

JOURNAL OF C.O.T.R. THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ISSN 2231-3230

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY, 2016



C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary

P.O. Box - 3, Dorathota

Bheemunipatnam Post,

Vishakapatnam – 531163,

Andhra Pradesh, South India.

Tel. 08933-200182; 200097, 201132

www.cotr.in

JOURNAL OF C.O.T.R. THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY, 2016

Journal of C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary (ISSN 2231-3230) is a peer reviewed publication of Church On The Rock Theological Seminary, located in Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, South India. The purpose of this journal is to promote the vision and mission of C.O.T.R College of Ministries; “of producing anointed and informed servants of God” in Indian churches, institutions, theological colleges and seminaries. Therefore, the journal intends to focus on scholarly articles from all theological disciplines that promote sound evangelical perspectives to current issues and trends. As an English-language journal, *JCOTRTS* actively seeks and promotes contributions from scholars from all over the world. This is the second edition of the second volume of the biannual edition published in February, 2016.

Publisher	: Mrs. Mary Titus
Schedule	: Published twice a year in October and February
Editor	: Suhas D.
Editorial Committee	: Suhas D., Hirendra Prasad and Josfin Raj

Subscriptions: *JCOTRTS* is available on a subscription basis both for individuals and institutions. Institutional journal exchanges are actively sought.

The rates of subscription per annum are as follows:

India: Rs. 350.00 Overseas : US \$ 50.00

Please send your subscription by Bank draft or Banker’s cheque payable to **C.O.T.R. College of Ministries**, P.O. Box - 3, Dorathota Village, Bheemunipatnam Post, Vishakapatnam – 531163, Andhra Pradesh, South India. Surface mail, handling and bank charges are included in the subscription rates.

Subscribers should give full name and postal address when paying for their subscription and should send notice of change of address at least five weeks before it is to take effect (old address as well as new address must be given).

Send all communications to the Editor, The Journal of C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary, C/o C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary, P.O. Box - 3, Dorathota, Bheemunipatnam Post, Vishakapatnam – 531163, Andhra Pradesh, South India.

Tel. 08933-200182; E-mail: cotrjournal@cotr.in

© COTRTS 2016. All rights reserved. Printed in India.

CONTENTS

Editorial	Suhas D.	1-2
Peter Waldo - A Role Model for today's Spirituality from the medieval period	Abraham Thomas	3-10
Corruption in the Church/Ministry: Causes, Contemporary Corrupt Practices, Consequences and Cures	Dr. Dasan Jeyaraj	11-27
The Cross-Cultural Leader: Communicating Cross-Culturally	Dr. Gladwyn Turner	29-37
The Contribution of Jesuit Missionaries and its Impact on Indian Christians	Rev. Rajasekhar	39-52
Towards Understanding the Trinitarian Interrelationship in the Soteriological Function: A New Testament Perspective	Hirendra Prasad	53-69
Towards a Trinitarian Ecclesiology for the Indian Church	Suhas D.	71-80
Challenges and Prospects of Missional Praxes in the 21st Century: A Theological Analysis	Josfin Raj	81-98
Significance of Indigenous Church Planting for Church Growth in the Indian Context	Rajan Babu	99-107
Book Review	Josfin Raj	109-110

EDITORIAL

Sola Gracia... is what we can say that has brought us to the end of this academic year. We give to you the second edition of the second volume for this year. We appreciate the prayers, partnership and contributions of everyone. This work is not an individual endeavor, rather a collaborative work. I thank the authors, co-editors, press and management for making this happen.

This journal is a collection of paper presentations presented in COTRTS by the writers who are the faculty at COTRTS. Mr Abraham Thomas introduces Peter Waldo from the medieval period as a contemporary model of spirituality. Rev. Raja Sekhar explicates the contributions and impact of Jesuit missionaries on Indian Christians. Mr Hirendra Prasad provides a New Testament perception of inter-relational soteriological functioning of the Trinity. Mr. Suhas accentuates on the necessity of Trinitarian ecclesiology as a better archetype for Indian Church in relation to its unity. Mr. Josfin Raj constructs a theological analysis on the challenges and prospects of missional praxes in the 21st century. Dr. Dasan Jayaraj decodes the causes, corrupt practices, consequences and cures of an extremely susceptible concern such as corruption in the church/ministry. Mr. Rajan Babu recommends that indigenous church planting method with a special emphasis on house churches is significant for the growth of church in India. Dr Gladwin Turner discuss about the magnitude of communication in cross-cultural leadership. Finally, the journal ends with a review by Mr. Josfin Raj on Dr. Dasan Jayaraj's book: *Followers of Christ Outside the Church in Chennai, India: a Socio-Historical Study of a Non Church Movement*.

The journal covers essential elements such as theological, biblical exposition and mission praxis of assorted issues for the Growth of Church in India. It reminds us that both these elements are imperative and correlative in the development of the Church. Church growth and the advancement of missions

are more pertinent and effectual when strong theological and biblical exposition becomes their foundation. On the other hand theological discourses and biblical exposition of missiological concepts independent of the praxis remain futile. This again turns me to the vision and mission statement of COTRIS which stresses upon both the elements: “To see God glorified in India through the transforming ministry of anointed and informed leaders.” “COTRIS has been established to fulfil the Great Commission by equipping the body of Christ to reach the unreached and to plant churches.” In these mission and vision statements ‘informed’ and ‘equipping’ stands for the theological and biblical exposition and ‘reach the unreached’ and ‘to plant churches’ stands for the mission praxis. This is our prayer that let God help us to work for the advancement of the gospel and missions with a strong basis of theological and biblical exposition.

Suhas D.

Peter Waldo – A Role model for today's Spirituality from the medieval period

*Mr. Abraham Thomas**

1. Introduction

Reformation period starts with Martin Luther's attempt to oppose the Roman Catholic Church by posting his 95 thesis on the doorpost of the Church at Wittenberg. It was a collective attempt in which Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin also made an attempt to oppose the Catholic Church in Switzerland and France. But the realization of the intolerant practices of the Catholic Church was known years before. There were people like Peter Waldo from France, John Wycliff from England, John Hus from Bohemia, Savonarola from Italy who earlier made an attempt to reform the Church. They realized the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. Clergy, priests and even Popes were also corrupted. Here I focus on Peter Waldo who opposed the intolerant practices of the Roman Catholic Church in the 12th century. The followers of Peter Waldo are known as Waldenses.

2. Birth and Early Life of Peter Waldo

Peter Waldo was born in France in AD 1140 into a wealthy family. His original name was Pierre Vaudes or De Vaux. He was a French businessman who believed in the simple way of lifestyle and adopted Bible oriented preaching. He stood against the intolerant practices and the unbiblical patterns of the Roman Catholic Church. The birthplace of Peter Waldo and the date of his birth are unknown. Most preferable place is Lyon.¹ The followers of Peter Waldo are nicknamed as 'Poor men of Lyon' by the Roman Catholic Church. They were the public Bible readers, men and women of that age. They met a popular want among the hungry multitudes, for; after all, the people were better at heart than the priest. They went out two by two, without pilgrim's staff or monks wallet, and they won the names of 'Humiliati', 'Poor men', 'Leonists', 'Sandal-wearers'. They drew many people after them. They knew how to impart their Scriptural knowledge, and grew richer and deeper.²

* Mr. Abraham Thomas is faculty for Church History at COTRTS.

¹ G.B.Watts, "The Waldenses in the New World," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 23 (Chicago: William Benton, 1768): 1-149.

² W.M.Blackburn, History of the Christian Church..., 310.

3. Teachings of Peter Waldo

One of the most convenient sources of his doctrines is a treatise written about 1320 by Bernard Gui, a famous inquisitor of southern France at a time when the Waldenses were still among the strongest of dissident movements.³ The Waldenses based their teachings strictly on the Scriptures.⁴

3.1. Church

Peter Waldo rejected the ecclesiastical authority, especially by their conviction that they were not subject to the Pope or his decrees of excommunication.⁵ The rejection of the intermediary role of the clergy was the fundamental issue which gained the Waldenses the description of heretics. The Roman Catholic Church opposed him due to his standpoint against their church practices.⁶

3.2. Eucharist

He rejected or re-interpreted for themselves all the Catholic sacraments.⁷ Transubstantiation, in Christian theology, dogma that in the Eucharist the bread and wine to be administered become, upon consecration, the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ, even though the external manifestations of the bread and wine—shape, color, flavor, and odor—remain. It is thus opposed to other doctrines, such as the Lutheran doctrine that the body and blood of Christ coexist in and with the bread and wine, which remain unchanged.⁸

3.3. Life after Death

He denied purgatory, for which they could find no basis in the New Testament. This led them (Waldenses) to reject the Catholic belief in the value of alms and prayers for the dead. For the Waldenses, if the dead were in hell they were beyond hope and, if in heaven, they had no need of prayer. Similar reasoning led them to reject as well the prayers to images of the saints.⁹

3.4. Bible

He rejected the unauthorized preaching of the Bible.¹⁰ He took much serious in the Bible rather than a religious piousness. Under serious impressions he

³ Ronald Finucane, "The Waldenses", Eerdman's Handbook to The History of Christianity, Edited By Tim Dowley (New York: Guideposts, 1977), 316. (Hereafter it is referred to as 'Ronald Finucane, "The Waldensians", 1977').

⁴ John T. McNeill, "Waldensians," The Encyclopedia Americana. Vol.28 (Connecticut: Grolier Incorporated, 1983): 1-273.(Hereafter it is referred as 'John T.McNeil, Waldenses'...)

⁵ Ronald Finucane, "The Waldenses"..., 316.

⁶ John T. McNeill, "Waldenses"..., 273.

⁷ Ronald Finucane, "The Waldenses"..., 316.

⁸ Joel T. Rosenthal, "Transubstantiation," Microsoft ® Encarta...,

⁹ Ronald Finucane, "The Waldensians"..., 316.

¹⁰ Ronald Finucane, "The Waldensians"..., 316.

wished to understand the Gospels which he had been accustomed to hear read in the Latin services of the church. He employed two men to translate portions of the Bible, and extracts from the Fathers, into the popular language (1160), thus forming a little book for the people. Copies were made and circulated.¹¹ At some points the scriptural principle caused revisions of doctrine similar to those of the 16th century Reformation.¹²

3.5. Apostolic Life Style

Peter Waldo adopted a simple way of life and showed a good pattern to his followers. He adopted the example from the Apostles of Jesus. He did not give importance to the worldly pleasure and wealth. He gave much of his wealth to the poor and himself to the work of his Lord. He began his lay-preaching in the streets of Lyons and in the neighboring villages. He had no aim to separate from the Church, but to receive and restore apostolic purity, piety, genial society, good character, and the rights of the people.¹³

4. Comparisons between Peter Waldo and the Roman Catholic Church

Dennis J. Mock in his book 'Church History Survey' is giving the comparison between the fundamental doctrinal differences between the Roman Catholic Church and Waldenses. Peter Waldo believed that the Faith in Christ alone for salvation, whereas Roman Catholic Church believed that salvation is by faith in Christ through the church sacraments. Peter Waldo believed that the Scripture is in the hands of all, whereas the Roman Catholics believed that Scripture is only for the Church officials. Peter Waldo believed in the authority of the Bible, whereas the Roman Catholics believed in the authority of the Church teaching. Peter Waldo advocated the New Testament poverty and simplicity, whereas the Roman Catholics possessed much wealth and power. Peter Waldo believed in the priesthood of each believer, whereas the Roman Catholics believed and practiced in the professional priesthood of clergy in the Church.¹⁴

5. Impact of Peter Waldo and Waldenses in the medieval period

The advent of Peter Waldo and his followers was a great hindrance for the Roman Catholic Church. The people in the middle ages began to realize the

¹¹ W.M. Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Cranton & Stowe, 1879), 309. (Hereafter it is referred as W.M. Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church...*).

¹² John T. McNeil, "Waldensians"...273.

¹³ W.M. Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church...*, 310.

¹⁴ Dennis J. Mock, *Church History Survey* (Atlanta: International Bible Society, 1984), 131.

wrong patterns of the clergy and priests. Following are the few impacts of the advent of Peter Waldo in the medieval period.

5.1. Obedience to God than Man

The impact of Waldo and his co-workers on central Europe was felt by the Church of Rome. The archbishop of Lyons launched a persecution against Waldo and the “poor men of Lyons” The archbishop officially forbade them from preaching in 1176. Waldo and the Church refused. “We must obey God rather than men,” Waldo responded. This, of course, has always been the policy of God’s Church, and his true Apostles.¹⁵

Waldo’s persistence in preaching the Gospel was brought to the attention of the Pope. He was summoned to appear before Alexander III. The outcome of this meeting was critical. The real issue at hand was whether the work could continue in central Europe. Remember, at this time Papal authority was reaching its zenith. Waldo went to Rome in later 1178. He used great wisdom while dealing with the Pope. He deflected the arguments away from doctrine to the use of the Bible. He carried with him a copy of the scriptures written in the vernacular. He showed the Pope how desperately the people needed access to the scriptures. He showed how these scriptures had helped people all over Southern France and parts of Italy and Spain.¹⁶

Alexander III¹⁷ at first appeared to agree with the Waldo’s demands. However, he left the decision to the Lateran council of 1179. Peter Waldo left two of the “poor men” behind to attend this council-They were condemned by the Lateran Council¹⁸. Waldo’s coworkers were told they could preach only if the local priest asked them to. The Roman Catholic Church cannot endure their preaching. Waldo’s associates resisted the decision of the council. It is recorded that they replied, “Christ sent us. If you were His church, you would not hinder us.”¹⁹

They continued to preach wherever they went. It took the archbishop five and a half years, a new Pope, and a new bull²⁰ anathemizing Waldo and all

¹⁵ Peter Salemi, “Impacts of Waldenses,” <http://www.british-israel.ca/Church%20of%20God7.htm> (accessed on 2.10.13).

¹⁶ W.M.Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church...*, 318.

¹⁷ Alexander III (Pope) (1105-1181), pope (1159-1181), who vigorously championed papal authority in the church.

¹⁸ Lateran Councils -five ecumenical councils of the Roman Catholic Church, held in the Lateran Palace, Rome.

¹⁹ Peter Salemi, “Impacts of Waldenses,” <http://www.british-israel.ca/Church%20of%20God7.htm> (accessed on 2.10.13).

²⁰ Papal Bull- special letter or document bearing the pope’s own seal. The word bull originally meant “seal” in the Middle Ages; it was applied also to the document to which the seal was affixed.

his followers to finally drive them from Lyons. But Waldo had already gone elsewhere. Jesus Christ had already opened a door.

At the same council, members of an ascetic association from Lombardy²¹ had also sought the right to preach-They were a section of the “Humiliated,” since about the year 1000, a widespread movement within the Catholic Church. Their request was denied. In disappointment, but apparent sincerity, they defied the Roman Catholic Church and asked Peter Waldo to become their leader. Waldo crossed the Alps to teach them. Thus a branch of the Waldenses was established in Italy.²²

5.2. Establishment of a College

Waldo moved into Italy, the work grew rapidly. He soon founded a college to train men for the ministry. History shows that the college was established in three stoned buildings in the Angrogna Valley of the Cottian Alps. The college and the town of La Torre became the new headquarters for the work and the growing Church of God.²³

The ministers produced booklets and articles as a support to the preaching of the Gospel. At this time there was no such thing as a printing press-everything was copied by hand.

5.3. The Waldensian People

The Waldenses recognized that they were the true successors of the apostolic Church. They kept the Sabbath, also the yearly Passover. And each September or October they held at the headquarters Church a great “conference.” As many as 700 persons attended from afar. New students were chosen, ministerial assignments were made, and crowds gathered daily for sermons.²⁴

5.4. Protection from the society

The Waldenses under Peter Waldo were anathemised²⁵. In time serious persecution set in against the Church and the work. Pope Lucius' bull of

²¹ Lombard - village, DuPage County, northeastern Illinois, on the DuPage River, a primarily residential suburb of Chicago; settled 1833, incorporated 1903.

²² Peter Salemi, “Impacts of Waldenses,” <http://www.british-israel.ca/Church%20of%20God7.htm> (accessed on 2.10.13).

²³ Peter Salemi, “Impacts of Waldenses,” <http://www.british-israel.ca/Church%20of%20God7.htm> (accessed on 2.10.13).

²⁴ Peter Salemi, “Impacts of Waldenses,” <http://www.british-israel.ca/Church%20of%20God7.htm> (accessed on 2.10.13).

²⁵ Anathema - somebody or something cursed, denounced, or excommunicated by a religious authority.

1184 condemned a group of rebel religious groups. Among the groups named were the Poor Men of Lyons, the Arnoldists and the Passagines. The Church of God had been targeted for persecution.²⁶

This bull did not have the effect the Pope intended. The work continued in Southern France. Many civil rulers protected the Church.

However, in 1194, Alphonse, King of Aragon, Barcelona and Provence declared that the Waldenses were worthy of any punishment in 1197, all Waldenses were commanded by him to be burned at the stake in these lands. They fled to Castile, but then were tracked down and slaughtered.²⁷ Pope Innocent III went after the Waldenses on all fronts. Some of the Waldenses fell by the wayside and became like any other Christian group, some even joined forces with those involved with the Protestant Reformation. But a remnant stayed true to Almighty God and the Bible truth. God always leaves a remnant that clings to the truth.²⁸

6. Implication in the post modern spirituality

The era in which we live is the epithet David Harvey attaches to modernity and its postmodern successor.²⁹ Rick Shrader presents postmodernism as the third of three time frames: the pre-modern era, the modern and the postmodern era. Princeton philosopher Diogenes Allen declared, 'A massive intellectual revolution is taking place that is perhaps as great as that which marked off the modern world from the middle Ages.'³⁰ This is the postmodern world-the world of rock group like U2³¹. This is the world of celebrities like Madonna, whom Jock McGregor calls the 'icon of post modernity.' It is the world in which children enjoy watching Star Trek, Star wars, Johnny Quest, Harry Potter and Pokemon. The postmodern Pentecostals are compromising with those materials in their life. Here the need of understanding the lifestyle and ministry of Peter Waldo, who lived in 12th century AD, is very much necessary.

Postmodernists reject the connection between thought and truth. In a postmodern world, people want to think least and feel more. Indeed, to a

²⁶ Peter Salemi, "Impacts of Waldenses," <http://www.british-israel.ca/Church%20of%20God7.htm> (accessed on 2.10.13).

²⁷ Peter Salemi, "Impacts of Waldenses," <http://www.british-israel.ca/Church%20of%20God7.htm> (accessed on 2.10.13).

²⁸ Peter Salemi, "Impacts of Waldenses," <http://www.british-israel.ca/Church%20of%20God7.htm> (accessed on 2.10.13).

²⁹ David Harvey. *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), P.39.

³⁰ Diogenes Allen. *Christian Belief in a Postmodern World* (Louisville: Westminster, 1989), P .87.

³¹ U2- U2 are an Irish rock band from Dublin. Formed in 1976,

postmodernist, “all reality is virtual reality.”³² In this context the postmodern Pentecostals are taking much interest in the feelings rather than biblical experience. After experiencing astounding growth in the last one hundred years, Pentecostalism now finds itself at many crossroads. With its greater acceptance by the larger evangelical community, influence felt from the wider charismatic world, and changes within, many Pentecostals today question the future of the movement. Theological shifts and trends are currently found within Pentecostalism. The ‘New Generation’ preachers and pastors are good at blending the Word of God according to their theories and imagination. These days most of the preachers and modern pastors (not all) in the Pentecostal realm are seeking a luxurious life and trying to get the attention of the people. They don’t want to lead a humble and simple life. I am not against material blessings, but I stand against the persons who give priority to the material blessing rather than spiritual blessing.

Peter Waldo stood for the sake of pure Gospel and took the Biblical doctrines as his food. He did not fear to proclaim the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. This boldness must be imputed on the Pentecostals. The Pentecostal arena is not very different from the middle age’s Roman Catholic Church. Corruption, luxury lifestyle, financial abuses, caste discrimination, immorality and pride are the major issues that Pentecostals face today. So the preachers, pastors and leaders of the Pentecostal realm today must know how Peter Waldo showed his boldness to lead an exemplary life among the corrupted ecclesiastical realm.

The Roman Catholic Church in the middle ages had great power over the state. Ecclesiastical problems were prevailed during the middle ages. Anyone who opposes Roman Catholicism was immediately labeled as a bigot, intolerant of other religions or a hate-monger. Peter Waldo, a citizen of Lyon, appeared most courageous in opposing the unholy practices of the Roman Catholic Church. He also attacked several other corruptions which had been adopted by the Roman priesthood.

This can be applicable to the people in the Pentecostal realm. If something is making a hindrance to the development of the church and the smooth function of the church they must show the capacity to oppose those things.

Conclusion

A transformed man cannot compromise with corruption. In this article the writer tries to explain about the condition of the church in France during the

³² Gene Edward Veith, J. Postmodern Times (Wheaton : Crossway, 1994), P.61.

middle ages, and the advent of Peter Waldo into this scene. The church was indeed corrupted; the character of the clergy had decayed. The clergy became rulers rather than servants. The Roman Catholic Church was holding great wealth. They neglected and ignored the authority of the Bible. The clergy became self-seeking, and avaricious. Selfishness ruled their lives, money was their end. Pluralism, simony, sinecure were numerous and sought after. The greed, extortions, the graft of the bishops was a public scandal. Immorality was widespread, drunkenness; gluttony and uncleanness were increasingly common. The literature of the time was full of attacks on their vices.

The church taught a debased religion. The gospel was curtailed by a religion of sacramental rites bringing a magical salvation, prayers to the good spirits of the Virgin and saints, godless fears of the evil spirits, wonder working relics and charms, priestly curses and deliverances. The Church grievously failed to meet the needs of the people. In the horrible fifth of medieval towns, thousands of the poor lived without Christian care for body or soul. All of these events should reinforce one very important lesson for us today. God's church and work often grow stronger in the face of persecution and other intolerant practices. Peter Waldo was a man who stood for the sake of the Gospel and started a great movement. His original intention was to work within the church. But he could not obtain the Pope's permission, mainly because his purpose clearly showed a feeling that the church was not doing its duty.

Here the writer emphasizes the importance of Peter Waldo by concentrating on his commitment and dedication towards the Lord Jesus and the word of God. Even though he was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church, persecuted and nicknamed he did not change his voice and turn back from his calling.

This article strongly recommends the following suggestions to eradicate the corruptions and financial abuses from the church. First, they have to follow the clear method of interpretation in their preaching. Second, they have to lead a simple way of lifestyle. Third, they should not give much priority for the financial matters and luxury life. Fourth, they have to show the boldness against the corruptions prevailing within the spiritual realm. If this article helps anyone to analyze and to get away from the unwanted elements in their lives, then the attempt and the desire of the writer will be fulfilled.

Corruption in the Church/Ministry Causes, Contemporary Corrupt practices, Consequences and Cures

*Rev. Dr. Dasan Jeyaraj **

Abstract: Corruption is the major issue now both in the country and in the church. The reasons for corruptions are many but it almost and always begins with the leaders and the current electoral system. Indian Christianity is witnessing many new corrupt practices and they are affecting the functions of the church and mission. Apart from losing her character, she is unable to fulfil the great commission. Corruption is both diabetic and cancerous but with the help of God and by going back to the word of God we can eradicate corruption and bring in the needed renewal and reform. It is possible and we must do it together.

Introduction

Corruption¹ in the nation² has become probably the number one concern to be confronted; however, it is a reality beyond doubt that the Church and Christian organizations in India find themselves facing similar problem. The Church is called to be ‘salt and light’ and bring healing to the nation; nevertheless the church herself is in need of healing, renewal and reform. The public, bureaucrats and politicians at the moment think that corruption in India is here to stay and it is going to be a formidable task to eradicate. It has become a way or part and parcel of life in India.³ It is strange that we now follow corrupt means to do right things in the right way in the right time

* Rev. Dr. Dasan Jeyaraj is raised through Bethel Fellowship and graduated from SIBS, UBS and Annamalai University. He earned his Ph.D. from Utrecht University, the Netherlands. He worked as the principal of OM seminary called ‘International College for Cultural Studies’ for 15 years. He now serves as the professor of Missions and History at COTRTS, Vizag and coordinates the Ph.D. program. He is also the honorary presbyter of St. Thomas’ Tamil Cathedral. He is married to Indra and they have two daughters: Preethi and Premi.

¹ Corruption is: 1. Illegal and intentional, 2. It is a violation of duty, 3. It is immoral and 4. It violates common interest. P. K. B. Nayar, “Social Context of Political Corruption”, Religion and Society, Volume 22/1, March 1975, p.69.

² India has an estimated amount of 10 lakh crore black money according to the study done by the government of India. The Times of India, Hyderabad, January 11, 2012, p.11.

³ According to the Transparency International, India got 32 marks out of 100 in integrity score. Joginder Singh, “Shortcuts to Curb Corruption”, Indian Currents, 28 May – 03 June, 2012, p.15.

(earlier wrong practises were solved by corruption).Deepak Parekh, an eminent banker and chairman of HDFC, said, “Corruption is not going to go away from our country...”⁴

Kasta Dip says, “Corruption is a global phenomenon and it is omnipresent...It is like diabetes, can only be controlled, but not totally eliminated.”⁵ Pratyush Sinha, former chief vigilance commissioner says that corruption is socially acceptable in India and millions of Indian families bribe public servants for access to basic services. Sinha said that while 30% of all Indians were totally corrupt, 50% of them are borderline cases. He added that just about 20% Indians were honest. The report card on corruption in India also had a social angle with Sinha pointing out that in modern India, it is the rich person who gets automatic respect. “If somebody has a lot of money, he is respectable.”

“Nobody questions by what means he has made his money” Sinha said. He added that while in the past people used to look down upon the corrupt, it is no longer the case. “There was at least some social stigma attached to it. That is gone. So, there is greater social acceptance now for the corrupt,” he said.⁶

I hope we don’t take a complacent attitude saying the churches and Christian organizations are unaffected. Those who are found in the pews (and presbyters) openly talk about the money paid by the bishops to be elected and the same people don’t show any indifferent attitude to take communion or to have their children confirmed from the same corrupt bishops. Corruption is accepted in the country, so too in the Church. Pastors, who are supposed to hand over the marriage certificate immediately after the marriage, anticipate the couple to come home to collect it. This is done with the intention of collecting some money. So corruption begins in the middle of the Church. A. Abdulraheem writes that some members of the Church make money by selling baptism certificates.⁷ The church and Christian organizations are in need of urgent renewal and reform, if she has to remain relevant in this land.

Corruption tiptoes into all religious systems; nonetheless it is rampant in

⁴ The Times of India, Hyderabad, November 5, 2012.

⁵ Kasta Dip is the coordinator for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation for Church of North India. “Healing the Nation from Corruption”, The North India Church Review, Volume XLI/5, May 2011, p.15.

⁶ “Corruption is Socially Acceptable in India”, The Times of India, Hyderabad, November 3, 2012, p.4.

⁷ A. Abdulraheem, “Corruption in India: An Overview. Causes, Consequences and Remedial Measures”, in Social Action, Volume 59, October – December 2009, p.351

India. Even within the religious system, there is a nexus of police, politicians, priests and public servants.⁸ Here is an example from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. A young lady Krishnaveni was an assistant commissioner rank officer in the enforcement directorate. She was strict with the finance of the temple that the savings increased from 10 lakh to 18 lakh in a span of 10 months. The entire temple staff became her enemy. The board members and staff harassed her for monetary gains. In a bid to force Krishnaveni to leave the place, the temple staff even resorted to her character assassination. Due to political pressure, the police did not take any action, when she approached them. She was told by her own top officials to be 'practical' and 'accommodative' in handling the issue. The priests revolted against her. The entire episode led the young official to commit suicide on October 1, 2012. This incident has taken place right in the temple, exposing the corrupt nexus between the priests, temple staff, politicians, police force and the enforcement directorate.⁹ It was reported that in Tamil Nadu alone over 1000 crores worth of properties of the WAKF board has been encroached and unauthorized buildings have come up.¹⁰ In Chennai alone 200 crores worth of properties have been encroached. Abdulraheem reports that Imams of Islamic Ulama accept bribes for issuing random, often nonsensical fatwas.¹¹

The role of religion is to bring morality and sanctity in the life of its followers through its scripture and sacrament, but they have become seedbeds of corruption. Speaking at midnight on August 14-15, 1947, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan called the nation to 'destroy corruption in high places'.¹² In this paper I would like to discuss some of the causes, contemporary corrupt practices, the consequences/impacts and the cure for corruption.

1. The causes of corruption in Churches and Christian organizations

There may be ample reasons for corruption in Christian Organizations. Here let me highlight some of the most important causes.

1.1. Corruption begins and breeds with the leaders

'Corruption grows with leaders', says George Plathottam.¹³ In Tamil there is a saying that the ways of the leader is the ways of the people. This is the

⁸ The five major players are: neta, babu, lala, jhola and dada.

⁹ The Times of India, Hyderabad, October 31, 2012, p.5.

¹⁰ Dinamalar, November 8, 2012.

¹¹ Abdulraheem, Social Action, p.351. It was called 'cash for fatwas scandal'.

¹² G. R. Madan, Casteism, Corruption And Social Development in India, New Delhi: Radha Publications, 2004, p.61.

¹³ George Plathottam, "Corruption Grows with Leaders", Indian Currents, Volume XXIV/25, 11-17 June 2012, p.26.

reality. When an individual begins the ministry, he/she begins very well with great commitment and enthusiasm. They embark with sole objective of serving the Kingdom of God. As they grow in the ministry, when they begin to enjoy power and money, corruption sets in. K. A. Paul entered into fulltime ministry at the age of 19 after his conversion experience at the age of eight. He is said to be the only evangelist who possessed a chartered Boeing 747 flight in India. He owned few hundred crore worth of properties and had the mission to help orphans and destitute women. Andhra Pradesh police on May 21, 2012 arrested K. A. Paul in connection with the murder of his brother David Raju. According to superintendent of police K. Raghuram Reddy, Paul had offered one crore as bribe to a police official to hide the murder.¹⁴

Leaders become corrupt for several reasons. Besides greediness, they would like to stay in power as much as possible. They create a group around them either their own family members and/or few handpicked individuals to be their supporters. As a group they get involved in corrupt practices and eventually the entire system becomes corrupt. Singh says, “When the top order is corrupt, the subordinates would also become corrupt and make hay when the sun shines.”¹⁵ The leaders have unlimited access to money and they spend on these individuals or family members who support them. They are given free international trips as incentives. Some of them are given mammoth salary package. This small group becomes the voice of the leader and they praise their leader at every given opportunity. They defend the leader at any cost. They ensure that decisions and information do not surge out of this group. Thus there is no transparency within the system, and corruption permeates the entire system, the leaders leading from the front. CSI Life reports, “Corruption is not confined only to the hierarchy but permeates down to the lowest level possible. In this process, even honest persons would become suspects. Hence there is a desperate need for reforming our electoral system.”¹⁶

1.2. Elections and Crony capitalism

A few decades ago, we heard about elections in a few mainline denominations and they were heavily criticised by other denominations. It has permeated now almost all the denominations. We have spent 10,000 crore for 2009 Lok Sabha election. Out of these 8000 crore was spent by political parties and individual candidates.¹⁷ T. N. Seshan, our former election commissioner writes,

¹⁴ “Evangelist Held for Murdering Brother”, Indian Currents, 28 May – 03 June 2012, p.14.

¹⁵ Singh, p.16.

¹⁶ S. Vasanthakumar, “Moderator’s Address”, CSI Life, Volume XI/3, March 2012, p.2.

¹⁷ 1300 crore was spent by the election commission and 700 crore was spent by the central and state governments. Dip, p.15.

A democracy is one in which the true choice of the people gets reflected in the public representatives. We have yet to make a beginning in that direction. Elections in India continue to yield to the manipulative tactics of the privileged few whether privileged by sheer dint of being in power at the sacred time of the poll or being privileged to be able to commandeer enough financial resources to influence and purchase the people's choice. A third category of the privileged professionals who are swarming the holy precincts of our legislatures are the musclemen who first worked for those who preferred to displace their erstwhile masters. Absence of purity in our election process is at the root of corruption in India. I dream of an India in which the voter shall be able to assert his true choice and will be free and aware enough to identify the appropriate man for the helm of the affairs.¹⁸

Christian leaders have emulated this lifestyle and they too spend an enormous amount of money on elections. The electoral process helps to establish democracy, former moderator of Church of South India says that "democracy works only when there is discipline" and he continues, "Without discipline democracy leads to mobocracy which ends up in anarchy. Instead of merit, money power takes control. Position and power become purchasable commodities."¹⁹ Several individuals are more than happy to fund the Church elections. Those who sponsor these elections have several incentives, like access to funds, important position in a committee, international trips, award of contracts, employment, scholarship for studies and transfer to a church/position where more money could be made. In a recently held Church election in Andhra Pradesh, money was distributed to the voters within the premises of the Church, where the election was taking place. This leads to 'Crony capitalism'.

Crony Capitalism is a pejorative (derogatory) term used to refer to the corrupt business dealings carried out by government officials in a capitalist economy. It refers to the success in business based on a relationship between business and government officials. The word crony means friend. When the politicians occupy power, they help their family member and friends make money by awarding them government contracts, legal permits, special tax breaks etc. This favouritism that they show towards family members and friends is called Crony Capitalism.²⁰ In Crony Capitalism success is not determined by a free market and the rule of law, but it is dependent on the favouritism

¹⁸ T. N. Seshan, *Heart Full of Burden*, New Delhi: UBS Publishers, 1995, p.12.

¹⁹ Vasanthakumar, *CSI Life*, p.5.

²⁰ <http://www.english-for-students.com/Crony-Capitalism.html> (accessed on 7 January 2013).

shown by the ruling government in the form of tax breaks, government grants and other incentives.²¹ Crony Capitalism grows and flourishes in the context of favouritism, friendship and family ties. It breeds corruption in the entire system.²²

Crony Capitalism has pervaded the Churches and Christian organizations in India. A business or influential individual pays for the election of a bishop and in turn the bishop gives freedom to those who paid the money to make appointments, transfers and to transact business about selling church properties and construction work. Family members too benefit largely through Crony Capitalism. Ordination is given to the relatives who flout the procedures and at times do not have even sufficient theological education. Family members are appointed to important posts including the position of treasurer with astounding salary, given opportunity for international trips in the name of the Church/ministry, building contracts are granted and/or appointed to supervise the funds received from abroad for socio-economic transformational activities. The amusing element is that Christian leaders claim such situations as the blessings of God and quote the scripture (Gen 32:10 KJV).²³

1.3. Lack of accountability structures and transparency

The business world believes that a stringent governance mechanism is both crucial and critical to increase business confidence and it creates a favourable atmosphere for investment. An accountability structure with transparency becomes indispensable, beginning with the members of the Church/organizations to the bishops and executives. In churches with some denominational structure there appears to be hope for accountability and transparency, nevertheless as individuals swirl through hierarchy, they care very little for accountability and transparency, as they have come closer to God than their members in the congregation. If there is an accountability group it consists of their own friends. When it comes to independent churches, the word accountability itself is unheard of. They claim to be directly accountable to God. In Christian organizations where there is a functional board, there is hope; but such organizations are very rare. Many Christian organizations are managed by charismatic leaders with board members being their friends and relatives. Boards normally do not meet and even if they do, they say 'yes' to the proposals and decisions of the leader. At the 'Wider

²¹ <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/cronycapitalism.asp#axzz2HGnviFoW> (accessed on 7 January 2013).

²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crony_capitalism (accessed on 7 January 2013)

²³ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

Consultation on Renewal in the Church of South India', the moderator of CSI states:

Issues with regard to the integrity of the church in matters pertaining to stewardship are of a serious concern. When it comes to people being entrusted with management opportunities, with considerable powers placed in their hands, handling finances and overseeing properties that are part of the responsibilities of the offices they hold, they have to apply the standards spelt out as to what real and responsible stewardship means. Being a steward is a sacred task and it cannot be abused in any way even to purchase or provide influence obviously often with monetary and material considerations.²⁴

The moderator insists on stewardship. Corruption is bound to occur when accountability structures are not in place. Christian leaders appear to have minimum commitment for stewardship, codes of conduct and value systems. Transparency is minimum or almost nil when accountability structures are developed for its namesake.

1.4. Intimidation and fear and whistle blowers are in trouble

Bishops, pastors and Christian leaders are called to be shepherds and they are simply stewards to manage the people and resources given in their care. They are entrusted to build the congregation and the kingdom of God through their work, word and worship. Intimidation and fear exists in two forms. When leaders misuse power and resources for their personal gain, they run the Church/organizations through intimidation and fear. There is no freedom of expression and commoners do not have access to them. Such leaders create an inner circle of informers and they tend to live on their reports. The whole system is run by fear and intimidation.

The government of India has created the 'Right to Information Act' in 2005; however it has yielded very little fruit as the whistle blowers are in trouble. Our former Prime Minister had appealed to the public that citizens should make use of the provisions of the RTI. There is great trouble when one blows the whistle, especially when this happens against politicians, police and public servants. To give an example:

One Thakur Rajkumar Singh sought information about the local MLA illegally taking control of a park in BHEL and setting up a function hall there for commercial gains. The Lokayukta case against the MLA was filed by Singh. In reaction, "About 100 henchmen of the MLA entered my house at around

²⁴ G. Devakadasham, "Church of South India: Towards Renewal", CSI Life, volume xi/8, September 2012, p.3.

3:30pm and threatened my mother and sister when I was not at home. They raised slogans in support of Yadav and told my family members to immediately withdraw the Lokayukta case,” said Singh. Reacting to the incident, another Right to Information (RTI) activist P Ramakrishna said that these repeated attacks on whistleblowers, especially by the public representatives, are a worrying trend.²⁵

This happens in the Church too. A pastor who may be a whistle blower will be transferred to a Church with minimum facilities and his wife will be transferred to another place so that they would suffer as a family. In this case, the children are affected and they develop a negative attitude towards Church and Christian leaders. He/she may not be allowed to go for higher theological education and may not be given any opportunity to serve in the committees. He/she also may not be given opportunity to take part in programs/conferences within or outside the country. As a result we have a few whistle blowers who are mostly retired people.

1.5. Members being careless and taking a spiritual approach to corruption

Christians should stop being innocent and should shed the belief that ‘ignorance is bliss’. Members should become knowledgeable and know what is going on around them. Seshan writes, “Public awareness is the key to a vibrant and living democracy – awareness of what ails the nation, what are our ills and what remedies are best under the prevailing environment, awareness of what are the rights and obligations of the citizens and what a faithful exercise of these rights will contribute towards the general good and well-being of all.”²⁶ Many Christians today assume that their responsibility is over if they come to the church once a week, hear the word, participate in the sacrament and give their offering. There is very little awareness about constitution, rights and obligations of members of the church.

The members of the congregation take a spiritual approach to the issue of corruption. They assume that it is their duty to give to God and it is the responsibility of the Church leaders to give account to God. They are unaware of how their offering is being used and misused. Some of them do not want to know about it by quoting Matthew 6:5 “But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth”. Corruption grows both in the context of intimidation and ignorance. The purity of the Church and Christian

²⁵ The Times of India, Hyderabad, January 3, 2013.

²⁶ Seshan, Heart Full of Burden, p.12.

organizations can be preserved only by those who are unwilling to tolerate moral degradation. It is a pity that these movements which would like to fight corruption in the churches are a few senior retired people. Seshan says, "One of the reasons for corruption is 'non-participation' (for example many people who know to decide don't go and vote) and someone votes on behalf of them."²⁷

1.6. When religion is commercialised

Religion is internal, spiritual and emotional. People can be easily exploited and fear could be infused in the name of God. In all religion, there is an element of commercialization and the promise of blessing both in the present and future could be a potential temptation. The Christian community owns large properties in prime locations of India and they bring huge revenue. Properties, educational and training institutions and professional institutions have become money vending machines. Indukuri John Mohan Razu writes about the Church of South India, "Admissions, employment, maintenance, buying and selling of properties and finalizing the contracts involve monetary transactions. Those involved in decision-making levels seem to amass huge sums of money. That is why for the top positions in the CSI there is cut-throat competitions."²⁸

Christian healers in India behave like swamijis and saints. We have to pay money to be prayed for by them on a priority basis. This happens normally in the Hindu temples, but it is now found among Indian Christian healers too. Multi-fold blessings are assured if we offer our first salary. Admissions are assured if our children become partners of their organizations. Suffering, sickness, poverty and being poor are promoted as the result of sin and prosperity is upheld as the blessings of God. Gnana Robinson says that this is a 'distorted theology' and 'is being promoted by fraudulent clerics and preachers in all religions.' He continues, "Businessmen who see the great profit-making potential in commercialized religions invest more and more to revive old superstitions..."²⁹ Honesty becomes a rare commodity when religion is commercialised.

Corrupt church leaders mistake that blessings in ministry, occurrences of miracles, people coming to Christ and healings are signs of God's blessings. They are not the indications of our corrupt free life. God decides to bless his

²⁷ Seshan, Heart Full of Burden, p.28

²⁸ Indukuri John Mohan Razu, *Faltering, Failing and Falling*, Bangalore: Candid Publications, 2012, p.22.

²⁹ Gnana Robinson, "Corruption Begins with Commercialized Religions", *The Journal of Contemporary Christian*, Volume 3/1, August 2011, p.14.

people in spite of his servants living a corrupt life. Moses disobeyed God but God still gave water to Israelites. The magicians in Egypt could do what Moses and Aaron did. Shridi Sai Baba, Sai Baba in Puttaparthi and Sabarimalai Iyyappan have lots of followers and they too get huge donations and people claiming of wonders and miracles. A number of our Swamijis are able to attract disciples from abroad including Swami Nithyananda of Bangalore. Can we call this as signs of God's presence and blessing? Character is the determining factor and Jesus Christ clearly said we know a tree by its fruit. A blessing in ministry is not the sign of a corrupt free life.

2. Contemporary corrupt practices in the ministry

There are a number of corrupted practices in the churches and Christian organizations. Let me highlight some of the contemporary ways without getting into details.

There is no doubt that people are coming to Christ through genuine missionary work in India. However, of late, a new corrupt practice of reporting has emerged. An evangelist or church planter reports about his/her ministry to multiple agencies and receives financial support from multiple evangelistic agencies. It appears that there are a huge number of people becoming followers of Christ, conversely it is not true. One person becoming a Christian is reported by one evangelist to 10 different organizations as though there are 10 conversions. Fundamental elements are alarmed by such reports and persecution ensues.

It is the poor and rural new Christians who suffer due to the corrupt reporting system encouraged by evangelistic organisations. This leads me to the second point which is very much linked to the first.

Evangelistic organizations are claiming 'great harvest' but they pay petty salaries to their evangelists. Some of these organizations have a free organizational structure and in fact, do not hire any workers, thus an evangelist may be in the allowance roll (it is not salary) of 10 different organizations. The evangelists are required to come for the meeting whenever they are called and give a report and there is no commitment beyond that. The heads and the evangelists are aware of this corrupt practice. This is a give and take policy. This is leading many of the evangelists to lie, cheat, produce false reports and even bring people for meetings by paying money. This corrupt practice is a human rights violation and clearly against the Bible. It is a corrupt practice to treat a pastor with a higher salary and a missionary with a poorer salary.

The next point is very much linked to the previous points. The donors are abused. They are shown church buildings, pastors and congregations multiple times. It has become a professional business to conduct pastors meetings inviting international speakers and make money out of it. Knowingly or unknowingly, donors publicise these reports causing persecution and suffering on rural evangelists and their families, who are innocent.

Christian leaders have become famous for emotionalizing Christian gatherings about the need for missions and the way people are responding to the gospel. They make big speeches like our politicians. Neither the politicians who makes the speech nor the public who hear believes it. The speeches do not hold any water as they are leaking through corrupt practices. Bishops and pastors talk about purity of life from great pulpits. Of late, there is a trifurcation of 'worship, word and work' or 'head, hand and heart'. There is neither correlation nor integral link. Immediately after the worship, leaders come out of the church and talk about properties and admission because 'Service begins after Worship'. Unfortunately the Hindu world view has over powered our leaders. In Hinduism bribes and worship can go simultaneously. Vishal Mangalwadi writes an incident from his life. He along with his friend went to meet a Revenue Officer to get a paper signed. They were welcomed and told that the Officer is in deep puja and 'does not allow anything to interfere with his religious practice'. "The Officer came out of the puja, serene and dignified. He began by calmly demanding a bribe of Rs. 2000 for signing a paper that was his duty to sign. It almost seemed that he thought that the gods had honoured his fast and sent us to him in answer to his prayers."³⁰ Church and corruption cannot go together.

In the theological education, we discuss about Indigenization, Contextualization and Inculturation. We are called upon to integrate age old Indian value systems and positive elements. In our attempt to be relevant and accommodative, we have adapted corruption. The church is called to be in the world; unfortunately the world is in the church.

There has been a change in our value system. One of the changes is that the church now does not hesitate to accept the money earned through bribes and corruption. The church appreciates those who give large amounts of money. They are given the red carpet welcome, offered position in the church and the bishops and pastors give special attention to them.

³⁰ Francis A. Schaeffer and Vishal Mangalwadi, *Corruption vs. True Spirituality*, Mussorrie: Good Books, 1998, p.5.

Corruption has a sociological dimension in the form of caste and it has penetrated our churches. There is a crystal clear link between corruption and caste practices. Corruption in the Church perpetuates caste discrimination within the ranks of the Church. Razu writes, "In reality, caste plays the most perverse role in the church elections, employment and admissions in the institutions, selecting the candidates for CEO (Bishops) and ministerial training, sponsoring for theological education, ordination of deacons and presbyters, fixing marriage alliances, and so on."³¹ This keeps away the so called 'low caste' efficient Christians from occupying positions in the Church. Thus, corruption becomes a barricade in bringing true unity and equality in the Church. This has resulted either in establishing denominations on caste lines or separate churches of one denomination on caste lines in one geographical location. The 'high caste' dominated churches look splendid with several institutions and activities as they are able to muster finance through the means known to them whereas the marginalised communities are left in a pathetic condition as they have no access to either finance or information. The availability of finance and other resources are kept as a top secret by corrupt practices in the Churches and Christian organizations. Corruption serves the interest of the rich and powerful and disadvantages the poor for whom the Bible declares God has a special concern.

3. The consequences of corruption

3.1. The Church/Christian organizations are maintaining double standards of holiness. There is one type of holiness inside the church and another outside. There is one for parishioners and another for clergy. This is pseudo-Christianity. This has brought shame on the church and the name of God. What is the result? Moses Manohar says that "Widespread corruption has made churches also embroiled in too many court cases that judges are virtually ruling our churches."³²

3.2. The church is called to do the work of transformation. The late Rajaratnam says, "Corruption is rampant among church leaders. The mission of the church is not on the agenda of many church leaders. The real agenda is power and money."³³ Esther Kathioli says that "Corruption in the churches was a 'vicious problem' with some pastors failing to take their mission seriously."³⁴ The church is unable to fulfil the great commission. It does not have time. There is a great need in our country, but due to corruption we are

³¹ Razu, *Faltering, Failing and Falling*, p.22.

³² www.savecsi.net/2011/03/indian-campaign-against-church.html 30 March 2011 (accessed on 3/1/2013).

³³ www.savecsi.net/2011/03/indian-campaign-against-church.html 30 March 2011 (accessed on 3/1/2013).

³⁴ www.savecsi.net/2011/03/indian-campaign-against-church.html 30 March 2011 (accessed on 3/1/2013).

unable to send missionaries, evangelists and pastors to carry on the work of evangelism and church planting. It appears that the church itself is in need of great transformation.

3.3. We get a bad name from the donors and partner agencies. In his address at the XXXIII session of the Synod the outgoing moderator reported, “Many of the partner churches and donor agencies distanced themselves from the CSI for the alleged financial impropriety in handling the grants received for Tsunami rehabilitation work, as well as due to the negative reports appearing in the print and electronic media, both in India and abroad. Above all, on our official trips abroad, we had the humiliating experiences of explaining our stand on the issue of corruption in the CSI. In short, we the Synod officers spent many a sleepless nights during our tenure as officers of the CSI Synod.”³⁵ Christian institutions and organizations have genuine needs and our partner agencies are more than willing to support us, but our corrupt practices are preventing them from sending their support.

3.4. It affects the congregation. Our leaders and bishops are spending sleepless nights solving the problems and they are nearer to the court than to the church. They do not have adequate time to prepare themselves to feed the congregation from the word of God. Thus, both the quantitative and qualitative growth is affected. The members remain at the infant level in their spiritual life.

3.5. It is quite visible that a lot of disappointed members of the congregation leave the mainline churches and end up in churches which are questionable in their commitment to the word of God and doctrinal practices. Many of them have pastors who do not have sufficient/no theological education. Such members develop a very bad and negative image about the church and end up practicing wrong doctrines.

3.6. Wastage of precious resources: Missionaries of yester years have contemplated through the process of making Indian congregations self supportive and self reliant. With good intentions they added properties and institutions to the church, ensuring that the churches may carry on its missional activities. The bishops and leaders are in a competition to sell the properties of the church and there are many court cases. We are spending our valuable time, energy and money in fighting the cases. The lawyers are benefiting

³⁵ Vasanthakumar, CSI Life, p.3.

from our fights. While there are many village presbyters and evangelists with insufficient resources struggling to meet their day to day needs, money is wasted in court cases and lawyers.

3.7. The gospel is ashamed of us: When leaders sell the properties, it is being bought by people of other faiths. Middle men play a great role in fixing the rates and there is no transparency in our dealings. People of other faiths wonder and question the claim of Christianity being a true religion and their leaders being so corrupt in their practices. How can we share the gospel with such people?

3.8. Bishops are unable to perform their calling as 'shepherds'. Pastoral oversight, leadership in evangelization, teaching, supervision of public worship, authority to ordain ministers and authorize them to preach and administer sacraments and oversight of the discipline of the church are the functions of the bishops. However, they spend more time in solving problems and litigations that they have very little time for shepherding. The former moderator of CSI says that "It is time that the church defines the meaning and understanding of 'episcopacy' and the powers and functions of the Bishop, both in the interest of the concerned Bishop as well as in the interest of the church."³⁶

3.9. Corruption devalues human dignity and prevents an individual from performing his/her best; all human beings are created in the image of God, and Christ has restored the distorted image. Corruption disturbs the restored image, it curtails the freedom. When we are forced to pay bribes for the right work, the dignity and freedom of an individual gets tarnished, it leads to dehumanization. Professions, positions and responsibilities are delegated on the basis of the merit of an individual. Resources and authority are needed to execute the work. Corruption reduces both resources and authority, thus it disallows an individual from doing their best, thus the outcome of the project is poor and below standards.

4. The cure for corruption

The former moderator of CSI spoke at the consultation on 'Renewal' that "In our pursuit of wider revitalization of the Church of South India, we should primarily be focused on changes and reforms in an ever-widening scenario that also calls for changes considered necessarily in our structures too."³⁷

The therapy must begin from the top and the electoral process must change. The moderator says, "We need to see how we can administer more effectively

³⁶ Vasanthakumar, CSI Life, p.5.

³⁷ Devakadasham, CSI Life, p.4.

by involving ourselves in electoral reforms at different levels so that we can have more participatory aspect in choosing the right people for the right position or responsibility.”³⁸ The boards, institutions and committee should be run by the people who know the job and not necessarily by the family members.

Leadership positions/services should have a term of office. Organizations run by the families and individual/dictatorial style of leaders assume that they are born to lead and not to be led. Like some of our political leaders, they cannot live without power as they are addicted to it. Such leaders exploit the position, power, personnel and policies to survive in their seat. Razu says, “De-clericalisation and de-episcopacisation should be thought about, so that the infallibility and indispensability of the so-called ‘bishops’ and ‘clerics’ would gradually wane...”³⁹

God exists in Trinity and today we must consider establishing the Trinitarian model of leadership. Team leadership has to become the model at every stage. Today the churches and organizations are filled with people with talents, gifts and enthusiasm and we must maximize the potentials found in our congregations. Consequently, there should be proper job descriptions and regular appraisals. To do this, Gurcharan Das, former CEO, P and G India, says that there must be a strong, independent and powerful human resources audit department. Integrity should become the culture of the organization and it should be reinforced not only through words but by the daily actions of its senior leaders.⁴⁰

The church and Christian organizations must establish their value system and code of conduct for its members. S. D. Shibulal, CEO, MD, INFOSYS says that organizations must create value systems and code of conduct and they should be well articulated and communicated.⁴¹ What are the value systems of the Church? It is seeking the glory of God, building the Kingdom of God, bringing people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and transforming the society by being salt and light. This has to become the supreme task of the Church and every Christian.

Transparency has to become the watch word if we are to weed out this cancerous corruption. In the matters of admissions to institutions, selling/buying of properties, handling international funds, appointments, transfers,

³⁸ Devakadasham, CSI Life, p.4.

³⁹ Razu, *Faltering, Failing and Falling*, p.34.

⁴⁰ The Times of India, Hyderabad, December 28, 2012.

⁴¹ The Times of India, Hyderabad, December 28, 2012.

recommending candidates for higher studies and theological education, nominating aspirants for both national and international consultations and conferences, hosting international guests and visitors and selecting candidates for ordination, then a clean administration must be established.

Much of Indian corruption could be attributed to hero worship of leaders. This is quite visible in Tamil Nadu and it has entered into Tamil churches. In such context, all the opponents are made to keep quiet or are forced to face dire consequences.

There is very little respect for human dignity and individual identity. The work of the kingdom of God does not belong to an individual, but to the people of God. Let us build it together.

Management experts say that one of the reasons for corruption in the government offices is due to the fact that they are under paid. The Prime Minister of Singapore says that if civil servants are paid only peanuts, we will get only monkeys as civil servants.⁴² This is very much happening in the Christian organizations too. Christian leaders are very good in spiritualizing the realities. To avoid corruption, it is advisable to pay the pastors, evangelists and missionaries as per their needs.

5. Conclusion

In the present context, a great soul search is needed by the leaders and those who are in positions of leadership. Francis Lobo says, “To fight corruption know the law, and learn to differentiate right from wrong. Knowledge makes one fearless. Spread the good news – corruption can be eradicated by support and encouragement to citizens to resist corruption and praising and toasting those who manage their responsibilities honestly...To fight Money Power apply the other M’s – Mind and Many (There is power in Numbers).”⁴³ We all need to work together.

“The Church is the Church only when it is for others,” said Dietrich Bonhoeffer. A corrupt church makes its followers selfish and inward looking. A repentant church can transform itself and it can become an agent of transformation. Unfortunately Churches and Christian leaders have domesticated corruption through their rituals and doctrines. The mainline Churches confess every Sunday and receive absolution and practice

⁴² N. Vittal and S. Mahalingam, *Fighting Corruption and Restructuring Government*, New Delhi: Manas publications, 2000, p.238.

⁴³ Francis Lobo, “The Innocence of Corruption”, *Indian Currents*, Volume XXIV/42, 08-14 October, 2012, p.21.

corruption from Monday to Saturday. The Calvinists believe that 'once saved eternally saved' leaving very little opportunity for continual reform and renewal. The Pentecostals insists 'one time born again', 'one time baptism' and 'one time baptism in the Holy Spirit' and that gives a relaxation both now and forever. Change must begin in every Church and in every Christian, because each one of us is called to be agents of transformation and witnesses of the Kingdom of God. Corruption can be eradicated and it is possible, if we will and it is the wish of God.

THE CROSS-CULTURAL LEADER: Communicating cross-culturally

*Dr. Gladwyn Turner**

Introduction

As leaders we all understand that there are certain functions that identify leadership. For instance planning, organising, controlling, development and communication are all general categories identified with leadership. The Bible calls it serving. All leadership functions have as their primary ingredient communication. The growth of relationships is related to the nature of the interpersonal communication between two individuals. G.R. Miller in his book *Explorations in Interpersonal Communications* says:

Understanding the interpersonal communication process demands an understanding of the symbiotic relation between communication and relational development: communication influences relational development, and in turn (or simultaneously) relational development influences the nature of the communication between parties to the relationship.

Communication in the cross-cultural leader is the greatest singular challenge that he or she faces and is the determining factor of all relational development. I have been asked to address the issues of leadership in a cross-cultural setting. Given the fact that most of us are mono-cultural in our rearing it is important that we learn to adapt our thinking and our behaviour in such a way that we can effectively communicate cross-culturally without deliberately causing offence to the community/communities that we are trying to reach. The cross-cultural leader is required therefore to make a number of transitions in his thinking that takes him beyond his own community to not only appreciate the complexities of other cultures, but to be at home in them as much as is possible. In essence the leader requires a missionary heart to be a good cross-cultural communicator in his own backyard. He will need to be a unique and adaptable individual who is prepared to have his comfort zone challenged by the complexities of foreign cultures. As leaders we need to be sensitive to culture. Jim Chew in his book *'When you Cross Cultures'* cites Paul Johnson as saying...

“far too often the Christian churches (may I insert ‘leaders’ into this quote) presented themselves as the extensions of European social and intellectual

* Dr. Gladwyn Turner is senior pastor of Southside Christian Fellowship, A.A.M.A. he is also faculty at COTRTS for M.Th.,

concepts rather than the embodiments of universal truths...though Christianity was born in Asia, when it was re-exported there from the 16th Century onwards, it failed to acquire an Asian face.”¹

The failure of European missionaries working cross-culturally was very often their inability to adapt to their new culture. Those who were successful learned quickly the need to contextualize their message.

Missiologist George W. Peters tells us that the “Gospel is relevant to all ages, cultures, and peoples; but its communication must be contextualized in order for it to be experienced as the living message of God” (emphasis mine).²

1. Defining Contextualization

In defining contextualization we will use the definition given by Bruce Nichols: “the translation of the unchanging content of the Gospel of the kingdom into verbal forms meaningful to the peoples in their separate cultures and within their particular existential situations.”³

However, we might simply state that as ‘putting the unchanging Gospel into the people’s meaningful cultural language’!

Given the fact that we are working in a culturally diverse community which in many cases consists of first generation immigrants into our own culture there is a need for us to contextualize the message within our own communities. Other considerations should revolve around, “How much does a persons willingness to adapt to a new culture and be integrated into it effect the way in which they are prepared to receive the message of the gospel, and what therefore is the subsequent degree to which that communication needs to be contextualized?” Does their willingness therefore to be integrated into what is perceived to be a Christian Community eg. Western society make them more receptive to the Gospel message and does this affect the degree to which the Gospel needs to be contextualized for them?

2. The Challenge to Contextualize

Any effective leader I think would want to present the Gospel in a meaningful and relevant form to those he is communicating to that are without Christ. Somehow we need to present the supra-cultural message of the Gospel in

¹ Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity*, Atheneum, 1976, pgs. 409,410.

² G.W. Peters, *Contextualization, Meanings, Methods, and Models*, (Preface): David J Hesselgrave & Edward Rommen IVP. 1989, p xi.

³ Bruce Nichols, “Theological Education and Evangelisation,” in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, ed. J.D. Douglas Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975, p. 647.

culturally relevant terms so that we pay strict attention to customs, belief systems and the language of the receptor community without compromising the message. In fulfilling the great commission any attempt to contextualize the message must be scripturally sound, culturally viable and relevant to that community. This of necessity means that as progenitors of change we should have a good understanding not only of Biblical culture but also of the culture that we are endeavouring to reach. The Lausanne Covenant states:

....Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture (Mark 7:8,9,13). Because man is God's creature, some of the culture is rich in beauty and goodness (Matthew 7:11; Genesis 4:21,22). Because he is fallen, all is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic. The Gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture. Missions have all too frequently exported with the Gospel an alien culture, and churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to the Scriptures...⁴

i. New Testament Leaders Contextualized their message

There is abundant evidence that the early church contextualized its message. For instance John's Gospel written to a Greek audience uses the term 'logos' to describe Jesus who is God.

John 1:1-3. "In the beginning was the Word (logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

John here shows his familiarity with the teachings of the sixth century BC Stoic Heraclitus who used the term 'logos' to designate the divine plan which co-ordinates a changing universe. John began with a term meaningful to Greek culture and used it in such a way that he would readily gain a hearing no matter where he used it. The culture understood what 'logos' meant. John had done his homework.

Paul with his Mars Hill sermon is another example of the early apostles contextualizing their message. In the case of his addressing the pantheistic Athenian philosophers of 'The Areopagus' (Acts 17:22-33) Paul began inspirationally with a reference to their altar dedicated to the 'unknown God,' then proceeded to tell them that what they called an 'agnosto theo' he would now declare to them. There is no doubt that he would immediately have had

⁴ The Lausanne Covenant: 10. Evangelism and Culture... as quoted in Let the Earth Hear His Voice.

the attention of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Diogenes Laertius, a Greek philosopher of the third century AD in a classical work called “The Lives of Eminent Philosophers” recounts how the altar came to be in Athens after the Athenian Nicias asked the advice of Epimenides to help them rid themselves of a long lasting plague. [Epimenides was poet, hero, prophet and philosopher from Knossos on the Island of Crete.] It was obvious that Paul was familiar with Epimenides’ character, deeds and poetry for he quotes his poetry in his letter to Titus 1:12-13. Although Paul’s success was limited he is to be given full marks for the way he contextualized the gospel for the Aeropagus philosophers.

Leaders should always take into account language-related difficulties as well as cultural differences when endeavouring to present the gospel to a different culture as well as disciple them. This was plainly evidenced by the actions of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). The early church was challenged with an issue of cross-cultural application by what was perceived by many as a non-negotiable element of the Gospel message. The problem was that certain converts from the sect of the Pharisees did not believe that a person could be a genuine convert without going through the rite of circumcision. Other problems in the Christian community came about with regard to eating, especially at combined functions where both Jew and Gentile were present. It was virtually impossible for a Jew to sit and eat with a Gentile. The Apostles of the Jerusalem Council were called upon to determine which part of their religioethnic background was binding on all believers. We need to remember at this point that the Gospel is distinctively Jewish in its origin. What is at stake here is what part, if any, of Jewish tradition/culture is an integral and therefore a supracultural part of the gospel. Whatever is decided would then be considered binding on all believers irrespective of religioethnic background. The fact that God had incorporated Gentiles into the Christian community without prior relationship to Israel, her Laws, her Covenants, meant that God had redefined who His people were and was gathering those people from all nations Acts 15:7-14. The outcome was obvious that salvation depended on an individual’s relationship to God, not upon a person observing the traditions of God’s previous covenantal community. The determination of the Jerusalem Council elucidated the fact that some cultural differences were in fact less important when seen in the light of promoting fellowship between its Jewish and Gentile factions. James’s conclusion amounted to this: ‘that all attempts to impose circumcision and its attendant legal obligations on Gentile converts must be refused.’⁵

⁵ F.F. Bruce, NICNT The Book of Acts. Eerdmans, 1977 p.311

ii. N.T. evidence of leaders failure to be properly encultured:

Acts 14:6-18 covers Paul and Barnabas' outreach to the people in Lystra. This city was situated in a remote mountainous country. Although it was colonised by Augustus in AD6 and was connected to Pisidian Antioch by a military road, it was not on a major trade route. Therefore 'its indigenous culture was left relatively unaffected by Roman influences.'⁶ Following Paul's miracle of healing the lame man Luke tells us that the Lystran crowd started to shout in their own language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" And Barnabas they called Zeus (Jupiter) and Paul, Hermes (Mercury), because he was the chief speaker. Acts 14:11,12. These people were not the Roman colonists, whose language was Latin, or the Aristocrats from the region but were the 'incolae', the native inhabitants. The Apostles didn't understand what they had bought into. Had they understood the culture they would have known that the people were being propelled along by an ancient legend recorded for us by Ovid in his 'Metamorphoses' (8.262 ff.)⁷. The legend makes record of an elderly couple Philemon and Baucis who slaughtered their last goose to feed the gods Zeus and Hermes who had been wandering the earth in human form. Because the people of the region had treated them so badly they were punished but the couple was immensely rewarded. Hence, the need to identify Paul and Barnabas accordingly and to worship them. They were determined not to miss out a second time. What the disciples failed to do was to appreciate how deeply rooted the belief system of the ancient Lystran was in classical legends. However, Paul's response was to contextualize the message shifting the emphasis from themselves being gods to their own humanity, then addressing the polytheism in terms of there being one creator of the universe who has a witness in the earth. We would conclude that had it not been for the miracle they would have had tremendous difficulty in reaching this culture at all.

We might conclude that an understanding of the culture of the receptor community is an absolute necessity if we are to successfully communicate cross-culturally and accordingly contextualize our message for them.

3. Contextualizing for our community

At the commencement I said that one thing we needed to consider was how the willingness of a person immigrating cross-culturally to adapt to his new society influenced his openness to accept new ideas and how that may

⁶ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*. Chicago: IVP, 1965, pp109-110.

⁷ David J Hesselgrave & Edward Rommen, *Contextualization, Meanings, Methods and Models*. IVP, 1989, p 9.

impact if any upon the degree to which leaders may need to contextualize the gospel.

In the culturally diverse church that I pastor the current real growth area has been amongst the Chinese community. I realise that as leaders working in different areas of the community we will all have different challenges given the diversity of the groups that we are trying to connect with.

However we all need to learn from what has been well researched and published over the years and relate this back to our culturally diverse communities.

i. We need to understand the thinking of our receptor community

For myself dealing with Chinese thinking which is described as concrete relational has its own peculiar challenges. For them life and reality are seen pictorially in terms of the active emotional relationships present in a concrete situation.

In verbal communication, the concrete relational thinker tends to express, inform, and persuade by referring to symbols, stories, events, objects and so forth, rather than to general propositions and principles. But he is especially prone to rely on non-verbal communication of all types—gesture and sign language, music, and the plastic arts, ritual, and drama, and image projection.⁸

Myths, fables, analogies, similes, aphorisms and tribal lore are heavily imbedded in their thinking and influence their culture. This is further complicated by the overlay of religious teachings and philosophies but the creative Chinese mind has made selective modifications leaving their thought forms intact maintaining their commitment to concreteness and particularity. This is evidenced in their emphasis today on social relationships, tradition and ritual. In the area of relationships the Chinese think “highly of the art of making it possible for human beings to live together in harmony and happiness.”⁹ To this end they will go out of their way to please you in a social gathering. The pursuit of harmony causes them to be non-confrontational. These two cultural entities alone make it difficult for the uninformed cross-cultural leader to present a confrontational Gospel of Christ without it appearing too dogmatic, too deep, too difficult, too definite, too abstract, too ideological and too conceptual.

⁸ David J Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-culturally*, 2 ed. Zondervan, 1991, p 325.

⁹ H.G. Creel, *Chinese thought from Confucius to Mao-Tse-Tung*, University of Chicago Press, 1953, p 2.

However the Bible is a treasure house of truth communicated indirectly and in concrete thought forms. The Hebrews had a special genius for making the absolute concrete. Concretizing is in fact the very essence of story telling and the Bible is full of stories especially the Old Testament. The aphorisms of the O.T. wisdom literature, the interpretation of visions and dreams, the parables of the O.T. prophets, the parables and symbolic acts of the prophets, and the parables of the N.T. all provide a wealth of material for contextualizing the Gospel in a meaningful and purposeful way. An old proverb states: 'truth embodied in a tale shall enter in at lowly doors.'¹⁰

Given the complexity of the problems and the need to simplify we may along with Mayers identify two distinctly different patterns of thought.¹¹ These he calls dichotomistic and holistic. The dichotomistic thinker will reduce each problem or situation to a right or wrong pattern of thought, will examine and sort details into a perceived order or pattern eg. The development of phonetic reading techniques where words are broken up into syllables. The holistic thinker does not separate out particulars from the context of the larger picture. The whole then is greater than the sum of the parts. In contrast to the dichotomistic mind words would be taught by recognising the whole word in a look and say technique. Dichotomistic thinking would tend to categorise people into specific roles. Once a person is labeled, the label defines one's character and place, even though it may not be a valid assessment of the person.¹² Holistic thinkers will often withhold value judgements, neither giving approval or showing disapproval. They are generally more tentative about condemning peoples faults and appear suspicious of those who seem to be without fault. Holistic thinkers and dichotomistic thinkers may make negative value judgements about others but for totally different reasons. The dichotomistic person is more likely to reject a person over a mistake where the holistic person sees all as flawed. This has an enormous challenge for leaders working from a dichotomistic viewpoint across the gap to holistic. It challenges for instance the way we go about effecting church discipline and the way we view ethics for instance. It produces a fluidity that dichotomistic thinkers are not generally comfortable with. The differences may be charted as follows:¹³

¹⁰ Colin Pearce, as quoted by in, *The Art of Storytelling*, Tabor College Video, Adelaide.

¹¹ Marvin K Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture*, Zondervan 1974

¹² Lingenfelter & Mayers, *Ministering Crossculturally*. Baker, 1986 p 56.

¹³ *ibid* pg 57.

Dichotomistic Thinking	Holistic Thinking
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Judgements are black/white, right/wrong-specific criteria are uniformly applied to evaluation of others. 2. Security comes from the feeling that one is right and fits into a particular role or category in society. 3. Information and experiences are systematically organised; details are sorted and ordered to form a clear pattern. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Judgements are open-ended, the whole person and all circumstances are taken into consideration 2. Security comes from multiple interactions within the whole of society-one is insecure if confined to particular roles or categories. 3. Information and experiences are seemingly disorganised; details (narratives, events, portraits) stand as independent points complete in themselves.

Whilst we will have people who obviously think in both categories within our own culture the distinctiveness become more pronounced as we cross cultures.

ii. We need to respond to that community

The cross-cultural communicator/leader working amongst Chinese concrete relational thinkers or amongst more holistic thinkers needs to employ methods of communicating the Gospel that uses:

- * Symbols (things that stand for something else)
- * Parables (truths illustrated by fictional or real events)
- * Emblems (figurative representations)
- * Types (a prefiguring symbol)
- * Metaphors (a figure of speech in which a term or phrase stands for another)
- * Similes (A figure of speech where one thing is said to have the likeness of another)

Other methods of communicating need to employ drama and pantomime, as truth is perceived by these people in terms of life experience. We also need to explore the art of communicating in conjunction with diagrams, pictures and different kinds of objects that we can relate to our message.

We must take into account the way that people think and formulate their ideas and respond accordingly. Only when we know the way that people prioritise their thinking can we contextualize our response in a meaningful way.

When people enter a new culture our social scientists tell us that that is when they are most open to new thoughts, methods of doing things, ideas and the acceptance of a new faith. The window of opportunity for this we are told is the strongest in the first two years of entry to a new culture. Whether this displays a person's eagerness to adapt as well as be accepted in his new culture is open to debate given the strength of traditions, rituals and social relationships as evidenced amongst concrete relational and holistic thought patterns evidenced in the Chinese culture. Traditions break slowly and with great difficulty. The more isolated a person is from his cultural community the more open he generally appears to be. In Australia people from Asia (and other eastern countries) have a tendency to cluster in ethnocentric groups geographically as well as socially. This provides a strong core of social support and a vehicle for the propagation of traditions and rituals making change from the societal norms less socially acceptable. That the Gospel needs to be contextualised attending to the givens inherent in a concrete relational culture or amongst more holistic thinkers is beyond dispute. At this stage, however, there does not seem to be any direct evidence to suggest that the degree to which we might have to contextualize the Gospel is lessened by a persons' willingness to be accepted cross-culturally.

The Contributions of Jesuit Missionaries and its Impact on Indian Christians

*Rev. Rajasekhar**

INTRODUCTION

Christianity in India has a tradition of St. Thomas establishing the faith in Kerala. The arrival of Vasco da Gama in Calicut in 1498 AD is a landmark in the history of the Church in India. Along with the advent of the Portuguese coming to India; the visits of Roman Catholic Missions to India became more organized, and were initially located around Goa, Cochin, and other coastal areas. Jesuit missionaries had great success in discipling the unbelievers (other faith people) of Asia, Africa and South America to Christianity. They took up many works that helped the people to have a better standard of living, alleviate poverty and improve their communities. St. Francis Xavier¹ became the first Jesuit missionary to arrive in India. Roberto De Nobili,² a Jesuit missionary to South India followed in his path. Many more missionaries contributed and Christianity spread in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries throughout India, under the auspices of the Society of Jesus. Dasan Jeyaraj³ said Jesuits had always in their mind three methods to follow, 1st Civilization, 2nd Colonization and 3rd Christianization at any cost. Thus, in this paper the writer would like to read the history of Christianity with the more comprehensive methods used by the missionaries, and without being too critical about the contributions of missionaries and its impact on Indian Christians.

1. THE JESUITS

The Jesuit is known as the Society of Jesus, one of the most effective resources of the Counter Reformation received its papal sanction in 1540.⁴ Ignatius Loyola⁵ was the founder,⁶ a Spanish nobleman, who had prepared

* Rev. Rajasekhar is an ordained minister of Anglican Church. He serves as Dean of Students and teaches at COTRTS.

¹ (1505-52) 'Apostle to the Indies' and 'to Japan.'

² (1577-1656) Father of Inculturation in India.

³ Class note By, Dasan Jeyaraj, At COTR Theological Seminary, 9th January 2012.

⁴ F. Hrangkhuma, An Introduction to Church History (Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 2005), 265.

⁵ (1491-1556)

⁶ John P. Donnelly, "The Jesuits," in Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity, ed., Tim Dowley (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 415.

himself for a military career; his goal was to give birth to a new religious order, which combined the intellectual distinction of humanism with a reformed Catholicism and for him true religion meant blind submission to the Church. His hopes were that this new order would appeal to powerful political and economic groups.⁷

1.1. The Purpose of the Society

The purpose of the Society was to advance the wellbeing of the Church, by fighting against the enemies of the Church and by mission, preaching and winning over new converts to the Church and dedicated themselves to teaching, working with unquestioning obedience and loyalty to the Pope. The organization of the society was a system of absolute, immediate obedience, enforced by regular discipline.⁸

1.2. The Jesuits three Principal Methods

1. Providing preacher and services to attract people.
2. Providing Education with first class teachers, free of cost and should be trained to be devoted to the Roman Catholics.
3. To inspire Roman Church rulers with their own devotion to the Church and their hatred of Protestantism.⁹

1.3. Outline of the Principles of Jesuits

1. Absolute obedience to the Pope and Superiors.
2. High passion
3. Careful selection of members
4. Thorough training
5. First class organization based on central authority. At the head of the organization was the general, to whom all should give absolute obedience, residing in Rome and absolutely under the Pope in all matters.
6. A combination of individualism (e.g. no fixed form of dress and no fixed time of worship) with corporate discipline.¹⁰

2. THE CONTRIBUTION OF JESUIT MISSIONARIES IN INDIA

The most effective of the Roman Catholic missionaries, however, were the Jesuits. Mission work fitted exactly into their great purpose, to extend the

⁷Albert Henry Newman, *A Manual of Church History, Volume II Modern Church History A.D. 1517-1932* (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1957), 364-65.

⁸ Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 258.

⁹ F. Hrangkhuma, *An Introduction to Church History*, 265-66.

¹⁰ F. Hrangkhuma, *An Introduction to Church History*, 266.

Church throughout the world, and they threw themselves into it with boundless zeal and heroism. The Jesuit missionaries was multidimensional, here following are a few of their contributions.

2.1. ‘Discovery’ of India and ‘Constructing’ India

The theme of Jesuit missionaries on ‘discovery’ of the Asian lands and their people. The so-called ‘discovery’ might have been a discovery for the Europeans but not for the indigenous people who were existing there earlier for centuries.¹¹ Further, gathering information on various people groups in India and making it available at the home front, was one way of constructing India. Kate Teltscher comments that “an India of a different kind was being constructed through European eyes thanks to the works of inscribing India by colonial and missionary scholars.”¹² Firstly, there was a high demand from traders to gather information through these missionary agents with a view to expanding their trade; secondly, the missionaries themselves needed to pacify the supporters in Europe and to appeal to the home front especially, the Padroado¹³ authorities who largely financed their mission work. Thirdly, the missionary reports were meant to attract further volunteers to work in the missions, besides giving a report of the progress made by them. In any case, through the scholarly works, especially ethnographic writing,¹⁴ a new India was being constructed in the mind of the Europeans, apart from creating a new self-understanding among the Indians.

Although Indian historians reflect on the body of knowledge collected and transmitted by Jesuit missionaries have contributed much to the general society, some studies of the Jesuits seem to have been done on demand from the colonial traders who wanted to have first hand information about the Indians.¹⁵

2.2. Historical Knowledge about India

Jesuits contribution to the knowledge about the history of India is not insignificant. Fr. Antonio Monserrate’s (1536-1600) ‘Commentaries’ contain

¹¹ Jose Kalapura, “Discovering and Constructing India: Jesuit Scholars and Geographers, 1542-1800,” in Delio De Mendonca ed., *Jesuits in India: Vision and Challenges*, Xavier Centre of Historical Research, Goa, 2003, 59-86.

¹² Kate Teltscher, *India Incribed: European and British Writing on India 1600-1800* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 211-212.

¹³ A system of state patronage of the Portuguese colonial government for evangelization in colonized regions. Stephen Neil view, this term is used to denote that division of spheres of influence between Spain and Portugal which had been made by the Pope in the fifteenth century.

¹⁴ For a typical study on the Hindus from European eyes, about Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies.

¹⁵ Class note by, Dasan Jeyaraj, At COTR Theological Seminary. 9th January 2012.

first hand information's about Akbar and his court.¹⁶ Monserrate belonged to the first batch of Jesuits who came to the court of Akbar at the invitation of the Emperor.¹⁷ His works are a summary of the diary he kept during his stay in the Mogul court. He has described accurately all the mountains, rivers and seasons, about the cities and villages, their inhabitants, their customs and manners, etc... that lay along his route from Goa to Kabul. Fr. Monserrate is credited with the honor of being the first European to make a map of India.¹⁸

It is not difficult to understand why the Jesuits in particular often did scientific research and experiments. When they were sent to South India by Louis XIV, he wanted them not only as Catholic priests, but also as trained scientists. They were expected to contribute to the progress of various arts, sciences and especially navigation.

In the category of ethnographic reports and accounts of Indian religions, the contribution of Fr. Giacomo Fenicio¹⁹ is significant. He was an Italian Jesuit of the Calicut Mission, the way in which he deals with the sources of Hindu mythology, betrays that scholarly spirit which is not always to be found even in later centuries: he was an eminent forerunner of the present European knowledge of India.

2.3. Jesuit Pundits in Indian Languages

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Jesuits to India is their scholarship in some of the Indian languages. Here the presenter briefly touches upon some Jesuits and their writings.

2.3.1. In Tamil

St. Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary who came to India and the first Provincial of the Jesuits in India insisted that all his subjects should learn very well the language of the place where they would work as missionaries. Fr. Enrique Henriquez²⁰ was the first Tamil scholar among the foreign missionaries. He composed 14 works in Tamil, including a grammar,

¹⁶ C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2008), 109.

¹⁷ The Jesuit missionaries had their presence in the Mogul court by late 16th century. Akbar, the emperor, invited the Jesuit scholars to his court for the conversation regarding Christianity. Three Jesuit missionaries, Rudolfo Aquaviva, Antonio Monserrate, and Francisco Heriques, were chosen to go to the court of the Emperor. He permitted them to start chapel for introducing Christian worship and teach. Fr Monserrate was appointed as a tutor to the emperor's second son. Akbar himself made available for the conversation with the Jesuits on religious subjects.

¹⁸ C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 110.

¹⁹ (1558-1632)

²⁰ (1520-1600)

a Tamil-Portuguese dictionary and a lexicon.²¹ For many years he worked on several books with great patience and perseverance. But the three books were eventually printed and those are enough to establish his name as the “Father of the Tamil Press.”²²

Fr. Robert de Nobili (1577-1656) was the first European Sanskrit scholar. He could quote from Manu, from the Puranas and so on, which were generally known only to those Sanskrit scholars who could read Sanskrit manuscripts.²³ De Nobili, known locally as Thathuva Pothakar (Learned Philosopher) was a scholar in Tamil also. He enriched Tamil with many words and phrases adapted from Sanskrit. His chief prose works are: *Atma Nirnayam* (Science of the Soul), *Gnana Upadesa Kandam* (A kind of Summa Theologica) in four volumes and *Dushana Dhikkaram* (Refutation of Calumnies).²⁴ In Sanskrit Nobili had written “On the signs of the true and the false religion.”²⁵

Further, Fr. Manuel Martins,²⁶ the author of *Gnana Muthumalai* (The Spiritual Garland of Pearls), and he composed several works in Tamil. He joined the Madurai Mission as a Brahmin sannyasi in 1625 and worked almost 31 years. The following is a list of his works in Tamil: Meditations to excite and nurture devotion, dialogues between a Christian and a Hindu, contempt for the Word, several lives of saints, mirror of examples and Bouquet of Spiritual Flowers. Other Tamil authors were Fr. Antony De Proenza²⁷ and Fr. James de Rossi.²⁸ Towering over all these writers stands Fr. Constant Joseph Beschi,²⁹ much has been written and much more deserves to be written about his master piece *Thembavani*, a religious poem in honor of St. Joseph, which relates the whole Christian story of God’s mercy towards humanity. He was not only a poet but a great scholar in the languages as shown in his works. Other important works of Beschi are two Latin-Tamil grammars: the first in 1728 was a grammar of *Kodum Tamil*, the colloquial language and the second grammar of Beschi, which was completed in 1730, dealt with *Sen Tamil*, the literary form of the language. To those two grammars

²¹ C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 61.

²² He collected funds for making a Tamil press and was the first to get books printed in Tamil characters.

²³ M. K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials* (Bangalore: ISPCK, 2006), 51.

²⁴ Sauliere S.J., *His Star in the East* (revised & edited) (Madras: n.p, 1995), 49.

²⁵ P. Peter Raj, “Robert De Nobili: An Indigenous Foreigner,” ed., Roger E. Headlund in *Christianity in India* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2004), 104.

²⁶ (1697-1756)

²⁷ Fr. Antony de Proenza (+1660) the compiler of a great Tamil dictionary.

²⁸ Fr. James de Rossi (1701-1774) who has given us three volumes of *Lives of Saints* and seven volumes of *Pudumai* (Miracles).

²⁹ Fr. Constant Joseph Beschi (1680-1747), known locally as *Viramamunivar Swami* (Great among Ascetics).

Beschi added another work known as *Tonnul Vilakkam*,³⁰ moreover three dictionaries: Tamil-Latin, Tamil-Portuguese and Tamil-Tamil.³¹

2.3.2. In Malayalam

Much outstanding work in this area of literature was done by a German Jesuit, Fr. John Earnest (Ernst) Hanxleden.³² He came to India as a Jesuit novice and for more than thirty years he worked in Kerala, in a territory situated west and south east of Trissur. He had acquired an outstanding knowledge of Sanskrit, Malayalam and Syriac. In many ways he was a pioneer in both Sanskrit and Malayalam as shown by his writings. He is the author of a Sanskrit grammar in Latin, a Malayalam-Portuguese grammar, a Malayalam-Portuguese dictionary and a Malayalam-Sanskrit-Portuguese dictionary.³³ Hanxleden, who is known among Malayalees as Arnos Pathiri, was also a poet of merit in Malayalam. He wrote at least five poetical works; on the Four Last Things; on St. Geneviene; on the Sorrows of the Mother of God; a versified life of Jesus-Christ; a poetical rendering of the Latin hymn *Ave Maris Stella*. All those pieces were later sung by the Christians.³⁴

Archbishop Emmanuel Carvalho Pimentel of Kodungalloor had such an excellent knowledge of Malayalam and Syriac that he was nicknamed *Buddhi-methran*, the brainy bishop, by his flock.

Among other Jesuits who left their mark in the same field are two other Germans. B. Biscopinck³⁵ and J. Hausegger.³⁶ The last Jesuit we come across in the field of linguistics is Emmanuel Ferraz, who knew both Malayalam and Tamil. He rewrote the Malayalam grammar of Hanxleden and composed a dictionary of colloquial Malayalam.³⁷ Jesuits who left their mark in the same field and had such an excellent knowledge of Malayalam and Syriac.

³⁰ It also treats of higher Tamil, but it consists of a summary of the five parts of the traditional Tamil grammatical treatises, written in verses, with a commentary by Beschi. It had an adapted version in Latin entitled *Key to the refined literature of the Higher Tamil language*. E. R. Hambye, *History of Christianity in India*, volume II, from the beginning up to the Middle of the sixteenth century (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1982), 189.

³¹ C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 123.

³² (1689-1732)

³³ E. R. Hambye S. J., *History of Christianity in India*, volume III, Eighteenth Century (Bangalore: the Church History Association of India, 1997), 95.

³⁴ E. R. Hambye S. J., *History of Christianity in India*, 96.

³⁵ Biscopinck wrote two dictionaries, one in Malayalam and the other in Sanskrit and also a Malayalam catechism.

³⁶ Besides completing Hanxleden's works, Hausegger is particularly known for his two German letters, respectively of 16 July and of 29 November 1742. They are actually small treatises on the religion and way of life of the Kerala people.

³⁷ E. R. Hambye S. J., *History of Christianity in India*, 96-97.

2.3.3. In Telugu

Fr. Peter Lalane³⁸ was one of the few Jesuits who mastered Telugu (the language of Andhra region in south east India) so well as to be able to accumulate a good grammar and a lexicon in that language. Another Telugu scholar was Fr. Francis Ricci who not only taught that language in the school he had founded, but also wrote several text books for the use of the students. Fr. Jean Calmette (1693-1739) who worked in the Telugu Country was well acquainted with the Vedas and forged from them weapons for meeting Hindus on their own grounds.³⁹

2.3.4. In Kannada

Fr. Leonardo Cinnami⁴⁰ the founder of the Jesuit Mission of Mysore, was well versed in Kannada (the language of Karnataka region in south west India). He wrote several theological expositions in Kannada, several lives of saints, besides a dictionary and a grammar.⁴¹

2.3.5. In Konkani-Marathi

Fr. Thomas Stephens,⁴² the first English man to come to India, is the author of the now well-known work called *Kristu Purana*, an epic poem of 11,000 stanzas dealing with the mysteries of Christianity.⁴³ Besides this he composed a Konkani Grammar.

2.3.6. In Persian, Arabic, Urdu and Hindustani

Fr. Jerome Xavier, a nephew of St. Francis Xavier and leader of the third mission sent to Akbar, remained more than 10 years in the Mogul court during which time he mastered Persian and wrote a dozen important works in that language. The corresponding English titles of those works are: *Life of Christ*, *The Mirror of Truth*, *Lives of the Apostles*, *A History of the Martyrs and Saints*, *Life of Blessed Virgin Mary*, *Prayer Book* and a *Persian Grammar*. There were other⁴⁴ Jesuits in the Mogul Mission who wrote books in Arabic, Persian, Hindustani and Sanskrit.⁴⁵

³⁸ (1669-1748)

³⁹ http://www.com/library/Jean_Calmette.htm, 3rd Nov, 2012.2:30 p.m.

⁴⁰ (1609-1676)

⁴¹ C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 119.

⁴² (1689-1732)

⁴³ http://www.com/Jesuits_missionaries_in_India.htm, 4th Nov, 2012.3:30 p.m. For a study on Stephen's Work, see *Kristapurana: A Christian-Hindu Encounter: A Study of Inculturation in the Kristapurana of Thomas Stephens*, S. J. (1549-1619), 2003.

⁴⁴ Notable among them was Fr. Henry Roth (1620-1668) who was a Sanskrit scholar and made the Western world acquainted with the Devanagari script. His Sanskrit Grammar written for the Europeans is described as *Opus Exactissimum* (a most accurate work). He also wrote an account of the ten Avatars.

⁴⁵ http://www.com/Jesuits_missionaries_in_India.htm, 4th Nov, 2012.4:00 p.m.

2.4. Jesuits Contribution to Education in India

J. Felix Raj said, perhaps Jesuits impart the best-known education in India. They conduct not less than 31 university colleges, 5 Institutes of Business Administration and 155 high schools spread throughout the country, almost all of them among its most reputed (for example: St. Xavier's, Calcutta, Mumbai, Ranchi; Loyola, Chennai, Vijayawada; St. Joseph's, Bangalore, Trichy). In them, more than 250,000 students belonging to every religious, linguistic and socio-economic group, receive their education.⁴⁶

To quote from Alexander P. Varghese's *History of Christianity*:

“Though nowhere in the Jesuit Order's Constitution is it stated that education is to be given special importance, yet the Jesuits have come to be particularly known in the public mind for their educational work and have acquired the reputation of being among the world's best educators; in every country a Jesuit school or college is the same with quality secular education given in an atmosphere conducive to character formation with emphasis laid on spiritual and moral values and the development of an integrated human personality.”⁴⁷

St. Francis Xavier opened the first Jesuit school in Goa in 1542. It was named St. Paul's College. Nothing exists of this institution today except its memory, but it was the forerunner of hundreds of other schools and colleges. Hence, the Jesuit motto “Give us a boy and we will return you a man, a citizen of his country and a child of God.”⁴⁸

Attached to all the important Jesuit colleges were the Jesuit libraries, especially in the colleges of St. Paul's at Goa, and Cochin.

2.5. The Press in India

Another significant contribution was the printing press, which was considered a secondary tool for evangelization to propagate Christian message to the natives.⁴⁹ Jesuits were the first to introduce into India the western method of printing with movable types. In 1556 the first printing press with movable

⁴⁶ [http://www.com/education in India.htm](http://www.com/education%20in%20India.htm), 3rd Nov, 2012.2:30 p.m.

⁴⁷ Alexander P. Varghese, *History, Religion, Vision and Contribution to the World* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2008), 241.

⁴⁸ John P. Donnelly, “The Jesuits,” in *Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity*, ed., Tim Dowley (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans publishing Co., 1977), 415.

⁴⁹ <http://www.com/> on the Jesuit contribution to printing press in India.htm, 4th Nov, 2012.4:30 p.m., see Henry Hosten, *The Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Vidyajyoti College Archives, Delhi. The Hosten Collection is also available in the Goethals Library and Research Centre, St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. See also, Jose Kalapura, “The Hosten Collection, A Veritable Source for a History of Christianity in India,” 1995.

types of Roman script was set up in the Jesuit College of St. Paul's in Goa. Within a few years two more presses were established, one for Malabar—the Syriac press in Cochin and another Tamil press in Punnaikayal.

2.6. Architecture in India

The Jesuit missionaries came out with new forms and structures of building in South India. They brought Western styled art and architecture. The churches are good examples of the contribution of the Christians in South India. The churches and schools of the Italian Jesuits introduced a new taste for attractive buildings.

2.7. Missionary Contribution of St. Francis Xavier

In 1541, Francis Xavier was sent to India by king John III of Portugal. He was one of the greatest of Christian missionaries, and an original member of the Jesuits. Historians generally admit that the mission of Francis Xavier on the development of the Church in India was massive.

He not only started mission systematic and rational way of Christianizing the people both within and outside the Portuguese settlements, but created through his letters, an enduring passion of his mission work begin from grass root level in India so hundreds of young men came after him to continue his mission. Wherever he preached he left organized Christian communities.⁵⁰

He identified with the People

St. Francis Xavier made himself one with them; his food was the same as that of the poorest, rice and water; he slept on the ground in a native hut. He always tried to identify with the people, so that the Gospel can be propagated easily to the people. He devoted himself in visiting the sick in the hospital and the prisoners in Goa, and gathering together children and others in the churches for elementary teaching. He began to recite in a loud voice and in their own language, the form of general confession, the Apostle creed, the Ten Commandment, the Lord's Prayer.⁵¹

He would go about the streets ringing a bell and calling out, faithful Christians, friends of Jesus Christ, send your sons and daughters to the holy teaching and for the love of God.⁵² One of the contributions was that he started a few schools to give education for the converts and their children. But these mission schools were primarily meant to provide nurture in Christian faith.⁵³

⁵⁰ A. Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Volume I, 397.

⁵¹ George Park Fisher, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 453.

⁵² C.B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church history*, 59.

⁵³ D. Arthur Jeyakumar, *History of Christianity in India selected themes* (Madurai: TTS Press, 2007) 37.

The ministry contribution which Francis Xavier used was very applicable to the people especially to Malabar; he won a multitude of converts among the Paravas a people of low caste and a number of Churches were established.⁵⁴

M. K. Kuriakose viewed that Francis Xavier had high qualification as a missionary: he was dynamic with brilliant zeal; he was gifted with great linguistic gifts, and his efforts left a significant impression upon the missionary history of India, and by pointing out the way to East India to the Jesuits, his work is of fundamental significance with regard to the history of the propagation of Christianity in China and Japan.⁵⁵

He himself witnessed many of the results of his labor, but still greater were the tasks he proposed. Since the Roman Catholic Church responded to his call, the effects of his efforts reach far beyond the Jesuit order; the entire systematic and aggressive incorporation of great masses of people on broad lines of policy by the Roman Catholic Church in modern times dates back to Xavier.

2.8. Missionary Contribution of Robert De Nobili

He pioneered (Inculturation), adopting many Brahmin customs which were not, in his opinion, contrary to Christianity. He lived like a Brahmin, learned Sanskrit, and presented Christianity as a part of Indian beliefs, not identical with the Portuguese culture of the colonialists. He permitted the use of all customs, which in his view did not directly contradict Christian teachings. It is estimated that his converts numbered some 100,000.⁵⁶

Culture adaption

Culture adaption was one of his targets in his mission to win the high caste, he encouraged them to continue their cultural practices. Such as to grow the Judumi, (the hair tuft at the back of the shaven head), to wear the sacred thread.

He adopted the ochre (Kavi) robe of the holy man, he lived and conducted himself as a (Sanyasi guru) a teacher. Nobili having considered Pongal (festival of Hindu Tamilians) allowed the Christians to cook the rice and boil their milk at the foot of the cross.⁵⁷ By doing so he had Christianized the Pongal feast. Nobili's adaptations had not left a stone unturned in all areas of his life be it personal, social, cultural, intellectual literary or religious.

Self Identity and indigenous self

Contextualizing what the church meant for him was that the socio-cultural environment of the land ought to be integrated into Christianity. To realize

⁵⁴ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity Mission* (Mitcham: Penguin books, 1964), 53-54.

⁵⁵ M. K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials*, 87.

⁵⁶ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 389.

⁵⁷ P. Peter Raj, "Robert De Nobili: An Indigenous Foreigner," 104.

this purpose and to reach the goal Nobili was determined to separate himself from the Portuguese people. The very opportunity of arriving in India was due to Portuguese Padroado and it was one giving social, economical, political and even religious support to the Jesuits among whom Nobili was one.

Despite this dependency and the right manner of approach of ministry in the Mission, Nobili was courageous enough to stand opposed to the traditional mission preaching. A European was ready to stand in opposition to other Europeans, Portuguese. This was not that Nobili had any objection against the Portuguese personally but it was due to the Hindu understanding about Christianity as the Parangi Margam. Despite the threat and challenges, he courageously took such a step to separate himself from the Portuguese and declared that he was a Sanyasi from Rome. This privileged option was for the sake of Christ and His church to be established in the Land of Tamils.⁵⁸

As Stephen Neill noted that:

“The days passed Nobili strongly felt that disowning Portuguese identity alone did not suffice to do his ministry; he needed to become alien to his nationality, Italian. Hence to win the Indians he would become Indian. He made a carefully study on Brahman custom and prejudices, abandoned everything that could offend, such as the eating of meat and the wearing of leather shoe. He adopted the ochre (Kavi) robe of the holy man, and as far as could be converted himself into a sannyasi guru, a teacher who has renounced every form of attachment to the world.”⁵⁹

The credit for composing prose in Tamil language for the first time goes to Robert De Nobili. Nobili wrote a lot in three Indian languages, Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit as well as three European languages, Italian, Portuguese and Latin. In 1656, one priest mentioned in his letter that the Indian scholars used to get astonished by Nobili’s mastery over so many languages. Some of his literary works are still available for scholars to study and appreciate Nobili’s intellect. These books are considered as important treasures of Tamil language. The service to the Church through these languages is also meant as a service to the literatures of the language through the Church.

3. IMPACT ON INDIAN CHRISTIANS

Firstly, the negative impact in the words of Fr. E. R. Hambye in his Book ‘History of Christianity in India Vol.III,’ the Jesuit missionaries in India realized the importance of literature because of the great influence of classical

⁵⁸ P. Peter Raj, “Robert De Nobili: An Indigenous Foreigner,” 103-104.

⁵⁹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 156-57.

languages such as Sanskrit. They learnt the language and acquired ability in it in different degrees. But none of them was able to make any contribution in the shape of original works in Sanskrit.

C. B. Firth said, though initially there were no separate places of worship, 'the buildings were so arranged as to keep caste and out caste in separate portions.'⁶⁰ Adding to this further Arthur Jeyakumar says, but later, separated worship services were conducted for different caste groups; there were separate burial grounds, etc. in a few church buildings dividing walls were put up inside to separate the congregations on the basis of caste. The Holy Communion elements were distributed first to the high caste Christians and then to others. This kind of practice continued almost till the middle of the 20th century.⁶¹

Some of the missionaries were carriers of European knowledge and ambassadors of European culture and did India proud by giving the best of European literary tradition, science and technology. As well as some attempted to take back to Europe some of the literary and religious traditions of India. However, the quantity and quality of the contribution of the missionaries to India seems to have been substantial in comparison to what they took back to Europe: that is to say, it was only a one-way transaction. Racial prejudice did often blight their understanding of the natives and made them underestimate the literary, philosophical and theological resources of the Indians.

Secondly, the positive impact is that it is easy to be too critical and to magnify the errors of the missionaries and be completely blind to the bright side of their missionary achievements. They did many beautiful and constructive things, in fact more than any other movement in the world. Readers of history should also remember that missionaries worked in the midst of many hardships and difficulties with tremendous dedication and sacrifice.

1. The Jesuit missionaries truly loved the Indians among whom they worked. Their love for their God overflowed to their love for fellow human beings.
2. They developed a genuine appreciation for the indigenous customs and cultural traditions. It is true that they introduced western learning and cultures, but it is not true of most that they set out to destroy all indigenous cultures. In appreciation of the 'native' cultures, the missionaries studied their customs and cultures.

For example Nobili did not stop at changing his dress and life style alone. He was of the view that the locals who embraced Christianity need not give up

⁶⁰ C.B Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church history*, 117.

⁶¹ D. Arthur Jeyakumar, *History of Christianity in India*, 63.

their social and cultural traditions even after conversion. Nobili strongly opposed the imposition of western culture on the neo-Christians in south India. Nobili is credited with introduction of the Inculturation process among the Indian Christians in the seventeenth century.

3. Jesuit missionaries introduced and established printing presses with movable types of Roman script and learned the indigenous languages. They shaped many languages to written forms, giving them scripts, developing languages, Christian songs, and literature into vernacular languages.

4. Jesuit missionaries were the first to believe in the potentiality of the indigenous people. Already in 1537, the papal Bull⁶² pronounced that “the Indians are truly men and that they are not only capable of understanding the catholic faith, but that they exceedingly desire to receive it they believed this when no one else did, and it was the missionaries, more than any others, who educated and trained them for future leadership.”

Jesuit missionaries used to appoint young men from converts who were capable and intelligent and reward them from the Portuguese government. In view of Arthur Jeyakumar, during the 1540s the Portuguese opened St. Paul’s College in Goa which was for the training of Indians, many for lesser jobs in the government. During Francis Xavier’s time it came under the management of the Society of Jesus and it became a theological institution too, where the young from the Malabar Syrian Church also were trained. Nobili felt that the spiritual leaders of the Indian Christian community should come from within their own community and the candidates for priesthood should be specially trained as per the Indian spiritual traditions.

5. They brought the good news about Jesus Christ and expanded the Church of God in India. The Church became an agent and a sign of the kingdom and as a light of the world. This is a remarkable impact. Even the Jesuits, who looked after Christians, were always short of men and their work was heavy and ceaseless despite the assistance of the catechists and village headmen.

6. Jesuit missionaries opened clinics and schools. The schools were open to all classes of Indians and generally charged nothing for tuition. Jesuit education was based on the plan of studies of 1599.⁶³ Jesuits insisted on learners attending classes. A carefully planned curriculum took students forward. Jesuit schools were famous for their drama. Moral and religious

⁶² *Sublimis Deus*

⁶³ F. Hrangkhuma, *An Introduction to Church History*, 366.

values were taught. Also Jesuits educated the sanctity of life, the worth of the individual, and the dignity of labor, social justice, personal integrity, and freedom of thought and speech.

CONCLUSION

It can be said that the contribution of Jesuit missionaries in India was substantial in both quantity and quality, especially in transferring European sciences to India, which effected the modernization of many Indian languages and scholarship.

On the other hand, the missionaries came with a purpose to evangelize the “heathen” people. In the contemporary understanding, evangelization meant transplantation of the European brand of Christianity along with its culture and value systems. This resulted in cultural and religious imposition on the believers. For instance, the believers in the early sixteenth century were expected to imitate Portuguese life-styles, dress-code, and food habits and so on, not to speak of a complete change to the Latin Christian way of religious worship, rituals and customs. However, the more indigenizing missionaries like Fr. Antonio Monserrate, Francis Xavier, De Nobili, Thomas Stephens and others did present Christianity through Indian and world views since the middle of the 16th century. Not only did they learn the local languages and customs, but also perceived Christianity through indigenous eyes, which approach eventually, impacted the enrichment of the local languages. Further, their scholarship, writings and their missional activities reflected on the Indians which was so immense.

Towards Understanding the Trinitarian Interrelationship in the Soteriological Function: A New Testament Perspective

*Hirendra Prasad**

Introduction

The doctrine of Soteriology is one of the most disputed and most debated doctrines in theology. In fact, it will not be a hyperbole to state that Soteriology is the grand theme of the Scripture and an inevitable part of theology. There has been a lot of in-depth study on this doctrine in the past. But as one researches the doctrine of Soteriology, it is not unfeasible to uncover new dimensions. There is nothing called self-salvation because salvation comes from others, either divine or human. The doctrine of salvation is one of the dimensions within the concept of salvation.

The concept of salvation has many dimensions:

- Physical salvation (individual) where a person is saved from either sickness, having received healing or from any danger or from social evils (addiction, barrenness, slavery).
- Material salvation is where people are saved from poverty.
- Political/military salvation (national or communal) where people collectively or as a community or nation look to be free from the bondage of a certain authority.
- Spiritual salvation (both individual and cosmic) where individual souls/spirits receive freedom from sin and the dominion of Satan.

While the first three categories of salvation are associated with the physical and visible realm, the fourth category of salvation is related to the invisible, but more of experiential realm than the first three. This paper explores exclusively on the third category of salvation.¹ The doctrine of salvation in the Old Testament is primarily seen in the Mosaic Covenant where God gave certain commands for offerings to be performed as rituals for the purification from sin and maintaining a covenant relationship with God. Although salvation, both as the concept and the doctrine, are essentially part

* Mr. Hirendra Prasad is faculty at COTRTS and heads the department of Evangelism & Moral Education.

¹ Though broadly speaking, salvation can be categorized also as cosmic salvation and individual salvation, the paper deals with the latter exclusively with the brief discussion on role of Christ in the cosmic salvation in point number 2.1.2.3.

of God's plan in the Old Testament is in a different way than that of the New Testament, but one needs to consider both for a comprehensive understanding of the doctrine of salvation. This paper explores the doctrine of salvation predominantly from the New Testament, not necessarily from the theological perspective although the theological motif is embedded, but from the New Testament perspective which will uncover the dimensions in which both Christ and other persons in the Trinity are interrelated in the total plan of salvation, and on the basis of this, the paper will underscore its evaluation on whether the Soteriological function of Christ and other persons in the Trinity are static or dynamic.

1. Soteriological Function of Christ:

This is the Christocentric salvation which refers to the Cross event where Jesus accomplished salvation for humanity. This salvation has different theological expressions: Sacrifice,² atonement,³ Passover,⁴ substitution,⁵

² Sin prevented man from appearing before God and there is no reason for man to please God. But there is one way to pacify God, through the expiation of blood. The sacrifices of the Old Testament do not have their importance in themselves because they were only the shadows of the death of Christ. So the real sacrifice is significant. Buren writes, "Christ himself the sacrifice offered to take away our sin, for all the sacrifices of the Law prefigured was accomplished in him alone." Without the blood of Christ there is neither purity nor salvation. Christ and the sacrifice of his death are inseparable. The sacrifice of Christ took away the sins of the world. Paul Van Buren, *Christ in our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 65-69.

³ There are two special features of the observance of this day. The first is that the high priest enters into the Holy of Holies on this day as the representative of the people. The second is the placing of the people in the scapegoat, and there was removal of sin by the placement of the sins of the people upon the goat. So also Christ entered into the heavenly holy place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb 9:12). The contrast between the blood of Christ and the blood of the animals is important, for "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb 10:24). So it is the blood of Christ that washed away the sins of human beings forever. The Day of Atonement, therefore, pictures the saving work of Christ in the New Testament. It forgives the sins of the people and gives them the access to God. Leon Morris, *The Atonement: Its meaning and Significance*, (Illinois: Inter-varsity, 1983), 73-86.

⁴ This was the event of the greatest deliverance of Israel in Egypt. All the three synoptic gospels call the last supper as the Passover meal. Jesus died on the Passover day. Apostle Paul identifies Christ's sacrifice with the Passover (1 Cor. 5:7). So "the Passover foreshadowed the great deliverance the God would bring about and for which his deliverance in ancient times formed the model." Jesus' death accomplished that great deliverance. In this new way they are free from slavery and sin. Morris, *The Atonement*, 100-103.

⁵ Christ is the substitute who bore the punishment of sinners. Berkhof rightly points out "The death of Christ is vicarious in the sense that Christ is the Substitute who bears the punishment rightly due sinners, their guilt being imputed to Him in such a way that He representatively bore their punishment." Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 392.

redemption,⁶ reconciliation,⁷ propitiation,⁸ forgiveness,⁹ justification,¹⁰ etc. The present work prefers the term “atonement” for the Christocentric salvation.

Before understanding the Soteriological function of Christ (atonement) from the New Testament, it is essential for the present work to deliberate a brief study on the Greek terminologies used to explain it and their Hebrew equivalents.

1.1 Hebrew and Greek Terminologies: The concept of atonement is not a new doctrine introduced in the New Testament. It was already there in the Old Testament. The expression “to make atonement is frequent in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, but rare in the rest of the Bible.¹¹ In the Old Testament the means of resolution of the problem of sin was the animal sacrifices. The substitute for sin included different offerings such as burnt offering (Lev 1:4), the sin offering (Lev 4:20; 7:7), and the offerings made on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:1-34).¹² The Old Testament further intimates that one could receive atonement simply by God’s grace (2 Chr 30:18-20; Ps 78:38; Ezek 16:62-63).¹³ It is clear that in the Old Testament death was the penalty of sin (Ezek 18:20), but that God graciously permitted the death of a sacrificial victim to substitute for the death of the sinners.¹⁴

⁶ There are different verbs in Greek which explains the meaning of redemption. The first is *lutrow*, which means “to obtain release by the payment of a price.” The precious blood of Jesus is the ransom price which freed or redeemed the believers from their sins. Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, ed. Cleon Rogers, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 655.

The second verb is *agorajw* and means “to purchase in the market place.” This word describes the purchase of believers from the slave market of sin and the release from the bondage of sin. The death of Christ is the purchase price for the believers’ freedom from sin. The next verb to explain redemption is *exagorajw* which teaches that Christ purchased the believers in the slave market (*agorajw*) and removed from (*ex*) the slave market together. Christ freed believers from the bondage to the law and from its condemnation. Enns, *The Moody Hand Book*, 324. Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 334-335.

⁷ The verb *katallassw* means “to effect a change, to reconcile.” Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 470. God is the subject and man is the object of reconciliation. John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 182.

⁸ Propitiation means that the death of Christ fully satisfied all the righteous demands of God toward the sinner. Enns, *The Moody Hand Book*, 325.

⁹ The verb *charijomai* means “to forgive out of grace.” Enns, *The Moody Hand Book*, 325.

¹⁰ To justify means to declare “not guilty.” Morris, *The Cross*, 24. It also involves the bestowal of righteousness upon the believing person. J. I. Packer, “Justification,” in EDT, 594.

¹¹ Leon Morris, “Atonement,” EDT (ed. Walter A. Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 97.

¹² Edward Rommen, “Atonement” in EDWM (ed. A. Scott Moreau; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 93.

¹³ Allen C. Myers ed., “Atone, Atonement,” EBD (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 105.

¹⁴ Leon Morris, “Atonement,” NBD (ed. J.D. Douglas; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 108.

The key word for atonement in Hebrew is *kadppar*, which means etymologically to cover, though some have suggested that it was “wipe off.” The word therefore is used in general sense of removing the effects of sin.¹⁵ The noun related to the verb *kadppar* is *kodper*, is mainly used of the ransom price that “covers” an offence- not by sweeping it out of sight but by making an equivalent payment so that the offence is actually and exactly paid for (Exod 30:12, “ransom” Num 35:31; Ps 49:7; Isa 43:3).¹⁶ The gold plate of the Ark of the Covenant was the place of atonement, *kappodret*, the place where Yahweh receives the atonement. So the sin or the guilt for which atonement is made is voided and annulled, it is no longer an effective obstacle to reconciliation. One may also reconcile himself to God by the payment of a fine or damages, *kodper*.¹⁷

Of the Greek words for *kadppar* and its derivatives the following are the most important which appear in the New Testament.

Hilaskomai, hilasmos, hilasterion: these are the words in classical Greek used to mean to reconcile or render favorable, reconciliation, the means of reconciliation. Christ himself is *hilasmos*, reconciliation for the sins of humanity, and for this the father has sent him (1 John 2:2; 4:10). God has set him as *hilasterion*, the means of reconciliation in his blood (Rom 3:25); the language indicates that God has made him a sacrifice of atonement.¹⁸

katharijw, kathatismos: In classical Greek these words mean to cleanse, used for the ritual cleansing of the mystery cult. It is reflected in 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 5:26, and especially in Hebrew 9:22-23, 1 John 1:7, 9, “where atone for sin” has become “cleanse from sin.”¹⁹ *katallassw, katallage*: in classical Greek these words mean “reconcile,” “reconciliation,” but not in LXX. Paul writes about the reconciliation of God and man (Rom 5:10; 2Cor 5:20), the reconciliation of God with Man and the world in Christ (2 Cor 5:18-19). Man received the reconciliation through Jesus Christ (Rom 5:11).²⁰

1.2 Atonement in the New Testament

Even though the word “atonement” does not occur in the New Testament, the meaning behind the word is constantly present. Here, however, it is not associated with temple sacrifices. Rather it is related entirely to Jesus Christ

¹⁵ Milton, “Atonement,” IDB, vol.1, 310.

¹⁶ J. D. Douglas, ed., “Atonement,” NIB D(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 108.

¹⁷ John L. McKenzie, S. J. “Atonement,” DB (New York: Macmilan, 1965), 69.

¹⁸ McKenzie, S.J. “Atonement,” DB, 69.

¹⁹ McKenzie, S.J. “Atonement,” DB, 69.

²⁰ McKenzie, S.J. “Atonement,” DB, 69.

and with his death upon the cross.²¹ As there is much to learn about the theology of atonement from the whole New Testament, the present work will concentrate in dealing with this concept from the viewpoint of different gospels, both Pauline and non-Pauline epistles, and even from the book of Revelation.

1.2.1 Atonement in Synoptic Gospels

It is not too much to say that the gospels are books about atonement. Each gospel has a theological purpose and the theological purpose is to convey to men the good news of what God has done for their salvation.²²

The death of Christ is explicitly linked with forgiveness in Matthew 26:28.²³ Then to say that Jesus is shedding his blood to inaugurate such a covenant is to say that he is shedding his blood that humans might receive forgiveness from their sins. It is to describe atoning value to his death.²⁴ There is one passage in the both gospels where in Jesus described his death as ransom. “The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life as ransom for many” (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45).²⁵

Many scholars like Conzelmann and others see the absence of the concept of atonement in Luke’s soteriology.²⁶ They say that the quotation of Isaiah 53 in Luke 22:37 and Acts 8:32-33 has nothing to do with the atonement theology, but it is the fulfillment of Scripture. Nevertheless the “Eucharistic words of Jesus” in Luke has its own significance of the atoning death of Christ for others. Luke again reaffirms the inevitability of Christ’s death in Luke 24:26, 44-46, and declares in 24:47 that the “repentance and forgiveness of sins” lies only in the name of Jesus.²⁷ So atonement is an important theme in the Gospel of Luke and the Lucan death of Jesus has, no doubt, enough to do with the forgiveness of sins.

1.2.2 Atonement in Pauline Writings

Paul is the only New Testament writer who speaks about the death of Christ extensively. He mentions about great concepts like justification, imputation, reconciliation, adoption, the state of being “in Christ” and many more.²⁸

²¹ Milton, “Atonement,” IDB, vol.1,311.

²² C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (London: Tyndale press, 1965), 47.

²³ Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament*(England: Paternoster Press, 1965), 51.

²⁴ Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament*, 51-52.

²⁵ Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, 22.

²⁶ Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, 200-01.

²⁷ <http://Davidgpeterston.com/atonement/atonement-in-the-synoptic-gospels/>

²⁸ Morris, *The Cross*, 216-17.

Repeatedly Paul says that Christ died for sin and that he died for men. (1Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4).²⁹ Paul also prefers to speak of the blood of Christ: “God set him forth to be propitiation, through faith, by his blood” (Rom 3:25), “being now justified by his blood” (Rom 5:9), “through his blood we have redemption” (Eph 1:7). Another concept of Paul is reconciliation and Paul connects it with the blood (Col 1:20). He also reports the words of Jesus at the institution, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood” (1Cor 11:25).³⁰

There are various passages which stress the thought that Christ in his death was very much one with the sinners, in that he took their place. God sent his Son to be the likeness of sinful flesh³¹ and for sin. So substitution is not some external process which takes place with God no more than a spectator. He is involved. He involves himself in this business of saving mankind.³²

1.2.3 Atonement in the Epistle to the Hebrews

The Lord came to earth specifically in order that he might die for men (Heb 2:9). Hebrews 9 speaks of the necessity of Christ’s death with an illustration of man’s last will and testament. “When a man makes a will it is necessary for his death to occur before the terms of the will become operative.”³³ And Christ’s new covenant is likewise inoperative until the death of Christ.³⁴ Another necessity of Christ death was that to establish the true sacrifice. So to replace the animal sacrifice with a better sacrifice it was necessary for Christ to die.³⁵

The author of Hebrew also tells that Christ made purification for sins (1:3), means making clean from sin.³⁶ Twice the Hebrews author quotes Jeremiah’s prophecy to remember no more the sins of man (Heb 8:12; 10:17). Jesus bore the sins of many (Heb 9:27), the meaning is that of the bearing the punishment for sin. The context makes it plain that a once-for-all bearing of sin is meant, it is a plain reference to Calvary.³⁷

²⁹ Morris, *The Cross*, 217.

³⁰ Morris, *The Cross*, 218-19.

³¹ His human nature never existed apart from personal union to the Son of God, nor apart from sin-bearing; and hence he appeared in the likeness of flesh of sin, not by a mere arbitrary assimilation to us men, but because he bore in his own body the weight of imputed sin. G. Smeaton, *The Apostle’s Doctrine of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957), 173.

³² Morris, *The Cross*, 224-25.

³³ Morris, *The Cross*, 278.

³⁴ Morris, *The Cross*, 278-79.

³⁵ Morris, *The Cross*, 279.

³⁶ Morris, *The Cross*, 298.

³⁷ Morris, *The Cross*, 299.

1.2.4 Atonement in Catholic Epistles and Revelation

The epistle of James has nothing to say about the atonement. But James deals with the serious character of sin. He explains how sin takes time to grow, conceives, and brings forth death (Jas 1:15). So the writer here connects sin with death as Paul (Rom 6:23). He notes the sin of omission (Jas 4:17).³⁸

Peter has a most interesting series of interpretations of the death of Christ. In his opening he refers to the “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:2). “Sprinkling of blood” points to the sacrifices.³⁹ He also clearly says “Christ suffered for you” (1 Pet 2:21).⁴⁰

Jude does not say anything about atonement. He just refers to the punishment of eternal hell fire (Jude 7), reservation of gloom of darkness for people (Jude 13). But as Morris comments, if Jude is sure of the punishment of evil, then he is equally sure that God has accomplished the deliverance in Christ.⁴¹

In the first epistle of John the death of Christ has a revelatory function. The author writes, “Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us;” “herein is love, not that we loved God, but he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 3:16; 4:10).⁴²

The book of Revelation also mentions a few things about the concept of atonement. It mainly speaks about the blood of the Lamb. Chapter 7 introduces a multitude coming out of the tribulation that washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (v.14).⁴³ The same idea is there when the saints are clothed in white linen (Rev 19:14).

Morris also speaks that it is possible to refer to the death of Christ without the use of the term “blood”. John speaks once of the crucifixion (Rev 11:8). He speaks of the Lamb “as though it had been slain” (Rev 5:6) or of “the Lamb that has been slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8).⁴⁴ “From all this is it clear that John thought of the triumph of which his book is so full as resting on the atoning death of Christ.”⁴⁵

³⁸ Morris, *The Cross*, 310-12.

³⁹ Morris, *The Cross*, 321.

⁴⁰ Morris, *The Cross*, 322.

⁴¹ Morris, *The Cross*, 337.

⁴² Morris, *The Cross*, 347.

⁴³ Morris, *The Cross*, 357-58.

⁴⁴ “Slain” in both Revelation 5:6 and 13:8 is a perfect participle; the lamb continues permanently in the character of the One who was slain for the men. The crucifixion is not regarded simply as a happening that took place and is all over. While there is a once-for-all aspect to it, there is also the aspect which sees it as of permanent validity and continuing effect.

⁴⁵ Morris, *The Cross*, 358-59.

2. Soteriological Function of Trinity

While the previous section of the paper has dealt with the Christocentric atonement/ salvation in the whole New Testament writings. The present section of the paper deals only with the Deutero-Pauline writings, to explicate the Trinitarian salvation, especially from Ephesians chapter 1, which is unique to this study in which we find the involvement of Trinity in salvation as a package. Although Paul strengthened his arguments for the Christocentric salvation, yet he did not neglect the Trinitarian role in salvation.

2.1 Paul's Argument in Ephesians 1:3-14: Unlike the epistle to Colossians, there is no clear indication as to why Paul wrote this letter to Ephesians. Therefore the subject matter in Ephesians incorporates a bigger picture than the need of local church.⁴⁶ The central theme of the epistle is "God's overall design for his Church and for his world,"⁴⁷ and Paul is introducing this theme in the opening doxology of the epistle.

In this passage Paul is talking about the spiritual blessings of God upon the gentile believers in Christ in heavenly places. Although the first privilege of the spiritual blessings (salvation) was given to the Jews, but as they rejected Christ, so it was offered to the gentiles. This does not mean that the gentiles are of secondary importance in the sight of God. God has chosen them before the foundation of the world. So they are the co-heirs of the salvation of God. Here Paul brings to attention God's plan of salvation. Often the concept of salvation is being misunderstood by Christians who think that salvation is associated only with the cross-event, which is true. In fact, salvation is not restricted to Christ or cross event, but it is beyond. The involvement of triune God in the total plan of salvation is the center of attention in Ephesians 1:3-14. God the Father is the author of the blessings, Jesus Christ is the agent of the blessings, and the Holy Spirit is the sustainer of those blessings. Paul explains the role of Trinity in God's plan of salvation extensively in this passage.

2.1.1 Argument 1: The Role of God the Father in the Plan of Salvation (1:3-6)

The role of God the father is crucial in the plan of salvation of humanity. He is the initiator of the plan of salvation. He is the source of it. In verses 3-6, Paul delineates that it was God the Father who began the plan of salvation for the whole humanity.

⁴⁶Leslie James Crawford, "Ephesians 1:3-4 And the Nature of Election" in *The Master's Seminary Journal* 11/1 (Spring 2000) 76.

⁴⁷A. Skevington Wood, "Ephesians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 11 (ed. Frank E. Gaebeline; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 17.

The opening word “blessed” (v.3) declares the focus of this section. Paul affirms that God is blessed. It is an identification of God’s inherent character.⁴⁸ The blessing (v.3) begins with a formula known from the Old Testament and common in Jewish and early Christian prayers.⁴⁹ God is worth of praise because he has bestowed every spiritual blessing on his people in Christ (v. 3). One should differentiate the spiritual blessings from that of the material blessings which are bestowed by God who promised such material blessings in Deuteronomy 28:1-14 for those who obey his commandments.⁵⁰ The preposition *en* (with) has an instrumental sense in this phrase. It expresses the means by which believers are blessed.⁵¹ The word for blessings, *eulogia*, is singular and combined with *pase* has the idea that every possible blessing presented in a single package.⁵² Thus God has blessed each believer with a comprehensive spiritual package. This blessing is spiritual blessing. According to Schnackenburg *pneumatike* points to the source of the blessing.⁵³ But Crawford disagrees with him and says if source were the primary idea then Paul could express it by *apo tou pneumatikou* or *ek tou pneumatikou*. Here Paul, says Crawford, has emphasized the nature of blessings, not their source.⁵⁴

The phrase “heavenly places” defines the spiritual blessings as being located in the spiritual realm over which God is supreme.⁵⁵ God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. According to John Allan, the “in Christ,” *en christw* formula is Paul’s favorite phrase in this epistle which occurs at least 34 times.⁵⁶ Kobelski refers it to the unity of Jews and gentiles in this letter (2:5; 3:11).⁵⁷ Allan has argued that “in Christ” should be understood instrumentally rather than its typical Pauline sense of incorporation in Christ.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, ICC(Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956), 3.

⁴⁹ Paul J. Kobelski, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” *New Jerome Bible Commentary* (Bangalore: Theological Publication in India, 2002), 886.

⁵⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1984), 253.

⁵¹ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), 516-17.

⁵² R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 352.

⁵³ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 50.

⁵⁴ Crawford, “Ephesians 1:3-4 and the Nature of Election,” 89.

⁵⁵ Crawford, “Ephesians 1:3-4 and the Nature of Election,” 90.

⁵⁶ John A. Allan, “The ‘In Christ’ Formula in Ephesians,” *New Testament Studies* 5 (1958-59):54.

⁵⁷ Kobelski, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” 886.

⁵⁸ J. Allan, *Pauline Theology*, 82: 121, cited in Kobelski, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” 886.

But Crawford says that the “in Christ” formula in Ephesians is best defined as describing the mystical union of the elect with Christ.⁵⁹ For Markus Barth the formula denotes the concentration, summation, revelation, and execution of God’s own decision in one person, that is the Messiah.⁶⁰

While verse 3 speaks of the blessings in general, in verses 4ff. it is particular. While verse 4 describes the first role of God the Father in salvation, verse 5 describes his second role.

2.1.1.1 Election (v.4): Firstly, God has elected us. The verb *exelaxato* (elected) is part of the word group which has the basic sense of “to gather” and by extension “to say, speak.”⁶¹ The common Greek sense of *eklegomai* (middle voice) is “to choose, to pick out.”⁶² It may refer to a thing (Luke 10:42; 14:7), but primarily alludes to people in the New Testament, as it does here.⁶³ For Crawford the Old Testament usage of this word supports the idea of a choice out of many as Israel was chosen out of many nations and David was chosen from among his brothers.⁶⁴ But for Abbott the idea of choice from among others is missing here. He only points out the example of Christ as the chosen one from among others. For him, this word in aorist tense indicates the immediate election at the point of calling.⁶⁵

Hendriksen has explained beautifully the concept of election in this verse. He says that it is God the father who takes the lead in the divine work of election. He is the author of it. He also explains the nature of the election. “To elect” means “to pick or choose out of” (for oneself). The passage itself does not indicate the mass of objects or individuals out of which the Father chose some.⁶⁶ However, this larger group is clearly indicated by the purpose clause, “in order that we should be holy and faultless before him.”⁶⁷ Accordingly, the larger mass of individuals out of which the Father chose

⁵⁹Crawford, “Ephesians 1:3-4 and the Nature of Election,” 85.

⁶⁰Markus Barth, Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3 , in The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1974) 107-08.

⁶¹A. Debrunner, “*legw*” TDNT, 4:71-72.

⁶²Joseph H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 196.

⁶³BAGD, 242.

⁶⁴Crawford, “Ephesians 1:3-4 and the Nature of Election,” 79.

⁶⁵Abbott, Ephesians, ICC, 6.

⁶⁶William Hendriksen, Exposition of Ephesians, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967), 74.

⁶⁷The purpose of election is found in the words, that we should be holy and faultless before him. Hendriksen, Exposition of Ephesians, 77.

some are here viewed as “unholy and vile.” Hendriksen thinks this interpretation suits the context.⁶⁸ This election is said to have occurred “before the foundation of the world,” that is, “from eternity.” So if those who are elected for eternal life were elected before the foundation of the world, then all glory for their salvation belongs to God. So Paul writes “blessed be God (v.3).”⁶⁹

The phrase “in love” as the conclusion of v. 4 appears so awkward that some have treated it as the motive for the divine “destined” (i.e., predestined in v.5). However, it matches the phrase “in the beloved” which concludes v.6. Therefore, the expression appears to be a stylistic marker. It may be intended to refer to divine election in Christ rather than to human behavior.⁷⁰

2.1.1.2 Predestination (v.5): Secondly, God has predestined us. The verb *prooorisas* is a “late and rare compound” that means “to define or decide beforehand.”⁷¹ O’Brien explains that the verb ‘foreordain, predestine’, which appears six times in the New Testament, is used exclusively of God (Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5), in relation to sonship;(Acts 4:28) and emphasizes his sole initiative and authority in our salvation. Predestination is for a God-designed purpose, in this instance, ‘adoption’. This was understood in Graeco-Roman law as referring to the adoption as sons of those who were not so by birth. It signified entry to a privileged position. Paul applies, O’Brien adds, this term from the Graeco-Roman world to the special relationship which believers have with God.⁷²

God’s election and the foreshadowing of his people are alike according to the good pleasure of his will. Since he is God, his purpose and activity have no ultimate cause outside his own being. Bruce quotes here Hendry who quotes Martin Luther saying that God’s will has no “why.”⁷³ But since God in his person is the love, his purpose and activity express the divine love. According to Bruce, whatever be the syntactical relation of the phrase “in love” between vv. 4 and 5, it was in love that God chose his people before the foundation of the world and foreordained them to be his sons and daughters through Christ.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Hendriksen, Exposition of Ephesians, 74.

⁶⁹ Hendriksen, Exposition of Ephesians, 77.

⁷⁰ PHEME PERKINS, The Letter to the Ephesians: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections, NIB. Vol 11(Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 373.

⁷¹ Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol 4, 517.

⁷² Peter T. O’Brien, The Letters to the Ephesians, The Pillars New Testament Commentary (ed. D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 102.

⁷³ “Gottes Wille hat kein Warum be” quoted by G.S. Hendry, God the Creator (London, 1937), 141, quoted in Bruce, The Epistle to the Ephesians, 257.

⁷⁴ Bruce, The Epistle to the Ephesians, 257.

Verse 6 spells out, according to Perkins, the reason for the existence of the elect community; worship and praise of the one whose gracious benefits they have received through the beloved (Jesus Christ).⁷⁵ Keener opines that God chose Israel for them to bring him glory (Isa 60:21; 61:3; Jer 13:11); so central was revealing his glory that even his acts of judgment were meant to turn people to him (Ex 7:5; Amos 4:6), the real source of life (Jer 2:13).⁷⁶

For O'Brien, the expression 'in the Beloved' speaks that all of God's blessings come to us 'in Christ' (vv. 3-4). It shows that God's election of believers to be his sons and daughters is closely related to their being in Christ the Chosen One (v. 5).⁷⁷

2.1.2 Argument 2: the role of God the Son in the plan of salvation (1:7-12)

After making mention of the Father's role in the plan of salvation, Paul goes further with the explanation of the role of the Son in the plan of salvation.

2.1.2.1 Redemption (v.7a): Barth explains verse 7 as a sudden transition from the election before the world's foundation to a specific event, i.e. to Jesus Christ's death on the cross.⁷⁸ The redemption which is the outcome of our Christian faith is through His blood, even the forgiveness of our trespasses. Westcott writes that "Men as sinners are represented under a twofold aspect, they are captives at once and debtors: captives to the devil from whom they are ransomed; debtors to God who remits what they owe to Him."⁷⁹ Redemption has to do with the emancipation either of slaves or of prisoners. It was done through his blood.⁸⁰ The Jews understood blood in the sense of violent death or bloodshed.⁸¹ What was foreshadowed in the Levitical system was realized at the Cross when the Son of God laid down his life in death and ransomed men from sin, Wood reflects.⁸²

2.1.2.2 Forgiveness (v.7b): Forgiveness (*aphesis*) is loosening someone from what binds him. It stems from a verb meaning to send away. When God deals with our sin, it is dispatched into the wilderness like the scapegoat (Lev 16:20-22). Here, as Wood says, the reference is not to sin (*hamartia*) as in Colossians 1:14, but to sins (*paraptwma*) or deviations from the right

⁷⁵ Perkins, The Letter to the Ephesians, 373.

⁷⁶ Craig S. Keener, IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (Illinois: Inter Varsity, 1993), 541.

⁷⁷ O'Brien, The Letters to the Ephesians, 104-05.

⁷⁸ Markus Barth, Ephesians, 83.

⁷⁹ Brooke Foss Westcott, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (Cambridge: university press, 1909), 11.

⁸⁰ Skevington Wood, "Ephesians," 25.

⁸¹ Morris, The Cross, 219.

⁸² Skevington Wood, "Ephesians," 25.

path. For Wood, the first term denotes a sinful condition; the second, sinful acts. Forgiveness deals with both. God displayed his generosity in redemption and remission of sins which is in proportion to the rich abundance of his grace.⁸³

2.1.2.3 Cosmic Salvation (v.10): Ephesians describes the “all things” gathered up in Christ in cosmic terms, all things in heaven and on earth. How all things are united in Christ is not specified at this point. Perkins sees that Ephesians develops that motif with the image of Christ as head of the cosmic body, the church (1:18). He also says that the power of Christ over the cosmos can be found in the ancient Christian hymn cited in Phil 2:9-11. Colossians 1:15-20 grounds its depiction of Christ’s rule over all things in the role of the preexistent Son of God in creation.⁸⁴

2.1.2.4 Future Inheritance (v.11): In fact this verse ceases to focus on the divine activity and explore our participation in it all in Christ.⁸⁵ The word “chosen” (*eklerwthemen*) means “to be appointed by lot.” Boles sees it, as in the Old Testament, with special reference to dividing the land by lot for inheritance (Num 26:55–56). The point he makes is that we ourselves are apportioned and designated as the inheritance of God. In Christ we are admitted to the ranks of the chosen people, the special possession of God. We get heaven and God gets us.⁸⁶

In verse 5 the statement of believers as sons and daughters of God, the purpose of their foreordination is for the glorious praise of his grace (v.6); in verse 12 again his glorious praise is the object of their being foreordained.⁸⁷

2.1.3 Argument 3: The Role of God the Holy Spirit in the Plan of Salvation (1:13-14)

Paul now comes to the final point. After explaining the role of God the Father and God the Son, he comes to explain the role of God the Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation.

2.1.3.1 Sealing (v.13): Lincoln writes “as regards acceptance of the Christian gospel, believing can be seen to be the vital link between hearing the word and receiving the Spirit.”⁸⁸ When the readers of this epistle believed, they were sealed with the Spirit. Lincoln further writes that as the cattle and

⁸³ Skevington Wood, “Ephesians,” 25.

⁸⁴ Perkins, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 375.

⁸⁵ D.A.Carson et al., eds. *The New Bible Commentary*, 21st cent. ed. (Secunderabad: OM Books, 1994), 1226.

⁸⁶ Kenneth L. Boles, *Galatians and Ephesians*, *The College Press NIV Commentary*, CD-ROM (Missouri: College Press, 1993).

⁸⁷ Bruce, *The Epistles to the Ephesians*, 264.

⁸⁸ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesian*, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1998), 39

slaves were brand-named with their owner's seal, so the seal was a mark of ownership and of preservation as the owner's property. For him, "In the Old Testament God can be said to set a sign on his elect to distinguish them as his own and protect them from destruction (Ezek 9:4–6). The seal also has this significance in (4 Ezra 6:5 and Rev 7:1–8; 9:4)."⁸⁹ So the believer's reception of the Spirit is the sign that they belong to God in a special sense and have been stamped with the character of their owner. They belong to him now, but they are also protected until he takes complete possession of them (v 14). Lincoln also says that the Spirit is an eschatological seal who marks believers out as a people who will be protected through the testings, the battles, and the sufferings of the end-time, which are already upon them (6:10–18). In the Spirit believers "were sealed for the day of redemption" (4:30).⁹⁰

2.1.3.2 Guarantee of Future Glorification (v.14): The Greek noun *arrabwn* in Genesis 38:17, 18, 20 means a pledge that is to be returned to the owner when the debt is paid in full. Such a pledge is not a part of the payment due but a security for it. To the debtor the value of such a pledge is generally greater than the amount owed.⁹¹ *Arrabwn*, according to Westcott, is properly a deposit paid as security for the rest of the purchase money; and then, by a natural transference, the first installment of a treasure given as a pledge for the delivery of the remainder.⁹² For Wood, it can be applied to an engagement ring which Paul regards the Holy Spirit as the first installment of the Christian's inheritance. He says, "at the end of the age God will redeem his pledge and open the treasuries of heaven to all who are his in Christ. Meanwhile, the Spirit gives us the assurance that these things will one day be ours."⁹³ The Spirit, according to Schnackenburg, is bestowed upon us as a 'guarantee' which allows us to expect God's full 'payment' of our inheritance, the riches of his glory (1:18). Paul states clearly that God has given us the Spirit as a guarantee in our hearts (2Cor1:22; 5:5) just as in (Romans 8:23) he describes the Spirit of our future complete redemption.⁹⁴ In view of all this, Hendriksen tells, Paul began his magnificent doxology by saying "Blessed be..." and ends with "to the praise of his Glory."⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Lincoln, Ephesian, 39.

⁹⁰ Lincoln, Ephesian, 39

⁹¹ Markus Barth, Ephesians, 96.

⁹² Westcott, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, 17.

⁹³ Skevington Wood, Ephesians, 27.

⁹⁴ Schnackenburg, Ephesians: A Commentary, 66.

⁹⁵ Hendriksen, Exposition of Ephesians, 93.

The eulogy of vv. 3–14 began with an outbreak of praise as Paul blessed God for all the blessings he had showered on his people in the Lord Jesus Christ. All these blessings came because of an act of the divine will (1:5, 9, 11). “The note of praise has been sustained throughout by means of the recurring refrain ‘to the praise of his glory’ (vv. 6, 12, 14).”⁹⁶ Paul quite deliberately begins with God’s eternal election and predestination (vv. 4–5). God’s aim in salvation to adopt us as his sons (v. 5) leads to the historical Redemption which he granted to us in his ‘Beloved’ (v. 6), in the Blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins (v. 7). The redeemed are included in the cosmic act of redemption: they have received their portion from God (v. 11).⁹⁷

All believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit and through him who is the ‘guarantee of their inheritance’ possess God’s confirmation of their complete redemption (v. 14).⁹⁸ Thus, the eulogy of vv. 3–14 has clearly established the role of triune God in the total plan of salvation of the humanity.

Evaluation and Conclusion: Although in the New Testament the term “Savior” is explicitly implied to God the Father and the Son, yet the work of the Holy Spirit is implicit unequivocally. Therefore, the three are interconnected (working together) to the same goal (here salvation) although they have different soteriological functions, as the three are not three but one in Godhead. Creation and redemption are two important themes in the Bible. If the Trinitarian role is involved in creation (Gen 1:1–2; Ps 104:30; John 1:3; Col 1:16), then it is definitely involved in redemption (both individual and cosmic, Rom 8:21, 23) too. But redemption is more dominant than the creation (1 Peter 1:19–20; Rev 13:8). Although the Trinity is involved in the total plan of salvation, the Soteriological function of Christ appears to be dominating than the other two persons of Trinity (Acts 2:38). Although the persons of Trinity are interdependent, yet the role of the second person in trinity seems to have been more dependent by the other two as far as the doctrine of Soteriology is concerned. Father accomplishes both justification and glorification through Christ (Rom 5:9). The Son also is involved in the sanctification along with the Holy Spirit (1Cor 6:11). The Father’s role will remain incomplete unless the Son is executing them through his work and until and unless the Son is completing his work, it is impossible for the Holy Spirit to effect his ministry of regeneration, sealing, permanent indwelling, sanctification, etc. Here the Trinitarian interrelationship in their soteriological

⁹⁶ O’Brien, *The Letters to the Ephesians*, 123.

⁹⁷ Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, 67.

⁹⁸ Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, 67–68.

function is evident again where three are working together toward one end. This is salvific trilogy. Yet the work of the Father and of the Holy Spirit is revolving around the work of Christ. Even in the “in Christ” *en christow* formula in Ephesians there is the indication on the emphatic salvific role of Christ than the other two persons of Trinity. The present work agrees more with Markus Barth, whose view is mentioned earlier in this paper, when he says that “the formula denotes the concentration, summation, revelation, and execution of God’s own decision in One Person, which is the Messiah.” Paul’s view of the Kenosis passage has the preeminence of Soteriological function of Christ (2:8) as a result of which God the Father highly exalted him and gave him the name above every name (Phil 2:9), likely above the name of the Father himself and that may be the assumption of Paul when the former orthodox Jew changed the order of Triune God in his benediction when he composed 2 Corinthians (2 Cor 13:14).

Often there is a controversial question regarding salvation as static⁹⁹ (event) or dynamic (process). The following will be the deliberation that Christocentric salvation as well as the Trinitarian salvation can be both static and dynamic.

Christ: Christocentric salvation is both an event and also a process. The death of Christ is an event from a historical perspective. It is also an event from God’s perspective because “the lamb has been slain before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8). But the realization of the cross event for individuals is both an event and a process.

It is a past event: “even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ- by grace you have been saved; for by grace you have been saved through faith”(Eph 2:5, 8). At the same time it is a present event: “the Gospel ‘is’ the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”(Romans 1:16-17). It is also a process within the present because people are being saved: “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”

(1 Cor 1:18); “For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing” (2 Cor 2:15). Therefore, salvation is a present reality.

God: Progressive salvation (Rom 8:30) is an event in God’s perspective because all the verbs are in aorist tense. The realization of it in its totality is a process. Predestination is an event, so also is election. Justification is an

⁹⁹ By “static” I mean only “event” as contrast to Process, not as the opposite of “active” theologically.

event: “we are justified by His blood” (Rom 5:9), but the realization of it by the individuals happens in the process. Glorification or eschatological salvation will be again an event which will be a communal salvation only for the church (Eph 5:27; Jude 24-25) and believing Israel as a nation (Rom 11:26). They will be saved from the wrath of God in contrast to the sinners who will face the wrath of God (Rom 5:9). Paul also says about himself in connection with the eschatological salvation: “The Lord will rescue me ... and save me for his heavenly kingdom” (2 Tim 4:18).

Holy Spirit: The past sanctification (positional) is accomplished by Christ (1Cor 6:11), but the present sanctification (progressive) is being accomplished by the Holy Spirit. The future sanctification (eschatological) will be accomplished by the Father in the second coming of Christ through Christ (1Thess 5:23). God’s purpose for humans to be holy (1 Thess 4:7) is being accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit’s work of Regeneration, Indwelling and Sealing are events for an individual’s life, but Filling is a progressive work. When the Spirit fills a believer, He protects the believer from committing sin. In this way sanctification, although has an ethical sense, is primarily Soteriological. This is salvific transformation. While the Spirit’s work throughout the individual believer’s life is a process, regeneration of the unbelievers is also in process. While certain aspects in the doctrine of Soteriology are static from God’s perspective, but their actualization in individual life is dynamic. At the same time other aspects even from a human point of view are both static and dynamic. Therefore, the Christocentric as well as the Trinitarian salvation are both static and dynamic.

Towards a Trinitarian Ecclesiology for the Indian Church

*Suhas D.**

1. Introduction

The relationship between the Doctrine of Trinity and Ecclesiology is an often discussed subject for the past few decades. Behr says that talking about the relationship between these two is an “odd juxtaposition”¹. He says this because of the negligence given to ecclesiology compared to that of Christology and Trinity². In other words Carson says that the doctrine of Church is not considered as the most fundamental doctrines in all of the Scriptures. He also quotes Hoekendijk who says that historically any interest in the doctrine of Ecclesiology is a debauchery³. This is true in many ways that schisms happened primarily on the issues of Christology, Trinity and other teachings, but less on ecclesiological issues. Though the Bible does not use the term “Trinity,” it does give us an understanding and description of God in three persons. It also teaches us about the being and the work of God in relation to his creation.

In this paper I will look into the relation between the doctrine of Trinity and the doctrine of Church (Ecclesiology) and bring its implications to the Church in India. The primary reason for me to choose this topic is to see Trinitarian Ecclesiology as more a biblical model (which some do follow) for the Indian church, which most of the times falls into Christomonism or towards the Pneumatological Ecclesiology. I do understand the complexities of the culture and religious impacts towards Christianity and therefore to the Church in India. I will discuss some of the Indian theological understanding of Church. In this juncture we have to answer the question: Why Trinitarian Ecclesiology? In the following section I will deal with this question, which will further lead us the study of biblical and theological understanding of Trinitarian Ecclesiology.

* Mr. Suhas is faculty at COTRTS and serves as Chaplain.

¹ John Bher. “The Trinitarian Being Of The Church.” St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly 48.1 (2004): 67-88.

² Ibid.

³ D A Carson (ed). The Church in the Bible and the World: An International study. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987, 14.

2. Why Trinitarian Ecclesiology?

Carson says that, the doctrine of church is not only closely related to the doctrine of the Trinity, rather it has its source from it⁴. In the same line, Erickson says that the church exists because of its relationship with the Triune God⁵. Leupp rightly quotes that if a doctrine of church runs on the models such as economic, psychological, cultural or corporate other than the doctrine of God (Trinity), then ecclesiology becomes futile⁶. Edmund Clowney says that the church can be understood better in trinitarian aspect such as the people of God, an assembly of people, chosen by Him to worship Him and to be His new nation, a city set on the hill; as the disciples of Christ, the gathering Church of Christ, as his body; and as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, worshiping, nurturing and witnessing in the spirit⁷. I do agree that culture, psychological and other issues plays a major role in understanding the Church. However, the doctrine of God gives us a better understanding of Church compared to any other. Therefore, from the above statements we can see that the Church exists not on its own, but for the Triune God and it loses its validity without the Trinity. Carson also says that the biblical doctrine of Church is directly related to the revelation of God to his people which is given to us in the Scriptures⁸. In order to understand Theological relationship between the doctrine of Trinity and Ecclesiology, we will be looking at the Biblical understanding of the relationship between God and Church.

3. Biblical Understanding of Trinitarian Ecclesiology

Carson says that the biblical understanding of the Church in relation to the revelation of God to His people can be seen in the Word of God. However, he structures his Trinitarian understanding of the doctrine of the Church in relation to worship, nurture and witnessing aspects of the Church⁹. Behr says that the three most often used scriptural images for the Church in the Scripture are the people of God, the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Behr quotes Bruce Marshall who says that these three images help us to look into the intimate relation between the three persons of the Trinity¹⁰. So, let us examine how the three images help us to see the relation between the Church and the three persons of the Trinity.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Millard J Erickson. *Christian Theology*. Michigan: Baker Academic, 2013. 970.

⁶ Roderick Leupp. *The Renewal of Trinitarian Theology*. Illinois: IVP Academic, 2008. 128.

⁷ Sunand Sumithra. "The Mission and Ministry of the Church in the Present-Day Indian Context: An Evangelical Perspective." *Andover Newton Review* 1.1 (1990): 22.

⁸ Carson, (ed). *The Church...*, 15.

⁹ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰ Behr. "The Trinitarian Being...", 70.

3.1 God the Father

The most usage of the term that relates to the first person of the Trinity is Church as “the people of God”¹¹. This can be first seen in Leviticus 26:12 where God says that, “I will walk among you and be your God and you will be my people” (NIV). Paul uses the same scripture in 2 Cor. 6:16 in relation to the yoking of believers with non-believers.

Here we can see a distinction that Paul makes between God’s people and others. It was the initiative of God the Father in calling people as his own.

3.2 God the Son

The closest and most used term for the Church in the Bible is “body of Christ” which refers to the second person of the Trinity: the Son. Erickson says that some assume that the term “body of Christ” is the complete definition of Church. However, he says that though it is very rich and very full statement, it is not the complete one¹². Carson says that the term “body of Christ” represents the individual union of believers with Christ, in Christ (vital union) and the corporate unity of believers with Christ¹³.

3.3 God the Holy Spirit

Another term in the Bible that was used for the Church in relation to the third person of the Trinity is “the temple of the Holy Spirit.” Erickson says that Holy Spirit is the one who brought the church into being on the day of Pentecost¹⁴. McCormick says that it is by the help of the Holy Spirit that we call God the Father (Abba) and confess Jesus as the Lord, and it is by the same Spirit that we can comprehend the love of God that reached us in the form of his incarnate Word, which now unites us to Christ as Church on the day of Pentecost¹⁵. Indwelling, imparting life, conveying power, bringing unity within the body, creating sensitivity to the Lord’s leading, bringing remembrance of Lord’s teachings and making Church holy and pure includes the work of the Holy Spirit in and for the Church¹⁶.

3.4 God the Trinity

After looking very briefly about the individual relation between the three persons and the Church we now turn to how the three are related to the

¹¹ Erickson. *Christian...*, 968.

¹² *Ibid*, 959.

¹³ Carson, (ed). *The Church...*, 51-58.

¹⁴ Erickson. *Christian ...*, 2013. 962.

¹⁵ McCormick, K Steve. “The Church an Icon of the Holy Trinity? A Spirit-Christology as Necessary Prolegomena of Ecclesiology.” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 41.2 (2006): 227.

¹⁶ Erickson. *Christian...*, 962-963.

Church as one. Drilling says that the triune God shares his saving love with all the humankind by reaching out into our lives. He also says that in doing this the divine persons of the Trinity act together without any indiscrimination. He continues saying that it is the work of the Trinity, each exercising a particular activity in bringing the people of various places, age and differences together into the fellowship of Church¹⁷. Behr reminds us that all the above images relates the Church to the individual persons in the Trinity, however he reminds us about the work of the Cappadocian fathers where they say that: The actions of God are differentiated but not divided: it is the one God, the Father, who calls the Church into being as the body of Christ indwelt by the Holy Spirit; and, in return, the Church is conceived in terms of communion, but communion with God, as the body of his Son, anointed with his Spirit, and so calling upon God as Abba, Father¹⁸.

This can be clearly understood when we look into the concept of “Trinitarian Perichoretic Coactivity” which is used by T F Torrance in explaining the mutual activity of the three persons in the Godhead. In relation to the coactivity within the Trinity, perichoresis was used first for the mutual and reciprocal relations between the Father and the Son¹⁹. Torrance also says that when we think of the Triune God as One Being, even the activity related to God should be treated in the sense of one Being-in-Activity and one Activity-in-Being²⁰.

In other words, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all involved in the activities like redemption, creation or any other activity; however, we have to understand that even though they are all involved, they have their distinctive activities. This way of mutual involvement in a particular activity without clashing in their specific tasks can be called as “Trinitarian Perichoretic Coactivity”²¹. The threefold coactivity of the triune God to the missions can be seen in Paul’s Epistle to Romans 11:36, which reads as, “of him, and through him and to him are all things,” which was paraphrased in the council of Constantinople as, “For one is the God the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and one Holy Spirit in whom are all things”²².

4. Trinitarian Ecclesiology

Behr says that the issue of ecclesiology is always considered as modern as

¹⁷ Drilling. *The Genesis...*, 64.

¹⁸ Behr, *The Trinitarian...*, 70.

¹⁹ Torrance. *The Christian...*, 195.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

²² *Ibid.*, 195-196.

it was neglected by most of the councils and major discussions²³. Though there was less dealt in regard to the relation between the Church and the Trinity, things started to change ecclesially during the WCC council that was held in New Delhi (1961). The basis of the WCC is broadened to include reference to the Holy Trinity, while Orthodox theologians, such as the Nikos Nissiotis and others, strive to shift the focus from Christology to Pneumatology in ecclesiology. The Faith and Order World Conference in Montreal (1963), in its report of section I, stressed that our understanding of The Church should not derive only from Christology but from the Trinitarian understanding of God²⁴. In the catholic circles, Church took the colour of Trinity to it from the time of second Vatican council²⁵. This council was conducted on 7th, December 1965²⁶.

Academically there are a handful of theologians who tried to work on Trinitarian Ecclesiology. In the next section, we will look at some of the contributions that were made by various theologians to Trinitarian Ecclesiology.

4.1 Contributors towards Trinitarian Ecclesiology

After the attempts of Augustine, Richard of St. Victor, Cappadocians, Rhoads quotes Dulles who categorise the second half of the twentieth century as the “half century of ecclesiology”²⁷. I do acknowledge the contributions of theologians such as Gregory of Nazianzen, Maximus the Confessor, Pseudo-Cyril, John of Damascus, Thomas Aquinas, Richard of St. Victor, Karl Barth, Paul S Fiddes, Catherine Mowry LaCugna, Colin Gunton, Leonardo Boff and Thomas F Torrance. However, I would like to discuss the work of Volf, Moltmann and Zizioulas in relation to the doctrine of Trinity and the Church.

4.1.1 John Zizioulas

John Zizioulas is a prominent Orthodox theologian who has worked on the Trinity as a paradigm for the unity of the Church. He agrees with the common understanding of the role of the three persons of the Trinity in relation to the Church: It is the Father who instituted the Church in his Son and constituted it by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, John Zizioulas highlights the work of the Holy Spirit as very significant²⁸. Volf finds that John Zizioulas

²³ Bher. *The Trinitarian...*, 67

²⁴ Zizioulas, John. “The Church As Communion.” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 38.1 (1994): 4.

²⁵ Behr, *The Trinitarian Being...* 67.

²⁶ Drilling. *The Genesis...*, 61.

²⁷ John Rhoads, “Highlights in Contemporary Ecclesiology: A Review Essay.” *Concordia Journal* 34.3 (2008): 223.

²⁸ Lawler, Michael G. “Perichoresis: New Theological Wine in an Old Theological Wineskin.” *Horizons* 22.1 (1995): 64-65.

falls into a sort of subordination in explaining role of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in relation to intra-trinitarian relationships. The same kind of subordination is seen in his Trinitarian ecclesiology, when he says that as the Father is the head of the Trinity, so in the church, the Bishop becomes the head of the authority. Zizioulas believes that as in the Trinity, so also in the ecclesiology, which Volf says is difficult to understand without the understanding of subordination²⁹.

4.1.2 Moltmann

Moltmann, in his book “The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation,” says that in the process of communion, each member derives life from each other. He also says that in a co-relational communion, life is not limited to individualism; rather active communion takes an individual over the mark of individualism (118). In addition to this, Lawler says that, “Active communion always produces living community; not every so-called community always yields communion”³⁰. However, he finds a two-fold meaning in Christian communion. First, the communion is about the participation of the believer with the Father, in Christ, and by the enablement of the Holy Spirit. Second, the communion is in between the believers of the church, an extension of the believer’s communion with the Trinity³¹.

4.1.3 Miroslav Volf

Miroslav Volf in his work, “After our likeness: the church as the image of Trinity,” proposes that the concept of perichoresis has rich implications for communion in the church³². Volf also says that by seeing the three persons in the Trinity and their perichoretic relationships, we can draw and understand the relations and the personhood of the church³³. In other words, we can see that at a human level, there is a relation between the unity in the Trinity and unity among the believers in the Church.

Buxton finds that Volf’s interpretation of John 17:21 does not allow him to equate the trinitarian perichoresis to the human level of perichoresis³⁴. However, from his interpretation of John 17:21, Volf says that though human beings are not internal to each other, it is the Holy Spirit, which is in everyone,

²⁹ John Zizioulas, *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*. New York: T&T Clark, 2008. 215.

³⁰ Lawler, *Perichoresis...*, 61

³¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

³² Miroslav Volf. *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*. Michigan: WBE PC, 1998. 208-213.

³³ Miroslav Volf, “Trinity and the Church.” *Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology*. Ed. Paul Louis Metzger. New York: T&T Clark, 2000, 116.

³⁴ Buxton, Graham. “On the Trinitarian concept of perichoresis: the Spirit in the divine, the human and the physical.” N.p.: n.p., 2008. 10

that is common and the Holy Spirit is the one who draws the human beings into communion with him and communion with each other. Therefore, this process of the Holy Spirit incorporating the humanity into the Trinity and uniting humanity among themselves, enables a unity within the church that is similar to the unity in the Trinity³⁵.

The main thrust we see in the Trinitarian ecclesiologists is about communion. They refer to the communion which is mutual and complementary in the being of the Trinity as an example for the Church. In the next section we will be looking at the concept of Church as Communion.

4.2 Church as Communion

In general, the term “communion” is derived from a Latin term, *communis*. *Communis* is a compound word of *com* and *munus*, which means “common duty,” “common task” and “common undertaking”³⁶. However, as Lawler notes, the etymology alone does not help us in understanding the theological meaning of the term. In the theological sense, the term “communion” is derived from the Greek term *koinonia*, which means “common possession,” “solidarity” and “responsibility”³⁷.

Theologians like Volf, Zizioulas, Lawler and others use the term “communion” instead of “community.” Lawler explains that the term “community” gives a passive meaning and is a commonly used term. On the other hand, communion imparts an active, dynamic and relational meaning. Lawler also says that history testifies that though there have been many human groups (such as ecclesial, government, social, sports and others), they have never given any indication of the sense of community or communion in them. He suggests that in a community “we give one another life” and any human community, without being active in communion or interrelations, ceases to share life, truth and love within it³⁸. Gunton says that God has placed us in a “bundle of Life,” where every being is actively in communion with each other in terms of family, church, marriage, society and so on (170).

Lawler says that there are three levels in ecclesial communion. Firstly, the communion is seen in the participation of the believers together in worship, in sacraments and in confessing the Triune God. Secondly, communion is seen with respect to the dwelling of the same Holy Spirit in all the believers in common. Finally, communion is when “all live and act as members of one People and one Body in communion with one another and with the God who

³⁵ Volf. *After Our Likeness...*, 213.

³⁶ Lawler, *Perichoresis...*, 60.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

called them into communion-being as the People of God and the Body of Christ.” He says that the concept of perichoresis becomes more active in this understanding of ecclesial communion³⁹.

5. Indian Ecclesiology

It was always hard for the Indian Christian thinkers and theologians to digest the philosophical understanding of God of the Western theologians which is not so relevant and appealing to the lives and norms of Indian soil. Especially in relation to the Church, Indian theologians had diverse understandings and an aversion towards the westernised style of worship, nomenclature, administration and methods used. One of the Indian understandings of Church can be seen as gurukula. As we have seen that Indian Christian Ecclesiology is primarily Christo-centric where Jesus becomes guru (master) and the disciples who stays with them becomes kula (caste or group)⁴⁰. In the following section I will briefly deal with some of the Indian Theologians in relation to Trinity and Ecclesiology.

Sadhu Sunder Singh is also seen as Christo-centric in his understanding of God, where Christ stands as the central theme of his discourses⁴¹. Sadhu Sunder Singh had a negative approach to denominationalism because of the restrictions given to him by the Anglican Church to preach in Anglican Church alone. He gave preference to revelation that he received during ecstasy. He looks at the concept of church as an individual experience rather than as a corporate body⁴².

Chenchaiah, a prominent Indian theologian also had a negative attitude to organised church primarily because of westernisation. Then he came up with the Hindu idea of ashram (monastery). He said that the Church is a hindrance for evangelism in India and then proposed the idea of “Churchless Christianity.” He proves this by saying that Jesus did not bring an organisation called ‘Church’ rather he preached ‘the Kingdom of God’⁴³. The prominent critique of Chenchaiah on the Church is that it is purely a human institution. It helps people in worship, fellowship and propagation but does not help the believer to live the life of Spirit, life of prayer and meditation. Therefore he started the practise of techniques (sadhana) of spiritual life in the ashrams which will help the believer to grow close to God⁴⁴. He did not believe in

³⁹ Ibid., 60.

⁴⁰ Thomas Kochumuttom. *Comparative Theology: Christian Thinking and Spirituality in Indian Perspective*. Bangalore: Dharmaram P, 1985. 24-25

⁴¹ Sumithra, Sunand. *Christian Theology from and Indian Perspective*. Bangalore: TBT, 1990. 93

⁴² Boyd, Robin. *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2000. 105

⁴³ Ibid., 160.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 161.

any sacraments instituted by Jesus. He said that there should not be any sacraments as he believed that the change should be done by the Spirit of Christ in the realm of Spirit but not in the realm of name (nama) and appearance (rupa)⁴⁵.

For P D Devadanam, the concept of Church is a rock of offence for Hindu believer. So he proposed that the concept of church can be seen as community of truth (sathsang). He also believed that this sathsang is a gathering of people (lokasangraha), which makes clear that it is a community of both good and sinners. He always had a positive and dynamic attitude towards the church⁴⁶.

Rajasekharan says that India regards the Church as a useful human institution for the threefold purpose of worship, fellowship and propagation⁴⁷ which also we have seen in the biblical understanding of Trinitarian Ecclesiology. He also says that Church in India is a failure and becomes a stumbling block to the Christian Baktha. Indian Church spoiled the plan of Jesus and claimed name where it is not needed. Therefore Rajasekharan says that India is not in need of Church but Christ, Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God and India needs Christianity not churchianity⁴⁸. Apart from the above Indian Christians and thinkers, it has been a quest, an attempt to reach the wide range of Indian community in a way they can comprehend.

6. Implications of Trinitarian Ecclesiology for Indian Ecclesiology

I do want to propose Trinitarian Ecclesiology as a paradigm for Indian Ecclesiology. Though I propose this as a paradigm, there are certain challenges which we have already seen in the section of Indian Christian Ecclesiology. The descriptive part of the Trinitarian Ecclesiology is derived from the western form of understanding Trinity. This can be easy to implement in western Churches where there is no problem of multi religious, cultural and traditional aspects. This is more applicable to Indian context in relation to evangelism and initial Christian experiences.

On the other hand, the Church of India has to educate the believers in the biblical understanding of Christian Doctrines and to teach them about concepts such as Trinity. We have to teach them that as the three persons in the Trinity are mutually united, the believers in the church have to be united in bringing God the glory and in working united for his Kingdom.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 199.

⁴⁷ Rajasekaran, V C. Reflections on Indian Christian Theology. Madras: CLS, 1993. 81

⁴⁸ Ibid., 87.

Communion can be one of the needed implications that we can get from the Trinitarian Ecclesiology for the Church in India. Though it is a global issue, being an Indian Christian, I do not feel sad for the divisions in the denominations, rather it is pitiful that we divide as individual groups. The concept of Ecclesial communion helps us to see the mutual interpenetration (perichoresis) of the three persons of the Trinity as a paradigm for the unity of the Church in India in spite of differences. The Trinitarian Ecclesiology helps us to understand that though we are united as one for his work, we still have distinctive tasks to fulfil. There is a huge need of dealing with the cultural and philosophical understanding of the Indian soil, to whom the concept of the Trinity is sometimes applicable (which is understood as tritheism by Hindus) and sometimes not applicable (when it is understood as tritheism by Muslims).

Trinitarian Ecclesiology helps us to understand the diversity of ministries that are entrusted to the Church working for one common goal. Sunand Sumithra says that according to one survey which was conducted among Indian Christians, it was revealed that “they embraced Christian faith not because of the shanti or peace it gives them, but rather primarily because of the offer of brotherhood in the church”⁴⁹. This also tells about the need of brotherly love which is needed within the Church before we go out to reach others. This love can be learned from the mutual love between the three persons of the Trinity.

7. Conclusion

In this paper we have seen the relationship between the doctrine of Trinity and the doctrine of Church (Ecclesiology). We have also seen the Biblical and Theological understanding of Trinitarian Ecclesiology, where we have learned that the Church get its being from the very Being of God. The inner life of God as Trinity helps us to see how to relate to each other and to God in a mutual love relationship. We have also seen the Indian understanding of Church in relation to Trinity, and how we can draw implications from Trinitarian Ecclesiology for the Indian Church.

⁴⁹ Sunand Sumithra, “The Mission and Ministry of the Church in the Present-Day Indian Context: An Evangelical Perspective.” *Andover Newton Review* 1.1 (1990): 21-27.

*Challenges and Prospects of Missional Praxes in the 21st Century: A Theological Analysis**

*Josfin Raj S. B***

Introduction

The growth of the Christian faith from the first century to the third century Common Era (C E) was remarkable. The growth was not only numerical (quantitative), but also qualitative growth.¹ In the half of fourth century C. E, 56.5 percent population of the vast Roman Empire was Christians and the average growth rate was 40 percent per decade.² This could be considered as quantitative growth. Qualitatively speaking, the Christian faith could influence the administration of the then Roman empire. The movement began by an itinerant preacher in Galilee turning out to be the official religion of an empire. This itself represents the influence of Christian faith in the public society of that time. However, contemporary status of Christian growth is alarming, now only 32.8 percent are Christians in the world. It is reported in a study that from 2010-2020 growth rate of Christianity is projected as 1.2 percent only.³ Comparing to early Christianity, the current rate of Christian growth rate has declined. Why has the Christian faith diminished its growth rate now? Is there any problem with contemporary Christian faith unlike the early periods in history? What happened with our qualitative and quantitative growth rate? This article will bring to its readers an encounter with the new reality of twenty first century and its challenges to the Christian mission

* Based on inter-collegiate seminar theme 'Mission Praxis in the 21st Century: Challenges and Prospects' Presented at COTRTS-MCT-NLSM inter-collegiate paper presentation at COTRTS, Visakhapatnam on 28-01-2015 by Josfin Raj S. B

** Mr. Josfin Raj S. B is faculty at COTRTS in Christian Theology.

¹ Quantitative growth is based on the numerical growth of the church in which believers are added by preaching and baptism. Qualitative growth is calculated by the impact of Christian faith upon the individual life and values in the society. Augustine Kanjamala, SVD, "Emerging Catholic Missions and Missiologies in India," in *Missiology for the 21st Century: South Asian Perspectives*, edited by Roger E. Hedlund and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj (New Delhi, Chennai: ISPCK, MIIS, 2004), 177.

² Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (Np: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 4-12.

³ *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970 – 2020: Society, Religion, and Mission* (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary: Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2013), 13.

praxes. It will be a theological critique to contemporary mission theology, with some suggestions and some viable framework for missional praxes for the Christian faith.

I. Twenty First Century: Change/Shift of the Center of Global Christianity

The Global North,⁴ the place once considered as the center of Christianity, which had sent out numerous missionaries to different parts of the world for missions, has reduced its zeal for Christian faith. The adherents of Jesus Christ are being diminished regularly in the global North. Timothy Tennent also shares the same concern, he writes, “the birthplace of the Apostle Paul, the stomping grounds of the Pauline missionary journeys, the recipients of the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation, the cities of the early ecumenical councils...all of these places are now predominantly Muslim.”⁵ However, there is positive growth of the Christian faith in the southern hemisphere. Recent research reports on Global Christianity, which says that in 1910 over 80% of the world’s Christians, lived in the global North. By 2010, it is diminished to 41 percent. That means now 59 percent of Christian population live in global south.⁶ Another statistic Tennent gives is that, when William Carey, the father of the modern missionary movement, went to India at the turn of the 19th century, only one percent of the entire world’s Protestants lived in all of Asia, Africa and Latin America combined! Today the majority of Christians live outside the Western world.⁷ In fact, 67 percent of Protestants today live in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Tennent also argues that “the visible Church of Jesus Christ that has now entered the twenty-first century is a church that is predominantly non-white and non-European in its cultural, ethnic heritage.”⁸ Looking towards this phenomenon, a prominent secular historian Philip Jenkins observes, the centre of global Christianity is shifting from global North towards the global South.⁹ In the

⁴ The term “global North” and “global South” is defined in geopolitical terms according to the United Nations. The global North includes Europe and Northern America, while the global South includes Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania. See. *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970 – 2020: Society, Religion, and Mission*, 9.

⁵ Timothy C. Tennent, “Contemporary Promises and Challenges in Global Christianity,” in *Missiology for the 21st Century: South Asian Perspectives*, edited by Roger E. Hedlund and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj (New Delhi, Chennai: ISPCK, MIIS, 2004), 184.

⁶ See. *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970 – 2020: Society, Religion, and Mission*.

⁷ Timothy C. Tennent, “Contemporary Promises and Challenges in Global Christianity,” 181.

⁸ Timothy C. Tennent, “Contemporary Promises and Challenges in Global Christianity,” 181.

⁹ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Also see *The New Face of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

words of Tennent, “The center of Christianity has shifted from Jerusalem to Antioch to Constantinople to Rome to West Europe, to North America and now to the non-western world.”¹⁰

For us, this shift is important in relation to missions, because the character of Christianity that moves south is also changing substantially. This southern expansion of Christian faith, though good news to the Asian/Indian theological communities of the 21st century, also poses certain challenges to us. This southward shift even changes the definition, place, nature, purpose and theology of Christian mission.

II. Twenty-first century: Change in the Definition of Mission(s)

The Greek term *apostellô* (to send) is translated into Latin *asmitto*, from which the English term mission takes its root. The earliest occurrence of the English word was in the 1600s, which denoted the sending of Holy Spirit into the world.¹¹ By 1729, use of the word in relation to the church focused on the Great Commission.¹² This traditional understanding changed at the end of the 20th century and began to grow in the 21st century. In the twenty first century, there is a new trend in the terminology, definition and meaning of mission(s).

At the end of the twentieth century, missiologists dropped the ‘s’ from missions, and singularised the concept of missions as *Missio Dei* (Mission of God).¹³ Mission of God (*Missio Dei*), for ecumenicals, is “...everything God does for the communication of salvation and, in narrower sense, everything the church itself sent to do.”¹⁴ The traditional understanding of mission by the church, and by individuals as missionaries was replaced by God, who is the author and finisher of mission! Hence, any discussion on mission praxis is centred on the mission of God. When mission became Theo-centric, the passion for classical evangelistic missions was swallowed up by the other good things a church must do to carry out God’s mission.

¹⁰ Timothy C. Tennent, “Contemporary Promises and Challenges in Global Christianity,” 184.

¹¹ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learner/mission> accessed on 20 Jan, 2016.

¹² E. Chambers, *Cyclopaedia; or An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* cited by A. Scott Moreau, “Mission and Missions,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, edited by A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 636.

¹³ The concept *mission dei* is originated and developed in 1938 International Missionary Council (IMC) meeting at Tambaram, South India influenced by Barthian theology. Cf. Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj, “The Future of Mission and Mission of the future: Christian Hope and Christian Mission,” in *Missiology for the 21st Century: South Asian Perspectives*, edited by Roger E. Hedlund and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj (New Delhi, Chennai: ISPCK, MIIS, 2004), 120.

¹⁴ John A. McIntosh, “*Missio Dei*,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, edited by A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 631.

Consequently, from Europe and mainline churches in North America the stream of missionaries started to dry up, until by the end of the century it was a mere trickle.”¹⁵

This Theo-centric approach of mission also had a significant role in determining mission praxis in the twenty first century. In this particular approach, our praxis also must reflect the heart of God. To put it in a different way, missiology determined the theology proper and other faith confessions. Thus, the twenty first century begins with the *Missio Dei* as center and utilised all other streams of theological discussion as its axis/alliance to serve towards the mission.

Re-definition of mission as *missio dei* also provided a novel tool to interpret Scripture – missional tool. In the past, missiologists tried to find a biblical basis for mission activities, but now Scripture itself is seen as a result of *Missio Dei* – mission of God and to unlock the grand narrative mission of God is the tool as Christopher Wright argues.¹⁶ This shift is understood as “the biblical basis of mission” to “missional basis of the Bible”. For the evangelical community, Scripture plays a vital role and is the sole basis of what we do and profess (*Sola Scriptura*). This hermeneutic of *Missio Dei* to interpret Scripture and Theo-centric approach to do mission, not deliberately, replaces the reformation thought of *sola scriptura*, and alerts the theological community. The paradigm shift in the meaning and scope of theology of mission is the concern to address in this twenty first century.

III. Twenty First Century: Shift in Mission Theology

Mission theology at the dawn of the twenty first century has been undergoing radical re-vision. The change of the center of global Christianity also has a vital role in determining mission theology. Timothy Tennent writes, The geographic shift of the center of Christianity to the Southern continents raises vital missiological questions about the nature of non-western theologizing. The theological activity coming from the Southern churches can no longer be viewed as tangential to the main work of theology in the West. Nor can it be caricatured as merely expressions of a ‘peoples theology’ whether Liberation theology, Minjung theology or Dalit theology.... We are seeing the emergence of many honest theological engagements and more profound reflections that are helping us all to understand the universal nature of theological reflection.¹⁷

¹⁵ Robertson McQuilkin, “The Missionary Task,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, edited by A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 648.

¹⁶ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 2006).

¹⁷ Timothy C. Tennent, “Contemporary Promises and Challenges in Global Christianity,” 185.

As a theological community, the role of theology in missional activities and mission in relation with theology in the twenty first century are the two areas that need our careful attention. There are two main notions predominant in the theological circles in relation between mission and theology. First, mission as the mother of theology and second, theology as the queen of all sciences. We need to ponder upon these propositions to reconstruct a viable mission theology for the global South to face the emerging challenges of mission in the twenty first century.

Mission as the Parent of Theology

“Mission is the mother of theology” (Martin Kähler) is a well-acclaimed-mantra in the field of mission studies. It received wide acceptance in the theological circles by the publication of *Transforming Mission* by David J. Bosch.¹⁸ How does theology become progeny of mission? This can be based on the premise that theology(ies) developed or emerged in a particular missional context. In a missional context, there are three ways in which theology is formed and delivered (produced). Primarily, contextual questions in the mission field that will lead to formulate viable solutions and will spontaneously turn out to be a contextual mission theology. For instance, what Apostle Paul encountered in the church of Corinth was contextual questions, such as; can we have food offered to idol? (I Cor.8). Should women cover their head? (I Cor. 11) and by the way of answering the question, he was theologizing in the missional context. Secondly, the missional context demands re-interpretation of Christian gospel in the language of the local/native people. Missionaries, actually, try to interpret/re-present the gospel in relation to the comprehension of the people. For instance, Kosuke Koyama’s mission exposure to Thailand made him to present Christian gospel in the context of “sticky-rice,” “cock-fighting,” and the farmers using water buffaloes in the muddy paddy field. His Water-buffalo theology found its birthplace in the missional context.¹⁹ Finally, missionaries carry their personal/denominational theology to the missional context. The mission field becomes a place of impartation of faith and tradition of the missionaries. In these three ways, mission/missional contexts become mother and will give birth to theology(ies). Then, the statement – “mission is the parent of theology” is a correct premise, but needs further clarification and critical analysis on this proposition.

When theology emerged in the missional context, it formed a colonial/superior approach in doing theology as like doing mission. Triumphalism and

¹⁸ Cf. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011), 16.

¹⁹ Kosuke Koyama. *Waterbuffalo Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1974), 5.

paternalism was rampant in the modern missionary movement.²⁰ People started to compare mission activity equal to civilizing society in the pattern of western civilization.²¹ Thus, theology(ies) that came out of the womb of western missionaries was mainly colonial in nature. It was a foreign mission and imposed theologies.²² The shift from Enlightenment based modern theology to postmodern theologizing created a general consensus among theologians in that objective theologizing is an impossibility, since one's background, perception, etc. will affect it while engaging with the activity of theologizing or doing mission. In the case of mission-activated theologies, a missionary as a foreigner gives/imparts theology along with his/her background. To put it in a different way, missionaries were the motivating factor behind doing/formulating/constructing theology and mission. It is then a given theology by a stranger to a native. Missionaries determined the theology and the ways and means of doing mission. The term 'mission' itself stands as a synonym for 'foreign activity'. Theology that derived from the womb of mission then is a foreign activated theology. The missionary theology then becomes a foreign theology and colonial theology, when it is given in a particular context. In short, one will not be able to identify with a theology that derives from the context of mission from missionaries. We cannot limit theologizing in missional context alone. We have to look then into what was the place of theology in the past, and what it means to theology now.

Theology as the Queen of all Sciences

A simple etymological definition of theology is the "discourse/science of God", which points towards the superior category of the discipline – theology. It was considered that whatever is related to God is sacred and superior in the early century of Common Era. Thus, theology that dealt with the Divine was also considered as a higher discipline. This meaning was continued until the eleventh century in which the term theology was used restrictedly to the matter related to God, not as the entire body of Christian faith.²³ In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, under the influence of Parisian writers such

²⁰ Roger E. Hedlund, "Theology of Mission in Historical Perspective: A Survey of Theological Trends as Traced in Major Conferences on Mission in the 20th Century in Relation to South Asia," in *Missiology for the 21st Century: South Asian Perspectives*, edited by Roger E. Hedlund and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj (New Delhi, Chennai: ISPCK, MIIS, 2004), 128.

²¹ Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York: Charles Scribner and Company, 1870).

²² However, we have to acknowledge the exceptions such as the attempt of Robert De Nobili and others who pioneered to develop native theologies in the Indian context.

²³ Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*, Second Edition (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013), 2.

as Peter Abelard and Gilbert of Poitiers, the Latin word *theologia* came to mean, “the discipline of sacred learning,” embracing the totality of Christian doctrine, not merely one of its aspects – namely, the doctrine of God, especially in the university levels.²⁴ The medieval universities such as Paris, Bologna, and Oxford held theology as higher faculties. There was theological orthodoxy which made theology as concrete subject along with philosophy, and freedom was allowed to other disciplines of arts, medicine, and law.²⁵ This education pattern was continued into the sixteenth century.²⁶ The result of this development was as Alister E. McGrath observed, “theology became established as a significant component of advanced (learning) study at European universities.”²⁷ Through the university education, theology that once considered only with prayer and spirituality started to address theoretical issues in it. Theology went outside of the cathedrals or monasteries and found its place in secular universities trying to cope up with scientific developments. Theology, especially during those days, was seen to be more theoretical than practical. It was explicit in the publication of *Summa Theologiae* by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. Thomas Aquinas’s attempts to speculate and theorise theology was condemned by medieval spiritual writers like Thomas à Kempis. Martin Luther and John Calvin were trying to “rediscover the practical aspects of theology.”²⁸ Alister McGrath recaptures the theological trends in between medieval and modern period as follows.

“The Genevan Academy, founded by Calvin in 1559, was initially concerned with the theological education of pastors, oriented toward the practical needs of ministry in the church. . . . However, later protestant theological writers operating in a university context generally returned to the medieval understanding of theology as a theoretical subject, even if they made it clear that it had certain definite practical implications in the areas of spirituality and ethics.”²⁹

When rationalism and humanism came into the forefront, along with Immanuel Kant, scholars began to question the existence of theology in the university faculties. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, a Protestant theologian of the early nineteenth century, in his *Brief Outline of the Study of Theology* (1811), responded to this threat. Schleiermacher identified three major components

²⁴ Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology*, 2.

²⁵ A. James Reimer, “Christian Theology and the University: Methodological Issues Reconsidered,” *The Conard Grebel Review (ATLAS)*, 226.

²⁶ Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology*, 2.

²⁷ Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology*, 2-3.

²⁸ Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology*, 3.

²⁹ Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology*, 3.

in theology, such as philosophical theology (which identifies the “essence of Christianity”); historical theology (which deals with the history of the church, in order to understand its present situation and needs); and practical theology (which is concerned with “techniques” of church leadership and practice). Historical development of theology gives us ample reasons in arguing the ‘uni-queeness’ of theology over other disciplines.

Missiology as an academic field emerged later within theology. Dutch Jesuit Ludwig J. van Rijkevorsel coined the term ‘missiology’ in 1915 within the theological studies.³⁰

Inter-Dependence of Mission and Theology

Missions derives its source from theology. While J. C. Gamaliel writes an introduction to the book *Missiology for the 21st Century: South Asian Perspectives*, he tells that

“The foundation of missiology is in theology. Missiology must be squarely based on systematic, exegetical and historical theology but is informed by the social sciences and the study of religions leading ultimately to an integrated inter-disciplinary approach.”³¹

That means one’s theology will definitely affect one’s mission. Mission activities of the church are guided by the theological position that a particular church holds. For instance, the traditional Roman Catholic Church advocated the proposition that salvation is within the Church only – “Church is the ark of salvation.”³² Based on this theology, the attempt of Roman Catholic Church was to convert everyone to Roman Catholicism by using all the tools including force and power.³³ However, the theology of the Roman Catholic Church shifted in the 1960s at the Vatican Council, and explicit in *Nostra Aetate*, the

³⁰ Jan Jongeneel, “Is Missiology an Academic Discipline?”, *Exchange, A Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research*, 27:3, Reprinted in *Transformation*, July 1998, pp. 27-32 cited in Siga Arles, “Some Thoughts on the Development of Missiology in India,” in *Contemporary Christian* 2/2 (Nov., 2010), 54.

³¹ J. C. Gamaliel, “Introduction: Evangelisation, Contextual Apologetics and Research,” in *Missiology for the 21st Century: South Asian Perspectives*, edited by Roger E. Hedlund and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj (New Delhi, Chennai: ISPCK, MIIS, 2004), 1.

³² “...Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus – “No salvation outside the Church” – was the traditional axiom taught by the St. Cyprian in the 3rd century, reinforced by the theology of St. Augustine and strictly interpreted and adhered to by the Church until very recently. The council of Florence, 1438-1445 officially taught: “The Roman Catholic Church firmly believes, profess and teaches that outside the Church no one, neither pagan nor heretics, nor schismatic can attain eternal life, but will go to the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his agents.” K. Rahner, J. Neuner, *Teaching of the Catholic Church*, Ranchi, 1969, 212. Cited in Augustine Kanjamala, SVD, “Emerging Catholic Missions and Missiologies in India,” 169.

³³ Edward Peters, *Inquisition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).

Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, affirmed the truth and values to be found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism.³⁴ After Vatican II, the Catholic Church began to accept a theology of religious pluralism and work of the Holy Spirit “outside the visible boundaries of the Church.”³⁵ The goal of Roman Catholic mission, after Vatican II, has been towards inter-religious dialogue rather than conversion. Catholic theologians such as Karl Rahner’s “implicit Christianity” proposition³⁶ and Raymond Panikkar’s “cosmic Christ” affirm this position in their writings. According to Panikkar, “The good and bonafide Hindu is saved by Christ and not by Hinduism... Hinduism has also a place in the universal saving providence of God.”³⁷ The following statistics within the Roman Catholic fold is also interesting. Around 66 percent of priests and 74 percent of religious sisters maintain that all religions are means of salvation for their sincere followers. In contrast, a minority 16 percent of the priests and religious sisters continue to subscribe to the traditional view.³⁸ This trend is also available within the evangelical Christianity.

Protestant Christian faith inaugurated world mission in the 19th century and culminated in the World Missionary Conference at Edinburg in 1910. “The evangelization of the world in this generation” was both the theme and the purpose of the World Missionary Conference. There was no debate about the meaning of mission. The aim and purpose of missionary activity was the evangelisation of the peoples of earth.³⁹ In 1938, the IMC conference on World Mission of the Church at Tambaram (Madras), Hendrik Kraemer was asked to prepare a clear statement on the Christian message and approach. As a missionary in Indonesia and as a theologian, he presented his thesis *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* – the title of his book as well.⁴⁰ He represented the neo-orthodox/Barthian evangelical faith. Jan A. B. Jongeneel observes the influence of Kraemer’s book was “a great plea to replace the anthropocentrism then ruling Christian theology and Christian

³⁴ Walter M. Abbott (ed.) *The Documents of Vatican II* (London-Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman), 660-667. Cited in Roger E. Hedlund, “Theology of Mission...,” 139.

³⁵ Thomas Mampira, “Mission in a Pluralistic Society,” in *A Missiology for the Third Millennium*, edited by Thomas Aykara (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1997), 80.

³⁶ See Karl Rahner, “Salvation of the Non-Evangelised,” in *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopaedia of Theology*. Vol. 4 (Bangalore: TPI, 1975), 80.

³⁷ R. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (London: Daron Longman and Todd, 1964), 54.

³⁸ Augustine Kanjamala, SVD, “Emerging Catholic Missions and Missiologies in India,” 169.

³⁹ Roger E. Hedlund, “Theology of Mission in Historical Perspective,” 129.

⁴⁰ H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1938).

missions and to enthrone theocentrism and christocentrism.”⁴¹ However, the Madras “Rethinking Group” in particular challenged Kraemer’s concept in the 1939 publication of *Rethinking Christianity in India*. Subsequently Indian Christian Theology has developed in a different direction. Vengel Chakkarai, for example, argued for continuity, rather than discontinuity of Christian faith and Hindu culture. Comparisons between Hinduism and Christianity as rival faiths are futile. The “Rethinking Group” espoused a radical appreciation for the values in Hinduism. P. Chenchiah, in particular, was anxious to retain his Indian-Hindu cultural heritage. This trend came to be known as the post-Kraemerian phase of Indian Christian theology.⁴² In the development of the World Council of Churches (WCC) the meaning of the term mission oscillated rapidly. Mission became the doing of good deeds, building neighbourly goodwill, humanization efforts, programmes of social and political action, inter-religious dialogue and inter-church relationships.⁴³ S. J. Samartha continued this trend and this was taken up by the WCC, which brought a pluralistic ecumenical standpoint in theology, where mission is no longer the preaching of the gospel and conversion, but having conversations with others (dialogue). Roger Hedlund reports the condition of the World Council of Churches,

“Gradually the WCC interest in mission per se appears to have diminished. Neither the Fourth Assembly of the WCC at Uppsala in 1968 nor the Salvation Today Conference of the CWME at Bangkok in 1972 evidenced interest in the communication of the Gospel among non-Christians but were concerned rather about questions of humanization.[...] Increasingly the emphasis has turned more toward inter-religious dialogue and related questions.”⁴⁴

Two things can be inferred from these examples for reflecting upon mission praxis in the twenty-first century. First, there is an integral relationship between theology and mission. Second, one’s theology will determine the doing of mission. Therefore, theologizing is equally as important as one in doing missions in the 21st century.

IV. Doing Mission and Doing Theology in the 21st Century

In the twenty-first century, doing theology is equally as important as doing mission. One’s theology will definitely affect aim, method and scope of doing mission. The twenty-first century is characterised with different ‘posts’ such

⁴¹ Jan A. B. Jongeneel, “Hendrik Kraemer’s Christian Message in a Non-Christian World: A Magnus Opus after 75 years,” in *The Journal of Contemporary Christians* 5/2 (Nov., 2013), 12.

⁴² Siga Arles, “Mission in The Indian Cultural Context: The Significance of Paul David Devanandan,” *Indian Journal of Theology*, 35/2 (1993), 56.

⁴³ Roger E. Hedlund, “Theology of Mission...,” 141.

⁴⁴ Roger E. Hedlund, “Theology of Mission...,” 134.

as post modernism, post-liberalism, post-Christianity, etc. One among them is post-modernism which tries to deconstruct metanarratives.⁴⁵ Theological and missiological metanarratives of the past such as ‘queen of all sciences’ and ‘mother of theology’ must be deconstructed and look forward to an integration and mutual benefit, then only a viable mission praxis is possible. What I wish to suggest is to have right faith and right action in the twenty first century; a ‘doing’ of both mission and theology hand in hand. It would be complementing and a correcting endeavour for a higher vision of Christian faith in the 21st century. To put it in another way, right/relevant theology (doctrine/faith) brings right/relevant mission (praxis/action) and vice versa. It is a lesson from the history of Christianity as well. Early theology determined their action and their action determined their theology. Wilbert R. Shenk also agrees that the breach between theology and mission must be healed. He writes,

“...Christians face a crisis of theological identity because evangelisation and mission have been separated from theology. If mission is to be effective, it must include continuing reflection on action in the light of scripture, a theological process. And for theology to remain vital it must arise out of missionary engagement.”⁴⁶

To heal the wound, mission and theology must work together. Some proposals are presented here for developing a viable missional praxis in the process of theologizing.

Firstly, ‘Doing’ mission and theology. Based on the theology of religious pluralism, inter-faith dialogue is considered to be one of the predominant ways of doing mission. It involves respecting the people and their faith traditions. This approach of doing mission is a shift from “conversion to conversation.” The Asian Bishops defined mission as triple dialogue: (a) dialogue with the great religious traditions of the people of Asia; (b) dialogue with the poor, the deprived and the oppressed; (c) dialogue with living traditions, the cultures and with the life realities of the people in whose midst we serve.⁴⁷ From the middle of the 20th century, under the influence of the comparative study of religions, dialogue with the world religions is understood as one of the methods of proclamation.

⁴⁵ Charles Jencks, *The Story of Postmodernism* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2011).

⁴⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, “Mission Theology: History, Development and Priority,” in *The Journal of Contemporary Christians*, 4/2 (Nov., 2012), 9-10.

⁴⁷ Augustine Kanjamala, SVD, “Emerging Catholic Missions and Missiologies in India,” 170.

In addition to the above-mentioned method, another way of doing mission is the traditional way of preaching, teaching and baptizing, by aiming at the quantitative growth of the church. The ultimate aim of this traditional paradigm is to convert people. However, the list of the ways in which mission is done is not complete here, we have now two ways of doing mission in the twenty first century global market.

Secondly, doing mission and theology ‘holistically’. ‘Doing’ or ‘praxis’ is the catchword for theologizing and mission activities today. Doing theology is no more framing theoretical formulas, but rather revolves around ‘praxis’.⁴⁸ The praxis of theology and mission must be holistic. Douglas McConnell defines holistic mission as follows:

“Holistic mission is concerned with ministry to the whole person through the transforming power of the gospel. While holistic mission affirms the functional uniqueness of evangelism and social responsibility, it views them as inseparable from the ministry of the kingdom of God. Therefore, holistic mission is the intentional integration of building the church and transforming society.”⁴⁹

With mission and theology, one must be able to minister to the holistic aspect of a person or society. This trend in evangelical circles is common. At the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism, which took evangelism and social responsibility as partners in the missionary task, reflected upon three emphases on mission. First emphasised on evangelism which focuses on “the development of thriving church movements among people groups around the world.”⁵⁰ “A second stream, following Stott, focuses on integrating a holistic approach to mission, incorporating evangelism and issues of social justice and reconciliation.”⁵¹ “The third stream sometimes referred to as the radical discipleship group and considers social justice to be mission just as evangelism is, and does not give priority to either.”⁵²

The emergence of contextual theologies like Latin American liberation theology, black theology, dalit theology, etc., centred on the concept of doing theology holistically. It did not address the religious aspect alone, but also included socio-political and cultural issues. It argues for ‘preferential option

⁴⁸ Dan Cohen-Sherbok, “Theology as Praxis,” *Companion Encyclopaedia of Theology*, edited by Peter Byrne and Leslie Houlden (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 1001 ff.

⁴⁹ Douglas McConnell, “Holistic Mission,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, edited by A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 448.

⁵⁰ A. Scott Moreau, “Mission and Missions,” 637.

⁵¹ A. Scott Moreau, “Mission and Missions,” 637.

⁵² A. Scott Moreau, “Mission and Missions,” 637.

for poor', justice, liberation and so on.⁵³ Most of the theological doing in the twenty first century tries to be holistic in nature. Theology is a 'servant to the church'⁵⁴ and society. Theology is now available to everyone. One can theologize without having a theological training. A theology that is derived from the common person is the characteristic of the 20th century and continues its momentum into the 21st century as well. M. M. Thomas, one of the leading lay theologians emerging from India, writes "...theology primarily as the tool of Christian witness in the world of religions and society."⁵⁵ He adds that theology is the servant of the community of faith.⁵⁶ It shows that theology finds its place in the everyday life of the people. However, this trend must be checked periodically, so that by holistic theologizing we should not bypass the original task of mission.

However, theology's uncritical servanthood to the philosophies and methodologies made it to be a servant of Mammon, colonialism, continentalism, feminism, Marxism and other 'isms'.⁵⁷ In a way theology, which once determined the content of other disciplines, has now become a tool in the hand of ideologies. Theology has lost its own distinct identity and characteristics. Methodology of doing theology is now determined by other branches/disciplines in and outside of theology. This development is intentional and cannot be avoided. Such trend, not deliberately, leads lay Christians to have less confidence in theological education.⁵⁸ Because of this, the emerging churches pay less attention to quality theological education, thinking that theology has less value to do in ministry. It is the challenge of twenty first century theologizing. We have to bring back the confidence of pastors and believers regarding theological education and training programs, by keeping our focus on the 'right faith and right action'. Therefore, as a theological community, doing theology and mission must be integrated into the 21st century carefully to face the challenges of our time.

⁵³ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, translated and edited by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988). Also Samuel Rayan, "The Justice of God," in *Living Theology in Asia*, edited by John C. England (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981), 214.

⁵⁴ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology Vol.1* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 3.

⁵⁵ M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (Madras: CLS, 1970), 285.

⁵⁶ M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, 291.

⁵⁷ Tissa Balasuriya, *Planetary Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984).

⁵⁸ For example, lay Christians and pastors concern over select syllabus in the theological education in India that uncritically syncretized with the secular philosophies which has less significance for them and church and mission.

Change in the Locus and Scope of Mission

One of the primary challenges that we face in the twenty first century is the place or location of mission. Aloysius Pieris asks a question, what is the locus of this praxis? He himself answers,

“[C]ertainly not the Christian life lived within the church in the presence of non-Christians; rather, it is the God-experience (which is at once the [hu]Man Concern) of God’s own People living beyond the church and among whom the Church is called to lose herself in total participation.”⁵⁹

Theology and mission have to penetrate into the areas where the life of the people is made or unmade, in social, political and economic affairs, not for the gain and power of its leaders, nor for the prestige of a minority community, but for the sake of human and humanity, of the Image of God on earth, of justice, of the quality of human life on earth.⁶⁰ Human context is the locus of mission and theology. In the Manila Manifesto mentions about four categories of people groups.⁶¹ The first category “is the potential missionary force, committed.” These are committed Christians serving missions wholeheartedly. Second, there are uncommitted, who need to be re-evangelised. This category is the lukewarm Christians (Rev. 3:16). They profess Christianity, but are not committed to the teachings of Jesus. Thirdly, the un-evangelised, those who have a minimal knowledge of the gospel, but have had no valid opportunity to respond to it. They are probably within the reach of Christian people. Finally, the unreached people, which consists of “the two billion who may have never heard of Jesus as Saviour and are not within the reach of Christians of their own people.”⁶² Though categorization may seem to be limited, the status that is given in the Manila manifesto is alarming.

“...Yet, at present, only 7 percent of all missionaries are engaged in this kind of outreach [among unreached people], while the remaining 93 percent are working in the already evangelised half of the world. If this imbalance is redressed, a strategic redeployment of personnel will be necessary.”⁶³

⁵⁹ Aloysius Pieris, “The Asian Sense in Theology,” in *Living Theology in Asia*, edited by John C. England (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981), 176.

⁶⁰ Samuel Rayan, “The Justice of God,” in *Living Theology in Asia*, edited by John C. England (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981), 215.

⁶¹ Roger E. Hedlund, *Roots of the Great Debate in Mission: Mission in Historical and Theological Perspective* (Bangalore: TBT, 1993), 430.

⁶² Roger E. Hedlund, *Roots of the Great Debate in Mission*, 430.

⁶³ Roger E. Hedlund, *Roots of the Great Debate in Mission*, 430.

This report shows that the Christian church in the 21st century is complacent in this current situation. We mainly focus on the first three categories such as committed, uncommitted, and un-evangelised and seldom on the last, unreached. However, we have to admit that God's mission extended to or involved all these four groups of people. Along with reaching the unreached, we also need to re-evangelise the evangelised. When we contemporize mission praxis, this matter needs to be addressed. The whole activity of mission will also determine the selection of location of mission. Therefore, the twenty first century mission praxis must be multi-dimensional, and directed towards plurality of mission strategies in the emerging contexts.

Change in the Purpose of Doing Mission

Why we need to 'do mission' and 'do theology'? What is purpose of doing Christian mission? This also raises a question, what is the end result which we are aiming for? Is it the conversion of individuals, or a new creation or the transformation of society, etc.?

The simple meaning of the term mission is "sending someone forth with a specific purpose" mainly to a foreign land.⁶⁴ What is this 'specific purpose'? A. Scott Moreau says that 'the purpose' can be identified as into two senses. In a broad sense, it represents "the interests of the sender" and narrowly "to hand-deliver a message written by the sender".⁶⁵ For Christians in India, the Western mission funded most of our missionary works. The sender is the western colonialists. Christian mission work, though claims that Jesus is the sender and serves His interest, represents the interest of the western mission societies. Therefore, as most of the Hindu fundamentalist groups accuse Christians as serving the "Western country." That means the term 'mission' itself poses a challenge to Christianity in India and elsewhere in the colonized land. Since we have a colonizing past, 'mission' represents a colonial military tone and triumphalism that trembles Indians as a whole.⁶⁶ For the Hindu fundamentalist groups, Christian mission represents the proselytising activity of Christian religion, which is western in nature. The fundamentals in India began Ghar Vapsi as their new mission to call back people who are proselytes of foreign religions. Christian mission (if we can use the term "mission" as such in the Indian context, is in question) needs to place emphasis on the personal and communal transformation rather than religious conversion in the Indian context. A theological reflection needs to be directed towards this

⁶⁴ A. Scott Moreau, "Mission and Missions," 636.

⁶⁵ A. Scott Moreau, "Mission and Missions," 636.

⁶⁶ Roger E. Hedlund, "Theology of Mission in Historical Perspective...", 128.

goal of personal and communal transformation. Evangelization is a comprehensive span of activities centred in witness to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.⁶⁷ The traditional purpose of mission is to fulfil the Great commission of Jesus Christ in Mathew ... "Go to the end of the world and make disciples of all jatis". Conversion is a necessary element in the process of doing mission. In the modern missionary movement, one way or the other it is aimed at the conversion of people. Mass conversions are celebrated as the fulfilment of God's commandment. Augustine Kanjamala shares that "The traditional emphasis of mission – proclamation, baptising, salvation of the souls, planting churches, and interior transformation and new life in the spirit through sacramental way. But it rapidly changes and India looks for new paradigm in mission."⁶⁸ Dialogue is an aspect of mission, but not its totality.

Change in the Nature of Mission

The nature of doing mission has rapidly changed in the 21st century. Proclamation of the gospel was the main concern, but now it is proclamation of liberty to the captives. It is a plea for social justice and social transformation. As previously mentioned, holistic mission must be the nature of Christian mission in the 21st century. We see it in WCC and other ecumenical forums. The main thrust of ecumenical theology today in Asia is toward the liberation of persons from social injustice, economic exploitation; political oppression, and racial discrimination. Following Lausanne, mission became increasingly holistic. Evangelicals and ecumenical arrived at a degree of consensus.⁶⁹ Social justice and evangelism were on the agendas of both. The participation of Pentecostals and other evangelicals along with the Orthodox in the WCC brought a more balanced understanding of mission within the world body today.

This balanced approach would help us to keep up the momentum of global expansion/influence of Christian faith, especially in the global South. Then we can properly evaluate the complete growth of Christian faith numerically and qualitatively. We are not bypassing the traditional understanding of mission as Jesus' great commission; we are also not negating the need of the hour to become 'salt of the earth' or 'witness in the context', and in 'transforming the community'. It is the way to do mission in a balanced way.

If we do mission qualitatively and quantitatively considering the holistic aspect,

⁶⁷ Roger E. Hedlund, "Theology of Mission in Historical Perspective...", 141.

⁶⁸ Augustine Kanjamala, SVD, "Emerging Catholic Missions and Missiologies in India," 179.

⁶⁹ Gerald H. Anderson, "Christian Mission in A.D. 2000: A Glance Backward," *Missiology* XXVIII (July, 2000), 281. Cited in Roger E. Hedlund, "Theology of Mission...", 141.

what are the means and ways to implement it? As I had mentioned there are two kinds of missions that exist now – the traditional way of preaching and converting and the second one is inter-faith dialogue and conversing. In addition, we have to involve in the process of holistic transformation of the society. M. M. Thomas' idea of 'salvation as humanization'⁷⁰ tends to share the idea explicitly. He writes,

“The Gospel of Christ as a source of humanization of the collective life of mankind, and of the possibility of faith becoming in some measure even on this side of history with its sin and death a force for the spiritual liberation of the liberation movements of history from the forces which betray the human ends for which they struggle.”⁷¹

The Indian context of poverty, exploitation, communalism, fundamentalism, increasing number of crime and violence, corruption, caste and consumerism demands to theologize into and do mission in this context.⁷² We are doing mission and theology for the need of 'now' learning from the 'past' and looking 'ahead' for the reign of God. Timothy Tennent also agrees, “A systematic study of the interactions between the Word of God and the servants of the Word of God and the recipients of the Word of God are constitutive elements of a dynamic, contextual and relevant missiology.”⁷³ The contextual struggle as an Indian and Christian is to respond in discourse with this social reality theologically. This can be done within three layers, such as, personal conviction and transformation at a base level, holistic development at the second and finally salvation from a dehumanised state. This theological engagement is the seed of mission praxis.

Concluding Remarks

Mission activities and centers are now re-located from Global North to Global South in the 21st century. Increasingly, mission today is from Africa, Latin America and Asia to Europe and North America. One projection claims there are 1500 international missionaries (mostly from Africa) at work in Britain today.⁷⁴ Since the 21st century shifting of the Christian center to the East, the mission and context must also be thought of in an eastern way and

⁷⁰ M. M. Thomas, “Christian Social Thought and Action, Reflection after Thirty Three years, (1976),” in M.M. Thomas Reader: Selected Texts on Theology, Religion and Society, edited by T. Jacob Thomas (Tiruvalla: CSS, 2002), 26.

⁷¹ M.M. Thomas, Christian Social Thought and Action, Reflection after Thirty Three years, (1976), 26.

⁷² R. Kottari, “From Religion to Religiosity,” Jeevadhara, 20 (Jan. 1990), 115.

⁷³ Timothy C. Tennent, “Contemporary Promises and Challenges in Global Christianity,” 169.

⁷⁴ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 108 ff.

in its context. Therefore, we have to be aware of the theological trends in these areas and their conception about mission. Then only a 'holistic' missiology is possible. Theological trends in the global south is vibrant and contextual, this makes it a challenge in doing Christian mission effectively. It allows us to explore a variety of methods of doing mission. The re-location of Christian faith centers teaches the fact that we cannot have one missional praxis for longer than a decade, periodically the praxis changes. Our theologizing and missional praxis is short lived. Theologies and practices of mission are contextual and temporal. Therefore, every now and then the activity of mission must be crosschecked with the way in which theology is done and vice versa. Because, right faith brings right action and vice versa. The integration and inter-dependability of both must be taken up and carried forward in a balanced way. Doing theology is not merely a scientific activity, but pastoral and missional. A radical re-vision is necessary to do theology along with mission into the next century.

Significance of Indigenous Church Planting for Church Growth in the Indian Context

*Rajan Babu**

1. Introduction

God created human beings in order to have an intimate fellowship with Him. He started His relationship with Adam and Eve the first man and woman on planet earth. But the first of the human race, Adam and Eve, lost their relationship with the Father and it became impossible to restore the same close intimate relationship. Therefore, in order to restore the lost relationship with God the father; God sent His son Jesus Christ to pay the ransom on the cross of Calvary, so through Him humanity was reconciled back to have an intimate relationship with the Father. Christ called everyone in order to know Him and to become a part in the fulfillment of God's purpose. Later the Church was founded on Christ and He Himself became the foundational cornerstone of the Church and gave the great commission to be a witness of Him. The church was gifted by the Holy Spirit and her work was started by proclaiming the Good News, to bring salvation for all the people of all groups. The Church had extended to many different regions by the resilience and the mighty deeds of the Holy Spirit. As a result the church delivered the Gospel in her missionary work.

As the task continued by the church in reaching many unreached groups, there were still many challenges at the same time, many communities have rejected her principles and as a result it faced many hindrances to proclaim this good news. As a consequence many communities have opposed and rejected the good news.

Particularly in India, many communities were turned away by the church because of the rapid expansion of Christianity through mass movements among various lower caste communities. As a result, Christianity was pictured as a "low caste religion" in India which caused the high caste communities to keep away from Christianity and hence remained unreached.

On the other hand Christianity came to India primarily by the missionary work of the western world. This made Indians brand Christianity as a "western religion" in the colonial period. The Indian church continued in

* Mr. Rajan Babu is faculty at COTRTS in Missiology.

practicing the western way of worship and church management which was introduced by the missionaries. After the rise of nationalism in India, some of the religious fanatic groups have promoted Christianity as a strange and foreign religion. Therefore, it challenged Christianity in India to identify with the native tradition and customs without losing its crux.

2.Church Growth

2.1 Definition

According to Alexander Wedderspoon, Church growth is “All that is involved in bringing men and women into relationship with God, fellowship with Jesus Christ, the life of the Spirit, and active church membership”¹.

2.2 Church Growth Theory

“The church is God’s agent of change on this planet; the local church is his plan for developing his kingdom in the lives of the believers”². Moreover, it is the duty of every member of the church to prepare each other in order to strengthen the universal and the local church. At the same time “God desires that churches should grow both qualitatively and quantitatively so that the gospel of the kingdom will spread to the uttermost ends of the earth in fulfillment of the great commission”³. As McGavran stated that,

church growth follows where Christians show faithfulness in finding the lost. It is not enough to search for the lost sheep. The master shepherd is not pleased with a token search; he wants his sheep found. The purpose is not to search, but to find.⁴

Furthermore, church growth is not merely important in quantity but in quality as well.

2.3 Biblical view of Church Growth

Christ has commissioned his disciples and send them into nations, as the Father sent Him, He also sent His disciples in this world⁵. The New Testament clearly informs us how the early church had grown tremendously. It started on the day of Pentecost experienced with 120 people in the upper room and the growth has been continuing till today⁶. Acts 5:14 states that the believers were bringing multitudes of men and women to the Lord. As Tippet states

¹ Alexander Wedderspoon, *Grow or Die*. (Ed. Wedderspoon, Alexander. London: SPCK, 1981), 116.

² Robert E Logan, *Beyond Church Growth* (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co, 1989), 18.

³ *Ibid.*,

⁴ D.A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 7.

⁵ Alan R. Tippet, *Church Growth and Word of God*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 9.

⁶ D.A. McGavran and Win Arn, *How Churches Grow*. (California: GL Publications), 17.

that the primary motives of Jesus teachings were reflecting and expecting on growth. Jesus used quantitative imagery by the example of men catching fish in Mathew 13: 47-48. The other example was the figurative usage of the light, which can be called as imagery of penetration. Here the light penetrates the darkness. And it is distinctly apparent that Jesus himself was the light and He called his disciples to be light John 8: 12, 9:5. Paul also used the architectural imagery (building of the house I Cor. 3:9-11) and imagery of social structure (the family of God, growing by the spirit of adaptation Rom. 8:15)⁷. Thus the scripture clearly states that the outgrowth is the deepest desire of God and the church growth was absolutely the work of God.

2.4 Dynamics of Church Growth

“From the beginning of the church our Lord emphasized that church growth is the work of God”⁸. God is the founder, builder and the life of church growth. The gospel is the universal and causal factor for eternity. And God’s word has penetrated into many civilizations and brought transformation in their lives. Besides, the life in the word was not bound by time, place or literary form, but it is reaching out to all men and women in the world. As Tippett says, the other dynamic factor of the church growth is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of individuals and convincing them to repent, strengthen and making them people of God. Moreover, every person experienced their own salvation, so that they can have new life in Christ. And the person must live within his social structure without losing the core of the scriptural ethics⁹. The supreme God is the one who gives real life to the church and allows it to develop.

2.5 Significance of Discipling in Church Growth

Jesus Christ has commissioned His followers to make disciples in all nations and strategically He Himself disciplined twelve people and sent them out into this world in order to enlarge His kingdom. Discipleship is not a one time process, but it extends through the lifetime of an individual. It demands absolute surrender in order to learn and implement His reign into the life of an individual. Logan states that the disciples waited for the Holy Spirit and only after the Spirit had descended upon them then they began the disciple making ministry. Whenever the disciples preached the Holy Spirit; he took an active role in disciple making. “Those thousands in the crowd who

⁷ Alan R. Tippett, *Church Growth and Word of God*, 13.

⁸ George W. Peter, *A Theology of Church Growth*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 60.

⁹ Alan R. Tippett, *Church Growth and Word of God*, 31-34.

responded positively to the message simply didn't go on along their way; instead their lives were radically altered to bring them into conformity with the church that God desired them to become"¹⁰. Discipleship is the work of human beings by allowing God's role in disciple making, it will be effective and result in producing radical disciples. Discipleship is very much a necessity for the qualitative development of the church.

2.6 Church Growth out of People Movements

McGavran states that, "in order to understand adequately the growth of the church, some compression of people movement is necessary. Such movements have had an important part in the extension of Christianity. Peoples' movements are a way of overcoming social resistance to the gospel and the whole community enters the church without social conflict"¹¹.

People movements are not a large number of communities rather, it's a small group which takes the collective determination of all members in the group.

As evangelism continued among various people groups, there was a formation of homogeneous units in various cultures, language, tribe or caste which gave room for more effective growth among their people. These homogeneous units practiced indigenization which is very much relevant in Indian societies. The following portion explains the study of Indian society and the necessity of indigenization in India.

3. Historical and Contemporary Situations in India

India is a country of Hindu traditional culture and it is an ancient faith which flourished throughout the land. The story claims that the settlement of Aryans on the banks of the river Indus where civilization began and with their writings which were called Vedas. The Vedas gave rich information about Hinduism and its mastery of the entire race and country and because of their teaching it resulted in caste division.

3.1 India's Hindu Religion

Indian society is a product of many cultures and races. The majority of the populations are Hindus and professing their religion is their birthright. Hinduism was developed on the philosophy of the Upanishads, the Gita and the Dhammapadam. The ethos and values in the society were founded upon the Hindu scripture. The Hindu philosophy has developed the caste system in India in order to sustain the faith. "The caste system seems to have developed out of the multi-racial nature of Indian society."¹² India tolerated many religions inside

¹⁰ Robert E Logan, *Beyond Church Growth*, 97.

¹¹ D.A. McGavran and Win Arn, *How Churches Grow*. (California: G.L Publications, 1974), 13.

¹² K.M. Sen, *Hinduism*. (England: Penguin Books, 1961), 29.

the country and allowed them to propagate their faith. At one level the foreign religious beliefs have become a menace to the Hindu religion and resulted in the fundamental activities against the alien religions.

3.2 Modern Trends in Hinduism

Hinduism in modern India has brought many changes in religion and the way of thinking in Indian society about their religion. Gurusism has become more popular in culture in modern Hinduism. "Many Hindu gurus are teachers and exponents of a spirituality they claim is relevant to the modern world"¹³. Gurus are the spiritual advisors to the masses. In modern India there are thousands of gurus who established their kingdoms throughout the country and even some gurus were possessed with spiritual forces.

The other component in modern India is the increase in nationalism and its development in eradicating the British rule in this Hindu nation. In contemporary India the religious fundamentalists have focused on protecting the Hindu religious beliefs from foreign religions.

On the grounds of religious nationalism the organizations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Sangh Parivar, Bharatiya Janata Party, Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad were established.¹⁴ These governing bodies act to protect the culture of India and Hinduism.

4. Hindrances for Evangelization in India

Christianity entered into India by the ministry of St. Thomas. "Further, it spread and developed from 16th century onward with the arrival of the Portuguese, the French and the British colonizers."¹⁵ Christianity has been facing many challenges from its arrival, but even with the challenges it has been reaching into various communities as well.

4.1 Hindu Fundamentalism

India is a secular state and every religion has its own freedom to propagate their religion. But when the BJP came into power the religious fanatics like the Sangh Parivar tried to enforce the Hindutva ideology in the country. The Hindutva ideology consists of one nation, one culture and one faith. Moreover, with casteism in the Indian society there were hierarchization and beside the hierarchy groups and others were considered as outside of the Indian society. Today, according to the Hindutva ideology Christians are seen as outsiders¹⁶.

¹³ David Smith, *Hinduism and Modernity*. (Malden: Black Well Publishing, 2003), 167

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 188-190.

¹⁵ S. Arulsamy, *Religion for a New Society* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 90.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

Though the people belong to the same land, but because of a “foreign religion,” Christians are excluded from nation building. And this scenario throws some new challenges that Christians must face and bring some modifications in order to live peacefully. In addition, Christianity is being considered as a threat to the Indian culture and identity. Some churches and church activities are highly influenced by western traditions rather than Indian traditions, as a result Christianity in India has been facing resistance, and therefore it has hindered the development of the church.

4.2 Socio-Political Issues

The political parties were founded on the basis of religion and capturing the power by highlighting the Hindutva nationalism. People were moved by the political parties in favor of their faith and giving chance to control the power. After getting into power the political parties have been enforcing the anti conversion bill in many provinces of the country to dilute Christianity.

5. Framework for Expansion of the Church in Indian context

A nation like India is in need of the gospel and at the same time there are many threats that can hinder its growth. In order to dilute the opposition the church can initiate to establish indigenous churches to extend the kingdom of God.

5.1 Indigenization Church Planting

“The Contextualization or indigenization of a church is an important aspect of a church planting ministry. It intends to plant a church which relates to its setting. The context not only spiritual and religious, but also reflects the socioeconomic and political life of the people”¹⁷. It is not entirely the church we plant, but also the gospel we preach to the worshippers. The term indigenization can be defined as living naturally in a local climate, and in missionary terms indigenous means “planting the church through evangelical efforts which are native to the soil”¹⁸. The indigenous church planting is all about meeting with people wherever they are, to lead them with dignity and freedom in worshipping Christ.

5.2 Biblical View of Indigenous Church Planting

“Paul and his missionary colleagues established new indigenous churches in the centers of influence of the Jewish Diaspora and prepared the believers as best as they could in spite of opposition to spread the gospel to neighboring cities and villages”¹⁹. The Holy Spirit strengthened the work of Paul and

¹⁷ S. Devasagayam Ponraj, *The Planting and Perfecting of Churches: A Practical Guide for Grass Root Church Planters* (Chennai: Missional Education Books, 2006), 82.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*,

¹⁹ Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting*. (Grand Rapids: Backer Academy, 2011), 66.

his colleagues helped him to reach pagans in the Roman Empire. “Paul methods were indigenous and Paul was content to establish the churches and let them grow with the power which is from the Christ”²⁰. As long as we consider that Christ is the head of the church, then anyone can establish churches in any place but it should be meaningful and identified with the local context.

5.3 The New Testament House Church as an Indigenous Model

God is the one who laid the foundation for community life among mankind. Robert Banks explicitly said that the early church had demonstrated the Holy union with God and with one another. The apprehension of the mightiness of the Spirit was primarily to share with one another, but not handled as an individual experience. “It has a social dimension. It is a communal affair. One cannot have the one without the other”²¹.

And this sort of oneness existed in the church and that was the reason Paul wrote the words to communities in the New Testament and these communities were put together in a small group²². Most of the time Jesus spent in the synagogues and open air preaching; at the same time a significant portion of His ministry was performed in the homes of several people. As Robert and Julia Banks described that Jesus along with the disciples gathered “in homes for instruction (Mark 3: 20; 7: 17) and for meals (Mark 3: 20; 14: 12-21), as well as for preaching and healing.”²³ Michelle Hyde in his article described that Jesus used the house as a base for His mission as well as it also became a ministry base to reach the surrounding places. Later on His disciples also followed the same method.²⁴ After the resurrection of Jesus the Spirit was poured upon the disciples in the upper room and later “Peter addressed the crowd, many were converted, and immediately all believers gathered for the purpose of learning, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2: 42).”²⁵ So homes were able to play a vital role in spreading the gospel in the initial stages of the Church.

²⁰ S. Devasagayam Ponraj, *The Planting and Perfecting of Churches*, 83.

²¹ Robert Bank, *Paul’s Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in their Historical Settings*. (Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 33.

²² *Ibid.*, 33-34.

²³ Robert Bank and Julia Banks, *The Church Comes Home* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1998), 26.

²⁴ Michelle C. Hyde, “House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity,” *Trinity Journal* 27.1 (2006): 171-172. ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials. Web. 2 Sept. 2013.

²⁵ Robert Bank and Julia Banks, *The Church Comes Home*, 27.

6. Implications

6.1 House Church

The early house church had many functions in order to administer the congregation as well as to fulfill the needs of the people. The functions like teaching, preaching, discipline and leadership were the common features of the early churches as well as today's house churches.

6.2 Preference for Indigenization

Indian Hindus were very cultural in their worship and they hold the same ideas when they come to the church. Indigenization is a process to bring the message of Christ in the settings or the context of the particular culture. This simply means the patterns which we introduce should not be alien to the culture and at the same time it should be in line with the scripture. The Hindu likes simple worship service, but it should reflect the Indian style of composition. The indigenous way of worship can be possible by using the Indian music instruments like tabla, drums and Pulluvan Putta which can create the local atmosphere. The pattern of worship should be flexible so that we can make the home structure in the church. As a result the believers should not feel that they were going to an alien worship pattern.

This pattern will be simple and suitable to the house church structure. No matter what we do, it must go with the scripture which gives validity. This method can help to grow churches in India and it will perfectly fit into the Indian society.

6.3 Teaching

Teaching is an important feature even the early churches gave preference to. Through teaching we can influence a particular individual, Jesus had influenced his audiences by his teachings. In the same way we can disciple the Indian believers by teaching accurate scriptural values. When we teach the moral insights from the teachings of Jesus Christ it will have an impact on the life of believers. As a result of teaching we can see the inner and outer transformation of an individual.

It is very difficult to teach to this orthodox Hindu community, even they have their own understanding about god, but we need to give them the truth and it's our responsibility to influence them with the scriptural knowledge. It is necessary to educate them with the right doctrines in order to strengthen their faith.

6.3.1 Developing Familiarity with the Bible

Proper Biblical foundation and knowledge is necessary to educate the Indian community. The Bible can become an instrument to transform an individual.

Familiarity with the scripture can be fulfilled when we conduct Bible study and teach them the purpose of their life from the Bible.

6.3.2 Discipling

Making disciples is a process in order to learn things in a smooth manner and it must be well planned. Discipling Indians will be very crucial and it is important to reach the other members in the community. Jesus was the best disciple maker and His style of discipling was to demonstrate love. He became one among them, identified with them and he taught them. Jesus Christ had laid down his life for the sake of his disciples and he became a great savior for them. In the same way we need to sustain such a strong confidence in Christ and look forward to discipling believers in Christ.

6.3.3 Developing Leadership Qualities

Leadership was very essential in discipling the new believers and the new format needed new forms of leadership. And Jesus was the best leader and trainer of the apostles, who became the leaders of the early church.

Basically, Indians are very religious and they do give preference to their spiritual leaders, and these spiritual leaders take on a substantial part in Indian spiritual activities. When they accept Christ, they do obey the Christian leadership, the only thing is that we have to do is to identify with them. And every believer should become a leader to pass on to lead others by motivating and influencing others with the passion of Christ (emphasizing the priesthood of believers).

6.4 Balancing Fellowship with One Another

The church should preserve the element of fellowship with one another and it can be performed entirely in the small gatherings like a house church. The real purpose of the church is to portion out and care for each other in a group. It was not about the individuality, as it was for the community. Whenever the early church believers come together in front of God, they come as one in order to have a holy union with God. Indians are a community oriented people and they maintain fellowship among themselves.

7. Conclusion

God founded the Church and His desire was to grow the Church in quantity and quality. Through the centuries the Church has matured in both views. In India churches are struggling to rise and it is time to implement the new indigenous church planting method in order to identify with the context in India. Through this indigenization method the Church in India will grow by overcoming the hindrances in expanding the Kingdom of God.

A Book Review

Jeyaraj, Dasan. *Followers of Christ Outside the Church in Chennai, India: A Socio-Historical Study of a Non-Church Movement*. Hyderabad: KEEANS, 2010.Pp. 1-505.

*Josfin Raj **

Dr. Dasan Jeyaraj, with a first-hand mission experience with Operation Mobilisation for many years, gives voice to the unidentified group of Christians who are outside of the four walls of the institutional churches and narrates their perils and anguishes. He vehemently argues that the followers of Christ outside of the institutional church are true and genuine Christians. The first chapter makes a good rapport for the further sections. This non-church movement is an 'already and not yet' reality in the Indian society. It is 'already' means, the phenomena of churchless Christianity traces its origin to the renaissance movements of the eighteenth century AD and continues till date with the movements like Yesu Darbar. It is very explicit in his second chapter, which traces back to the historical background of churchless Christianity and its proponents. Therefore, outside church movement is an already experienced phenomenon in India. However, it is also 'not yet' realised or does not gain much momentum in the contemporary Christian theologizing as such. Thus, this book comes as a challenge to the so-called traditional/denominational churches to consider the movement that is happening outside of the institutional churches.

Though there were attempts to give attention to this phenomenon, it must be observed that they were limited to theological analysis, along with the writings of the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner (1904–1984) who introduced the term Anonymous Christianity, which declares that people who have never heard the Christian Gospel might be saved through Christ. Before giving a theological interpretation of the phenomena, it is the need of the hour to find out the reality of this phenomenon. In this particular context, Dasan Jeyaraj's work comes as an important one with a case study with a special focus on the city of Chennai, in the state of Tamil Nadu. The third chapter is a wider

* Mr.Josfin Raj is a faculty for Theology at COTRTS

study on the people of the city of Chennai (specifically ten postal code regions) to find out people who are having personal affirmation about the lordship of Jesus Christ. Further, the fourth chapter is an in depth study of the people who accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour, but remain outside of the institutional church. It contains profiles, sources of knowing Jesus Christ, understanding the person and work of Jesus Christ, worship and the reasons for remaining outside of the church. The fifth chapter is on the attitude of the organised church in Chennai towards this phenomenon. The final chapter is rethinking the mission of the organised Church in India based on the non-church movement of the “followers outside of the Church.” Followed by fifteen appendices which consist of different questionnaires.

Dasan Jayaraj is not much concerned with the theological issues behind this phenomenon, but more with the missiological matters. He touches very little to the theological issues of this movement. In a way, he gives a framework for future theologians in India to take up his research into another level. He tries to answer some of their pertinent questions in the process of counselling/reaching out to the followers of Christ outside the institutional Church. His book comes as a well researched work among the followers outside of the institutional Churches. The language is lucid and coherent in his arguments. I would recommend this book to mission leaders, evangelists and pastors who can avail the information and thought patterns of the people who are outside of the institutional Churches, and also to theological educators, particularly mission departments to enhance the knowledge of this phenomena that carries on as invisible in the Indian context. It will also be a revelation for the established/institutional Churches to the mysterious ways in which God is working outside of the Church, in parallel to establish His kingdom.



COTR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Admissions for the Academic Session 2016-17

Applications are invited for the following Programs at COTR Theological Seminary

<u>Courses</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Qualification</u>
Dip. Th. (COTR Certificate)	(2 Yrs)	10 th Pass
B. Th. (ATA)	(3 Yrs)	+2 or Equivalent
M.Div. (ATA)	B.Th. (with B) (2 Yrs)	B.A. or Equivalent (3 Yrs)
M.Th. (ATA)	Missiology (2 Yrs)	M.Div. (B+) or Equivalent
M.Th. (ATA)	Church History (2 Yrs)	M.Div. (B+) or Equivalent
Ph.D	Missiology (3-5 Yrs)	M.Th (B+) or higher Second division

Send Rs. 200/- by M.O. or D. D in favor of

" COTR College of ministries "

for Prospectus & Application to:

Registrar

C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary,

Dorathota, Post Box-3, Bheemunipatnam P.O.,

Visakhapatnam, A.P. 531 163, India.

Email: principal@cotr.in Ph: 08933-200182, 201132

Download application form at www.cotr.in

*

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

I wish to subscribe to
The Journal of C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary

Year(s) of Subscription: 20....., 20....., 20.....

I enclose Bank draft/cheque for Rs. / US \$
(Make cheque payable to “**C.O.T.R. College of Ministries**”)

Name

Address.....

Mail to : The Editor
Journal of C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary
C/o C.O.T.R. Theological Seminary
P.O. Box - 3, Dorathota, Bheemunipatnam
Vishakapatnam – 531163, India

The rates of subscription per annum are as follows:

India: Rs. 350.00 Overseas : US \$ 50.00