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## AN EVOLVING THEOLOGY OF EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

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### **Abstract**

There is an intimate relationship between the concept of Evangelization and Catechesis. One is like the way the Kingdom of God is sown and the other is the way the Kingdom of God is nurtured, deepened and maintained. Both need a land and culture for their significant blossoming existence. India, being an ancient land of civilization with honourable heritage, legacy and wisdom, has the potency to become a fertile soil for the growth of Gospel. Today due to the religious fluidity many leave the traditional Christian religion. This reality demands from the Church a new-evangelizing mission, efficacious catechetical ministry and appropriate pastoral practice. The Indian Church awaits a true inculturated knowledge of faith, method of proclamation, liturgical life, moral formation, community life and transmission of the mission of the Gospel of Jesus. The available paradigms of evangelization and catechesis become valid tools for promoting authentic Christian praxis and mission.

**Keywords:** Catechesis, Churching, Divinization, Evangelism, Evangelization, Inculturation, Indigenization, Intentional Discipleship, Liberation, Models of Evangelization, Paradigms, Pastoral Praxis, Mission, *Theosis*

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## Introduction

The landscape of our culture and religious faith in the contemporary world is constantly fluctuating. Although religion has not been erased from the cultural consciousness of societies, it remains deeply challenging for the secular society. Sherry A. Weddell is one of the renowned theologians in the Christian circle today because of the publication of her significant book titled *Forming Intentional Disciples*. In this book she explains that there is a religious fluidity that happened as a global phenomenon and that we live in an era when religious identity is not stable.<sup>1</sup> The Chapter One of Sherry's book is entitled "God has no Grandchildren." Quoting from Pontifical Yearbook of 2012 she says that in the year 2010 there were 16 million people converted to Christianity which means 43,800 converts entered the Church every day. But on the same year 11.6 million left Christianity which means 31,780 left Christianity every day.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, there is a drive into and out of Christianity which tells us the need for a re-founding of the concepts of *evangelization*, *catechesis* and *pastoral praxis* of the Church. And for sure, the Church statistics released for 2018 reveal a frightening spiritual stagnation and destitution far more than we can comfortably imagine.<sup>3</sup> A terrifying example could be drawn from the German Catholic Church that the great parishes have become empty shells and a parish priest will have to support six or more parishes together.<sup>4</sup> The news blogs tell us that an oldest German Diocese had to Close 96% of its Parishes.<sup>5</sup> What is more alarming is the sale of the church buildings in the first world.<sup>6</sup> Over 500 Church listings of over 500,000 total commercial properties placed for sale and for lease. These critical contexts ask us for the 'sophisticated new evangelizing mission, inspiring catechetical formation and edifying pastoral practices' that do justice to the diverse philosophies and outlooks of our people and

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<sup>1</sup>Sherry A. Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*, Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2012, 16. 10% of all adult Catholics in America are ex-Catholics, which means those who have left but came back; while 2.6 % are converts to the Church. It means that nearly four times as many adults have left as have entered the Church.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Weddell, 17, 31.

<sup>3</sup> <https://fsspx.news/en/news-events/news/constant-decline-religious-practice-catholics-worldwide-22564> retrieved on 20/9/2018.

<sup>4</sup><https://onepeterfive.com/oldest-german-diocese-close-96-parishes/>

<sup>5</sup>Trier diocese, the oldest in Germany, will dissolve its 903 parishes and reduce them to 35, liberal Bishop Stephan Ackermann (54) explained. He spoke of a "crisis." <https://gloria.tv/post/QVcLsGZEiMCg3qkToVRj3DrmQ> Accessed on 24/02/2020.

<sup>6</sup><http://www.loopnet.com/churches-for-sale/> retrieved on 20/9/2018.

convincingly generate a true Christian evangelizing mission and forming an authentic Christian discipleship in the Church.

India is a mosaic of diverse cultures, religions, castes, and classes with unimaginable pluralism and diversity at all levels, making it the most complex nation in the world. In India, we have the Christians, 18.9 million (2.3% of total population) with Catholics just 14.91 million (1.51%).<sup>7</sup> The Church in India faces crucial challenges which can be described as follows: (1) The Christians in India, along with other minority communities, are facing serious challenges by the upsurge of fascist forces in India. (2) The sad part of the inside story is that the Indian churches not only failed to remove caste apartheid but the same system was brought within the church-setup too. The British could abolish slavery system in Britain 200 years ago. The same British ruled India for 200 years, but could not do anything to abolish casteism.<sup>8</sup> The Church in India is infected with caste discriminations and regionalism. (3) The Christian missions within the nation failed to bring the full message of the gospel of Jesus Christ suitable to the Indian context. Very often the Indian Christianity has the traits of Syrian or Western cultural acculturation but not an Indian inculturation. The Church in India is about 2000 years old, but still her struggle is whether to 'Restore' or 'Reform.'<sup>9</sup> Sadhu Sundar Singh, a passionate convert to Christianity, appealed to the Christian missionaries: "Give us the living water of life in the Indian cup."<sup>10</sup> It was a call for 'Cultural Relevance' of Christianity in the contemporary Indian Missions. Sundar Singh was deeply convinced that Christianity will make its entrance into Indian hearts only when it is presented in Indian form. (4) The corruption, mismanagement of lands, misuse of buildings and institutions, the dishonesty of Church personnel both in moral and financial matters, power politics involved in gaining the positions and roles have become the major growing issues in Indian Church.<sup>11</sup> The Church is

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<sup>7</sup> [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-1-4020-5776-2\\_34](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-1-4020-5776-2_34) retrieved on 20/9/2018.

<sup>8</sup> <http://thupui.blogspot.com/2011/07/challenges-faced-by-indian-church.html> retrieved on 20/9/2018.

<sup>9</sup> Francis Kanichikattil, *To Restore or to Reform? A Critical Study on Syro-Malabar Liturgical Renewal*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. A.J. Appasamy, Sadhu Sundar Singh, *A Biography to The Living Christ*, Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1990. See also, *Readings in Indian Christian Theology*, Ed. By Sugirtharajah & Cecil Hargreaves, Delhi: ISPCK, Vol 1, 1993.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. <http://www.lastampa.it/2013/10/06/vaticaninsider/indian-catholic-journalist-says-corruption-in-the-indian-church-must-end-Tn1zgsRgaQqkJfIGcjsT1K/pagina.html> retrieved on 20/9/2018.

frozen by her own scandals and weaknesses. We cannot expect a sin-free Church or stress-free milieu for Church's ministries in the societies, because the Church is as fully divine institution, so too, a fully human institution.

## 1. Evangelization is the Grace and Vocation of the Church

The Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, issued on 8 December 1975 by Pope Paul VI states that the Church has only one purpose: to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that is, evangelization. Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church and her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of his death and glorious resurrection.<sup>12</sup> Late Bishop Clemens Thottungal, CMI used to say that "the Church's presence itself is an evangelization."<sup>13</sup> By the virtue of her very presence and life, the Church is in the mission of evangelizing the world. Wherever the Gospel is preached, the Church could bring the holiness, refinement of the culture and values, and contribute positive developments in the uncut aspects of the lives of the peoples. Being the Sacrament of salvation,<sup>14</sup> the Church has the responsibility to launch the most vibrant mission to re-evangelize the people and re-form a healthy Faith-Formation for the growth of the Christian discipleship in our world.

## 2. What is Catechesis?

The Church has always considered catechesis as one of her primary tasks.<sup>15</sup> Catechesis refers to those efforts which help the individuals and communities to acquire and deepen Christian 'faith and identity' through the initiation rites, instruction, and formation of conscience. It includes both the message presented and the way in which it is presented.<sup>16</sup> Both the *Fides quae* as well as *Fides qua* are important in Catechesis. The word 'catechesis' is derived from the Greek word Κατηχεῖν (*Katechein*). This term which is seldom used in profane and secular literature, meant, to instruct orally, to teach by word of

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<sup>12</sup>*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14.

<sup>13</sup>The author, when he was a scholastic, heard these words in 1979, from the mouth of Bp. Clemens.

<sup>14</sup>*Lumen Gentium*, no. 1.

<sup>15</sup>*Catechesi Tradendae* (CT), 1.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. U.S.C.C., *A Catechist's Handbook*, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1980, no. 5, page 2.

mouth, to speak so as to be heard, etc. And, wherever it is used in the New Testament, it always referred to an oral instruction (Lk 1:4; Acts 18:25; Rom 2:18; Gal 6:6).<sup>17</sup> Etymologically, 'catechization' means 'oral instruction' or 'oral teaching.' In ecclesiastical usage the word *Κατηχεῖν* (*Katechein*) was used to designate the religious instruction and more specifically that instruction which was given to the 'beginners in the Christian faith.'<sup>18</sup> As defined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "The name of catechesis was given to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God... and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ."<sup>19</sup> The *General Catechetical Directory* defines catechesis as "that form of the Ministry of the Word, which is intended to make man's faith more living, conscious and active through the light of instruction."<sup>20</sup> Only Catechesis can revitalize the Church through her experiential instructions. As we cannot imagine a Christian-mission without Bible, so also we cannot imagine a catechesis without Jesus. Mission cannot be translated simply in terms of development and social work; but it is the process of making the dignified human beings and nourishing them to become a distinguished Christian community by the encounter with Christ and his Good News. It is the helping of human beings to enter into an *inner integrity* and to make their human lives fully realized. According to Dr Paulachan Kochappilly, "Evangelization is not selling of a product but sharing of one's lived Christ experience; it is an invitation for liberating diverse entanglements and to celebrate life in its fullness."<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, the Mission makes available the presence of Christ, his values and attitudes through the life and witness of the Church. And so, there is an unceasing linkage with the Mission, Evangelization and Catechesis. Catechesis is that particular form of the ministry of the Word which matures the initial conversion to make it into a living, explicit and fruitful confession of faith: "Catechesis has its origin in the *confession* of faith and it leads to the *confessing* of faith in life."<sup>22</sup> Evangelization cannot exist alone without the funding of catechesis.

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<sup>17</sup>Cf. R. J. Barrett, "The Normative Status of the Catechism," *Periodica* 1 (1996) 9.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. M. Gatterer and F. Krus, *The Theory and Practice of Catechism*, translated by J. B. Culemans, New York: Frederick Pustet & Co., 1914, 7.

<sup>19</sup>Paragraph 4, (Cf. *Catechesi Tradendae*, 18).

<sup>20</sup>GCD, 17, also cf. *Christus Dominus* 14.

<sup>21</sup>Paulachan Kochappilly, *Evangelization as Celebration*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2002, 13.

<sup>22</sup>General Directory of Catechesis (DCG), 82 (1971); General Catechetical Directory, *Ad normam decreti* (11 April 1971): AAS 64 (1972) 97-176.

So also, catechesis cannot enter into the life of the Church without first the evangelization does its best for initiating people to the fellowship of the Church through the kerygma.<sup>23</sup> One cannot exist without the other.

### 3. Catechesis for Churching: A Call for Inner Integrity

The word “Churching” was used in 1990s in the context of baptizing the infants and bringing them to the Church. Now the word ‘Churching’ is a more profound and pro-active word which is much more than just entering to the building of the church with baptismal rituals but it is a process of acquiring the ‘inner integrity’ by an encounter with Christ. Catechesis is a unique opportunity for a person to rebuild himself/herself from inside through Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup> Fr. Georgy Kochetkov of Russian Orthodox Church, while preaching to the catechumens, said: “Just think: people are becoming Christians, but the Church is no longer able to talk to them about Christ. The crucified and risen Christ is no longer preached. What are the Christians supposed to believe then and where can they go to find it out?”<sup>25</sup> The true Christians must know Christ. How to support people in their struggle to acquire the true foundations of Christianity? We believe that catechesis is a special ministry of both an *enabling* and *accompanying* of a Christian to know and experience Jesus Christ and learn from him the attitudes and virtues of Kingdom of God. It truly means a participation in the life of both God and neighbour. Thus, Catechesis is a call for personal holiness with Christ, and to have a social solidarity with every human being. Ultimately, Christ is at the centre of every Christian religious experience. He is the fullness of truth and life (Jn 1:16; Jn 10:10b ) whom we proclaim through evangelization and instruct through catechesis.

Every human person is a living icon of God since he/she is created in the image and likeness of God. Catechesis helps to have a transformation and makes Christians grow to the richness of grace and love of Christ. In this process catechesis becomes that instruction which enables the believer to participate in the divine progression of ‘*theosis*.’ *Theosis* is a process of attaining an ‘awakened consciousness’ of a believer in *knowing* and *becoming* Christ. The terminology of

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<sup>23</sup>Our historical knowledge of Jesus is essential and it will validate the necessity of the Christian kerygma.

<sup>24</sup><https://psmb.ru/en/a/otkrylas-konferenciya-po-katehizacii-posvyashchennaya-propovedi-o-hriste-sovremennym-oglashaemym.html> retrieved on 10/9/2018.

<sup>25</sup><https://psmb.ru/en/a/otkrylas-konferenciya-po-katehizacii-posvyashchennaya-propovedi-o-hriste-sovremennym-oglashaemym.html> retrieved on 10/9/2018.

'deification' and 'divinization' (*theosis and theopoeisis*), according to the Fathers of the Church, is capable of expressing the newness of the condition to which man had been restored through the incarnation of the Son of God.<sup>26</sup> This process deals with a mysterious exchange by which "each takes on the qualities of the other."<sup>27</sup> In the words of Epictetus, "You are a fragment of God; you have within you a part of him,"<sup>28</sup> which is being assimilated and blossomed in this process. We find the equivalent expressions from Ignatius of Antioch in his usage of "God bearers" (*theophoroi*)<sup>29</sup> and "full of God" (*theougemete*).<sup>30</sup> Thus the catechetical 'knowledge' as well as the 'becoming' invite the catechized to witness Christ in one's life (Mt 28:19-20). Here, the act of making the people Christ's disciples and teaching them to obey what Christ commanded involve evangelization and catechesis. Hence, the sharing of a new consciousness of Jesus is the true mission of every Christian in the world. Consequently, the Evangelization and Catechesis fulfil the commissions of the Lord.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4. The Fundamental Tasks of Catechesis

The fundamental tasks of catechesis are the deepening of inner knowledge and experience regarding Faith, Liturgy, Morality, training in prayer, and education in Christian Community Life and Mission. The knowledge imparted in the Faith-Formation (Catechesis) is life oriented and not merely for intellectual understanding. Beneficially, the contents of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are divided into four divisions and we find those four divisions follow the tasks of catechesis: a) Profession of faith, b) The Seven Sacraments – celebration of faith, c) The 10 Commandments – moral life, and d) The Prayer of the believer and community. All of these tasks are necessary for the well-being of the Church as human fellowship and communion. As the vitality and harmony of human body depends on the proper functioning of all of its organs, so also the maturation of the Christian life requires that it be cultivated and nourished by all these tasks: knowledge of the faith, liturgical-life,

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<sup>26</sup>See Irene Henri Dalmais in DS 3:1376, quoted in Tomas Spidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, Cistercian Publications Inc., 1986, 45.

<sup>27</sup>Theodore of Ancyra, *Imnativitatem* 5; PG77:1356BC.

<sup>28</sup>Arrian's Discourses of Epictetus II.8.11; ed., H. Schenkl, *Epicteti Dissertationes ab Arrianolitterismandatae*, Leipzig, 1898.

<sup>29</sup>Letter to Ephesians 9:2.

<sup>30</sup>To the Magnesians 14.1; quoted in Spidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, 46.

<sup>31</sup>First Commission: Lk 22: 19- "Do this in remembrance of me." The Church proclaims Christ's death (1 Cor 11:26); Second Commission: Mt 28:19-20 "Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ...;" Mk 16:15; Acts 1:8.

moral-formation, prayer, belonging to the Christian community and to have the missionary-spirit. When catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain its perfection or full development.<sup>32</sup>

### 5. A New Catechesis for Forming the Intentional Disciples

Sherry Weddell asserts that “in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, cultural Catholicism is dead as a retention strategy because God has no grandchildren. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have to foster intentional Catholicism rather than cultural Catholicism.”<sup>33</sup> The great Austrian liturgical-catechetical scholar Josef A. Jungmann, observed that “a pure habitual Christianity, a pure Christianity living by tradition and conservation, cannot last much longer or it must sink into insignificance, into a paganism which ekes out its life on the mere crumbs of a past age.”<sup>34</sup> When Pope Francis, with his authentic lifestyle and down to earth catechesis, came and challenged the Church to come out of her deep slumber, we found that in every assembly of the church around the world, there returned a rebirth and rejuvenation. Pope Francis invited the Faithful to be the part of a ‘poor Church’ and to lead an authentic Christian life with mercy and selfless love. He inaugurated an era of renewed spirit within the Church and as a result the ‘intentional Catholicism’ began to flourish.

### 6. Models of Evangelization and Catechesis: Discovering Our Mission

Catholic mission is a movement of reaching out and giving fullness of life envisioned by Jesus Christ. When Archbishop Desmond Tutu left for the Nobel Prize Ceremony in Oslo, Norway, he spoke at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, and narrated one of his favourite stories. He said: “When the missionaries came to Africa, they had the Bible and we had the land. They said “let us close our eyes and pray. When we opened them, we had the Bible, and they had the land.”<sup>35</sup> It is a dominant negative criticism that the African prelate made on the foreign missionaries. I would positively interpret it as follows: As the missionaries wanted to give the spiritual treasure of the Bible, their political partners acquired the land and material prosperity of the people. In that processes the people of Africa, although lost their land, were blessed by the greatest treasure of

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<sup>32</sup>GDC, 87.

<sup>33</sup>Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 39.

<sup>34</sup>Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1962, 332.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. <https://skeptics.stackexchange.com/questions/8644/did-desmond-tutu-criticize-african-missionaries-for-stealing-land> retrieved on 8/10/2018.



eternal wisdom and the knowledge about Jesus, the Son of God. The wealth perished but the grace survived! In India we missionaries are not those who came to steal the land and treasures of our people; but to empower them and make them rich by giving Jesus and his message. Faith in Jesus is an imperishable treasure that would transform them to become the inheritors of eternal wealth and possessors of heaven. Unless we share the treasure of the Bible, our activities are simply for our self-satisfaction, self-engagement or for worldly gain. We have to believe in a missiology which is a witnessing of the salvific presence of Jesus in the society rather than dominating and conquering like the Western colonial counterpart. Consequently, we can say that Jesus is the quintessential model of our practice of missions which we are to follow forever.<sup>36</sup> As a missionary, Jesus served, healed, instructed, transformed and prayed for his people. Today, he calls us to become what he was and to reach out to the hopeless and homeless of the world, the rich and the poor, those who hunger with their needs and to those whose dignity is wiped off. We, as the disciples of Jesus, are invited to live the Good News and to be the genuine presence of Christ amidst his people.

### **6.1. The Changing Scenario in the Mission in India**

Dr Anto Karokaran CMI, a veteran missionary and a brilliant theologian, brought out a most conspicuous book, namely, *Evangelization and Diakonia* in 1978. Karokaran daringly discusses the evolutionary changes that took place in the realm of evangelization in India. He says that at first the missionaries had only one spiritual and religious aim – the conversion of souls to give them eternal life. The missionaries did not go beyond the moral, spiritual and religious plane.<sup>37</sup> In this sense the missionaries preached, converted and baptized. Missionaries believed that the people in India were under darkness and they must be saved from eternal damnation. They also tried to remove moral, social and religious evil in India such as *Sati*. In 1930 a new approach began which stressed not only salvation of souls but also the whole person. The great social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) and Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) ardently worked for the Hindu revival and tried to give human dignity to the low-castes and along with these efforts, the Sarvodaya Movement ('Universal uplift' or 'progress of all') and the Ramakrishna

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<sup>36</sup>Cf. <http://www.churchleadership.org/apps/articles/default.asp?blogid=0&url=10&view=post&articleid=46711&link=1&fldKeywords=&fldAuthor=&fldTopic=0> retrieved on 8/10/18.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Anto Karokaran, *Evangelization and Diakonia*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1978, 13-18.

Mission (Founded: 1 May 1897) began to flourish. Renascent Hinduism restated the classical doctrines of *Karma* and *Maya* but encouraged for an active involvement in this world.

The emerging nationalism also paved way for the Christian participation in nation building. The Christian exclusivism was rejected and the services and charity were made available to all irrespective of religion. Also, there was an increased positive attitude towards Hinduism. The thinkers proposed that the visible sign of baptism should not be the only way in which God's grace is communicated because of the cosmic nature of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Finally, there emerged a firm conviction of presenting Gospel in India through the dialogue with the adherents of other faiths. The 'All India Seminar' on "The Church in India" summed up their thoughts as:<sup>38</sup> "We urgently need a theology that is truly Indian in its cultural categories and thoughts."<sup>39</sup> The entire Indian Church understood by now Indianization as a matter of self-identity and a condition to fulfil her evangelizing tasks in India. The thinkers like Raimon Panikkar <sup>40</sup> argued that Hinduism too contains what Christianity claims to possess. He not only appreciated the positive value of other religions, but considered them as capable of bringing salvation to their adherents. Evangelization according to Panikkar is a process of mutual growth in the context of a dialogue that leads to the only true universal religion. D.S. Amalorpavadass emphasized the importance of enabling local Church and indigenization in the process of evangelization.<sup>41</sup> Emergence of Christian Ashrams were supported to believe that they should be the cradle of Christianity in India. In the evolved stage, the evangelization was seen as actions for the growth of the total man and not just at an ecclesial growth or spiritual growth. The changed perspective focussed on *communion* and *development* as the end of evangelization.<sup>42</sup> According to Anto Karokaran, Evangelization aims at a mutually harmonizing double process: A communion in Christ in which the Church and people of different faiths share their experience of the ultimate values and

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<sup>38</sup>Cf. Karokaran, *Evangelization and Diakonia*, 137-138.

<sup>39</sup>Soon after the Second Vatican Council, the Church in India organized the well-known "All India Seminar on Church in India Today" in the year 1969 at Dharmaram College, Bangalore, in which the need for an Indian Theology, Spirituality and Liturgy was discussed in detail.

<sup>40</sup> Raimon Panikkar Alemany was a Spanish Roman Catholic priest and a proponent of interreligious dialogue. As a scholar, he specialized in comparative religion and proposed the concept of 'Unknown Christ of Hinduism.'

<sup>41</sup>Cf. Karokaran, *Evangelization and Diakonia*, 158-160.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Karokaran, *Evangelization and Diakonia*, 254-256.

secondly, exchange of brotherly/sisterly love in a tangible form for a common end to reach the fuller humanity.

## 6.2. The Six Paradigms of Evangelizing Mission

Today, the missionaries would ask a relevant question: How shall we do the Evangelizing mission today? In order to choose a mature and an appropriate way for evangelizing, we need to ponder on the models that were existing in the Church praxis in various missions in India and abroad. The late South African missiologist David J. Bosch wrote an outstanding classical book entitled *Transforming Mission*. In this voluminous book he has treated at length six important paradigms for mission. Mission is a complex notion; to know and interpret a suitable mission demands a serious exploration and appraisal. In our serious efforts to understand the true nature of evangelization and catechesis in building up of Indian mission, I feel the insights of David Bosch will enlighten us and complement all our missionary efforts. The six paradigms of mission are: 1. *Missio Dei*, 2. Mission as Mediating Salvation, 3. Mission as Evangelism, 4. Mission as Liberation, 5. Mission as Inculturation and, 6. Mission as Ministry by the Whole People of God.<sup>43</sup> As the notion of mission is complex, so too the notion of catechesis. Only a catechesis which is capable of transmitting the Gospel values in the language of various strata of the people who are evangelized, could bring the benefits of transformation and true Christian maturity.

### 6.2.1. Mission as *Missio Dei*

Mission was understood in a variety of ways: as saving people from eternal damnation, as introducing people of the Third World to the blessings and privileges of Christian West, as expansion of the Church, etc. It was Karl Barth who introduced the concept of mission as an activity of God Himself at the Willingen Conference of International Missionary Conference in 1952. Mission was understood here as something that derived from the very nature of God. It means that the mission is put in the context of the theology of the Trinity rather than ecclesiology or soteriology. Thus the mission is in God the Father sending the Son, and Father and Son sending the Holy Spirit and is expanded in sending the Church into the world. Mission is seen as a movement from God to the world and the Church is seen as an instrument for the mission of God. God's own mission is larger than the mission of the Church. The missionaries are invited to see God's salvation which has already been operative

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<sup>43</sup>Cf. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991.

through the Holy Spirit. In short, the concept of *Missio Dei* helped to understand that the mission is ultimately the work of the Triune God-Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier for the sake of the world.<sup>44</sup>

A catechesis that should accompany this model also must deeply convey the authenticity of following the mission of God in the individual's and society's life. A true understanding of the context of India and its people and cultural values are essential constituents for framing an apt catechesis. Indians have a natural capacity to accept and acknowledge God's working in history. Hence, when the evangelization is explained with an appropriate catechesis people will respond creatively and it is easy for them to understand mission as the working of God with His people, they will have greater positive response.

### 6.2.2. Mission as Mediating Salvation

The Christian missionary movement has been motivated to mediate salvation to all. Hence salvation defines the scope of the missionary enterprise. In the Greek patristic period salvation was understood as *Paideia* – a gradual uplift of believers to a divine status. The incarnation is understood as an instrument of the '*Divine Paideia*.' The West stressed the devastating effect of sin as well as the restoration from it by the Church. In the modern Enlightenment period salvation was interpreted as liberation from religious superstitions, attention to human welfare and the moral improvement of humanity. There was an alternative soteriology emerged which underscored the science and technology to effect the material improvement and induce a socio-political change. The Marxian category stressed not the salvation of the individual but the termination of unjust structures and hoped for a freedom from ignorance, hunger, misery and oppression. The Western mission was engaged in educating the unenlightened. Meanwhile the concept of salvation was over-shrouded in the smoke of ceaseless wars and in the radioactive winds of nuclear explosions that threatened to destroy all life on earth. Thus, the Church came to understand that our salvation is never out of this world but of this world. The salvation in Jesus Christ is understood in the context of human society and in its healing. Mission then means being involved in the ongoing dialogue between God who offers his salvation and the broken world that craves for His salvation.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Cf. Bosh, *Transforming Mission*, 389-392.

<sup>45</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 397-398.

The multifaceted aspects involved in this paradigm tell us the need for an equally multidimensional catechesis. As the concept of salvation has been interpreted differently, the Christian faith has to infuse inspirations suited to compete with the conditions of humans by the fresh interpretation of the revealed Word to the contexts of faith beneficiaries. The Indian society needs more justice, freedom, literacy and prosperity. The poor in India become prey to exploitations and subhuman treatments. If the Gospel brings them more freedom, wisdom, joy and release from oppression they will see God's hands behind these blessings. Hence our Indian mission must strive for greater freedom of our people from all their inhuman conditions.

### 6.2.3. Mission as Evangelism

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the Church and in the mission circles, there existed the verb "evangelize" accompanied by two other nouns: "evangelism" and "evangelization." The terms became very prominent and have been widely used since 1970 in Catholic as well as protestant circles. The Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and WCC Assembly in Nairobi, both pointed to these words. The Roman Catholics and the Protestant evangelical movement preferred the noun 'Evangelization' but the Protestant ecumenical churches favoured 'evangelism.' For some, mission means doing ministry to the people who are not yet Christians especially those who are in the Third World. The noun 'Evangelism' meant to do ministry to those who are no longer Christians particularly in the West. It was suggested that mission is concerned with first conversion and Christianization, and 'evangelism' is concerned with re-conversion and re-Christianization. In the last four decades, a trend emerged to understand 'mission' and 'evangelism' as synonyms. In the course of time all started using two terms as interchangeable concepts. The new term 'evangelization' came to replace the term 'mission' and added further confusion. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* used the term not less than 214 times. Here we find "One single term – evangelization, defines the whole of Christ's office and mandate."<sup>46</sup> According to David J. Bosch the words mission and evangelism are not synonyms but indissolubly linked together in theology and praxis. He perceives the word mission to be wider than evangelism. Evangelization is mission but mission is not merely evangelization. Mission embraces all activities that serve to liberate man from economic necessity to God-forsakenness. Bosch states that

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<sup>46</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 409-411.

Mission is the Church sent into the world to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal and to liberate. Therefore, Evangelism should not be equated with Mission. In true sense, 'Evangelism' is a radical reorientation which involves deliverance from every slavery by the Word and its powers; embracing Christ as Saviour and Lord; becoming a living member of his community – the Church; being enlisted into his service of reconciliation, peace, and justice on earth; and being committed to God's purpose of placing all things under the rule of Christ.<sup>47</sup>

The three words project unique patterns of faith development. When the initial announcement of the Gospel is targeted the catechesis has to deepen the knowledge of Christ and form a Christian conscience. The concept of mission envisages a catechesis that would cater an all-embracing faith-formation which would liberate humans by the liberating Saviour – Jesus Christ. The notion of evangelism should provide a catechesis that would support re-visiting, revitalizing and re-finding of faith and its practice. This paradigm needs the concerted efforts of expert catechetists and allied units of Christian formative group. India needs both evangelization and evangelism. For, there are more percentage of people who have never heard about Jesus or who are not served with evangelization. There are also Indian Christians who need a renewal and empowerment of their already existing faith. Hence the mission in India looks forward to integrated vision of mission.

#### **6.2.4. Mission as Liberation**

There were three non-systematic and ineffective approaches tried in the Church to solve the problems to liberate the poor. First was the traditional nineteenth-century tactics of charity. Secondly, in 1920s, the method was doing a more comprehensive programme including education, health care, and agriculture. Thirdly, from 1930 onward, "development projects" were focussed. It basically meant modernization. Yet none of the three approaches substantially improved the lot of the poor. From 1950s the "developing" world lost confidence in the development approach and wanted to confront the economic and political structures that maintained the poverty. Socio-politically the development was replaced by revolution and it is ecclesiastically and theologically named as "Liberation Theology." In 1979, the Latin American Roman Catholic Church coined the phrase: "God's preferential option for the poor" and concisely it is known as Liberation Theology. People living in subhuman conditions is a

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<sup>47</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 411-420.

scandal for humanity and that condition is a total system of death. Because the mission of the Church is wrapped up with the lives of the poor, she should liberate them here and now for a true salvation. The poor are no longer the recipients of mission and charity but they are the agents and bearers of mission. The 'Liberal theology' of Protestants dropped the cross but the 'Liberation theologians' assumed that God exists and that cross is a central image for theology today.<sup>48</sup>

The faith formation with the accent of theology of liberation would accelerate to understand the pain and suffering of the afflicted humanity and will bring the redeeming suffering of Christ crucified to the forefront. It would deepen a faith in Jesus who lived for the poor and who wanted the freedom of the children of God for all humanity. The mysteries of salvation need to be interpreted in the catechesis for attaining a holistic liberation through Christian faith. The Indian sub-continent awaits a true liberation from corrupt structures, unjust prejudices, insensitivity towards the poor and marginalized, etc. Only those inspired by the Gospel will have the ability to bring salvation to the people of India.

#### **6.2.5. Mission as Inculturation**

Inculturation is a concept originated recently and points to contextualizing theology and worship. In 1962 J. Masson first coined the phrase *Catholicisme inculturé* (Inculturated Catholicism). It soon gained currency among Jesuits in the form of "inculturation." In 1977, the Jesuit superior general Pedro Aruppe, introduced the term to the synod of Bishops and the Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae* which originated from this synod took it up and gave it a universal appeal. Today it is one of the most widely used concepts in the missiological circles. The early Church was born in a cross-cultural milieu. The same was true of the post-apostolic Church. The faith was inculturated through a great variety of liturgies and contexts: Syriac, Greek, Roman, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, Maronite, etc. However, the Western Christians were unconscious of the fact that their theology was culturally conditioned. They simply assumed that it was supra-cultural and universally valid. In the foreign lands their strategy was called 'adaptation' or 'accommodation' for Catholics and 'indigenization' for Protestants. In an extraordinary policy statement in 1659, the *Propaganda Fide* advised its missionaries not to force people to change their custom, as long as these were not opposed to religion or morality. Pope Benedict XV, in his encyclical

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<sup>48</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 442-447.

*Maximum Illud* in 1919 promoted the right of the “mission churches” to cease being ecclesiastical colonies under foreign control and to have their own clergy and bishops. *Rerum Ecclesiae* of Pope Pius XI in 1926 and *Evangelii Praecones* of Pius XII in 1951 elaborated further in similar lines. The new reality caused the contextual renewal and an increase in the church membership. It was finally recognized that a plurality of cultures presupposes a plurality of theologies and there was a farewell to a Eurocentric approach. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* encouraged that the Christian faith must be rethought, reformulated and lived anew in each human culture.<sup>49</sup> In 1982 Pope St John Paul II founded the Pontifical Council for Culture for supporting inculturation. Inculturation consciously follows the model of the incarnation. Inculturation suggests a double movement: inculturation of Christianity and Christianization of culture. At this point we must also consider to have an inter-culturation by which we should exchange theologies, spiritualities being open to other Churches globally. As we act locally we have to think also globally. Since the Church is the body of Christ, there should be bridges within the Churches.<sup>50</sup>

In India, the concept of inculturation invites a deeper pondering on the Christian mysteries as well as the local cultural symbols and signs. Every culture has its own modes to interpret the eternal truth revealed in Christian faith. The catechetical lessons should introduce the salvation history and Gospel teachings within the intelligible signs and symbols of the land and people, so that Christian faith will stand together with the unique patrimony of the culture of the people and be able to assimilate Christian truths as natural flow of thoughts. The catechesis should creatively introduce the inculturated theology, spirituality, worship, administration and the basic apostolic legacy. As the Catechesis forms the conscience and life-style of particular people, it must utilize an appropriate and inculturated language beneficial for the people of the land and for the greater integration of eternal truths.

#### **6.2.6. Mission as Ministry by the Whole People of God**

Mission is not a monopoly of ordained men but the responsibility of the whole people of God, ordained as well as non-ordained. For almost nineteen centuries in all ecclesiastical traditions ministry has been understood practically and exclusively in terms of the services of ordained ministers. Jesus chose his disciples not from priestly class but from among the fisher folk, tax-collectors and from ordinary people. By 80s of the first century AD, Christianity had become a new

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<sup>49</sup>*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 21.

<sup>50</sup>Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 456-457.



religion and could no longer be contained within the Judaism. In the process of this growth, the Church had to cope with heresies from without and from within. In this context the most reliable antidote was to follow the directives of clergy, in particular the Bishops, who were regarded as the sole guarantors of the apostolic tradition and they were endowed with full authority in matters of faith and administration. This was later strengthened by the concepts of apostolic succession, “indelible character,” and infallibility of Pope. Hence the ordained ministry became the way to mediate eternal salvation. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the priests and religious were authorized by the Pope to go for the mission in the whole world. But Luther strongly introduced the notion of the priesthood of all believers. Still the Church remained a strictly sacral society run by in-house personnel. II Vatican Council in its *Lumen gentium* no. 33 stated that “The apostolate of the Laity is a sharing in the salvific mission of the Church. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself. *Ad gentes* 28 urged every member of the Church “to collaborate in the work of the Gospel, each according to each one’s opportunity, ability, charism and ministry.” It was a great and significant proclamation of *Ad gentes* (no. 21) that “The Church is not truly established and does not fully live, nor is it a perfect sign of Christ unless there is genuine laity existing and working alongside the hierarchy.” In spite of the teachings of II Vatican, we find that the participation of laity in decision making is much blocked. It is the Christian community that is the primary bearer of mission. Mission does not proceed primarily from the Pope, nor from the missionary order, society, or synod, but from a community gathered around the Word and the Sacraments and sent into the world.<sup>51</sup> At this juncture, we remember what Jürgen Moltmann noted that the future will no longer be simply a theology for priests and pastors but also for the laity. It will be directed not only toward divine service in the church, but also toward divine service in the everyday life of the world.<sup>52</sup> According to Lesslie Newbigin who was a British theologian, missiologist, missionary and author who served India for long time, “The priesthood of the ordained is to enable, not to remove, the priesthood of the whole Church.”<sup>53</sup> One of the criticisms of the missional church is that it does not mention ecclesiastical structures that would prepare the laity for their callings.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Cf. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 470-472.

<sup>52</sup>Quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 478.

<sup>53</sup>Quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 473-474.

<sup>54</sup> cf. Goheen, [http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S2074-77052017000100019](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2074-77052017000100019) retrieved on 9/10/18.

In India, mostly, the faith formation in the Church is given to the laity. They must be well educated to understand their role in living the invitation of their vocation received in the Baptism and Confirmation. Only a laity oriented and mission aimed catechesis can strengthen the Church's commitment in the world. So too, only an affirmed laity community in the Church will receive variety of ministers for the evangelization. In fact, the role of the ordained is to serve the community of believers and not the other way – to receive extraordinary respect and service from the laity. The supremacy over the catechesis is not for the ordained but for the entire Church. Hence, the laity must be well prepared to support every aspect of Church-life.

## 7. Conclusion

Today, in Indian context, the above mentioned paradigms remain as the most valid tools for helping the Church to examine herself to see where she stands. They also speak loud about the lived experiences of thousands of missionaries in a variety of cultures and lands. The models of evangelization like *Missio Dei*, Mediating Salvation, Evangelism, Liberation, Inculturation and Ministry by the whole People of God, would provide lenses for focusing valid and complementary ways of being a true evangelizing Church in India. David J. Bosch through his book *Transforming Mission* clarifies that the Christian faith is intrinsically missionary and it is universal and addressed to all members of the human race. The six paradigms which we have discussed are not isolated components of a new model, but they are all intimately related to each other. It is our duty to learn from the past and go ahead with conviction by adapting the pattern most suitable to our land and people. As we know, Christianity is an ancient religion of India and has taken deep roots here. But like every other culture in the world, Indian cultures are subjected to continuous evolution and adaptation. Hence, the Catholic Church also must evolve and adapt. We need an exodus from 'only saving the souls' to a holistic understanding of mission. We are the gifted charioteers/heralds of the treasures of the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth who are invited to share and nurture the humanity with an inner authenticity of Christian faith and foster the formation of intentional Disciples of Christ.