ASIAN
HORIZONS
Vol. 5, No. 2, June 2011
Pages: 280-303

"NEW TASKS OF INCULTURATION" IN A GLOBALIZED INDIA

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Introduction

Globalization is a multifaceted phenomenon and any effort to define it is outside the scope of this paper. Culture too, is a complex term and there is no effort in this paper to enter into a detailed discussion about it either. However, both globalization and its impact on local cultures is a topic of some very intense debate. Since the topic of this paper is globalization and inculturation it is my intention to address the relationship between the two in the Indian theological context. It is my contention that globalization presents the Indian church an opportunity to renew its own efforts at inculturation.

This article focuses on inculturation in the Catholic Church in India in the context of globalization. I begin with a brief general discussion on the effects of globalization on local cultures, most significantly, the problem of identity. Second, I assess the role that religion plays both in a globalized world and in the local cultures, particularly, the dynamic within which religion becomes a tool to regain the lost identities. Third, I argue that previous attempts at Christian inculturation in India, though credible, have had serious weaknesses. On the contrary, in the global environment in India, the church must incorporate advances in the field of intercultural communication for inculturation to be a genuinely contextual project. The contemporary Indian context calls for a theological response that takes into account the complexity of the interaction between the gospel / tradition culture

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and Indian culture as an intercultural communication event. In this way inculturation can become an attempt to address the identity of local cultures in a globalized world without also losing the Christian identity of the Catholic faith. Fourth, I suggest that a retrieval of pre-colonial interaction between Christianity and other cultural and religious traditions may offer invaluable resources for a renewed theology of inculturation. Although the pre-colonial cultural integration had its drawbacks, a careful retrieval of this tradition can be a crucial resource for the inculturation project in contemporary India.

Globalization, Culture and Identity

Two concepts are significant in the discussion on globalization and culture: "reflexivity," and "relativization."[1] "Reflexivity" means that globalization is not a one-way process where global decisions impact local territories and its peoples. Rather, it refers to the movement from the local to the global as well, where local decision-making affects the global forces, most often as movements of resistance. In other words, reflexivity means that the two-way movement from global to local and vice-versa is systemic to globalization. This could happen in the migration of colonized peoples to the country of their colonizers and more recently in militancy and terrorism.[2] This means that in spite of the growing interconnectedness of the world, "locality" reflexively becomes a major force in global decision-making.[3]

As an Asian Indian living in the United States, for me the concept of reflexivity is even more apparent. As more and more American jobs get outsourced to India, the resentment against Indians living in the United States has increased. A well-meaning parishioner, unable to deal with such resentment within her, expressed her sentiments to me one day at a cordial private meeting. I had to explain to her that the United States was only experiencing now what nations around the world have experienced for years. In the past, American businesses took over local businesses in India resulting in job cuts or sometimes even company closures. The Union Carbide factory, owned by Dow Chemicals, was responsible for the death of thousands of Indians in 1984. The effects of that chemical disaster are

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[1]Anthony Giddens develops these concepts in *Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990, and *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991.

[2]Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994. Also see Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and Local*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1997, 13; and, John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, 24-25.

[3]Malcolm Waters, *Globalization,* New York: Routledge, 2001, 5.

apparent as defective babies are born even today. The present American experience as well as the anti-globalization struggles is merely part of the "reflexive" dynamic of globalization.[4]

Reflexivity has implications for the nature of Christian inculturation in India. Inculturation does not merely mean how the Church affects the local cultures. This is the old colonial *modus operandi*. Reflexivity means that the Church must be prepared to be affected by the local cultures as well. This is inevitable in the new dynamics of a global world.

The second concept is "Relativization." Historically, globalization as a system can be traced back to the expansion of European culture during the colonial era. What relativization means in today's context, as Waters suggests, is "… not that every corner of the planet must become Westernized and capitalist but rather that every set of social arrangements must establish its position in relation to the capitalist West."[5] In Robertson's words, the rest of the world must relativize itself to the West.[6] The homogenization of cultures, seen in jeans-clad teenagers subsisting on fast food and glued to gaming screens, is but one example of the relativization process.

On the cultural level, globalization has resulted in local cultures being destroyed on the larger social level. Thus from New York to New Delhi, from Mexico to Mumbai, and from Tokyo to Toronto, big cities are becoming increasingly similar in their cultural flavour. Meanwhile, local cultures are now preserved in museums or showcased before camera-toting tourists. Politically too, local populations are being disenfranchized as the power to make decisions is transferred to those who control the capital flow. Decisions that affect local populations are more and more being made on the multi-national level. All these factors contribute to the development of animosities, the generation of social conflicts, and the rise of global resistance movements.

Seen in this perspective, it is not difficult to see why Hindu nationalists in India, for example, react against Western and Christian cultural entities. From the colonial times, Hinduism and Eastern Christianity in India have been under relentless pressure to succumb to Western cultural, political and economic equations. In the contemporary global context these animosities have resurfaced, since the dynamics of colonization and globalization are not

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[4] Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 13.

[5] Waters, *Globalization,* 6.

[6] Roland Robertson and J.A. Chirico, "Humanity, Globalization and World-Wide Religious Resurgence," in John Beynon and David Dunkerley, ed., *Globalization: The Reader*, New York: Routledge, 2000, 159-163.

incomparable.[7] All the more reason for my contention, that inculturation in India must be based on new paradigms.

Globalization and the Problem of Identity

The relationship between globalization and the problem of identity has generated much scholarly research. The problem can be simply explained by saying that in a globalized world the conditions for the identification of individual and collective selves and individual and collective others are becoming ever more complex.[8] The complexity of the situation arises from the fact that, culturally, globalization provokes radically novel processes of identity formation. Scholars like Saskia Sassen term this phenomenon the "unmooring" of cultural identities.[9]

Identity is understood as "the subjective feelings and valuation of any population which possesses common characteristics (usually customs, language, or religion)."[10] In this sense nations can be understood as historical, political, and cultural identities. According to Smith, identity becomes a problematic under globalization because "global and cosmopolitan cultures fail to relate to any such historic identity."[11] Simultaneously, global culture cannot provide an alternative "global identity" simply because collective identities are associated with particular cultures within specific geographical territories[12] – a project impossible to implement in a "deterritorialized" world. For example, when Western cultural symbols such as jeans, Valentine's Day celebrations, hip-hop music, dating or junk food began to flood the Indian society in the late 1980s, it instigated adverse reaction because it not only threatened what was quintessentially Indian but also replaced it with global symbols devoid of the power to integrate local cultures. Thus, even though

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[7]The conflation of the terms colonialism and globalization is a matter of intense debate. Some scholars consider the connection between colonialism, globalization and neocolonialism to be analytically mistaken. See Jan NederveenPieterse, "Globalization North and South," in *Theory, Culture, & Society,* 17 (Feb 2001) 132-133; also Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 114-115. On the other hand, the conflation is not entirely baseless. Pieterse simultaneously admits that the feeling that globalization is another round of hegemony is a political reality. Pieterse, "Globalization North and South," 132-133.

[8] Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 98.

[9]Saskia Sassen, "Whose City is it? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims," in *Globalization and its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*, New York: the New Press, 1998, xxxi.

[10]Anthony Smith, "Towards a Global culture?" in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, ed, Mike Featherstone, New Bury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990, 179.

[11]Anthony Smith, "Towards a Global culture?" 179,

[12]Anthony Smith, "Towards a Global culture?" 180.

dating is alien to the Indian social context and found currency in the new found global environment of urban India, it only served to unsettle the family structure of traditional Indian society. Similarly, the growth and development of the business processing industry struck at the very roots of the identity of the Indian family as a cohesive social entity.[13] That is why Johann Arnason interprets modern nationalistic movements to be "the image [identity] of the nation as a cultural totality, capable of imposing a new unity on the diverging 'life orders'"[14] in response to the globalization process. Croucher captures this well when she suggests that globalization points to a world in flux and the politics of belonging [identity] is a central dimension[15] of that flux.

The question of identity becomes especially problematic when a nation-state fails to either represent or provide opportunities to groups to empower themselves towards the construction or the reconstruction of their identities because, as Paglia has pointed out, "identity is power."[16] It is under such circumstances, Manuel Castells suggests, that a social, political, or religious group may attempt to assume power "to make it the exclusive expression of such an identity."[17] For example, Castells attributes the rise of Hindu nationalism in India to the efforts of a socio-religio-political group to empower itself with a (re)constructed identity in a globalized world.[18]

The above discussion raises serious questions for the church in India. How can the Church be Christ's presence in India in a manner that the identity of both the gospel and the people is maintained and enriched? In an age of globalization, when identities of people are at risk, how can the Church in India be genuinely local? How must it rethink its ecclesiology so that it is not perceived as it was during

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[13]Take the example of business processing centers which have to remain open at night to cater to the corporation based in North America. The time difference makes it mandatory for the young people employed by these centers to leave for work at the same time when their parents return from work in the traditional work places. It was traditionally the practice that families would have dinner together and even engage in family devotions. The family, for most part, functioned as a cohesive unit. This cohesiveness is now threatened. Not only has the clashing work schedule changed the moral ethic of young people, also, children's attitude toward the elderly, the rate of divorce and the care of children has undergone dramatic and often catastrophic change. As a result the identity that is associated with being an Indian family or for that matter an Indian society is changing.

[14] Johann P. Arnason, "Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity," in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, 227.

[15]Sheila L. Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World*, New York: Rowman& Littlefield Publishing Inc., 2004, 36.

[16]As quoted by Robertson in *Globalization*, 166.

[17]Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, 339.

[18]Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 339.

colonial times where embracing the gospel also meant rejecting local cultural identities? As we shall see below, religion continues to play a significant role in the global world and in identity formation in a global environment. Could the church, then, become an agent of identity formation that is both local and Christian at the same time?

Religion and globalization

In contemporary society, and particularly in India, religion has begun to play a crucial role in the re-appropriation of identities. It is important to comprehend the reason why religion becomes a means of regaining identity when group identities are either in danger of amalgamation with a larger group or faced with extinction. We must grasp the political nature of religious struggles. In brief, the following pages will first take a closer look at the role that religion plays in a globalized world. The resurgence of Hindu nationalism in India can be seen as a case in point.

James Beckford is right in his assessment that many writers on globalization gloss over and even neglect religion in their preoccupation with the political, cultural, and economic dimensions of globalization.[19] This is so because under the "privatization thesis"[20] religion was expected to be relegated to the private sphere of human existence. Peter Beyer suggests that, although the privatization thesis is one way of dealing with the ambiguity of a global world, it is only part of the story. He contends that globalization, while structurally favouring privatization of religion, also provides fertile ground for renewed public interest in religion. Both Rolans Robertson and Peter Beyer extensively discuss the integral role of religion in the globalization debate. The discussion is crucial in India, since Hindu nationalism in part is a religio-political resistance movement.

Peter Beyer explains the role of religions in a globalized world by proposing two directions that religious traditions can take: first, traditional religions, he contends, are intricately built into particular cultures. By this Beyer means that there is a close relation between a particular culture and its religion since religion functions and operates within particular communities rather than in some vague, generic context. Thus, in the altered global context, religious traditions that normally deal in absolutes face the risk of relativization. This adjustment process brings about serious crises in

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[19]James A. Bedford, "New Religious Movements and Globalization," in *New Religious Movements in the Twenty-First Century: Legal, Political, and Social Challenges in Global Perspective,* ed. Phillip C. Lucas and Thomas Robbins, New York: Routledge, 2004, 253.

[20]Peter Beyer has written extensively on the validity of the privatization of religion in a global world. For example see, Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2000; *Religions in a Global Society*, New York: Routledge, 2006.

both the traditions and the cultures. Religions in this context begin to assert their 'otherness' or difference in relation to the global. Second, religions, however, could also imbibe the values emerging from the global culture. If religious traditions take this approach, then they can take it upon themselves to address positively the problems engendered by globalization.[21] The first option approaches globalization negatively from the perspective of particular cultures, and the second option approaches globalization positively from the perspective of global culture. Either way, religion can become a major player in the globalization debate.

Robertson uses the concept of relativization to suggest that, under globalization, subunits within the global whole are compelled to deal with their relativization. In this context, "the traditionally close ties between religions and particular cultures encourage the formation of national and personal identities."[22] Religion, then, aids communities to rediscover, reclaim, or maintain their particular identities. In this sense, the rise of religious resistance movements can be attributed to the relativization introduced by globalization. However, as Robertson suggests, most of the religious forms of resistance are not purely religious but essentially political.[23] In the proliferation of religio-political conflicts, Robertson sees empirical evidence of a reaction to globalization. Thus for example, during the British colonization of India, some Indian nationalists turned to religion to define the identity of the nation in religious terms. India was associated with a particular religious tradition. Similarly, in a globalized India, Hindu nationalists are once again turning to religion to regain the national identity. I do not argue that this identification is correct or that other interests are not at stake such as caste status quo, but that the dynamic under discussion has some credibility. On the other hand, because the search for identity and meaning itself originates in the context of the relativization of nations and societies, the problems of globalization are intrinsically political. Thus Hindu nationalists considered a Hindu rightist political party in power in India as the best way to ensure India's Hindu identity. Robertson calls this phenomenon the "politicization of theology and religion… and the "theologization of politics."[24]

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[21] Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 9-10.

[22] Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 29.

[23] Roland Robertson, "Globalization Politics and Religion," in James A. Beckford and Thomas Luckmann, ed., *The Changing Face of Religion*, Beverly Hills California: Sage Publications 1989, 15.

[24] Roland Robertson and Jo Ann Chirico, "Humanity, Globalization and Worldwide Religious Resurgence: A Theoretical exploration," in *Sociological Analysis* 46 (1985) 238.

John Meyers further clarifies the role of religion under globalization. Religious and cultural processes, he says, are sources of collective authority.[25] Such a collective bargaining or identity-assuring-element becomes necessary under globalization because it brings about rapid changes in the core structures of particular societies: family, morality, and religion. This is true in countries such as India in which, in spite of its increasing political independence and economic power, is succumbing to Western cultural patterns. As Beyer contends "What appears to some in the West as moral, economic, and political decline of their own culture appears to some in the non-West simply as continued Western cultural, economic and political imperialism."[26] In such a situation, Beyer, like Meyer, concludes that religion with its capacity for communal organization becomes an obvious candidate for structuring a response to unprecedented social and cultural changes.[27]

Beyer also suggests that religion's capacity to offer a structural response to the ambiguities of the global world is particularly effective when political and economic structures fail to respond adequately to the ambiguities created by globalization. Since religions are rooted in local cultures, Beyer continues, religious leaders have the potential to portray regional conflicts in religious term. Religious response, particularly the conservative response, encourages the dichotomization of the world into "religiously pure and impure, into us and them."[28] To quote Beyer: "Such a clear religious message can, under the current conditions, lead to successful mobilization of entire populations. Politicization on the religious basis then becomes a way of regions to assert themselves in the face of globalization and its consequences."[29]

Under globalizing conditions, religion can be expected to take one of the two directions: either its role can be limited to private religious practices or it can be assigned a broader social function. The latter choice itself offers two possibilities: an ecumenical one, concentrating on the global problems generated by the global conditions, or a particularistic one that encourages cultural separateness of one's cultural domain through a "re-appropriation of traditional religious antagonistic categories."[30] Movements that display the latter characteristic are called "anti-systemic" movements. Because of the socio-cultural and particularistic nature of religion, such religious

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[25]John Meyers, "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State," in *Studies of the Modern World System,* ed. Albert Bergesen, New York: Academic, 1980, 131.

[26]Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 91.

[27] Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 91.

[28]Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 92.

[29]Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 92.

[30]Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 93.

movements succeed in making religio-cultural themes the subject matter of politics. In Beyer's words, "religious movements supply religion as a cultural resource for the political and legal systems."[31] The description of Hindu nationalism in India and its quest for political power as a religio-cultural entity is a sound example of such a dynamic.

The anti-systemic religious systems have two common characteristics. First, they find a common agenda in the problems that emerge as consequences of the globalized world. The relativization of individual and group identities is one such problem. Thus, the Hindu nationalists' claim that Indian culture would be diluted by Western culture is a "relativization" argument. Second, the Hindu nationalists seek to address those problems by themselves becoming institutionalized in the political and legal systems of particular societies.[32] Again, the rise of the Hindu nationalists to political power in India was the way in which anti-systemic religious forces institutionalized themselves. Attempts were made to rewrite school history books and radical constitutional amendments were attempted to accommodate the "Hindutva" ideology. In this manner anti-systemic religious forces succeed in countering the globalizing forces from transporting religion from the realm of the private to the public.[33]

Yogendra Shah, emeritus professor of sociology at the Centre for Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, has drawn out the implications of the above discussion for India.[34] First, they create negative perceptions about the globalization process in local populations who become suspect about the motivations of richer nations, their social, political, and economic institutions, and the "authenticity of the nature of interdependence."[35] Secondly, he suggests, "it accelerates the growth of cultural self-consciousness and cultural identities."[36]

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[31]Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 94.

[32]Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 107.

[33]Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 108. Also see Satish Deshpande, *Contemporary India: A Sociological View*, New Delhi: Viking Books 2003.

[34]Yogendra Shah, *Culture Change in India: Identity and Globalization*, New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2000, 97.

[35]Yogendra Shah, *Culture Change in India...*, 98.

[36]Yogendra Shah, *Culture Change in India*, 98. Also see Satish Deshpande, 171-2. Deshpande analyzes globalization more in spatial terms than in cultural or purely religious terms and identifies "deterritorialization" as the primary characteristic of globalization. Deterritorialization provokes the simultaneous process of "reterritorialization." According to him, the process of reterritorialization takes two main forms. "First, there is the simple refusal of archaic territorial entities to go away, and, indeed and increase in their mass appeal." Thus, Deshpande studies *Hindutva* more as a reterritorialization issue than a purely cultural or religious phenomenon. Secondly, as he suggests, "a more complex form of

Hindu nationalists' perception of globalization and its impact on India is coloured by the nation's past experience of Western colonization. This is also true of its perception of the Church as a Western entity. Both the colonizers and the Church were perceived as a threat to the Hindu religious, cultural and political consciousness. In discussing the cultural elements of globalization in India, then, one needs to particularly keep in focus the early Portuguese and later British political, economic, and religious exploitation.

A few crucial points have emerged from the previous discussion. First that, far from losing its power, religions can maintain a revitalizing presence in globalized societies because they are intricately connected to particular cultures. Second, religion, because of its particularistic presence, is a primary source of individual and group identity. Third, when group identities are either in danger of amalgamation into a larger group or faced with extinction, religion offers a means of regaining lost ground as movements of resistance. Fourth, religious struggles are rarely purely spiritual in nature. They are deeply political movements, and political power is often seen as a means of gaining control and identity. Hindu nationalism is a classic example of a response to the prospects of relativization of a particular cultural identity in India.

Globalization and Inculturation in India: Need for a New Paradigm

Globalization and inculturation emerged as a central theme of the Asian Synod 1998, organized in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000. The late Pope John Paul II had called for five Continental Synods. The Asian Synod was held in 1998. Cardinal Jan Schotte, the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, invited responses to the *Lineamenta* from various groups of the local church. As mentioned earlier, globalization was one of the central themes that emerged in the group discussions. For example, Remigius Peter, Bishop of Kumbakonam, India, reported:

> Globalization has eroded the cultural values of the local people. Poor countries cannot compete with first-world countries. The local free markets are taken away by the world markets. As a pastoral response, we should appeal that the debts of the third-world be cancelled or lightened.[37]

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reterritorialization is an integral part of globalization itself, namely, the cultivation and deepening of spatial specificity…." Hence, Deshpande describes *Hindutva* as a struggle for spatial identity.

[37]Remigius Peter, "Report of Group Discussions: English Group A," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed. Peter C. Phan, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002, 128.

In an essay evaluating the theological contribution of the preparatory phase of the Synod, Amaladoss writes:

> Looking around Asia, it is not difficult to list the various problems the people are facing: poverty and injustice, division and discrimination, corruption and exploitation, fundamentalism and communalism, domination and oppression, individualism and consumerism. The list is long and challenging.[38]

Yet when it comes to identifying the themes for the Synod, Amaladoss points to globalization as the most pressing problem facing India. Ironically, the year 1998 also happened to be the five hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the Portuguese adventurer Vasco da Gama in South India. As Amaladoss notes, "The new route was not for purposes of tourism!"[39] On this occasion two international seminars were held in New Delhi. The themes of the seminars make the pressing context of India obvious. They were *From Colonization to Globalization: 500 Years after Vasco da Gama*[40] and *Globalization Seen from the Point of View of Its Victims.*[41]

Amaladoss expresses the themes for the Synod from the Indian point of view very clearly. He writes:

> Contemporary globalization is lived by the peoples of Asia as a form of economic colonialism. It is supported by open or hidden military might. It is mediated by monochrome, consumer culture. It gives rise to secularization and an erosion of values. It is dominated by liberal capitalism system that swears by profits and free markets and indulges in unfair trade practices…. Ecological exploitation, economic migration, displacement of peoples, mounting unemployment, sex tourism, destruction of indigenous cultures, fundamentalist religions etc., are only some of the manifestations of the hidden oppressive structures.[42]

Similarly, Soosai Arokyasamy, observes that, the church "faces a particular challenge in the invasive homogenizing culture linked to globalization."[43] In response to the materialism, consumerism, hedonism, fierce competitiveness, greed, and selfishness, Arokyasamy

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[38]Michael Amaladoss, "Expectations from the Synod of Asia," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, 54

[39]Michael Amaladoss, "Expectations from the Synod of Asia," 55.

[40]"Colonialism to Globalization: Five Centuries after Vasco da Gama," in Walter Fernandez and Anupama Dutta, ed., *Papers Presented at the International Conference Held at Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, Feb 2-6*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1999.

[41]"Globalization Seen from the Point of View of Its Victims," in Michael Amaladoss, ed., *Papers Presented at the International Consultation on Globalization from the Perspective of the Victims of History Held in Delhi, Jan 18-22*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1999.

[42]Michael Amaladoss, "Expectations from the Synod of Asia," 55.

[43]Soosai Arokyasamy, "Synod for Asia: An Ecclesial Event of Communion and Shared Witness of Faith, *Vidyajyoti: Journal of Theological Reflection* 62 (1998) 674-675.

suggests that the church must be counter-cultural on behalf of the cultures of the Asian people, their identities, and their values.[44]

In the end, fifty-nine propositions were presented as the Synod's final propositions for discussion. Among them globalization was highlighted as a phenomenon requiring urgent attention.[45] As a result, the post-synodal apostolic exhortation of John Paul II, entitled *Ecclesia in Asia,* contained an explicit and significant reference to globalization and its implications for Asia. In Chapter Six of the exhortation titled, "The Service of Human Promotion," paragraph 39a, it states:

> While acknowledging its many positive effects… globalization has also worked to the detriment of the poor, tending to push poorer countries to the margin of international economic and political relations. Many Asian nations are unable to hold their own in a global market economy. And perhaps more significantly, there is also the aspect of a *cultural* globalization, made possible by the modern communications media, which is quickly drawing Asian societies into a global consumer culture that is both secularist and materialistic. The result is an eroding of traditional family and social values which until now had sustained peoples and societies. All of this makes it clear that the *ethical and moral aspects of globalization* need to be more directly addressed by the leaders of nations and by organizations concerned with human promotion.

As the final fifty-nine propositions had already proposed, the Pope's exhortation insisted on the need for "globalization without marginalization."[46] Even before the Synod, Felix Wilfred had warned the Church in India about the dangers of globalization. He had described globalization as a conservative revolution taking the world to the restoration of capitalism without restraint. He termed it as an anti-people revolution manufactured for them by others who reap the benefits.[47]

The Asian Synod also provides the background for the thoughts of the Church in India on inculturation. In its response to the *Lineamenta* sent by Rome in preparation for the Asian Synod 1998, the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, while acknowledging the limited progress made in the field of inculturation,[48] lamented the fact that

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[44]Soosai Arokyasamy, 674-675.

[45]Proposition 49.

[46]"*Ecclesia in Asia*," Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Jesus Christ the Savior and his Mission of Love and Service in Asia, 39b.

[47] Felix Wilfred, "Searching for David's String," 86.

[48] To quote the CBCI, "The churches in India have a completely indigenous hierarchy…. Local languages are used in the liturgy and are media for evangelization. Indian religious traditions are studied in houses of formation... Centres of interreligious dialogue and ashrams are promoted. The beginnings of an Indian ecclesial expression of our Christian faith have been made…. But there is a

the spirit of *Ad Gentes* regarding the promotion of faith-reflection in new cultural contexts has so far not been implemented in India.[49] The CBCI attributed this setback to the Church's failure to understand, appreciate, and promote the different yet complementary spiritual and mystical elements of Asian religions and their worldviews. Rather, the CBCI notes that the Church deals with these religions with fear and distrust.[50]

The above view is also supported by some leading Indian theologians. For example, Amaladoss suggests that two weaknesses characterize the Indian Church's efforts at inculturation: first that it was a project undertaken outside of the context of the people in local churches. Second, ecclesiastical control has placed overly stringent limits on any reasonable exercise in inculturation. Other theologians agree with this assessment.

It must be mentioned here that inculturation is a relatively recent problem. The 'alien' nature of the Church in India began only in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the Portuguese colonizers "imposed their way of life"[51] on the St. Thomas Christians and the Indian converts to Christianity. The pre-colonial church was more culturally integrated into the environment. But in colonial India the scene changed. Amaladoss best describes the situation:

> The good news was not only proclaimed. The people were also told how they should respond to it, namely by taking over the package of creed, ritual, and community organization that the Church offered them. In the process the people were uprooted from their social and cultural identity. For example, in India one had to choose between being either an Indian socially and culturally or a "Christian."[52]

Inculturation received an impetus at the Second Vatican Council. The Council defined culture as "all those things which go to the refining and developing of man's diverse mental and physical

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shadow side to this process…." The Bishops then go on to lament the fact that the inculturation in India has not been a genuine encounter of two cultures. CBCI, "Becoming Truly Indian and Asian," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, 19.

[49]The bishops were referring to *Ad Gentes,* 22.

[50]CBCI, "Becoming Truly Indian and Asian," 19. For example, in the 1980's Anthony De Mello (1931-1987) published a number of works that tapped into depths of Asian spirituality to communicate essential Christian truths. Ten years, after his death in 1998, some of his thoughts were condemned by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. It was the manner in which these condemnations took place that creates in the Asian theologians a fear for creative interreligious work. De Mello did not have a chance to defend himself.

[51] Michael Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation: Can the Many be One?,* Delhi: Vidyajyoti Education and Welfare Society / ISPCK, 2005,xi.

[52]Michael Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation*, xi.

endowments,"[53] but did not offer any serious insights concerning the relationship between the culture of the gospel and local cultures apart from recognizing the plurality of cultures. It suggested, "legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions and peoples, especially in mission countries" provided "the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved,"[54] and even called for a more radical adaptation of the liturgy where needed.[55] It evaluated other religions positively and saw in them a ray of the truth by which God enlightens human beings.[56]

The preparatory gathering of the Bishops of Asia in Taiwan for the 1974 Synod on Evangelization described evangelization as a Church incarnate in a people, a Church indigenous and inculturated.[57] Beyond Vatican II, the Synod addressed culture more seriously than ever before. It proposed: "The gospel must impregnate the culture and the whole way of life of man… Accordingly, we must devote all our resources and all our efforts to the sedulous evangelization of human culture, or rather of the various human cultures. They must be regenerated through contact with the gospel."[58]

Amaladoss evaluates the effort as having begun well, but losing its way in the course of time. Two reasons could be suggested for its lack of success. While the documents of the Church encouraged inculturation, serious limits were placed upon its implementation. For example, the 1994 document issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship insisted that the unity of the Roman rite must be preserved while attempting variation for the sake of inculturation.[59] Moreover, stringent bureaucratic controls long delayed any serious efforts at inculturation. Secondly, Amaladoss suggests that the inculturation project in India was abstract and elitist. Instead of letting an Indian liturgy spontaneously evolve from and in the midst of people, it was "developed" as if a specimen in a laboratory from the literary sources of Hindu Vedas. It only served to alienate the subcultures that have found the Hindu religious tradition oppressive.

The implications of such limits on inculturation are obvious. Christians are looked upon as foreigners, associated with India's Western colonial past and its equally Western globalized future. In

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[53]*Gaudium et Spes*, 53.
[54]*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 38.
[55]*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 40.
[56]*Lumen Gentium*, 13.
[57]Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation*, 7.
[58]*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 18,20.
[59]Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation*, Rome: 1994.

this context, the Church in India must respond in a manner consistent with its past history of cultural symbiosis achieved at least to some degree, by the pre-colonial church.

A new framework for inculturation

The context of globalization makes inculturation an urgent issue. As was seen earlier, the cultural effects of globalization threaten the identities of local cultures and populations. Often, as is the case with Hindu nationalism in India, religious militancy becomes a *modus operandi* for regaining local cultural identity.

Two concrete proposals form the crux of this new direction. The first proposal suggests that Christian inculturation must be approached more broadly and contextually in India. In other words, inculturation cannot be limited to incorporating symbolic gestures into liturgy, making superficial ritual changes, or even adopting local languages as a medium of worship. Neither can it be achieved primarily by efforts at Hinduization or Indianization. Rather, inculturation must be seen as a dialogue between the local cultures (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist etc.), in all its intercultural complexity. At a time where local identities are at risk, the church must be present in the local cultures in a way it enriches the local cultures rather than risk them. Moreover, inculturation must be approached keeping in mind the dynamics of globalization such are reflexivity, relativization, the problems of identity, and in India, the equation of colonialism and globalization.

For this project, I suggest that, first the application of the advances in the field of intercultural communication to the Indian context can be of much help. I will use the insights of Robert Schreiter extensively here. Second, the pre-colonial tradition of Christianity's encounter with local cultures in India can be an important resource for future intercultural projects. The retrieval of this tradition can shed light on the relative cultural integration the early Christians had achieved in South India. I contend here that not only will such retrieval present Christianity and other religions as capable of peaceful co-existence, but it will also lead to interreligious dialogue that can serve to alleviate misconception about Christianity as a Western, globalizing religious tradition.

With regard to inculturation, the interaction between the gospel and local culture should more and more be understood and as an intercultural communication event since the gospel (understood as culture) and its interaction with other local cultures carries within

itself all the complex processes of intercultural communication.[60] The effects of globalization both positive and negative could guide the church in India to assess its own interaction with local cultures.

First, just as the success or failure of intercultural communication events are evaluated by the criteria of effectiveness and appropriateness of the cultural interaction, the gospel/culture encounter too must be evaluated by the same criteria. "A communication event is *effective* when the speaker feels that it has achieved its goal; namely, that it [the message] has become lodged with the hearer on the other side of the cultural boundary in a manner recognizable to the speaker;" and "a communication event is *appropriate* when it is achieved without a violation of the hearers' cultural codes."[61] By contemporary standards, colonial Christianity failed with regard to both these criteria. The Portuguese, for example, used violence as a strategy. Some of the more contemporary efforts at inculturation can be called partly successful on the 'appropriate' criterion. For example, the *ashram* experiment is clearly an attempt on behalf of Christians to enter into the cultural milieu of Hindu India in a manner that values the Hindu religious and cultural structures. On the effectiveness criterion, on the other hand, the Church in India has experienced little success, as the Hindu nationalist movement against Christians attests. The Church has essentially been ineffective in entering into dialogue with India in a manner in which it feels at home within the Indian cultural milieu.

Second, Indian inculturationists must pay attention to the elements of intercultural communication events such as the speaker/hearer, context, and the message. The Indian church must also pay attention to the hermeneutical implications of intercultural communication such as, for example, that the success of any intercultural communication event lies at the end of an intensive dialogue which involves much give and take.[62] The concept of "reflexivity" can be very helpful in this regard. Thus, it is imperative for the Church in India to consider not only how it is carrying out its mission but also how this mission affects the identity of the majority of its people and its own identity. The church must be sensitive not only how she will affect the local culture but also how the local culture will affect the church. It must not only consider what its message is, but also how this message is perceived and received by the Indian people. Preserving the integrity of the gospel message depends upon being

[60]Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 33.
[61]Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 33.
[62]Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 35-36.

sensitive to the manner in which the message can be heard and received.

For example, the "great commission" in Mt 28:18-19 can be understood very differently from the perspective of the speaker and the hearer. In India, this biblical passage can justify the claim of the Hindu nationalists that the primary motive of the Christian presence from the colonial times to the present is conversion of India to Christianity. The culturally insensitive evangelization efforts at the turn of the millennium by both Catholic and Protestant Evangelical Christians further validates the Hindu nationalists' claim. Christians, on the other hand, cannot deny that evangelization is an important aspect of the Christian mission. Such complexities make it imperative for the Church in India to take the principles of intercultural communication seriously as the Church strives to be faithful to the gospel and to be authentically Indian.

Third, Indian inculturation theologians must pay attention to yet another important aspect of the intercultural communication process – the context in which differing cultures interact. Whether the interacting cultures are individualistic or collective, low-context or high context, and tolerant or intolerant of ambiguity are significant elements of intercultural communication.[63] The implications of not taking into account the context of cultural dialogue are all too evident in India. Experiments with liturgical inculturation failed, for one reason, because theologians did not take into consideration the caste complexities of the Indian society. For the most past, non-Brahmin and non-Hindu populations in India were bound to reject a Sanskritized liturgy. Christian efforts at inculturation on the official level were primarily an attempt at Hinduization. The rest of the population was essentially excluded from the inculturation project. In contrast, the proposal being made here is that cultural integration requires a differentiated attention to various elements of the context. In some parts of India, Christianity may have to inculturate into a Buddhist, Muslim or Sikh cultural milieu. This would be possible only if deep sensitivity to the cultural and religious identity of the local populations are taken as seriously by the church as its own identity and message.

The fourth aspect of intercultural communication is the message itself. Any message runs the risk of either losing or gaining information as it crosses cultural boundaries. Some part of the message may be more obvious and transparent in the speaker's culture than in the hearer's culture or vice-versa. Lack of

[63]Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 37-38.

understanding of this aspect may lead to much confusion and even communication failure.[64] For example, the present violence against Christians is a new development. Globalization opened the hitherto secluded cultures to the Western world and its Western values. Thus, when at the turn of the second millennium, Christians of all denominations converged upon India to "make known the gospel to every Indian," Hindu nationalists interpreted that as the return of colonial Christianity in the new age of globalization. Although the Christians had a message, from the perspective of the non-Christian hearers, this message crossed the Indian cultural boundary as nothing short of yet another Western imperialism. The result has been damaging for the Church in India. Thus, when one takes into account the different variables of intercultural communication such as the speaker, the hearer, the context, and the message, one is compelled to pay attention to the complexity of intercultural communication.

Fifth, Beyond analyzing the communication event to assess the hermeneutical issues involved in intercultural communication, epistemologically, there are four distinctive characteristic of any intercultural communication event: meaning, truth, sameness / difference, and agency.[65]

For the Church in India it is crucial to understand the implications of the statement that "meaning is not a predetermined product but the result of the interaction [dialogue][66] of all those involved in establishing meaning." From this perspective, the Church in India must pose probing questions to itself, asking, what is the meaning of being the Church in India? What is the very meaning of interreligious dialogue in the Indian pluralist context? Toward what realistic end should dialogue be directed? What does it mean to be a "local" church? What should be the Church's mission in India? How does it arrive at its conclusions about the meaning of its mission and how does the Church accomplish this mission in the Indian multi-cultural context? These questions are particularly important in the way the universal Church understands the life of the local church.

The limitation that the universal Church places on the local church's efforts at inculturation is a matter of much contention in all of Asia. As mentioned earlier, in preparation for the Asian Synod, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India lamented the lack of progress regarding the promotion of faith-reflection in new cultural contexts. They attributed this failure of Christian mission efforts to the failure of the universal Church to take the spiritual and mystical elements of

[64]Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 38.
[65]Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 39.
[66] Brackets mine.

Asian religions seriously.[67] Thus, as mentioned earlier, even the earliest attempts to develop an Indian liturgy that incorporates Hindu spiritual traditions (a carefully selected inclusion of scriptures from Indian religions) or Buddhist mystical practices (zen) has not received official approbation to date. Yet Latin liturgy has been recently promoted without sensitivity to religious or cultural boundaries. As Peter Phan notes,

> "Many bishops [at the Synod] stated plainly that without a genuine inculturation of the Christian faith into the Asian cultures – in theology, liturgy, indeed, in every aspect of church life – and without a humble dialogue with other religions and a committed solidarity with the Asian poor, Christianity will simply have no future in Asia in the next millennium."[68]

The Asian churches are equally disenchanted with the recent *motuproprio* permitting celebration of the Tridentine Mass because of its promotion of an ancient Roman rite.[69] The Church in India will have to discover the "meaning" of being church in its own social, religious, and cultural context rather than in existing as the "branch office"[70] of a Western church. In other words, Indian bishops and Asian theologians are convinced of the need for new theological initiatives in India.

Understanding 'meaning' as the end result of a dialogic process rather than just propositional statements has implications for a theology of inculturation in India. Propositional truth is seen as a necessary but insufficient condition for establishing intercultural truth. In fact, propositional truth is only as significant as the meaning of the lives of parties involved in the intercultural event, particularly those of the speakers. The bitter reaction to *Dominus Jesus*[71] (August 6, 2000) from both Hindu religious leaders and Indian Christian theologians is a telling example. The reaction to the document was particularly bitter because John Paul II had just visited India and shared the platform with Indian religious leaders. During the event the Pope did not fail to hail the value of Indian religious traditions and express his appreciation for these traditions. *Dominus Jesus* was released immediately after his return to Rome from India. Indian religious leaders were taken aback at the tone of *Dominus Jesus*. The following statement, no matter what it was originally intended to

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[67] CBCI, "Becoming Truly Indian and Asian," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, 19.

[68] Peter C. Phan, ed., x.

[69] http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/VISEnglishSummPont.pdf

[70] http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/VISEnglishSummPont.pdf, ix.

[71] http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dom inus-iesus_en.html.

mean, was understood by Hindu and other religious leaders in India to mean that whereas their particular religions contained divine elements in them they essentially lacked salvific power. As the document stated:

> Certainly, the various religious traditions contain and offer religious elements which are from God…. One cannot attribute to these, however, a divine origin or an *ex opera operato* salvific efficacy, which is proper to the Christian sacraments. Furthermore, it cannot be overlooked that other rituals, insofar as they depend on superstitions or other errors (cf. 1 Cor 10:20-12), constitute an obstacle to salvation (*DI*, 21).[72]

Since the document did not identify specific rituals within other religious traditions that are termed "superstitious" or "erroneous," Hindu nationalists, in light of the colonial Christian experience, saw this statement as history repeating itself in modern India. *Dominus Jesus* was interpreted in a way that seriously hurt both the credibility of the Church among leaders of other religious traditions. Thus, the church must pay attention not only to what it is saying but also to how it comes across to its hearers and how it is received by those hearers. Without sensitivity to the reality that in intercultural communication meaning is a negotiated process, the 'meaning' of any message will be 'lost in translation.' The bitter controversy created by *Dominus Jesus* is a telling example of this.

Another characteristic of intercultural hermeneutics is agency. Intercultural communication should not lead to either of the subjects involved being deprived of their subjectivity. One of the negative effects of globalization is precisely this, that it deprives people of their identity, subjectivity, individuality and the capacity to make their own decisions. For instance, the Church in India for many centuries functioned under the colonial model of communication where the speaker was the gospel/church and the hearer was the local culture. There are even recent examples in India where even remote mission stations of rural India, new churches were built to replicate their European counterparts. Architecturally, the buildings look colonial, the social set up within the rectories are Western, and the liturgy is Roman. Christian presence for the most part still focuses on making "them" (the people) "one of us." Seminary education for most part is still focused on imparting Western philosophical and theological thought that guarantees doctrinal soundness. Except for the *ashram* experiment, it is not uncommon to find Christian churches and communities to be a Western oasis in the Indian cultural landscape.

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[72]http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html.

In contrast, the global environment and sensitivity to the local cultures demand that the Church and the local culture are both speakers and hearers simultaneously. In practical terms, then, the Church must listen to the culture as eagerly as it intends to speak to the culture. Failure to do so will result in the ineffectiveness of the communications event. For example, Hindu nationalists' violence against Christians in India cannot be excused, but it must be recognized that one contributing factor is a failed intercultural communication process. In fact, Hindu nationalists name conversion to Christianity the single most contentious issue underlying its attack against Christians. The *suddhi* (purification by reconversion to Hinduism) exercise was meant to regain converted Christians back to Hinduism both as a religion and as a cultural life-style. Since the focus of the Christian presence in India in colonial times was to be the conversion of Indians to Christianity, the Church failed to effectively gain from the encounter. In the process, even genuine attempts at inculturation such as the *ashrams* become suspect.

Another important element in intercultural communication is the problem of identity. As seen in the earlier discussions, identity is a crucial aspect in a global world. The Church in India is caught between its primarily Western identity and the local cultural context. The history of the Western identity lies in the fact that people in colonial India were not only presented the Christian message but were also told what the appropriate response to the message should be. In the process, Amaladoss notes, the people were uprooted from their social and cultural identity.[73]

If identity is at the core of the cultural debate, the Church as a religious entity cannot be anything but Christian.[74] Simultaneously, however, the context of globalization provides the impetus for the Church in India to become essentially more Indian and local without a return to its colonial or Western past. The intercultural communication in India must be between the Gospel / Indian Church and local cultures and not between a Western Church and local cultures. In essence, the Church in India must be, as the Catholic Bishops Conference of India proposes, truly Indian, truly Asian, and truly Catholic.

I suggest that a viable model for such a project, perhaps, can be found in the pre-colonial Indian church history. In other words, a retrieval

[73]Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation,* xi.

[74]Joseph Mattam, "Inculturated Evangelization and Conversion," in *Theological Studies*, 50 (2003) 229-235. Mattam suggests that the church needs to be deculturated from the world's outlook and reculturated into Jesus' outlook.

of the pre-colonial tradition may provide insights and resources for a renewed theology of inculturation.

Directions for Indian Church - Pre-colonial church in India: A model for intercultural communication?

A blueprint for inculturation based on the principles of intercultural communication is not easy to find. Models for such a project are scarce. In light of this difficulty, the pre-colonial Indian church may present important insights for a renewed theology of inculturation in India. A detailed study of the advances in intercultural communication along with a retrieval of the history of Christianity in pre-independent India may be a worthwhile project – a project that is incumbent upon the Church if it is to become genuinely Indian and address the issue of identity in a globalized India.

While undertaking this project one must resist the temptation to romanticize the life of these early Indian Christians or to claim that Indian religious pluralism was an ideal reality. In retrospect, one can find many weaknesses and erroneous practices in the Church. Also as described earlier, Indian pluralism was an imperfect reality, which can be perceived as successful mainly in relative comparison with the systemic violence associated with the colonial period. Nevertheless, one is compelled to pay close attention to the relative cultural symbiosis, social harmony, and orthodoxy that the Church was able to achieve in these pre-colonial times – a challenge to both the Hindu nationalists and to the Church in India today.

The study of the history of Christian presence in India reveals that "Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Christians, Jews and later Muslims, both Indian and foreign, lived in reasonable harmony"[75] up until the advent of the Portuguese. This observation, although seeped in romantic idealism, is significant in the contemporary Christian experience of militant Hindu nationalism. As suggested earlier, realistic assessment does indicate the existence of relative social and cultural integration. A question that Indian theologians must ask is, "What were the factors that led to the relative assimilation of the early Christian into the main fabric of the Indian society?" The answers are varied. Whereas some scholars suggest that both Hinduism and Christianity exhibited impressive levels of toleration,[76] others attribute it to ancient India's economic exigencies.

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[75] Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India: From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century*, Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1984, 153.

[76] M.G .S. Narayan, as quoted in Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India, Vol I,* 153.

Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in-between. Certainly, economic considerations of the Hindu majority were a major factor. The spices from Southern India were acclaimed in the then known world and the arrival of traders from Asia Minor was always a welcome and profitable practice. That should not, however, overshadow the reasonable ability of the Hindus for assimilation which was matched by the Christians' (and Muslims') ability for integration as well.

It is clear that the pre-colonial and postcolonial church functioned within two different models of intercultural communication. In this context, the pre-colonial cultural integration, which reasonably preserved the identity of particular communities, becomes a great resource in a globalized world. Although historians such as Mundadan give us the details of the cultural symbiosis, there remains a need for more detailed research on the actual dynamics of the cultural interaction between the diverse religious and cultural traditions of the time. There remains the need to isolate the romantic aspects of this history and the need to trace historically reliable data on the religious coexistence. There is also the need for an extensive study of the cultural and religious implications of the life of this Indian community. How did the pre-colonial Indians accomplish this? Could "trade" be the only reason for the relative harmony? If so, why could their achievement not be replicated by the colonists and the colonial church since "trade" was their primary motive too?

It is interesting to note that the primary motive for the arrival of the early Christians to India was both missionary and for trade. Yet the cultural integration they achieved, the degree of reasonable peaceful coexistence they developed, and the economic cooperation they forged added up to a relatively successful experiment. This point is being stressed for a very important theoretical reason. The retrieval of this pre-colonial tradition must be sensitive to the multidimensional nature of Indian theological efforts. In other words, any work of retrieval must be attentive to the cultural, religious, and economic aspects of the lives of these Indians. This sensitivity will be important in the context of the multi-dimensionality of the Indian theological tradition (which is multidimensional in its emphasis on inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice), and the multidimensional characteristic of globalization.

Conclusion

The following five points may be proposed as the important characteristics of the renewed theological initiatives that must be made in the field of inculturation in a global India. First, inculturation is really the task of the local church and the context in which the Church

exists. Inculturation cannot be imposed from above – as the Indian colonial and post-colonial inculturation experiment has indicated. The integration of the gospel and cultures can only take place through dialogue between the local church and the context in which it lives.

Second, in a global environment, inculturation must be carried out a contextual process that is sensitive to local identities. In this sense, there cannot be only one model of inculturation for India. The past inculturation models failed because the more literal approach was designed as the one model to be implemented in all contexts in India. As Mattam suggests, "Inculturation must begin with life, not with the liturgy."[77] As the previous inculturation experiment indicated, such one-model-fits-all approach to inculturation only served to alienate contesting cultures across India. The multicultural and multi-religious context calls for contextual theological approaches to be implemented.

Third, inculturation can only happen in an atmosphere of freedom and trust. The cultural context should be considered the locale where the relationship between the universal Church and the local church is seen as complementary rather than as instances of domination and subjugation or for ecclesiastical policing. In India there must be much room provided for theological synthesis between Christian doctrine and Indian philosophical schools of thought. A similar claim can be made also with regard to the liturgical realm. Censuring and silencing of theologians and liturgists cannot produce creative theological and intercultural enterprise. Also, the relationships between bishops and theologians and local peoples need to be life-giving rather than merely juridical. Thus the appointment to the ecclesiastical offices must take place in favour of the local church rather than only the preservation of a de-contextualized orthodoxy and Roman tradition.

Fourth, inculturation is a dialogic process. Intercultural interaction should be characterized by dialogue. The church must realize that the meaning of an intercultural communication will only be achieved at the end of the process of a dialogue. Meaning cannot be predetermined in an intercultural context.

Fifth, resources for such future inculturation can be discovered in the pre-colonial church in India. Indian theologians must have the confidence to explore their rich cultural heritage and find its future in the wisdom of its ancestors. The pre-colonial history can foster meaningful dialogue between Hindus and Christians.

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[77]Mattam, Joseph Mattam, "Inculturated Evangelization and Conversion," in *Theological Studies*, 50 (2003), 235.