

“WE WERE GENTLE AMONG YOU”: CHRISTIAN MISSION AS DIALOGUE

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Abstract

The authors present an extended reflection on mission *as* dialogue which, they argue, is necessary for authentic Christian mission today. Although the approach is in contrast to the assertive, confident Christianity of our recent past which assumed it had ready-made answers for every tribe, people and nation, the focus of Christian mission, namely Jesus Christ, remains the same. It is our method or praxis of proclaiming Christ that we are challenged to change. Mission today needs to be done in vulnerability and humility with a genuine openness to both evangelize and be by evangelized by the people to whom we are sent.

This change of approach from mission as conquest to mission as dialogue has strong theological foundations in the Patristic conviction that the “seeds of the Word” are universally present in the cultures and religions of the world. The approach is also strongly endorsed by Vatican II and subsequent magisterial pronouncements. In part, the change is necessary in view of significant social and cultural changes that are part and parcel of modern society. More poignantly, “mission must be lived out in dialogue because of the nature of the Trinitarian God as such, and because mission is participation in that divine, dialogical nature”.

Moving beyond theoretical foundations, the second part of the paper dialogues with an extensive range of voices to draw together valuable reflections on the scope, characteristics and images of dialogue as well as demonstrating how Francis of Assisi, Charles de Foucauld, and Pandita Ramabai are inspirations for dialogue. Finally, the authors make it clear that mission is also *prophetic* dialogue which learns to speak boldly and, where necessary, engage in counter-cultural activity in the name of the Gospel. Jesus is the Christian model for prophecy *par excellence* and, while never riling from speaking the truth and denouncing injustice, is also the one who is “gentle and humble in heart” (Mt 20:29). [Editor]

Introduction

An army of youth flying the standards of Truth,

We're fighting for Christ, the Lord.

Heads lifted high, Catholic Action our cry,

And the Cross our only sword.

On Earth's battlefield never a vantage we'll yield

As dauntlessly on we swing.

Comrades true, dare and do 'neath the Queen's white and blue,

For our flag, for our faith, for Christ (our) King!^[1]

Daniel A. Lord's rousing hymn "For Christ (Our) King," was a song that many Catholics (including myself!) sang with gusto in the halcyon days of the 1950s; and it was a song, we believe, that captured the spirit of the way Christian mission was often depicted and imagined—as "an assertive Christianity . . . aiming at conquest."^[2] This was not, of course, the way the best thinkers about mission and many missionaries themselves thought about mission; my own study of mission theology and my own friendship with missionaries of that era certainly would bear this out.^[3] Even Dan Lord, it will also be noticed, does speak about the *cross* as "our only sword"!

Nevertheless, to imagine and to preach about mission in military terms was—and sometimes still is—very much part of the vocabulary of the church's mission. In the 1920s, Divine Word Missionary Clifford King founded the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade; student mission clubs were named *militia orans*, or the "praying army"; missionaries often spoke of "conquering the world for Christ"; and we remember being told as high school students that we Divine Word Missionaries—and missionaries in general—were the "marines of the Catholic Church"! As Jean Yves Baziou describes this attitude: ". . . it was usual to speak in terms of territory to be conquered, or occupied, and in terms of peoples or individuals to be converted and baptized. . . . Obsessed with frontiers, mission was perceived as pastoral work in pagan territory where the Church had yet to be established."^[4]

Mission theology and practice today, however, has undergone what can only be described as a radical shift in understanding and motivation. To use Baziou's language, that shift is from understanding or imagining mission as "expansion" to understanding and imagining mission as a genuine and deep "encounter." Instead of envisioning people who are to evangelized as "objects" or "targets," contemporary mission theology and



practice is struggling—and we mean struggling, because this is “no small death . . . to be endured”[5]—to acknowledge people as genuine “others.”[6] Mission today, in other words, needs to be thought about and carried out in the spirit and practice of *dialogue*—recognizing that, in the famous words of Max Warren, “God was here before our arrival,” or in the words of Donal Dorr: “there is a two-way exchange of gifts, between missionaries and the people among whom they work. . . . that mission is not just a matter of *doing things for* people. It is first of all a matter of *being with* people, of *listening* and *sharing* with them.”[7]

Mission today must still be possessed by St. Paul’s urgency for witnessing to and proclaiming Christ—“for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel!” (1Cor 9:16; see Rom 1:16 and 2Cor 5:14). And in its *annunciation* of the gospel, the church must be equally passionate about its *denunciation* of injustice and evil.[8] The gospel is good but disturbing news in a profoundly sinful world. But for all his boldness and passion, Paul speaks of his ministry as done in vulnerability and weakness, and he describes himself as a “slave to all,” “all things to all people” (1Cor 9:16, 22; see 1Cor 2:1-5; 2Cor 12:8-10). In the passage which inspired the title for this paper Paul writes about his arrival among the Thessalonians not “with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed,” nor making “demands as apostles of Christ.” Rather, he says, “we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. . . . we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us” (1Thess 2: 5-8).

It has been pointed out that the “who” of mission—Jesus—is not in doubt; what concerns mission today is the “how,” the *way* mission is conceived and lived out, the *method* of mission.[9] In this regard, then, as the late Archbishop Marcello Zago has expressed it, “the dialogue method must be manifested in the whole of missionary and pastoral activity.”[10] Ultimately, mission must witness to and proclaim the name, the mystery and the gospel of Jesus Christ; it must be conceived of and practiced as *prophetic dialogue* (which we will treat in the final section of this paper). But, in today’s world, mission needs first of all to be imagined, thought about and practiced as “gentle among” women and men—*as dialogue*.

Dialogue as Spirituality

The term “dialogue,” as the 1991 document entitled *Dialogue and Proclamation* (DP) points out, can be understood in a number of different ways.^[11] In the first place, it can refer to a practice that leads to good communication between persons, or even to a sense of intimate communion between friends or lovers. Second, dialogue can mean “an attitude of respect and friendship, which permeates or should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the church,” an attitude that can be called “the spirit of dialogue.” Third, dialogue can be understood as the practice of openness to, fairness and frankness with, respect for, sincerity towards and appreciation of people of other Christian churches or other religious ways, those who hold to a particular ideology (e.g. Marxism), those for whom faith commitment is meaningless (e.g. secularists) or those who have no faith at all. This latter meaning of dialogue is what is known as ecumenical, interreligious or inter-ideological dialogue,^[12] and—in regard to the last two types—is one of the elements that make up the “single but complex reality” of the church’s evangelizing mission as a whole.^[13]

DP says specifically that it is the third understanding of dialogue that it focuses on in the document. My focus, however, in this paper is the second understanding that “permeates or should permeate . . . the evangelizing mission of the church.” My focus, in other words, is a basic attitude, something that not only is practiced in the specific *practice* of dialogue, but one that gives direction to each and all of the elements of mission, whether it be the way Christians give witness or proclaim the gospel, celebrate liturgy or pray, do deeds of justice and peace-making, engage in inculturation or in the process of reconciliation. Dialogue as used here is “a style of living in relationship with neighbours.”^[14]



In a certain sense, when we speak of “mission as dialogue” as we will in this paper, we are speaking of dialogue as a “spirituality,” a sense of “contemplation” that enables the minister or missionary to perceive a particular context in a new way. As DP expresses it, mission “always implies a certain sensitivity to the social, cultural, religious and political

aspects of the situation, as also attentiveness to the ‘signs of the times’ through which the Spirit of God is speaking, teaching and guiding. Such sensitivity and attentiveness are developed through a spirituality of dialogue.”[15] When we speak of mission as dialogue, therefore, we are saying that this “spirit” or “spirituality” of dialogue “is the norm and necessary manner of every form of Christian mission, as well as of every aspect of it Any sense of mission not permeated by such a dialogical spirit would go against the demands of true humanity and the teachings of the Gospel.”[16] There is a real need today to recognize that mission should be done in vulnerability, in humility, with a sense of being open to be evangelized by those whom we are evangelizing—a kind of “mission in reverse.”[17] Like Paul, missionaries need to be “gentle among” those to whom they are sent, sharing not only the gospel of God but their very selves (see 1Thess 2:7-8).

From Mission as Conquest to Mission as Dialogue

When we speak as mission as dialogue, then, we are about as far away from imagining mission as “conquering the world for Christ” and missionaries as “marines of the Catholic Church” as we probably can get. There has indeed been a radical shift, both in the world in which the church does mission and within the church’s own consciousness of the goodness and even holiness of that world.

Although we would not fully subscribe to the radical pluralism he advocates, Leonard Swidler points out the significant changes that have taken place in human thinking about the nature of the world and the adequacy of language to express that truth. Language is a thoroughly contextual reality, and no language or even doctrinal expression can fully capture the human experience of transcendence. Truth, in other words, may exist in powerful expressions *outside* the boundaries of any culture or any religion, and so it behooves visitors to another culture or missionaries engaging in cross-cultural ministry to pay close attention to linguistic forms and cultural ways.[18] In addition, the last half of the twentieth century saw the collapse of a colonialism that had its roots in the “Age of Discovery” beginning in the fifteenth century, but that was practiced with particular intensity in the “Age of Progress” in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. No longer could the cultures and peoples of the world outside Europe and North America be conceived as the “White Man’s Burden,” but—especially with the rise of

nationalism and the renaissance of local religions—they had to be taken seriously and treated with respect. Such new attitudes, of course, were the result of the West’s “turn to the subject” at the dawn of modernity and the subsequent realization of universal human dignity and of peoples’ right to participate in the processes of their own governments. Tied to this new attitude as well was the discovery by the new science of anthropology of what Bernard Lonergan has called the “empirical understanding of culture”—that culture was not a norm held up by an elite but a universal reality in which every human being takes part and to which every person contributes.[19]

Within the Catholic Church in particular, a number of theological shifts were taking place in response to these shifts of consciousness in the world at large. Although Christian theology had always had a strong, if perhaps subaltern, tradition of the possibility of grace and salvation outside the boundaries of the church and explicit faith in Jesus Christ—from the second century theologian Justin Martyr through Thomas Aquinas to Pius XII in the 1940s[20]—the documents of the Second Vatican Council, Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), John Paul II’s *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) and documents like DP represent an authentic breakthrough in the church’s openness and reverence to other religions, to the presence of God in history, and to the goodness and holiness of the world’s cultures. Vatican II’s *Nostra Aetate* (NA) speaks about the existence of “rays of the Truth which enlightens all human beings” within religions other than Christianity; the document on the church in the modern world—*Gaudium et Spes* (GS)—recognizes that the concerns of the world are indeed the concerns of the followers of Christ, and that Christians must seek to discern the “signs of the times” as they are manifested in the warp and woof of history; the Council’s document on missionary activity speaks about the fact that missionaries can learn “by sincere and patient dialogue what treasures a bountiful God has distributed among the nations of the earth.”[21] Jacques Dupuis traces a particularly positive development in terms of the possibility of salvation not only *despite* peoples’ participation in other religions, but *because* of it. DP puts it clearly: “. . . it will be in the sincere practice of what is good in their own religious traditions and by following the dictates of their conscience that members of other religions respond positively to God’s invitation and receive salvation in Jesus Christ, even while they do not recognize or acknowledge him as their savior.”[22] Paul VI in EN speaks about the importance of the evangelization of culture, not just in a superficial way, as in a veneer, but by a

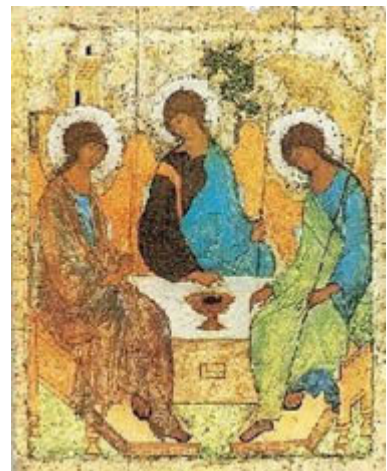
mutual penetration of faith and culture[23]. In a famous line, Pope John Paul II says that faith that does not become culture is not really faith.[24]

In 1964, Paul VI said in his first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (ES) that there are a variety of valid ways for the church to approach today's world—one might say to approach the way of doing mission. However, “it seems to us that the sort of relationship for the Church to establish with the world should be more in the nature of a dialogue.” It is this method, the pope goes on to say, that “is demanded nowadays by the prevalent understanding of the relationship between the sacred and the profane. It is demanded by the dynamic course of action which is changing the face of modern society. It is demanded by the pluralism of society, and by the maturity women and men have reached in this day and age.”[25] We can no longer march through the world as “an army of youth.” We must bear our “standards of truth” with gentleness among the women and men of our time, offering not only the message of the gospel, but our very selves.

But the deepest reason for mission as dialogue is not found in accommodation to new thought forms or new appreciation of the world's religions, or of human history or human culture. Mission must be lived out in dialogue because of the nature of God as such, and because mission is participation in that divine, dialogical nature.

Trinitarian Foundations

Although there are only a few hints in official church documents and in the writings of theologians, the ultimate foundation for mission to be thought about and practiced in a “dialogical spirit”[26] is the doctrine of God as Trinity. Christians have experienced God in all God's “unapproachable light” (1Tim 6:16) as “inside out” in the ebb and flow of human history as God's Spirit gives and restores life, raises up prophets and calls women and men to freedom and communion with one another.[27] This mysterious yet palpable presence of the Spirit “present and active in every time and place”[28] was “in the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4)—a particular time: 4 BCE—concretized in the particular and limited body of Jesus of Nazareth. By



the way he talked, the way he cured illness and exorcised demons, the way he included all and excluded no one, and the way, finally, he was vulnerable “even to death on a cross” (Phil 2:8), Jesus revealed the very face of God and gave concrete reality to the Spirit’s always and everywhere lifegiving work. Jesus words, deeds and person announced and sacramentalized the way God was present—“reigned”—in creation; through Jesus and in the power of the Spirit, the Mystery at the center of the world was calling humanity into a “kingdom” or communion (some call it a “kindom”) of “truth and life . . . holiness and mercy . . . justice, love and peace.”[29]

Through all this, God’s and Jesus’ method was one of dialogue. As Paul VI teaches in *ES*, dialogue has its origin in no less than the mind of God, and says that “the whole history of humanity’s salvation is one long, varied dialogue, which marvelously begins with God and which God prolongs with women and men in so many different ways.”[30] The Spirit’s presence was (and still is in some cases) a “secret presence,”[31] a gentle and persuading presence calling women and men to participation in what would be revealed in time as the “Paschal Mystery,”[32] within the context of peoples’ histories and cultures. Jesus, too, is remembered in the gospels as a man of dialogue, open to foreigners, to people of non-Jewish background like the Samaritan woman (the story is a model of dialogue) and the Canaanite (Syro-Phoenician) woman, responsive to the pleas of the Centurian, of Jairus and Blind Bartimaeus.[33] Through the working of the Spirit and the ministry of Jesus, God does “not force his mystery on us,” to quote a line from the Scottish theologian John Oman. Rather, God works with “the final might of the world,” which is “truth and character and service and the spirit of love.”[34]

What theologians have recognized—particularly in the last several decades, but building on insights going back to Gregory of Nyssa in the fourth century—is that the communion of wholeness or “salvation” into which God calls women and men to participate is the very communion which God is in Godself. God works for communion in the world because God as such *is* communion and wants to be “all in all” (1Cor 15: 28; Eph 4:7). In other words, God’s very *nature* is to be in dialogue: Holy Mystery (“Father”), Son (Word) and Spirit in an eternal stance of openness and receiving, a total giving and accepting, spilling over into creation and calling creation back into communion with Godself. Relationship, communion and dialogue,

therefore, is the ultimate goal of all existence. As Vatican II's document on revelation puts it: "through this revelation . . . the invisible God . . . speaks to women and men as friends . . . and lives among them . . . , so that God may invite and take them into communion."[\[35\]](#)

What *missiologists* have recognized in the last several decades is that if God's *inner nature* (what theologian Karl Rahner calls the "immanent Trinity") of dialogue and communion is the same as God's *outer movement* (what Rahner calls the "economic Trinity")[\[36\]](#) of acting in dialogue and calling to communion, then the very nature of God as such is missionary; God in God's deepest triune nature is a communion-in-mission. The same Spirit who is Holy Mystery "inside out" from the first moment of creation and who is manifest in the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth has been bestowed in a new and dynamic way by the Risen Christ on those who have found a new wholeness and breadth of vision in his name (see Acts 4:12). That Spirit, given in baptism, unites women and men to Christ in such a way that they are a "new creation," (2Cor 5:17); now that work of reconciliation that God has done in Christ as been entrusted to them (2Cor 5: 19), and they now live in the world as Christ's body (1Cor 6:15; 12:13; Eph 4-7), created by the Spirit as God's temple—i.e. God's visible presence—in the world (see 1Cor 3:16; 6:19). And so the *church*, because it participates in God's life as communion-in-mission (*missio Dei*), is *itself* "missionary by its very nature."[\[37\]](#)

What follows from this reality, then, is that the church—rooted in the Trinity and therefore committed to mission as its "deepest identity"[\[38\]](#)—takes its lead in mission "from the divine pedagogy,"[\[39\]](#) engaging in its evangelizing mission in the same dialogical, vulnerable, gentle way in which Holy Mystery is made known by the Spirit's "secret presence" and in the life and person of Jesus the Christ. EN says that the church seeks to convert women and men to Christ through "the divine power of the message;" as John Paul II writes, in other words, "*the Church proposes; it imposes nothing.*"[\[40\]](#)

The Scope of Dialogue



Perhaps the understanding of mission as dialogue as so foundational to the nature of the church has been best understood and best articulated in the documents of the

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). In fact, the word "dialogue" summarizes the whole attitude of the Asian church, its mode of evangelization, as the understanding of mission in Asia has developed over the past thirty years.^[41] Reflecting on the thought of Edward Schillebeeckx in the light of the FABC's documents, Malaysian theologian Edmund Chia speaks of the church as a "sacrament of dialogue;" in a similar way Malaysian theologian, Jonathan Tan, images the church in his reflection on the FABC as a "community of dialogue."^[42]

Since its beginning, the FABC has spoken of the mission of the church in Asia as an engagement in a three-fold dialogue. A passage from its Fifth Assembly is representative of what is constantly repeated in its documents as "a new way of being church"^[43] in Asia:

Mission includes: being with the people, responding to their needs, with sensitiveness to the presence of God in cultures and other religious traditions, and witnessing to the values of God's Kingdom through presence, solidarity, sharing and word. Mission will mean a dialogue with Asia's poor, with its local cultures, and with other religious traditions.^[44]

This articulation of mission, we believe, is Asia's gift to the entire church. Like the church in Asia, the church in all parts of the world should be engaged in a dialogue with the poor, with particular contexts, and with the other religions, ideologies or secular value systems among whom it lives. In addition, we might extend this basic attitude of dialogue to the way the church witnesses to and proclaims the gospel message, to the way the church engages in its ministry of reconciliation, and even to the way it celebrates its liturgy and practices its prayer and contemplation. Space does not allow me to go into detail here, but a short reflection on each of these elements as ways of dialogue is certainly in order.

First, then, there is the *dialogue with the poor*, a dialogue that can also be widened to a dialogue with any marginalized people, such as women, people of color, the disabled, gays and lesbians. As a "sacrament" or "community" of dialogue, the church gets its vision from a solidarity with the world's poor and marginalized. Latin American theologians have spoken of the need for the church to be not only a church *for* the poor, but also a church *of* the poor and *with* the poor.^[45] This will also involve a close and deep listening to the poor, taking the needs of those on the margins of society seriously—developing, in novelist Alice Walker's phrase, "a heart so open that you can hear the wind blow through it."^[46]

Second, we may speak about *dialogue with particular contexts*. We use the word “context” here instead of “cultures” in order to point to the wider arena in which the church engages in mission, and so by context we mean any particular situation in which mission takes place: in dialogue with people’s particular experiences (death in the family, or a social experience like a hurricane), with people’s social location (again, an attention to people of color, to gender, to wealth or poverty), or to culture and the various changes happening within a culture (for example, globalization). We do not do mission in a vacuum, and so we need to be sensitive to the environment in which we minister, to listen, hear and see, be open to difference and vulnerable to awkwardness in strange situations, willing to learn. We have to learn to “let go” before we “speak out.”[\[47\]](#)

In the section on *interreligious dialogue* in RM, Pope John Paul insists that such dialogue “does not originate from tactical concerns or self-interest. . . .” Rather, dialogue with other religions demands “a deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who blows where He wills.”[\[48\]](#) Such dialogue demands a deep commitment to learn from the other, to be ready to be changed by the other, to be fully prepared for conversation by studying the other’s religion and to try to “get into its skin” as much as possible, and, when necessary, to take the other seriously enough to “agree to disagree.” Leonard Swidler offers a “dialogue decalogue,” ten principles that are the conditions for the possibility of true dialogue.[\[49\]](#) We might add here that, according to DP, part of the church’s mission in regard to interreligious dialogue is to encourage dialogue of the world’s religions and ideologies among themselves.[\[50\]](#)

Witness to the gospel is almost by definition dialogical. One “preaches the gospel,” to allude to the saying attributed to Francis of Assisi, but one does it by example, by kindness and gentleness, by service rather than the words of an explicit message. But even *proclamation*, says Marcello Zago, “presupposes and requires a dialogue method in order to respond to the requirements of those to be evangelized and to enable them to interiorize the message received.”[\[51\]](#) A stunning example of a lack of such dialogue is that of the fundamentalist missionary in Barbara Kingsolver’s novel *The Poisonwood Bible* when the missionary zealously

proclaims “Jesus is Lord!” but because he has not learned the language sufficiently actually tells the people “Jesus is poison”—and so the people recoil in horror!

What might the attitude or spirituality of dialogue have to do with *liturgy, prayer and contemplation*? A community never celebrates liturgy, first of all, in a vacuum. It is always done in a context of particular concerns and a particular cultural group, and these factors need attending to. And one never knows who might be in the liturgical assembly—people visiting for the first time, people attending because of a particular crisis in their lives, people coming to church out of curiosity. What this means is that the assembly—from greeters to lectors to the presider—needs to be a welcoming one, an attentive one. Prayer and contemplation, of course, are also deeply dialogical, because before we pray we must listen to God’s stirrings within our hearts, and such attentiveness and centering is also the *sine qua non* of contemplation.

Finally, as Robert Schreiter urges, the church’s ministry of reconciliation is much more a spirituality,^[52] a disposition of openness and readiness, than it is a strategy, a set of steps toward a goal. Those engaged in the work of reconciliation need to have patience, courage and genuine vulnerability. They need to be hospitable, offering safe places of refuge and sharing for those who have been wounded and scarred by untruth and oppression. Perhaps more than any other aspect of mission, ministers of reconciliation need to be gentle among those whom they minister, giving not only the *message* of reconciliation, but their very selves.

Characteristics of Dialogue



The preceding section has certainly pointed to several characteristics of authentic dialogue: respect, openness, willingness to learn, attentiveness, vulnerability, hospitality, humility and frankness. But we might also name a few more as well, so as to understand this basic attitude for mission even more deeply.

A first characteristic—not often mentioned in the literature of dialogue from my own reading—is that of *repentance*.^[53] Mission, as Peter Phan has remarked, is not an “innocent word,” but one that evokes anger and even

disgust.[54] Christians have a lot to apologize for—to former peoples colonized by the West, to native peoples in North America, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand, to women, to other Christians—and they must do it. Otherwise there is no way that these cultures and peoples will be able to listen to the good news that—despite their malpractice in the past—Christians have to share with the world.

A second characteristic of dialogue must be *orthopraxis*. Edmund Chia expresses this well when he speaks of the importance of the “principle of graduality” urged by the Asian bishops. “Evangelization,” he says,

must be engaged in one step at a time. The early steps are the most tedious, yet easiest and most important. The Christian witnesses through love, service and deeds in the *dialogue of life*. It is through simple acts of caring, sharing and attending that others see Christ and come to accept the Church and Christianity. . . . That accounts for why Mother Teresa has been so well accepted in Asia. Hers is a mission of touch, of love and of service. That also accounts for why the Asian bishops stress that evangelization in Asia must begin with the “way” before preaching the “truth” Presence, deeds, and service are key words the Asian bishops use most often when speaking about evangelization[55]

Pope Paul VI in ES offers several other important characteristics that underlie the basic attitude or spirituality that should inform all missionary activity. The first of these is *clarity*—“before all else; the dialogue demands that what is said should be intelligible. . . . In order to satisfy the first requirement, all of us who feel the spur of the apostolate should examine closely the kind of speech we use. Is it easy to understand? Can it be grasped by ordinary people? Is it current idiom?”[56] Dialogue, in other words, demands an attitude that is “listener oriented” rather than “speaker oriented.”[57]

The pope goes on to speak of the fact that dialogue must be carried out in the same spirit of *meekness* that characterized Jesus himself. Dialogue, in other words, needs to eschew all arrogance or bitterness. What gives our mission authority is its authenticity and transparency. “It is peaceful, has no use for extreme methods, is patient under contradiction and inclines toward generosity.”[58]

A third characteristic mentioned by the pope is *confidence*—not in the effectiveness of one’s own ability to communicate, “but also in the good will of both parties in the dialogue.”[59]

Mutual trust, in other words, is absolutely essential. Dialogue as mission is first and foremost about establishing and maintaining relationships.

The fourth characteristic mentioned is similar to the Asian bishops' "principle of graduality." In paragraph 87, however, even though it is not included in the section on "characteristics," the pope speaks eloquently of a kind of *discernment* that characterizes any and all dialogue. ". . . before speaking, we must take great care to listen not only to what people say, but more especially to what they have it in their hearts to say. Only then will we understand them and respect them, and even, as far as possible, agree with them."

There are probably more characteristics that might be mentioned here, but we think we have named the principal ones. Basically, however, these characteristics point to the fact that mission is never about imposition or conquest. On the contrary, it is about the love of God for all peoples and all of creation, and that such love is expressed first and foremost in a gentle presence and an offer of self.

Images of Mission as Dialogue

A powerful way to speak about mission as dialogue is through a number of images that evoke the kind of thinking and practice that the method of dialogue requires. In a line that one of us (Bevans) has quoted a number of times in his writing, theologian Jack Shea insists that we do not so much *see images* but rather we see *through* images.^[60] Images, we believe, especially a constellation of images, help us to move beyond the conceptual and the abstract to the level of the emotions and the imagination, where we can be motivated to think in a way that leads more immediately to action. Here we'd like to speak about four images of mission as dialogue: the missionary as treasure hunter, as guest, as stranger, and as someone entering into someone else's garden.



First, the missionary might be imaged as *treasure hunter*. This is an image first used a number of years ago in an article by Robert T. Rush.^[61] Rather than the image of the missionary coming into a particular place already bearing a treasure, this image highlights the fact that—while she or he *does* bring something of inestimable value—the missionary’s task is also to search for the treasure that is already present there. Missionaries need to look long and hard for the treasure. They do not know *where* to look, but they know because of the treasure they *already* bear that there is, indeed, a treasure buried in this land to which they have come. They need to study the local maps with care; they need to learn the local language, the local proverbs, the traditional wisdom of the local people. Most of all, they need to befriend the local people, engage them as guides, be taught by them. If they can, they recruit the local people to help them in their search. As a result of the search, both the missionaries and the local people are changed. Had the missionaries not come, the local people may not have discovered a treasure in their own soil of such richness and abundance, and so they are enriched. But also, had the missionaries not come, they would not have been enriched by a new people and a new wisdom, nor, ironically, would they have grown in as great appreciation of the treasure they already possessed. Arriving not to impose or conquer but to be enriched and enrich in return has made all the difference.

As treasure hunters in a foreign land, missionaries are deeply aware that they are *guests*. A guest is always a blessing, for a guest brings new ways of seeing and understanding the world. But guests, in turn, have to always be aware of the graciousness of their hosts. They need to learn the etiquette of the place where they are being hosted; they need to learn to appreciate the local food and the local customs; and they need to recognize the value of the gifts—large and small—that their hosts lavish on them. Guests also need to be sensitive to the fact that learning to accept hospitality gratefully and graciously is perhaps the best way to be of service to their hosts; this goes hand in hand with knowing the best time to offer them a helping hand.

And as guests, missionaries always remain *strangers*. Strangers, too, are blessings, but they also are sources of challenge and uneasiness within a group or society. And so strangers have to be very careful not to impose their strange ideas on the people among whom they have come. They need to act with care and respect, and take care to ask about customs and ideas that are foreign to them, while trying to explain their own customs to the people among whom they

have come. The stranger is always going to make mistakes of language or cultural etiquette, but she or he can apologize for them, and is constantly trying to do better. Bevans reflects that his own experience as a missionary is that, although he could increasingly feel comfortable with Filipino culture, he recognized that he was always going to be awkward, an outsider. Soon after he arrived he heard a story of an old Spanish priest who had spent most of his life in the Philippines. He was asked if, after all those years, he had come to understand the people. His reply was “el alma del Filipino es un misterio” – “the soul of the Filipino is a mystery.” And yet, that recognition of ignorance seems to be a kind of *docta ignorantia*, a “learned ignorance” that is born of deep respect and which yields a very important kind of knowledge. My own sense was that the more I recognized by strangeness and foreignness among the Filipino people, the more accepted and closer to them I became. Being a real stranger, ironically, is a way of coming close. As missiologist Anthony Gittins wisely reflects:

If a newcomer honestly presents herself or himself as a stranger, thus showing respect for the hosts and allowing them to take certain necessary initiatives, this facilitates the interaction, even though the price may be some uncertainty and powerlessness on the part of the stranger. But only by doing this will missionaries be able to indicate their openness, integrity, and willingness to engage in relationships. [\[62\]](#)

In his writings, Roger Schroeder has proposed a fourth image: *entering into someone else's garden*. [\[63\]](#) This draws together aspects from the earlier images. One enters another's garden not to compare its beauty and variety with one's own, but to appreciate another way of gardening, another way of arranging the flower beds or vegetable patches, another way of pruning and weeding. One can always learn from another gardener, and although one may want to give advice for growing roses or tomatoes, it is probably best that one waits until asked. One can call attention to the existence of weeds in the garden, but she or he had better be careful, for what is considered an undesirable weed in one gardener's mind might be in another's a beautiful flower or a plant which serves medicinal purposes. A garden is another person's special place, and so one has to be respectful of the gardener's particular tastes and talents, and the experience that he or she brings to his or her work there. When one develops a relationship with the gardener, one can learn a lot and perhaps even teach a bit as well. On a deeper level, the plants valued as bearing life-giving fruit in that particular garden represent how God is already present and nurturing them, the seeds of the word of God, or using the term from above, the treasure

buried in this ground. Those plants considered weeds sap and destroy that which sustains life and represent those elements of evil and injustice that need to be denounced in the face of the gospel. Of course, all gardens have their share of weeds and lifegiving plants, and the gardener has the primary responsibility for his/her own garden. A missionary who enters into someone else's garden needs to do so very gently and respectfully and to remember that she/he is a guest and stranger there. A missionary needs an attitude and spirituality that allows the gardener to share one's unique garden at his/her own pace with the missionary. With time, trust, and in response to an invitation, a missionary can accompany the other in tending to their garden. At the same time, the missionary can learn so much about gardening in general and about the lifegiving plants and weeds in her/his own garden.

Inspirations for Mission as Dialogue

In 1927, Pope Pius XI proclaimed St. Francis Xavier and the newly-canonized Thérèse of Lisieux patrons of the church's missionary work—a wonderfully balanced choice of a man who was a tireless worker in the field and a woman who, though confined to a small Carmelite convent in a small town in France, brought the whole world with her into the cloister and prayed passionately for missionaries. Although we balk a bit at the word “patron” because of its patriarchal overtones, and would prefer to use the term “inspiration,” we think it is appropriate to suggest a few women and men as “patrons” or “inspirations” for mission as dialogue. We have already mentioned Mother Teresa and, in footnote 3, several others. Let me suggest here, however, from a rich choice of examples, three more: Francis of Assisi, Charles de Foucauld, and Pandita Ramabai.



In the midst of the Fifth Crusade in 1219, Francis of Assisi and several companions set out for Damietta in Egypt, where the Crusading army, under the command of Jean de Brienne, King of Jerusalem—although Brienne was under the watchful eye of Cardinal Pelagius, legate to Pope Honorius III.^[64] After spending several days at the Crusaders' camp, Francis and his companion, Brother Illuminato, crossed the battle lines and—after some mistreatment it

seems—were brought into the presence of the sultan, Al-Malik al-Kamil. The sultan, who legend has it was a highly educated and sensitive man, sick of war, received Francis with great hospitality and spent several days listening to Francis’s gentle words about Christianity, after which he had him escorted back to the Christian camp after asking that Francis pray for him. It was clear that Francis certainly intended to convert the sultan to Christianity, but he went about it not with the military violence of the Crusaders, but with the gentleness and vulnerability of Christ himself. Obviously Francis did not succeed in converting the sultan, although some legends have it that the sultan was “secretly” converted;^[65] nevertheless in several ways Francis *himself* was converted. Francis most likely had believed that the sultan, and all Muslims for that matter, were evil, violent men. That idea vanished as he met the man face to face. And Francis was so deeply impressed by the Muslims’ periodic call to prayer that he proposed the same thing for Christians. As missiologist Mary Motte puts it, “having no need to exert power over the other, Francis was able to learn more about prayer from the followers of Islam.”^[66]

Francis seemed to have learned a lot about mission as well. In his rule of 1221 he addressed “those who are going among the Saracens and other nonbelievers,” explaining that Christian presence and witness might be done in two ways. A first way does not start with “arguments or disputes,” but on being “subject to every human creature for God’s sake” (1Pet 2:13). A second way is to preach the gospel openly and explicitly, but it depended on the particular context, Francis said, whether one would choose the first way or the second. In either case, mission was about “living spiritually” among people, and Franciscan scholar Cajetan Esser says that both ways of mission are ultimately interrelated. “The preaching of the Word, as Francis saw it, availed little without the sermon of one’s life.”^[67] Or, in the phrase often attributed to Francis, “preach always and, if necessary, use words.”

On November 13, 2005, Pope Benedict XVI beatified Charles de Foucauld, whose rule was the inspiration for the founding of the Little Brothers (1933) and Little Sisters (1936) of Jesus. After a rather decadent life in the French Army, Foucauld underwent conversion and spent a number of years as a Trappist monk in Syria, and then as a handyman in a convent of sisters in Nazareth in the Holy Land. It was only in 1901 that he found his true vocation when he was ordained a priest and decided to live as a hermit in Algeria. . Foucauld was murdered in 1916 at

his hermitage in Tamanrasset in the Ahaggar Mountains by a young man “in what was probably a tragic accident.” [68]

In all his ten years in Algeria, Foucauld baptized only two people—a child and an old, blind woman; as Little Sister Cathy Wright says, “If missionary ‘success’ was to be measured in numbers, Charles was a miserable failure.” [69] And yet, in many ways, de Foucauld pioneered a whole new way of doing mission: the mission of *presence*. What attracted people to him was his great kindness and holiness, his “unspoken imitation of Christ, in which they recognized the Qur’anic portrayal of *Isa* (Jesus).” [70] Foucauld practiced hospitality, bought the freedom of seven slaves, and nursed the wounded from battles between the local people and the French colonizers. Toward the end of his life de Foucauld wrote that he was



“not here to convert the Tuareg people at once, but to try to understand them” [71] Direct preaching, he wrote, was not the method Jesus wanted in his situation. “We must go very slowly and gently, get to know them and make friends with them.” [72] His apostolate, as he wrote in 1909, “must be one of goodness. In seeing me one must say, ‘If this man is good, his religion must be good.’ If they ask me why I am good I must answer, ‘Because I am the servant of one who is much better than I. If only you knew how good my Master, Jesus is.’” [73]

Although he had written a rule and had dreamed of founding a community that would live out his own ideals, Foucauld attracted not one follower in his lifetime, and it was only some twenty years after his death that men and eventually women began to form the community he had hoped for. Although rooted in the theology and missiology of his time, his commitment to authenticity, simple presence and deep reverence for Islam make him a marvelous “inspirer” of mission as dialogue today.

Our third “inspirer” is a person who will most likely be unknown to most Catholics today. Dongre Medhavi Ramabai (Ramabai was her first name) was born a Hindu in India in 1858, and became a member of the Anglican Church. She was the daughter of a wealthy Brahmin scholar who—much to the shock of his friends—taught her to read the Sanskrit classics of

Hinduism. After her father's death she toured all of India's holy shrines and amazed audiences by her knowledge of Sanskrit poetry. As Robert Ellsberg writes, "Her knowledge of Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hinduism, eventually won her fame and honor. She was given the honorific title 'Pandita,' mistress of wisdom."^[74]



Ramabai married at twenty-two, but her husband died after only sixteen months of marriage, leaving her a widow with an infant daughter. As she traveled around India she now became sensitized to the plight of widows and orphans, and so she began to dedicate her life to women's rights in India. Such commitment to social justice brought her into contact with Christian missionaries, and, on a journey to England, asked to be baptized a Christian. When she returned to India amid angry reactions from Indian Hindus, Ramabai continued to be involved in much charitable work, "founding a center for unwed mothers, a program for famine relief, and a series of schools for poor girls."^[75] But now it was her fellow Christians who were her bitter critics. They were angered because she made no efforts to convert the women she served. But Ramabai continued in her work and refused to be intimidated. She strongly believed that "to serve women and the poor was a religious and not simply a social work,"^[76] and so was a real expression of preaching the gospel. In the 1890s she underwent a second conversion that was evangelical and Pentecostal in nature, and in 1905 the school she had founded experienced a Pentecostal style renewal.^[77]

Ramabai had a real aversion to the cultural insensitivity of foreign missionaries in India, and was convinced that one could be a Christian and not betray Indian culture and values. In her later years, Ellsberg writes, she "prayed not for the conversion of Hindus but for the conversion of Indian Christians"^[78]—not obviously a conversion back to Hinduism but to the gentle way of Jesus, and what we would call today his "dialogue method."

Mission as Prophetic Dialogue

Although this paper has made been an extended reflection on “mission as dialogue,” and although dialogue “must be manifested in the whole of missionary and pastoral activity,”^[79] mission simply *as dialogue* is not enough. Ultimately, we believe, mission is best done in *prophetic* dialogue.^[80] To reverse the emphasis of what we have said at the beginning of this essay, Paul certainly becomes “all things to all people,” a slave to all,” but this is because “woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (see 1Cor 9:16-23); Paul writes that he was “gentle among” the Thessalonians, and that he gave them his very self, but he also gave them “the gospel of God” (1Thess 1:7-8). South African missiologist David Bosch speaks of mission done in real vulnerability and humility, but he also speaks of mission done in “bold humility,” or with a “humble boldness.” We do not have the “corner” on God’s love and mercy when we offer the gospel. “We know only in part, but we do know. And we believe that the faith we profess is both true and just, and should be proclaimed.”^[81]

To say mission must be done in *prophetic* dialogue is to take back not one thing that has been said in this paper. Mission must first and foremost be done with openness and respect for the other, recognizing that God was present before our arrival, that the Spirit has sown the seeds of the word among all peoples and all cultures, and that we missionaries need to be evangelized by those whom we evangelize. However, we *do* have something to say, and we speak, like the prophets of the Old Testament, not in our own name, but in God’s. As God sent Jesus, so Jesus has sent us, to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth (see Jn 20:21; Acts 1:8). Dialogue is the “how” of mission, and in many ways the “what” of mission as well, because it is a sacrament of the way God is; being prophetic develops and makes explicit that sacrament and gives it a shape and a name.

There are two particular aspects of the *prophetic* aspect of mission that runs through all the elements of witness and proclamation; liturgy, prayer and contemplation; justice, peace and the integrity of creation; interreligious dialogue; inculturation; and reconciliation. The first aspect is that mission as prophecy is a “speaking forth” the explicit name of Jesus, the story of his life, ministry, death and resurrection, and his explicit message of God’s generous mercy and love, God’s challenge to all to love and forgive, God’s call to justice and inclusion—the message of the already here but not yet fully inaugurated Reign of God. By the witness of our lives, by our

confession of our faith in the context of dialogue with people of other faiths, in our liturgical celebrations and prayer, in our “working for justice and participation in the transformation of the world,”^[82] Christians are called to proclaim—under the guidance of the Spirit (the “principal agent of evangelization”^[83])—clearly, faithfully and intelligibly God’s good news.

Second, like the prophets of the Old Testament, the prophetic aspect of mission calls Christians to denounce any form of injustice or oppression, be it in the world or in the church. This can be done, for example, by countercultural witness—as individual Christians or as the church community—in terms of lifestyle, by a direct proclamation in demonstrations or through official documents, by organizing prayer services and liturgies, or through interreligious groups that practice the “dialogue of action.”

Again, while both the *annunciation* of the gospel and the *denunciation* of injustice must be done in the spirit of deep respect and dialogue with the parties concerned, God’s story needs to be told. Christians must say it in the context of dialogue, but they must say it, for they indeed have something to say: they are not ashamed of the Gospel, because “it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith” (Rom 1:16).

Conclusion

Yes, the gospel about which Christians are not ashamed “is the power of God for salvation for everyone who has faith” It is the *power of God*, which is not a power that overwhelms or forces, but a power that leads patiently and gently to freedom and abundant life. This is why Paul, with all his confidence in the Gospel, came “gently among” the Thessalonians, and gave not only the gospel, but his very self. This is why, although the task of mission clothes Christians with the mantel of the prophets—especially the mantel of the great prophet Jesus—it also bestows on them the yoke of him who, in his prophecy, was “gentle and humble in heart” (Mt 11:29).

^[82]Daniel A. Lord, “For Christ (Our) King,” as quoted on <http://catholicculture.org/lit/activities/view.cfm?id=912>.

^[2]William R. Burrows, “Concluding Reflections,” *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 244.

^[3]See, for example, Pierre Charles, SJ, *Études Missiologiques* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclé de Brouwer, 1956). This volume contains articles written by this great missiologist in the 1920s, ‘30s, 40s and ‘50s before his death in 1954. See also the first (1964) edition of Louis J. Luzbetak, SVD, *The Church and Cultures* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1970), particularly the bibliography that cites many books and articles from the first half of the twentieth century. The study of mission and mission theology will also point to examples of great missionaries in history, among whom are the brothers Cyril and Methodius, the Jesuit missionary to China Matteo Ricci, and missionaries like Vincent Lebbe, Anna Dengel and Francis X. Ford, MM. Among friends who were missionaries of that era we count Fr. Luzbetak himself, along with great men like Alphonse Mildner, Frederick Scharpf, Richard Kraft, Charles Scanlon, Henry Sollner, Ferdie Mitterbauer—all SVDs.

^[4]Abbe Jean Yves Baziou, “Mission: From Expansion to Encounter,” *USCMA Periodic Paper* #1 (Spring, 2005): 2.

^[5]Burrows, 244.

^[6]Baziou, 2. See David Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other: The Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Louvain and Grand Rapids, MI: Peeters Press and William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 4: “Dialogue demands the intellectual, moral, and at the limit, religious ability to struggle to hear another and to respond. To respond critically, and even suspiciously when necessary, but to respond only in dialogical relationship to a real, not a projected other.”

^[7]Max Warren, Preface to John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 10; Donal Dorr, *Mission in Today’s World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 16.

^[8]Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), 267-268.

^[9]See Edmund Chia, *Towards a Theology of Dialogue* (Privately printed in Bangkok, Thailand, 2003), 269. Chia cites John Prior, “Unfinished Encounter: A Note of the Voce and Tone of *Ecclesia in Asia*,” *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 37, 3 (2000): 259.

^[10]Marcello Zago, OMI, “Mission and Interreligious Dialogue,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 22, 3 (July, 1998): 98.

^[11]Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (1991), paragraph 9, in Burrows, ed., 96. Hereafter DP followed by paragraph number and page number in Burrows, ed.: DP 9, 96.

^[12]This is the term used by Leonard Swidler in “Interreligious and Interideological Dialogue: The Matrix for All Systematic Reflection Today,” in Leonard Swidler, ed., *Toward a Universal*

Theology of Religion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 5-50. Dorr uses the term “Dialogue with the Western World” for dialogue with secularists. See Dorr, 56-73.

^[13]Eleanor Doidge and Stephen Bevans have spoken of these elements as six: witness and proclamation; liturgy, prayer and contemplation; justice, peace and the integrity of creation; interreligious (and secular) dialogue; inculturation; and reconciliation. See Stephen Bevans and Eleanor Doidge, “Theological Reflection,” in Barbara Kraemer, ed., *Reflection and Dialogue: What MISSION Confronts Religious Life Today?* (Chicago: Center for the Study of Religious Life, 2000), 37-48. See also Stephen B. Bevans, “Unraveling a ‘Complex Reality’: Six Elements of Mission,” in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 27, 2 (April 2003): 50-53; and Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 348-395.

^[14]World Council of Churches, “Guidelines on Dialogue,” in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, eds., *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization I: Basic Statements* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 17.

^[15]DP 78, 114.

^[16]Secretariat for Non-Christians, *The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*, 29. Henceforth DM. Quoted in U.S. Bishops, *To the Ends of the Earth* (New York: Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 1986), par. 40, page 22.

^[17]See Claude Marie Barbour, “Seeking Justice and Shalom in the City,” *International Review of Mission*, 73 (1984): 303-309; David J. Bosch, “The Vulnerability of Mission,” in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, eds., *New Direction in Mission and Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 73-86; David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 489.

^[18]Swidler, 5-50.

^[19]Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972), xi.

^[20]See Jacques Dupuis, “A Theological Commentary: Dialogue and Proclamation,” in Burrows, ed., 123 and 133-135.

^[21]Vatican Council II, “Declaration on the Relationship to the Church to Non-Christian Religions” (*Nostra Aetate* [NA]), 2; “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” (*Gaudium et Spes* [GS]), 4; and “Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity,” (*Ad Gentes* [AG]), 11.

^[22]Dupuis, 135-136. See DP 29.

^[23]Pope Paul VI, “Evangelization in the Modern World,” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* [EN]), 20, in David J. O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 310.

^[24]Pope John Paul II, Letter to Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, *L’Osservatore Romano* (28 June, 1982), quoted in Aylward Shorter, *Inculturation in Africa: The Way Forward*, The Fourth Annual Louis J. Luzbetak, SVD Lecture on Mission and Culture (Chicago: CCGM Publications, 2005), 1.

^[25]Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (ES), 78,
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam_en.html.

^[26]DM 29.

^[27]See Stephen Bevans, “God Inside Out: Toward a Missionary Theology of the Holy Spirit,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 22, 3 (July, 1998): 102-105.

^[28]See title of RM 28, in Burrows, ed., 19.

^[29]Preface of Christ the King.

^[30]ES 70.

^[31]AG 9.

^[32]See GS 22.

^[33]See DP 21, in Burrows, ed., 99.

^[34]John Wood Oman, *Vision and Authority, or The Throne of St. Peter* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928 [second edition]), 225; “God’s Ideal and Man’s Reality,” *The Paradox of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 69.

^[35] Vatican Council II, “Dogmatic Decree on Revelation,” (*Dei Verbum* [DV]), 2. This translation is somewhat free. The original Latin reads: “Hac . . . revelatione Deus invisibilis . . . suae homines tamquam amicos alloquitur . . . et cum eis conversatur . . . , ut eos ad societatem secum invitet in eamque suscipiat.” Our translation is an attempt to make the language more inclusive.

^[36]Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

^[37]AG 2. Note the trinitarian context of this statement in the text.

^[38]EN 14.

^[39]DP 69, in Burrows, ed., 112.

^[40]EN 18; RM 39, in Burrows, ed., 27.

^[41]See Felix Wilfred, “The Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC): Orientations, Challenges and Impact,” in Gaudencio Rosales and Catalino G. Arévalo, eds., *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Vol. I (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1997), xxiii. Quoted in Edmund Chia, *Towards a Theology of Dialogue: Schillebeeckx’s Method as Bridge between Vatican’s Dominus Iesus and Asia’s FABC Theology* (Bangkok: Privately Printed, 2003), 230; see also 264.

^[42]See Chia, 228-229; Jonathan Tan, “Missio *ad gentes* in Asia: A Comparative Study of the Missiology of John Paul II and the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences,” Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 2002, 133.

^[43]See Tan, 133; See also Thomas Fox, *Pentecost in Asia: A New Way of Being Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

^[44]Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences, “Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium,” Statement of the Fifth Plenary Assembly, Bandung, Indonesia, 1990, in Rosales and Arévalo, eds., 280. Quoted in Tan, 149.

^[45]See, for example, Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Option for the Poor,” in Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, eds., *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 235-250.

^[46]Alice Walker, “A Wind Through the Heart: A Conversation with Alice Walker and Sharon Salzberg on Loving Kindness in a Painful World,” *Shambhala Sun* (January, 1997). www.shambhalasun.com/Archives/Features/1997/Jan97/Alice%Walker.htm.

^[47]Stephen Bevans, “Letting Go and Speaking Out: A Spirituality of Inculturation,” in Stephen Bevans, Eleanor Doidge and Robert Schreiter, eds., *The Healing Circle: Essays in Cross-Cultural Mission* (Chicago: CCGM Publications, 1999), 133-146.

^[48]RM 56, in Burrows, ed., 36.

^[49]Swidler, “Interreligious and Interideological Dialogue: The Matrix for All Systematic Reflection Today,” in Swidler, ed., 13-16; the term “dialogue decalogue” is used by Chia, 254, quoting Leonard Swidler, *After the Absolute: The Dialogical Future of Religious Reflection* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 42-45.

^[50]DP 80, in Burrows, ed., 115.

^[51]Marcello Zago, “The New Millennium and the Emerging Religious Strategies,” *Missiology: An International Review*, XXVII, 1 (January, 2000): 17.

^[52]Robert J. Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), vi.

^[53]World Council of Churches, “Guidelines on Dialogue,” 21, in Scherer and Bevans, eds., 14.

^[54]Remark by Peter Phan at Catholic Theological Union, June 2001; see also Jeannette Rodriguez, “Response to Stephen Bevans,” in *Catholic Theological Society of America: Proceedings of the Fifty-sixth Annual Convention* (Berkeley, CA: CTSA, 2001), 43-48.

^[55]Chia, 260.

^[56]ES 81.

^[57]See Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 112-113.

^[58]ES 81.

^[59]Ibid.

^[60]John Shea, “Theological Assumptions and Ministerial Style,” in M. A. Cowan, ed., *Alternative Futures for Worship*, Vol. 6, *Leadership Ministry in Community* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987), 105-128; see also Bevans’ article “Seeing Mission through Images,” in Scherer and Bevans, eds., 158-169.

^[61]Robert T. Rush, “From Pearl Merchant to Treasure Hunter: The Missionary Yesterday and Today,” *Catholic Mind*, 76 (1978): 6-10.

^[62]Anthony J. Gittins, *Gifts and Strangers: Meeting the Challenge of Inculturation* (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 132.

^[63]Roger Schroeder, “Entering Someone Else’s Garden: Cross-cultural Mission/Ministry,” in Bevans, Doidge and Schreiter, eds., 147-161.

^[64]Galen K. Johnson, “St. Francis and the Sultan: An Historical and Critical Reassessment,” *Mission Studies*, XVIII, 2 (2001): 149.

^[65]Ibid., 157.

^[66]Mary Motte, “In the Image of the Crucified God: A Missiological Interpretation of Francis of Assisi,” in Dale Irvin and Akintunde Akinade, eds., *The Agitated Mind of God: The Theology of Kosuke Koyama* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 79. Quoted in Bevans and Schroeder, 143.

^[67]See Cajetan Esser, “Saint Francis and the Missionary Church,” Ignatius Brady, trans., *Spirit and Life*, 6: 22-23. Quoted in Bevens and Schroeder, 144.

^[68]David Kerr, “Foucauld, Charles Eugène de (1858-1916), in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1998), 220.

^[69]Cathy Wright, “Nazareth as a Model for Mission in the Life of Charles de Foucauld,” *Mission Studies*, XIX, 1 (2002): 36.

^[70]Kerr, 219.

^[71]Quoted in Wright, 37.

^[72]Quoted in *Ibid.*, 44.

^[73]Quoted in *Ibid.*

^[74]Robert Ellsberg, “Pandia Ramabai: Indian Christian and Reformer (1858-1922),” *All Saints* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 154.

^[75]*Ibid.*, 155.

^[76]*Ibid.*

^[77]Eric J. Sharpe, “Ramabai Dongre Medhavi (Pandia Ramabai Sarasvati) (1858-1922),” in Anderson, ed., 557.

^[78]Ellsberg, 155.

^[79]Zago, “Mission and Interreligious Dialogue,” 98.

^[80]See Bevens and Schroeder, 281-285; 348-352. See also *In Dialogue with the Word Nr. 1* (Rome: SVD Publications, 2000) and L. Stanislaus and Alwyn D’Souza, eds., *Prophetic Dialogue: Challenges and Prospects in India* (Pune: Ishvani Kendra / ISPCK, 2003).

^[81]Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 489.

^[82]1971 Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, Introduction, in O’Brien and Shannon, 289.

^[83]EN 75.



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