved through different forms and criteria, all reflections of stereotypical postures but without ever necessarily managing to achieve completeness.

The model described by the experience of faith is founded neither on pietism nor on activism; it incorporates breadth and complexity, which is to say that it will not allow itself to be taken captive or manipulated. We might see a parallel there with the parable of the good seed, because true beauty requires land that is sufficiently fertile and above all visible in the eyes of God and of human beings.

This necessarily implies that the journey from love to beauty follows a path of marvellous uncertainty, opening up to new proposals from the science of life and the life of science, where faith is a response, but is not the truth. It is the means, but can never be the end.

Faith pushes and pulls us towards a magnificent pendulum between the everyday and the divine, the divine and the everyday.

Between atrium and temple: The need for a Gospel

In an attempt now to centre our reflections, allow me to offer three

focal threads of this search: the temple as a place to encounter God, the atrium for contemplation, and the new *sukkoth*.

It is not my intention to attribute total certitude to any of these, hence my use of the word “between”, but if we bear in mind that these places direct us towards something, they will open us inevitably to dogma that liberates (see the work of Juan Luis Segundo), so that we can understand the different steps towards spirituality we take in everyday life.

The temple, of course, is a place where we encounter the holy. That is why temples were built. That is their *raison d'être*. They provide an atmosphere that enables us to deepen our prayer and our fellowship, a setting to reconnect in respective ways, a locus to comprehend institutional propositions which reflect a way of perceiving and feeling the sacred.

To be in the atrium is to recognise too that many of our temples have to some extent become stages on the Windows society tour, where every now and then windows open up to offer random religious window shopping, from a huge array of continents and content, arranged so as to blind thousands of “pilgrims” or tourists to critique and contemplation, as they click away with their cameras, each fuller than the next with indelible images that will probably never be looked at twice, only to be saved in immense memories with unimaginable storage capacity.

But from the atrium we can also gaze with the eyes of faith upon thousands of faces with an infinite variety of perceptions and preoccupations, faces of every kind, the colours of the rainbow blurred by the speed of the moment, all sensing and feeling the marvel of every instant.

It is in these spaces that we need a Gospel, the Good News, because the agent of the sacred becomes simply part of the mass “outside”, those who, given that they never enter the temples, have a need for contemplation, and who so often stumble across the temples of those who peddle words. This, I believe, is a fine challenge, and one to which we must find a response. It means taking a look at the city and even at how we can work with social networks.

Finally the *sukkah*. This is simply the ability to have a permanence, an identity and a mobility, that is, to know how to remain at the side

of the other person, not to convince or conquer, just to be together, sometimes animatedly sharing the experience of resurrection and sometimes walking within the anonymous procession, feeling the breath and the strength of the person alongside us.

Identity means accepting that, from the Pauline understanding of the head, each of us is a member of a body; it means recognising that when we announce the Good News we do so not with apocalyptic or millennialist intentions, but with the certainty of the Baptist that when we offer baptism in the Good News we are expressing our identification and solidarity with Jesus's project, and this is on a continuum with what Pope Francis is proposing to us.

Mobility means that these days the mission is and must be itinerant, not because we support the throw-away culture, but with the assuredness of those who know that the Gospel is Good News, and that this news – because it is good – cannot remain locked up within four walls or in devices that seem to be alive, but that it must travel the daily road, where the tent might be a mall, or a square, an embrace, anything that gives rise to solidarity and compassion and makes us prophets opposed to all forms of violence and oppression.

The faces of Mary today: The women who generate life

In the light of all this, permit me to offer a Latin American take, a reading through the eyes of a woman. I am not a woman, but this comes from my humble experience, amid a world that is discussing questions about the freedom to make choices. I shall not delve into that topic, but I shall try, through a woman's eyes, to grasp what it might mean to spread the Gospel today.

We have lost those women who upheld the Good News in the home. Now they must go out to work. Often, if we are lucky, we will have migrant women who can pass on this experience of faith. Or we have information and communication technology, but I shall not attempt to argue what is better or worse, only to say that from the angle of our everyday lives we must discover a wondrous Yes to life. Things are changing, but among all the changes some things stay the same. One of these is the face of Mary, of today's many Marys, who not only generate life, but give us hope.

This not about discussing dogma, but about respect for life, about understanding how it can be that there are some people who bring life to this planet and others who, with their weapons of destruction, wipe out thousands or millions of human beings.

But it also means understanding who those are who give hope to this planet, who – in spite of everything – are able to feel, through the gift of life they engender, and to express solidarity. Those of us who pursue our woeful thoughts have forgotten this, because we go about doing nothing, preoccupied with the big answers and not this little one: “Let it happen to me as you have said”.

Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World

The Practice of Mission in Ecumenical Responsibility

Klaus Krämer

“Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World” is the title of a remarkable document published in Geneva in 2011 by the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Worldwide Evangelical Alliance: an ecumenical code of conduct for the practice of Christian mission.⁴²⁰ This document does not intend to be a theological statement on mission but to address practical issues associated with Christian witness in a multi-religious world. The following remarks are a comment from a systematic theology perspective on the theological foundations and resulting principles for the practice of Christian witness. The theological and ecumenical significance of the document cannot be properly understood, however, without a brief description of how the process came about. This contribution begins, therefore, by outlining its essential features.

The process behind the document

The document is the outcome of a five-year process of reflection and discussion. It began with an international conference held in the Italian town of Lariano near Rome in May 2006. In response to an initiative launched by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Office on Interreligious Relations and Dialogue of the World Council of Churches, 27 representatives of different religions gathered to discuss practical issues of religious freedom under the heading “Conversion: Assessing the Reality”.⁴²¹ The conference participants

⁴²⁰ Cf. World Council of Churches (WCC)/Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID)/World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), *The Christian testimony in a multireligious world: Recommendation for a code of behaviour*, Bangkok 2011, The document is available in English at: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20111110_testimonianza-cristiana_en.html (24.08.2015).

⁴²¹ Cf. Vellguth, Klaus, “MissionRespekt: Der ökumenische Verhaltenskodex zum christlichen

unreservedly endorsed the universal right to religious freedom as defined in the 1966 United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They also reaffirmed the right of every person to actively promote his or her own faith and religious convictions. It was made clear from the outset that this right to mission can only be exercised in full respect for other faiths.⁴²² The ground was thus laid for the key issue to be discussed during the process.

It was already clear in Lariano that a) this issue had to be addressed in an interreligious context and b) in relations between the different Christian churches there was a considerable need for clarification of how mission should be practised and by what ethical rules and limitations it should be governed. The conference participants therefore agreed on a process of ecumenical dialogue, the purpose of which was to conduct a critical examination of Christian mission in today's multi-religious world. A working group of nine staff members of the Holy See, the World Council of Churches and the Worldwide Evangelical Alliance was appointed to prepare and implement the process.

At a second consultation held in Toulouse in August 2007 a long list of problems and questions was drawn up to review the practice of Christian witness from different standpoints and with regard to relevant spheres of life: family, school, education, social and medical care, the economy, politics, legislation and violence.⁴²³ This consultation furnished the document with an initial structure which then needed fleshing out. There followed three-and-a-half years of intensive effort by the working group, which produced its draft texts in close collaboration with the sponsors of the process. At a third consultation in Bangkok in January 2011 the representatives of the churches drew up the final version of the text, which was then submitted to the responsible bodies of the three process sponsors.⁴²⁴

Zeugnis in einer multireligiösen Welt und seine Rezeption in Deutschland", in: *Verbum SVD*, No. 56 (2015) 1–2, 163.

⁴²² Both are reflected in the 2006 Lariano Report: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/interreligious-trust-and-respect/report-from-inter-religious-consultation-on-conversion> (20.08.2015).

⁴²³ Cf. Troll, Christian/Schirmacher, Thomas, "Der innerchristliche Ethikkodex für Mission: Eine Einführung", in: *Materialdienst der Evangelischen Zentralstelle für Weltanschauungsfragen*, No. 74 (2011) 8, 293.

⁴²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 294.

At the signing ceremony in Geneva in June 2011, Cardinal Tauran, the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, spoke of a "historic moment for common Christian witness."⁴²⁵ The signing of the document can, indeed, be deemed historic for two reasons. On the one hand, it is the first consensus document, in the elaboration and adoption of which over 90 per cent of Christians worldwide were represented via the participation of the Roman Catholic Church and the member churches and communities of the World Council of Churches and the Worldwide Evangelical Alliance. Its ecumenical significance notwithstanding, the document also represents a milestone in mission theology since, for the first time in the history of Christianity, a common standard was formulated for the practice of Christian mission across denominational boundaries.⁴²⁶ With that in mind, we come now to the principal theological aspects of the document and an examination of the stimulus it provided for a fresh understanding of the task of evangelization.

The theological foundations of the document

For good reasons, the document does not claim to offer a theological explanation for the concept of mission in its ecumenical complexity. Nevertheless, it does refer to theological foundations from which consequences for missionary practice can be drawn. To that extent the document expresses a certain minimum consensus in respect of mission theology.

Significance is attached to the rooting of mission in Trinitarian theology. Mission derives from God's very essence: "Just as the Father sent his Son in the power of the Holy Spirit, so believers are sent in mission to witness in word and action to the love of the triune God."⁴²⁷ This point of departure gives rise to the document's clear Christological emphasis. Jesus Christ is the supreme witness. His message of the Kingdom of God, his loving devotion to others and the mystery of his death and resurrection are the essence of the

⁴²⁵ Press release "Heute schreiben wir Geschichte", 29.06.2011, retrievable under www.missionrespekt.de/prozess.dokumente/intstimmen.3/in dex.html (24.08.2015).

⁴²⁶ Cf. Gerth, André, "Konfliktfeld Konversion: Zu einem neuen Verhaltenskodex für die Mission", in: *missio Korrespondenz*, No. 4 (2011) 3, 10.

⁴²⁷ Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland/missio (eds.), Studienausgabe zum ökumenischen Dokument "Christliches Zeugnis in einer multireligiösen Welt", Grundlagen für christliches Zeugnis, No. 2, 7.

proclamation and simultaneously the normative guideline and model for missionary practice. Christians affirm that, while it is their responsibility to witness to Christ, conversion is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit. This again sets practical limits to the conduct of mission.⁴²⁸

In ecclesiological terms, this rooting of mission in the “*missio Dei*” means that mission is the very essence of the Church.⁴²⁹ The document leaves no doubt that there is a constitutive obligation to actively engage in Christian mission in the world; hence missionary work is in no way an option. Nonetheless, the document avoids any hint of authoritarianism in defining the missionary mandate. Referring to the First Epistle of Saint Peter, it says that for Christians it is a privilege and joy to give an accounting for the hope that is within them and to do so with gentleness and respect (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).⁴³⁰ The mandate continues to apply even where difficulties, hindrances and prohibitions are encountered.⁴³¹

It follows from the model character of Jesus’ proclamation that whenever Christians engage in inappropriate methods they obscure or even “betray” the good and liberating news of the Gospel itself. This explains the need for repentance and conversion. The missionary task is thus not an instrument of power, of which Christians are free to dispose, but a mandate and a yardstick by which they, too, must constantly measure themselves. The document thus invites all Christians to engage in self-critical reflection on the practical aspects of mission past and present.⁴³²

A further key theological message finds expression in the special emphasis given to dialogue with people who follow other religions and cultures; this is a part of Christian witness in a pluralistic world. Therefore, mission and dialogue cannot be played off against each other; they are indispensable elements in the comprehensive missionary task of all Christians.⁴³³

⁴²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 7, 10.

⁴²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 5f.

⁴³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 1, 7.

⁴³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 5, 9.

⁴³² Cf. *ibid.*, No. 6, 9.

⁴³³ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 4, 8.

Principles in the practice of Christian witness

Proceeding from these theological foundations, the main section of the document lists twelve principles for the appropriate practice of Christian mission. They examine the conduct of mission from three perspectives.

Firstly, fundamental attitudes are systematically derived from the message of the Gospel and the example set by Jesus. They focus on respect for the inviolable dignity of others and their personal freedom. The commandment to love one’s neighbour, elementary compassion, loving devotion to others and personal humility and sincerity foster an attitude of fundamental respect towards others. Anything that might be seen as an expression of arrogance, condescension or disparagement of others is unacceptable.⁴³⁴ Completely irreconcilable with Christian witness are all forms of violence, abuse of power, discrimination and oppression.⁴³⁵ This applies not just to manifest cases of an abuse of power by government or religious authorities. Equally imperative is a sensitive approach to offers of assistance aimed at improving people’s situation in life. The provision of educational opportunities and health care, help in emergencies and championing the rights of those who have none are an integral part of Christian witness in the world. Great care must be taken to ensure that no situations of personal dependence arise which might impair the freedom of the persons concerned to make their own decisions.

The document makes it very plain that poverty and need should not be exploited to encourage conversion by means of material incentives.⁴³⁶ Based on the theological awareness that personal faith can only be brought about through an intervention by the Holy Spirit, complete personal freedom to change one’s religion is essential. In particular, there must be an adequate timeframe to allow people to prepare sufficiently for this decisive personal step.⁴³⁷ The document gives special emphasis to dealing with healing ministries, which are accorded a central position in Free Church missionary work. This special ministry can refer directly to the example set by Jesus, but at

⁴³⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 3, 12.

⁴³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 6, 13.

⁴³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 4, 12.

⁴³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 11, 16.

the same time it entails a special need to proceed with the requisite sensitivity so that “people’s vulnerability and need for healing are not exploited.”⁴³⁸

A second important perspective emerges from the document’s focus not just on the personal dignity and freedom of individuals, but also on their specific living conditions. In the conduct of Christian witness we cannot engage with individuals as isolated human beings, but must realise that they are an integral part of a social, cultural and religious fabric which we must approach with respect and sensitivity. Hence all forms of violence directed against other religions are out of the question. Specific reference is made in the document to the desecration or destruction of places of worship, holy symbols and texts.⁴³⁹ Christians are urged to speak sincerely and respectfully of other religions and cultures. They must listen “so that they can appreciate and understand other faiths and their practices.”⁴⁴⁰ It is important that they should “recognise and value what is good and true in them.”⁴⁴¹

Wherever elements of a culture merit critical questioning from the point of view of the Gospel, this should be carried out with all due respect. Moreover, it should always be done in awareness of the fact that one’s own culture must be measured against the Gospel too, not rashly equated with faith or even imposed on others.⁴⁴² In this context, exercise of the basic right to freedom of religious belief acquires a new status. It is asserted not just for the freedom of religious practice and hence for the missionary activities of one’s own religious community, but is accorded as a matter of principle to all people. The inevitable consequence is that Christians must make their views abundantly clear whenever religion is exploited for political ends or religious persecution takes place, irrespective of whether Christians or followers of other religions are affected.⁴⁴³

The third perspective goes well beyond respect for other religions and cultures in that the document calls for representatives of the

⁴³⁸ Ibid., No. 5, 13.

⁴³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 6, 13.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 10, 15.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² Cf. *ibid.*, No. 9, 15.

⁴⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 7, 14.

Christian churches to cooperate respectfully with all people, and especially with representatives of other religions, so that a stand can be taken for justice and peace in the public arena and the common good thus enhanced.⁴⁴⁴ Such interreligious cooperation presumes the steady extension of interreligious relations. Relations rooted in trust and respect should strengthen mutual understanding and reconciliation and, ultimately, cooperation for the common good. The document expressly urges all Christians to work towards “a common vision and practice of interreligious relations.”⁴⁴⁵

Impetus for a fresh understanding of Evangelization

The substance of the document and its evolution are remarkable in several respects. Firstly, its deliberate focus on the conduct of Christian witness is tantamount to a paradigm shift, which could ultimately inject fresh life into the ecumenical understanding of the key elements of faith and church in the different Christian communities. This is underlined by the document’s emphasis on contextuality. The starting point for the combined endeavours was the common context of a multi-religious world which poses new challenges for the conduct of Christian witness. But, while it does not actually say so, the document concedes that, in this multi-religious context, the Christian voice is just one in a whole host of different tones and expressions. The realisation of a common responsibility for awareness of the Christian message in this pluralistic setting lends a new dimension to ecumenical dialogue. Henceforth it is no longer directed solely “inwards”, i.e. at relations between the different Christian communities, but also at the “external impact” of the Christian message as a common cause and joint responsibility.

Hence the major step forward that the document represents is not related primarily to the positions it adopts on matters of substance, which are mostly identical with statements made in the documents of the Second Vatican Council⁴⁴⁶ and in the corresponding opinions on missionary issues formulated by the Orthodox and Protestant Churches, but to the fact that it formulates a basic standard for the practice of the Christian mission, which is accepted by the Christian

⁴⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 8, 14.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 12, 16.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. Vellguth, Klaus, *loc. cit.*, 164ff.

churches to a hitherto unprecedented degree. In the final analysis, this common responsibility for the credibility of the Christian faith as a whole rules out any conflict between the Christian churches and communities from the very start. To that extent the document provides an important stimulus for the inner-Christian debate on proselytism, even though this issue is not explicitly addressed in the document itself.

At the same time, the emphasis on context means that the aim of the document must be spelled out with respect to specific living conditions and the very individual challenges they pose. Hence the comprehensive reception process that is recommended is perhaps the most important stimulus to emerge from the document. The religious communities involved in preparing the document are expressly called upon to study the main issues addressed in the text and to draw up rules of conduct appropriate to their specific context.⁴⁴⁷ This makes it perfectly clear that the specific nature of the Christian witness must relate to the social, cultural and religious context and, therefore, be different and diverse in line with the varied nature of these contexts.

In Germany the response to this stimulus came in the form of the MissionRespekt Congress held in August 2014.⁴⁴⁸ The roughly 250 universal Church and ecumenically engaged representatives from the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches, the Evangelical Regional Churches and the various Free Churches attending the congress made it one of the biggest ecumenical events ever held in Germany not just as regards the numbers of participants, but also and above all in view of the wide range of churches, church communities and universal Church missionary organisations involved. A variety of workshops, attended by guests and observers from abroad, discussed topics relating to the universal Church and the missionary work undertaken by various churches and church organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The specific situation in Germany was also examined – particularly as regards how Christian witness can be conducted in the public and social sector, e.g. in religious instruction, at universities and colleges and in the broad area of social and pastoral facilities.

The aim of this kick-off meeting was to attract public and political attention to the document and its objective. Working aids and specially prepared media were designed to encourage as many as possible groups involved in the ecumenical movement and the universal Church throughout Germany to address the impetus provided by the document, to engage in dialogue across denominational boundaries and flesh out the recommendations for action contained in the document with respect to their specific contexts and activities.

The momentum of the path embarked on in Lariano shows that a great deal has changed in cooperation between the different Christian churches, their self-perception and the awareness of their joint responsibility in and for a world in which religion and faith have become open issues for many people. Correspondingly, changes have also taken place in the understanding of mission as the concrete manifestation of how Christian witness can be conducted in a pluralistic and multi-religious world. Clear contours are now emerging of a dialogical understanding of missionary work which takes others seriously, is prepared to learn from them and to engage with them while not disavowing one's own standpoint.

In its key documents the Second Vatican Council stressed time and again that dialogue is the path the Church must take in today's pluralistic world. Fifty years after the Council this issue has lost none of its topicality. Thanks not least to the document on Christian witness in a multi-religious world, this dialogue has gained in breadth and depth and can thus form a new basis for cooperation with representatives of other religions and philosophies that is based on trust and respect.

⁴⁴⁷ Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland/missio (eds.), loc. cit., No. 1, 17.

⁴⁴⁸ A documentary report on the congress themes and workshops is available at <http://www.missionrespekt.de>.

Many Religions Offer Salvation

Jacob Kavunkal

The ever growing globalization process with its built-in mechanisms of information dissemination and mass people movement as well as the post-colonial self-assertiveness of the religions of the world, including what are described as primal religions, have brought a new awareness of the reality of religious pluralism, making it “difficult to believe,” as Claude Geffre reminds us, “that any specific culture or religious tradition could justifiably claim to be universal and exclusive.”⁴⁴⁹

The religious landscape of the world at large has undergone rapid changes due to people movement triggered by many causes. Religious pluralism as such is not new to Christianity as it encountered other religions right from its inception and in some parts of the world like India Christianity existed all through its history in interaction with the followers of other religious traditions. What is new is the fresh ways of thinking about religious pluralism, which is not just tolerance or isolation, but the awareness of each religion’s right to exist with an equal right to respect for its claims.⁴⁵⁰

In contrast to the past, today any reflection on Christian mission has to be in relation also to the need of a harmonious society, where all can live alongside people of other faiths. The gracious ways of treating others cannot be ignored in our reflection on Christian mission. This does not imply we adopt a practical pluralism with a ‘live and let live’ ideology. A Christian cannot abandon the Christian call

⁴⁴⁹ Geffre, Claude, “The Word of God in Other Religious Traditions”, in: *Concilium*, No. 2 (2010), 24.

⁴⁵⁰ Even in this respect the Indian church, the St. Thomas Christians, held always, until the arrival of the Portuguese, how each way is salvific to the followers of the way, a position that was condemned by the so-called synod of Diamper. See Mundadan, A.M., *Paths of Indian Theology*, Bangalore 1998, 38.

to follow Jesus as he/she is sent as Jesus himself was sent by God (Jn 20: 21). Hence this paper analyses the specific Christian service in the context of religious pluralism. Due to the key role salvation and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ played in Christian mission, the paper will begin by examining the biblical understanding of salvation, to be followed by a presentation of the biblical realism of creation that becomes a source of revelation, bestowing a 'supernatural' character to all religions. Together they will show the centrality of the Mystery of the Word, the only mediation between God and humans. This prepares the ground for the Christian witnessing in a multi-religious world.

Biblical Perspective of Salvation

Christian mission in the past was understood nearly always as saving people by bringing them into the church. The salvation itself was understood as something related to life after death, accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, as Marcus Borg has pointed out, salvation, in the bible, is seldom about an afterlife; "rather, it is transformation this side of death."⁴⁵¹ In the bible the word salvation occurs about 127 times, but rarely does it mean an afterlife.⁴⁵² It is liberation from chaos and bondage. In the books of Genesis or Exodus we hardly come across the idea of salvation as otherworldly. Life after death, especially the idea of resurrection appears in the bible only after the Babylonian exile, because of which it could be said that the biblical faith in resurrection was influenced by Zoroastrianism that was the religion of the Babylonians; Zoroastrianism believed in resurrection.

Salvation, in the bible, implies freedom from economic bondage, liberation from political bondage as well as liberation from religious bondage. The Lord saved Israel (Ex 14:30). Salvation is return from exile. "Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation" (Is 45:17). Cyrus, the Persian emperor who liberated Israel from the Babylonian captivity, is called messiah (the anointed) in Isaiah (45:1). In the Psalms where salvation occurs frequently, salvation means: rescue, deliverance from the pit, and similar ideas (Ps 27:1; 51:12;

⁴⁵¹ Borg, Marcus J., *Speaking Christian: Recovering the lost meaning of Christian Words*, London 2011, 14.

⁴⁵² Cf. *ibid.*, 39.

65:5; 69:29; 118:21 and others). In contrast, in the book of Daniel, we find explicit reference to life after death (12:2-3).

In the New Testament too we come across similar ideas. The very announcement of the arrival of the Kingdom, the Messianic salvation, is accompanied by healings and casting out of demons. It is also a new kind of life, a new relationship with God and neighbour (Lk 19:8-9). Salvation is political as well, transformation of the city where humans live together (Lk 19:28-44).

The crucifixion of Jesus is associated with political salvation, that is leading, not to domination and tyranny but, to service and love (Mk 10:42-43). As opposed to the Anselmian interpretation of the substitutionary atonement, Jesus in his predictions about his death does not indicate at all that he is going to Jerusalem in order to die for the sins of the world, rather that he will be killed by the authorities.⁴⁵³ Marcus J. Borg insists that the use of the term "ransom" in Mk 10:45 is to be situated in the context of liberation from slavery: the price to be paid to liberate the bonded. In fact Jesus speaks of his death in conjunction with the raising from the dead, showing God's role in it for the sake of the people.⁴⁵⁴

Biblical Perspective of Religions

Admittedly, the bible does not indulge in developing a theology of religions but it does provide enough orientations for us to acknowledge religions. As far as the traditional Christian understanding of other religions is concerned, there is one word that has been so much misused: 'nature'. As Christina Peppard has reminded us there is need for us to "denature nature".⁴⁵⁵ "Nature is a historically constructed idea whose meaning is affected by dynamics of power, privilege, and patriarchy," observes Elizabeth Johnson.⁴⁵⁶ Nowhere is this as true

⁴⁵³ Cf. Borg, Marcus J., *Meeting Jesus in Mark*, London 2011, 79. Interestingly, responding to the lawyer's question as to what is to be done to inherit eternal life (Lk 10:25), Jesus refers only to the law of love and no mention is made of his death. Similarly, when Zacchaeus has rectified the law of love he is assured of salvation, again, without any reference to the atoning death!

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 80.

⁴⁵⁵ Peppard, Christiana, "Denaturing Nature", in: *Union Seminar Quarterly Review*, No. 63 (2011), 97-120; Johnson, Elizabeth A., *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love*, London 2014, 4.

⁴⁵⁶ Johnson, Elizabeth, *op. cit.*, 4.

as the Christian theology of other religions through its distinction of nature and revelation, forgetting the fact that in the bible what we call nature is suffused with the Word and Spirit of God (Gen 1:1-31).

What we call nature is creation and that makes a theological difference. The whole creation is the result of “God acting through the two hands of God,”⁴⁵⁷ the Word and the Spirit. The language of creation, Johnson reminds us, is “pervaded with the absolute presence of the living God who empowers its advance in the beginning, continuing now, and moving into the future.”⁴⁵⁸ Similarly Walter Kasper has argued: “Through the presence and action of the Holy Spirit creation already always has a supernatural finality and character.”⁴⁵⁹

The biblical wisdom literature reaffirms what has been said in the Genesis’ narrative of creation. Biblical scholarship has shown the importance of the figure of personified wisdom particularly in the books of Job, Proverbs, Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon.⁴⁶⁰ Wisdom is closely associated with God’s work of creation, and is present with God at creation as a skilled co-worker (Prov 8:30; Wis 7:22; 8:6). It pervades and penetrates all things (Wis 7:24). Wisdom “reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other and orders all things well” (Wis 8:1).

Wisdom is presented in the image of a woman, lady wisdom, whose primary mode is relational (Prov 1:8-9; Sir 1:9-10; Wis 6:11-12). No aspect of reality is closed off from her. She exists as it were in a tapestry of connected threads, patterned into an intricate whole of which she is the centre.⁴⁶¹

The first nine chapters of Proverbs give a series of poems in which Lady Wisdom looms large. God created Wisdom as the first born (8:22). Wisdom has come from the mouth of God (Sir 24:3) and has a sway over all nations. She comes to the earth like mist, as the breath of God covers the waters (Sir 24:3-7). God has placed God’s

⁴⁵⁷ Irenaeus, *Adversus Hereses*, IV., 20.1.

⁴⁵⁸ Johnson, Elisabeth, op. cit., 5.

⁴⁵⁹ Kasper, Walter, *The God of Jesus Christ*, New York 1984, 228; Johnson, Elisabeth, op. cit., 130.

⁴⁶⁰ Murphy, Roland E., “Wisdom Literature and Biblical Theology”, in: *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, No. 24 (1994), 4–7.

⁴⁶¹ O’Connor, Kathleen, *The Wisdom Literature*, Wilmington 1988, 59.

eye (*olam*) in every human being (Sir 17:8). Roland Murphy summarizes wisdom as “a divine communication: God’s communication, extension of self, to human beings. And that is no small insight the biblical wisdom literature bequeaths to us.”⁴⁶²

Jesus Wisdom Incarnate

The early Christian community identified Jesus with wisdom⁴⁶³, identifying Jesus with wisdom’s care for the *oikos*, the household of all creation. “It was this identification between Jesus and Sophia that was to be the bridge whereby the community which believed that God had raised up Jesus of Nazareth came to see this Jesus as the pre-existent one”, observes Dennis Edwards.⁴⁶⁴

In this the Christian thinking was influenced by Philo of Alexandria (c 50 BCE – c 50 CE) who made use of the Greek concept of the Logos, introduced by Heraclitus as the principle of continuity in the world of continuous change and later used by Plato as the immanent and transcendent mind of God, as an intermediary between God and humans, as the agent of creation and through which humans understand God. No doubt, Philo was influenced by the Old Testament Wisdom literature that we described earlier. As Francois Bovon has shown, the Hebrew God of history tends to become the Lord of space and world, becoming more distant and more transcendent. To restore the balance, the Septuagint Jews of Alexandria made use of the Greek concepts of Sophia (wisdom), Logos (word) and others, as intermediary which occurs in the supplementary to the Hebrew bible, the Sapiential books, where these appear as personal beings.⁴⁶⁵ Though the personality and pre-existence of the logos are not very clear in Philo, for him logos is God’s instrument in creation.⁴⁶⁶

Scripture scholar Bruce Vawter has noted that the oldest Christology may well be the one based on these wisdom categories.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶² Murphy, Roland, op. cit., 7.

⁴⁶³ Cf. Col 1:1-15-20; Eph 2:14-16; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Cor 1:24; 3:18-22; Jn 1:1-18 and others.

⁴⁶⁴ Edwards, Denis, *Jesus the Wisdom of God*, New York 1995, 34.

⁴⁶⁵ Cf. Bovon, Francois, *The Emergence of Christianity*, Tübingen 2013, 27.

⁴⁶⁶ Cf. Tuckett, Christopher, *Christology and the New Testament: Jesus and His earliest Followers*, Edinburgh 2001, 31.

⁴⁶⁷ Vawter, Bruce, *An Essay Toward A New Testament Christology*, Garden City 1973, 153–154.

These early hymns⁴⁶⁸ express the early church's faith in Jesus Christ risen from the dead and identified him with the wisdom of God, and thus attributes to him a cosmic role in creation and salvation. This all-pervading activity of the Logos prompted St. Augustine to recommend that the first five verses of the Johannine prologue be written in gold and displayed in the most prominent places in every church.⁴⁶⁹ This has profound significance for today's Christian search for acknowledging, preserving and promoting" (NA 2) the value of other religions, in the context of the church's faith in Jesus Christ.

The Centrality of the Mystery of the Word

Christology lies at the core of Christian theology and Christian mission. A committed Christian cannot water down his/her faith in Jesus as the centre of Christian living. What we are trying to do is only to make our commitment to Jesus Christ ever more relevant and meaningful in a multi-religious world. Our reflection of Jesus Christ and his mission must include the horizon of our readers as well.

Though faith in Jesus Christ originates from the particular Jewish background through the hope for the promised messiah, the bible opens up the horizon to extend the mystery of Jesus Christ to all peoples in so far as Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the divine wisdom as narrated by the wisdom literature and the Johannine prologue. Raymond Brown is of the view that John substituted Sophia with Logos because the latter is masculine while Sophia is feminine.⁴⁷⁰

Though the pre-existence of Jesus Christ is not absent in the synoptic gospels, only John describes the activity of the pre-existent Word that became Jesus of Nazareth. The Word that became incarnate in Jesus was God and was with the⁴⁷¹ God from the beginning. With the use of the imperfect *en* (was), throughout verses 1 and 2, John brings out the timelessness of the activity of both God and the Word, which are described thereafter. The salvific activity of God in the Word is an eternal one, preceding even creation.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Col 1:1-15-20; Eph 2:14-16; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Cor 1:24; 3:18-22; Jn 1:1-18 and others.

⁴⁶⁹ Cf. St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, X, 29, 41, 307.

⁴⁷⁰ Brown, Raymond, *The Gospel According to John (I-XII)*, Garden City/New York 1966, CXXIV.

⁴⁷¹ The use of the definite article in the Greek original gives the possibility of drawing a distinction between the divinity of the Word and the Absolute divinity of God.

No doubt, the focus of the prologue is the advent of the pre-existent Logos, *Vak* in Indian tradition, into the world at a certain moment of time. But at the same time it asserts the universality of the work of the Logos. The world is Word-permeated, as everything was made through him (Jn 1:3). The Word is the source of life and this life is the light that enlightens every human being coming into the world (1:4-5, 9). This describes the revelatory character of the Word.

No wonder Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation, *Dei Verbum* number 4 says how "the Word that enlightens all human beings" was sent by God and "Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work of making present and manifesting Himself: through His words and deeds, His signs and wonders, ... Moreover, He confirmed with divine testimony what revelation proclaimed: that God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to life eternal." Through this *Dei Verbum* upholds the existence of divine revelation from the time of creation through the Mystery of the Pre-existent Word.

From what has been said it follows that just as there is only one God, regardless of whatever name that God is addressed, that God reaches to humans only through one mystery, which Christian tradition identifies as the Person of Jesus Christ. What is important is the reality and not the name. The names, logos, *vak*, wisdom, word, and others, are cultural.

On the other hand the reality itself is beyond human grasp. John P. Meier has shown how we cannot know the total reality of Jesus of Nazareth with all his thoughts, words, deeds, feelings, etc., but only the historical Jesus who is a scientific reconstruction based on the gospels and other available sources.⁴⁷² If so, how much less do we know the Word. Hence it is better to refer to the mystery of the Word. Mystery was used by St. Paul in his letters (Eph 1:9; Rom 16:25; Col 1:26 et al). More significantly, mystery would be acceptable to the followers of other religions as well.

This mystery is the only one mediation in which all human beings participate. All religions are the social and historical expressions of the human response to the divine revelation through the creation and

⁴⁷² Meier, John P., *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (No. 2), New York 1994, 9.

enlightening of the Word (Jn 1:4, 9). Hence it is incorrect to distinguish *a priori* between revealed and natural religions, though as human responses, religions can be mixed with limitations as well.

Despite the revealing activity of the Word from the beginning, due to the personal character of the divine dealing, this revelation ultimately takes on a human character. The entire ministry of Jesus was rendering visibility, tangibility and concreteness to the divine love. So much so, time and again, people exclaimed how the power of God was manifested in him (Mk 2:12). Jesus himself, in the Johannine gospel, towards the end of his ministry asserts that those who have seen him have seen the Father (12:45; 14:9). Hence, Pope Francis, quoting his predecessor, asserts: "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a new decisive direction."⁴⁷³

Before we continue to discuss the Christian service in the multi-religious context, we have to bear in mind how the heart of the mission of the incarnate Word, was inaugurating the divine reign, according to the Synoptics,⁴⁷⁴ and manifesting God, according to the fourth gospel. At a deeper level there is no disjunction between the two for even the fourth gospel emphasizes how the manifestation of God is a matter of deeds of light (Jn 3:16-21), for "he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God" (Jn 3:21).

Though Jesus is the Word incarnate, in the gospels we do not come across this Jesus engaged in the work of the Word, pre-existent (Jn 1:1-5; 9-10), but in "going about doing good" (Peter's summary of Jesus ministry, Act 10:38), and thereby inaugurating the divine reign and manifesting God. Thus, he is the path, *halakha*, (Jn 14:6-7) and the community of his disciples is called to follow him (Mt 4:19; Mk 1:17; Lk 5:11; Jn 1:37 and par) and it is sent out as he himself was sent by God (Jn 20:21) to be his witnesses (Lk 24:48).

⁴⁷³ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*, Vatican 2013, No. 7.

⁴⁷⁴ Commenting on Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom, Lois Tverberg writes: "[T]o Jesus' Jewish audience, to proclaim the kingdom of God was to make a shocking announcement that God's promised Messiah had arrived, because the task of the Messiah was to establish God's kingdom on earth." Tverberg, Lois, *Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus*, Grandrapids 2012, 27. Similarly Marcus J. Borg writes: "Mark affirms at the beginning of his gospel that Jesus is the Messiah, the hope-for and longed-for anointed one of Israel. The good news is the story of Jesus the Messiah." Borg, Marcus J., *Meeting Jesus in Mark*, London 2011, 20.

Christian witness

The incarnate Word is God's reaching out to the humans and in his life and ministry he invites the disciples to follow him in this life of relationship and communion, bringing life to the full, the realization of the kingdom. The mission of the church is to focus on the Word incarnate and follow him rather than developing doctrines and claims to set itself apart from the followers of other religious traditions. It implies, as Pope Francis has underlined, going out of self, "reaching out to others and seeking their good" (EG 9).

The first step in our service is that we Christians refrain from making claims that intimidate the followers of other religious traditions, distancing them from us. We have to abstain from theological positions germinating mistrust, hatred or conflict. Our soteriological theories are not for proving Christian superiority, but to be true to God's plan as we have in the bible, that we become a 'blessing to the nations' (Gen 12:1-3). Not only Asian religions have discounted the Christian claims of exclusiveness but even indigenous thinkers in the west too have done the same. George Tinker, American-Indian theologian, has argued how soteriological exclusivism was used to justify European colonial expansion. It was used "to justify a western supremacist agenda whereby universal truth claims such as the idea that salvation can only be obtained through Christ, were used to reinforce 'amer-european Christian triumphalism.'⁴⁷⁵

Our call is not for making judgements on others and their faith or to ask if their right to exist is only *de facto* or also *de jure*. We have to move away from claims of our uniqueness and superiority and return to those aspects of mission that go back to Jesus – loving to the extent of losing oneself; serving solely as an expression of love; forgiving as the manifestation of the divine quality; working for the kingdom of God on earth.

While we uphold the unicity and universality of the Mystery of Christ in the divine plan for human salvation, we have, equally, to be open to the role of other religious traditions in the same divine plan. This was demonstrated by Pope John Paul II at Assisi in October 1986. The Pope, quoting *Nostra Aetate*, assured the assembled leaders of

⁴⁷⁵ Tinker, George E., *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty*, New York 2008, 129.

world's religious traditions: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions" (NA 2). As Claude Geffre has pointed out, "We cannot reduce the vast history of salvation to the cursory sequence that coincides with the history of Israel and of the church."⁴⁷⁶

As long as the followers of any religion try to submit themselves to the will of the Supreme, perceived through the creative and enlightening activity of the Mystery of the Word, they are all part of God's people. Hence it is questionable if we Christians can monopolize the right to be called 'the people' of God, unless we understand it in the same way as many tribes and nations do, considering themselves to be at the centre of the world. Nor should we maintain any hope that they will find their fulfilment in the church. Christianity, along with them, pilgrimages towards the final fulfilment and fullness of salvation (1Cor 15:28), at the eschatological times, "like a pilgrim in a foreign land" (LG 8).

We have a common origin and a common destiny with the followers of other religions (NA 1) which demands that we do not stereotype other religions, attributing to them "ambiguities" or their having only "a ray of hope." Ambiguities are part of all religions due to the human liminality. Other religions are "institutional shapes"⁴⁷⁷ due to God's working in them through God's creative and enlightening Word and through God's Spirit. Consequently we have to overcome the theological habit of seeing only "a seed of the Word" working in other religions rather than God's working in them. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India's response to the Working Document of the Asian Synod 1998 was inspired by this vision. The Bishops asserted: "Salvation is seen as being channelled to them not in spite of but through and in their socio-cultural religious traditions. We cannot, then, deny *a priori* a salvific role for these non-Christian religions."⁴⁷⁸ God united God-self with humanity at least six million years ago when human beings are believed to have evolved from primates.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ Geffre, Claude, op. cit., 25.

⁴⁷⁷ Dorr, Donal, *Mission in Today's World*, Dublin 2000, 17.

⁴⁷⁸ Cf. Phan, Peter, *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, New York 2002, 22.

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. O'Murchu, Diarmuid, *Catching up with Jesus: A Gospel Story for Our Times*, New York 2005, 4.

Such a Christian faith will generate confidence in the followers of other religious traditions paving the way for recognizing each other's identity and enabling Christians to enter into dialogue with them as required by Vatican II (NA 2), as a major step towards the realization of the divine reign.

Interreligious Dialogue

The post-Vatican II Magisterium has uniformly been dedicated to the cause of fostering dialogue with the followers of the religious traditions of the world that was initiated by John XXIII whose advocacy for the Jews led to the evolution of the Council's Declaration on the church's relation to other religious traditions, *Nostra Aetate*. Already in 1964 Pope Paul VI set the tone for interreligious dialogue not only through his first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* but also by his counsel to the leaders of different religions whom he met at Bombay in December 1964: "We must come together with our hearts, in mutual understanding, esteem and love. We must meet not merely as tourists, but as pilgrims who set out to find God."⁴⁸⁰

Continuing this spirit, John Paul II made use of every opportunity to promote dialogue among religions. We have already referred to his initiative in bringing the religious leaders together in Assisi in 1986. In his encyclical on mission, *Redemptoris Missio*, the Pope acknowledged how "inter religious dialogue is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission. Understood as a method and means of mutual knowledge and enrichment, dialogue is not in opposition to the mission *ad gentes*; indeed it has special links with that mission and is one of its expressions" (RM 55).

Despite the Roman curia's concern for proclaiming Jesus Christ as the only Saviour in Asia, in the post Asian Synod Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, the Pope pointed out that proclamation in Asia has to be in the spirit of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence existing in Asia, and that proclamation in Asia has to be through Asia's own spirit of harmony and complementarity (EA 6). The millennial Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* spoke of the great challenge of interreligious dialogue to which the Church must be committed in the new millennium for, "in the climate of increased

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. Acta Apostolica Sancta Sede, No. 57 (1965), 132–133.

cultural and religious pluralism, which is expected to mark the society of the new millennium, it is obvious that this dialogue will be especially important in establishing a sure basis for peace and warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religion which have so often bloodied human history” (n 55).

Pope Francis too attaches great significance to inter religious dialogue. In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* the Pope outlined interreligious dialogue as a necessary condition for peace in the world, and presented it as the duty for Christians as well as other religious communities. Quoting the Indian bishops the Pope wrote, dialogue “is a matter of “being open to them, sharing their joys and sorrows. In this way we learn to accept others and their different ways of living, thinking and speaking.” (n 250)

As Pope Francis reminds us, we are “missionary disciples” (EG120) and this implies that we reach out to the followers of other religions not as raw material for our mission, but as collaborators in realizing the divine reign. *Lumen Gentium* 1 describes the church as the sacrament of union with God and the unity of all humans. The very Christian identity is to be seen in its two-fold relationship to God and humans, manifesting God’s own self-reaching out to humans as the biblical narrative shows. This becomes the motive for the realization of the prophetic words of Cardinal Bea, a key architect of *Nostra Aetate*, at the promulgation of the decree: “The Declaration on the Non-Christian Religions is indeed an important and promising beginning, yet no more than the beginning of a long and demanding way towards the arduous goal of a humanity whose members feel themselves truly to be of the same Father in heaven and act in this conviction.”⁴⁸¹

Discipleship does not adopt a “one- among-the-many” attitude, but the call to follow the Word Incarnate in his mission of realizing the divine reign that includes giving rise to communities of disciples where such communities are not existing (Mt 28:19-20). However, in the context of religious pluralism that we have analysed theologically, it is a call to dialogue. As John Paul II wrote to Cardinal Cassidy on the occasion of the XIII International Meeting of People and Religion,

⁴⁸¹ Vorgrimmler, Herbert (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (No. 3), New York 1968.

“We must all be bolder on this journey, so that the men and women of our world, to whatever people or belief they belong, can discover that they are children of the one God and brothers and sisters to one another.”⁴⁸² As Pope Francis has reminded us, our call is not to proselytize, but respect others’ beliefs and thus we can inspire others through our Christian witness so that we grow together through communication.⁴⁸³

Inter religious dialogue is not just for creating a harmonious civil society, but for the realization of the reign of God. Pope Paul VI has taught how Christian witnessing is not just a question of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographical areas, but “affecting and as it were upsetting through the power of the Gospel, humankind’s criteria of judgement, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 19). Christian witnessing through interreligious dialogue includes a process of changing life patterns that are in contrast with the values of the Kingdom, which in contemporary context no particular religion can hope to accomplish, but would require the collaboration of all people of good will.

By quoting Isaiah 61.1-2 as a sort of programmatic summary of the ministry of Jesus (Lk 4:18-19), the Lucan gospel presents the salvation that Jesus proclaimed as the content of the Kingdom that he inaugurated and it includes sight to the blind, the ability to walk for the lame, and liberty to all those who were bound in any way. Interreligious dialogue, to the extent it contributes to the realization of the Kingdom, is the realization of salvation as well. Dialogue among the followers of religions must lead to a dialogue with the poor, with the oppressed and the exploited, enabling them to experience the arrival of the acceptable year of the Lord. Hence, authors like Wayne Morris remind us how interreligious dialogue must lead us “to struggle with those who live under oppression, irrespective of their faith commitments to transform it.”⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² Pope John Paul II, “Message to Cardinal Cassidy”, in: *Pro Dialogo* 106, No. 1 (2001), 12.

⁴⁸³ Pope Francis, “Interview with the Editor”, Argentinian weekly *Viva*, 27. July 2014, 14.

⁴⁸⁴ Morris, Wayne, *Salvation as Praxis: A Practical Theology of Salvation in a Multi-Faith World*, London 2014, 168.

Conclusion

In summary, we need a fresh approach with regard to other religions in our thinking, seeing, feeling, talking and living: a thinking that is formulated in the light of the bible, a feeling that participates in Gods feeling, seeing things from the contemporary perspectives and acting and living in collaboration with the followers of other religious traditions. It is the personalization of the divine presence (*shekinah*) through the community of the disciples of the Word Incarnate.

Through this dialogue practice the Christian community becomes the *sal terrae* (salt of the earth), in the spirit of the beatitudes (Mt 5:2-15), while it remains a “little flock” (Lk 12³²). Christian mission is no longer directed against the followers of other religious traditions, but against non-kingdom situations. The “frontier” of Christian witnessing lies, not between the Christian world and other faiths, but somewhere between the prevalence of the kingdom and the absence of it, which can be anywhere in the world. Ultimately it is in the human heart.

Christian Witness as a Culture of Inviting and Welcoming

Pius Rutechura

Living the reality of religious pluralism in globalization settings presents both opportunities and challenges. To effectively engage in meaningful understanding and dialogue with worldly realities and situations, faith traditions need to re examine and articulate modalities of giving testimonies on believed and lived faiths in a multi-religious world.

As it has been emphasized by recent papal admonitions in our times, there is always a tendecious temptation for religious traditions to turn inwards and complacently define truth in terms of self referential. This can easily lead to isolationism and accentuation of biases of being forced to quiet attrition as non effective contributors to humanity’s most troubling questions pertaining to values and morals.

It is within this context that is situated the relevance of reflecting on parameters of Christian Testimony in a Multi Religious World. From the Christian point of view, testimony/witness of life cannot be delinked from the mandate of going out to the whole world to preach the Gospel. From the Pentecostal experience, giving witness implies prolonged attestation of the salvific mission of Jesus till he comes again (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1;18).

Witness and Proclamation are among the six essential components of God’s mission as lived and manifested by the Church. Christian witness is manifested at individual, communal and institutional levels. Christian witness incorporates common witness of the various Christian traditions. Right from the beginning, it appropriate to grasp that Christian witness is related to an encounter with a person, Jesus Christ, a message of the Good News/Gospel as well as a way of life in a particular context.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. Bevens, Stephen/Doidge, Eleanor/Baawobr Kuuia, Richard, Changes and Its Effects on Mission and Church Relationship: A Roman Catholic Perspective, in: Academic Journal Articles: International Review of Mission, Vol. 101, No. 2 (November 2012).

This paper capitalizes on pastoral theological experiences as lived mainly from the Church in Eastern Africa perspectives. It articulates on fundamental tenets which have consistently (though not always being appreciated) made it possible for the Evangelization mission of the Church in Africa to attain tremendous successes despite newness of proclamation of the Gospel message. This paper interchangeably uses witness and testimony to express the same reality. This is due to the fact that from lived experiences, testimony can be misinterpreted for purely court procedures. It is mainly replaced by witness which is more appropriate within the settings of the Church within our Ecclesiastical region.

Focus is on entry points for Christian Witness in a Multi Religious World by addressing the fundamental quest of what gathers and bring people together. From cultural anthropological and humanistic angles as evidenced within many societies in Africa, it all converges in addressing the fundamental aspect of Being/presence, availability and welcoming. In more practical ways, being which is anchored in mutual listening and communicating which pave way for dialogue of believers, solidarity gestures and joint ventures. It is then from these perspectives that proper faith inputs and motives can be brought in to effectively add value in enhancing Christian witness.

Being and Welcoming: Mutual Search for Meaning and Purpose in Life Settings

Presence in terms of being for others and loving people in their life settings is the most realistic chronological starting point for Christian witness in a multi-religious world. Being for the others, welcoming and accommodating/providing them space to be, are imperative necessities for the removal of separating barriers, mutual suspicion, biases and even hatreds. This is true from the point of view of particular local communities as well as of other people in multi-religious world settings. From an experience of growing up in an African village, the fact is that being there for others and manifesting concerned presence for relatives and neighbours come first before pronouncing words or giving any material assistance. When a child is born, marriage takes place or death strikes, what counts most is being there for each other. Whatever happens in the neighborhood, the basic expectation and response is one of being there for each other. What was valued and

adhered to in terms of being for others in childhood is still relevant and respected after over half a century of lived experiences as I return back to my home village ambient.

As a matter of fact, African responses of being and welcoming the other has been well explained by John Mbiti the most quoted African thinker and theologian who put it well when he said that in most of the African societies, "I am because we are," comes first. It is abiding by basic tenets of "being there for others," in terms of love, respect, kindness and tolerance that the foundational gist of Christian testimony is found in a multi religious world.

Being and presence in solidarity pave the way for the exposure to the proclamation of the Gospel. Exposure to the Gospel results from lives lived consistently by being there for others. It is worth noting that some of the primary evangelization generation of missionaries was fully aware of this approach, which greatly contributed to making their mission a success. Within the Great Lakes set ups of evangelization in the 19th century, for example, the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers and White Sisters), abiding by the instructions their founder Cardinal Charles Lavigerie were down-to-earth in terms of respecting and paying close attention to cultures and customs of the indigenous people to whom they intended to proclaim the Word of God. Cardinal Lavigerie categorically instructed his followers to focus on essentials of being, relating and developing authentic friendships, caring for practical needs and creating space for people to believe through belonging.⁴⁸⁶ Willingness to be with and to live with indigenous people was part of entry points for Christian witness in the early years of planting the Christian faith in Africa. There is still a lot which could be learnt in approaching Christian witness in our times as far as various cultures and globalized settings are concerned.

Mutual Engagement in Confronting Realities of Life

Properly understood, welcoming and inviting people lead to involving them in confronting and looking for solutions to intimate personal and social problems. This brings witness to another important level. Most of the time, love cannot be effective when only understood

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. Missionaries of Africa, Charles Cardinal Lavigerie, Founder of the Society of Missionaries of Africa, <http://www.mafwestafrica.net/content/view/full/13/42/lang,en/> (28.05.2015).

in principle. It is being in solidarity to address real human concerns that love appeals to humanity. This was the approach of Jesus in his missionary journey. Giving full and loving attention first by listening to each other, respecting others genuinely and sharing with sense of sincerely concern for their personal and communal needs, matter most. It is this level of witness which expunges attitudes of prejudices and biases, leading to being less suspicious, judgmental and stereotyping.

As such, presence in love cannot be practiced in vacuum. Christian testimony must not wait; it is imperative to meet people half way. Inviting and welcoming become crucial aspects in Christian witness. Being and loving presence must lead to joint action on issues of common concern. Sympathetic proactive engagement with people's value systems and ways of life cannot be avoided. It is this which actually paves way for dialogue of believers.

In recent times, for example, this has been manifested in ways in which Christian faith-based initiatives have responded to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and EBOLA virus threats. Within the past three decades, responses to these calamities in particularly affected communities have gone beyond mere religious or ethnic belonging. For example, within the AMECEA researched study on responses to HIV/AIDS pandemic, what comes out clearly is that the responses of Small Christian Communities focus on all infected and affected people. Care givers go beyond mere denominational adherence to respond to the needs of the sick, orphans, widows and the elderly.⁴⁸⁷

One of the best practices is exemplified in the stance of Church Agencies in responding to the Ebola virus pandemic outbreaks in West Africa. During the Geneva consultation in 2014, emphasis was put on dialogue through presence and joint action taking. The proposed approach to the crisis is that faith based organizations, politicians, media, and communities, all need to work together. If one fails everybody will fail. Church and faith communities were envisioned to make appropriate interventions in addressing stigma issues, promoting preventative messages, compassionate alternative burial ceremonies and rituals and offering psychosocial and pastoral counseling to traumatic people and health care providers.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. Rutechura, Kato, et al. (eds.), *Holistic Response to HIV/AIDS in Africa*, Nairobi 2008.

⁴⁸⁸ Cf. World of Council Churches, Churches and agencies formulate responses to Ebola

Likewise, the response of the Holy See to the outbreak of Ebola Virus points to the same direction. On the occasion of giving USD 3.5 million on January 7th 2015 to Ebola effected countries in West Africa, the Holy See through the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace made it clear that while supporting the Church-sponsored assistance to those affected by the Ebola outbreak, the Holy See encourages other donors, whether private or public, to add funds as a sign of solidarity with brothers and sisters who are suffering in the areas affected by the disease. Targeting all people, released funds were to be channeled towards catering for people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs. The conviction is that the church can contribute to the prevention of stigma and discrimination in families, neighbourhoods and in local faith communities; addressing the stigma of rejection and abandonment. It is interesting to note that the Holy See proposes an approach that entails interactive discussion and planning among the leaders of religious congregations, international catholic organizations and lay movements in order to assure that the best resources and expertise are mobilized to respond to the changing needs and dynamic nature of the epidemic.⁴⁸⁹

What becomes evident from the two examples cited above is that Christian witness in our times signals towards realizing that it is vital to create seedbeds of action which as a matter of fact enable and makes more meaningful the loving presence. Engaging love leads to experiencing the present reality of God's reign. The realistic starting point of loving presence to peoples in their situations consists in experiencing the present reality of God's reign over human relations, between God and man, man and society, between man and environment. Mutual realization is that our common vocation consists of actualizing God's plan in Jesus Christ, affirming that God's redemptive mission in Jesus Christ embraces all things.⁴⁹⁰ It is through this type of Christian witness of engaging human societies that makes more visible presence of the Kingdom of God to all humanity. The kingdom becomes present and real, offering new hope, making it possible in building up the body of Christ.

outbreak, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/churches-and-agencies-formulate-responses-to-ebola-outbreak> (28.05.2015).

⁴⁸⁹ Cf. Catholic News Service, Vatican sending \$3.5 million to help church response to Ebola, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1500056.htm> (28.05.2015).

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. Eph 1.

Enhancing Communication Witness and Inculturated Encounters

Communicating the Good News poses a challenge of addressing the paradigm shift from bringing the Gospel to witnessing/testifying to the Gospel in relationships and encounters within specific social contexts. Within globalized information technology settings, it is becoming more and more evident that enhancing communication witness cannot be left to whims of trial and error. It is imperative to positively read out receiving methodologies of our potential customers, especially the youth. Communication witness demands packaging and presentation of faith and beliefs in befitting manner. Constructive presentation, communicating in language and terminologies that can be understood without watering down the content is a necessary art and requirement for effective Christian witness today. What is needed is communicating the Gospel to touch hearts.

Beyond conveying information, it is communication witness that makes it possible to have changed outlooks on relationships. If at all Christianity has to succeed in re encountering God in multi religious contexts, there is need for linking language to action. The same approach is greatly recommended within parameters of enhancing new and deeper evangelization through catechetical and pedagogical methodologies.

It is essential to know better the life settings of people and genuinely be committed to betterment of their lives. Christian witness needs to build bridges for mutual access to value systems. It is in here that comes in the importance of enhancing inculturated encounters and communication.

In the past four decades, inculturation of the Gospel has become an attractive magnetic phrase in Evangelization paradigms that are proposed as being appropriate within the Church as far as particular contexts are concerned. Within multiple efforts of fostering inculturation at various levels, as *Ecclesia in Africa* and Pedro Aruppe rightly noted, the gist of inculturation is that the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message must be rooted in a particular cultural context in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question; it has to become a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remarking it so that it brings about a new creation.

There has been a felt in need to bridge gaps between cultural diversity and contexts such that encounters between the gospel and cultural values lead to appreciation of both convergences and divergences. It is through concerted and well-coordinated efforts of inculturation that intensive evangelization in Africa can be better achieved. Such inculturation paves the way for intensive Christian communities that would witness transformation of different levels of its life, laws, customs, moral values and its worldwide view in the light of the gospel message.⁴⁹¹

Among the actual protagonists for enhancing this type of approach are African biblical scholars. What is evidenced in biblical scholars in the most recent published reflection on “Animatio Biblica Totius Actionis Pastoralis ‘Verbum Domini,’” by the Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM), is that the Word of God to be relevant in Africa, must focus on a living encounter with Christ as well as with other persons, cultures, beliefs and customs within particular social locations. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Jesus’ Father is an involved and involving God. To form character and bring about changes inside Africans, there is a need for promoting a biblical apostolate approach that is dialogical in nature. The emerging emphasis is that the biblical apostolate to be effective and fruitful, should focus on facilitating encounters with people. Evangelizing traditions and customs and inculturating the Gospel must be oriented towards what promotes unity and fraternity.⁴⁹²

Witness Through Solidarity in Action Joint Ventures

Institutional joint ventures in addressing human realities bring Christian witness to another level. Solidarity in action at this level originates from hearts fired with love, guided by the attitude of service and the zeal and joy of establishing God’s love. To succeed, corporate consistency of involving and engaging each other is needed for bridging gaps. Rather than being motivated by the desire to preserve influence and prestige, it is humility and stewardship that can lead Christian witness to fruition in addressing social issues. Identifying with the marginalized, the helpless and hopeless,

⁴⁹¹ Cf. Kanu, Ikechukwu, “Inculturation and the Christian Faith in Africa”, in: *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (Vol. 2, No. 17), September 2012, 236–244.

⁴⁹² Cf. BICAM, Acts of the 8th Plenary Assembly of BICAM, Kachebere/Malawi, 17–23. September 2013, 86–93; 94–99.

people become part and parcel of witness. This involves redefining structures of sin.

There are several good practices that vivify the reality of witness through joint ventures. In Uganda for example, the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) is an ecumenical organization that was established in 1963. Its current membership comprises the Church of Uganda, the Roman Catholic Church and the Uganda Orthodox Church, which together constitute about 78% of Uganda's population. The member churches recognized a need for Christians to witness together and live in harmony. For over half a century UJCC has remained focused and consistent with its ecumenical mission of providing services for improved quality life of Ugandans and across borders. UJCC continues to strive to promote human dignity through interventions in various thematic areas of Ecumenism, Family Life development, Education, Governance, peace building and conflict transformation. It's engagements with various stakeholders in fostering an environment that enhances quality life in Uganda and beyond, amidst changing contexts is visible.⁴⁹³

Within the Kenyan realities, at least looking in the past three decades, the best example is that of the Ufungamano Initiative Movement for Change, a forum of religious organizations comprising of over 52 religious groups including the Anglican Church of Kenya, Evangelical Alliance of Kenya, Hindu Council of Kenya, Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, Methodist Church in Kenya, National Council of Churches of Kenya, Organisation of African Instituted Churches, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Salvation Army was formed in 1999. Consistently, Ufungamano was actively involved in addressing abrasive issues in the country including the Constitution and the December 2007 general elections. The Initiative has been working in close collaboration with the Muslim Supreme Council of Kenya and the Hindu Council of Kenya in addressing pertinent issues of common interests in the nation.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ Cf. Actalliance, Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC), <http://www.actalliance.org/about/actmembers/uganda-joint-christian-council-ujcc> (28.05.2015).

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. Rescue Kenya, Press Statement by steering Council one Kenya one people. Keeping the Country together after a general Election, <https://rescuekenya.wordpress.com/2008/02/21/ufungamano-initiative-one-kenya-one-people-keeping-the-country-together-after-the-general-election> (16.03.2016); Refworld, Kenya, The Ufungamano/Ufungamano Church Movement: Members, types of activities undertaken in process of

Within the Tanzanian set ups it is worthy to cite the Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC). This is an ecumenical body established in 1992 by the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC) and Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) to facilitate the provision of social services in Tanzania. CSSC supports church institutions that deliver quality social services to all the people regardless of colour, race and faith. It also promotes expansion of health, education and other social services all over Tanzania. Through partnerships, it has led to improved quality, accessibility, and availability of health and education services in Tanzania. The joint commission continues play key roles in institutional development, capacity building, and lobbying and advocacy. In collaboration with various government and non-governmental partners, CSSC coordinates the implementation of numerous health and education projects such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis programs (with the Global Fund), the Malaria Communities Program, the Pay for Performance Program, and the Construction and Rehabilitation of School and Health Facilities program.⁴⁹⁵

What these cited examples point to is the affirmation that the process of promoting Christian witness through Solidarity in Action demands the incarnation and inculturation approaches. It is via interacting and interrogating with social realities around us that Christians can jointly make a difference in given life settings. Unless we develop concrete expressions of our own faith both in good works and way of life, redressing structures of injustices, effectiveness of Christian witness will remain impaired. It is through commitment to serve in solidarity that will truly help humanity to attain the full stature in Jesus Christ. The bottom line of Christian witness consists in reconciling word and deed through being, presence and service. In the final analysis, Christian testimony in a multi religious world must go beyond confirmation and attestation by substantiation or validation of facts; it is by way of life. As a matter of fact, life witness becomes the evidence in support of the fact that the Jesus' salvific event is still alive and effective in making world religion traditions relevant and conversant with globalization realities of our times.

advocate for constitutional change (1999–2001), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3df4be5211.html> (28.05.2015).

⁴⁹⁵ Cf. Info Tanzania, Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC) Employment Opportunities, <http://infotanzania.blogspot.com/2012/10/christian-social-services-commission.html> (28.05.2015).

Concluding Suggestion: Fostering the Dialogue of Religious Experiences

In life settings of the world that is becoming more and more globalized and secularized, the sustainability of Christian witness will depend highly on willingness to enhance encounters that foster dialogue of religious experiences. What transpires from the above is that to a greater extent, Christian witness in a multi religious world including Africa has been a product of openness to accommodate each other and enter into dialogue at various levels.

In line with Stephen Bevans' scholarly observations, the take off stage has been over and above all Dialogue of life, in which Christians live and rub shoulders with people of other faiths and ideologies. At this level, at this stage, people of different faiths intentionally get to know one another as human beings, as neighbours and as fellow citizens. People begin to see one another not in the abstract but with concrete faces and personalities, overcoming fears and tensions that so often exist between practitioners of different faiths. That is where being and becoming for each other paves the way for mutual accommodating and establishing meaningful relationships.

More visibly and convincingly, Christian witness has been manifested through dialogue of social action, by which people work together for issues of common concern, ranging from social, political, or ecological ones. This level brings in concern for values and their practicability in life, inspired and guided by social doctrines of the various religious and secular traditions.

It is from the above two that possibilities of establishing witness through the dialogue of theological exchange emerge. This elevates dialogue to the level of experts, who probe one another's doctrines and practices, challenging and inspiring one another's sacred document and cherished authors. Through this level of dialogue, people could get to know one another, learn about other perspectives as well as deepening their own faith.

Reading the signs of the time, Christian testimony in a multi religious world demands willingness to sustain the dialogue of religious experience. To a greater extent, rightly taken from Christian witness perspectives, I concur with Stephen Bevans who recently observed that Interreligious dialogue is not an extra, it is not a luxury which we can enter into at will; it is part of the missionary nature and work of the

church itself. So part of being a missional church is to find out where those partners are for dialogue, seeking to learn from them and work with them.⁴⁹⁶

To make this a success, such a dialogue needs to be prophetic; whereby attentive listening, conversation skills, empathy, study, and respect must be adhered to. It demands honesty, conviction, courage, and faith. The ideal is not a mere search for "lowest common denominators" for keeping relationships moving. It is not seeking to be nice or politically correct which must be the driving forces. Rather, properly understood, such dialogue must pave way for certain levels of mutual conversion in terms of respect and upholding faith values.

I firmly believe that at this level of fostering Christian witness no room should be left for atrophy. It is not the negation or compromise of one's faith or surrender of one's fundamental values and belief systems or doctrinal integrity which leads to desired fruits. What is needed is firm conviction and articulation and clarification of tenets of own faith, done as St. Peter did, giving an appropriate direction: with humility and respect of others.

It should be noted that such witness does not grow by chance nor is done hazardly. It has to be nurtured through the building capacities of those who enter into it. In the final analysis, true dialogue is nurtured not only through mutual listening, but more so, it is a result of mutual listening to the Holy Spirit who makes it possible. The power of prayer must never be neglected. In the final analysis, we must all strive to mutually participate in the mission of the Triune God, the mission of love. The ideal is aspiring to attain the higher gifts, of which is love is of paramount importance (I Corinthians 13).

In Conclusion, reading the signs of the time, Christian Witness in a Multi Religious World calls for adopting right and appropriate methodological approaches that are sensitive to the being and presence of the other! Presence in solidarity sums it up all. For us Christians it is a privilege and joy to give an accounting for the hope that is within us and to do so with gentleness and respect (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

⁴⁹⁶ Bevans, Stephen, *Practices of Mission: Interreligious and Secular Dialogue*, New York 2013.

As it was well articulated by a joint statement by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, Jesus Christ is the supreme witness (cf. John 18:37). Christian witness is always a sharing in his witness, which takes the form of proclamation of the kingdom, service to neighbour and the total gift of self even if that act of giving leads to the cross. Just as the Father sent the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit, so to are believers sent in mission to witness in word and action to the love of the triune God. Hence, Christian witness in a pluralistic world includes engaging in dialogue with people of different religions and cultures (cf. Acts 17:22-28) guided by the spirit of being in solidarity with one another (Acts 1:18; Mt 28:19-20). In doing so, it is imperative to take note of this: that while it is our common invitation and responsibility to witness to Christ, we need to internalize the fact that conversion is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-47; John 16:7-9). The Spirit blows where it wills in ways over which no human being has control (John 3:8).

Hence, our vocation and role as Christians is to conduct ourselves with integrity, charity, compassion and humility, and to overcome all arrogance, condescension and disparagement (cf. Galatians 5:22). Our vocation is one of acting justly and loving tenderly (cf. Micah 6:8). Whenever we serve others and especially the least of sisters and brothers, we serve Jesus (Matthew 25:45). Acts of service, such as providing education, health care, relief services and acts of justice and advocacy are an integral part of witnessing to the gospel.

Without pretending to be exhaustive, reading the signs of the time, it is essential to prioritize cultural and intellectual understanding of other religions, and to develop profound pastoral instincts within theological circles. It is crucial to relearn fundamentals of being and loving. It is through being and acting in God's love, motivated by the gratuitous love of God and neighbour that can be better summed up the gist of Christian Witness/ Testimony in a multi religious world. Indeed, we are called to imitate Jesus by sharing love, giving glory and honor to God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit (John 20:21-23).

We all have the mutual responsibility of creating space for nurturing and building relationships of mutual acceptance, respect and trust among people of various religions. To be effective we need courage and skills of strengthening our own identity and faith while seeking to

deepen knowledge and understanding of different religions. We need to prioritize solidarity in action by carrying out collaborative ventures and engaging in advocacy for common good and justice and peace issues. Above all we need prayer and divine support; prayer must be an integral support pillar in Christian witness in a multi religious world.

The way to go is building interreligious relationships. Christians should continue to build relationships of respect and trust with people of different religions so as to facilitate deeper mutual understanding, reconciliation and cooperation for the common good.

In the final analysis, Christian witness in a multi religious world is not just about being informed about others; it is about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is meant to be a gift for us. It takes developing attitudes of openness in truth and love. We all need the ability to cultivate an interior space which can give a Christian meaning to commitment and activity. We are all sealed and branded to the mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing.

I would like to conclude that Christian witness in a multi religious world must be guided by the missionary zeal and happiness of seeking the good of others, desiring their happiness, appreciating them as God's handiwork, and deserving our love.⁴⁹⁷ We need to refocus our witness strategy by focusing on the essentials of friendship, care for practical needs and creating space for people to believe through belonging. It is through willingness to be with, live with and dialogue with others that will greatly influence the effectiveness of Christian witness in a multi religious world.

⁴⁹⁷ Pope Francis, Apostolic letter *Evangelii Gaudium* about the promulgation of the Gospel in the today's world, Announcement of the holy seat (No. 194), Office of the German Episcopal Conference (eds.), Bonn 2013, 272–174.

The Need to Heed Reality

Norbert Strotmann

In 2011, after five years of discussions, the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Worldwide Evangelical Alliance published a code of conduct for Christian witness / church missionary work under the heading “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World”.⁴⁹⁸ The document’s ecumenical recommendations for action can be summarised by saying that, in principle, the ‘form’ of Christian witness should be determined by its ‘content’. The way in which people live and work together should never be at odds with the essence of the faith. That applies just as much to interaction between the Christian churches and denominations in their missionary undertakings as it does to missionary activities with respect to non-Christian religions. In a nutshell, the document has its roots in the customary, i.e. classical interpretation of religion. Short and easy to understand, it is recommended reading for anyone interested in guidelines for relations among Christians and with the established religions.

My approach is based on a broader understanding of religion. If we understand ‘culture’ to be the socially influenced ways and means people have of comprehending and shaping the real world they live in, then religion is the ‘inner core’ of a culture, its key competence, i.e. “that which initially and mostly is not readily apparent, ... that which forms an intrinsic part of what initially and mostly manifests itself in such a way that it constitutes its meaning and reason.”⁴⁹⁹ Only an extended view of this kind makes it possible to examine today’s multi-religious world without reference to classical religions, theologies, churches and denominations.

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20111110_testimonia-cristiana_en.html (01.08.2014).

⁴⁹⁹ Heidegger, Martin, *Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen ¹¹¹⁹⁶⁷, 35.

In his famous dialogue *De pace fidei* (after 1453) Nikolaus von Kues notes:

“It is a human characteristic to defend long-standing custom, which is regarded as part of nature, as the truth. Considerable differences of opinion arise, therefore, if one community gives preference to its own faith over another.”⁵⁰⁰

Separating belief from religion and Christian faith from deep-seated custom is the only way to provide what I hope will be some interesting thoughts on the topic we are addressing.

I. Reality

In 1900, John R. Mott, General Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and later Nobel Peace Prize laureate (1946), published *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation*.⁵⁰¹ Fifty years after the Second Vatican Council and the promulgation of *Ad Gentes*, its Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, to which this publication is devoted, little remains of Mott's optimism – in the Catholic Church at least.

The number of crises now being analysed is astonishing: the many Church leavers, Church taxes, cases of abuse and bishops resigning. It is not easy to accept – let alone approve of – any of these developments in a Church which claims the historical presence of the mission of Jesus Christ as the justification for its existence and core competence. However, the difference between the “causes” and “reasons” for these developments no longer seems to matter. The perception of reality would appear to be impaired. While that is primarily the Church's problem, it is not one it faces alone.

Putting forward some thoughts on this problem is far from easy. Reflecting on the ‘cultural’ aspects involved is tricky because, in a

⁵⁰⁰ Von Kues, Nikolaus, *De pace fidei*, in: idem, *Philosophisch-Theologische Schriften*, No. 3, edited by Leo Gabriel, translated by D. u. W. Dupré, Vienna 1967, 705–797, here: 711. The Latin text reads: “Habet autem hoc humana terrena condicio, quod longa consuetudo, quae innaturam transisse accipitur, pro veritate defenditur. Sic eveniunt non parvae dissensiones, quando quaelibet communitas suam fidem alteri praefert.” (710) – For Kues the terms ‘fides’ and ‘religio’ have an inverted meaning compared with modern language usage, which is reflected to the present day in Catholic canon law.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. Mott, John R., *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation: Student Volunteer Movement*, London 1900.

manner of speaking, you have to judge the suit you're wearing without looking at yourself in a mirror. It is even harder to grasp the ‘meaning’ of and ‘reason’ for cultural facts, to comprehend their ‘religion’. Some deep thinking is required if I am not to be content with simply adding a few more remarks – full of profound insights, perhaps, but of little practical use – to the publications on evangelization we have been deluged with in recent years.

I should point out that my attempt to provide a far-reaching analysis of the situation has not been prompted solely by the current debate and its less than satisfactory outcome. It has to do with my personal experience as well. In 2007 I had the privilege of taking part in the meeting of Latin American bishops in Aparecida and in 2008 in the Synod of Bishops in Rome. Both meetings undoubtedly had valuable statements to make about the respective issues they were addressing, but I was shocked by the fact that, in both cases, no proper appraisal was undertaken of the real world outside the Church, information about it merely slipping in by chance, as it were.

Pope Francis, to his credit, is currently searching for new forms of shared responsibility and synodality for the Catholic Church. But if you look at the preparations for the forthcoming Family Synod you can see that, while the circular, inner-Church perspective may have widened, it has not been overcome. While Luhmann's ‘autopoiesis’ theory has come under criticism, its continued practice within the Church – in a sophisticated form – raises no eyebrows. The following comparison characterises the situation within the Church: The captain of an aircraft or a ship has no problem switching to automatic pilot, i.e. using standardised self-regulation programmes, but only if sufficient calculations have been made about the surroundings and there is a guarantee of fine weather. Such conditions certainly do not apply to the Church at present. Tinkering with the inner-Church self-regulation mechanisms may be useful and necessary, but it is definitely not sufficient. What is needed is a long, hard look at reality, at the new conditions affecting Church activity, at the changed environment for Christian witness.

The purpose of my contribution is to throw light on the present reality of Christian witness. I will begin by investigating the worldwide trends within the Catholic Church and looking at the contrasting situation of the New Religious Movements. I will then examine the changes that have affected Christian witness in the past few decades.

The stipulations for this contribution mean that my remarks will have to be greatly condensed.

Global trends in the Catholic Church

A few years ago, being somewhat dismayed by the form of the aforementioned bishops' meetings and their lack of touch with reality, I began investigating the global trends in the Catholic Church from 1974 to 2008 with the help of the official Church statistical handbook.⁵⁰² This revealed the following:

- In the period under review, worldwide growth in Church membership was 14 per cent lower than the growth in the world's population. This was due primarily to the situation in Europe and Latin America, which account for two-thirds of the global membership of the Catholic Church.
- The continents with the strongest growth were Africa (221 per cent increase in the number of Catholics) and Asia (111 per cent). However, both continents together make up just 24 per cent of Catholics worldwide.
- Latin America (43 per cent of Catholics worldwide) occupies a middle position on the global growth scale (67 per cent). Due to its losses to Evangelical groups, however, it remains 10 per cent lower than the growth in its own population.⁵⁰³
- The regions with the lowest growth in the number of Catholics were Europe (5.8 per cent) and the USA (43 per cent), both of which – in very different ways – are Christian heartlands.

I will return to an interpretation of these data a little later. For the moment let us look at the numbers of full-time witnesses to the faith (priests and women religious).

Only in Asia is there a certain balance in respect of priests: their number (11.9 per cent of all priests) corresponds roughly with the number of believers (10.3 per cent of all Catholics); the growth rate in the number of priests (111.2 per cent) likewise corresponds with the

⁵⁰² Cf. Strotmann, Norbert, "Descifrando la Situación de la Iglesia en América Latina", in: idem/Pérez Guadalupe, José Luis, *La Iglesia después de 'Aparecida': Cifras y Proyecciones*, Lima 2008, 17–133. This contains information on the procedure and relevant literature with which we do not wish to burden this contribution.

⁵⁰³ Pérez Guadalupe, José Luis, "Y sin embargo, se van ...", in: Strotmann, Norbert /idem., loc. cit., 135–294.

growth rate in the number of believers (111.2 per cent). – The situation as regards women religious is as follows: Asia has a considerable relative surplus of women religious (19.6 per cent); its growth rate (86.3 per cent) is below the growth rate in the number of Catholics (111.2 per cent), but worldwide it is the highest among women religious.

On the other continents the personnel situation is worsening. In the period under review the number of priests dropped overall by 0.8 per cent and the number of women religious by 21.9 percent worldwide – in both cases compared with a 55.8 per cent increase in the number of Catholics.

North America recorded a drop of 19.2 per cent in the number of priests, Europe 18.9 per cent and Oceania, which in the Vatican statistics includes Australia, 12.2 per cent. In the period under review no reversal of the trend was discernible in these regions. They have a conspicuous relative surplus of priests, but that bonus will vanish rapidly due to over-ageing.

Apart from Asia as the leader, there is consistent growth in the number of priests in Africa (90.3 per cent) and in Latin America (44.1 per cent). However, it should be borne in mind that both these continents were in the weakest starting position if an equal distribution of 'priests per believers' on a global scale is taken as a yardstick. In that case Africa currently has about half and Latin America one-third of the number they are entitled to. At the same time their growth rates are well below the Catholic growth rates mentioned above. The ratio of 'priests to Catholics' is thus deteriorating rapidly. With the exception of Asia the work of priests worldwide is becoming progressively more difficult.

The situation facing women religious is even more delicate. I need only refer to the global figures for their decline, which amounts to 21.9 per cent worldwide (compared to a growth in the number of Catholics by 55.8 per cent). This decline is most pronounced in North America, Europe and Oceania (in that order).

What do these figures mean for 'Christian witness in the world'?⁵⁰⁴ The situation facing the Catholic Church in this respect is very critical

⁵⁰⁴ On the situation facing global Christianity see PEW Research Center, *Global Christianity. A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population* (The PEW Forum on Religion & Public Life, December 2011), http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious_Affiliation/Christian/Christianity-fullreport-web.pdf (01.09.2014). For a more precise description of the New Religious Movements see *ibid.*, 69.

and one can understand why Pope Francis strove to alleviate the general despondency within the Church by issuing the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. To avoid any hasty interpretation of the present situation I will now proceed to the second step and turn my attention to the

New Religious Movements

In 2013 I was asked by the head of the Commission for the Universal Church / German Bishops Conference to give one of the closing speeches on its long-term study of the New Religious Movements. The thoughts I shall now present draw on that study⁵⁰⁵ and what I experienced at the international meeting in Rome.⁵⁰⁶

Why is this second step important? Looking, as we have just done, at the trends in the Catholic Church, one might gain the impression that Christian witness as a whole in the modern world is in a sorry state. Contradicting any such impression is the success story of the New Religious Movements over the past few decades.

The New Religious Movements include the Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelical movements and the new developments they have given rise to.⁵⁰⁷ Karl Gabriel concludes his research report on the international study conducted by the German Bishops Conference by saying:

“The different religious, social and political contexts in the world mean that the Evangelicals, Pentecostal Churches and Charismatic movements assume very varied guises and have different influences and effects. Their diversity repeatedly casts

⁵⁰⁵ Cf. Strotmann, Norbert, “Was bedeutet das Phänomen der NRB für die Pastoral-Konzepte der Universal-Kirche?”, unpublished manuscript for the internal session of the German Bishops Conference: “Evangelikale – Pfingstkirchen – Charismatiker: Neue religiöse Bewegungen als Herausforderung für die katholische Kirche” (Rome, 9–11.April 2013). The data in the following section are taken from this manuscript. It will be published soon in English.

⁵⁰⁶ Cf. Ruh, Ulrich, “Neue Konkurrenz – Pfingstler und Charismatiker als Herausforderung für die katholische Kirche”, in: Herder Korrespondenz, No. 67 (2013) 6, 305–309.

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. in addition to Strotmann, Norbert, “Was bedeutet das Phänomen der NRB für die Pastoral-Konzepte der Universal-Kirche?”, unpublished manuscript for the internal session of the German Bishops Conference: “Evangelikale – Pfingstkirchen – Charismatiker: Neue religiöse Bewegungen als Herausforderung für die katholische Kirche” (Rome, 9–11.April 2013) see the relevant articles in the Evangelical Church Lexicon (EKL) and The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.

doubt on the assumption that the movements have a uniform nucleus.”⁵⁰⁸

Bearing that reservation in mind, a look at the New Religious Movements shows that they set store by (1) a firm Christian belief which (2), thanks to personal conversions to Christ (awakening) and (3) the strong ties between their belief and the Holy Bible, serves as an anchor in everyday life. This belief (4) ‘saves’ and ‘heals’. (5) Transmitting this belief to the non-converted is the fundamental task of every member of the New Religious Movements. Building on this evangelical radicalism, Pentecostal church members and Charismatic Christians are (6) very insistent on the action of the Holy Spirit in the present, as reported in the writings of the early Christian community. As movements they normally dissociate themselves from churches and denominations. From the point of view of Catholic theology, the fundamental problem of the faith practised in the New Religious Movements is its un-churchlike directness in the all the attributes mentioned above.⁵⁰⁹

The members of these movements see their ‘social connect-edness’ as stemming not from church structures but from the firm belief they have in the Christocentric faith they share with each other that is rooted in scripture. This bonding is so strong in the movements that they rely for the most part on informality and a minimum number of institutions. Their religious ties are also usually ‘trans-denominational’, i.e. most of the members of the New Religious Movements are simultaneously members of a church or denomination. Their social form is largely ‘parasitic’, as it were. This (dual) membership regularly makes a thorough mess of the statistics on the New Religious Movements.

All of which brings me on to the most important item in this paper: the astounding success story of the New Religious Movements in a very short space of time. The Pew Research Center gives the

⁵⁰⁸ Gabriel, Karl (ed.), *Evangelikale, Pfingstkirchen und Charismatiker in vier Erdteilen: Ergebnisse von Fallstudien der Wissenschaftlichen Arbeitsgruppe der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz zu Costa Rica, Philippinen, Ungarn und Südafrika*, Münster 2013, 13.

⁵⁰⁹ The dangers emanating from it are (1) fideism and fanaticism in respect of the faith; (2) a Christology based on individualistic personal needs; (3) fundamentalism in respect of the Scriptures; (4) an egocentric salvific exclusivism, which (5) both motivates and characterises missionary activity, and (6) the instrumentalisation of the Holy Spirit. –These dangers come from extreme tendencies and positions appear on the fringes of the New Religious Movements but do not constitute their essence.

following figures (December 2011) for Pentecostals and Charismatics, which also includes the Evangelicals. It is impossible to know which figures are correct: the 400 million members of the New Religious Movements, on which the study conducted by the German Bishops Conference was based, or the following figures supplied by Pew:⁵¹⁰

Christians by movement

Movements	Estimated Numbers	Percentage of Total World Population	Percentage of Total World Christian Population
Pentecostal	279,080,000	4.0 %	12.8 %
Charismatic	304,990,000	4.4 %	14.0 %
Pentecostal & Charismatic together	584,080,000	8.5 %	26.7 %

Within the space of fifty years, lay Christians with a deep-rooted faith, a largely trans-denominational church affiliation and minimal requirements of their own church structures have built up a worldwide fellowship equivalent to a half – or at least a third – of Catholic Church membership, which developed over a period of two thousand years. I will add nothing to that for the moment and go on to a cautious comparison between the ‘difficult situation of the Catholic Church’ and the ‘success story of the New Religious Movements’.

There is a great temptation to simply assume that the answer to the witness problems currently faced by the Catholic Church lies in emulating the mission practices of the New Religious Movements along the lines of “that’s the way to do it!” Such an assumption would be foolish. It would entail transferring an extremely successful partial model of Christian witness to a far more complex universal model.

- It should be pointed out that the model adopted by the New Religious Movements does not concentrate on transmitting the faith to non-believers (in the classical missionary sense), but largely (though not exclusively) on reviving the faith of baptised Christians, i.e. people who already belong to a church or an

equivalent thereof but are mainly ‘retired’, ‘nominal members’ or, at any rate, ‘not actively involved’.

- The process of religious revival varies from continent to continent (and no doubt from country to country, too). Whereas in Latin America it is Catholic Christians who have been converted, in Africa it is predominantly Anglican and Reformed Christians (Catholics there are said to be more resilient to the New Religious Movements). In Asia, meanwhile, the situation is different again. In the Philippines, the one Catholic country on the continent, most followers of the New Religious Movements remain Catholics and they constitute a large majority within the movements as compared to the non-Catholic adherents.
- The strategy applied varies accordingly. In Latin America the revivalist core of the New Religious Movements consists of people who have not been served by a priest for a long time, i.e. those living in regions or sectors of society where little or no preaching or worship is carried out. In Africa, the Christian faith has a wide diversity of denominations which have their origins in a varying colonial past. This, in turn, multiplies the number of potential church contacts for the revivalist ambitions of the New Religious Movements. The Catholic Church in the Philippines, by contrast, has used its key competence for its own self-renewal.
- Crucial importance attaches to the following observation, however. When subjected to closer examination, the success of the New Religious Movements is certainly breathtaking, but it is also limited. This is apparent
 - in the social transition from a rural culture to a modern society
 - and there, in particular, in the outlying districts of the large cities.
- The fact is that, the more advanced a society is, the less successful the New Religious Movements are. This means that their strategies have very little impact on continents where there is a very high level of development, i.e. in precisely those societies in which the Catholic Church finds itself in a very precarious situation.
- Finally, there is virtually nothing we can say about the development of the New Religious Movements and their members

⁵¹⁰ Cf. PEW Research Center, loc. cit., 67.

following the leap from a society in transition to a developed society. In view of the marginal efficiency of these movements in highly advanced societies, the prospects for their future would appear to be negative rather than positive.

Summing up, then, the current success of Christian witness in the New Religious Movements is not a straightforward means of resolving the serious witness problems facing the Catholic Church in developed societies. But that does not mean the Catholic Church has nothing to learn from the New Religious Movements. The following salient points need to be considered.

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the Church undertook numerous theological studies of faith in the developing countries. However, the driving force of social change – the leap from an agrarian to an urban culture with all the concomitant cultural and religious upheavals – was never made the subject of a pastoral strategy review. This past failing should make Church authorities sit up and take notice when queries are raised about their analytical capabilities in pastoral matters. The Catholic Church has stuck to its pastoral habits. The New Religious Movements, by contrast, are attuned to the new requirements arising from social change.

The Catholic Church in Latin America and Africa should consider introducing 'a modified version' of the strategy applied by the Church in the Philippines as quickly as possible.

In view of the major institutional problems it is encountering in the developed world, the Church should rethink the role played by lay people in the renewal of the faith, since current pastoral practice poses considerable risks for the transmission of the faith from one generation to the next.

The New Religious Movements' 'organisational' flexibility and 'lack of institutions' should definitely prompt some serious thinking within the universal Church about the present adequacy of the Church as an organisation. The issue here is not whether its institutions should be abolished *de jure divino*, but whether they can, to the greatest extent possible, be slimmed down and made more flexible.

In this section entitled 'Reality' I began by looking briefly at the statistics documenting the precarious witness situation facing the Catholic Church and then went on to consider its successful com-

petitors, the New Religious Movements. The conclusion I arrived at is that these movements do not offer a solution to the key problem facing the Catholic Church, which is witness to the faith in the developed world. I will now move on to look at

What has changed for Christian witness in past few decades

Why is Christian witness faring so badly in highly developed societies? – This question sums up the problems highlighted by the first two reality checks.

Charles Taylor's wonderful *A Secular Age*⁵¹¹ leaves us with more questions than answers to the problem we face. A survey of the explanations given for the situation in the German Church since the 1970s,⁵¹² including the latest milieu approach,⁵¹³ exposes the short-term validity of the interpretations they offer. Sociologists such as Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, Karl Gabriel, Detlef Pollack and others deserve our utmost esteem. Their debates on individualisation, secularisation and secularisation/diversification are extremely illuminating. The question is whether they provide us with a sufficient understanding of the problem to hand.

I will take a different approach – one based on my personal experience. In the 1970s I had the privilege of working for a few years as a missionary in the southern Andean highlands of Peru, a poor area with almost 100 per cent subsistence agriculture, and from 1996 as the bishop of a new diocese on the eastern outskirts of the Peruvian capital, Lima. On various occasions in recent years memories of this experience, full of so many contrasts, have come back to me as a result of my involvement in a project on pastoral care in mega-cities.⁵¹⁴ This raised the question as to the main differences

⁵¹¹ Taylor, Charles, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge 2007.

⁵¹² For example, Gerhard Schmidtchen and the 'cognitive dissonance' he describes in: *Zwischen Kirche und Gesellschaft: Forschungsbericht über die Umfragen zur Gemeinsamen Synode der Bistümer in der BRD*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 1972. Ironically enough, 40 years ago Schmidtchen considered problems of 'deviation' and 'dissonance' to be the root cause of Germans' problems with their faith. The situation has now been stood on its head. Today, problems of 'consonance' are more to the fore.

⁵¹³ Cf. Herder Korrespondenz e-Dossier, Kirche in Milieus, Freiburg im Breisgau 2008.

⁵¹⁴ Cf. Eckholt, Margit/Silber, Stefan (eds.), *Glauben in Mega-Citys: Transformationsprozesse in lateinamerikanischen Großstädten und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Pastoral* (Forum Weltkirche, No. 14), Ostfildern 2014.

in sources of orientation available to people engaged in subsistence agriculture as opposed to those living in the outskirts of big cities. A comparison of the answers confronts us with the following questions: Why are the New Religious Movements so helpful for the agrarian migrants living in the urban outskirts? Why does faith fare so badly in today's advanced societies? – Here again I shall have to be brief and compare the contrasting situations in condensed form in columns⁵¹⁵:

Subsistence farming

*People live 'in' and 'off' nature
Limitedness and manageability*
Living space is limited but manageable.–Natural rhythms determine the sense of time, which is felt to be both repetitive and cyclical.

Stable, iterative activity

Subsistence farming depends on the relatively stable integration of economic activities into nature and its rhythms, which determine the predictable working cycle.

Limited 'acquaintances'

The boundary distinguishing

Mega-city outskirts

*People live 'in' and 'off' society
Endless complexity*
The living space on the urban outskirts is manageable in physical terms, but what goes on within the space is largely unclear. – Time no longer offers a (predominantly) natural regulatory framework. It is the technical determination of time and the events which characterise the sense of time.

Dependence on social institutions and technological developments

Activities take place in a complex, differentiated environment involving unknown social facilities and are determined by the dynamics of technical development.

Endless numbers of 'strangers'

The number of acquaintances

acquaintances and strangers is clear and relatively stable. The circle of acquaintances is clearly predominant. Normally people are 'among their own kind'; being known is the rule. Not being known attracts attention.

Focus on people

In subsistence farming human encounters are 'meetings between people'. People know each other; or they know that they don't know each other. Amongst acquaintances background and family relationships are 'known'.

Encounters in the farming world are normally personal encounters. That applies even to 'negative' relations.

Family as 'life's roof'

In subsistence culture the family is the normal living environment; an institution which persists throughout life (from cradle to grave). It is the focus of largely

is reduced (relative to the environment); the number of strangers is 'infinite'. The daily challenge resides in constant interaction with strangers.

Lack of focus on people

In a mobile, differentiated society the number of acquaintances may increase; but – in public transport, at work or in a shopping centre – the most we know about others in the majority of encounters is what they do or are trained as, but not who they are.

Encounters are largely determined by instrumental or functional rationality; with a limited interest in people. For personal meetings there are pre-determined residual areas, such as family, clubs, colleagues at work, etc. Encounters in the urban world are restrictive; they mostly form part of a relationality of mutual use and functionality.

Family as a 'part-time residual area'

In the modern era (above all since industrialisation and the concomitant process of social differentiation) basic activities,

⁵¹⁵ More detailed inform on 'procedure', 'content' and 'bibliography' can be found in: Strotmann, Norbert, "Pastoral der mega-urbanen Randbereiche: Grundsätzliche Überlegungen zu Soziologie und Pastoral", in: Eckholt, Margit/Silber, Stefan, loc cit., 36–56.

repetitive work. At the same time it imparts adequate practical knowledge relevant to both gender and work.

At the same time it is the locus of a consistent, life-oriented sense of purpose that is shared by the members of the family.

such as upbringing and work, are increasingly outsourced into independent areas of society.

The family has delegated these formerly essential functions. Its duration is also generally limited until the children become young adults. It is no longer the normal living environment, but just the residual area of childhood and adolescence.

The family increasingly loses its role as the giver of meaning.

With this comparison in mind, let us return briefly to the successes of the New Religious Movements in countries in transition from a rural to a modern urban culture. Normally this transition means a leap from one culture into another with all the contrasts indicated in the columns above. 'Development migrants' taking this leap experience something very different to what Europeans have been exposed to during the gradual and almost unnoticed transformation of their world over the past fifty years. While this transformation has not been quite so dramatic as the cultural transition described above, it has not been without its difficulties either. The contrasts I have listed in the columns may help to put things into perspective, though.

In contrast to the situation in Europe, a migrant in a developing region leaps unprotected into a new world in which the old guiding principles governing a life in harmony with nature and integrated into a closely-knit community now only apply to a limited extent. He has yet to master the new rules that apply. This is where the New Religious Movements come in with their 'tailor-made' offer. Firstly, they present an antidote to the loneliness felt by the migrant following the loss of his native community (family and village). This takes the form of a fervent community of faith with a focus on face-to-face relationships (bringing the past into the present). Secondly, the new expression of his faith enables the migrant to get to grips his own subjectivity, which is crucial. There was only limited scope for this in a farming environment; living in the urban outskirts, he constantly has to react

to new people, new welfare institutions and new situations. A subject-centred⁵¹⁶ faith in the Reformation heritage and with a reduced number of church institutions (how do I get grace from God?) is an ideal way to train self-referentiality (practical training for the future). After all, the witnesses to the faith in the New Religious Movements stand for the modern world, which has a 'magical' power of attraction, as the global statistics on migration and urbanisation show – that may suffice as a partial explanation for the success of the New Religious Movements.

Let me return now to the main thrust of this examination of Christian witness and its relevance to the real world and ask: Why is the Christian faith so lacklustre in modern advanced societies?

In addressing this key question I could fall back on (i) 'discerning' interpretations,⁵¹⁷ (ii) 'empirical' approaches such as the long-term European Value System Studies (EVSS), which were brought to the attention of Church circles primarily by Paul M. Zulehner, (iii) their global dissemination in the World Values Survey (WVS), or (iv) the Religion Monitor of the Bertelsmann Foundation.⁵¹⁸ But once again I prefer to take a personal approach.

Let me summarise once again the crucial differences between subsistence farming and life on the fringes of urban society: limited manageability as opposed to endless confusion – dependence on technical artefacts and their barely controllable development – endless possible contacts but minimal knowledge of the persons and welfare institutions contacted – lack of a focus on people because of the prevailing instrumental and strategic nature of relations, in which the 'person as such' is normally ignored and, wherever the 'person as such' is indispensable, is integrated into residual areas of society, in which functional freedom can only be experienced to a limited extent – loss of the family as 'life's roof' and its drastic reduction to an

⁵¹⁶ A good synthesis of subject-centredness in the German Protestant tradition of thought can be found in: Weischedel, Wilhelm, *Der Gott der Philosophen* (No. 1), Darmstadt 1971, 191–386.

⁵¹⁷ Cf. Joas, Hans/Wiegandt, Klaus (eds.), *Säkularisierung und die Weltreligionen*, Frankfurt am Main 2007.

⁵¹⁸ Cf. Pickel, Gert, *Religiosität im internationalen Vergleich* (Religionsmonitor), Gütersloh 2013, http://www.religionsmonitor.de/pdf/Religionsmonitor_IntVergleich.pdf (01.08.2014); Pollack, Detlef/Müller, Olaf, *Religiosität und Zusammenhalt in Deutschland* (Religionsmonitor), Gütersloh 2013, http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/cps/rde/xbcr/SID-2D9F0AC2905BF130/bst/xcms_bst_dms_37661_37775_2.pdf (1.08.2014).

environment for living, working, experiencing time and conveying a purpose – plus the marginalisation of convictions due to media control of opinions and entertainment. These are the key differences in the two types of life.

A well-known Böckenförde dictum – one which has been quoted ad nauseam – says: “The liberal, secularised state depends on conditions it cannot itself guarantee.”⁵¹⁹ That immediately prompts the question: Only the liberal, secularised state? Does it not also apply to modern-day society as a whole and for all its segments, of which the state is but one institution? Does it not also apply to politics as such, to the economy and its financial system, to technology and its impact on the environment, to the whole field of education and to the mass media? Is this not increasingly the case following the surge in globalization triggered by the latest revolution in computer sciences?

Looking at this reality, it is clear that

1. people in developed societies depend on it – for better or worse.
2. the new lifestyle offers many forms of assistance and creature comforts, above all of a social and technological nature, but it is also very ambiguous, expensive and barely predictable.
3. relations with ‘others’ are infinitely extended, but for the most part they are ‘functional’ (in the everyday working environment) or ‘indirect’ relations (in the media). As Martin Buber said, the surfeit of ‘It-ness’ in modern life considerably reduces the opportunities for personal relations.⁵²⁰
4. in the ‘leftist’ construction of social reality it is, above all, politicians who take it upon themselves to domesticate people into the role of functionality and mediacy; in the ‘rightist’

⁵¹⁹ The rarely quoted context, from which the quote is taken, is as follows: “The liberal, secularised state depends on conditions it cannot itself guarantee. That is the bold venture it has embarked upon in the cause of freedom. On the one hand, it can only survive as a liberal state if the freedom it grants its citizens is regulated from within, drawing on the moral substance of the individual and the homogeneity of society. On the other hand, it cannot attempt to guarantee these inner regulatory forces from within itself, i.e. by means of legal coercion and authoritative laws, without renouncing its own liberalness and – at the secularised level – resorting to the claim of totality, which it shook off during the religious civil wars.” (Böckenförde, Ernst-Wolfgang, *Staat, Gesellschaft, Freiheit*, Frankfurt 1976, 60).

⁵²⁰ One of the key questions in coming years will certainly be: How can the ‘functionalisation’ of life be controlled and reduced in favour of a ‘re-personalisation’? Pope Benedict XVI touched on this in his social encyclical *Caritas in veritate* under the heading of ‘gratuity’.

construction it is the economy and its shameless partner, the financial sector.

5. globalisation has transferred new economic functions to politics so that it can lay down the conditions designed to ensure the competitiveness of the national economy in the international arena.
6. the power of the economy is particularly noticeable both in the redesigning of the family to make it compliant to economic demands and in its functionalisation to serve the logic of the economy over the past fifty years.
7. the knowledge which society needs for its self-reproduction and development is supplied by the formal education sector (from day nursery to university) – above all with an eye on social needs and usefulness, while the knowledge that serves the needs of society is organised by the media. Personal convictions, which find expression primarily in the classical religions, are disruptive influences, because they are mutually incompatible and at odds with pluralist society. They find greater acceptance in conditions of socially controlled compatibility (e.g. USA).

The logical conclusion of these reflections can only be that modern society is anything but a ‘social construction of reality’ that does not depend on any conditions.⁵²¹ Varying Böckenförde’s dictum, it can be said that modern society depends on conditions that it cannot itself guarantee. The assumption that nobody will press the ‘red button’ that would launch warheads presumes a great deal of trust or the capacity to suppress. The same applies to the hope that there will be no new Reagan or Thatcher and that Putin will remain predictable. Without optimism we cannot be confident of coping with the threats to the environment that our lifestyle has caused. – These are some of the ‘major’ conditions; but there are also the ‘minor’ ones: the hope of health, family happiness, job success, a fair pension, people who matter more to us than our daily bread, and the smooth functioning of all the institutions which make this possible.

In the globalised world the fundamental worries of the present and the questions about the purpose of future life are of a social

⁵²¹ Cf. Berger, Peter L./Luckmann, Thomas, *Die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1969.

nature. In contrast to the farmer in the bare Andean highlands who begs for rain and the right weather so that his seeds will grow and his cattle will have young (he lives off nature, after all), the man living in the urban outskirts (and we, too) have other concerns, other imponderables to deal with. These are of a social nature. In living his life he is dependent on this society with all its ups and downs. As an individual there is precious little he can do to influence his situation.

This examination of the present reality of Christian witness indicates that the Church has largely lost the ability it once had to bring and hold people together by the sheer vitality of its faith. It no longer provides answers to the philosophical and fundamental questions facing post-modern man in his everyday reality and to the problems he has to grapple with. It is mostly out of touch with the fundamental and philosophical issues he is confronted with in his social life (i.e. with religion as we understand it) and, therefore, cannot make the Christian faith attractive to him. Rarely is the Church a source of inspiration for celebrations to mark the social successes of the present, of consolation for the sorrow caused by failure or of solace for the great worries about a future which seems barely predictable. The reason for the current malaise of Christian witness is not to be found in the faith itself but in the lack of realism on the part of those who proclaim it in a multi-religious world. Which brings me back to the Cusanus quote: It is easier to pass on familiar habits than to exploit faith for a real and effective response to people's joys and needs.

II. Mandate

I have focused so far on the reality of Christian witness in a multi-religious world for a quite simple reason. In terms of pastoral theology there is not a lot to be gained by reflecting on this witness without taking notice of the problems it encounters. I come on now to the challenges for Christian witness: firstly, in globalised society, secondly, in the Church and, thirdly, in the Christian faith.

1. Christian witness in globalised society

In his most recent ecclesiology Cardinal Kasper notes the "end of the Constantine era" for the Church in Europe, an era in which it

"largely left its stamp on social life."⁵²² This end applies to most of the societies which have been impacted by globalisation over the past thirty years.⁵²³ In these societies we can no longer simply assume the existence of homogeneous cultural areas, for in the new situation the proclamation of the Church is accompanied at every turn – in the same spaces and at the same time – by the activities of other faiths and, therefore, by a largely partial identification on the part of its members. This living with 'otherness' is the main problem in the new situation. The new point of departure for any non-violent⁵²⁴ communication of faith in globalised societies is put very succinctly by the Korean-North American theologian, Anselm Min:

"The globalization of the world brings together different groups into common space and produces a twofold dialectic, the dialectic of differentiation, in which we are made increasingly aware of differences in nationality, culture, religion, ethnicity, gender, class, language; and the dialectic of interdependence, in which we are compelled to find a way of living together despite our differences. The central challenge of the globalizing world is how to manage and transform this twofold, antithetical dialectic of simultaneous differentiation and interdependence into a solidarity of others, the mutual solidarity of those who are different."⁵²⁵

⁵²² Kasper, Walter, *Katholische Kirche: Wesen – Wirklichkeit – Sendung*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 22011, 62. Kasper is cautious. What he formulates for Europe also applies to the 'Catholic continent', i.e. Latin America. The globally most intensive bond between society/politics and Church is rapidly dissolving, especially in conurbations. As far as North America is concerned, it is worth recalling (despite the Casanova discussion) that it presents the most alarming Church institution data anywhere in the world. The social presence of the Church there rests on a wide-ranging network of educational and health services which, in their traditional form, can no longer be maintained. – The 'Christian heritage' in the USA is very strong for two historical reasons: 1. The Christian faith (in contrast to Europe) was constitutive for the founding of the state; 2. This faith, due to its origins, was located primarily in the individual or private sphere and has its intangible state rights only in that sphere. Both of these reasons tended to protect it for a longer period from the social erosion of the present.

⁵²³ Cf. Strotmann, Norbert, "La Globalización en la Mira de la Iglesia", in: Haour S.J., Bernardo (ed.), *Apertura a la Globalización: Desafíos y oportunidades en el Perú*, Lima 2007, 241–282.

⁵²⁴ On the subject of religion and violence cf.: Palaver, Wolfgang, "Wahre Religion und falscher Götzendienst: Zum Zusammenspiel von Gewalt und Religion", in: Herder Korrespondenz Spezial, *Gottlos glücklich? Facetten heutiger Religionskritik* (2014) 1, 21–25; Orth, Stefan, "Grausame Religion?", in: Herder Korrespondenz 68 (2014) 10, 487–489.

⁵²⁵ Min, Anselm, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World: A Postmodern Theology after Postmodernism*, o.O. 2004, 1.

The first thing the Church and its faith must do is to transform the inevitable otherness in our modern societies into solidarity. This is a far from easy task. ‘Slave labour’ and ‘service’ are part of Jesus’ basic vocabulary, which needs to be spelled out anew. At all events, power is no longer an appropriate vehicle for Christian proclamation – if, indeed, it ever was, given Jesus’ message. In a pluralistic society it does not unite; it rents asunder.

On the other hand, Christian witness is beholden to the indispensable claim to truth enshrined in its message,⁵²⁶ as Pope Benedict XVI has underlined time and again in his teaching. Christian proclamation is never about the media-friendly processing of the truth to ensure a modicum of acceptance. The Church must never use the ‘persuasion of power’ but only ever the ‘power of persuasion’. This means that, under certain circumstances, it may have to content itself with a minority status. But that is not all. If the Church takes its duty to spread the Gospel seriously it may not even discredit its majority opponent.⁵²⁷ A large number of Church customs will therefore have to be amended. While that is naturally one of the major problems to be tackled in the near future, it also offers opportunities.

There is no denying that modern society is highly sensitive as regards the Church’s claim to the truth. It neither overlooks nor pardons any contradiction between the form of Christian witness and its message. One cannot preach love and exercise power or discrimination. The Church only has a future if it ceases to be a bone of contention and becomes a source of inspiration and an indispensable institution for resolving society’s contradictions. That applies especially to poverty in the world. In a seminar he gave forty years ago Niklas Luhmann said that the Church must formulate its message in such a way that those who hear it realise that, without it, they are missing the most important thing in life.

2. Witness to the faith ‘in the Church’

Throughout Church history the periods after a council have regularly been marked by considerable ecclesiastical confusion.

⁵²⁶ Cf. Comisión Teológica Internacional (CTI), “El Cristianismo y las Religiones”, in: Dies., *Documentos* 1969–1996, edited by Cándido Pozo SJ, Madrid 1998, 557–604.

⁵²⁷ Cf. Matthew 5:43.

The same still applies fifty years after the Second Vatican Council. Whether it is wise to talk of an ‘epistemological investiture controversy’ in Catholic theology is debatable. At any rate there has been a thorough polarisation of the positions adopted by numerous post-Council adjectival and genitival theologians with their often fruitful partial perspectives, on the one hand, and the defenders of the ‘pure’ doctrine, on the other.⁵²⁸

A few years ago, Olegario González de Cardedal – a friend of Cardinal Ratzinger – set out the two fundamental positions on the current pastoral scenario and the underlying post-Council tension between them as follows:

“The Church turns into a sect and succumbs to fundamentalism if loyalty to its origins and concern for its identity become disproportionate or develop into an obsession. It risks self-dissolution and ultimately insignificance if it exaggerates concern for its social relevance and its involvement in the communal tasks of mankind to such an extent that it forgets its own sources and resources.”⁵²⁹

It is apparent that conservatives rely on the identity faith gives and progressives on its relevance. However, we should realise that González’ pastoral antithesis does not constitute a disjunction. To paraphrase Kant, one might say that faith identity without relevance is ‘empty’ and that faith relevance without identity is ‘blind’. Without faith there is no relevance problem, while without relevance faith becomes an empty formula.

It may be useful to recall two old theological rules of cognition. On the one hand, the Christological rule of the Council of Chalcedon (451), that of the ‘unconfused’ and ‘undivided’;⁵³⁰ on the other, that of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) which says: “Between creator

⁵²⁸ Cf. De Mattei, Roberto, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Eine bislang ungeschriebene Geschichte*, Stuttgart 22012.

⁵²⁹ De Cardedal, Olegario González, *Ratzinger y Juan Pablo II: La Iglesia entre dos milenios*, Salamanca, 2005, 168. Original text: “Cuando la fidelidad al origen y la preocupación por la identidad son desproporcionadas o se tornan obsesivas, la Iglesia se convierte en secta y sucumbe al fundamentalismo. Cuando la preocupación por su relevancia para la sociedad y su colaboración con las causas comunes de la humanidad es llevada hasta el límite, en el que se olvida los propios hontanares y recursos, entonces la Iglesia está en el borde de la disolución y finalmente de la insignificancia.”

⁵³⁰ DH 302.

and creature there can be noted no similarity so great that a greater dissimilarity cannot be seen between them.”⁵³¹

The ‘whole’ reality – including the ‘whole social’ reality of the present with all its successes and uncertainties – is relevant to the faith; the ‘whole’ faith is relevant to reality. The search for the relevance of the faith for reality is the task of the Church with the help of the Spirit, on which it can call; the search for the relevance of reality is the task of the human spirit in its history, successes and failures. However, neither the truth of reality nor the truth of faith constitutes a dependent variable of their respective relevance. Unconfused and undivided, they each have their own non-negotiable validity. At any event, the present mutual fear displayed by these truths is not a Catholic trademark; the sense of anathema they inspire in each other can hardly be deemed intelligent.

In the first part of this study we established that the ongoing validity of the Christian faith and its witness in the world today can only regain their relevance if this faith comprehends the new religious situation people find themselves in and responds to it. It has to be emphasised that this requires an ecclesiastical consensus on faith that makes Christian witness possible. Let us recall the success story of the New Religious Movements I looked at earlier. Without a simple and inspiring faith in Christ there is little that can be said on the matter at hand.

3. ‘Witness’ to the Christian faith

Let me conclude by bringing the two perspectives together: social reality and the simplicity of our faith. The aim is to show that, wherever and to the extent to which social reality and our faith are taken seriously without confusion and without division, Christian witness is still an inspiring and dynamic force in our pluralistic and multi-religious world.

I will take as an example the Church’s core competence, the credo:

- “God said, ‘Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves.’” (Gen 1:26) The dignity of every human being is founded in God’s act of creation.

- In his life, in his proclamation, on the cross and through his resurrection Jesus Christ, human being and God’s son, realises God’s loving community with humankind, the Kingdom.
- The Holy Spirit as a person is the bond of love between father and son; for those who make the son the criterion for their lives and thereby participate in the Kingdom, the Spirit is definitive connectedness with God.

Anyone who accepts the essence of our faith and takes it seriously knows that any form of exclusion or marginalization of people by their fellows is irreconcilable with the basic Christian experience of God. That applies to our social world in every respect – our little (local and national) world and the global social world. The living faith thrives on the knowledge that God takes people seriously. It therefore insists on God’s sensitivity to people and to their value. A Christian’s meaning in life is to serve God and humankind.

A new sensitivity to the intrinsic value of human life also implies a ‘critical assessment’ of our man-made reality. What do we mean by a ‘critical assessment’?

Our self-made world is not ‘bad in itself’, but it is even less ‘good in itself’. Its value depends on the extent to which it

1. values nature, which humankind exploits in its activities (the ecological dimension of creation),
2. respects and encourages people as persons in the way it acts (Christological / personal dimension) and
3. serves ‘all’ people in its approaches and products (pneumatological / universal community dimension)
4. and, above all, the excluded and/or the marginalised (preferential dimension).

Those who take the Christian faith seriously, along with the instructions that accompany it, have the guidelines of a Christian vision of the future in front of them. This encompasses not only a global economic order and a global political order, but also the key points for everything that needs to be changed in the respective countries. They can thus erect a barricade against the increasing functionalisation of people and a reassessment of values, the consequence of which is that people are increasingly reduced to a means

⁵³¹ DH 806.

or function of technology, economics and politics. The seventy years since the Second World War, which have been devoted primarily to social conservation and expansion, are very hard to tolerate for anyone with a serious belief in God. – But I will leave things there and come to my conclusion.

The reformed theologian, David J. Bosch, ends his standard work on missiology,⁵³² in which he examines the results of the exegesis of the New Testament, the entire missionary history of Christianity and the missionary input of recent theologies, by saying: “Jesus Christ, his life, his proclamation, his deeds, his death and his resurrection are the lasting criterion for the witness of our Christian faith.”⁵³³ To that nothing need be added.

Attitudes to Christian Evangelization

⁵³² Bosch, David J., *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, New York 1991.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 621–631.

“Come to me, . . .”

On the Inviting and Mystagogical Nature of Evangelization Today

Mariano Delgado

The *Lineamenta* of the Synod of Bishops in October 2012 on the “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith” urgently recalled the missionary mandate which concludes the Gospel (cf. Mk 16:15f.; Mt 28:19f.; Lk 24:48f.), as this “is far from being carried out”.⁵³⁴ However, this text paid insufficient attention to the prophetically liberating and invitingly mystagogical aspects of evangelization. Thus one searches in vain for a reference to Jesus’ speech at the synagogue in Nazareth (Lk 4:16-21), in which he himself tells us that he was primarily sent to “bring the good news to the afflicted”, to “proclaim liberty to captives” and “give sight to the blind”, and “to let the oppressed go free”. Moreover, there are no references at all to Mt 25 when the importance of the encounter with Jesus Christ as the main aim of evangelization is underlined; mention is made solely of the Eucharist, as if the Lord had not introduced us to a second true presence in the world in his words about the Last Judgment. Nor are there any allusions to his great invitation in Mt 11:28-30: “Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest [...]. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.”

Pope Francis corrected this imbalance in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of 24 November 2013. In it he both endorses the outcome of the Synod of Bishops and develops in greater detail the fundamental concept of the “inflammatory speech” he gave on 9 March 2013 at one of the preparatory Congregations of Cardinals prior to the Conclave. Here, referring to Paul VI, he addressed the

⁵³⁴ Synod of Bishops, XIII Ordinary General Assembly, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, Lineamenta* 2012, No. 10, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html (19.12.2014).

necessity of regaining the “delightful and comforting joy of evangelising”, to which Jesus Christ himself impels us “from within”. This also entails reclaiming *parrhesia*, freedom of prophetic speech within the Church, as well as the will to move beyond its confines – to the very limits of human existence: “the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents, and of all misery.”

A failure to emerge from seclusion would equate to ecclesial and theological “narcissism” or a “worldly Church, living within herself, of herself, for herself”, which “lives to give glory only to one another.” Bergoglio wished for a Pope, “who, from the contemplation and adoration of Jesus Christ, helps the Church to go out to the existential peripheries, which helps her to be the fruitful mother, who gains life from ‘the delightful and comforting joy of evangelising’”⁵³⁵. A Church which sees herself in this light must today advocate “inviting” and “mystagogical” evangelization.

The inviting evangelism of a maternal, merciful Church

Christian anthropology starts from the premise that human beings have been equipped by the Creator with rational faculties and a free will. Christian mission should therefore take place only in the manner championed by Bartolomé de Las Casas in the struggle against enforced mission of a colonial nature: “Divine Providence established one single way to teach people the true religion all over the world and for all time: persuading the mind by means of rational arguments and gently inviting and exhorting the will.”⁵³⁶ With a view to our times and the religious freedom they offer, John Paul II emphasised the inviting character of evangelization: “The Church proposes; she imposes nothing. She respects individuals and cultures, and she honours the sanctuary of conscience.”⁵³⁷ The 1996 letter of the French Bishops to the Catholics of France entitled *Proposer la foi dans la société*

⁵³⁵ Cf. the Spanish original and the German translation, in: Laudetur Jesus Christus/Vatikan Block, *Die Kirche, die sich um sich selber dreht: Theologischer Narzissmus*, 27.March 2013, <http://blog.radiovatican.de/diekirche-die-sich-um-sich-selber-dreht-theologischer-narzissmus/> (19.12.2014).

⁵³⁶ De Las Casas, Bartolomé, *Werkauswahl*, in: Mariano Delgado (ed.), *Missionstheologische Schriften* (No. 1), Paderborn 1994, 107.

⁵³⁷ John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* on the permanent validity of the Church’s missionary mandate, 7.December 1990, No. 39, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html (16.06.2015).

*actuelle*⁵³⁸ is aware that the Church “has been sent as an ambassador with an invitation to the feast, which the Father in Heaven has prepared for all his children.”⁵³⁹

Pope Francis places clear emphasis on the inviting nature of evangelization. In *Evangelii Gaudium* he carefully outlines the “new style” of evangelization and invites everyone to adopt this “in every activity which you undertake.”⁵⁴⁰ He refers to regaining the joy of evangelising mentioned at the outset and to “tenderness and mercy” as being at its heart. What he means is the clear and inviting presentation of the Gospel as it is understood in the mystical tradition of Christianity. This revolves around the tender wooing by a God who, because he is the ever abundant source of love and mercy and “first loved us” (1 Joh 4:19; cf. 4:12), decided as a Good Shepherd to live among us and, with endless patience and mercy, to wait for acceptance of his invitation in the form of the voluntary submission of our love. Having been created in the image of God, we are called upon to exercise our freedom and form a “love match” with him.

The reference here is to an evangelization which, as stated in *Lumen Gentium* 8 and *Gaudium et Spes* 1, is fully cognisant of the messianic, prophetically liberating heart of the invitation by Jesus to the poor and afflicted (Lk 4:16–21) as well as of the seriousness of succession (Mt 25). Pope Francis is talking of a style which respects the right of believers to be heard first and not to be lectured, since the faithful, too, have knowledge of God and a sense of faith. What he has in mind ultimately is a Church which acknowledges the plight of souls and responds to this not primarily by invoking ecclesiastical law and doctrine but by acting as the “merciful mother” of all who wishes to be “fruitful”. The extent to which this thought preoccupies Pope Francis is clear not least from his morning meditation in Santa Marta on 19 December 2014, in which he invites us to pray “for our Mother Church” in the face of the barrenness in the People of God: “The barrenness of selfishness, of power [...]. This is why we need

⁵³⁸ The French Bishops: *Proposing Faith to French Society*, Letter to the Catholics of France, Lourdes 1996.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁵⁴⁰ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* on the proclamation of the Gospel in today’s world, (announcement of the apostolic seat (No. 194)), ed. by the Secretariat of the German Episcopal Conference, Bonn 2013, No. 18.

to pray. And to do so in a way that this Christmas also renders 'our Church open to the gift of God', able to let herself be 'startled by the Holy Spirit': a Church 'which has children, a Mother Church'⁵⁴¹ This is the "pastoral" style of the Church in the modern world called for by John XXIII in his speech at the opening of the Council on 11th October 1962⁵⁴² and the "Samaritan" style⁵⁴³ described by Paul VI in his speech at the Council's Conclave on 8 December 1965. It is also the style appropriate to the mystagogical evangelization required today.

Mystagogical Evangelization following Karl Rahner

"The pious person of tomorrow will be a 'mystic', one who has 'experienced' something, or he will cease to be pious, because the piety of tomorrow will no longer be supported by the prior unanimous, self-evident, public conviction and religious practice of all, which leads to a personal experience and decision, as a consequence of which the religious education customary hitherto can only provide a very secondary conditioning for the religiously institutional."⁵⁴⁴ This "mystagogical hypothesis" postulated by Rahner in the mid-1960s constitutes a "turning point in the history of faith",⁵⁴⁵ inasmuch as evangelization today must "be the necessary initiation and awakening of an internal, personal experience of faith", one which according to Rahner exists even in those "who initially claim to have no experience of, or interest in, faith."⁵⁴⁶

Ultimately, this forms the basis of Rahner's fundamental view of humanity as "hearers of the Word", the theory of God's grace-filled

⁵⁴¹ Pope Francis, Morning meditation in Santa Marta, 19.12.2014, <http://kipa-apic.ch/k261702> (19.12.2014).

⁵⁴² Cf. Sievernich, Michael, "Die 'Pastoralität' des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils", in: Delgado, Mariano/idem (eds.), *Die großen Metaphern des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils: Ihre Bedeutung für heute*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 2013, 35–58.

⁵⁴³ On the "Samaritan Church" in the context of the Council and in the 2007 Aparecida Document cf. Gutiérrez, Gustavo, "Die Spiritualität des Konzilsereignisses", in: Delgado, Mariano/Sievernich, Michael (eds.), op. cit., 405–421.

⁵⁴⁴ Rahner, Karl, "Frömmigkeit früher und heute", in: idem, *Schriften zur Theologie*, (No. 7), Einsiedeln 21971, 11–31, here: 22f.

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. Biser, Eugen, *Die glaubensgeschichtliche Wende: Eine theologische Positionsbestimmung*, Graz 21987, 171–208.

⁵⁴⁶ Rahner, Karl, "Glaubensbegründung heute", in: idem, *Schriften zur Theologie* (No. 12), Einsiedeln 1978, 17–40, here: 25.

self-communication as an expression of his universal will for salvation, which is present from the outset at all times and in all places as a transcendental, non-elitist and non-exclusive "elementary revelation" preceding that of the categorical or incarnational revelation of the Word. It is also at the heart of his theory of a universal "everyday mysticism", which exists as an "anonymous Christian mysticism" or a "seeking Christology"⁵⁴⁷ outside verbalised and institutionalised Christianity, at all times and in all places, especially in the radical act of charity (Mt 25). However, it does not become expressly Christian of its own accord, but only through the reflexive experience which occurs in the wake of an encounter with Christian preaching of the faith – in its twofold dimension as *fides quae*, or convincing dogma, and *fides qua*, or appealing, consummated belief – and takes the form of the Christian range of experience.

As Edward Schillebeeckx, among others, has written, modern man's path leads to Christianity in and through a personal "experience of experiences", but "interpreted in the light of that which the Church imparts to him from its long history of Christian experience", because faith is rooted "in listening". Consequently it is important in the present day to present this history of experience in a very clear and inviting manner and to put it into practice plausibly so that people in this spotlight can use their "human experiences to create a *Christian* experience."⁵⁴⁸

For Rahner it is self-evident that those who have encountered Christ once with sufficient clarity must acknowledge the fact, "as they would otherwise deny their own hope."⁵⁴⁹ As many people as possible should receive the opportunity to explicitly become Christians through proclamation of the Gospel – even though this is not necessary to ensure individual salvation in the broad context of human history. Today we justifiably regret the negative consequences of the exclu-

⁵⁴⁷ On the terms "everyday mysticism" and "anonymous Christian mysticism", cf. Rahner, Karl, "Erfahrung des Heiligen Geistes", in: idem, *Schriften zur Theologie* (No. 13), Einsiedeln 1980, 226–251; on the term "seeking Christology", cf. idem, *Visionen und Prophezeiungen: Zur Mystik und Transzendenz Erfahrung*, ed. by Josef Sudbrack, Freiburg im Breisgau 1989.

⁵⁴⁸ Schillebeeckx, Edward, *Die Auferstehung Jesu als Grund der Erlösung: Zwischenbericht über die Prolegomena zu einer Christologie (Quaestiones Disputatae 78)*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1979, 13–28, here: 17; cf. idem: "Erfahrung und Glaube", in: *Christlicher Glaube in moderner Gesellschaft* (No. 25), Freiburg im Breisgau 1980, 73–116.

⁵⁴⁹ Rahner, Karl, "Glaubensbegründung heute", in: idem, *Schriften zur Theologie* (No. 12), Einsiedeln 1978, 17–40, here: 35f.

sivism of salvation promulgated in Mark's version of the missionary mandate: "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:16). Added only in the second century, it emphasises the redemptive aspects of mission and the urgency of baptism in the shadow of Christian persecution, which was regarded as a sign that the end of the world was nigh.

There is a certain tragic element in the reception of this apodictic chapter in missionary history, taken out of its original context, which resulted in exaggerated missionary zeal and forced baptisms designed to save heathens from damnation. It also embroiled missionaries in deep-seated conflicts: "Were they complicit in the damnation of the non-baptised when evangelising proved unsuccessful? Should non-baptised forebears, particularly revered as ancestors in Asia and Africa, be counted among the damned?"⁵⁵⁰ Against this background many mission catechisms in both the Age of Discovery and the 19th century informed the proselytised that their ancestors were burning in hell.

The missionary mandate and the Pauline doctrine retain their validity in a mystagogical interpretation of evangelization: "... preaching the gospel gives me nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion and I should be in trouble if I failed to do it" (1 Cor 9:16). The Church cannot take leave of her "missionary" essence⁵⁵¹ if she wishes to remain the Church of the Lord. This goes hand in hand with the incarnational nature of divine grace, which is Church-building and seeks to elicit the reflexive self-discovery of anonymous Christianity via religious preaching in order to bring the abundance of Christian life to fruition.⁵⁵² However, before we begin explicit proclamation in order to transform the transcendental "hearer of the Word" into a conscious "hearer of the Word incarnate", we must humbly discover and anamnetically 'unearth' the experience of God common to us all, i.e. discover God's presence in people and cultures. This means respecting "the right of all rational individuals of good will to be heard (and not just

⁵⁵⁰ Sievernich, Michael, *Die Christliche Mission: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Darmstadt 2009, 21.

⁵⁵¹ AG 2.

⁵⁵² Cf. Rahner, Karl, "Anonymes Christentum und Missionsauftrag der Kirche", in: idem, *Schriften zur Theologie* (No. 9), Einsiedeln 1972, 498–515, here: 513ff.

lectured) on the question of God."⁵⁵³ Hence mystagogical evangelization must cultivate the dialogical dimension, as described by the Spanish poet Antonio Machado, for instance: "To conduct a dialogue, / first ask; / and then ... listen carefully."⁵⁵⁴ This applies especially with regard to the poor and afflicted, whose experience gives them a prior right to talk of God, as Gustavo Gutiérrez has stressed.⁵⁵⁵

There is a marked degree of convergence between Rahner's mystagogical theory and the main mystical message of the Second Vatican Council, namely that the Son of God has, by dint of his incarnation, united himself "quasi with all people", as a result of which "grace works invisibly" in all their hearts and "the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one: the divine". Hence the Holy Spirit, in a manner known only to God, offers "every man" the possibility of "being associated with this paschal mystery."⁵⁵⁶ As far as the interpretation of this Council statement is concerned, the ecclesial Magisterium is at pains to reconcile the universality of salvation, Christ's mediation and the Church's necessity for the same salvation in order to stave off missionary defeatism. This explains the statement by John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* (no. 9) that "it is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for salvation", as both these truths help us to understand the one mystery of salvation. The ecclesiological codification of the universalism of salvation also applies to the working of the Holy Spirit. Although the latter, "limited neither by space nor time [...], is at work in the heart of every person", it manifests itself "in a special way in the Church and in her members."⁵⁵⁷

Mystagogical Evangelization following Saint John of the Cross

Mystagogical evangelization can learn much from the great mystics in the history of Christianity – the *doctor mysticus* Saint John

⁵⁵³ Metz, Johann Baptist, "Karl Rahners Ringen um die theologische Ehre des Menschen", in: *Stimmen der Zeit* 212 (1994), 383–392, here: 387.

⁵⁵⁴ Machado, Antonio, *Poesías completas*, Madrid 1989, 626.

⁵⁵⁵ Cf. Delgado, Mariano "Die Theologie Gustavo Gutiérrez' oder Das Recht der Armen auf ihre Gottesrede", in: Gutiérrez, Gustavo, *Nachfolge Jesu und Option für die Armen: Beiträge zu einer Theologie der Befreiung im Zeitalter der Globalisierung (Studien zur christlichen Religions- und Kulturgeschichte 10)*, ed. by Mariano Delgado, Freiburg/Stuttgart 2008, 9–23.

⁵⁵⁶ GS 22.

⁵⁵⁷ *Redemptoris Missio*, No. 28.

of the Cross, for instance. The following principles can be derived from his works.

1. *Each individual has an "experience of God"*: Every person is aware of God, "without knowing how",⁵⁵⁸ for God, like the sun, stands above human beings "ready to communicate himself."⁵⁵⁹ Consequently the initial task of mystagogical evangelization consists, as already stated, in the humble "anamnesis of experience" in order to retrieve the experience of God, which is "deeply embedded"⁵⁶⁰ in the biographies of all individuals – in their tales of hope and woe.
2. *God is the chief agent*: He is the first mystagogue who mysteriously "indoctrinates"⁵⁶¹ people and performs his works in them all "how and whenever he wishes."⁵⁶² God "leads each one along different paths"⁵⁶³, he ceaselessly shapes the deepest recesses of humankind in his image and likeness and thus imparts his spirit and wisdom to them. Thus Isaiah 64:7: "we (are) the clay and you our potter, all of us are the work of your hands." The secret work performed by God on humanity and the various roads each one of us takes to him are compared with a strait in a sea, "whose paths and traces cannot be pursued. The steps and traces which God leaves in people he wishes to bring close to himself by making them great in union with his wisdom also have the quality of being

⁵⁵⁸ Vom Kreuz, Johannes, *Aufstieg auf den Berg Karmel (Vollständige Neuübersetzung. Gesammelte Werke 4)*, ed. by Dobhan, Ulrich/Hense, Elisabeth/Peeters, Elisabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau 1999, 201 (2: 14, 11).

⁵⁵⁹ Vom Kreuz, Johannes, *Die lebendige Liebesflamme (Vollständige Neuübersetzung. Gesammelte Werke 5)*, ed. by Dobhan, Ulrich/Hense, Elisabeth/Peeters, Elisabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau 2000, 149 (B 3,47).

⁵⁶⁰ Gemeinsame Synode der Bistümer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Beschlüsse der Vollversammlung. Offizielle Gesamtausgabe, No. 1 (Unsere Hoffnung, I 1), Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 1978.

⁵⁶¹ Vom Kreuz, Johannes, *Die dunkle Nacht (Vollständige Neuübersetzung. Gesammelte Werke 1)*, ed. by Dobhan, Ulrich/Hense, Elisabeth/Peeters, Elisabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau 1995, 103 (2: 5,1).

⁵⁶² Vom Kreuz, Johannes, *Aufstieg auf den Berg Karmel (Vollständige Neuübersetzung. Gesammelte Werke 4)*, ed. by Dobhan, Ulrich/Hense, Elisabeth/Peeters, Elisabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau 1999, 292 (2: 26,9).

⁵⁶³ Vom Kreuz, Johannes, *Die lebendige Liebesflamme (Vollständige Neuübersetzung. Gesammelte Werke 5)*, ed. by Dobhan, Ulrich/Hense, Elisabeth/Peeters, Elisabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau 2000, 159 (B 3,59).

unknown."⁵⁶⁴ It follows that the second task of mystagogical evangelization is to accompany others prudently and not to stand in the way of God's actions.

3. *Invitation to take the leap of faith*: Christianity starts from the premise of a natural union between God and humanity in the wake of creation and fortified by the incarnation of the Son, in which everyone is a participant, whether they know it or not and whether they live virtuous lives or are great sinners. In mystagogical evangelization it is important to announce the way towards that other union with God which is rendered possible by our conscious devotion to him. The way to achieve this is through faith, which is simultaneously "safe and dark."⁵⁶⁵ It is safe because it knows, through the likeness, how God is and how best to lead us to him. We can only learn from faith that God "is love" (1 Joh 4:16). However, faith is also dark not only because it is "still night" in the "quarrelling church"⁵⁶⁶, i.e. under the conditions of finiteness, but also because it tells of things "we have never seen or heard in themselves or in forms similar to them."⁵⁶⁷ The third task of mystagogical evangelization involves the need to make the God of faith, and faith itself, plausible as a way to fulfil humanity's divine vocation and, in addition, to invite people to risk committing themselves to the "safe and dark" faith, conscious of the fact that the faithful are unable to answer many questions and can only hope that God will answer them one day. These questions include not only that of theodicy, which the dying Romano Guardini saved for his encounter with God,⁵⁶⁸ but also ones like the following: Why did the incarnation of Jesus as self-communication by God take place just 2,000 years ago, although the history of religion goes back much further?

⁵⁶⁴ Vom Kreuz, Johannes, *Die dunkle Nacht (Vollständige Neuübersetzung. Gesammelte Werke 1)*, ed. by Dobhan, Ulrich/Hense, Elisabeth/Peeters, Elisabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau 1995, 170 (2: 17,8).

⁵⁶⁵ Vom Kreuz, Johannes, *Aufstieg auf den Berg Karmel (Vollständige Neuübersetzung. Gesammelte Werke 4)*, ed. by Dobhan, Ulrich/Hense, Elisabeth/Peeters, Elisabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau 1999, 127 (2: 3,1).

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 130 (2: 3,5).

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., 129 (2: 3,3).

⁵⁶⁸ "Warum, Gott, zum Heil die fürchterlichen Umwege, das Leid der Unschuldigen, die Schuld?" Biser, Eugen, *Interpretation und Veränderung*, Paderborn 1979, 133.

Why did this occur, moreover, in a dialectic of revelation and concealment, as a result of which it was not immediately obvious to people? Why, for centuries, did so many nations have no knowledge of the story of revelation in the Old and New Testaments? Why have Christians remained a minority in the history of religion to date? Why, even “after Christ”, do new religions emerge claiming to succeed Christianity?

4. *Focusing solely on Christ:* As the self-communication and “final Word” of God – as the “mediator and the fullness of all revelation”⁵⁶⁹ – he is “the” historically objective path to knowledge of and union with God. In a remarkable text Saint John of the Cross has God the Father tell us via his Son to focus our gaze “solely on him”, since in him he has “told and revealed everything to us [...], for he is my entire locution and response, vision and revelation.”⁵⁷⁰ According to Col 2:3, it is in Christ “that all the jewels of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.” For Saint John of the Cross this means that “we must then dig deeply in Christ. He is like a rich mine with many pockets containing treasures: however deep we dig, we will never find their end or their limit. Indeed, in every pocket new seams of fresh riches are discovered on all sides.” The treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God are hidden so deeply in Christ “that for the holy scholars and holy people the majority remains to be said and understood, as is the case with so many secrets and miracles they have revealed or understood in this life.”⁵⁷¹ If the Church, therefore, immerses herself in Christ and correctly interprets the signs of the times, she can continue to make new discoveries and renew herself in the sense of a living heritage. The question at the heart of Church reform is, in essence, whether we comprehend the Church as the tangible wider distinction of the substance or the treasure of its beginnings

⁵⁶⁹ *Dei Verbum* 2.

⁵⁷⁰ Vom Kreuz, Johannes, *Aufstieg auf den Berg Karmel (Vollständige Neuübersetzung. Gesammelte Werke 4)*, ed. by Dobhan, Ulrich/Hense, Elisabeth/Peeters, Elisabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau 1999, 262 (2: 22,5).

⁵⁷¹ Vom Kreuz, Johannes, *Der geistliche Gesang (Vollständige Neuübersetzung. Gesammelte Werke 3)*, ed. by Dobhan, Ulrich/Hense, Elisabeth/Peeters, Elisabeth, Freiburg im Breisgau 1997, 226 (A 36,3).

or whether we are, in the light of the signs of the times, entitled to initiate new developments, because “the Church is free” and the Holy Spirit propels it forwards. This is what Karl Rahner believed and Pope Francis underlined in his homily during the Holy Mass in Santa Marta on 6 July 2013, when he made reference to the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-35) and the question of circumcision.⁵⁷² The fourth task of mystagogical evangelization is to lead people to Christ and enforce the precept of *solus Christus* as the way towards Church reform, which should always work in a spirit of service to evangelization.

5. *Promoting joy in the Church:* The Church has conveyed the principles of faith and, as pointed out earlier, only faith can help us to interpret the gist of God’s self-communication in Jesus Christ. Evangelization along the lines of “Jesus yes, Church no” would contradict the spirit of mystagogical evangelization. On the contrary, the fifth task of the latter is to arouse the mystics’ *Sentire ecclesiam*, which combines “joy in the Church”⁵⁷³ with constructive Church criticism and ecclesiastical reform,⁵⁷⁴ so that the Church, as the Bride of the Lord, becomes more Christ-like. In other words, only an evangelised Church which listens to the Word of God can become an evangelising Church. As a result evangelization must start with the Church.

Outlook

The mystics are those who accepted Jesus’ invitation to “come to me” and who found in him peace, security, an easy yoke and a light burden. Hence they are always ready to proclaim the “sweet and comforting joy of evangelising”, in which Pope Francis invites the Church of today to join. “Mystagogical evangelization” in the spirit of mysticism attempts to put forward both rational and emotional

⁵⁷² Cf. the German translation of extracts of the sermon in: *L’Osservatore Romano* of 7 July 2013, <http://www.osservatoreromano.va/dt> (19.12.2014).

⁵⁷³ Kasper, Walter, *Katholische Kirche: Wesen – Wirklichkeit – Sendung*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 2011, 48.

⁵⁷⁴ On Church criticism of the mystics cf. Delgado, Mariano/Fuchs, Gotthard (eds.), *Die Kirchenkritik der Mystiker: Prophetie aus Gottese Erfahrung*, 3 volumes, Studien zur christlichen Religions- und Kulturgeschichte (No. 2–4), Freiburg im Breisgau/Stuttgart 1994–1995.

arguments to motivate people to accept Jesus' invitation. For in today's society, characterised as it is by religious diversification and freedom, an inner link with Jesus is of particular importance. Ultimately mystagogical evangelization is also an invitation to personally answer Jesus' question to the disciples ("What about you, do you also wish to go away?") in the words of Simon Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life."⁵⁷⁵

Conversion as Goal of Christian Mission in Asia

Peter C. Phan

There is no gainsaying that early Christian missions were almost exclusively aimed at producing "conversions." Seeking to fulfill the "Great Commission" (Mat 28:19-20) and "constrained by the love for Christ" (2 Cor 5:14), members of religious orders, under the patronage of the Portuguese and Spanish crowns, sailed from Europe to foreign lands to save the souls of "heathens." This was true also of Asia, if we leave aside the missions of the Church of the East—misleadingly named Nestorians—in India and China. Indeed, the paramount measure of the success of the missionary enterprise is the number of baptisms administered. In the Jesuit Church of the Gesù in Rome, in the Saint Francis Xavier Chapel in the right transept, there is displayed in a reliquary above the altar the saint's right arm to honor the fact that he has baptized some 300,000 people, an unimaginable number given the brief span of his missionary work.

Part of the reasons for this focus on conversion was, as David J. Bosch has documented, the "individualization" and "ecclesiasticization" of salvation, what Bosch terms the "medieval Roman Catholic missionary paradigm."⁵⁷⁶ This paradigm, which insists on conversion, that is, renouncing previous beliefs if any, receiving baptism, and joining the church, as the indispensable condition for salvation, was influential not only among Roman Catholic missionaries but also Protestants who came to Asia in the nineteenth century, though the latter's missionary methods were more inspired by the Enlightenment ideals and values.

Enormous changes have of course transpired since the middle of the twentieth century in both the theology and practice of missions. In the Catholic Church, Vatican II, especially through its documents

⁵⁷⁶ Bosch, David, J., *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll 1991, 214–38.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. Delgado, Mariano, "Herr, zu wem sollen wir gehen?", in: Röser, Johannes (ed.): *Christsein 2001: Erwartungen und Hoffnungen an der Schwelle zum neuen Jahrtausend*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1998, 188–190.

on the church (*Lumen Gentium*), mission (*Ad Gentes*), non-Christian religions (*Nostra Aetate*), and the church in the modern world (*Gaudium et Spes*), has exercised a huge impact on the re-envisioning of Christian missions. Seismic changes have also occurred in the World Council of Churches, especially with the establishment of the sub-unit “Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies” in 1971, in addition to its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. The Evangelical/Pentecostal Churches, with their phenomenal global expansion, reinvigorate the sense of the necessity and urgency of evangelism, and more specifically, conversion.

As to be expected, new trends in missiology have caused anxieties among ecclesiastical guardians of orthodoxy. Among Roman Catholics, there were in the 1980s rumblings of discontent against the tendency, allegedly prevalent among Asian theologians, to abandon evangelization, especially *missio ad gentes* [mission to non-Christians], in favor of a triple dialogue: dialogue with the poor (liberation), dialogue with cultures (inculturation), and especially, dialogue with religions (interreligious dialogue). Particularly troublesome, in the eyes of the Roman magisterium, is the third form of dialogue since it seems to reject conversion as the goal of missions.

As a response to new and seemingly dangerous directions in missiology, Pope (now Saint) John Paul II issued in 1990 *Redemptoris Missio: An Encyclical Letter on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate*, in which he laments that “missionary activity specifically directed ‘to the nations’ (*ad gentes*) appears to be waning”⁵⁷⁷. To booster this type of evangelization, John Paul II vigorously affirms not only the necessity but also the urgency of proclaiming Christ to those who do not yet know him. The pope provides an expansive definition of the contemporary “*gentes*,” including not only vast geographical areas that are still to be evangelized (he singles out Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania), but also the new social worlds and phenomena (such as urbanization, youth, and migration) and cultural sectors (such as social media, peace-making movements, development and liberation of peoples, human rights of individuals and peoples, especially minorities, the advancement of women and

⁵⁷⁷ John Paul II., Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* about the permanent validity of the missionary order, No. 33 (7.12.1990), http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/de/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html (No. 2) (16.06.2015).

children, and ecological protection⁵⁷⁸. In sum, John Paul II notes that “the mission *ad gentes* [is] still in its infancy”⁵⁷⁹, and that “particularly in Asia, toward 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”⁵⁸⁰.

Conversion and Baptism as the Goals of *Missio ad Gentes* in Recent Official Teaching

John Paul II’s expansive definition of the *gentes* to whom Christian missions must be directed today has the undeniable merit of “contemporizing” the old and now theologically discredited notion of *gentes* as “heathen” or “pagan.” Not that the pope diminishes the necessity of conversion and baptism. Far from it. Indeed, he devotes two lengthy paragraphs on this theme⁵⁸¹. He states categorically: “The proclamation of the word of God has *Christian conversion* as its aim: a complete and sincere adherence to Christ and his Gospel through faith”⁵⁸². He goes on to lament: “Nowadays the call to conversion which missionaries address to non-Christians is put into question or passed over in silence. It is seen as an act of ‘proselytizing’; it is claimed that it is enough to help people to become more human or more faithful to their own religions, that it is enough to build communities capable of working for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity”⁵⁸³. Over again this theology of mission, John Paul II reasserts 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 can live out in its fullness his or her proper calling”⁵⁸⁴.

Moreover, John Paul explicitly links conversion to receiving baptism: “Conversion to Christ is joined to Baptism,” and this for three reasons: First, it is the church’s traditional practice; second, it is the will of Christ himself; and third, baptism gives the fullness of new life in

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 37.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 40.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 37.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, No. 46f.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, No. 46.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Christ⁵⁸⁵. In fact, baptism, the pope points out, is not simply “a seal of conversion, a kind of external sign indicating conversion and attesting to it. Rather, it 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”⁵⁸⁶. Again, the pope laments that “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”⁵⁸⁷.

John Paul’s attempt to update the new forms of the “Areopagus” as targets of *missio ad gentes*, however useful pastorally, carries with it a hefty price. Assuming for the sake of argument that what John Paul II says about conversion and baptism as the goals of *missio ad gentes* is correct, it is hard to see how they can be applied, without a substantial modification and even total evacuation of their content, to the wider categories the pope includes under the contemporary *gentes* as listed above. How can, and indeed should we, “convert” and “baptize” urbanization, youth, migration, social media, peace-making movements, development and liberation of peoples, human rights of individuals and peoples, especially minorities, the advancement of women and children, and ecological protection? Will such a conversionist and baptizing enterprise not bring about a new form of Christendom? Should these goals be the (hidden) agenda of *missio ad gentes*? This is not to deny that Christian values should be brought to bear on these areas of contemporary life. But it makes little theological sense to speak of “converting” and “baptizing” them. Were we to do so, the price is intolerably high: We should not be surprised if the people who engage in the various economic, social, political, and cultural activities do not want to have anything to do with Christianity and the Catholic Church.

Clearly, therefore, conversion and baptism as goals of *missio ad gentes* are exclusively directed to the followers of non-Christian religions and non-believers. But should mission to these *gentes* aim at their conversion and baptism, as John Paul II says? If so, we are confronted with an unpalatable choice. Either we declare in all

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., No. 47.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

honesty at the very outset of our missions to the *gentes*, as we surely must, that our real purpose is to convert them to the Christian faith and baptize them into the church. But can we then reasonably expect that the followers of other religions and non-believers will give us a sympathetic hearing? Or, in a ruse to obtain *captatio benevolentiae*, we dissimulate our intention under the guise of “dialogue” or activities for social welfare. In sum, the doctrine that the goals of *missio ad gentes* are conversion and baptism ends up in a theological quandary.

Missio Ad Gentes: What For and How?

To overcome this quagmire and to reconceptualize the goals of *missio ad gentes* as traditionally understood, appeal is made to several recent theological developments. First, a deeper appreciation of God’s efficacious will to save all human beings, which opens up unlimited horizons to God’s saving grace. Secondly, a greater awareness of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit and divine grace outside the visible and institutional boundaries of the church, which leads to the affirmation of the possibility of salvation of people outside the church and a more inclusive reinterpretation of the axiom *extra ecclesiam, nulla salus*. Thirdly, a clearer realization of the continuing validity of the God’s covenant with Israel and the interdependence between Judaism and Christianity, which makes Christian mission to the Jews theologically questionable. Fourthly, a sharper awareness of the Jewishness (and not simply the “human nature”) of Jesus, which on the one hand ties Christianity to Judaism more intimately, and on the other hand reveals the historical, cultural, and religious limitations of Jesus as the universal savior and of his teaching. Fifthly, a better knowledge, both scholarly and experiential, of non-Christian religions, which unveils the spiritual riches of both their teachings and practices from which Christians can and should learn precisely to be better Christians. Finally, a growing awareness that no religion, Christian and otherwise, can claim to possess a complete and perfect understanding of the divine, and no religious organization, even if it pretends to possess God’s final revelation, can claim to practice perfectly the truths it confesses, which excludes any claim of religious superiority and commends mutual learning and correction among religions.

These theological principles, to cite just the most important ones, significantly mitigate the necessity and urgency of *missio ad gentes*

to the extent that *it is geared toward conversion and baptism*. As mentioned above, Christian missions in the “medieval Roman Catholic paradigm” were governed by the twin principles of individualization and ecclesiasticization of salvation. The six principles enumerated above combine to undermine the theological foundation of this conversion-baptism paradigm of missions. No longer is *missio ad gentes* undertaken with the fear that without conversion and baptism the *gentes*—pagans and heathens—will be condemned to eternal hell, and that without Christian revelation, non-Christian religions and their followers will remain mired in ignorance, superstitions, and immoral practices. History has shown that Christianity and Christians are no more immune from these errors and sins than non-Christian religions and their followers, and, more significantly, that non-Christians are no less marked by holiness than Christians.

This missiology by no means abolishes *missio ad gentes*, as the Roman magisterium alleges; it only argues that *missio ad gentes*, while still retaining its necessity, should not be geared toward conversion and baptism as its goals, whether the *gentes* is understood to refer to non-Christians exclusively or also to the new social areas mentioned by John Paul II. On the contrary, its goals must be subordinated to the fundamental reality which is the purpose of Jesus’ ministry itself, namely, the kingdom or rule of God. Of course, there is an intrinsic unity between the reign of God and the church, but the one must not be identified with the other. Indeed, the reign of God is much wider than the church and is found even where the church does not exist, at times even in spite of the church, especially when the church fails to live up its ideals. The church is nothing more than the (more or less credible) sign and instrument (“sacrament”) of the reign of God to which it must be subordinated as to its *telos*. No doubt the grace that is present and active outside the church in non-Christian religions and among their followers as well as among non-believers is somehow related to the church but it needs not always lead non-Christians and non-believers to conversion and actual baptism, especially when for various reasons, both objective and subjective, either the church’s message or its communication is not persuasive.

In this religiously complex and multifaceted context, what must be the tasks and objectives of Christian missions? Of course, the answer depends largely on how certain key New Testament texts regarding

the so-called missionary mandate are selected and interpreted, such as Matthew 28:19-10, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:47-48. Given the six theological principles mentioned above, it is clear that, however they are interpreted, they can no longer be taken to mean that the Good News must be preached everywhere and to all nations to secure conversion and baptism otherwise the “gentiles” will be damned. Thus, they cannot be used to justify the urgency and necessity of conversion and baptism *as the goals of Christian missions*.

Furthermore, the *gentes* can no longer be seen merely as objects and recipients of evangelization. Rather they are subjects of their own evangelization, not only in the sense that they must respond actively, freely, and out of love, and not out of fear of damnation or out of desire for material or spiritual gains, but also in the sense that they determine the goal (“what for”) and the manner (“how”) of evangelization.

Before expounding a new interpretation of *missio ad gentes*, especially in Asia, it is helpful to acknowledge a stubborn fact, that is, despite centuries of Christian missions, Christianity in Asia still remains a very small minority. Except in the Philippines, Timor-Leste, South Korea, and Vietnam, Christians make up only a tiny percentage of the population, especially in the three most populous countries, namely, China, India, and Indonesia. Though there are breathless reports about a vast number of conversions, especially in the Evangelical/Pentecostal Churches in China, mass conversions of Asians to Christianity are, barring an act of divine intervention, extremely unlikely. The chief reason for this dearth of conversions is that Asia already has several religions of its own, most of which are devoutly practiced and even are engaged in missions on a global scale. This prognosis must not of course discourage evangelization nor dampen missionary zeal. But it is important to take note of it so that missionaries will not entertain unrealistic expectations, and the lack of conversion and baptism will not be taken as evidence of the failure of Christian missions.

In light of the fact the *gentes* determine the what-for and the how of *missio ad gentes*, I propose that the preposition *ad* be joined with two other prepositions: *inter* (*missio inter gentes*) and *cum* (*missio cum gentibus*). The preposition *inter* in the phrase *missio inter gentes* means *among* or *in the midst of*, so that *missio inter gentes* means *reciprocal* mission between the missionaries and the

gentes. In other words, mission is not a one-way activity, done by the missionaries to the *gentes*, but rather a two-way activity done by the *gentes* to the missionaries and by the missionaries to the *gentes*. It is therefore a *mutual* mission: Both the missionaries and the *gentes* “do mission” (as agents) and “are missioned” (as recipients). Furthermore, in addition to reciprocity between missionaries and the *gentes*, mission is performed *together*, so that *missio inter gentes* is also *missio cum gentibus*, which implies that there is a common cause to which both the missionaries and the *gentes* are committed and for which they labor together. I now explore these two aspects of *missio inter gentes* and *cum gentibus* in some detail, with special reference to Asia.

***Missio inter gentes* as Mutual Evangelization**

It is a widely common experience of missions in Asia (and of course also elsewhere) that in evangelizing the *gentes*, missionaries themselves are evangelized by them, and indeed, that the effectiveness of their mission work depends on the extent to which they are open to being evangelized by the *gentes*. By this I do not refer to the banal fact, already alluded to above, that there are *gentes* who are much wiser and holier, even by Christian standards, than the missionaries themselves, or that there are certain teachings and official actions by the church as an institution that the *gentes* deem immoral and therefore find no compelling reasons to join the church. I refer rather to the fact that in not a few areas of Christian life there are teachings and practices of the religions and cultures of the *gentes* that missionaries would do well to learn and practice in order to be a better Christian and missionary. Examples abound in areas such as sacred books, ethics, prayer, spirituality, and monasticism. This fact was recognized by luminaries such as Matteo Ricci in China, Roberto de Nobili in India, Alexandre de Rhodes in Vietnam, and countless other, lesser-known but no less effective, missionaries, both women and men, in the distant past as well as in the present.

Recognizing and celebrating the goodness and holiness of people outside one’s religious tradition and culture is not an invention of progressive missionaries. It was practiced by Jesus himself. Jesus praises the Samaritan leper who alone among the ten lepers whom he has cured comes back to thank him (Lk 17:17-18). He also holds

up a Samaritan as the model of love of neighbor (Lk10:33-35). Jesus is said to have been astonished or amazed by “such great faith” of the Roman centurion (Mat 8:10). That Jesus was—and did not pretend to be—“astonished” (*ethaumasen*) implies that the existence of such faith in a *goy* was something he did not expect or know. Thus, in a real sense, the Roman centurion’s faith-filled behavior revealed to Jesus how universal God’s saving grace is. Even more tellingly, the “great faith” (Mat 15:28) and perseverance of the Canaanite woman, in spite of Jesus’ curt, even insulting, refusal to grant her request for her daughter’s healing, and her humble retort that even “the dogs [a Jewish term of abuse for the *goyim*, which Jesus himself used] eat the crumbs that fall under their masters’ table” (Mat 15:27) succeeded in changing Jesus’ understanding that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Here, it is Jesus’ ethnocentric understanding of his ministry that was changed and enlarged by a Gentile, and a woman to boot!

In their work, in light of Jesus’ own practice, missionaries in Asia must be willing and able to open their minds and hearts to be changed intellectually and transformed spiritually by the “reverse mission” of the *gentes Asiae* to them. Admittedly, they are severely hampered in this by the fact that the traditional descriptions of mission as “teaching,” “proclamation,” “evangelization,” and “conversion” that form part of the theology of *missio ad gentes* do not predispose missionaries to adopting a posture of listening, learning, silence, and humility. Indeed, if one comes to a foreign place with the conviction that only one’s church possesses all the truths in all their fullness; that one’s primary task is to “proclaim” these truths, as if standing at a pulpit or behind a lectern, with a megaphone in hand, and “teach” the religiously ignorant and morally perverse *gentes* like an all-knowing professor; and that the objective of one’s mission is to “convert” them, would it come as a surprise that the *gentes* are seen as nothing but targets of one’s mission (as implied by the preposition *ad*) and that success in mission is measured by the number of baptisms, as victory in a war is demonstrated by the number of enemy casualties and cities destroyed or occupied? Would it be strange that the *gentes Asiae* will look upon Christian mission as a neo-colonialist attempt to conquer and destroy their religions? How can we plausibly defend ourselves against this charge if in fact the goal of our mission is to convert the followers of other religions to Christianity?

In contrast, suppose, as a thought experiment, we no longer use terms that imply superior knowledge and moral excellence such as “evangelize,” “convert,” “teach,” and “proclaim” to describe the objectives and tasks of Christian mission, still so prevalent in magisterial documents as a litmus test for orthodoxy? What would missionaries do and how would they act if they come to Asia not as proclaimers and teachers and converters and evangelizers but as guests—and uninvited, and even unwanted, guests at that—who totally depend for their physical and spiritual survival on the kindness and generosity of the *gentes* as hosts? What if we bring our Christian faith not as something to be proclaimed and taught in order to evangelize and convert the Asian *gentes* but as a *humble gift*, as a token of our gratitude for their hospitality, which our hosts have the perfect right to accept or refuse, use or not use? What if, as becoming of grateful guests, we do not insist that they abandon their beliefs and adopt ours, reject their moral norms and follow ours, condemn their rituals and practice ours, disown their religions and be baptized into ours? Suppose, with a sincere and humble heart, *we let ourselves be “taught,” “proclaimed,” “evangelized,” and “converted”* by our hosts’ beliefs, moral values, modes of worship, and religious affiliations because in fact there are things that are of great, or even greater, truth and value in these than in ours.

Perhaps, someday, after we have known and trusted each other as friends, we can play host in our turn and invite the *gentes* as honored guests into our spiritual home, which we call ‘Church.’ Then we can proudly display its splendor and *gemütlichkeit*, its welcoming atmosphere and warm hospitality. Then we can talk to them about our beliefs and practices; tell them our family history, from the ancient Hebrews to Jesus to us as Jesus’ disciples, with our warts and all; and invite them to create with us a larger family made up of theirs and ours. But then we must reckon with the likelihood that as guests, they too will bring us their own gifts of faith and spiritual practices, which may very well be of great use to us, or which we even may find that we are in need of very badly. In this way, our mission is no longer *ad gentes* but *inter gentes*. The “evangelizers” become “evangelized” and the “evangelized” become “evangelizers,” in mutual respect and appreciation, in open honesty and genuine friendship, correcting one another when necessary, and always reaching out to greater truth and goodness.

Missio cum gentibus: The “Reign of God” as Our Shared Goal and Destiny

The above reflections on *missio inter gentes Asiae* may appear to some to deny the possibility and necessity of mission. In fact, however, what is denied is only that conversion, baptism and incorporation into the church should be conceived as the goal and fulfillment of mission. In other words, what is denied is not the possibility and necessity of mission as such. Rather it is denied that mission should be undertaken simply as *missio ad gentes*, and not primarily as *missio inter gentes*. What mission should intend to do is not simply making the *gentes* into members of our presently existing church, which with all its current beliefs, practices and institutions, is still too small and narrow in structural design, too limited and provincial (i.e., Western and Roman) in theological outlook, too imperfect and even sinful in institutional leadership, to offer the *gentes* a liveable home.

Before we invite our guests into our home, even for a short visit, let alone for a permanent stay, we must, as good hosts, clean and spruce it up, even remodel and rebuild it, to meet their special needs and to make them feel welcome and comfortable. So too must we do with the church, and with the help with the *gentes*. It is also a common practice for the host to ask the guests in advance what kinds of food and drink they cannot eat and which ones they favor. So also must we do when we invite the *gentes* to come to (or into) the church, our spiritual home: Are there anything they find objectionable or harmful, anything to be abandoned, modified, and improved? In this way, our church will truly become the house of God for all peoples. Only in this way, I submit, the very goals of *missio ad gentes* will be achieved, and even more effectively, by *missio inter gentes*. Of course, it is not guaranteed that the *number* of conversions will become thereby bigger, but no doubt the quality, that is, the depth and genuineness of faith will grow, and not least, the church itself will become truly “church,” more conformable to what God intends it to be.

Implicit in this theology of mission is the notion that mission is a collaborative enterprise in which both Christian missionaries and the *gentes Asiae* are engaged and which they help each other carry out. It may be objected that it is naive to expect the *gentes Asiae* to contribute to Christian missions. This point is well taken only if mission is conceived as *missio ad gentes*. Obviously the Asian *gentes* can hardly be expected to help missionaries expand the church. Nor

should they be blamed for their suspicion and rejection of Christian missions that are geared toward what they perceive as a destruction of their religions by converting them to Christianity, notwithstanding the Catholic Church's official rhetoric about respecting the "elements of truth and grace" that may be found in their religions.

The situation would be completely different if mission is undertaken as *missio inter gentes*, since in this case the ultimate goal of mission and the final destiny of humanity are not the expansion of the church but the realization of the kingdom of God (*basileia tou theou*), however this reality is understood and named in various religious traditions. To make the kingdom (or reign or rule) of God (or heaven)—and not the church—the ultimate goal of mission is no theological innovation. On the contrary, it represents fidelity to Jesus since there is no doubt that Jesus himself made the reign of God, and not the church, the center of his life and ministry. It is this total commitment to the reign of God that allowed Jesus to recognize that a man who drove out demons in his name, even though he was not one of his disciples ("not one of us," said John), was not against him but for him and should not be stopped from doing it, since driving out demons was part of working for the kingdom of God (Mk 9:38-40). Interestingly, there is no record that the exorcizing man ever knew Jesus personally, or that Jesus ever attempted to make him his disciple or required him to be one. It is thus possible (and indeed a fact) that a person can do something in the name of Jesus without knowing him or being his follower.

There is another reason why in Asia *missio inter gentes* must also be *missio cum gentibus*. I mentioned above both the tiny percentage of Christians among the Asian population and the unlikelihood of mass conversion of the Asian *gentes* to Christianity. This means that from a practical point of view Christians in Asia will never be able to effectively work for God's reign of justice, peace and reconciliation without the collaboration of the *gentes*. They simply cannot "go it alone." This is especially true in socialist-communist countries (such as China, Vietnam, and North Korea) and in countries with Muslim majority (such as Indonesia and Malaysia), where Christianity lacks necessary resources and encounters severe restrictions to its missions. Thus, while the *gentes* cannot and must not be expected to work for the expansion of the church, they can be encouraged to work with Christians for the reign of God—however this reality is

named, since Buddhists, for instance, do not even mention God— by promoting justice and peace, reconciliation and love. Indeed, in many places of Asia, they have in fact done so. Once again, it is to be noted that in *missio inter gentes* and *cum gentibus*, the goals of Christian missions can be amply fulfilled, without the *gentes* being converted, baptized, and incorporated into the church. Of course, there is no opposition between church and the reign of God. In fact, the former is a sign and instrument, or sacrament, or symbol of the latter. But it would be idolatrous to identify the church with the reign of God. It is the difference between the two that enables the *gentes Asiae* to work for the kingdom of God and yet not belonging to the church, *reapse* [in fact] or *in voto* [in desire].

In conclusion, the reign of God calls for missions more urgently today than ever. But its effective presence outside the visible confines of the church, among the *gentiles* in their lives, cultures, and religions, turns *missio ad gentes*, whose goals are traditional understood as conversion and baptism, into *missio inter gentes* and *missio cum gentibus*, in which Christians and *gentiles* are both evangelizers and evangelized, in mutual mission and conversion.

“Entering and Going Forth” Approaches to Christian Evangelization

Anne Béatrice Faye

“The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself.” Cf. Pope Francis, EG, no. 27

Certain events with a claim to universality sometimes have an ambiguous significance related not to an imaginary, elusive universe, but to specific eras, familiar places, and real men and women. The Second Vatican Council⁵⁸⁸ was one such event which had a dramatic impact on the pastoral plan of the Church in the modern world and especially its constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. There can be no denying that the context of evangelization has altered significantly. The world has changed and so has the Church’s place in it. Fifty years on, this document merits attentive reading not just on account of its anniversary, but also because it greatly influenced the Church’s method of evangelization and approach to pastoral and institutional tensions.

“...during the Second Vatican Council there was an emotional tension as we faced the common task of making the truth and beauty of the faith shine out in our time, without sacrificing it to the demands of the present or leaving it tied to the past: the eternal presence of God resounds in the faith, transcending time, yet it can only be welcomed by us in our own unrepeatable today.”⁵⁸⁹ As at

⁵⁸⁸ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 39–42.

⁵⁸⁹ Homily delivered by Pope Francis on 11 October 2012, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/de/homilies/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20121011_anno-fede.html (03.06.2015).

other important moments in its history, the Church senses the need for an attentive, contemplative gaze in order to evangelise and read the signs of God's divine presence in our world. These signs are also essential to effective witness.⁵⁹⁰

In the context of globalisation these signs are remarkable in that they are unique. This has to do with the fact that a great deal of modern-day culture holds out a vision which weakens the social fabric. Many religious and human values are being eclipsed by secularism. The emigration and immigration of large numbers of individuals ends with their cultural, social and religious dislocation. The Church is by no means indifferent to all the suffering this entails – quite the contrary.

Such is the background to the dynamic “of entering and going forth”, which I propose as a Christian approach to contemporary evangelization. While this phrase captures the method and experience of living out the mission in all its fullness, it also represents a missionary choice capable of transforming everything. It summarises the pastoral plan outlined by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*.⁵⁹¹ It is the “drive to go forth and give, to go out from ourselves, to keep pressing forward in our sowing of the good seed.”⁵⁹² “Entering and going forth” is the response to the calling into question of the expression “transmission of the faith”; it is the criterion, the practice of successfully imparting everything we can to our world for the good of all. At the same time it determines the rhythm of change and the requirements of witness, inspiring in pastoral agents a constant desire to “go forth” in a missionary sense and enabling all Christians to go forth from their comfort zones and make their way to all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel. Ultimately these are “the customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules,

⁵⁹⁰ Pope Francis, Apostolic letter *Evangelii Gaudium* about the promulgation of the Gospel in the world of today (announcement of the apostolic seat (No. 71)), ed. by the Secretariat of the German Episcopal Conference, Bonn 2013.

⁵⁹¹ First and foremost, the text is an Apostolic Exhortation and, as such, possesses a unique style and a language all its own. The tone is almost familiar. The Pope avails himself of a language which is both serene and exudes warmth, absolutely consistent with the style he employed during the initial months of his pontificate. When reading his words, we have the sense of encountering a minister engaged in a meditative conversation with his fellow believers. He not only stamps the text with his own pastoral experiences, but also invites us to welcome the grace-filled moment currently being lived out within the Church.

⁵⁹² *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 21.

language and structures (which) can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world.”⁵⁹³

In what follows I will outline three (3) experiences which convey the essence of my contribution. The first relates to the “transmission of the faith” in the context of the Church in Africa with its manifold tensions. What could “entering and going forth” mean to it? The second concerns the rhythm of change and the witness required of all Christians. The third addresses the saving power of the poor. Each of these experiences prompts us to listen to the words of Pope Francis, who “points out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come, and for all the Christian faithful.”⁵⁹⁴

Tension between traditional practices in Africa and faith in Jesus Christ

The discussions during the synod on New Evangelization highlighted its dual resonance.

Secularisation and the dethronement of God in the life of Christians are a cause of concern in the Western Churches. In a profoundly changing world, where life proceeds as if God were non-existent and a deep inner void is opening up, we must boldly talk of God, reawaken a longing for God in people's hearts and revive the missionary conscience of the baptised. Evangelization, the transmission of the faith, passes first and foremost from person to person. Every baptised individual is capable of bearing witness to his or her loved ones, neighbours and colleagues of the humble joy of knowing Christ. This presents a real difficulty. Many believers adopt a relativist approach. Faith is reduced to no more than a personal option. What is going on in the other churches in Africa, Latin America and Asia?

In the churches in Africa, Latin America and Asia we witness popular piety, campaigns conducted by sects, esoteric tendencies, etc.; in other words, a disturbed relationship with God. In Africa this tension is apparent at two levels.

On the one hand, Christianity remains for many Africans “an alien religion”, since a part of their being and their lives is not reflected in the Gospel. So in the practice of their beliefs they are torn between

⁵⁹³ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 27.

⁵⁹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 1.

traditional practices and customs and their faith in Jesus Christ. This “dual allegiance” to Christianity and to traditional African religions presents a real challenge. The fundamental, recurrent issue is how to impart a sense of the divine, of God, to Africans through elements of their own cultures.

If every culture includes values and positive role models capable of enriching the way in which the Gospel is proclaimed, understood and lived, it is essential for the Church in Africa to help people discover the fullness of Gospel values through profound catechesis and inculturation.⁵⁹⁵ Inculturation paves the way for the Church to induct people with their diverse cultures into its own community. Thus we can share the conviction that Christianity represents an opportunity for Africa, just as Africa constitutes an opportunity for Christianity.

This brings us on to the second aspect, the fact that the relationship between culture and faith is invariably endowed with a dual meaning. “If faith has a role to play in respect of culture, it is equally true that the latter has a task to fulfil as far as faith is concerned, and that it by no means limits itself to providing passive support or a critical context. Culture may well represent an opportunity.”⁵⁹⁶ After all, the Church rubs shoulders every day with followers of traditional African religions. These religions, which invoke ancestors and offer a form of mediation between man and the Immanent, constitute the fertile cultural and spiritual soil from which the majority of converted Christians spring and with which they remain in daily contact.

The Second Vatican Council “exhorts her sons that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognise, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.”⁵⁹⁷ If religions seek to influence cultures, one could equally state that cultures provoke religions, sometimes destabilising them and fre-

⁵⁹⁵ Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* about the Church in Afrika in the duty of the reconciliation, the justice and the freedom, 19.November 2011, No. 93, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/de/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus.html (16.06.2015).

⁵⁹⁶ Bourgeois, Henri, *Foi et Cultures: Quelles manières de vivre et quelles manières de croire aujourd'hui?*, Paris 1991, 30.

⁵⁹⁷ *Nostra Aetate*, No. 2; cf. Propositiones 3,13.

quently leading them to reform or redefine themselves. The situation with popular culture is no different.

Popular culture has something to say to the faith established in its midst. It urges that the religious experience, regardless of the religion in question, should not be identified with that of the clergy or of believers from academic or professional backgrounds. Ultimately, religious faith practised at grassroots level can inject an element of relativity.⁵⁹⁸ The forms taken by popular piety are incarnate because they are born of the embodiment of the Christian faith within a popular culture.

It is important to understand the necessary link which exists in Africa between professed faith and popular culture with respect to the effective development of the latter. An evangelised popular culture comprises values of faith and solidarity which can promote the development of a fairer and more devout society, one furnished with a wisdom that should be perceived and gratefully acknowledged. “Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid.”⁵⁹⁹

Listening to the words of Pope Francis

Taking up the teachings of Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Francis confirms the central position occupied by Jesus Christ, the first evangeliser, who calls each one of us to join him in the work of salvation. This call is preceded, however, by the encounter with Jesus Christ the merciful Saviour, who invariably plays a key role and brings immeasurable joy. The “joy” to which Pope Francis refers is not some indefinite psychological emotion; it is the joy of the person who has undergone a resurrection, the joy of salvation encountered and experienced in a life of grace, the joy of the mercy which pardons our sins and, if we so wish, the joy of the light which faith in Jesus Christ casts upon our personal, familial, communal and social lives. This joy punctuates and accompanies all Christian witness on the path to evangelization.

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. Bourgeois, Henri, op. cit., 56–57, 89.

⁵⁹⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 187.

“Though it is true that this mission demands great generosity on our part, it would be wrong to see it as a heroic individual undertaking, for it is first and foremost the Lord’s work, surpassing anything which we can see and understand.” He is “the very first and the greatest evangeliser.”⁶⁰⁰ In all forms of evangelization primacy rests invariably with God, who has called on us to cooperate with him and who leads us on by the power of his Spirit. The true novelty is that which God Himself wishes to create in a mysterious manner, that which he inspires, provokes, directs and accompanies in a thousand different ways. Throughout the entire life of the Church we must always acknowledge that the initiative comes from God, that it is “he (who) first loved us”⁶⁰¹ and that “it is only God who gives growth.”⁶⁰² This belief enables us to preserve joy in the face of a mission that is as demanding as it is challenging, one which permeates all aspects of our lives. It asks everything of us, yet at the same time it offers everything to us.⁶⁰³ This is what is meant by “entering and going forth” in the dynamic of the encounter between faith and culture.

“Entering and going forth” punctuates dialogue, encounter and witness

“Entering and going forth” facilitates the transition from dialogue to encounter, a more concrete expression of the current experiences of men and women of our time.⁶⁰⁴ Such encounters are a part of the daily lives of inhabitants of the same town, village or neighbourhood. In the long term these forms of coexistence often develop into real friendships which are both deep and enduring. Increasingly this is accompanied by joint participation in social, charitable or educational tasks and sometimes even by moments of common prayer or spiritual sharing.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁰ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* about the evangelization in the world of today, 8 December 1975, No. 7, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/de/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html (16.06.2015).

⁶⁰¹ 1 John 4:19.

⁶⁰² 1 Corinthians 3:7.

⁶⁰³ Cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 12.

⁶⁰⁴ Cf. Aveline, Jean-Marc, “Les spécificités d’une éthique politique dans un contexte interreligieux”, in: *Chemins de Dialogue*, No. 29 (June 2007), 73.

⁶⁰⁵ The dialogue of religious experience is doubtless at the root of the encounters elicited since 1986, which triggered what is currently known as “the Spirit of Assisi”.

It is difficult to conceive of evangelization without its foundations of witness, service and sharing. For a Christian, “service” can take several forms. He or she may imbue it with pragmatism and professionalism or treat it as something functional or technical. Christians may adopt a solely philanthropic approach to service, giving away that which they no longer need, or espouse a paternalistic attitude like those who help without changing anything. These attitudes in themselves may humanise, but they are not yet permeated by a spirit of evangelization. Jesus stressed the fact that he came to serve.

His “serving” takes the form of complete devotion to people, a commitment to increasing their well-being by liberating them and helping them to grow. Evangelical “serving” is to know and adopt the legitimate causes for which those we wish to serve are fighting: to serve is, first and foremost, to commit ourselves to them; it is also to continue to love, namely going out of oneself to open oneself to the other; and, finally, it is the act of laying the foundations of communion within the concrete realm of everyday reality. Those who witness the lives of Christians should be able to say of each and every one of them: “Your deeds resonate so loudly in our ears that we cannot hear what you say.” Christians are called upon to bear witness by expressing their faith in the way they live their lives.

For Christians today witness matters more than words. It requires them to be sensitive and attentive so that they can tackle the numerous economic, social and religious challenges confronting us all. They are summoned to make the Gospel incarnate within this reality, particularly in places where human and spiritual poverty hold sway. We are surrounded by so many injured and wounded people; so many people who feel unsightly in soul and body, because no look of love has delivered them from their contempt for themselves; so many who feel isolated and abandoned because no family or community has given them a feeling of belonging; so many who are exploited and deprived of their rights, because profiteers, employers and speculators know how to glean undeserved profit from an inequitable economic system and do so with impunity.

The Church itself can no longer remain secluded within its structures nor restrict itself to its specific missions. It is being jostled and challenged by the world of economics, politics and technology. In the words of Cardinal Suhard, founder of the missionary society

'Mission de France', "It is not a question of compelling the world to enter the Church as it is, but of creating a Church capable of welcoming the world as it is." In essence, we are talking of a strategy to renew the mission of the Church in an era in which "the scientific", the concrete and rational hold an immense appeal. People are judged in terms of their lives, experience and efficiency. Christians share and give of themselves in the image of Jesus who gave himself up for our sake and continues to do so unto the very end, laying down his life for his friends.⁶⁰⁶ This form of "sharing" means renouncing one's life (mine) in order to regain it (the life of the other and mine, too, from another perspective). This presupposes truth and benefaction, complete respect for liberty and for the "rhythm of the other", without any need for reward or return. In this way God gave us the gift of his Son, as Pope Francis tells us.

Listening to the words of Pope Francis

Mission is simultaneously proclamation, communion and service. It expresses a fundamental dimension of the Gospel, namely its movement in the direction of others (entering and going forth). The incarnation of Jesus Christ exemplifies the desired approach to mission. He penetrated right to the heart of the lives of those addressed by his ministry, whom he served. He spoke to the sinners, to those excluded from society and to the poor and needy, giving them the opportunity to grasp their fundamental human dignity. This is the challenge Christ places before us, his disciples: "For the Son of man himself came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."⁶⁰⁷ Thus serving the poor, the needy, the oppressed and the exploited implies that one risks one's own life in order to give life to others.

The Church which "goes forth" is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelising community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first,⁶⁰⁸ and therefore "we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. John 15:13.

⁶⁰⁷ Mk 10:45.

⁶⁰⁸ Cf. 1 John 4:10.

outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy."⁶⁰⁹ That is why the Church advances fearlessly. To this end Pope Francis stresses the need for "pastoral conversion", which means replacing a purely bureaucratic, static and administrative vision of pastoral work with a missionary perspective in which the latter is "permanently in a state of mission".⁶¹⁰

The social dimension of Evangelization, a renewal for the mission

A return to the Scriptures is sufficient to ascertain how the good Father wishes to hear the cry of the poor: "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying for help on account of their taskmasters. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings. And I have come down to rescue them [...] So now I am sending you..."⁶¹¹ He is concerned for their needs: "The Israelites then cried to Yahweh, and Yahweh raised a deliverer for them."⁶¹² Turning a deaf ear to those in need when we are the instruments of God, charged with listening to the poor, distances us from the spirit of the Father and his divine plan.

The Church and Christians accomplish their mission as men and as Christians whenever they engage with other men, performing deeds which bring the Kingdom of Heaven ever closer. The tasks of the Church may vary through time and place, since peoples' vocations are diverse and God's Reign does not proceed in a steady rhythm.

Here it may be the catechesis of a new community, there the building up of unity between Christ's disciples, and in other cases the commitment to a battle in the interests of justice, service to the poor, prayer on behalf of the people, action for truth, for peace, for understanding between men, religions or peoples. Finally, it invariably signifies, for all men, humble everyday tasks. In the multi-faith, secular societies of our age this dedication will usually be demonstrated by all people of good will. "Acknowledging that these tasks are common

⁶⁰⁹ Cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 24.

⁶¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 25.

⁶¹¹ Ex 3:7-10.

⁶¹² Jg 3:15.

to all men convincingly places the Christian vocation at the heart of every struggle for a truly human existence.”⁶¹³

Listening to the words of Pope Francis: The saving power of the poor

The social dimension of evangelization is a topic dear to the heart of Pope Francis, because “if this dimension is not properly brought out, there is a constant risk of distorting the authentic and integral meaning of the mission of evangelization.”⁶¹⁴ The fundamental advancement of each individual prevents us from circumscribing religion, so it becomes a private fact, lacking consequences within social and public life. An “authentic faith... always involves a deep desire to change the world.”⁶¹⁵ The Pope refers to this faith with a profound evangelical passion, aware that the future of humanity is at stake: the “social integration of the poor” and “social peace and dialogue”.

It is a question of performing “small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter.”⁶¹⁶ What is striking here is the plea to acknowledge the “saving power” of the poor and the central role they play in the life of the Church.⁶¹⁷ Today and always “the Gospel is addressed in a special way to the poor”⁶¹⁸ and evangelization, freely addressed to them, is the sign of the Kingdom Jesus came to bring. It must be stated unequivocally that an inseparable bond exists between our faith and the poor. They must never be abandoned.

Pope Francis believes we must not only exercise the fundamental option in favour of the poor, but also acknowledge that they primarily require “spiritual” and “religious care”.⁶¹⁹ This must provide the Church with the impetus to go forth from itself, towards the mission centred on Jesus Christ, towards a commitment to the poor. The “pastor of a

⁶¹³ Pastoral letter of the Regional Episcopal Conference of North Africa, “Christians in Maghreb: The Meaning of our Encounters”, 4.May 1979.

⁶¹⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 176.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 183.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 188.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 198.

⁶¹⁸ Benedict XVI, Address given on the occasion of the meeting with the Bishops of Brazil in the Cathedral of São Paulo, Brazil, 11.May 2007.

⁶¹⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 200.

Church without frontiers”⁶²⁰ cannot look the other way. He therefore calls upon us in the strongest of terms to consider the issue of immigrants and clearly articulate the new forms of slavery. “Where are the brother and sister whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in rings of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labour? Let us not look the other way. There is greater complicity than we think.” Since beginning his papacy the Pope has upheld human life and the dignity of all living beings in many different ways.⁶²¹

Conclusion

To encourage us as we conclude – or not, as the case may be – our discussion of the dynamic of “entering and going forth”, let us recall some helpful stances on the Church and on Christians.

There is a need to create, in our homes, centres of warmth which invite us, again and again, to transcend our individualism, our egotism, and welcome the other, in all his or her difference, and engage in dialogue. To establish “places of civic communion” based on the equality of their members and a spirit of non-violence. Their chief aim should be to build healing, liberating relationships with the environment of which they form a part.

There is a need to fight poverty. We must unite our forces to respond creatively to the new forms of dehumanisation and poverty, to the cries for help from the world of the excluded. A sense of solidarity must inspire us to mine the depths of our creative genius as we launch specific initiatives and collaborate on joint projects.

The Church “going forth” in a missionary sense, or the Church with “open doors”. Going forth towards others in order to reach the very peripheries of humanity does not mean running around the world in circles without direction. It is frequently preferable to slow down, set aside our trepidation and use our eyes and ears to see and listen, or take the time to support someone who has fallen behind. The Church cannot and must not take a back seat in the struggle for justice.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 210.

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*, No. 211.

To prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty, because it has been out on the streets, to one which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. As the Pope says: “I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures.”⁶²²

Evangelization as Practical Fundamental Theology

Thomas Fernet-Ponse

The dual perspective of fundamental theology and Evangelization

At first glance it might seem a little surprising to see evangelization described as practical fundamental theology. After all, fundamental theology has its roots in apologetics and thus in a discussion of – and indeed defence against – queries that have been put forward about the Christian faith throughout history and which have led to a distinction between three *demonstrationes*: *religiosa*, *christiana* and *catholica*. Also, from the mid-19th century to the present day, there has been a predominant understanding of fundamental theology as the academic study of faith. It is seen as an introductory theological discipline which does not lead directly towards evangelization, as it is primarily about ensuring oneself of one’s own faith foundations and about gaining an overview of theological scholarship. Set against this background, fundamental theology – i.e. as classical apologetics, an introductory discipline and academic foundation – might be understood as a “threshold discipline”⁶²³ which covers the arguments of those inside the house and those outside it. This does of course involve an initial in-house perspective, either warding off criticism or edifying those within. Since this is done through a conscious examination of enquiries from outside, Hans Weidenfels concludes that a fundamental theologian aims to provide an entry into the house, using “inside knowledge as an invitation to those inside *and* outside the Church”.⁶²⁴ This also reflects the words of 1 Peter 3:15b, a passage

⁶²³ Waldenfels, Hans, *Kontextuelle Fundamentaltheologie*, Paderborn et al. 32000, 98.

⁶²⁴ Ibid. “Within the domain of fundamental theology a distinction can be made between identifying and justifying the theological basics, i.e. between self-exploration *ad intra* and self-assertion *ad extra*.” Böttigheimer, Christoph, *Lehrbuch der Fundamentaltheologie: Die Rationalität der Gottes-, Offenbarungs- und Kirchenfrage*, Freiburg im Breisgau et al. 2009, 77f.

which has often been described as the “Magna Carta of fundamental theology”: “Always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you” (RSV).⁶²⁵ It is about the *logos* of the Christian hope, and fundamental theology is expected to give a rational “account” of that *logos*. This apologetic function is twofold: firstly, to convey the essence of the Christian message to those outside – something which is not tied to any enquiry – and, secondly, to provide a defence against attacks. “This apologetic function must be fulfilled and thought out in the form of rational argument – a process in which the discussion of opposing positions may itself deliver important contributions to clarifying the essence of the Christian faith.”⁶²⁶ Yet although the dimension owned by a fundamental theologian involves dialogue with those “outside”, it cannot simply be equated with evangelization.

Evangelization, too, is concerned about the credibility of the Christian faith, but it cannot limit itself to an academic and rational defense or justification of this faith – as can be seen in the problems surrounding “proofs of the existence of God” and the debate about natural theology. But unlike fundamental theology, evangelization – as the name suggests – puts the emphasis not on demonstrating the rationality of the Christian faith or on any academic justification of the *logos* of Christian hope (something which is at least implicitly assumed), but on proclaiming or bearing witness to this hope, i.e. the Gospel, and on sharing it and passing it on to others. Similar to fundamental theology, this proclamation is inward and outward in its orientation. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, written for the Synod of Bishops in 2012, Pope Francis outlines three areas where “new evangelization” is relevant: first of all, in ordinary pastoral ministry, i.e. helping believers to “respond to God’s love ever more fully in their lives”, secondly, “the baptised whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism” and, thirdly, “those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him”.⁶²⁷ He then underlines that “missionary

⁶²⁵ The NIV does not provide any direct translation of the Greek word *logos*, whereas the RSV is much closer. Therefore the Luther’s translation is instead opted for.

⁶²⁶ Böttigheimer, Christoph, op. cit., 79f.

⁶²⁷ Cf. Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World, No. 14, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (08.03.2016).

outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity*”.⁶²⁸ This comprehensive perspective of missionary identity (also emphasised in *Ad Gentes 2*) owes its existence to a communicational understanding of revelation and, in the same connection, the theological understanding that the Church’s mission is not primarily to persuade the largest possible number of individuals towards membership, but to find traces of God’s presence in the world and to be actively involved in building His Kingdom. If the place where we find God’s traces is wherever mission takes place, then it is “no longer just an activity in a ‘hitherto unreached missionary territory’, but it is the basic tenor of the Church and of local churches wherever it exists.”⁶²⁹

The relationship between “inside” and “outside” after the Second Vatican Council

Like fundamental theology, mission and evangelization are therefore directly impacted by the Church’s understanding of the relationship between “inside” and “outside”. This is an area where, according to many observers, the Second Vatican Council has made a substantial difference to the Roman Catholic Church. On the one hand, the “outside” – particularly in *Gaudium et Spes* – is no longer simply viewed as being in need of teaching, but is appreciated as being of essential significance to the “inside”. To clarify its own self-image, the Church must develop an adequate relationship with the outside, and this is what happened at the Council where the outdated dualisms – Church vs. the world, nature vs. the supernatural and dogma vs. history – were overcome by a new underlying perspective. Hans-Joachim Sander lists the various elements which *Gaudium et Spes* introduced into post-Council theology as a way to flesh out the inside-outside constellation of any talk about God in this world today: “(1) Pastoral ministry is the new essential dimension of the Church. It is the basis of the Church’s existence in today’s world. (2) The principal focus of pastoral ministry is on the people of today. They are the ones who form the basis for verbalising the Christian faith, and faith cannot have any justification without an analysis of today’s people. (3) It follows that the time in which we live is the outside of the

⁶²⁸ Ibid., No. 15.

⁶²⁹ Bünker, Arnd, *Missionarisch Kirche sein? Eine missionswissenschaftliche Analyse von Konzepten zur Sendung der Kirche in Deutschland*, Münster et al. 2004, 460.

Christian faith and thus the area where its truth must prove its worth. For the Church, the people of today are always dialogue partners through whom it learns to have faith.”⁶³⁰

On the other hand, if the essence of the Church is seen as “a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race”⁶³¹, then any separation of the Church’s inner life and its mission to the outside simply becomes untenable. Rather, it must be made clear that there is a close relationship between both aspects and that the Church and the world have a mutual impact on one another, so that the distinction between the inside and the outside of the Church needs to be seen in rather more complex terms. “Neither can the reality of the Church be kept out of the world, nor the reality of the world out of the Church.”⁶³² What we can conclude is not that the Church and the world are identical, but that our primary concern must be the relationship between the two. This, after all, is also inherent in the incarnation. The very dynamic of the Church is focused on the world, and the world therefore does not just have secondary significance. If the essence of the Church is its calling or mission of continually bringing the Gospel to life among humankind, then this “must be reflected right down to its innermost disposition – a disposition which has no other purpose than to help the Church fulfil its calling. Moreover, to do so in a credible manner it must shape itself under the very principles which it proclaims ‘to the outside’.”⁶³³

According to *Gaudium et Spes*, anything the Church says *ad extra* is a matter of solidarity with all humanity at a given time. If the People of God see themselves as being very much part of today’s

⁶³⁰ Sander, Hans-Joachim, *Glauben im Zeichen der Zeit: Die Semiotik von Peirce und die pastorale Konstituierung der Theologie* (unpublished post-doctoral thesis), Würzburg 1996, 95. “Thanks to the Council, today’s modern world, in all its complexity, is now the recipient of the Church’s proclamation of the Gospel, and so the Church – based on its innermost self-image – has been led to relate to a wide range of groups, movements and philosophical convictions which have defined and continue to define its presence.” Siebenrock, Roman, “Die Wahrheit der Religionen und die Fülle der Selbstmitteilung Gottes in Jesus Christus”, in: Hünemann, Peter/Hilberath, Bernd Jochen (eds.), *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil* (No. 5), Freiburg im Breisgau et al. 2005, 120–133, here: 120.

⁶³¹ LG 1.

⁶³² Gilich, Benedikt, *Die Verkörperung der Theologie: Gottesrede als Metaphorologie*, Stuttgart 2011, 389.

⁶³³ Mette, Norbert, “Gaudium et spes – die Pastoralkonstitution und das Pastoralkonzil”, in: *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift*, No. 54 (2003), 114–126, here: 125.

human situation, then “today’s outside world becomes a dimension of discovery for anyone wanting to show forth the inside of the Christian faith”⁶³⁴ – a thought which is paradigmatically reflected at the beginning of the message. This means that the outside world becomes a genuine factor in the Church’s teachings and is thus systematically given the same ranking as the inside. It creates a dynamic that makes the Christian faith very much part of the pastoral ministry: “It is not just a matter of taking a certain position, but of deriving one’s position from one or more [of the] others [outside it].”⁶³⁵

The “pastoral” focus and style of fundamental theology and Evangelization

The “pastoral” focus of the Council, which is reflected in this change in the inside/outside relationship, also has its relevance beyond this relationship and is important for a Christian evangelistic attitude – and indeed concerning a point where, again, it coincides with fundamental theology. This focus is not just a matter of finding an appropriate and comprehensible form of language, but mostly and primarily of understanding the outside as an essential dimension. It means seeing people as partners in dialogue and responding to their “joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties.”⁶³⁶ In evangelization, too, this necessitates an attitude of humility, modesty/gentleness and fear of God – the attitude which, according to 1 Peter 3:15, we must adopt when giving an account of the *logos* of hope, i.e. when engaging in fundamental theology. Such an attitude also aligns with the evangelistic style mapped out by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, a style which follows the example set by Jesus, involves dedication, takes account of the new definition of the inside/outside relationship and can therefore be summed up briefly as follows: “Moved by his [i.e. Jesus]”

⁶³⁴ Sander, Hans-Joachim, “Theologischer Kommentar zur Pastoralkonstitution über die Kirche in der Welt von heute Gaudium et spes”, in: Hünemann, Peter/Hilberath, Bernd Jochen (eds.), *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil* (No. 4), Freiburg im Breisgau et al. 2005, 581–886, here: 624.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 702. “The visual logic of dialogue as a metaphor creates an inverted relationship by giving the other person – the stranger – a role in defining our own identity. The way the Church thinks and talks about itself determines the possible ways in which it speaks to and about the others – and vice versa.” Gilich, Benedikt/Hoff, Gregor M., “Metaphern, in denen wir (nicht) glauben: Das 2. Vatikanische Konzil und der Atheismus”, in: Delgado, Mariano/Sievernich, Michael (eds.), *Die großen Metaphern des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils: Ihre Bedeutung für heute*, Freiburg im Breisgau 2013, 287–304, here: 287.

⁶³⁶ GS 1.

example, we want to enter fully into the fabric of society, sharing the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep; arm in arm with others, we are committed to building a new world. But we do so not from a sense of obligation, not as a burdensome duty, but as the result of a personal decision which brings us joy and gives meaning to our lives.”⁶³⁷

While Francis emphasizes togetherness with those others and full entry into the fabric of society as essential ingredients of a good evangelistic style, these elements are also recommended for the apologetic function of fundamental theology: Before we can adequately answer outside enquiries or indeed provide defence against attacks from outside, we must first of all understand the (possibly justified) concerns that are behind them and the needs they reflect – something which we can only do on the basis of togetherness. Only then can we give a reply or furnish a defence, ensuring that our words take account of those concerns and needs. Conducted in this way, fundamental theology aligns with the dialogic (and thus pastoral) style of the Second Vatican Council and its teachings, whereby the doctrine and attitude of the Church must be determined by its relatedness to people and to its own mission. Based on a communicational understanding of revelation, this puts the emphasis on the relational character of faith, with the consequences that has for both fundamental theology and evangelization: “It is impossible to proclaim the Gospel of God without involving the other person. In other words, the very essence of our proclamation is already at work *within* that other person, so that he or she can freely respond and accept it.”⁶³⁸ The focus is thus not only on the cultural shape of the revelation, but also on the other person’s historical and cultural context – both in evangelization and in fundamental theology.

The essential significance of the “outside” for the “inside”, mentioned above, is reflected in this reversal of the usual asymmetric movement from the evangelist to the other person which – according

⁶³⁷ *Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 269.

⁶³⁸ Theobald, Christoph, “Das Christliche als Lebensstil: Die Suche nach einer zukunftsfähigen Gestalt von Kirche aus einer französischen Perspektive”, in: Böttigheimer, Christoph (ed.), *Zweites Vatikanisches Konzil, Programmatik – Rezeption – Vision*, Freiburg im Breisgau et al. 2014, 203–219, here: 212f.

to *Gaudium et Spes* – means that the hearing of God’s Word by an evangelist depends on his ability “to take what is going on in the other person and in his history and to use that as the starting point for his own listening and proclamation”.⁶³⁹ This highlights the need for genuine, open-ended dialogue, engaging in the other person’s position and arguments and understanding that person as more than someone who needs to be taught something, thus accepting that there should be no dualism between the Church and the world. However, any dialogue that aims for truth and truthfulness includes the possibility of failure because this is what the truth potentially involves. As guarantors of truth, Christians therefore need the Spirit of Christ: “Dialogue is outwardly focused. The Spirit is present within a person if space is given for different qualities, both outside and inside. When relating to those outside, the prevailing element is the other person’s strengths, as they are given room to develop. Inside, weaknesses are revealed which have so far been obstacles to dialogue.”⁶⁴⁰ By entering into dialogue, the Church recognises its own limitations and can work on them, based on the strengths of others, i.e. it has no need to fear them.

Once the inside and outside perspective interact in this way, then the apologetic function of fundamental theology becomes highly important to its other function, that of providing a foundation for faith: By engaging in serious dialogue with those outside and their enquiries, the focus shifts onto their strengths, which can then be made fruitful for the Church’s weaknesses. Likewise, evangelization is not – or rather no longer – a matter of proclaiming secure and canonised knowledge, but of bearing witness to our relatively insecure trust in the presence of God and encouraging others to trust in the experiences to which we bear witness. “So crossing borders does not mean exporting existing religious knowledge in order to canvass for our own knowledge community. Rather, it primarily means showing the world that Christian knowledge is indeed relevant.”⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁶⁴⁰ Sander, Hans-Joachim, “Scheitern können: Ein Zeichen für die Qualität des Dialogs auf dem Konzil”, in: Hünermann, Peter/Hilberath, Bernd Jochen, op. cit., 349–356, here: 355.

⁶⁴¹ Bünker, Arnd, op. cit., 460f.

Pastoral ministry and dogmatics, Evangelization and fundamental theology

Both in the inside/outside relationship and in the required style of fundamental theology and evangelization one essential element is the mutual impact between life and doctrine and thus also between pastoral ministry and dogmatics. If we no longer understand pastoral ministry as the mere application of doctrine, to which it might be hierarchically subordinate, but rather as something that describes the full range of the Church's activity in the world and therefore also encompasses its teachings, then pastoral ministry and dogmatics become inseparable. It means we must look at the pastoral significance behind dogmatic teachings, on the one hand, and the dogmatic significance behind pastoral considerations, on the other. As the practice and person of Jesus are the yardstick for everything the Church does, we need a pastoral ministry that is carried by our hope in the presence of the Spirit and our faith in Christ, a pastoral ministry which seeks to proclaim the Gospel in any geographical location and at any point in time and which aims to serve people. "Such practice will acquire a normative character because today's successful pastoral ministry will be Christianity's binding tradition in the future. Anyone who plays off dogma against pastoral care fails to understand the essence of tradition."⁶⁴²

In view of these connections and what we have learned about the relationship between fundamental theology and evangelization, it seems reasonable to define this relationship in similar terms. Although fundamental theology and evangelization cannot be equated or reduced to one another, they are nevertheless inseparable because they are so closely connected. Both are substantially about the inside/outside relationship of the Church and illustrate the close link between the Church's inner life and its mission. Just as, in fundamental theology, apologetics (being outwardly directed) is connected with the study of fundamentals (which is inwardly directed), and just as outside enquiries are of essential significance to the inside, so we must understand evangelization in similarly comprehensive terms. After all, it is directed at all humankind, sharing people's lives, joys and sorrows. Both fundamental theology and evangelization,

therefore, depend on genuine dialogue with the outside. In fact, this is how they fulfil their respective functions which are derived from their own (communicational) understanding of revelation. Studying and responding to enquiries from outside and also bearing witness to one's hope in God's presence are not a matter of unilateral teaching or the defence of a system. Rather, both must involve togetherness with all humankind and openness to the world and must have their starting point in the realities of life.

Evangelization can be understood as practical fundamental theology: although fundamental theology as an academic discipline needs to meet scholarly standards, such as rationality and a coherent and plausible line of argument, it has an important point in common as its object of enquiry – the Christian hope which eludes any purely academic approach and therefore needs to be supplemented by the testimony of faith, bearing witness to one's experience of this hope. As testimony of the Christian hope, evangelization explains the relevance of this hope to mankind today and, in doing so, is based on the essential function of fundamental theology, which is to give an account of this hope.

⁶⁴² Siebenrock, Roman, op. cit., 121.

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