

## CHAPTER ONE

# ST. PAUL AND HIS MISSIONARY ZEAL

## INTRODUCTION

Paul is known as the leading persecutor of Christians. Later he became the Apostle of Christian faith to the Gentiles. He is popularly known through his letters and he is most often referred to in the Acts of the Apostles. From the first generation of Christian life we have only one first-hand testimony of Paul, formerly known as Saul the Pharisee. Only with the letters of Paul one can get in touch with the first generation of Christianity and of Christian theologizing as such. This, of course, is not to dispute with the facts in the κήρυγμα in the early church. It is not at all obvious who other else were doing theologizing during the early period of first century other than Paul. And if other NT writings are there as early as Paul's letters (possibly James), they have hardly been as significant as Paul's letters.<sup>1</sup>

He was able to carry the name of the resurrected Jesus to the ends of the earth. As we know the Christophany transformed Saul into Paul and that led to stop his initiative to persecute the Christians. Moreover, it transformed Paul to grow in Christ according to the

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1 Cf. James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Scotland: Eerdmans, 1998) 2.

divine plan of God whereby he became a zealous preacher and a witness of Christ. It is certain that at the time of the early Christians, as mentioned in the scripture, no one covered as many kilometers as he did over land and across the seas, with the sole aim of proclaiming the gospel.

It is abundantly clear that Paul's profound union with Christ which was the result of an authentic revelation of Christ, led him to say: "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). This is clearly an expression of his zeal for the Gospel. Paul realized that Jesus is the Messiah, who had been crucified and killed and is the one who is alive and dwells in heaven, as he had truly resurrected from the dead. Paul proclaimed that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. Paul's commitment to true Christian faith is unquestionable as he had great zeal for Christ and his mission.

## **1. PERSONAL PROFILE OF PAUL**

"Paul was born, probably *ca.* AD 5-10, in Tarsus during the reign of the emperor Augustus."<sup>2</sup> Tarsus was one of the towns in Cilicia, a Roman province (Acts 22:3). It is learnt from Paul's letters and The Acts of the Apostles that Paul comes from a strict Jewish family. Paul's parents being Pharisees, (cf. Acts 23:6; 26:4-5) he was brought up in a religious manner (cf. Phil 3:5). He wrote good

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2 Raymond E. Brown, "The Life of Paul", in *The Anchor Bible Reference Library - An Introduction to the New the New Testament* (Doubleday: Newyork: 1997) 423.

Greek, had basic Hellenistic skills, and quoted from the scriptures in Greek. Paul's use of Greek confirms his origin as a Hellenistic Jew of the dispersion, quite at home in the Greco-Roman world.

It seems that right from childhood, he had two names- Saul and Paul. In the first century AD many Jews, especially of diaspora, used to have two names – one Semitic and the other Greek or Latin.<sup>3</sup> In Acts 9, where his conversion is described, Paul was known as Saul. During the Damascus event, when he had fallen to the ground, the voice of Jesus that he heard was: Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? (Acts 9:4). Subsequently, in the Acts in many places (Acts 9:11, 20, 24-25, 27) one could notice the name Saul. Finally, in the Church in Antioch, Saul and Barnabas<sup>4</sup> were commissioned by the Holy Spirit, saying “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2). But once he was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:9), he is known as Paul, the vibrant and sharp apostle. Thereafter, throughout in the Acts he was known as Paul. In the salutation of all his letters also, the name indicated is ‘Paul’. “His life, conversion, teaching, and missionary work made him singular among all other Apostles and merited for him the title of “Apostle of the Gentiles.”<sup>5</sup> In Jewish as well as in New Testament tradition, changing the name of the chosen one, on specific call of the

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3 Cf. Ammanathukunnel, “St Paul, His Life and Apostolate”, 11-12.

4 Cf. G. M. Burge, “Barnabas”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 66-67.

5 Myers Allen C. “Paul”, in *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*”, eds. John W. Simpson, Jr., et al. (Grand Rapids. Michigan: Eerdmans, 1987) 801.

Lord, prevailed.<sup>6</sup> Paul was called from his quest to impose Temple truth and discipline on the first Christians to be a witness that this new way was a cure for blindness of eye and of heart.

Paul's name stands for his person in Christ. We note that symbolically the persons who dedicate themselves to follow Christ in the Church, in strict terms, assume new names. The assignment of a "name" is solely a divine prerogative and an expression of God's sovereignty over every power in the cosmos. It is pertinent to note that the exalted Christ shares the universal lordship known of Yahweh, and is thus given the title "Lord." But His humiliation to the extent of death on the cross has given new meaning to lordship: the true character of the one who bears the "name" has been indelibly shaped by 'servanthood' in the historical person of Jesus. In each case, it is Christ's person or authority or both, that is in focus and to that extent assumes total mission change of a person.<sup>7</sup>

## **1.1 ZEALOUS JEWISH BACKGROUND OF PAUL**

Paul was proud of his Jewish ancestry. Paul, having been educated strictly according to the ancestral law, was zealous even before his conversion. His parents who belonged to the tribe of Benjamin might have given him the name Saul, thinking of "Saul"

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6 Cf. Timothy Gollob, "The Bible and the Servant-Priest-Disciple" in *The international Bible Commentary, An Ecumenical Commentary For The Twenty First Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, Sean McEvenue, Armando J. Levoratti and David L Dungan, John Pathrapankal, Erik Eynikel, (Bangalore: Theological, Publications In India, 2019) 271-273, 271.

7 Cf. Luter, Jr., "Name", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 626-628.

the first king of the Israel, a Benjaminite.<sup>8</sup> In his argument against opponents he boasts of his Jewish origins. As long as he remained in Judaism, he continued to be a Pharisee. He might have regularly attended the services in the synagogue, learnt the scriptures and their interpretation. In his letter to the Galatians he affirms: “I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors” (Gal 1:14). The influence of his strong Jewish background is evident in his writings. “He makes abundant use of the Old Testament in its Septuagint version which he cites almost 90 times.”<sup>9</sup> His style of quoting the Old Testament and interpreting the same conforms to the contemporary Jewish way of interpreting.

## **1.2. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND IN ANCESTRAL FAITH**

Paul was brought up in the city and educated strictly according to his ancestral law (Acts 22:3a). According to Acts 22:3, Paul was educated in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel who was noted for his spirit of fairness and tolerance (Acts 5:34). Paul’s main concern in the school of Gamaliel was to become as proficient as possible in the ancestral traditions of his people. He claimed indeed to have outstripped his contemporaries in the knowledge and practice of the Jewish religion.<sup>10</sup> It is believed that Paul might have finished his

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8 Cf. Ammanathukunnel, “St Paul, His Life and Apostolate”, 12.

9 Ammanathukunnel, “St Paul, His Life and Apostolate”, 13.

10 Cf. Bruce, “Paul the Apostle”, in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol III K.P. ed. Geoffrey W, et al. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans 1986) 680-720, 710.

rabbinic studies by the time he was about twenty years old, i.e., by around AD 24-30.<sup>11</sup> Despite the relative liberalism of his teacher Gamaliel, Paul was, according to his own reports, a strict rigorist among the Pharisees. (cf. Gal 1:14; Phil 3:5-6).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, he was well versed in the intricacies of the scriptures and his ancestral faith. It is doubtful that he ever married but he probably associated with the life style of a community of Jews called Essenes for whom celibacy was an ideal.<sup>13</sup> His own letters reveal that early in life, Paul learned a trade, probably from his father. The trade was tent making and other leather works. Practice of this trade provided Paul later with means of support for his missionary activity (cf. 1 Thess 2:9; 1 Cor 9:6).<sup>14</sup> According to Acts, Paul lived as a Pharisee following the Pharisaic traditions (cf. Acts 26:5).

### **1.3. PAUL CHARACTERIZED BY HELLENISTIC BACKGROUND**

The fact that Paul hailed from Tarsus, a city of Greek culture, his frequent use of the Greek Bible (LXX) and his composition of letters in Greek, affirms his Hellenistic background. In addition to that, his style of writing portrays a good Greek education. The influence of Greek rhetoric is also evident in his writings.<sup>15</sup> Practically from its earliest days, the Church of Jerusalem included Hellenists as well as Hebrews (cf. Acts 6:1), and “Paul being a Hebrew, as he declared

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11 Cf. Ammanathukunnel, “St Paul, His Life and Apostolate”, 14-15.

12 Cf. Myers, “Paul”, 801.

13 Cf. Sklba, “Paul St.”, 463.

14 Cf. William Baird, “Paul”, 757-765, 757-758.

15 Cf. Ammanathukunnel, “St Paul, His Life and Apostolate”, 12-14.

himself to be, must have imbibed many of the Hellenistic elements in the cultural atmosphere of his day.”<sup>16</sup> In the circumstances and in view of the fact that the birth place of Paul was Tarsus, the capital of the Roman province of Cilicia, Paul had a good exposure to Greek culture, as Tarsus itself was a well-known center of Greek culture in those days. As a city at the cross-roads between the known centers of eastern Roman empire, Tarsus had become a meeting place of culture and religions of the east and the west. Hence the Greek cultural influence of Tarsus is clearly visible in Paul. The images and terminological usages are typical of Hellenistic environment as is seen in most of his writings (cf. Phil 1:17; 2:16; 3:20; 1 Cor 9:24-27; 1 Thess 2:19; Gal 3:5; 4:1-2; Rom 7:14). All these confirm Paul’s Hellenistic background to a great extent.

#### **1.4. PAUL, A PROUD CITIZEN OF ROME**

Paul claimed that he is born a Roman citizen. This would mean that he had inherited citizenship from his father or some other ancestors who had done meritorious service for the Romans. Paul was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28). According to Prospero Grech, his father might have acquired this privilege by performing some public or economic service for the state.<sup>17</sup>

Pertinently, the revelation that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens alarmed the magistrates because they had broken Roman laws in that they had flogged and imprisoned Roman citizens,

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16 Bruce, “Paul the Apostle”, 710.

17 Cf. Prospero Grech, *Acts of the Apostles Explained – A Doctrinal Commentary* (New York: Alba House, 1966) 94.

with a trial so cursory that they hardly had a chance to learn about their citizenship.<sup>18</sup> Pertinently, in the salutation of all his letters, he mentions ‘Paul,’ the name indicative of his Roman citizenship and precisely in this name he is known as the Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul was proud of his Roman citizenship.

As a citizen of Rome, Paul had several rights and prerogatives and in Acts we see him invoking those citizenship rights (Acts 16:37; 22:26) to stand on his dignity (cf. Acts 22:25b-29). Later Paul was heard by Felix the Governor (Acts 24). Felix ordered the centurion to keep him in custody, but let him have some liberty and not to prevent any of his friends from taking care of his needs (cf. Acts 24:23). Because of his self-confidence, Paul decided to appeal to the Emperor.

Paul defended himself before King Agrippa confidently. “The trial of Paul is the trial of Christianity, and his reply echoes the tenor of the traditional defense of the Church against the time-worn accusations of the Jews and the ever-present difficulties encountered in the Roman Empire.”<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, Paul sailed to Rome accompanied by the centurion and after a very tedious journey by sea; he reached Rome as he wished. At Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier who was guarding him (Acts 28:16). The fact that Paul was allowed to live himself in Rome even when he was a prisoner can be considered as a privilege on account of his

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18 Cf. Conrad Gempf. “Acts”, in *New Bible Commentary 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition*, eds. D.A. Carson, et al. (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1997) 1069-1107, 1092.

19 Grech, *The Acts of the Apostles Explained*, 125-126.

prestigious Roman citizenship. He could preach Gospel to the Jewish leaders in Rome as well, during such a stay there. “Luke delights in showing Paul insisting on his rights as Roman citizen, and even rulers quaking before the Christian missionaries.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, Paul was able to fulfil the will of the Lord in all respects even up to his death. As part of Nero’s persecution of Christians, following the great fire of Rome in A.D. 64, he was apparently, arrested, brought to Rome, tried, and executed and thus he became a martyr for Christ.<sup>21</sup>

## **2. ZEAL WITHOUT ENLIGHTENMENT LEADS TO PERSECUTION**

This section is an evaluation of all that we have described above. Here, two specific instances in which Paul started persecution against the ‘people of the Way’ and against Stephen prior to his enlightenment are highlighted. In the history of Christianity, the persecution begins in Jerusalem with the preaching and martyrdom of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, around 35 AD. Paul was one of the zealous persons who joined in the persecutions. But later, he realized that Jesus is the Messiah, the long awaited Lord and God of Israel and that Jesus whom the Jewish authorities crucified on the cross and killed (cf. Acts 2:23) is still living and is God of all. Such a realization totally changed his previous convictions. Now Paul is in a position to testify before the Jewish authorities that they really

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20 William S. Kurz, “The Acts of the Apostles”, in *The Collegetown Bible Commentary*, eds. Dianne Bergant and Robert J. Karris (Collegetown, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1989) 1031-1068, 1049.

21 Cf. Joseph Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology* (Tellicherry: Alpha Institute of Theology and Science, 2013)1-29, 23.

have zeal for God, but their zeal is not enlightened and therefore emanates from their ignorance. In other words, Paul argues that even though the Jews were zealous in their own way, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and that they were keen to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. This he confessed before the Romans based on his own Jewish ancestral background as a zealous Pharisee prior to his conversion, when he himself had been engaged in persecution<sup>22</sup> of the innocent Christians.

## **2.1. DID SAUL AGREE WITH THE JEWS IN KILLING STEPHEN?**

Basically, Stephen was a person filled with the grace and power of the Lord. He did great wonders and signs among the people (cf. Acts 7:55). While Stephen was preaching in the synagogue, people could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. "It generally surprises people to learn that the longest speech found in Acts is not by Paul, or even by Peter, but by Stephen."<sup>23</sup> Some of those who were in the synagogue secretly instigated some men to say that they have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and God. They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him and brought him before the council. They set up false witnesses against Stephen (cf. Acts 6:8-14). In his speech, Stephen contented that although the Jews received the law as ordained by angels, they have not kept the same

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22 Cf. Baird, "Paul", 758-759. Acts reports that he "laid waste the church" and "dragged off men and women and committed them to prison" (8:3).

23 Gempf, "Acts", 1076.

whereby they became betrayers and murderers. Having heard such truth from Stephen, they became enraged and ground their teeth at him. But filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. They covered their ears and with a loud shout all rushed together against him and dragged him out of the city and began to stone him (cf. Acts 7:55-58a). While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59). Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord does not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60) and died.

When Stephen was stoned, the young man Saul of Tarsus was there watching, but not as mere spectator; he went there on purpose, approving whole-heartedly the execution of Stephen. In fact some of those who were stoning had left their mantles with Saul, knowing well with whom he sided, as he was popular as the young man who came from Tarsus.<sup>24</sup> In fact his religious conservatism made him approve the killing of Stephen. Paul concurred in the death of Stephen and began to persecute the Church, obviously due to his deep allegiance to Judaism (cf. Acts 8:1-3). It is pertinent to highlight here that “Persecution scattered the Church abroad, and where they went they took their gospel.”<sup>25</sup> In fact everything went on to the good of the gospel.

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24 Cf. George Kaitholil, *Encounter with St Paul* (Mumbai: St Paul’s, 2008) 15.

25 William Barclay, “The Church Reaches out”, in *The Acts of the Apostles – The New Daily Study Bible* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009) 72.

## **2.2. SAUL PERSECUTES THE PEOPLE OF THE ‘WAY’**

Prior to his conversion, Paul was just an exasperated Saul, a typically zealous Jew, a staunch Pharisee and a knowledgeable person of the law, who was keen to persecute those who maintain an ideology different from his own. “As a Pharisee although he lived in expectation of resurrection and of the Messianic era”<sup>26</sup>, he was ignorant of Jesus of Nazareth, born of virgin Mary, the Son God, who declared himself to be the Life, the Truth and the Way (Jn 14:6). In fact “the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus gave birth to a new movement called the Way (cf. Acts 2; 19:9-23; 22:4; 24:14-22) which proclaimed the risen Jesus as Lord and Savior.”<sup>27</sup> It seems that Saul developed zero tolerance towards those who belonged to the Way, and in the fight against the “new heresy”, Saul obtained the trust and approval of the Sanhedrin to conduct inquisition against the followers of the new faith.<sup>28</sup>

As Saul was ignorant of the Way that was represented in the person of Jesus Christ, he disregarded Jesus Christ himself and the People of the Way, and proceeded to Damascus to bring them bound to Jerusalem. Later, Paul admits that he had “persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it (cf. Gal 1:13; 1 Cor 15:9; Phil 3:6).”<sup>29</sup> “As for Saul, he tried to ravage the Church. He went to house after house and dragged out both men and women and put them under arrest. The death of Stephen was the signal for an

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26 Grech, *Acts of The Apostles Explained*, 139.

27 Ammanathukunnel, “St Paul His Life and Apostolate”, 12.

28 Cf. Ammanathukunnel, “Life and Apostolate of Paul”, 1-31.

29 Brown, *The Life of Paul*, 426.

outbreak of persecution which compelled the Christians to scatter and to seek safety in the remoter districts of the country.”<sup>30</sup> Clearly, these events reveal that though Paul was zealous, that zeal, in the absence of enlightenment, led him to persecution and destruction.

### **3. DIVINE ENCOUNTER LEADS TO ZEALOUS PROCLAMATION**

From the reading of the Acts it is clear that the divine encounter of Paul (Acts 9) was instrumental for his conversion and zealous proclamation of the gospel. With the initiatives taken by Paul during the early years of his conversion, it is evident that for a person to initiate proclamation of the gospel, he must have a divine encounter with Jesus in his life. In the words of late Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil: “Only one who has a deep experience of the Risen Lord feels urged to get out of oneself and share that with the rest. Only a person who carries with him/her the kingdom of God will go to any land which he/she thinks badly needed the same.”<sup>31</sup> In all these, we realize that, as a Pharisee, Saul was good at heart and that God loved him deeply. God’s profound love led to Paul’s call and all the allied events worked for the growth of the gospel in accordance with God’s plan.

In the Damascus event we find that it is the Risen Christ who manifests Himself to Saul by the power of His Word. As a

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30 Barclay, “The Church reaches out”, 72-73.

31 Vithayathil, “Forward”, in *the Service of Mission, Studies in Honour of Archbishop Thomas Menampambil*, eds. Thomas Manjaly, Kuriakose Poovathumkudy and Haokip Peter (Shillong: Oriens Publications, 2006) xv, v.

result, Saul the persecutor really finds himself face to face with the mysterious one who is persecuted. Consequently, the eyes of the one who persecuted were opened by grace, to a new and unexpected conviction: Jesus of Nazareth who was tortured disgracefully on the cross is alive and present in his community;<sup>32</sup> and identifies Himself with the community, attributing the persecutions directly against Himself. Through the Damascus event, Paul became instrumental in building up Lord's mission on earth. Paul's Apostleship began with Jesus Christ's appearance to him on the way to Damascus (Acts 9:1ff. 22:5ff. 26:12ff.). For Paul, this was an action of God, an objective event, and not a visionary experience (cf. Gal 1:15; Rom 1:1). It made him conscious of a calling such as that of the Old Testament prophets, particularly what Jeremiah had received. "Paul, however, did not rest his authority entirely on the supernatural appearance at Damascus that began his apostolate. When necessary, he also appealed to the continuing evidence of Christ that powerfully worked through him."<sup>33</sup> "The appearance of Jesus to Paul on the Damascus road, which is rightly called the 'Christophany', a turning point in which Paul ultimately realized the basic truths: (i) Jesus who was crucified and killed by the Jews is still living; (ii) by persecuting the followers of Christ, the actual persecution was against Jesus; (iii) Jesus is the long awaited Messiah of Jews; (iv) in Jesus, the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled.

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32 Cf. Kaitholil, *Encounter with St Paul*, 20.

33 Webster J.H. Gerstner, "Pauline Theology", in *the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol III.K.P. eds. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, et al. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1987) 721-729, 722.

### **3.1. SAUL IS CALLED BY THE RISEN JESUS**

The vocation of Paul was a direct action of God who chose him as his instrument to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.<sup>34</sup> Right from the start of Paul's commissioning, his task before the Gentiles was made clear to him and to Ananias in a number of ways (see also Acts 22:21; 26:17), including the great sufferings he had to undergo in the name of Jesus.<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, the Lord revealed his mind that Paul was a chosen instrument of the Lord for bringing the name of the Lord before Gentiles, their kings and before the people of Israel, and was to suffer for His name (Acts 9).

### **3.2. INITIAL PREPARATORY YEARS IN DAMASCUS AND ARABIA**

We have very little knowledge about Paul's first three years in Damascus and Arabia. "He went to Arabia (cf. Gal 1:17), and many have considered this a further preparation, like a retreat, for more apostolic work."<sup>36</sup> Taking the letters as primary evidence, it is clear that Paul spent three years in Arabia. "Unless he had been doing more than meditating, Paul would scarcely have had to flee from Damascus (cf. 2 Cor 11:32-33; Acts 9:23-25)."<sup>37</sup> At any rate it can be assumed that the initial period spent by Paul in Damascus and Arabia worked for the realization of a divine origin of the gospel,

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34 Cf. Grech, *The Acts of the Apostles Explained*, 62.

35 Cf. Gempf, "Acts", 1080.

36 Sklba, "Paul, St.", 463.

37 Baird, "Paul", 760. Paul escapes by the skin of his teeth as is seen from Acts 9:23-25 as the disciples took him by night and, by way of the wall, let him down in a basket.

as he had a divine call while he was in solitude in retreat, similar to Old Testament prophetic calls (cf. Jer 1:5).

### **3.3. FIRST JERUSALEM VISIT, VISIT TO SYRIA AND TO CILICIA**

After his conversion, Paul went to Jerusalem and met Peter and James. As Paul received his Christian vocation and apostleship in a way different from those of the other Apostles, there may be an inference in theological circles that Paul might have visited Peter and James to seek their formal approval for his Christian vocation. However, it appears that there is hardly any room for such an inference. Paul writes to Galatians that he went to Jerusalem three years after his conversion and met Ce'phas and stayed with him only fifteen days and that the other Church leader he met was James, the Lord's brother (cf. 1:18-19). Thus before going to Jerusalem, he spent three years in Arabia in religious reflection. Moreover, he stayed with them in Jerusalem only for fifteen days. It is clear that Paul made a journey to Jerusalem and met Peter (cf. Gal 1:18-20; cf. Acts 9:26-30) and was accorded the recommendation of Barnabas (cf. Acts 9:26-27). Therefore, it can be reasonably inferred that Paul met Peter and James in a general way and that there was nothing beyond a brotherly visit in Paul's meeting with Peter and James in Jerusalem. However, it is reasonable to assume that Paul went to Jerusalem mainly to establish bonds of fellowship with the leaders of the first Church and to obtain from them information on its past experience. During his stay with Peter for fifteen days Paul went to James also to hear his version of the Christ-event. "After the Jerusalem visit, Paul left for Syria and Cilicia."<sup>38</sup> "While in Galatia

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38 Ammanathukunnel, "St Paul His Life and Apostolate", 21.

Paul insisted that he had received the gospel and his commission to preach directly from God through no human mediation and in 1 Cor 15:11 he equally insisted that the gospel he preached was essentially the same as that preached by the other Apostles.”<sup>39</sup> Having spent there 14 years in evangelization work, it can be legitimately concluded that Paul had a fruitful period of apostolate there.

The fact that Paul himself kept away from Jerusalem Church for 14 years (Gal 2:1) would imply that Paul pursued his preaching in his own way into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, probably in the vicinity of Tarsus as the report in the Acts implies (Acts 9:30).<sup>40</sup> Paul mentioned before the Galatians that the Judeans glorified God because of him as he was formerly engaged in persecuting the Church and is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy (1:23-24). It is clear from the foregoing that Jesus merited the inner person in Paul, who was good at heart and loved God whole-heartedly, even before his conversion and that the Lord effectively mobilized his actions to the glory of His Kingdom. These events bring out Paul’s zeal and enthusiasm towards proclamation of the gospel.

### **3.4. CONVICTION AND COMMITMENT TO CHRIST AS A ZEALOUS MISSIONARY**

Zeal is the motive of love and the resulting action that prompt one to serve God. With great enlightenment and zeal,<sup>41</sup> Paul

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39 Bruce, “Paul the Apostle”, 699.

40 Cf. Ammanathukunnel, “St Paul His Life and Apostolate”, 21.

41 Cf. Sklba, “Zeal”, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia – Revised and Updated Edition*, ed. Robert C. Broderick (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986) 612.

travelled extensively for proclamation of Gospel and witnessed Christ the crucified as the one who resurrected from the dead. He spoke to the Jews and the Gentiles and focused his mission amongst the Gentiles. He was able to build up Christian communities in places where he could preach the gospel. These communities were continuously inspired and strengthened by letters which he wrote to them subsequently, in spite of his busy schedule elsewhere. Thus, Paul rendered his missionary task relentlessly and by doing so, today if we look back, we can see that he was one of the greatest thinkers and theologians of the early Church, who articulated his commitment to Christ, although previously he had been a zealous follower of Judaism, its law and practices.<sup>42</sup>

Clearly, Paul the Pharisee became not only a zealous Apostle of the Church but also its earliest comprehensive theologian<sup>43</sup>. The Damascus experience illumined in a creative act in Paul's mind and gave him an extraordinary insight into what he later called the mystery of Christ (Eph 3:4). Here, "Paul is the redeemed persecutor."<sup>44</sup> Paul understood the soteriological (=relating to the theology of salvation) value of the death and resurrection of Jesus in real terms.

In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul proudly affirmed

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42 Cf. Joseph Pathrapankal, "Conviction, Conversion and Commitment: A Study on the Religious Personality of St. Paul", *Journal of Dharma* 12 (1987) 289

43 Cf. Pathrapankal, "Conviction, Conversion and Commitment", 291.

44 Margaret Y. Mac Donald, "Ephesians", in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds., William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1670-1686, 1680.

his conviction that he was a staunch Pharisee even before his conversion and hence he claimed that even though he too had reason for confidence in the flesh, he does not do so on account of his conviction that he adores the Spirit of God and boasts in Christ Jesus, which were of prime concern for him. “Paul’s encounter with Christ completely changed his scale of values. The knowledge of Christ (that includes the decision to live for him and to love him) relativizes everything else.”<sup>45</sup> He wanted to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death so as to attain resurrection from the dead (cf. Phil 3:10-11).

The zeal of Paul in realizing the truth that Jesus is the Lord is worth mentioning. More than his identity as a true Pharisee and his own righteousness as a blameless Israelite, he considered the immense value of knowing Christ Jesus the Lord as supremely relevant. Accordingly he discarded his own righteousness and embraced the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Christ. Through revelation, he gained this by grace and realized the power of resurrection of Christ. Paul explains how the resurrection of the dead is accomplished (cf. 1Cor 15:12-56). This can be totally attributed to his conviction for proclamation of Christ and his kingdom to everyone and everywhere. Reflecting on this context, Pope Benedict XVI affirmed: “St. Paul was not transformed by a thought but by an event, by the irresistible presence of the Risen One

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45 Pedro Ortiz, “Philippians”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1687-1696, 1693.

whom subsequently he would never be able to doubt; so powerful had been the evidence of the event, of this encounter. It radically changed Paul's life in a fundamental way; in this sense one can and must speak of a conversion."<sup>46</sup>

Paul had clear conviction of the power and wisdom of God and the soteriological value of the death of Jesus which inspired him to be a staunch witness of Christ. As a Jew, Paul certainly knew that Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified, had been "hung on a tree" and hence had been "cursed" (Deut 21:23). This was undoubtedly the main reason why, prior to his conversion, Saul as a Pharisee could not accept Jesus as the Messiah. He was, for Saul, "a stumbling block" (cf. 1 Cor 1:23), one 'cursed' by the very law which he so zealously observed (cf. Gal 3:13; Phil 3:5-6). With a logic that only a rabbi could appreciate, Paul saw Christ Jesus taking upon himself the curse of the Law and transforming it into its opposite, so that he became a means of freeing men from its malediction. The cross, which had been the stumbling block to the Jews, became for him the "power and wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24)<sup>47</sup>. Thus Paul was empowered to proclaim proudly to the whole world, the glory and power vested on the holy Cross, by virtue of its carrying Jesus the Lord of all!

Being an Apostle to the Gentiles, his God-given responsibility was to enlighten and to bring them into a righteous relationship with

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46 Pope Benedict XVI, "St. Paul's Conversion and Ours", General Audience (3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2008) 1-2" <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/b16stPaulind.htm> [accessed on June 23, 2017].

47 Cf. Pathrapankal, "Conviction, Conversion and Commitment", 292.

‘the God of Israel’ through the New Covenant which the Messiah brought out. This is evidently elucidated throughout his letters. Every time Paul refers to himself as an Apostle, he reminded them of his God-given authority to them. To the Romans he wrote “we have received grace and Apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of His name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ” (Rom 1:5). Although Paul was not the one who began the Gentile mission, he joined the movement out of his ardent zeal after it had already been started.<sup>48</sup> Until the death of Stephen, the preaching of the Word was confined to Jewish population of Jerusalem (cf. Acts 2:36; 3:26; 4:10; 5:31).

The persecution that broke out in Jerusalem following the martyrdom of Stephen augmented the spread of Christianity into the Gentile world, apart from the Jewish population of Jerusalem. This was due to the fact that consequent on the martyrdom of Stephen and the continuing persecution, the fleeing Christians reached cities like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch in Syria, and the island of Cyprus, and began to evangelize first Jews and then the Gentiles in those faraway places (cf. Acts 8:4; 11:19.20).<sup>49</sup> Viewing historically, it is evident that the persecution against Christianity contributed to the spread of Christianity in the Gentile territories to a large extent. Even though Peter is the first to witness to the Gentiles, Paul is the

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48 Cf. Kanachikuzhy, *Paul of Acts*, 233.

49 Cf. Fearghail, *The Introduction to Luke – Acts* (Rome: Anchor Bible Dictionary, 126, 1991) 76.

dominant figure to carry out that witness.<sup>50</sup> Peter was instrumental in converting Cornelius, the Gentile, in the coastal town of Judea (Acts 10:1-33). In Jerusalem, the conversion of Cornelius was a turning point in the opening of the mission to the Gentiles. It attracted the attention of the Christians there and Peter really had to defend it (cf. Acts 11:1-18).<sup>51</sup>

By telling Peter to call no person unclean (cf. Acts 10:28b) and by having shown him a vision by God (cf. Acts 10:11), Peter is invited to look at the Jewish law from a different perspective. The law given by God is not meant to discriminate between peoples and races. This is in the context of the Jews having considered the Gentiles inferior to them and avoided all kinds of association with them. Apart from that, visiting the house of a gentile was not only a source of ritual uncleanness, but it was also unlawful (*Athemitos*) (cf. 2 Macc 6:5; 7:1; 10:34; 3 Macc 5:20). After the vision, Peter realized that he should not call anyone profane or unclean (Acts 10:34-35). Peter did not raise the question as to how this impartial attitude of God is to be squared up with the teaching of the Old Testament which stressed the privileged place of Israel, as a result of God having elected them.

It is clear, however, that the election of Israel was based solely on God's choice and not on any merits of the people, and hence there is no inconsistency in the claim that God accepts people of all nations on the same basis. God accepts not only Jews but also all the

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50 Cf. John B. *Acts* in *The New American Commentary*, V 26, eds. David S. Dockery, et al. (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1992) 230.

51 Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, 230.

gentiles who call upon him.<sup>52</sup> Paul believed that God's gift was given to the gentiles on equal terms with the Jewish believers, and the qualification for it is belief in Lord Jesus Christ, without any mention of the Jewish law<sup>53</sup>. Even though the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were initially unhappy over gentiles coming to the faith, they realized after hearing from Peter that God has given "repentance leading to life" (Acts 11:18) to the Gentiles as well. Pertinently, the Gospel of St. John affirms that to all who received him and who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God (cf. Jn 1:12-13). Pope Benedict XVI says: "There is no doubt that the universalist vision, characteristic of St. Paul's personality, at least of the Christian Paul after the event on the road to Damascus, owes its basic impact to faith in Jesus Christ, since the figure of the Risen One was by this time situated beyond any particularistic narrowness."<sup>54</sup> Peter's defense and the resulting endorsement of the Gentile mission by the Jerusalem Church is an absolute evolution which paved the way for Paul to continue the Gentile mission and that he was not alone in the outreach to the Gentiles. The Hellenists who settled in Antioch began a major mission among them (cf. Acts 11:20), and the Holy Spirit instructs that Barnabas and Paul to be set apart for the mission. (cf. Acts 13-2b).

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52 Cf. Kanachikuzhy, *Paul of Acts* (Mumbai: The Bombay Saint Paul Society, 2013) 235.

53 Cf. R. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T& T Clark, 1982) 36.

54 Pope Benedict XVI, "Paul the Apostle, Teacher for Today", General Audience, (2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2008) 3," <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/b16stPaulind.htm> [accessed on June 23, 2017].

#### **4. PAUL'S MISSION AND CHRIST-CENTERED INITIATIVES**

To Paul, Christ was the central theme and his primary concern as he had dedicated himself for Christ and his mission. The reason behind Paul's zealous initiative was that it was entirely the Lord's work. "As God calls Jacob in Gen 46:2, the Lord calls Saul by name and identifies himself 'as Jesus, whom you are persecuting'. He directed him to go into the city of Damascus, where he will be told what to do (v.6)."<sup>55</sup> In other words, it is at Jesus' initiative and grace that Paul came into prominence on the gentile mission. In this domain, the zealous initiative of Paul for proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles is highlighted by revealing his zealous argument in the Jerusalem Council and his apostleship for the Gentiles as well. Paul humbly recognizes that "he had received grace". Grace always implies a gift which is absolutely free and absolutely unearned.<sup>56</sup> Through the power of Holy Spirit, Barnabas and Saul were set apart for the work for which they were called and commissioned (cf. Acts 13:1-2).

To Paul, the proclamation of the gospel is his ultimate responsibility (cf. 1 Cor 9:6). Having zealously enlightened, Paul proclaimed Jesus as God, Savior, Son of God and Lord (κύριος). Paul presented statements about Christ that imply subjection to God, for God may be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:27-28). Paul proclaimed

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55 Justine Taylor, "Acts of the Apostles", in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1506-1545, 1522.

56 William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 2009) 1-262, 15.

that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. To proclaim the gospel, Paul travelled extensively and visited major urban centres (major cities of coastal and southern Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Central Greece).<sup>57</sup> He had an intention to visit Rome also where he had not visited earlier. Therefore, by writing a letter to the Romans, Paul wished to make a self-introduction to build-up a rapport before the proposed visit. It is obvious that at a very early stage, various circumstances contributed to give prominence to the Church of Rome.<sup>58</sup> Pauline epistle to Romans is therefore, distinct from his various other epistles, in that Paul had taken special interest to give a long, detailed introduction and salutation to the faithful in Rome.

As an apostle of Jesus, Paul presented three basic aspects in his self-introduction. First of all, he emphasizes that he is a servant of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:1), which implies that those who accept Jesus as the Lord are expected to deem themselves as ‘servants of the Lord’<sup>59</sup> and their life itself is a service to the Lord (cf. 1 Rom 6:16; 7:6; 12:11; 14:18; 1 Cor 7:22; 1 Thess 1:9). Secondly, he is aware that he is called upon to be an Apostle. To him, the authority of his calling is that of Christ who called him. This concept he had mentioned in other epistles also, apart from the Romans (cf. Gal 1:11-17; 2 Cor 4: 5-6). Thirdly, it is Paul’s intense awareness and zeal that he is set apart for the gospel.<sup>60</sup> The epistles of Paul are typical expressions

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57 Cf. Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology*, 17.

58 Cf. “The Pauline and Other Letters”, NT (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2015) 151,

59 Cf. CCC 555.

60 Cf. Karimattam Michael, “Letter to the Romans”, in *Alpha Bible Commentary 7* (Thalassery: Alpha Books, 2012) 135-136.

of his zeal and concern for the spread of the gospel. It is one of the most emphatic statements of Paul's faith. He tries to emphasize that although Christianity is rooted in Judaism, yet it is a faith for all humanity. The letter to Romans is a book full of the power and grace of God and has been a source of inspiration and renewal in the Church from the earliest time to the present. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul impressed upon the Corinthians as to how Christians are enjoined to live a way of life different from pagans and inspired them to grow spiritually. At the time of Paul, out of the seven lakhs people in Corinth, five lakhs were slaves. It shows the state of affairs that prevailed then in that city. Paul, the founder of the church in Corinth, wrote emphatically in his first letter to them about his zeal and fatherly care towards them.<sup>61</sup> In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul highlights the divine plan of salvation.

According to Paul, God desired to recapitulate everything in Christ. "Christ is the epitome of all things; he takes everything upon himself and guides us to God. Thus he involves us in a movement of descent and ascent, inviting us to share in his humility, that is, in his love for the neighbour, to share in his glorification and thus becoming sons of God along with the Son."<sup>62</sup> Paul argued zealously before the Christian converts from Jews who reached Galatia and started misleading the people by proclaiming a gospel different from what Paul categorically stated that in Christ Jesus, neither

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61 Cf. Michael Karimattam, *First Letter to the Corinthians*, Alpha Bible Commentary 7 (Thalassery: Alpha Books, 2012) 229-235.

62 Pope Benedict XVI, "Paradox of the Cross: Life from Death", General Audience (October 22, 2008) 4 <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/b16stPaulind.htm> [accessed June 23, 2017].

circumcision nor un-circumcision counts for anything and that the only thing that counts is faith working through love (cf. Gal 5:6). Though the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, they want others to be circumcised so that they may boast about their flesh (cf. Gal 6:13).

He also gives guidance for a true spiritual life. In most of the other Pauline epistles, the church envisages the local church but in Colossians, the word Church envisages a wide meaning and a universal outlook as such. The epistle focusses on enhancing the true faith of the Colossian Church and to curtail the false teachings prevalent in that Church.<sup>63</sup> Emphasizing the supremacy of Christ, Paul told them that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in Him all things in heaven and on earth were created, irrespective of things visible, invisible, whether thrones or dominations or rulers or powers; all things have been created through Him and for Him” (cf. Col 1:15-16).

Paul speaks of the fullness of life in Christ (cf. Col 2:6-19) and also of the newness of life in Christ (cf. Col 3:1-17). Theologically, it has in-depth dimensions that Christ Jesus is the center point of all. “Christ is all and in all!” (Col 3:11b). Persecution compelled Paul to leave Thessalonica, and his letters reveal how the Christians there ought to live, and to await the Lord’s return with constant diligence. Having proclaimed gospel in the synagogue for three Sabbath days, Paul built up a community of faithful by associating the Gentiles and other believers assembled there. The newly instituted community of

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63 Cf. Karimattam, *Letter to the Romans*, 135-136.

believers grew up in their faith day by day and took steps to bring others into the faith. By virtue of the effects of the Christ-event, they started experiencing the power of resurrection.

The epistle gives an insight that the Thessalonians maintained an awareness on the eschatological concepts about Jesus. It also reveals a Christology, apart from the teachings and traditions of the early Church.<sup>64</sup> Paul zealously proclaimed that Jesus is the incarnated Word and he alone is Christ and the Savior. Apostle Paul emphasized that Christian life is not merely a lifestyle praising the glory of the Son of God for consolation, but a life lived by God's grace, moulded by the teachings of the Word of God.<sup>65</sup> Paul identified himself to the will of God (cf. Gal 2:20). Such a life of Paul in letter and spirit is an indication of his esteemed zeal and enthusiasm towards the mission entrusted to him. *Pauline Letters* represent the ripest fruit of medieval exegesis.<sup>66</sup>

The epistles of Paul obviously reflected the living Word of God as the Lord inspired Paul to give the good news to the churches he planted, to the persons with whom he had interacted and also to the Churches he wanted to visit. Thus he turned out to be a living witness, a zealous preacher and a great missionary. "In Romans 9:21 Paul argues that it is not those of physical descent who are Abraham's children but those of physical descent who share

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64 Cf. Michael Karimattam, *First Letter to Thessalonians*, Alpha Bible Commentary 7 (Thalassery: Alpha Books, 2012) 541-574, 545.

65 Cf. Karimattam, *First Letter to Thessalonians*, 115-116.

66 Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, "St. Paul Our Guide to Christian life" 3 [accessed on June 23, 2017].

the faith of their father Abraham. Only in Romans 9:22-24 Paul mentions the inclusion of Gentiles. The Gentiles are included along with the faithful in Israel (cf. Eph 2:11-22).<sup>67</sup> Paul categorically told the Jews that merely by carrying out the circumcision in its literal sense or as an external physical or outward ritual, one cannot become a Jew and that a Jew in the real sense is the one who does it inwardly as a matter of the heart in its spiritual sense (cf. Rom 2:28-29). Such a theological exposition from Paul gives a clear insight into his zealous spirituality too. Paul's ideology is distinct from that of the separatists or certain activists of Jesus' time. In the context of Christianity's determination to be a missionary religion, Paul opened up the way for the gentile converts to remould their practice and behaviour.

The role of Paul in elevating the Christian religion, hitherto within the influential framework of the Jewish background, to a stature of its own, by bringing the Gentiles also into the Christian fellowship and framing their own practices in line with true spirit of Christian ideology, is indisputable. By undertaking extensive missionary journeys through the Gentile territories, Paul and Barnabas were able to make a break-through in proclamation of the word of God amongst the Gentiles. This shows Paul's insight and inspired approach towards the growth of Christianity.

For Paul, preaching the Gospel is rooted in his call; it is a necessity and not a ground for boasting. The only "meritorious" thing

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67 W.S. Campbell, "Covenant and New Covenant", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 179-183, 182.

he can do is to proclaim the gospel free of charge. “This is his boast and paradoxically, his reward is to have no reward.”<sup>68</sup> Even when Paul was well aware that the Jews planned to attack and kill him at Jerusalem, he was bold enough to comment that he considers his life in no way important to him (cf. Acts 20:24; 21:17-40; Rom 15:25) and went to Jerusalem irrespective of the threats and challenges, to discharge his commitment to Jesus by proclaiming the gospel to the Jews and the Gentiles as well.

The trial of Paul is the trial of Christianity, and his reply echoes the tenor of the traditional defense of the Church against the time-worn accusations of the Jews and the ever-present difficulties encountered in the Roman Empire. Jesus had already prophesied that his disciples would be dragged before synagogues, kings, and rulers (Lk 21:12). The Sanhedrin represented Judaism, while the rulers (Felix), and kings (Agrippa) represented the civil authority, very often pagan, before whom the Church had to explain itself in order to survive. The Apostle bears witness to Jesus in everybody’s presence, but Luke is more concerned to show that it is exactly because Paul’s witness is not accepted by the Jews in Jerusalem that the gospel would be preached in Rome, where the Gentiles would accept it.<sup>69</sup> All these show his deep commitment to the mission entrusted to him by Jesus which he considered to be his esteemed privilege.

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68 Jan, Lambrecht, “1 Corinthians”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, Sean Mc Eventue, I, Armando J. Levoratti and David L. Dungun (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1601-1632, 1617.

69 Cf. Grech, *Acts of the Apostles Explained*, 125-127.

#### **4.1. THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL AND PAUL'S INITIATIVE IN GENTILE MISSION**

There prevailed a question of the relationship of the Gentile Christians to the older Jewish converts. The issues included were as to (i) whether the Gentile converts were required to be circumcised (ii) whether they are required to observe the Mosaic Law and (iii) whether they are required to follow the Pharisaic prescriptions in dietary matters.<sup>70</sup> In order to settle the controversy, Paul and Barnabas were sent from Antioch to meet the apostles and the elders.<sup>71</sup>

The primary issue of Jerusalem Council was the question of requiring Gentile to become Jews before they could become Christians. According to Gal 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-21 as well, in regard to the decision; circumcision should not be required. Paul attended the Jerusalem Council with a special mission to discuss the issue regarding the circumcision of the Gentiles according to the custom of Moses. Various issues in regard to systems and practices followed by the converts from the Jews and the converts from the Gentiles to the Way of Christ, were subjected to debates for a consensus. When the Council met, Peter first addressed the members.<sup>72</sup>

It is pertinent to note that amongst the disciples, Peter held an overwhelming role as is evident from the command of the Lord (cf. Mt 16:18-10). Also, "Peter being the first to be called by the

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70 Cf. Pathrapankal, "Conviction, Conversion and Commitment", 294.

71 Cf. Baird, "Paul", 757-761.

72 Cf. J.B. Tyson, *Images of Judaism in Luke-Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1992) 146.

Lord to discipleship, and through whom God inaugurated the Gentile mission in the conversion of Cornelius and his household, addressed the gathering first.”<sup>73</sup> On the ground that God does not discriminate between the Gentiles and the Jews, it was forcefully submitted that no additional burden should be laid on the Gentile believers. Peter testimony concludes by saying that belief in Jesus is the only thing which saves the Jews and the Gentiles alike (cf. Acts 15:7-11). The congregation listened to Paul and Barnabas, as they narrated the miracles which God worked through them. Paul and Barnabas felt pained to note that the false brethren were trying to destroy the freedom of the Christians which they had in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal 2:4-5). Their testimony before the Council helps to consolidate the doctrine which Peter had presented. They agreed that Paul and his companions should take responsibility for the mission to the Gentiles while the others saw to the missions to the Jews (cf. Gal 2:8) This agreement founded the partnership between the Apostles Peter and Paul, which was sealed in their blood. This partnership is Central to the message Luke wishes to convey in Acts. It gave shape to Catholic –Apostolic Christianity, to the NT and to the Church. According to Paul, it was a meeting between the delegates from Antioch and the testimony “pillars” of the Jerusalem church, namely, James, Ce’phas (Peter), and John (cf. Gal 2:2-9).<sup>74</sup>

Although the problem of the admission of the Gentiles to the Church was theoretically solved in the Jerusalem Council, there

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73 E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Westminster John Knox, 1985) 458.

74 Cf. Taylor, “Acts of the Apostles”, 1530.

were many more problems coming up in which Paul had to take a lead and prove his courageous stand. One of them was the “Antioch Incident”, as it is called, and it happened after the Jerusalem Council (Gal 2: 11-14). Paul felt it necessary to protest and correct Peter, and so he “opposed him to his face” (Gal 2:11). He told Peter that he was violating the accepted principles of the Jerusalem Council and was not “walking straight according to the truth of the gospel” (Gal 2:13). It transpires that Paul’s commitment to true Christian ideology is unquestionable. Possibly, Paul strongly believed that with the advent of the proclamation of the good news there is no partiality shown to persons and that it was incorrect not to share the bread. This sharing of the bread included the Eucharistic meals.<sup>75</sup> Subsequent to Jerusalem Council, Petrine leadership of the Jerusalem community gives way to James and the elders. At the same time, Paul becomes a dominant figure in the story of Acts after chapter 15. Paul believed that as the Gentile mission is willed by God, if anybody is to be blamed, it is God Himself.<sup>76</sup>

Many theologians maintain the view that on the one hand Luke differentiates the Jews within themselves, i.e., the Jews who accept the Gospel and the others who neither accept the gospel nor embrace Christianity.<sup>77</sup> Certain others were of the view that: Luke does not

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75 Cf. Elsa Tamez, “Galatians”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds., William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1654-1669, 1661.

76 Kanachikuzhy, *Paul of Acts*, 241.

77 Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Jewish People and the Mosaic Law in Luke-Acts”, in *Luke the Theologian: Aspects of His Teachings* (New York: Mahwah, 1989) 175-201.

make any distinction between believing and non-believing Jews, or condemns the Jewish people collectively for their refusal of God's offer of salvation through Jesus.<sup>78</sup> Obviously, the opposition between Judaism and Christianity, which centers on the issue of the Christian proclamation of the resurrection, develops as the Acts progresses.<sup>79</sup> Luke expresses the theology of the Gentile Christianity towards the end of the first century. The coming of the Messiah and the missionary proclamation of the apostles and disciples have divided Israel into two groups: the repentant Israel and the unrepentant Israel. The section of the Jews who believe in the Messiah and who are willing to repent appear as a purified, restored and true Israel. They are the Jews who have accepted the gospel and to whom the promises have been fulfilled.<sup>80</sup>

To conclude, Paul emphasizes a renewal process in that the faithful shall get stripped of the old self with its practices and get clothed with a new self, renewed in the knowledge according to the image of its Creator. In the renewal process, Christ is all and in all! Paul also reiterates to the Romans by declaring that "the Word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (cf. Rom 10:8; cf. Deut 30:14), because if anyone confesses with his lips that Jesus is the Lord and believes in his heart that God raised Him from the dead, he will be saved. For, each one believes with his own heart and so he is justified and each one confesses with his own mouth and so

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78 Cf. R.L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* SBLMS 33 (Atlanta - Georgia: 1987) 156-159.

79 Cf. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews*, 53.

80 Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)", *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* 28 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981) 53.

he is saved (cf. Rom 10:9-10). According to the scripture, no one who believes in Christ Jesus will be put to shame (cf. Rom 10:11). So also, there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all. Thus, through his mission, Paul proclaimed the universality of Lord's salvific endeavour to everyone who calls upon his name, irrespective of any barrier whether he is a Jew or a Greek, because everyone needs His grace for salvation. In that respect, "during his travels, apostle Paul was a champion of champions."<sup>81</sup> He rendered his apostolate to the Gentiles in the spirit of his call through the salvific accomplishments in Christ Jesus. The account of Acts moves decisively to the wider world, to lands and peoples beyond Judea and the Jews.

#### **4.2. PAUL, THE ZEALOUS APOSTLE FOR THE GENTILES**

Paul had the clear conviction that he is an apostle of Christ. "He has remained throughout the centuries and up to this day as a true teacher and apostle to the Gentiles".<sup>82</sup> Two of his letters to Corinthians begin: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1). In his letter to the Galatians he starts: "Paul an apostle, sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead, and all the members of God's family who are with me" (Gal 1:1.2). His great letter to the Romans also opens by "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle,

81 Robert C. Broderick, "St. Paul", in *The Catholic Encyclopedia – Revised and Updated Edition* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986) 463-464, 464.

82 Pope Benedict XVI, "St. Paul's Martyrdom and Heritage", General Audience, (4th February 2009)3, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audience/2009/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audience/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi) (accessed June 21, 2017).

set apart for the gospel of God” (Rom 1:1). Evidently, through such expressions, Paul wanted to emphasize zealously the title as an apostle of Jesus Christ and in full legitimacy of his evangelization. To address any possible debate by others in regard to his apostleship, he categorically wrote “Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? “Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?” (1 Cor 9:1). “If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord” (1 Cor 9:2). Such writings of Paul are clear expressions of his determination and commitment to his apostleship.

In accordance with the Gospels, it is the Twelve that we identify with the title of apostles, thereby desiring to point out those who were Jesus’ companions in life and who listened to his teachings. Yet Paul too felt that he was a true apostle and it clearly appears, therefore, that the Pauline concept of apostolate was not limited to the group of the Twelve. “It is the Lord who appoints the apostolate and not one’s own presumption. The apostle is not made by himself but is made as such by the Lord; consequently, the apostle needs to relate constantly to the Lord.”<sup>83</sup> Obviously, Paul is able to distinguish between his own case and that of those who were apostles before him (Gal 1:17), as he recognized that they have a special place in the life of the Church. “The Church is grounded on the apostolic witness of Paul and its sound teaching ultimately derives from Paul. In the ‘Pastoral Letters’, Paul is repeatedly highlighted as the foremost apostle of Jesus Christ (cf. Tit 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1) and the teacher (cf.

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83 Pope Benedict XVI, “Transformed by Grace at Service of Christ”, 1-2.

Tit 1:3; 1 Tim 2:7; 3:14-15; 6:3; 3:10; 2 Tim 1:11-14).”<sup>84</sup> Titus 1:3 illustrates this point by presenting Paul as the apostle entrusted with the revealed word for preaching and teaching.

#### **4.2.1. PAUL’S HOPE IN THE CONVERSION OF JEWS**

Although on three different occasions Paul made the announcement that he would next go to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:26-28), he did not thereby intend that God is abandoning his people.<sup>85</sup> Paul never ignored the Jews, for he used to preach in the synagogues (cf. Acts 14:1). Paul taught in the synagogue and persuaded both the Jews and the Greeks. Paul did not ignore the Jews at any point of time, as God did not show any partiality to anyone.

During his meeting with the Jews in Rome, Paul sought to convince them about Jesus. Some of them were convinced while others did not believe. As no agreement was reached in that meeting and when a few of the assembled Jews started to leave one after another, Paul quoted Isa 6:9-10.<sup>86</sup> The motif of the quotation from Isaiah deals not with the opening of the Gospel to the Gentiles but with self-exclusion of the Jews. It is true that Paul’s word in Acts 28:28, “this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles” are just the opposite of his words in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia where Paul says that to us (i.e. to us Jews) has been sent the message

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84 Mark Goodwin, “Titus”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1752-1758, 1753.

85 Cf. Kanachikuzhy, *Paul of Acts*, 243.

86 Cf. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, 44.

of this salvation (Acts 13:26). Considering the full text of Paul's writings it is clear that Paul never ignored the Jews and that he maintained great expectation in their salvation.

Probably, it is this quotation from Isaiah placed at the conclusion of Acts (cf. 28:24-28) that prompts many writers to argue that Paul had finally pronounced his judgment against the Jews.<sup>87</sup> Actually Paul compares the obstinacy of the Jews of old with that of the Roman Jews as he tells them that God's message will now be preached to the Gentiles. Paul is well aware that faith and the correct response to the Christian message are gifts of God. Jesus himself meant this when he quoted the passage of Isaiah as he taught his disciples, "You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive" (cf. Mt 13:14; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10; Jn 12:39-40). At the end of Acts, Luke stresses that the failure of some Jews to respond positively to the Christian message is not God's fault or that of the Christians, but of the Jews themselves. At the same time, it is important to note that not all the Jews who came to Paul disbelieved. It is clearly said that some of them were convinced, though no agreement was reached by those in attendance. Further it is said that Paul welcomed 'all who came to him' (Acts 28:30)<sup>88</sup> and 'all' should include both Jews and Gentiles. A deeper insight of the passage from Isaiah can be gained when we recognize the prophetic nature of the passage. In fact, Isaiah did not mean that the Jews would be cut off from God's salvation envisaged. Isaiah like a spiritual father challenges the Jews to open their eyes and

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87 Cf. Kanachikuzhy, *Paul of Acts*, 244.

88 Cf. Kanachikuzhy, *Paul of Acts*, 245.

ears in order that they may see and hear correctly. The threat that salvation is moving out to the Gentiles who will hear, challenges the Jews to take the offer of salvation seriously, as otherwise, they will miss the benefits which the Gentiles will reap.

#### **4.2.2. PAUL'S REALIZATION: GOD'S LOVE EMBRACES ALL**

Considering the scriptural background, Paul maintained openness in his approach to the Jews and the Gentile, as God's love embraces all and did not limit His grace to any particular group as such. Ultimately, Paul realized that there is a purpose in everything; at the helm of all things is the unseen pilot, God. Obviously, Paul did not shut the door on the Jewish people as a whole as he had maintained hope in their salvation. In the end, Paul comes to a conclusion that this too is the work of God; this rejection of Jesus by the Jews is the very thing which has opened the door to the Gentiles. Therefore, it can be said that amongst the Jews whoever believed in the Messiah and were willing to repent became part of the true Israel.<sup>89</sup> They are the Jews who have accepted the gospel and in whom the promises have been fulfilled. In the OT this concept is rooted and in the NT it is developed in the fullest sense with the Christ-event fulfilled in Jesus.

God extends the salvation through the people of his choice. As channels of salvation God authorizes Judges (2:16 and 3:9) and Kings (1 Sam 9:16; 11:3) in the OT (2 Sam 8:6). God has done great things by redeeming the Israelites from the slavery in Egypt

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89 Cf. Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 227.

(Ex 14:3.4; 15:2; Ps 78:22ff; Isa 63:9). No doubt, the fruits of salvation is experienced to a person based on his own attitude to the salvation process such as his keenness, faith, repentance, openness, and submission to the truth etc. (Isa 30:15; Jer 4:14; Ps 7:10; 17:7; 50:23). God is the strength of the poor, needy, and the oppressed and stands at the right hand of the needy, to save them from those who would condemn them to death (Ps 12:6; 76:9; 109:31). God is the savior or redeemer is a popular concept in the NT (Lk 1:47; 1 Tim 1:7; 2:3; Titus 2:10). Salvation is the fruit of God's mercy, (Titus 3:5), grace (2:11); and Forgiveness (2 Pet 3:15). We get this salvation through Jesus ((Lk 2:11; Jn 10:9; Acts 13:23; 2 Pet 1:1, 11f). He is the redeemer of the Church (Eph 5:23), He is the only redeemer (Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; Rom 10:13). The salvation that Jesus gives is the redemption from sin (Mt 1:21; Lk 1:77; 19:10; 1 Tim 1:15) the purpose of proclaiming Gospel is for the salvation of the soul (Acts 13:26; 16:17; Rom 1:6; 1 Cor 1:21; 1 Thess 2:16; Eph 1:13; 1 Tim 4; 16; Heb 2:3; Jas 1:21). Towards this salvation, faith is vital (Rom 10:10).

The Bible provides deep insight into the essentiality of the salvation to the humanity and process by which the same could be secured, i.e., through faith and baptism and furthered through good deeds and fellowship. The salvation in the fullest sense could be secured by undergoing the eschatological process.<sup>90</sup> It is an important ideology of Christian theology. Obviously, Paul is able to distinguish between his own case and the case of those who were apostles before him; as he recognizes that they have a very special

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90 Cf. Therath, "Salvation", 806-808.

place in the life of the Church. “The apparition of the Risen Lord to him made Paul an untiring preacher of Jesus’ death and resurrection, which gave hope to humanity and guaranteed every human being a similar resurrection from the dead (cf. 1 Thess 4:14; 2 Cor 4:14). That was part of the salvific (=redemptive) plan of God being accomplished through his Son, Jesus Christ.”<sup>91</sup> In other words, the door which the Jews shut was the door that opened to the Gentiles; and even that is not the end, because in course of time, there would be ‘one flock and one shepherd’, as the Lord did not limit his grace to any particular group.

#### **4.2.3. PAUL’S ZEALOUS WITNESS TO CHRIST AND HIS MISSION**

Paul maintained confidence in the power of the Lord for deliverance. Hence, quoting the Scriptures,<sup>92</sup> he proudly reiterated before his listeners that in all the turbulences, he would stand up to any conquerors, through the Lord who loved him” (cf. Rom 8:35-37). Paul acclaimed his trust in God’s love in Christ Jesus! Before king Agrippa he boldly stated, “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, king Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews; therefore, I beg of you to listen to me patiently” (Acts 26:2-3). Before him, Paul testified his religious background under which he had persecuted many people in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul also reported

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91 Kizhakkeyil, “Preface,” in *St Paul His Apostolate, Vision and Theology*, ed. Sebastian Kizhakkeyil. (Ujjain: ISA Darsan Kendra, 2001) 7-8, 8.

92 Psalm 44:22.

that he was directed to go to the Gentiles to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, by receiving forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus (cf. Acts 26:5-18). Agrippa was not in any way displeased with Paul's words; he believed in the innocence of the apostle."<sup>93</sup>

It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the majesty of his will. "By love, God has revealed Himself and gave Himself to man. He has thus provided the definitive, superabundant answer to the question that man asks himself about the meaning and purpose of his life."<sup>94</sup> His will was that men should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, and the Holy Spirit, and thus become sharers in the divine nature.

Paul was highly concerned about the divine commission bestowed on him by God. Paul reveals his mission and the revelation of God's plan for the universe before the Ephesians (cf. 3:10-13). It is Paul the apostle, the revealer of the mystery of Christ (cf. 3:4), who has unquestionable authority to call believers to lead a life worthy of their calling (cf. Eph 4:1).<sup>95</sup> Before them he emphatically addressed: "This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ for the sake of you Gentiles, for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and

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93 Grech, *Acts of The Apostles Explained*, 141.

94 The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New Delhi: Theological Publications in India, 1994). (Hereafter it will be cited as CCC).

95 Cf. Mac Donald, "Ephesians", 1680.

how mystery was made known to me by revelation” (Eph 3:1-4a). Thus, Paul made it known to the Gentiles that he had a commission of God for them and that they were the sharers of promise in Christ through the gospel and that grace was given to him to bring to them the news of the boundless riches of Christ.

Paul insists that it is by grace that we were saved. We have not earned salvation, nor could we have earned it. It is the gift of God, and our part is simply to accept it. Paul’s point of view is undeniably true.<sup>96</sup> To the Gentiles in Lystra and Athens, Paul spoke of events from general history such as the creation of the world and related themes. In Lystra, he cures a man who is crippled from birth. Even so, Paul was humble and meek. He vehemently prevented the crowd from worshipping him and Barnabas, and convinced them that it is to the living God to whom they should turn (cf. Acts 14: 8-15). In his speech, Paul contemplates on the great actions of God in favour of humanity as a whole. This he had done so by realizing that the listeners are pagans who have no knowledge of the God of Israel. Surely Paul might have introduced an inculturation strategy when he got into the mindset of the pagans without dilution of the gospel values. The gentiles could have recognized the living God from his gifts of rain and fruitful seasons. However, now that God has given Jesus as the Savior, pagan worship will not be tolerated (cf. Acts 17:30; 1 Cor 1:20-21)<sup>97</sup> and Paul emphasized that there is only one God who should be worshipped.

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96 Cf. William Barclay, *The Letter to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009) 20.

97 Cf. Joseph.A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Anchor Yale Bible (Doubleday, New York: Yale University Press, 1998) 1-664, 532.

While in Athens, Paul became deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols and the pagan worship associated with them. All the same, he preached the gospel to the Jews and those who feared God in the synagogue and even to anyone he happened to meet in the marketplace. Paul having proclaimed the good news about Jesus and the resurrection, Epicurean<sup>98</sup> and Stoic<sup>99</sup> philosophers alleged that he was a proclaimer of foreign divinities. So, they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and questioned him. Paul was bold enough to stand before Areopagus and address the Athenians, pointing out the fallacy of their worship and reading the inscription on the altar which showed that their worship was to an unknown god. Paul took the opportunity to explain that the God who made the world and everything in it, is the Lord of heaven and earth, who does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mortals, life and breath and all things (cf. Acts 17:23b-25).

At Corinth, Paul engaged himself busily in proclaiming the Word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah<sup>100</sup> is Jesus. Paul is fully convinced that according to the OT and in the Jewish view, a king is expected to be sent by God in the fullness of time; the ‘Messiah; the one who is ordained (Gen 49:10-12; Num 24:17; Isa 7:10-17; 9:1-7; 11:1-9; 9:6; 11:6-9; Mic 5:2-5; 5:2; 5:4; Jer 23:5-6; Ezek 17:22-24; 21:25-27; 34:23-24; 37:22, 24-25; 34:30; 37:28; 37:25;

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98 Cf. Therath, “Epicureans”, 168-169.

99 Cf. PHEME PERKINS, “Stoics”, in *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, eds. Paul J. Achtemeier et al. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2018) 1066.

100 Cf. Therath, “Messiah”, 723-727, 723, and 726.

Hag 2:21-23; and Zech 6:9-14; 9:9.10). In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as the Messiah (ordained). On the first part of the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus is seen to be hesitant to reveal his identity as the Messiah. Although Peter proclaims his faith before Jesus that He is the Messiah (Mk 8:29), Jesus sternly ordered him not to tell anyone about it and began to teach that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days to rise again. But at the end of the same Gospel Jesus declared before the Chief Priest that He is. (Mk 14:62). The NT presents Jesus as ‘God’s ordained’ (Lk 2:26, 9:20; 23:35; Acts 3: 18). ‘Son of God’ is a usage in the Gospel similar to ‘Messiah’ (Mt 16:16; 26:63; Mk 14:61; Lk 23:35). The usage of ‘Messiah’ (Christ) called Jesus is given in the Gospel of Mathew (1:16; 27:17, 22). Paul presents the glorified Jesus as the Lord in his epistles (Rom 1:4, Phil 2:11). Christ’s second coming is dealt with in the NT as the glorified coming of the Lord (1 Cor 11:26; 16:22; 1 Thess 4:17).

The proclamation of the Word has an important place in evangelization of peoples.<sup>101</sup> He affirmed to the Corinthians: “For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor 4:5). Invariably, the explicit proclamation of Jesus should have primacy in the whole

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101 Cf. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, promulgated 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1975, 18, [http://www.file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Evangelii%20Nuntiandi%20\(December%208,%201975\)%20\\_%20Paul%20VI.html](http://www.file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Evangelii%20Nuntiandi%20(December%208,%201975)%20_%20Paul%20VI.html) [accessed on February 3, 2018] (hereafter referred to as EN).

process of missionary activity.<sup>102</sup> The proclamation of the good news is the proclamation of Jesus himself. “There can be no true evangelization without the explicit proclamation of Jesus as the Lord.”<sup>103</sup> Thus the ultimate goal of evangelization is proclamation of Jesus as the Lord and Savior.

Pope Paul VI stated “there is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises and the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, is not proclaimed.”<sup>104</sup> It is relevant to mention here that Jesus, the Son of God is the subject matter of evangelization, because in Jesus there is the fulfilment of the law and He is the embodiment of God’s will for salvation. Paul vehemently adduced before the Romans as to why he is bound to proclaim the gospel to those who are new to it. “But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?” (Rom 10:14-16a). All that shows clearly that Paul is seriously concerned of his call and all the more, he is zealous of his call for proclamation of Jesus as the Lord and Savior. The immediate outcome of such an action of Paul is found in the conversion of Crispus. “Crispus, the official of the

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102 Cf. Shaji Jerman, “Church of Mission to Missionary Church”, in *Mission and Conversion towards a New Ecclesiology*, Dr. Selvister Ponnunmuthan and Shaji Jerman eds. (Aluva: Asian Trading Corporation, 2008) 100.

103 Pope John Paul II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, (Mumbai: The Pauline Sisters Bombay Society, 2006) no. 9 (hereafter referred to as E.A).

104 E.N. 22.

synagogue at Corinth, became a believer in the Lord, together with his entire household; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul became believers and were baptized (cf. Acts 18:8).

Emphasizing the significance of becoming new creations in Christ, Paul stated before the Ephesians that they were once without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus they who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Paul also stressed the fact that Jesus is their peace and that in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between the Jews and the Gentiles. Paul has made it clear: “the Gentiles have been admitted to the spiritual blessings together with the Jews” (Eph 2:13). He goes on to teach that in these blessings the Gentiles are not of less eminence than the Jews themselves and that they enjoy a completely equal access to Christ’s blessings.”<sup>105</sup>

According to Paul, he never boasts of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to him, and he to the world. (cf. Gal 6:14). Thus Paul made it clear that the new creation is not possible without the crucifixion of the self to the world and the world to the self. Here, again his sense of participation in Christ is powerful, but the dominant thought is of participation in Christ crucified.<sup>106</sup> To Paul, the command of love fulfills the whole law because it fulfils the spirit of the law and in

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105 Mathew L. Lamb, *Commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians by St Thomas Aquinas* (Albany, New York: Magi Books, Inc., 1965), 110.

106 Cf. James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 998.

the situation of loving the neighbour, the command of love indicates what things really matter and what can be treated as nonessentials (αδιάφορα).<sup>107</sup> Therefore, faith operating through love is how the commandments of God are to be kept. Paul instructed the Gentiles that they should live as imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave up himself for us, as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

## **5. PAUL'S ZEALOUS AND GLORIOUS FINISHING**

The victorious journey of Paul on mission endeavour finally ended up with his martyrdom for Christ. Paul had a wish to visit Rome, which he could accomplish by the grace of the Lord, in spite of many hurdles. The journey of Paul to Rome through the rough sea accompanied by soldiers was a very tedious one. Throughout the sailing he had to face considerable difficulties, but he could gracefully overcome all the obstacles miraculously and reach Rome by 60 AD. While Paul was in Rome, he was anticipating imminent end to his own life. Even at that time, he was more concerned to proclaim the gospel for the salvation of souls. Paul courageously stated that in his body, Christ will be exalted always, whether in life or in death (Phil 1:21). This is the sum total of Pauline spirituality.

His fair-weather friends deserted him. Luke remains steadfast. Paul asks Timothy to come to his relief and to bring Mark with him and was fully prepared for his martyrdom. In the words of Blessed James Alberione and Blessed Timothy: God granted a great grace

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107 Cf. J. L. Jaquette, *Discerning What Counts: The Function of the adiaphora Topos in Paul's Letters*, SBLDS 146 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995) 3.

to the Church when he gave to her and to the world the Apostle St Paul. He is a miracle of doctrine, a prodigy of zeal and a hero in every virtue. Converted by a special favour, he worked more than any other apostle as is evident from the events reflected in historical records. “Paul expressed, presented and represented Christ actively, vividly and fruitfully making himself a model for every Christian to follow, and his form is made after the original form, who is Christ himself, unto his martyrdom”.<sup>108</sup>

The figure of St Paul towers far above his earthly life and his death; in fact, he left us an extraordinary spiritual heritage. He too as a true disciple of Christ became a sign of contradiction. Essentially, we still have before us the luminous figure of apostle and an extremely fruitful and profound Christian thinker, from whose approach everyone can benefit. In one of the panegyrics, St John Chrysostom made an original comparison between Paul and Noah. He says: Paul “did not put beams together to build an ark; rather, instead of joining planks of wood, he wrote letters and thus rescues from the billows, not two, three or five members of his own family, but the entire power of acumen that was on the point of perishing (Paneg.1,5).”<sup>109</sup> According to Pope Benedict XVI, Paul appears almost as a new founder of Christianity. It is true that in St Paul the centrality of the kingdom of God, crucial for the proclamation of Jesus, was transformed into the centrality of Christology, whose crucial point is the Paschal Mystery. It is from the Paschal Mystery

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108 Kaitholil, *Encounter with St. Paul*, 142.(Introduction to *A month with St Paul* - By James Alberione)

109 Pope Benedict XVI, “St. Paul’s Martyrdom and Heritage”, in *General Audience*, 2, 4

(of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection) that the sacraments of baptism and of the Eucharist derive, as a permanent presence of this mystery, from which the Body of Christ grows and the Church is built.<sup>110</sup>

In short, the significance of Paul to the world is twofold: he was chosen by Christ to be a special apostle; and he was a man of utmost love because he had seen the glory and could communicate the glory which he had seen. Paul, who was 'set apart for the gospel of God' (Rom 1:1), declares that he became all things to all men that he might save all.<sup>111</sup> Martyrdom of this great missionary of the Lord, who zealously declares having finished the race and kept the faith, bears a supreme witness to the faithfulness and love for Christ, especially for the Gentiles. Paul was martyred perhaps about 66 AD. Tradition reports that he was beheaded.

## CONCLUSION

The enlightened Paul realized that the Lord had called him by name and entrusted him with a noble mission to be discharged in the true knowledge of Christ Jesus. Such a realization transformed him into a new creation in Christ whereby the persecutor in Paul became a zealous proclaimer of the living Christ. The central theme of the gospel as proclaimed by Paul is that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who resurrected from the dead and in whom there is life

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110 Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, "St. Paul's Martyrdom and Heritage", in *General Audience*, 3.

111 Cf. Sklba, "Paul, St.", 464.

and salvation to the mankind and that those who believe in Jesus and live in Jesus will have life in his name. It is a true and masterly proclamation that every missionary would wish to accomplish, in fulfilment of the mission envisioned in the word of God (cf. Jn 20:31).

If we look back, Paul's zealous Jewish background, his exceptional training in ancestral faith, his Hellenic culture, his Roman citizenship and his rebellious approach towards Christianity, followed by the decisive divine encounter with the Risen Lord moulded him in the hands of the Lord into a chosen missionary and a staunch witness of Christ who could carry the name of the Lord to the frontiers of the civilized world. Here, one can see that there is a purpose in everything that the Lord does and that at the helm of all things is the unseen pilot, God Himself. With his fearless approach to the truth and the conferment of God's grace on him, Paul could boldly bear witness to Jesus in Rome as well. As a result of his untiring efforts, Christianity flourished wherever he proclaimed and a large number of people received faith in Jesus in the first century itself. Through his ardent missionary model, Paul became a zealous apostle for the Gentiles. He established Churches in places far and wide and laid strong theological foundation for Christianity.

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE ZEALOUS MISSION ENDEAVOURS OF ST. PAUL

### INTRODUCTION

A faithful missionary is always on the way of conversion and renewal in Christ. Such a missionary is able to enter into the differing circumstances of people's lives, their emotions, to understand their struggles and to share their joys and worries. "St. Paul is one of the greatest Christian Missionaries of all time."<sup>1</sup> Christianity considers Paul as a true lover of souls. As a result of his Christ-experience, Paul got an insight into the mystery of Christ and the salvific and redemptive value of Christ's death and resurrection (cf. Gal 1:16; 3:13; 1 Cor 1:22-25). Those who with God's help have welcomed Christ's call, and freely responded to it, are urged on by the love of Christ to proclaim the good news everywhere in the world. This treasure, received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All who are faithful to Christ are called to hand it over from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Kizhakkeyil, *The Pauline Epistles An Exegetical Study* (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2011) 7.

2 Cf. CCC 3.

1. Here the aim is to present the zealous Mission endeavours of Paul in three sections. In the first section, the zeal of Paul in his missionary journeys is distinctly presented verifying his first, second and third missionary journeys which he had undertaken with boundless enthusiasm for the proclamation of the gospel. The second section explains Paul's concern for the communities he had nurtured by preaching the Gospel and witnessing Jesus in synagogues and other communities. The third section reveals how Paul inspired the communities through his letters and extended concern towards pastoral care of the Church he had planted. He actively encouraged lay leaders by associating them for the achievement of the mission goals.

## **1. MISSIONARY JOURNEYS: EXPRESSION OF PAUL'S ZEAL**

Divine grace compelled Paul into the service of Christ. His response was one of vivid faith, whereby he dared to confess before the early Church that "Jesus is the Lord" (1 Cor 12:12; cf. Rom 10:9; Phil 2:11). That experience, manifested in a creative act in Paul's mind, gave him an extraordinary impetus to go to the ends of the known earth and proclaim the mystery of Christ. This starts his missionary journey to witness the resurrected Lord and His gospel. Paul realized the soteriological (=the theological doctrine of salvation by Jesus) value of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah and that the Messianic age had already begun. This introduced a new perspective into his view of salvation history. He looked back to the death and resurrection of Jesus as the inauguration

of the new age, an age in which he looked forward to his coming in glory with Christ, his own parousia (=second coming).<sup>3</sup> Clearly, Paul's own missionary experience was uniquely transformed by his insight into the mystery of Christ that he acquired out of his zeal for the gospel and his determination to spread the good news to the ends of the known earth in line with the great task entrusted to him by the Lord.

On the number of mission journeys performed by Paul, the scholars differ in their views. Using Pauline letters alone, one can construct a surprisingly full picture of Paul's ministry, but the evidence falls short of providing a full chronology.<sup>4</sup> "According to T.H. Campbell, the sequence of Paul's movements from his conversion to his arrival in Rome is confirmed by data in Paul's own letters as convincingly shown."<sup>5</sup> The classic number of Paul's missions is three; but it is a real question whether Paul was ever conscious of being on simply three missionary journeys, or whether even Luke so intended them. Since the transition from Mission II to Mission III (according to Acts 18:22-23) is very abrupt, one can ask whether they were meant to be distinguished. At any rate, for the sake of convenience one can continue to speak of Paul's

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3 Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed., Raymond E. Brown, et al. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970) 800-805, 803-804.

4 Cf. L.C.A. Alexander, "Chronology of Paul", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 117-123, 119.

5 JBL 74 [1955] 80-87.

three journeys.<sup>6</sup> Broderick also affirms the fact that Paul made three extensive journeys around the eastern Mediterranean Sea.<sup>7</sup> Based on the available texts, this aspect can be relied on.

‘The Acts of the Apostles’ reveals that it was in Antioch that the evangelization to the Gentiles began on a large scale. Apostle Paul had a trade, that of the tent-maker (cf. Acts 18:3), but he was not a businessman in the usual sense. Rather, it was a competence that made it possible for him to work in various places and maintain himself (cf. Acts 20:33-35).

1.1. Amazingly, Paul was well supportive for his mission. Therefore, he could undertake his missionary work in lands where no Christian would come forward to give assistance to him until he had been effective among them. The mission journeys were purposeful and very much oriented to glorifying God and spreading the gospel. His epistles reveal his trust in Christ and how much zealous he was in his mission.

## **1.1. THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

1.1.1. Acts 13:4; 14:28 give an account of the events leading to his first missionary journey and the way God used him for his mission and the kingdom of God. His devotion and contribution for the mission endeavor amongst the Gentiles is remarkably

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6 Cf. Richard J Dhillon, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Acts of the Apostles”, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed., Raymond E. Brown, et al. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970) 165-222, 191.

7 Cf. Broderick, “St. Paul”, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia – Revised and Updated Edition* (Nashville, New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986) 463-464.

appreciable. In the Church at Antioch, there were prophets and teachers. “Antioch shows itself to be a church that has not only received the gospel but is also playing its part in the spread of the gospel.”<sup>8</sup> While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “set apart for me Barnabas” and Saul appreciated the same (cf. 1 Cor 9:6; 2 Tim 4:11). The first missionary journey of Paul was during a three-year period between 47– 49 AD. Paul and Barnabas set out from Antioch and sailed from Seleucia, the Antiochene port and reached Cyprus. They preached at Salamis and Paphos. From Paphos they sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, which was a low-lying coastal province and they did not preach there, because it did not suit Paul’s health. They moved through inland and came to Antioch in Pisidia.

When things grew too dangerous there, they went ninety miles further onto Iconium. Once again, their lives were threatened, and they moved on to Lystra about 20 miles away. After suffering a very serious and dangerous attack there, they went to Derbe, the site of which has not been definitely identified. From Derbe, they started for home, going back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia on the way and preached the good news and witnessed Jesus the Risen Lord. After having preached in Perga in Pamphylia this time, they boarded a ship from Attalia, the principal port of Pamphylia, and sailed via Seleucia to Antioch.<sup>9</sup> St. Paul gave himself to the gospel, with his entire daily life; that is 24 hours a day! He performed his

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8 Justine Taylor, “Acts of the Apostles”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1527.

9 Cf. Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 113-114.

ministry with faithfulness and joy, so that he might by all means save some.” (cf. 1 Cor 9:22).<sup>10</sup>

### **1.1.1. THE EVANGELIZATION STRATEGY OF PAUL**

The evangelization strategy used by apostle Paul was: first he addresses the local Jewish community, as the overseas Jewish communities were scattered all over the Roman Empire and then proceeds to evangelize the Gentiles. The methodology of evangelization was to use the Old Testament as the starting point to lead the Jewish audience to accept Jesus as the fulfilment of the prophecies.<sup>11</sup> He brought them the good news, telling them that what God had promised to their ancestors, God has now fulfilled through the resurrection of Jesus (cf. Acts 13:32-33a). Keeping these objectives as the prime motif, Paul and Barnabas started from Seleucia (the port of Antioch) (cf. Acts 13:4) and sailed to Salamis, on the island of Cyprus (cf. Acts 13:4-5). As the Lord opens the door for proclamation, Paul considered that the central point of proclamation shall necessarily be the salvific (=redemptive) work of the Lord, accomplished in Jesus Christ, in the fullness of time.

Paul had no hesitation to tell that when God’s fulfilment came in Jesus, it was not immediately recognized. Although people, in their folly, rejected and crucified Jesus Christ, God could not be defeated. The resurrection of Jesus is the proof of the undefeatable purpose and power of God. History is neither repetitive nor aimless; it looks forward to what must come in God’s purpose (cf. Acts

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10 Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, “Transformed by Grace, at Service of Christ”, 4.

11 Cf. “*St. Paul and his Missionary Journeys*”, 1.<http://eoc.dolf.org.hk/livingev/stPaul.htm> [accessed on December 25, 2016].

13:16-41).<sup>12</sup> This “explicit proclamation of Jesus should have primacy in the whole process of missionary activity; there can be no true evangelization without explicit proclamation of Jesus as the Lord.”<sup>13</sup> The relevance of this thought is dealt with below:

“The Resurrection is a fundamental fact, almost an accepted axiom (cf. 1Cor 15:12), on the basis of which Paul formulated his Christian proclamation of truth (*kerygma*) : Jesus who was crucified and who thus manifested God’s immense love for man, is risen again, and is alive among us”.<sup>14</sup> The Church must be a missionary because she believes in God’s universal plan of salvation.<sup>15</sup> It is important to understand the relationship between the proclamation of the resurrection as Paul formulates it and its proclamation among pre-Pauline Christian communities. “Here indeed we can see the importance of the tradition that preceded the apostle and that he, with great respect and care, desires to pass on in his turn.”<sup>16</sup>

On Sabbath days Paul and Barnabas used to visit the local synagogue and after reading the law and the prophets, the officials of the synagogue persuaded them to deliver a message and they invariably made use of the opportunity to proclaim the Lord (cf. Acts 13: 13-16). Paul addressed the Israelites by name and spoke as to how the prophecies were fulfilled in Christ Jesus in whom there is salvation for all. This was repeated in subsequent days also in the

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12 Cf. Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122-123.

13 EA.19.

14 Pope Benedict XVI, “Theology of the Cross, not a Theory”, 1.

15 Cf. CCC 851.

16 Pope Benedict XVI, “Theology of the Cross, not a Theory”, General Audience, (5<sup>th</sup> November, 2008), <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/b16stPaulind.htm> [accessed June 23, 2017].1.

synagogue (cf. Acts 13:16–45). “It was necessary that the Messiah be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord at once as king and priest, and also as prophet” (cf. Isa 11:2; 61:1; Zech 4:14; 6:13; Lk 4:16-21). Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of the priest, the prophet and the king.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, both Paul and Barnabas summarized the message by saying “it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. If you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).

When the Gentiles heard the gospel, they became glad and praised the word of the Lord; and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers. Thus the word of God spread throughout the region (cf. Acts 13: 48-49). The Jews stirred up the people against them, Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium (cf. Mk 6:11; Lk 9:5). Here it is necessary to remember the following words in the Acts: the disciples were filled with joy and the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 13:52); “by his death and resurrection, Jesus is constituted in glory as Lord and Christ (cf. Acts 2:36). From his fullness, he poured out the Holy Spirit on the apostles and the Church.”<sup>18</sup>

### **1.1.2. THE LORD CONFIRMS THE PREACHING BY SIGNS AND WONDERS**

Throughout Paul’s mission endeavours, there were many instances in which the Lord affirms the preaching with His grace,

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17 Cf. CCC 436

18 CCC 746.

granting signs and wonders through the hands of the apostles. A few of such instances can be seen in Acts 14. For instance, in Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went together to the synagogue and preached with such power that a great number of both Jews and Gentiles believed. The apostles stayed there a long time, preaching boldly of the grace of the Lord. The Lord proved their message true by giving them power to do miraculous signs and wonders. A mob of Gentiles and Jews, along with their leaders, decided to attack and stone them. When the apostles heard of it, they moved to the surrounding places and there they preached the good news there (Acts 14:1, 3-7). The crowds were so astonished at the apostles' power to perform miracles, that they started adoring them as gods. The missionaries, who were just kicked out of the cities as evil men, were now adored as gods.

As Paul and Barnabas rendered missionary endeavours, it was their goal to highlight glory to the Lord through their words and deeds as their mission endeavours had progressed and the Lord worked wonders through their hands. In Lystra,<sup>19</sup> a man with crippled leg from birth was listening as Paul preached, and Paul noticed him and realized he had faith to be healed. So, Paul called him in a loud voice, to stand up. Then the man jumped to his feet and started walking. When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language: "The gods have come down to us in human form (cf. Acts 14:8-9)." When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes (Mk 14:63) and rushed

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19 Cf. Hayford, "Acts", in *Hayfords' Bible Handbook*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 337.

out into the crowd, shouting, “Friends, why are you doing this?” Here Paul teaches that blasphemy<sup>20</sup> is a grave sin.

In Pauline Epistles, blasphemy is referred to in Rom 2:24 and 1 Tim 1:13. In the Gospel of Mathew, Jesus’ Words are quoted “Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven, but whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come (Mt 12:31-32; Mk 3:28; Lk 12:10). The tendency to label the goodness inspired of Holy Spirit as the outcome of evil spirits is an evil action, which will not be excused. According to Luke, those who decline the Holy Spirit decline Jesus Himself. “Blasphemy is contrary to the respect due to God and his holy name. It in itself is a grave sin.”<sup>21</sup> Even after doing wonders in the name of the Lord, Paul and Barnabas had no hesitation to admit before their listeners that they were mortals just like the listeners themselves, and advised them that they should refrain from their worthless things and turn towards the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that in them (cf. Acts 14: 8-15).

### **1.1.3. PAUL THE MISSIONARY: FEARLESS IN PERSECUTION**

Even though persecution comes unexpectedly, being a missionary of Christ, Paul was never scared of persecution on the way

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20 Cf. Therath, “Blasphemy”, 436.

21 CCC 2148.

of his mission. For instance, quite a few Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and instigated the crowds to turn into a murderous mob. They stoned and dragged Paul out of the city, apparently dead (cf. Acts 14:19). But as the believers stood around him, he got up and went back into the city. After preaching the good news and making many disciples, he went with Barnabas to Derbe, on the following day, to visit the communities there. The missionaries never lost courage. Instead, they encouraged the believers to affirm their faith, saying that it is through many persecutions that they would enter the kingdom of God (cf. Acts 14:22b).

After appointing elders in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe. “After two years on mission, the team returns to the community in Antioch where from they had started the journey. They report how the door to faith is wide open to the Gentiles.”<sup>22</sup> When they returned to Antioch, they called the church together and told them about all what God had done with them, and how God had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. And they stayed there with the disciples for a long time. Thus, after completing the missionary journey at Attalia, Paul returned to Antioch within a span of almost three years.

## **1.2. THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

The second missionary journey (cf. Act 15”36-18:22) of Paul was during 50-52 A.D. It begins with Silas (Silvanus) and later continues with Timothy (Acts 16:3), instead of Barnabas (15:36-40). They were the companions of Paul.<sup>23</sup> The Journeys performed

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22 Hayford’s, “Acts”, 337.

23 Cf. Purdy, A.C, “Paul the Apostle”, 686.

by Paul in the second journey are: from Antioch in Syria to Cilicia, Derbe, and Lystra; and from there into Phrygia, (N) Galatia, Mysia and Troas; after a dream-vision, he crosses into Europe: to Neapolis in Macedonia, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Beroea.<sup>24</sup> From there, he went to Athens and then to Corinth, where he spent about eighteen months. Then he travelled to Jerusalem through Ephesus and finally back to Antioch, his starting point. The great step forward is that with that journey, Paul's activity passed beyond Asia Minor and entered Europe.<sup>25</sup> Paul's evangelization plan was to establish a strong local Christian community in each place he went, and then later revisit these communities or keep in contact with them through letters.

### **1.2.1. PAUL LED BY THE LORD IN UNCERTAINTIES**

It is quite possible to have uncertainties even in the life of a zealous missionary like Paul. But one could see that the Lord enabled him to proceed still further by providing heavenly insight by His own means. For instance, subsequent to his tour to the churches of Syria and Cilicia, he revisited the Churches in the regions of Derbe, Lystra and Iconium. There followed a period when he could not see the way ahead clearly. Passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.<sup>26</sup> During the night Paul had a vision. Having seen

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24 Cf. Richard J. Dhillon and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Acts of the Apostles", in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds., Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970) 165-214, 197.

25 Cf. Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 113-114.

26 Cf. Mary K Milne, "Troas", in *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, eds. Paul J. Achtemeier et al. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2018) 1179.

that vision, they immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia,<sup>27</sup> with the conviction that God had called them to proclaim the good news to them (cf. Acts 16: 6-10). “The spread of Christian faith in Macedonia (and thus again to Europe, although Acts does not highlight the continent) is presented almost as a manifest destiny; and in retrospect, a tremendous contribution to two thousand years of European Christianity could justify that judgment.”<sup>28</sup> Evidently, Paul sustained his efforts through trust in God. It is clear that the providence of the mission is from above and that it is the Holy Spirit who directs and inspires the mission endeavours in right direction from time to time.

### **1.2.2. TIMOTHY, THE RELIABLE COMPANION OF PAUL**

During the course of Paul’s visit to Derbe and Lystra, Paul met the young disciple Timothy in Lystra. He was the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer. His father was of Greek origin. In Timothy, Paul found a reliable companion. He was well spoken of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium, so Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him. Paul took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek (cf. Acts 16:1-3). Timothy’s circumcision made some turbulence in the community since Paul was not adamant about it.<sup>29</sup> The reason for circumcision of Timothy was that Timothy was a

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27 Cf. Robert A Wild, “Macedonia”, in *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, eds. Paul J. Achtemeier et al. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2018) 639.

28 Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 310.

29 Cf. Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 140.

Jew and Paul had never said that circumcision was not necessary for Jews. It was the Gentiles who were freed from the ceremonies of the Jewish way of life. The strategy adopted by Paul in the case of circumcision of Timothy was noteworthy as he had to move among the Jews to win them for Christ.

### **1.2.3. PAUL'S MISSIONARY HARVEST IN PHILIPPI**

To proclaim in Philippi Paul sailed to Samothrace, Neapolis and from there to Philippi. After proclamation in that city for some days, on the Sabbath day they went outside for prayer and happened to meet a woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, who was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. She and her household were baptized; she urged them to stay at their home and she prevailed upon them (cf. Acts 16:13-15). "The extraordinary thing about Paul's work in Philippi is that an amazing cross-section of the population was won for Christ."<sup>30</sup>

### **1.2.4. PAUL'S REMOVAL OF AN EXORCIST'S EVIL SPIRIT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

In Philippi, one day, as Paul and Silas were going to the place of prayer, they met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination (cf. Acts 16:16). As Paul turned to the spirit and commanded in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, it came out at that very moment. At such an incident, her owners were enraged with Paul because she was their source of income. They seized Paul and Silas and dragged

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30 Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 139 and 162 and Cf. 2. Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology*, 144.

them to the magistrates who ordered severe flogging and threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely in the innermost cell, fastening their feet in the stocks.

### **1.2.5. WORSHIPPING THE LORD IN DISTRESS SAVES ALL**

While Paul and Silas were in prison in chains, they praised the Lord by singing.<sup>31</sup> By about midnight, the Lord worked miracle through His mighty hands. The story is that at midnight Paul and Silas were praying. They sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there occurred an earthquake, so violent that even the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's chains were unfastened. Jailer having thought that the prisoners might have escaped, planned even to end up his own life as a matter of his guilt. But, to his surprise, Paul and Silas did not even attempt to escape from the prison in spite of the fact that the doors of the prison remained open as a result of the earthquake and the chains were unfastened. The Jailer having realized that there is great holiness and heavenly power with those prisoners over the incident, surprisingly asked Paul, "Sir, what shall I do to be saved?" Paul replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:25-34).

Thus the entire family of the Jailor got baptized without delay. Belief is not merely an action of brain. But the same is a reality affecting the personality of the person as a whole. The belief of

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31 Cf. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 310. The miraculous opening of the prison echoes scenes of Peter's miraculous release from prison and shows that God is with his emissary to the Gentiles.

Abraham the forefather was reckoned to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6; Rom 4). Israelites, being the descendants of Abraham believed in the Lord when they had succeeded in crossing the Red Sea (Ex 14:31). But later on their belief declined and even got diminished (Num 14:16; Deut 32:30). Consequent to their becoming disloyal to the Lord's covenant, they were subjected to foreign invasion and to remain exile for long. Yet a few of them were kept loyal and protected by the Lord (Hab 2:4). In the teachings of Jesus emphasis is given to belief or trust in the Lord. In the eyes of John, to those who believe in the Son of Man will have eternal life (Jn 3:15-16, 36; 6:10, 47). Seeing the first miracle of Jesus, his disciples believed in him (Jn 2:11). John wrote the Gospel so that people may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing people may have life in his name (Jn 20:30). Yet quite a few Jews did not believe in him and declined the truth (Jn 6:36; 64; 7:48; 10:25-26; 12:31).<sup>32</sup>

The Lord worked through Paul by affirming the word of God and strengthened him to be more courageous. It transpires that Paul and Silas rejoiced at the presence of Jesus Christ even in the prison and in the darkness of midnight. "The deliverance of Paul and Silas at Philippi was a rebuke to those who instigated their imprisonment on false charges and at the same time a means of bringing salvation to the jailor and his family" (cf. Acts 16:25-34).<sup>33</sup> As they glorified the Lord in their imprisonment, the Lord worked through their

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32 Cf. Therath, "Faith, Belief", 879-880

33 Cf. Everest F. Harrison, *Interpreting Acts – The Expanding Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Academie Books, 1986) 446.

hands and paved the way for the salvation of the Jailer and his family, apart from their own release. Paul never had a grudge in his nature. He could preach to the person who had chained him into the stocks.<sup>34</sup> Eventually, the Magistrate came down and apologized and took them out of the city. From the prison they went to Lydia's home where they could meet the brothers and sisters who were eagerly awaiting their return. (cf. Acts 16:39-40).

### **1.2.6. RIOT AND EXPULSIONS HELPS TO EXCEL**

Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and Silas eventually reached Thessalonica, where they proclaimed Jesus in the Synagogue (cf. Acts 17:1-3) as usual. "Paul runs into the same kind of Jewish opposition that marred his mission in Asia Minor before the Jerusalem conference. The list of charges against Paul and his supporters in Acts 17:6-7 resembles the list of charges against Jesus before Pilate. – that the missionaries ("turning the world upside down"), acting against the emperor by proclaiming another king, namely Jesus the Messiah (v.7; cf. Luke 23:2)."<sup>35</sup> Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar" (cf. Acts 17; 5). Paul and Silas were smuggled out of Thessalonica by night. They went to Beroea, an important town of Macedonia. There they could get an excellent reception from the Jewish community, who eagerly received the missionaries' messages, the reliability of which

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34 Cf. Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 148.

35 Justine Taylor, "Acts of the Apostles", in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2019) 1581-1621, 1608.

they affirmed with the scriptures daily and got satisfied. Many of them believed, including many women of high standing. Thus their mission endeavours excelled in Beroea according to God's plan.

### **1.2.7. PAUL'S RELIANCE IN GOD'S MERCY AND FORTITUDE IN HIS MINISTRY**

As the Jews of Thessalonica came and stirred up the crowds, Paul had to leave the place (cf. Acts 17:10-14). After visiting Athens, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, came from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius I (Nero, Emperor of Rome, AD 41-54) had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them; and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them, and together they worked as tentmakers. To Paul, it was a matter of routine that every Sabbath day he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince the Jews and the Greeks. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was pre-occupied with proclamation of the word, testifying before the Jews that the long awaited Messiah is Jesus. It is here in Corinth that Crispus, the leader of the Jewish community, became a believer together with all his household (cf. 1 Cor 1:14), despite the hostility of some in the synagogue, and that many others believed and were baptized.<sup>36</sup> Paul believed that it is by God's mercy that they were engaged in Lord's ministry. They did not lose heart, for it is the Lord who works wonders, and with the Lord nothing is impossible.

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36 Cf. Taylor, "Acts of the Apostles", 1536.

## **1.2.8. PAUL STRENGTHENED BY THE LORD IN DISTRESS**

Throughout his mission journeys, the Holy Spirit inspired Paul and guided invariably in all critical junctures. Typically, while at the house of Titius Justus, a worshipper of God at Corinth, the Lord said to Paul in a vision in night, “Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people” (Acts 18:9b-10). Confidently, Paul stayed further for one year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. “The Jews conspired against Paul. As a result he was arrested and brought before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia. Notably, he refused to interfere in the religious controversy of the Jews (Acts 18, 12-17).”<sup>37</sup> After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. (cf. Acts 18:1-18). When they reached Ephesus,<sup>38</sup> Paul left them there, but first he himself went into the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews. When they asked him to stay longer, he declined; and took leave of them. Then he set sail from Ephesus (cf. Acts 18:19-21). When Paul landed at Caesarea (*seiseria*), he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the Church, and then went down to Antioch (cf. Acts 18:22). This mission was fulfilled at Caesarea and Paul returned to Antioch.

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37 Ammanathukunnel, “St. Paul His Life and Apostolate”, 27.

38 Cf. Therath, “Ephesus”, 169.

### **1.3. THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

Paul undertook his third missionary journey during 53 – 57 AD (cf. Acts 18:23-21:16). From Jerusalem, he went down to Antioch. Having spent some time at Antioch, Paul departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia (*gelashe*) and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples (cf. Acts 18: 22-23). In Acts 18:24 we see Apollos. His name is mentioned in Paul's letters several times (1 Cor 3:4-6; 16:12; Tit 3:13). Apollos is introduced as a Jew from Alexandria who is learned, eloquent, and powerful in scriptures, capable enough to interpret their true spiritual sense.

#### **1.3.1. PAUL'S EPHEBUS MINISTRY WITH THE SHOWER OF HOLY SPIRIT**

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions of the place and came to Ephesus. In Ephesus, he found some disciples who were ignorant of the existence of the Spirit of God (cf. Acts 19:3). Hearing Paul's words, they were baptized in the name of Jesus. When Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied; altogether there were about twelve of them (cf. Acts 19:6-7). In the words of Taylor: "The resemblance to the first Pentecost is underlined by the remark that they were twelve in number."<sup>39</sup> Evidently, the disciples so visited by Paul in Ephesus, were disciples of John the Baptist. There was the outpouring of the Spirit on them, as a special Christian experience, when the apostles laid their hands on them and they were received into the Church (cf. Mk 1:8; Jn 7:39). Pertinently, John baptized

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39 Taylor, "Acts of the Apostles", 1580- 1619, 1537.

with water the baptism of repentance since they were to receive the Lord's shower of Holy Spirit, as a gift from Jesus.<sup>40</sup> Paul entered the synagogue and for three months spoke out boldly, and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God.

### **1.3.2. THE LORD TAKES CARE THE MINISTRY** (In Christ, Every Thing is for Good)

Subsequent to Paul's deliberations in the synagogue of Ephesus, when some Jews stubbornly refused to believe and spoke evil of the "people of the Way" before the congregation, he left them, taking the disciples with him, and argued daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. That turned out to be a blessing in disguise. His open deliberations in the lecture hall continued for two years and as a result, the word of the Lord spread throughout the region ("Asia") among both Jews and Gentiles (cf. Acts 19:8-10).<sup>41</sup> Such an incident also reaffirms Paul's conviction that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to the purpose of God (cf. Rom 8:28).

While in Ephesus, Paul persisted in his ideologies and at the same time he was very considerate in managing the challenges he faced. God did extraordinary miracles<sup>42</sup> through Paul. Even his handkerchiefs or aprons brought healing to the sick and deliverance

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40 Cf. Dillon, Fitzmyer, "Acts of the Apostles", in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 165-214, 202.

41 Cf. Taylor, "Acts of the Apostles", 1611.

42 Cf. Therath, "Miracles", 62-63, and 62. God's power or action revealed in the most unnatural way are treated as miracles in the Holy Bible (Deut 13:1; Ex 15:11; Ps 89:5-6; Dan 3:32-33; Jer 32:20)

to people possessed by evil spirits. Many of them became believers by repentance and confession, and were transformed as new creations in Christ. Those who practised black magic and sorcery collected their books and burned them publicly, costing around fifty thousand silver coins. Thus the word of the God grew mightily and prevailed (cf. Acts 19:11-20). “Nothing can more definitely show the reality of the change than the fact that in the superstition-ridden city of Ephesus, people were willing to burn their books and the charms which were so profitable to them.”<sup>43</sup> In all, the Lord worked through the hands of the Apostles for His glory. In Ephesus, Paul sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, while he himself stayed for some time longer in Asia. About that time no little disturbance broke out concerning the ‘Way.’

### **1.3.3. POWER OF SATAN DEFEATED BY THE NAME OF JESUS**

As the power of the mission endeavours emanated from the power of the Holy Spirit, the mighty name of Jesus overwhelmed the power of Satan. In Ephesus, Demetrius, the leading member of the guild of manufacturers of silver objects stirred-up the fellow members of the guild as Paul’s preaching focussed against the worship of images, which would affect their income, the prestige of the local temple and the goddess there (cf. Acts 19:23-40).<sup>44</sup> Although crowds gathered against him, Paul was not afraid of it. In fact, he wished to go into the crowd, but the disciples would

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43 Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 162.

44 Cf. Taylor, “Acts of the Apostles”, 1534.

not let him. Even some officials of the province of Asia, who were friendly to him, sent him a message urging him not to venture into the theatre. Meanwhile, people gathered there got confused and dismissed the assembly (cf. Acts 19:30-41) by God's providence. What was needed to overcome the powers of Satan was the name of Jesus, announced by the Church. Paul's mission to the Gentiles reached its zenith at Ephesus. Having withdrawn with his disciples from the unbelieving Jews of that city, he began to extend his mission to the province of Asia, (a part of modern Turkey), in and around Ephesus, and this he did with considerable success. Miracles were many. Judaism became too powerless to oppose the spread of the Christian mission. After due consideration, Paul intends going to Rome where the definitive transfer of the gospel from Judaism to the pagan world will be achieved (cf. Acts 19:8-22).<sup>45</sup>

To sum up, Paul began his third missionary journey from Antioch as before. He followed the same route similar to the previous one. The first part of the third journey is by land. First, he reached Tarsus, then Iconium and reached Ephesus. Staying there for two years he taught the Ephesians very successfully and it attracted a reaction in the form of a riot against Paul. Then he left for Macedonia (in north Greece) and the other areas of Greece.

#### **1.4. THE RETURN FROM THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

From Philippi in Macedonia, Paul accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus, Aristarchus Secundus, Gaius and Timothy sailed off,

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45 Cf. Grech, *Acts of the Apostles Explained*, 1-148.

after the days of unleavened bread, and in five days joined in Troas (near the city of Troy), where they stayed for seven days (cf. Acts 20:6).

#### **1.4.1. MIRACLE OF RESUSCITATION BY PAUL IN TROAS**

The Apostles used to break the bread on the first day of the week (cf. Acts 20:7), by which they were strengthened in their oneness in Christ and took courage and furthered their mission endeavours. Obviously, Paul pursued the same practice and zealously continued his proclamation and witnessing of Jesus before the people, gathered up to mid-night and beyond until day-break. As Paul was filled with grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, he was in a position to bring a boy named Eutychus back to life who fell down from a three story building (cf. Acts 20: 8-11). “Luke presents Paul in the act of bringing about a miraculous resuscitation.”<sup>46</sup> They had taken the boy away alive and were not a little comforted (cf. Acts 20:9-12). Clearly, a miracle happened through Paul. It was similar to that of Elijah’s (cf. 1 Kings 17:17-24; Jesus’s (Lk 7:14) and Peter’s (Acts 9:36-41). “The resuscitation of the dead boy symbolized the spiritual resurrection that would accompany the salvation effected by the Messiah. Its meaning is brought out still more clearly when we reflect that the miracle took place during the celebration of the Eucharist, the “Breaking of the Bread.”<sup>47</sup> It is pertinent to highlight that the miracle took place on the first day of the week, i.e. on

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46 Dillon, Fitzmyer, “Acts of the Apostles”, in the *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 165-214, 203.

47 Grech, *Acts of the Apostles Explained*, 113.

Sunday, the day of Resurrection of Jesus, the day on which the Christians worship and glorify the Supreme God.

Paul continues his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, by travelling from Troas to Miletus as he was eager to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.<sup>48</sup> In the NT, the Holy Spirit is bestowed on the Apostles on the day of the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:1f). The official inauguration of the Church is taken place on the day of Pentecost. There is reference of the Feast of Pentecost in the OT (Ex 23:16, 34:22; and Num 28:26). Paul having been a Jew, the celebration of Israel's Pentecost would have been of deeper significance to him. Moreover, he might have expected that as a festival of remembrance, there would be a shower of the Holy Spirit upon his people to empower them to witness the risen Messiah to the "ends of the earth" (cf. Acts 20:13-16).

#### **1.4.2. PAUL'S FAREWELL DISCLOSURE AT MILETUS (Testament to the Elders)**

Paul's farewell message to his missions described in Acts 20:17-38, represents a new genre, his farewell disclosure, a "testament" for all the Churches he leaves behind. Before the elders of Ephesus, Paul affirmed with a sense of accomplishment of his commitment before the Lord that he lived among them with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to him through the plots of the Jews as he did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming the message to them and teaching them publicly and from house to house. His confidence was that he testified to both the Jews and the Greeks about repentance before God and faith in Lord Jesus. Now he admits that as a captive to the Spirit, he was on his way to

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48 Cf. Therath, "Feast of Pentecost", 512 and 383.

Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to him there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to him in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for him. But what made Paul distinct is that he did not count his life of any value to himself, and that his ultimate desire was to finish his race and the ministry that he received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace, more than anything else. This follows Paul's testament to the elders and a subject for reflection by all the missionaries.

### **1.4.3. PAUL ENTRUSTS THE FLOCK TO THE MISSIONARIES**

Paul's warm-hearted speech to the elders of Ephesus before his departure to Jerusalem can be considered a typical farewell talk, not only to those elders of Ephesus, but also to his entire mission field and his liberal apostolate. In other words, it is a spiritual testament, corresponding to a well-defined Biblical and Jewish literary model.<sup>49</sup> It has been a highly motivational exhortation to Church leaders and a model for future pastors (cf. 1 Cor 4:6; Gal 4:12). In his speech, Paul expresses his deep concern for the welfare of the new Christian community after he leaves the place and gives his last instruction to its pastors with affection and tenderness. Here, Paul mainly emphasizes the following:

1. He declares that he is innocent of the blood of those of his own people who refused to accept his message (cf. Acts 20:26).

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49 Cf. Henry Wansbrough, "Acts of the Apostles", in *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, eds. Reginald C. Fuller, Leonard Johnston Conleth Kearns (New Jersey: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1969.) 1075-1101, 1097.

2. He charges the elders to watch over the flock which the Holy Spirit has entrusted to their pastoral care (cf. 1 Pet 5:1-2);
3. He forewarns that ravenous wolves (i.e., teachers of error) will invade the flock (cf. Mat 7:15; 2 Tim 4:3-5),
4. He asks the shepherds to be watchful and to bear in mind all that he has taught them (1 Tim 1:3-7; 4:1-7); and finally
5. He commends the elders to God and openly declares his own freedom from self-interest, in all his dealings with them (cf. 1 Sam 12:2-5; 1 Thess 4:11; 1 Cor 4:12).

“Paul remains down the centuries and up to this day a peerless teacher and a pristine apostle for the Gentiles.”<sup>50</sup>

#### **1.4.4. POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE MISSION**

The Holy Spirit takes the initiative and directs the mission of the young Church at several important turning points (cf. Acts 8:26,29, 39; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6-9). Here, as a chosen instrument of God, Paul surrendered himself. More than one-half of the book of Acts is devoted to Paul’s ministry and his mission journeys to preach the good news. Paul was impelled by the power of the Holy Spirit to strengthen the Church, as it spread across the Mediterranean world. As part of his evangelization effort, Paul visited most of the early Christian centers in the Mediterranean region more than once. He nurtured and nourished their spiritual growth in the true Christian character by letters and personal visits. Paul’s religious commitment was always total and radical. “Above all it is the Holy Spirit who

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50 Pope Benedict XVI, “St. Paul: Our Guide to Christian Life”, 3.

is bringing the Church into being and drawing it into unity among many different individuals and communities.”<sup>51</sup>

#### **1.4.5. CHRIST AS THE MOVER OF PAUL’S LIFE**

In Caesarea, Paul went to the house of Philip, the evangelist. There a prophet named Agabus who came down from Judea, urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Prophet Agabus from Judea (cf. Acts 11:27-28) foretold that at Jerusalem Paul would be bound and handed over to the Gentiles (cf. Lk 18:31-32). Paul’s companions and the local Christians, dismayed by the prophecy of Agabus, begs Paul not to go up to Jerusalem, in view of the impending danger<sup>52</sup>. In spite of their warning, Paul replies that he is willing not only to be bound but even to die there. He did not change his Jerusalem journey, stating that “The Lord’s will be done” (cf. Acts 21:14b). Paul’s bold declaration to proceed to Jerusalem ignoring the threats to his own life resembles Jesus’ foretelling his journey to Jerusalem, anticipating his death (Mt 20:18; Mk 10:33 and Lk 18:31) and without yielding to the request of the disciples not to go to that city. Here, Paul made up his mind wilfully to follow Christ (Phil 1:21), in letter and spirit. This might be on account of Paul’s conviction about the meaningfulness of suffering for Christ (1 Thess 4:14). ‘Jesus’s hand over’ was a passive form that culminates in a powerful divine action. God permitted that the shameful suffering of Jesus must take place and that he be crucified, but will triumph and be raised on

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51 Taylor, “Acts of the Apostles”, 1506.

52 Cf. Justin Taylor, “Acts of the Apostles”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2019) 1581-1621, 1613.

the third day.”<sup>53</sup> Obviously, for Paul, Christ is at the helm of his life and his life is identified with the virtues underlying the mystery of Christ’s crucifixion, death and resurrection. After a few days, Paul journeyed to Jerusalem. He could face everything in life on account of Christ.<sup>54</sup> For Paul, it was Christ, who at the helm of his life, controlled all his actions.

#### **1.4.6. CHRIST LEADS AND NURTURES THE MISSION**

It was Christ Jesus who checked Paul (Acts 9:4) and moulded him. Paul zealously begins to proclaim the word of God. The word of God began to spread and grow wherever it reached. Notably, it was persecution that, like a violent wind, scattered the seed of the Word that until then had been clinging to the tree.<sup>55</sup> But now, the forceful wind of the Holy Spirit continues and in effect, the word of God germinates and flourishes in people. The Lord, by means of the Holy Spirit, leads and nurtures the mission through his trusted hands.

The missionary journeys primarily helped to highlight the good news of salvation in the name of Jesus. To the Jews, he begins with the history of Israel (Acts 13:17-25) from the Exodus to Samuel, Saul, David, and then moves forward to David’s descendant Jesus. The good news is that the promise made to the ancestors has been fulfilled in Jesus. He has resurrected from the dead in accordance with the Scriptures. This proves that Jesus is the Messiah in whom

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53 Adrian Leske, “Matthew” in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2019) 1319-1396, 1376.

54 Cf. Pathrapankal, “Conviction, Conversion and Commitment”, 300.

55 Cf. Justin Taylor, “Acts of the Apostles”, 1595.

there is salvation. The message of salvation concerns the mystery of the Christ event: crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (vv.27-31). By drawing attention of his listeners to the virtues emanating from the Christ event, Paul proclaims that the message of salvation is “meant for you” (vv. 26) as forgiveness of sins comes only through Jesus (38-39). At the same time Paul warns his hearers not to be among the “scoffers” who will reject what God is doing (.vv. 40 -41). The concluding proclamation that the forgiveness of sin comes through Jesus is developed into a statement of justification by faith: through Jesus everyone who believes is set free from those sins from which they could not be freed by the Law of Moses (vv.39). This implies that the salvation is offered not only to the Jews, but to all, including Gentiles who believe.<sup>56</sup>

Paul having been a Jew prior to his conversion, in principle had set a priority to reveal the truth to his own fellowmen first as they were ignorant of the Messianic salvation fulfilled in Jesus. Therefore, as part of his mission, whenever Paul enters a town, he goes into the local synagogue and begins to preach the gospel of Christ; at first he generally meets with some success, but then an opposition gathers strength and eventually drives him out of the town. Then he goes to the next place and begins again (cf. Acts 13:14, 50; 14:1; 5, 6; 17:1-2; 5, 10b-11, 13-14).<sup>57</sup> By doing so, Paul not only complied with an ideal evangelization pattern envisaged in the gospels (Mt 10:14 and Lk 9:5) but also could build Christian

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56 Cf. Justin Taylor, “Acts of the Apostles”, 1602. The death and resurrection of Jesus occupy the central place in Paul’s speech at Antioch of Pisidia as in Peter’s speeches.

57 Cf. Justin Taylor, “Acts of the Apostles”, 1597.

communities in each place. Thus, he left behind a small but faithful group of converts who were the nucleus of the Church in that town. (Gal 5:9). The Pauline pattern in this regard illumines the hearts of those who go for the mission with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor 5:7-8).

## **2. PAUL'S CONCERN TOWARDS HIS COMMUNITIES**

Paul had a prime concern for spiritual enrichment of the communities he nurtured. He had undertaken various initiatives to inspire them to achieve his mission. The initiatives he had taken to strengthen the communities through his letters, his proclamation and witnessing of Jesus in the synagogues, in the communities, involvement of lay leaders for the mission endeavors, and the extension of special concern for the pastoral care of the communities nurtured by him are dealt with in this discussion. "The faithful were usually called "saints," but the title referred especially to the community in Jerusalem. "Widows," according to 1 Tim 5:3-16, were elderly women who, after the death of their husbands, dedicated themselves to the works of mercy, caring for their fellow Christians."<sup>58</sup> Paul instructed Timothy not to speak harshly to any elderly people. Paul instructed that one must speak to the elderly as to a father/mother, to youngsters as brothers/sisters, with absolute purity. He advised to honour the widows. According to Paul, the virtues of real widows must be respected since they have set their hope on God and they continued in supplications and prayers night and day. He warned that the widows who live for pleasure are dead

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58 Grech, *Acts of the Apostles Explained*, 64.

even while they are alive (cf. 1 Tim 5:1-7). Such instructions of Paul bring out his zeal and concern towards the communities he nurtured. They particularly inspired Timothy to follow.

Paul took special initiatives to mobilize resources for supporting graciously and generously the needy and the afflicted Christians in Jerusalem. He mobilized such resources as voluntary gifts of the faithful by inspiring them, saying that the one who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will reap bountifully. The significance of giving cheerfully to the needy, instead of under compulsion, was emphasized, saying that God loves the cheerful givers. He inspired the Corinthians by advising that the Lord is the prime giver and the one who provides people with every blessing in abundance and that the receivers always have enough of everything in order that they may share abundantly in every good work (cf. 2 Cor 9-6).

## **2.1. PAUL PREACHES AND WITNESSES JESUS IN SYNAGOGUES**

Paul proclaimed: “I am called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope” (1 Tim 1.1). In the same way he defends the orthodoxy, by his preaching against anyone who doubts his mission, saying, “I have in fact received from the Lord what I have in turn transmitted to you.”<sup>59</sup> For several days, Paul was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. The Jews who heard him were amazed and

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59 Kaitholil, *Encounter with St Paul*, 9.

doubted his integrity. Saul became increasingly more powerful and dismayed the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that “Jesus is the Messiah” (cf. Acts 9:21b-22). To Paul, every situation provided ground for proclamation of the good news. Whenever he goes to a new town, he used to look out for a synagogue, where Jews gather for worship and discussion on matters of faith.

The strategy followed by Paul in the synagogue was basing his discussions on the scriptures, demonstrating that Jesus is the promised Messiah (cf. Acts 17:11; 18:5). He further elaborates that the crucified Messiah reveals God’s true wisdom and power (cf. Acts 17:32; 1 Cor 1:18-2:5). He chose also religious /cultural centres (e.g., the Areopagus – Acts 17:16-34) or private houses (cf. Acts 17:5; 18:7) as a setting for his proclamation.<sup>60</sup> According to Acts, Paul was with the disciples at Damascus “for some days” (9:19), preaching in the synagogues that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and antagonizing the unbelieving Jews (9:20-22). Then after “many days”, these men resolved to kill him (9:23).<sup>61</sup> Thereafter, during his missionary journeys too, Paul took time to preach in synagogues on many occasions. Ignoring the threat for his life from the Jews, he took it as a challenge to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah and savior before them.

During the first missionary journey, beginning at Salamis in the east, Paul and Barnabas with Mark proceeded across the length of the

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60 Cf. T. Manjaly, “Paul’s Ways of Community Building”, in *The Relevance of Saint Paul – An Indian Reading of His Letters*, ed. Kurien Kunnumpuram and Rekha M. Chennattu (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2009) 204-232, 214.

61 Cf. LB-PvI, “Paul”, 1766.

whole island to Paphos in the west, preaching in every synagogue on their way (Acts 13:5). In connection with Paul's labours in Pisidian Antioch, a summary of his sermon is given in Acts 13:15-41 as a typical example of his synagogue preaching.<sup>62</sup> In his sermon Paul quoted the scriptures from the Old Testament and established that Jesus who was crucified and killed, is the long awaited Messiah. Paul proclaimed: "He whom God raised up, experienced no corruption. Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through Jesus forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and that by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free, whereas you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:37-40). During the second missionary journey, in Thessalonica, Paul preached on three Sabbaths in the synagogue and converted some Jews and many converts to Judaism and many pagans (Acts 17:1-4). At Athens, Paul preached in the synagogue and at the market place (17:17). There, he preached of the one true God. The proof of the pre-eminence of Christ is his resurrection. He is not an unknown God but he is the Risen Christ with whom we have to deal.<sup>63</sup> But when he spoke of the resurrection of the dead and of the general judgment, his audience decided that they had heard enough; only a few pagans were converted (cf. 17:18-34). Obviously, in all his synagogue ministry, Paul adopted the strategy of proclaiming the message persistently, whether the time was favorable or unfavorable. He attempted earnestly to convince, rebuke, and encourage the people, irrespective of whether they were Jews, pagans or Gentiles, with utmost patience in teaching them

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62 Cf. LB-PvI, "Paul", 1768.

63 Cf. Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 155.

which he would later reveal to Timothy also (cf. 2 Tim 4:2).

## **2.2. PAUL PREACHES AND WITNESSES JESUS IN HOMES (COMMUNITIES)**

At a time when there were no formal churches for the faithful to assemble and worship, Paul introduced a pattern of gathering in private homes for worship. This has created an environment for the coming together of the believers as a family which indirectly helped to build up inter-personal relations, facilitating development and strengthening fellowship in the spirit of love. “Christ is no longer in this world in the body; therefore, if He wants a task done in the world, He has to find someone to do it. If He wants a child taught, He has to find a teacher who will teach that child.”<sup>64</sup> In that sense, each one in the society has distinct role to play for the accomplishment of God’s will and the members have to share their responsibilities.

From the Pauline model of fellowship and communities (churches), emerged local leaders, especially lay leaders and even notably, women leaders. The head of such a community was usually a prominent person of the place, well-known, trusted and with financial means and considerable influence in the society. The ‘house churches’ provided the essential network for the ministry. They provided a base and a ready-made set of contacts. Paul built that system into his mission strategy.<sup>65</sup> They were not only self-supportive but also provided for the needs of the travelling

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64 William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009) 133.

65 Cf. Manjaly, “Paul’s Ways of Community Building”, 218.

missionaries (cf. 1 Cor 16:5-12; Rom 15:22-24). Paul's concept of the *ecclesia* (ἐκκλησία=the assembly or the congregation of a church), as the body of Christ is notable from his Hellenistic background (cf. Rom 12:3-8, 27; 1 Cor 6:15; 10:16-17; 12:12, 27; Eph 1:23; 4:11-16; 5:22; Col 1:15-20). In the words of William Barclay, "A real church is a body of men and women united to each other because all are united to Christ."<sup>66</sup> Paul's strategy of building up communities in unity of purpose and inclusiveness of harmony is instrumental for the growth of the Christian community.

Paul addresses Romans as brothers and sisters, and tells them that his heart's desire and the prayer to God for them is that they may be saved (cf. Rom 10:1). His deep concern for the communities is well elucidated before the Corinthians also (cf. 2 Cor 11:28-29). Paul was concerned to strengthen the faith of the communities to which Gospel is proclaimed. Paul indicated that the purpose of sending Timothy was to build them up by strengthening their faith and encouraging them to live accordingly (1 Thess 3:1-5). Paul realized that nurturing the faith of the community is vital until they attain maturity in faith. As a zealous apostle of Christ, Paul took initiative in founding communities. He nurtured the Galatians as his little children for whom he deemed himself as if he is a mother who suffered pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in them (cf. Gal 4:19). "His parental responsibility embraces nurturing his children through instruction, admonishing, urging behavioral change and

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66 Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, 120.

encouraging” (1 Thess 2:11-12).<sup>67</sup> In his writings, Paul used various images to emphasize his spiritual role.

The spiritual strength and fraternity of the believers in the early church as revealed in Acts 2:43-47 was that day by day, they spent much time together in the temple, broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. Day by day the Lord added to their assembly those who were being saved. In Acts 14:21-28, Paul gave notable insights to the people gathered. He told them frankly that it was through many afflictions that they would have to enter into the kingdom of God. He offered them no easy way. He acted on the principle that Jesus had come ‘not to make life easy but to make people great.’ On his return journey, Paul set apart elders in all the little groups of newly made Christians. He showed that it was his conviction that Christianity must be lived in a fellowship. Paul and Barnabas never thought that it was their strength which had achieved anything. They spoke of what God had done with them. They regarded themselves only as fellow labourers with God. They realized that they received the right idea of Christian service when they worked, not for their own honour, but from the conviction that they were only tools in the hands of God.<sup>68</sup> Notably, that was how the Lord worked through his trusted hands.

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67 Manjaly, “Pauls’ Ways of Community Building”, 209.

68 Cf. Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 130.

### 3. PAUL'S LETTERS: AN INSPIRATION TO CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Paul's Letters<sup>69</sup> are expressions of his deep rooted love and concern towards the persons or the communities he nurtured. According to Purdy, "The Pauline writings in the NT are indeed genuine letters – not, of course, private, 'off the record' communications, for they are addressed to the churches and presumably intended for public reading."<sup>70</sup> The way he communicates his love of Christ is often unforgettable. In the whole library of Christianity it is hard to match his impassioned eloquence.<sup>71</sup> Through his letters, Paul explains his understanding as to what Jesus Christ means to an ordinary Christian and addresses some of the problems that the churches and their members were facing while practising their faith. "In all his preaching, in the voluminous writings he sent out, the one constant message was the freedom in Christ, declaring its eschatological certainty, the culmination of faith and hope (Rom 8:38-39)."<sup>72</sup>

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69 Cf. James C. Turro and Raymond E Brown, "Canonicity", in *The Jerome Bible Commentary*, ed., Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970) 515-534, 526. Most of the Pauline Letters were written as instruction and encouragement to churches that Paul himself had evangelized (Romans is a notable exception). In the early 50's, 1-2 Thessalonians were written, in the late 50's, the Great Letters (Galatians, 1-2 Corinthians, Romans) and perhaps Philippians were written. In the early 60's the Captivity Letters (Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians [?] and perhaps Phil) were written. Traditionally, the Pastoral Letters (1-2 Timothy, Titus) have been dated in the mid-60. In all, there were 13 letters although there existed, dispute on the inauthentic letters (2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, 1-2 Timothy and Titus) of Paul in the biblical scholarship.

70 Purdy, A.C, "Paul the Apostle", 682.

71 Cf. Brown, "The Life of Paul", 451.

72 Broderick, "St Paul", 463.

The Letter to the Romans is considered to be a mature statement of his understanding of the gospel after having founded churches throughout the Mediterranean world and at the verge of completion of his third missionary journey.<sup>73</sup> When Paul wrote the Epistle to Romans by about AD 56, he had not yet been to Rome but he had been preaching the gospel ever since his conversion in AD 35. “In Paul’s view, the forgiving grace of God does not compromise God’s moral integrity or righteousness. The new revelation proves that God’s gracious mercy and God’s righteousness are one in Christ. This saving action of God is announced in the powerful proclamation of the gospel (Rom 1:16).”<sup>74</sup> Here, Paul tries to establish that although Christianity is rooted in Judaism, it is a faith for all humanity.

As regards Paul’s mission policy, “his task has been essentially that of the path-finder, the pioneer, the one, ever eager (*philotimoumenon*) to press on outwards to those regions where Christ has not been named, that is, where missionaries have not yet preached nor communities founded (cf. Rom 15:20-21).”<sup>75</sup> Paul’s love of God is so firm that he could affirm before the Romans that neither hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword will separate him from the love of Christ (Rom 8:35). It can be concluded: “Romans is commonly considered the greatest exposition of Christian doctrine anywhere in the Scripture.

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73 Cf. Hayford, “Romans”, in *Hayfords’s Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 464.

74 Baird, “Paul”, in *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, eds. Paul J. Achtemeier, at el. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2018) 822.

75 Brendan Byrne, *Romans, Sacra Pagina 6*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996) 437.

It contains an orderly, logical development of profound theological truths. It is filled with the greatest themes of redemption: the guilt of all mankind, our inability to earn favour with God, the redeeming death of Christ, and the free gift of salvation to be received by faith alone.”<sup>76</sup> God’s mercy is well brought out in Romans. God’s mercy and His compassion are His prerogative (cf. Rom 9:15). “Paul shows that there is no inequity with God. The Lord gives to the believing seeker through the Holy Spirit. Now, having given His Spirit, God will then give compassion to those to whom he has already been compassionate. That is, he will make the believer compassionate, so that he can do good works through love.”<sup>77</sup> Though Israel is unfaithful, God is righteous (cf. Rom 9:1-33). Paul is deeply aware of the gifts God has given to Israel. The Jewish nation has lost its place because of its failure to seek righteousness through faith (9:32). On no count, then, can God be charged with unfairness in the way he has dealt with Israel. God’s mercy is unending.

Paul warns the believers that anyone who does anything which disturbs the peace of the Church has a great deal to answer for. People who have brought strife to any Christian fellowship will answer for it someday to the one who is the King and the head of the Church. There are people who put hindrance in the way of others. Those whose behavior offers a bad example or exerts an evil influence or who while teaching dilutes or reduces the force of the Christian faith will someday bear their own punishment; and it will

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76 Hayford, “Romans”, 344.

77 Paula Fredriksen Lands, in *Augustine on Romans – Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982) 1-49, 33.

not be light, for Jesus is stern to anyone who caused one of his little ones to stumble.<sup>78</sup>

Paul had a clear vision as to the concept of resurrection of the dead. This is evident from his affirmation to the Corinthians that to those who died in Christ, Christ is the first fruits of resurrection and by virtue of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, everyone who died will harvest resurrection. Paul's treatment of this topic arose out of the tendency of some members of the Corinthian Church to drop the doctrine of resurrection from the creed. According to Paul, on the day of resurrection, a "Spiritual body" will be raised, and simultaneously those who have not passed through death shall receive immortal bodies in a fraction of the second (cf. 1 Cor 15:52). Here the concept of a "Spiritual body" marks a notable advance on the prevalent Jewish ideas.<sup>79</sup> Paul's affirmation on the resurrection of those died in Christ is the reflection of his zealous approach and esteemed trust on the power of the resurrected Lord and is fundamentally co-related to the resurrection of Jesus on the third day of his crucifixion, death and burial.

**1 Corinthians** is written in response to specific concerns in regard to division in the church and in the context where the Christians are called to live a way of life different from pagans. The whole of 1 Corinthians is a multi-faceted letter, devoted to the ethical

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78 Cf. Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, 256-257.

79 Cf. Bruce, "Paul the Apostle", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol III.K.P. eds., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, at el. (Grand Rapids. Michigan: Eerdmans 1987) 698.

and doctrinal questions which were of immediate importance.<sup>80</sup> It is written to resolve doctrinal and practical problems within the local church.<sup>81</sup> The letter addresses ten specific issues: (1) sectarian spirit (2) incest, (3) lawsuits, (4) fornication, (5) marriage and divorce, (6) eating food offered to idols, (7) wearing of the veil, (8) the Lord's Supper, (9) spiritual gifts and (10) the resurrection of the body.<sup>82</sup> Paul had extended fatherly admonition towards them (1 Cor 4:15-17). 1 Corinthians is also written to resolve doctrinal and practical problems within the local church.<sup>83</sup> Paul reminded them that they were bought with a price and for that reason, do not become slaves of human masters. In whatever condition they were called brothers and sisters, they remain with God (cf. 1 Cor 7:23-24). The gift of love in varied characteristics is its indispensability (1 Cor 13:1-3), descriptiveness (1 Cor 13:4-7) and permanence (1 Cor 13:8-13).<sup>84</sup> Here, love is the condition without which no gift is of any value to any one since love is indispensable. Paul depicts qualities of love such as patience, forbearance, ability to believe, hope and endurance and at the same time it does not rejoice in wrongdoing while it rejoices in the truth. Above all, love never fails. Paul emphasizes

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80 Cf. Lambrecht, "1 Corinthians", in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1601.

81 Cf. Hayford, "1 Corinthians", 356.

82 Cf. Hayford, "1 Corinthians", in *Hayfords' Bible Handbook*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 356.

83 Cf. Hayford, "1 Corinthians", 356.

84 Cf. Jan Lambrecht, "1 Corinthians", in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds., William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1733-1746, 1734.

that love is permanent and that Christian life evolves on three virtues of faith, hope and love, of which love holds the greatest value. The 2 Corinthians is not in fact the second letter written by Apostle Paul to that community. It was preceded by a “tearful letter” alluded to in 2 Cor 2:3-4, 9; 7:12, dealing with very severe problems Paul had to work out with his Corinthian faithful. The 2 Corinthians begins as a letter of reconciliation and develops into a laudatory discourse about the apostolic mission itself (mainly from 3:1 to 6:10). The kernel of the disclosure is the vision of apostolic mission as a participation in the illuminating power of God (4:1-6), which is not obscured by the fact that “we have this treasure in clay jars” (vv.7-12).<sup>85</sup> Above all, the mission is Lord’s work and the Spirit guides its direction.

**Galatians** is one of the most important documents of the first century for our knowledge of the history of the new borne Church and of Christian thought in general. Galatians 3:28 is one of the most powerful theological discourses for affirming the equality of women on all levels within the Church and in society.<sup>86</sup> Galatians throw insight into the beginning of the Church and a key to understand Paul’s faith in Christ, justification, and relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

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85 Jorge Sanchez-Bosch, “2 Corinthians”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds., William R. Farmer, Joseph Pathrapankal, et al. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2019) 1707-1727, 1707, 1633-1653, 1633, 1639.

86 Cf. Tamez Elsa, “Galatians”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1654.

In **Ephesians**, Paul brings out one of the most adventurous and most uplifting thoughts on the Church. “He calls the Church by its greatest title – *the Body of Christ*. ”<sup>87</sup> In other words, “Ephesians unveils the “mystery” of the Church more than any other epistles. God’s secret intention is revealed: (1) to form a body to express Christ’s fullness on earth (Eph 1:15-23); (2) to do this by uniting one people – both the Jew and the Gentile, among whom God Himself dwells (2:11-3:7), and (3) to equip, empower, and mature this people to the end so that they attain Christ’s victory over evil (3:10-20; 6:1-20).”<sup>88</sup>

According to Paul, “this world is of complete disunity and there is disunity between human beings and God. It was Paul’s argument that Jesus died to bring all the discordant elements in this universe into one, wipe out the separations, reconcile people to one another and reconcile them to God. Jesus Christ was above all things God’s instrument of reconciliation.”<sup>89</sup> That purpose points to the Christological focus coming in fullness of time (Eph 1:10). Ephesians is a meditation on the purpose of God in reconciling all things in heaven and on earth in Christ. It brings to light that the Church is a part of the purpose of God, called to bring unity to the world, as Christ brought unity to the Church. Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles is an expression of his concern for them in line with his commitment before God (cf. Eph 3:1-4).

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87 William Barclay, *The Letter to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 2009) 1-121, 106.

88 Jack W. Hayford, “Ephesians”, in *Hayfords’s Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), 378-385, 380.

89 Barclay, *The Letter to the Galatians and Ephesians*, 106.

**Philippians** is a direct exposition of Paul's concern towards them (cf. Phil 1:3-11). The hymn in (Phil 2:6-11) is a powerful statement imitating Christ's humility wherein Christ, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend in heaven and earth and under the earth and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The theme of this hymn occupies a very prominent place in the Christian Theology. A few theologians are of the view that basically this hymn was part of the liturgy of the Church right from the beginning and that considering its significance Paul included the same as part of his letter to the Philippians.<sup>90</sup> In furtherance of this view it can be stated that in Pauline thoughts, much emphasis is given to the Lordship of Jesus and the salvation of all through Jesus. Pertinently, in the Holy Mass, through the Holy Sacrament the Word is made flesh and becomes the sacred body of our Lord Jesus Christ and by receiving the Holy Communion, actualization of faith in fullness of heart is achieved for salvation (cf. Rom 10:8b-9).

It upholds Jesus' pre-existence, his self-emptying, his further humiliation in death, his heavenly exaltation and the adoration of him by the universe and the application of the name "Lord" to Him. As for the adoration of Jesus, the hymn says that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth and under the

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90 Cf. Thomas Kochukarottu, "The Letter to the Philippians", in *Alpha Bible Commentary Vol 7*, eds. by M. Karimattom, et al. (Thalassery: Alpha Institute of Theology and Science, 2012) 485-507, 493.

earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.<sup>91</sup> According to the Old Testament thinking, (cf. Isa 53:12), humility is an essential grace to stand before the Almighty, while in the New Testament it is a pattern of following Christ Jesus.<sup>92</sup>

**Colossians** was a Church, much confused by false teaching. Paul wrote to remove that confusion. “Other than Colossians, no other book of the New Testament sets forth more fully or defends more thoroughly the universal Lordship of Christ. His supremacy hinges upon His uniqueness as God’s eternal, beloved Son and Heir (1:13, 15). Paul declares Christ’s Lordship distinctly. First of all, Christ is the Lord over all creations. His creative authority encompasses the whole material and spiritual universe (Col 1:16). Secondly, Jesus Christ is pre-eminent in the Church as its Creator and Savior (Col 1:18). Thirdly, Jesus Christ is supreme in salvation (Col 3:11). In him all man-made distinctions fade and all barriers fall. He has made all humanity into one family in which all are equal in God’s forgiveness and adoption. “Christ is all and in all” and that alone matters.<sup>93</sup>

**1 and 2 Thessalonians** are possibly the earliest writings of the New Testament. Persecution had compelled Paul to leave Thessalonica, and in his letters, he tells Christians there how they ought to live and to await the Lord’s return, with constant

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91 Cf. Kanachikuzhy, *Paul of Acts*, 123-124.

92 Cf. Kochukarottu, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 493.

93 Cf. Jack W. Hayford, “Colossians”, in *Hayfords’s Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 394-397, 394.

diligence. As for the origin of Christianity in Thessalonica, it can be seen that Paul went to the synagogue of that Greek city and over several weeks he preached, arguing that Jesus, the carpenter's son from Nazareth, was in fact God's anointed one – the Messiah, long promised in the Jewish scriptures (Acts 17:1-3). Here, Paul established the second major church of the European continent. The faith of Christian believers at Thessalonica became widely known (1 Thess 1:7-8).<sup>94</sup> Paul extended hearty and gentle care to each one from the Thessalonian church similar to the care of a father to his loving children, by urging, encouraging and pleading them that they may lead a life worthy of God who calls them into his own kingdom and glory (cf. 1 Thess 2:7b-12). The eschatological day (= the closing day of the world and its judgment) or the “day of the Lord”(2 Thess 2:2), is the central theme of 2 Thessalonians. The attempt of 2 Thessalonians to correct misunderstanding about the “day of the Lord” must have followed soon after 1 Thessalonians was written. The two letters to the Thessalonians do not quite agree in their eschatology. The first epistle looks forward to a *Parousia* (= the Second Coming) that will come so suddenly as to be wholly unpredictable (1 Thess 5:1-3), while 2 Thessalonians gives an apocalyptic time table (2 Thess 2:1-8) from which the arrival of the *Parousia* can be known, because it is preceded by observable events.<sup>95</sup> These are providing very valid insights to the Church to go

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94 Cf. Hayford, “1 and 2 Thessalonians”, in *Hayford's Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 401.

95 Cf. George M. Soares-Prabhu, “2 Thessalonians”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, eds. William R Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1721-1729, 1721.

forward with diligence.

**1 and 2 Timothy**, not only inspired Timothy in fulfilling his responsibilities as a Church leader, but they have served as handbooks for the pastors of Christian world, down the centuries. It transpires that the ministers must stay in constant touch with God through prayer and study of the Bible (cf. 1 Tim 2:1; 8; 4:6, 12-16).<sup>96</sup> Paul instructed Timothy of the duties towards believers who consist of older men, younger men, older women, younger women, widows, and warned him to desist from doing things on the basis of partiality. It teaches as to how to ensure order of Church's worship, how to choose Church leaders, and how to deal prudently with different classes in the Church. All the more, Timothy was instructed to teach the apostolic faith and lead an exemplary life.<sup>97</sup> Paul issued specific advice concerning the modality of conducting prayer by men and women (cf. 1 Tim 1:8-15).

Paul issued guidelines as to the qualifications for bishops and deacons (cf. 1 Tim 3:1-13) and also for the ministry of the Christian faith (cf. 1 Tim 3:14-16). Paul cautioned against false asceticism (cf. 1 Tim 4:1-5). Paul inspired Timothy to be a good minister of Jesus Christ and to train himself in godliness, just as physical training is of some value in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. "Paul conceived that the Church as the locus

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96 Cf. Jack W. Hayford, "1 and 2 Timothy", in *Hayford's Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 409-418, 412.

97 Cf. Jack W. Hayford, "1 and 2 Thessalonians", 398-411, and 412. As an exhortation, Paul wrote letters 1 and 2 to Timothy and Letter to Titus, which are in fact Pastoral Epistles.

of truth in the world (cf. 1 Tim 3:14-16).”<sup>98</sup> Paul urged Timothy to adhere to the good fight for faith and entreated him to guard what has been entrusted to him. He further instructed Timothy to avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, since by professing it, some had missed the mark as regards the faith (cf. 1 Tim 6:11-21). In 2 Timothy, Paul specifically enjoins Timothy to maintain fidelity in the face of the errors (cf. 2:14-4:18) so that he may make himself well versed in the word of God (2:15). Paul declares that the scripture is “given by inspiration of God”; literally, it is God-breathed (3:16). Therefore, he should take care to its adherence without any doctrinal error (cf. 2 Tim 2:14-26) and lead God’s people. It implies that doctrinal error is never simply mental; it always leads to an adverse compromise in the lifestyle like increased ungodliness (v.16) that leads believers into the “snare of the devil” (v.26). Paul points out many errors (2 Tim 3:1-4:8) and insists on the preparedness of the Church to resist those errors. The “perilous times” (cf 3:1) are linked to the wilful, deliberate, and cunning attempts of some to lead astray the people of God.<sup>99</sup> These are areas of which the missionaries themselves are to be cautioned.

In his second epistle, Paul encouraged Timothy of his good deeds and advised him to bear his suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus (cf. 2 Tim 2:3). Paul cautioned him to be aware of

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98 Schroeder, Hans-Hartmut. “1 Timothy”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1740.

99 Cf. Hayford, “1 and 2 Timothy”, 417.

godlessness in the distressing times of last days, when people will become lovers of themselves and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding on to the outward form of godliness while denying its power. Such persons are to be avoided (cf. 1 Tim 3:1-5). Paul specifically forewarned that all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12). Second Timothy reveals Paul's emotions more than his intellect, because his heart was speaking. Consequently, the letter is not an orderly literary production, but "a personal note containing the apostle's last will and testament."<sup>100</sup>

In **Titus**, the ecclesiology (=the study of the Church) revolves around two dominant images: the Church as pillar and bulwark of truth with its teaching offices of bishops and presbyters, and the Church as a great household of God, structured so as to ensure good order in Christian life.<sup>101</sup>

Paul enjoined Titus to teach what is consistent with the sound doctrine and issued suitable instructions concerning how to deal with older men and women, young men, young women and others. In the case of slaves, they should be told as to how they should keep themselves self-controlled and behave to one another. The Church ought to appoint elders in every town, who are blameless, married only once, and whose children are believers, not accused of debauchery or rebellious conduct. Similarly, guidelines were given in the case of bishops also. A bishop must be deemed as God's

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100 Hayford, "1 and 2 Timothy", 416.

101 Cf. Goodwin, "Titus", 1753.

steward; he must be blameless and not arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy. A bishop must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. The bishops are expected to have a firm grasp of the word that conforms to the teaching, so that he is able to teach what is consistent with the sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it (cf. Titus 1:5-9). In his epistle to Titus, Paul issues instructions concerning the Elders in the Church and their qualifications. Apart from that Paul issues instructions concerning Christian conduct and the role and the responsibility of Titus in the organization and supervision of the churches in Crete. “It is written to strengthen and exhort Titus to firmly exercise his authority as an apostolic representative to churches that need to be put in order.”<sup>102</sup> Paul’s encouragement of Titus is praise worthy.

“**Philemon** is an excellent example of Paul’s apostolate, written from the prison in Rome.”<sup>103</sup> It presents the incredible power of Christ to bring healing to broken lives. It includes the personal reunion between Jesus Christ and the runaway sinner as well as the wonderful restoration of two believers who were formerly separated. Only with Christ’s example of forgiveness through the cross, humanity is able to overcome their hurts and mistakes and be reconciled to the Lord’s brothers and sisters in Christ.<sup>104</sup> Paul pleaded for Onesimus “I am sending him, that is, my own heart back to you” knowing that you will do even more than I say, an exclusive

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102 Jack W. Hayford, “Letter to Titus and Philemon” in *Hayford’s Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 419-425, 420.

103 Ammanathukunnel, “Life and Apostolate of Paul”, 29.

104 Cf. Jack W. Hayford, “Letter to Titus and Philemon”, 424.

expression of his deep concern towards the one who deserves consideration and sympathy (cf. Philem:12-21). “It is Paul’s habit to reinforce his teaching by his own example (see, for example, 1 Corinthians 8-10). Here is a lesson for pastors to bear in mind; the leader should live upto his or her teachings.”<sup>105</sup> By doing so the pastors will become models for others.

Typically, all the letters of Paul are in line with the true Biblical spirit and are inspirational to bring hope and salvation to all, irrespective of being a Jew or a Gentile. It highlighted that whosoever repents and calls upon the grace of Christ Jesus, by virtue of the Christ’s crucifixion, death and resurrection, will have salvation and a new life in Christ Jesus. Paul spared no effort in communicating with his communities during the course of his missionary task, whether the prevailing situation was favourable or unfavourable. Even while Paul was under house arrest in Rome, he kept busy with his noble mission. To those who approached, he proclaimed the kingdom of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ courageously, and hopefully. (Acts 28:30-31). “The ultimate gift of Paul is to have preached a gospel that had enormous power in itself and therefore, could not be chained or silenced even when its opponents were active.”<sup>106</sup> All his letters are inspirational as they enlighten the readers by providing insights into the joy of salvation, by revealing the gospel values.

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105 Young Bong Kim, “Philemon”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty First Century*, eds. William R Farmer (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1759-1764, 1761.

106 Brown, “The Life of Paul”, 455.

### 3.1. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR PASTORAL CARE

To Paul, the Pastoral care of the Church is of prime concern. Paul earnestly discharged that function with foresight. Pastoral Epistles are clear evidences of Paul's special care and concern for the Church. "They are called "Pastoral" because of their practical character: they include instructions on Church discipline, appointment of officers and combating false teachers; they aim at helping the leaders to guide the Christian communities. They are written at a time of inner crisis in the Pauline churches due to false teachings by teachers who endangered apostolic doctrine and attempted to disrupt the communities. The Pastoral Epistles show the ability of the apostolic Church to counteract destructive forces by preserving the apostolic tradition and developing new social structures that would protect and increase Church's unity."<sup>107</sup> Ultimately, at the conclusion of the rules for the community, there follows a theological foundation: The Church is expected to be guided by the principles established by the Apostle even after his death. In this way the Church will be secured over time as the locus of truth, that is, 'the Christ-event' (1 Tim 1: 14-16).<sup>108</sup>

There are very many instances in which Paul's concern towards the pastoral care of the Church is revealed. To the Thessalonians, Paul and Silas developed a deep affection, and their ministry

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107 Enrique Nardoni, "Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles" in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty First Century*, eds. William R Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1730-1732, 1730.

108 Cf. Schroeder "1 Timothy", 1740.

was out of parental concern for them (1 Thess 2:1-12).<sup>109</sup> It is considered that the 1 Thessalonians was written from Corinth as Paul expressed concern for a Church he had evangelized (AD 50-51). Paul's eighteen-month stay at Corinth was the longest thus far at any Church he had founded; ironically he was to leave behind there a community that would be troubled over more issues than any other to which he would write.<sup>110</sup> Both in 1 Thessalonians (1:6;2:14; 3:3-5) and in 2 Thessalonians (1:4-7), it is clear that believers were subjected to certain sufferings, persecutions and hardships – just as Paul and Silas themselves have had and led to their departure by night from that city (cf. Acts 17:5-10; 1 Thess 2:2).

Paul's concern for the spiritual stability of the Thessalonian Church had led him to send Timothy and to express in writing 1 Thessalonians, his joyful relief upon learning of their spiritual health (1 Thess 2:17-3:10).<sup>111</sup> In the name of God Paul earnestly appeals to people to return to God (cf. 2 Cor 5:20)<sup>112</sup> His Pastoral Epistles, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, were issued with his esteemed authority as the apostle of Christ Jesus. For, "Paul thought of himself as a man holding the royal commission."<sup>113</sup> 2 Timothy is an expression of Paul's continuing concern for the welfare of the church and to give instructions to Timothy for perfecting its

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109 Cf. Hayford, "1 and 2 Thessalonians", 398-408, 404.

110 Cf. Brown, "The Life of Paul", 433.

111 Cf. Jack W. Hayford, "2 Thessalonians", 406-408, 406.

112 Cf. Joseph Thekkekarott, "St Paul and a Modern Missionary", in *St Paul – His Apostolate, Vision and Theology* (Ujjain: Isa Darsan Kendra, 2001) 99-127, 100.

113 William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009), 20.

organization and safe-guarding the gospel.<sup>114</sup> “The new church at Antioch decided to send money to their brothers and sisters in Judea as a sign of solidarity as well as practical help, and chose Barnabas and Saul to deliver it (cf. Acts 11:27-30; cf. 12:25). It is the first example we have of inter-Church aid.”<sup>115</sup> There are also other similar initiatives to help the needy and the distressed. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to mobilize financial collection for the saints in Galatia (cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4). While the instructions concerning the collection for Jerusalem (2 Cor chapter 8 and 9) emphasize generosity in mobilizing financial resources, just as Paul emphasized generosity in self-giving,<sup>116</sup> it is also a clear reflection of Paul’s deep concern and care for the poor and needy brethren of the Church.

Towards the end of his Ephesian ministry also, Paul was busily engaged in organizing the churches he had planted east and west of the Aegean and collection for the relief of the chronic poverty of the Jerusalem Church. In Paul’s eyes, “the delivery of the collection in Jerusalem would be the climax of his apostolic service thus far, the visible sign of that “offering of the Gentiles” which he planned to present to God, in Jerusalem as the crown of his “priestly service” (Rom 15:16).<sup>117</sup> Similarly, Paul took special care to address the problems faced by the Churches and their members because of their

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114 Cf. Jack W. Hayford, “1 and 2 Timothy”, 409-418, 415.

115 Taylor, “Acts of the Apostles”, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 1506- 1765, 1525.

116 Cf. Jack W. Hayford, “2 Corinthians”, in *Hayford’s Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 363-370, 365.

117 Cf. J.R. Michaels, “Paul in Acts and Letters”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G.F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993) 686-695, 686.

faith, by personal visits and by initiating careful follow up through letters and epistles.

In his order to Timothy, Paul specifically instructed that elder widows should be enrolled and are to be paid and are to be received into the community's order of widows. Concerning the Elders and slaves too, guidelines were issued for dealing with their cases properly (1 Tim 5:15-25 and 6:1-2) respectfully. "Like Col 3:18-4:1, Eph 5:21-6:9 is an example of a type of ethical teaching and the house-hold code, found in the New Testament and in the early Christian literature. The distinctive feature of the Ephesian house-hold code is the treatment of the marriage bond between Christ and the Church."<sup>118</sup> Paul's testament to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:28) is also a reflection of Paul's enthusiastic approach to groom the community. Here Paul supplies the Church of every age with the essential role model and the curriculum for leadership training.

Describing his own trials and temptations, Paul warns the Christian leaders that they too will encounter similar attacks from within and outside the congregation and that they must deal with them as he has. Paul is quite hopeful that the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit in the congregation will enable its leaders to overcome whatever crisis they may have to face in their journey gracefully. Essentially, those who are called and nurtured by God's Spirit to lead people belonging to God are expected to maintain absolute purity in their deals and in the ministry of the Word of God (cf. Acts 20:20). The effectiveness of the Gospel in strengthening the

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118 Mac Donald, "Ephesians", in *The International Bible Commentary* 1683-1684.

morale of the people in true Christian values in their day to day life is subverted by theological compromise and threats from within and outside the congregation, affecting the purity of the rule of apostolic faith. Reiterating the words of Lord Jesus that “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35), Paul also urged the Ephesian elders as to how they should use their possession (cf. 1 Tim 6:3-10, 17-19). Luke implies that the world will consider a preaching ‘mere pretence’ if the Church says one thing but lives another. The abstract truth of the word ‘God’s grace’ is tested in the real world by the handling of the resources in a gracious and not greedy manner. The motive of Christian ministry must never be monetary or temporary.

Those in charge of the spiritual formation of believers must not covet their possessions (cf. Acts 20:33); indeed, they are to collect money only to redistribute it among the poor (cf. Acts 20:34-35). In the simplicity of one’s life style and the sharing of one’s goods, the truth of God’s generosity towards all is made manifest. Due to “arrogance of power”, those placed in positions of influence have used their standing to coerce others to do their bidding.<sup>119</sup> The leader who imitates Paul’s example is drawn to ministry by the Holy Spirit to serve the redemptive interests of God and the needs of God’s flock.

### **3.2. PROMOTION OF THE LAY LEADERS FOR THE MISSION**

Paul’s idea that a minister is co-working with God, (cf. 1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1) implies that all the ministers are fellow-workers

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119 Cf. Leander E. Keck, “Reflections”, in *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary* 9 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015) 1-292, 227.

among themselves (cf. 1 Cor 3:9). The beauty and fruitfulness of the vine is in the beauty and fruitfulness of its branches (Jn 15:1-10).<sup>120</sup> In Pauline ministry, we find co-missionaries like Barnabas, Silas and Timothy assisted Paul to a certain extent. Independent co-workers like Priscilla, Aquila and Titus also carried out the directions of Paul in their respective communities. Moreover, representatives from the local churches like Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Gaius and others were commissioned by Paul to build their respective communities. Practically, Paul maintained a vision of participatory ministry with his co-workers.

The participatory dimension of the ministry helped him to understand that ministers are only servants (1 Cor 3:5; 5:20), and that ministry is *diakonia* (= doing service) and grace (1 Cor 3:5-6). The teachers were the Christians who build up the converts who have been won through preaching by the evangelists and the apostles. It is through individuals that people really learn about Christ. Helpers are people whose duty it is to bring relief to the poor, the orphan, the widow and the stranger. Administrators are parts of the body which are never seen but who serve the Church in ways that win no publicity, but without whose service the Church could not go on.<sup>121</sup> Though Paul had a wide circle of co-workers at various levels, he exercised excellent leadership as the apostle (cf. 1 Cor 9:1-2; Gal 1:1, 15-15), the father and the founder of communities (1 Cor 3:10); 4:15).

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120 Cf. Manjaly, "Paul's ways of Community Building", 223.

121 Cf. Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, 136-137.

Paul trusted his co-workers, delegated power to them and encouraged them for their significant contribution as is indicated by the titles and the type of ministry to which they were engaged (Rom 16:1-21).<sup>122</sup> Where Paul could not visit repeatedly he sends his trusted emissaries. Their efforts could build up the gap to a great extent. Two of his chosen emissaries were Timothy and Titus. They played prominent role in the mission of Paul in founding churches (Acts 16:1-3). In the Letter to the Romans, in chapter 16, there were twenty-four individual names mentioned, apart from other interesting things noted. Of the twenty-four, six were women. Paul is often accused of belittling the status of women in the church which is not true. If we really want to see Paul's attitude, a passage like Rom 16:12-16 is worth considering, wherein his appreciation of the work of those women who rendered excellent ministry in the church were well brought out and commended, from the bottom of his heart.<sup>123</sup>

Silvanus (Silas) was Paul's companion during Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 15:40). He had closely associated with Paul and as such, Paul mentioned him as a co-sender of some of his letters. Also Silas worked with Paul in Corinth for nearly one and half years (cf. Acts 18:20). Apollos, who was earlier the disciple of John the Baptist, proclaimed that Jesus is the Messiah. At a time when he stayed for a year and a half at Corinth, he first lived at the house of Aquila and Priscilla. With that good Judeo-Christian couple, he worked at his trade on weekdays. Through his association

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122 Cf. Manjaly, "Paul's Ways of Community Building", 220.

123 Cf. Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, 256-257.

with Aquila and Priscilla, he got himself familiarized with the truth of the gospel and started gospel work in Corinth and brought many into repentance. The gospel work of Apollos is referred to by Paul as “Apollos watered” (cf. 1 Cor 3:6). As Paul travelled extensively (Rom 15:19; Acts 27:14-20) for his missionary task of preaching the gospel and building up the communities, he adopted the strategy of pioneering and after founding a community and preparing its local leaders, he used to move on to other places.

In spite of his busy schedule he used to re-visit his communities to the extent possible and was desirous to do so, as is evident from his writings (cf. 1 Thess 2:17-3:5; 2 Cor 2:12-3:4). Aquila and Priscilla (Prisca), whom he met at Corinth and who sailed with him to Ephesus, became lifelong friends and co-workers both at Ephesus and Rome. During his third missionary journey, at Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla had already prepared the ground for him. An outstanding lay leader associated with Paul was Epaphroditus, who also qualified as a co-worker and fellow soldier (Phil 2:25). There was another leader named Epaphras who evangelized the Lycus valley (cf. Col 1:6-8; 4:13).

Paul realized the power and effectiveness of feminine genius. Phoebe was considered prominent among the many women collaborators of Paul. In his personal greetings Paul advised the Romans that he commends Sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae, so that they may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from them, for she had been a benefactor of many including himself. This shows

the high position she enjoyed in the Cenchræe church. Concerning Prisca, Paul sends personal greetings to his beloved co-workers: “Greet Prisca and Aquila, (Rom 16:3), who worked with him in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for his life, to whom not only Paul gives thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. As for Junia, she may be the wife of Andronicus. It is significant that the two are perhaps referred to as apostles (Acts 16:7). He also calls her Prostratis, thereby reaffirming her leading role in the church of Cenchræe. Paul took time to acknowledge and greet each and every one of his co-workers as they were closely associated in his gospel mission and as such he specifically mentioned names in his epistles to the Romans: Prisca, Aquila, Epaenetus, Mary, Andronicus, Junia,<sup>124</sup> Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Aristobulus, Herodion, family of Narcissus, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus and his mother, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers and sisters, Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister and Olympas, and all the saints who were with them (cf. Rom 16:3-16).

Names of other co-workers of Paul were also mentioned in the epistle: Timothy, Lucius and Janson and Sosipater, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus and Quartus (cf. Rom 16:21-23). These men and women belonged to the Jewish and Gentile communities who were ordained as lay ministers. Their designations indicate their special role in building up and strengthening the communities. Their functions included various activities such as hosting house churches, instructing the believers, offering hospitality to travelling

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124 Cf. Stephen C. Mott, “Junias”, in *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, eds. Paul J Achtemeier, at el. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009)557.

missionaries, working as emissaries and establishing local contacts etc. It was to Paul's credit that he was able to ensure effective collaboration of them in the Spirit of God. He planted, others nurtured; he laid the foundation, others built upon it as it is an ongoing process of the Holy Spirit, as they were instruments in His powerful hands (cf. 1 Cor 3:5-15). The strategy adopted by Paul in associating lay leaders for evangelization and gospel work not only facilitated the tempo of the evangelization process but also helped development of missionaries in large numbers and for the growth of the early Church to a great extent.

## **CONCLUSION**

As a result of Paul's untiring efforts, Christianity was firmly established in many places and large number of people received faith in Jesus in the first century itself. The setting up of Christian communities in those places were clear indications of his quest for proclamation and evangelization. He re-visited most of those communities repeatedly. Paul maintained personal relations with the members of the communities to strengthen their faith and to inspire, thank, encourage, remind, correct, guide and felicitate. He extended cooperation and fellowship in their mission endeavours.

His letters critically address the problems that prevailed in the Churches and gave directions as may be necessary for adhering to the fundamental doctrines relevant to the true followers of Christ. To the scholars, Paul's letters were the primary sources of information, on early Christian life and the early Churches planted by him,

since they were first-person accounts. Pauline letters are the largest collection of writings by any one person in the New Testament. Notably, his letter to the Romans has been a source of inspiration and of renewal in the Church from earliest times to the present. These epistles were written with great intention and compassion towards the communities he built up. To the Philippians he wrote in order to encourage them to be faithful and to remain humble like Jesus. 2 Thessalonians has contributed significantly to the development of a curious but enduring theme of Christian eschatology.

He confidently proclaimed the gospel and witnessed Jesus in the Jewish community, especially in their synagogues, irrespective of threats to his own life. While preaching to the Jews, he reasoned from the Scriptures and opened their eyes with their own historic beginnings and swiftly proceeded to the life of Christ, the promised Messiah (cf. Acts 13: 16-41; 17: 2, 3). To the Gentiles, Paul reasoned from nature and brought them to good news whereby they could give up their erstwhile attitude towards the worthless things and return to the living God who made heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. He convincingly proclaimed to them that Jesus is the Savior and that in Him there is salvation for all. He extensively worked amongst them and welcomed them to trust in Jesus Christ.

Paul extended great concern towards the pastoral care of the Church. His epistles to Timothy and Titus provide great insight into the care of the Church and its organizational life. They exceedingly helped the young pastors who were trying to lead the Church. Although deadly dangers were part of his missionary work, Paul did

not discourage himself, as he knew that the same would be the price he had to pay for proclaiming Christ, a debt he owes to his Lord. He pursued team-work and maintained active collaboration with lay people including women. The zeal and enthusiasm, with which Paul carried out his missionary endeavours, made him a model to the Christian missionaries. As a great missionary of the early Church, his contribution from pastoral, missiological and theological perspective, was of paramount importance to Christianity.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **THE PASTORAL ZEAL REVEALED IN THE PAULINE THEOLOGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Paul was inspired by a divine grace, transcending the bondage of the law. In the Jewish world people were bound by the Torah. Therefore, Pharisees and the priests interpreted the law into its minute details so that an ordinary believer was under the yoke of the law. Even for observing the Sabbath, the law was given more importance than the meaning and content of it. Even Jesus was criticized for his doing good on the Sabbath day, to which the Lord sharply retorted. Likewise, circumcision was the strongest canon in the law for the initiation into Judaism. This is kept as such even today by the Israelites. In the early Church scenario, the main resistance was from Jerusalem Jewish Christians who were under the guidance of Peter. Paul was criticized that he had never seen the Lord in his life time, that he was not one among the twelve and immature since unmarried etc.

An instance of the missionary zeal revealed in Pauline theology is evident in the First Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) where,

the apostle adhered to his theological conviction on circumcision. After long prayer and discussion, Peter also consented that physical circumcision was not needed. Paul maintained his zealous approach to Gentile mission, based on his theological conviction. Paul was fully convinced that a person is justified, not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. By revealing the truth that a person is saved by faith through grace, he affirmed that he is what he is only because of the divine grace.

To Paul, “Love is the heartbeat and center of his ethic.”<sup>1</sup> By revealing the depth of his love, Paul proclaimed that neither any person nor any force such as hardship, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword, will be able to separate him from the love of Christ (Rom 8:35). “The primacy of God’s grace which takes the initiative and promotes human recovery are revealed in the *Pauline Corpinum* (cf. Rom 8:29-30; Phil 1:6; 1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 5:18-21; 2 Thess 2:13; Eph 2:1-10).”<sup>2</sup> Paul asserted that God’s covenant with Abraham, into which the Christians are incorporated in Christ as Abraham’s “seed,” is neither nullified nor enlarged by the later Sinai covenant which is subsidiary to it (cf. Gal 3:15-18). This aspect of divine grace is a significant element in the life of Paul. He was wholly convinced that those who were bestowed a divine grace alone are able to share that grace and promote the cause of the

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1 T. R. Schreiner, “Law of Christ”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press) 1993 542-544, 544. Gal 5:13 enunciates the “Law of Christ” as another way of describing the “law of love”.

2 R. P. Martin, “Center of Paul’s Theology”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 92-95, 93.

gospel zealously. In the early Christianity, the focus of proclamation of the gospel was the passion of Christ (cf. Acts 2:22-28) as the central point of salvation history.

## **1. THE ZEALOUS PROCLAMATIONS OF PAUL**

Paul is the most influential Christian theologian of all time. Paul's pastoral zeal is unparalleled. He has conceived his profound reflections on ecclesia. His concept that the Church is the Body of Christ is one of the most significant contributions to the development of a Christian theology and reveals his ardent missionary zeal for building up of the Church. Jesus Christ by virtue of his sufferings, crucifixion, death on the cross burial and glorious resurrection had accomplished abundant life and grace for humanity. They are basically known as the gracious effects of the Christ-event. The effects of the Christ-event such as justification, salvation, reconciliation, expiation, redemption, freedom, sanctification, transformation, new creation and glorification are of paramount importance to the humanity and were discussed by prominent theologians and are briefly dealt with in this section, as they are part of Pauline proclamations, revealing Paul's pastoral zeal. Thus, the pastoral zeal revealed in his theology enabled him to inspire, guide and strengthen his listeners abundantly. Pauline proclamations are the outcome of his zealous initiative for spreading the gospel truths to all concerned especially to the Gentiles.

### **1.1. ECCLESIAL VISION OF PAUL**

One of the richest contributions of Paul to Christian theology is his profound reflection on the Church. "The word ecclesia appears

114 times in the NT, with sixty-two instances in Paul and 23 times in the Acts. It is an integral aspect of Paul's teaching about the people of God and is a term meaning 'congregation', 'church', and 'gathering' or "assembly."<sup>3</sup> "*Ecclesia*", according to Joseph Pathrapankal, is not an abstract speculation of Paul, but is something which resulted from his own personal experience, right from the beginning of his commitment to Christ.<sup>4</sup> Paul's endeavour has been to build-up, by all means, the Church as the house-hold of Christ. This is clear from the fact that "the term "*ecclesia*" is seen 62 times in Pauline corpus (most frequent in 1 Corinthians) and is clearly an indication of the zealous approach he had maintained in his mission endeavours amongst the Gentiles."<sup>5</sup> This seems to suggest that it took some time for early Christians to become aware of their union in Christ as an *ecclesia*.<sup>6</sup> It is of significance that the Church is described as belonging to the one who brought it into existence, i.e. God, or the one through whom it was formed, namely, Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Cor 10:32; 11: 22; Rom 16:16). Surely, *ecclesia* is not simply a human association or a religious club, but a divinely created entity.<sup>7</sup> What is more important to note about the reality of

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3 P.T. O'Brien, "Church", in *Dictionary of Paul, and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993)123-131, 123. 123-131, 123.

4 Cf. Joseph Pathrapankal, *Time and History – Biblical and Theological Studies* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2002) 128-129.

5 James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998) 537.

6 Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", in *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond E Brown, et al. (Great Britain: Prentice Hall Inc., 1989) 1383-1416, 1411. In Paul's uncontested letters the term 'ἐκκλησία' is found 44 times (in Deutero-Paulines 15 times; in the Pastorals 3 times).

7 Cf. O'Brien, "Church", in *Dictionary of Paul*, 123-131, 125.

the Church in the Acts is the way in which the Church grew up in its early stages and established its identity as something different from Judaism. Through Acts we understand the enlightened growth of the early Church. Without Acts, we would have had no clear idea as to how Christianity first spread.

Though Jesus of Nazareth had envisaged the community of his followers as an entirely new one, consisting of all humans qualified by their conversion (*metanoia*) and faith (Mk 1:14-15), the community in Jerusalem had almost identified itself as a new sect of Judaism (Acts 24:5) which accepted Jesus of Nazareth as its messiah.<sup>8</sup> In Phil 4:15, the community of Philippi is specified as an *ecclesia* in the full sense of the word, which came forward to help Paul in his personal needs, and the letter is addressed to all the “saints in Christ Jesus who were in Philippi with bishops and deacons” (Phil 1:1).<sup>9</sup> The very fact that Paul gracefully contributed to the evolution and development of an ecclesial theology through his varied proclamations and his affirmation that he has built up and established his missions on his own foundation is an explicit exposition of the missionary zeal revealed in his theology. Clearly, the “Church” is a term with which Paul most regularly conceptualized the corporate identity of those converted in the Gentile mission.<sup>10</sup> As a result of such an insight into the mystery of the Church, Paul began to develop a practical theology of the Church. Surely the theology behind the ecclesial vision of Paul is an exposition of his

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8 Cf. Pathrapankal, *Time and History*, 125-126.

9 Pathrapankal, *Time and History*, 131.

10 Cf. James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 3.

pastoral zeal, as he had conceived that faith in Jesus Christ which is the decisive criterion for anyone to become a disciple of Christ and to be part of the Church.

## **1.2. CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Yet another significant theological contribution of Paul is his metaphor of the Body of Christ to describe the Church in its varied connotations. “The Church as the Body of Christ is undoubtedly the most important of the images applied to the Church in New Testament. It clearly proclaims the closest possible identification of the Church with Jesus Christ, and in this respect it is related to the image of the church as a temple.”<sup>11</sup> Paul explicitly identifies the Church as the Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor: 12:27). Paul further affirms that God has put all things under the feet of Jesus and has made Jesus the head over all things for the Church, which is His body the fullness of Christ who fills all in all (cf. Eph 1:22-23). Against the intervention of the Risen Lord: “Why do you persecute me?” and also against the Lord’s own revelation that: “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting” (cf. Acts 9:4-5; 22:7-8; 26:14-15), one can see the seed of Paul’s later understanding of Christ in relation to the Church, namely, the close relationship between Christ and the believers who constitute the Church.<sup>12</sup> The unity and oneness of the Christian community in Christ is compared by Paul to the integrated system of the physical parts of the human body. Similarly, the

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11 Edmund Hill, “Church”, in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, eds. Joseph A Komonchak, Mary Collins, Dermot A Lane (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2014) 185-201, 189.

12 Cf. Pathrapankal, *Time and History*, 129.

people in the Church were all baptized into one Spirit and they form one body, irrespective of whether they are Jews or Greeks, slaves or free (1 Cor 12:12-14). Through the term ecclesia, the wisdom of God is made known even to the cosmic powers- ‘the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places’ (Eph 3:10). A few connotations of the Church envisaged by Paul are highlighted below:

### **1.2.1. CHURCH, THE UNIFIED PEOPLE OF GOD**

The Christian Church, as one body with many members, is one of the favourite thoughts of Paul. (cf. 1 Cor 12:12-27). The members of the body neither argue with one another nor envy each other nor dispute about their relative importance. Each part of the body carries out its own function, however big or small it might be. It was Paul’s conviction that the Christian Church should be like that. Each member has to perform his function with a unified sense of belonging.<sup>13</sup> It is the Holy Spirit who unifies the people of God through baptism into the Church. The relevance of the unity in the Body of Christ is emphasized by Paul in Ephesians (4:1-12) and in various other epistles. “Christ is the head of the body, the Church” (Col 1:18) God made him the supreme head of the Church, which is his body (cf. Eph 1:23). Paul imparts great emphasis on the unity of the Church as Christ has broken down the barrier between Jew and the Greek; all now share one salvation, for He had reconciled in one body to God through the cross (cf. Eph 2:16; 4:4). Such a novel theological concept of Paul is a clear expression of his pastoral zeal, as his endeavour has all along been for unifying the faithful into the

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13 Cf. Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, 187.

Body of Christ through the holy baptism.

### **1.2.2. CHURCH, THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD**

Paul develops the picture of the Church as the community of the redeemed which, through the sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit, is constituted as the dwelling place of God (cf. 2 Cor 6:16-18; cf. 1 Cor 6:19). Paul asserted that Christ himself is the corner stone and that in Him the whole structure is joined together and it grows into a holy temple in the Lord. It is in Jesus that the members of the Church are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God (Eph 2:20b-22). Since every faithful in the Church is conceived as the temple of God (cf. 1 Cor 3:16), he or she is also expected to be the dwelling place of God, in a wider sense.

### **1.2.3. CHURCH, THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD**

Throughout the New Testament, God's people are deemed as a family. A number of terms, drawn from family life, are introduced in the Christian communities by Paul. Such terms commonly used by Paul are: God as "father" (cf. Rom 8:1:15; Gal 4:9); those who are redeemed by Jesus Christ are known as God's children (Gal 4:1-7); Jesus Christ is the first born of the family (Rom 8:29). Paul addresses the fellow Christians as 'brothers' and 'brothers and sisters' (Phil 4:1 includes both 'brothers and sisters'). The theme of family relationship is particularly prominent in 1 Tim, where the Church (*ecclesia*) is described as the 'household of God', and the pillar and bulwark of the truth (cf. 1 Tim 3:15; cf. Heb 3:1-6). It can be considered that the very purpose of his letters to Timothy was to

indicate as to how one ought to behave in God's household. Members are expected to treat one another as they would the members of their own family (cf. 1 Tim 5:1-2). They are to care for one another in their need (cf. 1 Tim 5:5, 16), while overseers or bishops are to be skillful at managing the household of God, as demonstrated by their skill and care for their own immediate families (1 Tim 3:1-7).<sup>14</sup> Pauline theology of considering the people of God as the household of God has contributed tremendously to the Christian theology. It substantially enhanced the fraternity among the members of the fellowship gathering.

#### **1.2.4. CHURCH BY NATURE IS MISSIONARY**

The Church is basically a missionary, by her very nature.<sup>15</sup> If she ceases to be a missionary, she ceases being a Church. Therefore, if the Church ceases to be a missionary, it is not merely a failure in one of the tasks of the Church. The missionary activity is the greatest and holiest duty of the Church.<sup>16</sup> It is God who had sent Jesus into the world as a missionary. Jesus fulfilled his mission to the fullest measure and completed the redemptive mystery at the expense of his own life. It was Jesus who entrusted the Church to continue his mission in the world through his apostles. With the special intervention of Jesus, the apostolate of Paul was instituted with thrust on his Gentiles mission. The role of the Church in proclaiming and witnessing Jesus in the world until the second

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14 Cf. O'Brien, "Church", in *Dictionary of Paul*, 128.

15 Cf. A.G 2.

16 Cf. A.G 29, R.M 63; Thekkekarott, *St Paul His Apostolate, Vision and Theology*, 113.

coming of the Lord, is of paramount significance. 1 Cor 9:16 is a clear depiction of Pauline zeal for the gospel. The theology behind Paul's ecclesial vision with emphasis on Church being a missionary, clearly reveals his pastoral zeal, since mission of the church means the expression of the very being of the Church itself. In perpetuating that doctrine, the role played by Paul is most significant.

### **1.3. PAUL'S PROCLAMATION 'JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST'**

Paul emphasizes that God himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. He also clarifies that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by law (cf. Rom 3:26; 3:28). It follows that the gratuitous and unmerited character of the justification of the humanity by faith is fulfilled with the assertion that God has displayed Jesus in death (by his blood) to show forth that God, who is upright, accepts as righteous and justified, everyone who has faith in Jesus (cf. Rom 3:26; cf. 5:1; Gal 2:15-21). The process of justification begins in God who is upright and who justifies the godless sinner as a result of what Christ has done for humanity. For this reason Paul speaks of Christ as "our uprightness" (1 Cor 1:30), since through his obedience many are "made upright", Rom 5:19; cf. 1 Cor 6:16; Rom 5:18).<sup>17</sup>

Paul highlighted righteousness (Rom 5:16) as a gracious gift of God. "God's righteousness received in Christ is man's justification."<sup>18</sup> This denotes that salvation is God's gift. In the theological context

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17 Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 1397.

18 Webster, "Paul the Apostle", 727.

of Paul, Christ Jesus is the source of righteousness, sanctification and redemption of humanity (cf. 1 Cor 1:30). The righteousness of God and that of man are different (Rom 10:3).<sup>19</sup> The righteousness of man is a free gift of God. The fulfilment of righteousness is in Christ Jesus and through his gospel (cf. Rom 1:16-17; 3:25-26). It builds up relationship with God as His adopted children. Righteousness is an active manifestation of a new life in the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 8:9-11). It is a sign of hope and glorification on eschatology (the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus), marking the end of the present world and the glorification of those chosen as justified because they conformed to 'the image of His Son' (Rom 8:30). Thus righteousness is a gift of God (cf. Phil 1:11). By the very nature, no person can do well for the sake of righteousness, but does so, because he takes part in the righteousness of God through Jesus.

The concept of righteousness is brought out prominently in his proclamation throughout his missionary endeavours. Apparently, the theological concept of righteousness by faith may look contradictory to the concept brought-out by St. James who emphasizes that faith without works is barren, and that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone (cf. Jas 2:14-26). But on a critical analysis it is clear that these two concepts are not contradictory to each another. While, James emphasizes that faith is perfected by works, the same is in line with the theological concept of Paul, in as much as, the effect of righteousness is a righteous life.<sup>20</sup> "The grace of the Holy

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19 Cf. Michael Karimattam, *St. Paul: The Person and Vision* (Thalassery: Alpha Books 7, 2012) 24-25.

20 Cf. Therath, "Righteousness", 26.

Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ” and “through Baptism.”<sup>21</sup> The ultimate goal of mission is to bring about oneness with Christ. In the gospel, the solemnity of Christ the King is revealed. He is the judge whose sole criterion is love. The Pauline vision is truly in line with the gospel concept of love. Communion with Christ in faith leads to charity. And charity is the fulfillment of communion with Christ. Thus, we are just by being united with Him and in no other way.<sup>22</sup> Through the power of the Holy Spirit if anyone takes part in Christ’s passion by dying to sin, and in his resurrection by being born to a new life, it is possible to become the members of his body which is the Church, like branches getting grafted onto the vine that is Christ himself (cf. 1 Cor 12; Jn 12.1-3).

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul emphasized justification by faith and relationship between Judaism and Christianity. According to Pope Benedict XVI, our common identity within the diversity of cultures is Christ and it is He who makes us just. Being just simply means being with Christ and in Christ. “For this reason Luther’s phrase: “faith alone” is true, if it is not opposed to faith in charity, in love. Faith is looking at Christ, entrusting oneself to Christ, being united with Christ and being conformed to Christ and his life. The form and the life of Christ, is love; hence to believe is to conform to

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21 CCC 1987.

22 Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, “Justification in Christ, God’s Free Gift”, General Audience (November 9 2008, 4” <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/b16stPaulind.htm> [accessed June 23, 2017].

Christ and to enter into his love. (Gal 5:14).<sup>23</sup>

By the proclamation that the fulfilment of righteousness is in Christ Jesus and through his gospel, Paul reiterated God's unconditional love towards humanity. Paul zealously stood for the truth he had experienced by proclaiming and witnessing the unconditional love of God. That is clearly an expression of his pastoral zeal, revealed in his theology of unconditional love.

#### **1.4. SANCTIFICATION: AN EFFECT OF CHRIST EVENT**

“Sanctification<sup>24</sup> (*hagiasmos*) is an effect of Christ-event. According to Paul, God made Christ Jesus ‘our sanctification’ (cf. 1 Cor 1:30), i.e. human beings are dedicated anew to God and oriented to serving him with awe and respect. In the NT, Sanctification is understood as a process whereby a person grows in virtue by identifying himself to Christ. To his holiness “God has called us” (cf. 1 Thess 4:7) and we have been made ‘holy’ or sanctified by Christ Jesus (cf. 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11) and by Holy Spirit sent by Jesus (cf. Rom 15:16; cf. 6:22).”<sup>25</sup> Paul reiterates that by grace we have been saved through faith, and that this salvation is not our own doing but it is the gift of God; not the result of works, so that no one may boast (cf. Eph 2:8). The will of God is our sanctification and that each one is expected to abstain from fornication by controlling the body in holiness and honour (cf. 1 Thess 4:3-4). Keeping this in view, Paul uses the term “saints,” as a common designation for Christians

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23 Pope Benedict XVI, “*Justification in Christ, God's Free Gift*”, 3.

24 Cf. Therath, “Sanctification”, 876.

25 Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1401.

in his uncontested letters, except 1Thess and Gal, where they are ‘called, to be saints’ (Rom 1:7).<sup>26</sup> “The Holy Spirit is the master of the interior life. By giving birth to the “inner man”, justification entails the sanctification of the whole being.”<sup>27</sup> Basically, Christ-event is the source of sanctification, grace and holiness. The Church teaches: “Sanctifying grace is a habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by His love.”<sup>28</sup> Such a gift is availed by the missionaries by abiding in Christ.

The theology behind Pauline proclamation and witnessing is that to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God and that God has made Christ Jesus our sanctification and that we have been sanctified by his grace. Accordingly, Paul was in a position to write so boldly that in Christ Jesus he had reason to boast of his work for God. He forcefully stated that he would not be venturing to speak of anything except what Christ had accomplished through him to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum, he had fully proclaimed the good news of Christ (cf. Rom 15:17-19). It reveals how perfectly Paul proclaimed the name of the Lord and became a tool in the hands of the Lord, for the scripture says that the Lord will sanctify His great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and that

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26 Cf. Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1401.

27 CCC 1995.

28 CCC 2000.

the nations shall know that He is the Lord God and through you the Lord will display His holiness before their eyes (cf. Ezek 36:23). To Paul, it was clear in his mind that he was sanctified by grace through the effects of the Christ event and thus he was ordained to sanctify and proclaim the great name of the Lord amongst the nations. This clearly reveals the sanctity and holiness to which each and every missionary is called by the Lord, as they are bound to proclaim the gospel with utmost earnestness and commitment to the Lord.

### **1.5. TRANSFORMATION: A LIFE INTO CHRIST.**

Paul uses the image Transformation<sup>29</sup> (*metamorphosis*) as an outcome of Christ-event. Here, Paul sees how Christ Jesus gradually re-shapes human beings, ‘who turn to the Lord’. The concept presented by Paul is that the creator God through the Risen Christ puts creative light anew in human lives and that it transforms them.<sup>30</sup> “When we offer ourselves to live for God, (cf. Rom 6:15-23), we begin a process of inner transformation that will lead us to an entirely new outlook on life.”<sup>31</sup> Paul himself impelled by the power of transformation, warns the Romans not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of the minds, so that they may discern what is the will of God and do what is good that is acceptable and perfect (cf. Rom 12:2). Paul writes to Philippians that transformation is a gracious gift of the most powerful Lord, by which our body of humiliation gets conformed to His glory (cf. Phil 3:21). The wonderful effect of transformation is that one will be able

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29 Cf. Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1401.

30 Cf. Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1401.

31 Hayfords, “Romans”, 350.

to live by faith and will not lose heart in front of adversities. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. Even a slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal (cf. 2 Cor 4: 16-18). Here, Paul also implants into the minds of his audience, the beauty and pleasure of his own encounter with the Lord Jesus which he had inexplicably experienced in his life and his realization that the Christ-event really transforms those who fall into a bond of relationship with the Risen Lord.

As Jesus Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures (cf. 1 Cor 15:3) and he rose on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures (cf. 1 Cor 15:4), Paul connects the events of the Lord's death and resurrection (Christ-event) to the history of the Old Covenant of God with his people. From that event, history receives its inner logic and its true meaning and Christ's victory over death took place through the creative power of the Word of God.<sup>32</sup> Paul realizes that the Christ-event transforms and illumines the mind-set of humanity by liberating them from their inner urges towards worldly life and by bringing hope and joy enshrined in the Paschal revelation. It is this creative and divine power of the Word of God which is proclaimed and witnessed by Paul through his missionary endeavours. Here, Paul brings out a theology which is ever valid. The transformation of a person in Christ takes place through the

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32 Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation* (Trivandrum: Carmel International Publishing House, 2010) 31-32.

effects of Christ- event whereby he gets into the likeness of Christ. The ultimate goal of proclamation is to invite humanity to focus on Christ, the Crucified One, through whom transformation is to be attained by virtue of the effects of Christ-event.

## **1.6. IN CHRIST: THE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GOD AND THE WORLD**

Reconciliation<sup>33</sup> (*katallage*) is an image conceived by Paul to describe an effect of Christ-event. Being a zealous and enlightened missionary, he presented the Gospel to the Gentiles, proclaiming that through the Christ-event, God in Christ has reconciled the world to Him (cf. 2 Cor 5:19; Rom 11:15). “We ought never to forget that “the Word of God is a Word of reconciliation, for in it God has reconciled all things to himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-20; Eph 1:10).”<sup>34</sup> Also, the Church is a universal phenomenon as it embraces the whole world and influences the entire creations (cf. Eph 1:21-23; 3:9-11). In the reconciliation process, the initiative is with God, who through the Christ-event brought human sinners from their status of enmity to friendship (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-19). Even when we were enemies, God reconciled us by the death of his Son, exclusively to bestow his saving grace on us. For the same reason we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation (cf. Rom 5:10-11).

“God has opened the door of faith to the whole world, but he has not rejected the people who were the original branches growing

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33 Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1398-99.

34 Pope Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, 111.

from that tree of faith which has its historical roots in God's first great act of self-revelation. The day is coming when Israel will be grafted back into that original vine."<sup>35</sup> Such a concept is further developed by Paul in that it is related to the overall cosmic role of the Risen Christ (cf. Col 1:20-22; Eph 2:11-19). The Reconciliation is described both "horizontally," in that Gentiles and Jews are brought near as Christians, and "vertically," in that both Gentile and Jewish Christians have been reconciled to God through Christ, who is "our peace."<sup>36</sup> It is Paul who categorically proclaimed: If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise (cf. Gal 3:28). Such an exhaustive exhortation of Paul is an ardent expression of his theology that through the Christ-event, the reconciliation process is fulfilled in Jesus.

## **1.7. EXPIATION WIPES AWAY HUMAN SIN**

Expiation<sup>37</sup> (*hilasterion*) is an image Paul uses to convey one of the vital effects of the Christ-event. Paul uses this image in Rom 3:25, where Christ, by his death or the shedding of his blood has achieved for humanity once and for all what the day of atonement ritual symbolized each year for Israel of old; he has become the new mercy seat. Since all have sinned and fell short of the glory of God, they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith.<sup>38</sup> Expiation wipes

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35 Hayfords, "Romans", 350.

36 Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 1398-99.

37 Cf. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 1399.

38 Cf. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 1399.

away human sin, and Paul sees this as achieved once and for all in Jesus' death on the cross. Paul insists on the gracious and loving initiative of the Father and the love of Christ himself in this action. He often says of Christ that he "gave himself for our sins" (Gal 1:4; 2:20) and that he "loved us" (Gal 2:20; Rom 8:35, 37). Here lies the significance of Paul's theological concept that he died to the law and was crucified with Christ and that it was no longer he who lived but Christ who lived in him.

### **1.8. 'REDEMPTION' AN EFFECT OF CHRIST-EVENT**

Paul highlighted 'Redemption' (*apolytrosis*) as a prime effect of Christ-event. In particular, Jesus' redemptive death fulfills Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering servant (Isa 53:7-8; Acts 8:32-35). The righteousness of God is the key concept for Paul's doctrine of redemption. Redemption being an effect of Christ-event, he acknowledges that Christ's passion, death, etc. were a ransom to set sinners free from bondage and enslavement. It was Paul's conviction that Christ is our redemption (1Cor 1:30). "Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:24), human beings are freed and justified. Though this has already been achieved by Christ, there is still a future, eschatological aspect, for Christians await the redemption of the body (Rom 8:23) – even a cosmic aspect, since "the whole creation" (Rom 8:19-22) is groaning in expectation of it.<sup>39</sup> When Paul speaks of Christians as having been "bought for a price" (1 Cor 6:20; 7-23), he emphasized the onerous burden of what Christ did for humanity. "The Paschal mystery of Christ's death and

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39 Cf. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 1400; CCC 344.

resurrection stands at the center of the good news that the apostles, and the Church following them, are proclaiming to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished "once for all" by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ."<sup>40</sup> "The Scriptures<sup>41</sup> foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of "the righteous one, my Servant" (Isa 53:11) as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin.

Paul insists on the gracious and loving initiative of the Father and of the love of Christ towards the saving plan accomplished by Jesus. He often says of Christ that Jesus "gave himself" for us, for our sins (cf. Gal 1:4; 2: 20) and that he loved us" (cf. Gal 2:20; Rom 8:35, 37). It speaks of God's righteousness. It is the accomplishment of God's love enshrined in Christ Jesus. Paul realized that the redemption is a significant effect of Christ-event and the whole world may be accountable to God since no one is justified before God by the law and at the same time, the one who is righteous will live by faith (cf. Gal 3:11b). The theology behind such a realization of Paul made him to surrender his whole life to proclaim the God's love to all. This reflects the zealous approach of Paul based on his conviction for proclamation of the truth and is a paradigm to the missionaries at all times.

## **1.9. IN CHRIST: GOD CREATED HUMANITY ANEW**

According to Paul, a "new creation" (*kainektisis*) is a wonderful effect of Christ-event. In fact, God in Christ has created

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40 CCC 571

41 CCC 81.

humanity anew, giving it “newness of life” (Rom 6:4), that is a life in union with the Risen Christ (cf. Gal 2:20: “Christ lives in me”), a life destined to share in “the glory of God” (cf. Rom 3:23b).<sup>42</sup> The newness of life that Christ has brought in is a share in his own Risen life (cf. 1 Cor 6:4; 2 Cor 4:14; Rom 6:4-5; 8:11). Fundamental to Paul’s theology is his acceptance of Jesus as Christ and Lord. The decisive event has already occurred in history (Gal 4:4) in the death and resurrection of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15: 20). In short, anyone in Christ is a new creation. “It is the definitive possibility of salvation offered and effected by God on a person of faith through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”<sup>43</sup>

As for the new life in Christ, Paul insisted, not to be conformed to this world. What is needed is a transformation by the renewal of the minds, so as to discern what is the will of God and what is good, acceptable and perfect before the Lord (Rom 12:2) Paul insisted in his letter to the Colossians that if they have been raised with Christ, they are expected to seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God so as to set their minds on things that are above and not on things that are on earth, since they have died, and their life is hidden with Christ in God (cf. Col 3:1-3). Paul realizes that God in Christ transformed him into a new creation; ever since he experienced the transforming power of Christ the Lord, he became a new person altogether. It can be recalled that in his Gospel, Luke typically highlights an instance of the tax collector

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42 Cf. Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1401.

43 Jacob Prasad, “Paul and the New Creation”, in *The Relevance of Saint Paul – An Indian Reading of His Letters*, eds. Kurien Kunnumpuram, Rekha M. Chennattu (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2009) 392-408, 405.

Zacchaeus of Jericho (cf. Lk 18:18-25) becoming a new creation as a result of his adherence to the command of Jesus. As a new creation in Christ, Paul whole-heartedly adhered to the command of the Lord and proclaimed the gospel, theologizing the truth that the gospel transforms people into a new creation in Christ.

### **1.10. IN CHRIST: ALL ARE CALLED TO FREEDOM**

“Freedom” (*eleutheroun*) is an image used by Paul to denote one of the effects of Christ-event which would mean that the Christ Jesus sets human being free, enabling them the rights of citizens of a free city or state. Paul conceives that although our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20), while we are here on earth, we assume a colony of free heavenly citizens.<sup>44</sup> To Corinthians Paul writes, “Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor 3:17). Paul realizes that the Christian has not yet fully achieved that destiny and insists as follows: “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another” (Gal 5:13). Freedom is not a license to do evil; but freedom implies that the Spirit of the Lord sets us free from the clutches of evil spirit and its slavery. Being a virtue of the Christ-event, “Freedom” is a privilege of those in Christ. According to Paul, those who are under the law are no longer free (cf. Rom 6:14). Paul views law and sin in the same scenario.

Through the death of Christ on the cross, all are freed from the clutches of the slavery of law (cf. Gal 3:10-14). That is why Paul

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44 Cf. Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1400.

insists that it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Therefore, what is needed is to stand firm, without submitting again to a yoke of slavery” (cf. Gal 5:1). The slavery which Paul refers is that of “sin and death,” “self” and “the law” (cf. Rom 5-7; esp. 7:3; 8:1-2). According to Paul, except with the law of the innate love of Christ, with no other law, a Christian is expected to be tied-up with. Since the law of the innate love of God is Spiritual, it does not hurt freedom of any one. Against the question as to whether the food offered to idols is eatable, Paul hinted to leave it to the law of innate love of freedom (cf. 1 Cor 8:1-13)<sup>45</sup>. The Pauline concept that those who are in Christ are called to freedom is of universal significance and the same is the effect of Christ-event. It is to this freedom that Paul invited all through his exhortations and varied missionary endeavours. Freedom arising from the innate love of God inspired Pauline ministry exceedingly well and it is inspirational to missionaries at all times.

### **1.11. SALVATION: AN EFFECT OF CHRIST-EVENT**

Paul presents “salvation” (*soterion*), as a vital effect of Christ-event. “The image represents deliverance or rescue from evil or harm, whether physical, psychic, national, cataclysmic or moral.”<sup>46</sup> All the evangelization endeavours of Paul focusses towards salvation of souls and out of his zeal for proclamation of the gospel and to win the virtual effects of the Christ- event for all. Paul considers himself as a servant of Christ and a model for the salvation of sinners, and even a prototype for the sinner to be saved by grace (cf. 1 Tim

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45 Cf. Therath, “Freedom”, 1069-71.

46 Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1398.

1: 15-16). His example serves to manifest the truth, valid for the whole Church that Jesus came into the world to save sinners.<sup>47</sup> Paul categorically reiterates that the Law does not bring salvation. Paul recognizes that Christians “are being saved by the cross of Christ” (cf. 1 Cor 1:18, 21; cf. 15:2; 2 Cor 2:15), i.e., rescued from evil (moral and otherwise). He identifies that the message about the cross is foolishness to all those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (cf. 1 Cor 1:18).

In Christ, all man-made distinctions fade and barriers fall. He has made all Christians into one family in which all members are equal in forgiveness and adoption; and the Lord is all that matters.<sup>48</sup> According to Paul, there are two possible routes to the interior of the economy of faith, one for the circumcised (Jews: Lev 18:5; Deut 30: 11-14), and another for the uncircumcised (Rom 10: 8-13). The first would consist in living one’s faith by observing the divine will expressed in the Law transmitted by Moses, and the second by believing in Jesus Christ and becoming his disciple. Jesus Christ would thus be the substitute for the Law, a way for the Gentiles to achieve salvation by another route. According to Romans 10, the Jewish faith process has nothing to do with salvation. Everyone, Jew or non-Jew wishing to be saved must confess Jesus Christ, since the Law does not bring salvation, while everyone who calls on

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47 Cf. Schroeder, “1 Timothy”, 1736.

48 Cf. Jack W. Hayfords, “Colossians”, 392-397,394.

the name of Lord shall be saved.<sup>49</sup>

Salvation has an eschatological aspect too (cf. 1 Thess 2:16; 1 Thess 5:8-9; 1 Cor 3:15; 1 Cor 5:5; Rom 5:9-10; Rom 8:24). [“In hope we have been saved”]; (cf. Rom 10:9-10, 13).<sup>50</sup> Paul exhorted that God is the one working in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure, lest anyone should think that salvation can be achieved without God’s grace. However it has to be borne in mind that God’s forgiveness and mercy do not free the faithful from the duty to do their best to fulfil the commandments of the Law.<sup>51</sup> Paul reiterates: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not the result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph 2:8-9). The salvation in Christ is offered to all. The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church but to all. Since salvation is to all, it must be made concretely available to all. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the Gospel revelation or to enter the Church. For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation.

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49 Cf. Jean Noel Aletti, “Romans”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, at el. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1553-1600, 1595.

50 Cf. Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1398.

51 Aletti, “Romans”, 1558.

This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his Sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. It enables each person to attain salvation through his or her free co-operation. “Since Christ died for everyone, and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and is therefore a universal one, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this Paschal Mystery in a manner known to God.”<sup>52</sup> Paul’s untiring effort to proclaim the Gospel that salvation is a gracious effect of Christ-event clearly reveals the theology behind his missionary endeavor.

### **1.12. GLORIFICATION: AN EFFECT OF CHRIST-EVENT**

The image used by Paul to describe an effect of Christ-event is “glorification” (*Doxa*). Paul speaks of this effect in Rom 8:30: Those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified” (cf. 1 Thess 2:12; 1 Cor 2:7; Rom 8:18, 21). It implies, that according to Lord’s predestined plan, the Lord calls, justifies and glorifies the humanity. To the Romans Paul affirmed: Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God (cf. Rom 5:1-2; 8:17, 1 Cor 15:40; Phil 3:21; Col 3:4; 2 Thess 2:14). The hope of mankind is that God has rescued us from the power of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son (cf. Col 1:13; cf. Eph 2:6).

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52 Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, *On Church’s Missionary Mandate* (Mumbai: St Paul’s, 1990) 18-19.

1. In summing up, it is clear that the missionary endeavour of Paul has all along been focussed to proclaim Christ and the effects of Christ-event to the humanity. This endeavor he has carried out in line with the *kerygma* and the Spiritual insight bestowed on him. “The *kerygma* of the Apostles always precedes over the personal re-elaboration of Paul; each of his arguments moves from common tradition, and in them he expresses the faith shared by all the Churches, which evolved in one single Church.”<sup>53</sup> “Paul’s gospel is related to the pre-Pauline *kerygmatic* tradition: I passed on to you above all what I received” (cf. 1 Cor 15:1-2).<sup>54</sup> Thus, St. Paul offers a model for all time, of how to approach theology and how to preach. Accordingly, it transpires that Paul’s proclamation, particularly in the Proto-Pauline letters (*homologoumena*, *homologoumenos* =undeniable, certain) are in line with the gospel and more particularly in line with the *kerygma*<sup>55</sup> of the early Church which throws light on the traditions. The theological thoughts on the effects of Christ-event on humanity that were precisely crystalized and focussed here, facilitate humanity in their hope of sharing the glory of God. Undoubtedly, the effects of Christ-event influenced Paul for his onward journey, with enhanced zeal and has contributed substantially to the enrichment of mission endeavours of the Church more vibrantly.

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53 Fitzmyer, “Pauline Theology”, 1390.

54 Pope Benedict XVI, “Theology of the Cross, Not a Theory”, 1-2,

55 Cf. Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology*, 41. Seven letters which were undeniably written by Paul himself: Rom, 1 and 2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thess, Phlm. These seven letters are also called authentic Pauline Letters.

## 2. PAULS' ZEAL LEADES TO SUFFERINGS

Suffering is a theological theme vital to the Pauline mission. Paul has not seen his suffering as an unfortunate consequence of his apostolate.<sup>56</sup> Instead, Paul viewed “suffering as central to his apostolic calling as Christ told him at the time of his calling that he has to suffer in his mission”<sup>57</sup> (cf. Acts 9:15-16). Ultimately, Paul realized the purpose behind his suffering and was able to say that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose (cf. Rom 8:28) since he is aware that he has an apostolic call from God, a call is for God’s purpose. Therefore, Paul is confident that in his endeavours, he is not alone and to him God is the final word. This section brings out the various instances of his sufferings: as an apostle; during the course of his arrest in Jerusalem; during his imprisonment in Caesarea; during his journey as a prisoner to Rome and during the course of his martyrdom which he eventually had to undergo for Christ.

Paul encountered all his sufferings courageously and as a privilege in the true spirit of his missionary endeavour. “Paul’s suffering is the very vehicle which God has ordained to validate his apostleship and to make known the knowledge of His own power and glory, revealed in the gospel of Christ. Paul’s ministry of suffering and of Spirit does not represent an unresolved tension

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56 Cf. Joyce Kaithakottil, “Paul and Suffering”, in *The Relevance of St. Paul – an Indian Reading of his Letters*, eds., K. Kunnumpuram, S.J. and Rekha M. Chennattu (Mumbai: The Bombay Saint Paul Society, 2009) 361.

57 Hafemann, “Suffering”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 919.

which calls into question his sufficiency as a true apostle.”<sup>58</sup> Throughout his missionary life Paul lives more or less under the sign of mortal dangers. Through and even beyond dramatic events, death was progressively attacking his person. Yet he was able to say with confidence that the transcendent power comes from God that he himself is afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, ‘so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies’ (cf. 2 Cor 4:8-10). These are the reflections of his inner heart towards his love for and commitment towards Jesus.

Pope Benedict XVI quotes St. Augustine: “Christians are not spared suffering, indeed they must suffer a little more, because to live the faith demands the courage to face in greater depth the problems that life and history present. But only in this way, through the experience of suffering, can we know life in its profundity, in its beauty, in the great hope born from Christ crucified and risen again.”<sup>59</sup> In spite of innumerable threats and challenges to his missionary work, he was neither up-set nor got discouraged as he knew that it was through such mysteries that his Lord carried the cross and fulfilled His mission for him. Therefore, Paul was not hesitant to say that he dies every day! (cf. 1 Cor 15:31). With that courage, Paul exhorted his listeners realize that “death is at work in us while life in you” (cf. 2 Cor 4:12). What sustained him was the hope that no power

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58 Ellis, “Letters to the Corinthians”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press 1993) 178.

59 Pope Benedict XVI, “Theology of the Cross, not a Theory”, 4.

on earth, not even death would be able to separate him from his Lord (cf. Rom 8:35, 38-39). According to him, death is a reality that cannot be trivialized, transformed or made attractive. He warns of its annihilating power, greatly dramatizing it. For him it is ‘not sister death, it is rather the last enemy’, the strongest, the most pitiless, the most relentless of all. However, against that there is the powerful weapon of hope in Christ, the unique and sure conqueror of death.<sup>60</sup> No missionary can win the race without the powerful weapon of hope in Christ. To Paul, suffering is a participation in the mystery of Christ. Therefore, with intense desire Paul stated that he wants to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like Him in his death, if somehow he may attain the resurrection from the dead (Phil 3:10-11). Paul sees himself as participating in the Passion of Christ. “Because we are being saved through the death and resurrection of Christ, we must participate in his Passion to obtain salvation.”<sup>61</sup>

On the one hand Paul looks at the face of death with all its horror and on the other, he is not afraid of it or paralyzed by it. For the sake of the gospel he neither spares himself nor defiles himself. “When he is placed under judicial process, expecting a sentence that would send him to the gallows, he writes to the Philippians that he finds him divided between two contrasting sentiments: to die, thus entering into the full communion with Christ, or to live on, still striving for the growth and maturity of the Christian community

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60 Cf. Kaitholil, *Encounter with St Paul*, 167.

61 Brian Pizzalato, “St. Paul Explains the Meaning of Suffering”, “<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/sacraments/anoointing-of-the-sick/st-paul-explains-the-meaning-of-suffering> [accessed June 21, 2017]1.

of Philippi.”<sup>62</sup> Paul ponders all the implications/alternatives of his living and dying (cf. Phil 1:21-25). Here, faced with the prospect of bodily death, Paul implies that Christ will be honoured in his body, whereby his physical life is to be spent in toil for the gospel or else surrendered in death. To live in Christ according to Paul means to live with Christ and that is why to him “to die is a gain” since the whole purpose of life in union with Christ (*en Christo*) is to be one day with him in glory.<sup>63</sup> In other words, at the point of sufferings, like any other apostle, Paul accepted the same in full actualization of his heart, accepting things as they were in fulfilment of his commitment and trust in the Lord.

## **2.1. PAUL’S SUFFERINGS: AS AN APOSTLE**

Paul zealously suffered as an apostle of Christ (cf. Eph 3:1-13). At any rate, imprisonment clearly implies suffering (3:1; 4:1) and for him, suffering is a sign of true apostleship (cf. 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 11:23-33).<sup>64</sup> Paul experienced trials and afflictions in many and varied ways. Due to hindrance by false apostles also, Paul encountered problems (Acts 11). “Paul’s sufferings are a living proof of the value of the message he is proclaiming.”<sup>65</sup> Paul realized the truth diligently and lived that truth till he attained his

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62 Kaitholil, *Encounter with St Paul*, 167.

63 Cf. Fitzmyer, “The Letter to the Philippians”, in *The Jerome Bible Commentary*, 249.

64 Cf. Mac Donald, “Ephesians” 1681.

65 Cesar Alejandro Mora Paz, “Colossians”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, Sean Mc Eventue, I, Armando J. Levoratti and David L. Dungun (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1697-1709, 1702.

martyrdom.<sup>66</sup> Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith. It means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. He endures death through an act of fortitude. The Church has painstakingly collected the records of those who persevered to the end in witnessing to their faith. These are the acts of the Martyrs. They form the archives of truth written in letters of blood. The Church being the Body of Christ, it has to conform to the head who is Christ: just as Christ endured what he had to suffer in accordance with the Father's designs (cf. Jn 17:4; 19:30). So, the members of Christ's Body must share in His afflictions until the plan of God is fulfilled and in this way they will also share in His glory (cf. Rom 8:17, 20).<sup>67</sup> On his own credentials as an apostle, Paul was confident to argue before his critics, the authenticity and enthusiasm with which he undertook his missionary task.

At the extremity of his mental agony, Paul zealously dared to challenge before his critics by highlighting the magnitude of the threat, challenges and sufferings he had to encounter for the sake of his commitment before the Lord, which none of his opponents might have come across at any point of time (cf. 2 Cor 11:23-29). Here, Paul does not cite any virtues (as he did in 2 Cor 6:4c; 2 Cor 6a, d, f). The sense can be that here the apostle is not exalting his own work in any way, but rather God's protection (cf. 2 Cor

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66 Cf. CCC 2473, 2506, 2474.

67 Cf. Mora Paz, "Colossians", 1702.

10:18).<sup>68</sup> Paul encountered insurmountable sufferings gracefully with absolute focus on Christ and his Kingdom with the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul insists that the focus of a missionary should always be on Christ who is the light, truth and the way.

Paul's endurance was unquestionable. According to Pope Benedict XVI, "the theology of the Cross is not a theory; it is the reality of Christian life. To live in the belief in Jesus Christ, is to live in truth and love, implying daily sacrifice in suffering. Christianity is not an easy road to travel; it is, rather, a difficult climb, but one illuminated by the light of Christ and by the great hope that is born of him."<sup>69</sup> With conviction Paul affirms his having died with Christ, believing that he will live with him. Paul understands that the suffering he endures serves as a way to be like Christ, as well as it being for Christ's sake. "Paul knew himself to be mysteriously united with Jesus in His suffering, death and resurrected life and also joined to all those who, by faith in Jesus were, by the Spirit, adopted into the family of God as co-heirs with Jesus Christ."<sup>70</sup> With absolute commitment to Christ and his mission, Paul confirms having reckoned everything as loss because of the great gain from knowing Christ Jesus, his Lord. For the sake of Christ, he had suffered the loss of all things, and reckoned them as refuse, in order that he might gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of his own based on law, but a righteousness through faith in Christ since the righteousness from God depends on faith so

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68 Cf. Sanchez-Bosch, "2 Corinthians", 1651.

69 Pope Benedict XVI, "Theology of the Cross, Not a Theory", 3.

70 Meye, "Social-Scientific Approaches to Paul", 909.

that he might know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and that he might share His suffering, becoming like Him in His death, with the expectation that he might attain the resurrection from the dead (cf. Phil 3:8-11).

Paul repeatedly emphasizes here that the focal point of a missionary should always be on Christ. “Paul was careful to note that he had done all this only because he had received the command from the Lord, and because he was absolutely convinced from his own study of the Scriptures that the Messiah truly had to suffer, rise, and bring salvation to the Gentiles.”<sup>71</sup> To Paul, his suffering as an apostle enabled him for a fuller revelation and a fuller knowledge of God and for a new realization of the power of God and His resurrection that God is still in control.<sup>72</sup> In such a context, it can be considered that Paul treated his sufferings as a precious privilege in fulfillment of his commitment to Christ and for the glory of the Gospel.

## **2.2. PAUL’S SUFFERINGS: ARREST IN JERUSALEM AND IMPRISONMENT IN CAESAREA**

Paul has taken his sufferings as a privilege, because God has chosen the path of suffering as the means to save the world. Paul had to encounter his suffering exclusively as ‘he himself’ as part of Lord’s will. This can be considered yet another instance of the fulfillment of the ‘Word’ of the Lord revealed to Ananias that the Lord Himself will show ‘him’ (Paul) how much ‘he’ must suffer for

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71 Grech, *Acts of the Apostles Explained A Doctrinal Commentary*, 140-141.

72 Cf. Barclay, *Ephesians*, 104-105.

the sake of Christ's name (cf. Acts 9:16). In Jerusalem temple, Paul is seized by the Jews, but is rescued by the captain of the Roman Guard. After completion of almost seven days, the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd. They seized him, shouting "Fellow Israelites help! This is the man who is teaching every one everywhere against our people, our law, and this place, more than that he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place" (Acts 21:28). For, they had previously seen Trophimus,<sup>73</sup> the Ephesian, with him in the city and they supposed that Paul brought him into the temple. Then the entire city was aroused. They laid hands on Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. Paul had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. The crowd had been following him, shouting 'Kill him!' (cf. Acts 21:28-36). It is pertinent to note that Paul was arrested and chained on either side with two soldiers. That was a divine plan to protect him. In the confusion that prevailed, the commander was unable to extract any coherent charge against Paul from the excited mob and Paul was safely carried through the violent crowd into the barracks. There was never a time when Paul was nearer to death than this incident. The unbiased justice of the Roman legal process was part of the plan to save his life.<sup>74</sup> But in all these situations, Paul suffered repeatedly for the gospel.

Just as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, Paul intervened with the tribune, with the profound background of his

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73 Cf. Therath, "Trophimus", 411.

74 Cf. Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 185.

Roman citizenship and managed to tackle the issue (cf. Acts 21:37-39) against the roaring mob. This event shows the force of Paul's personality. He used his status as a Roman citizen to silence the mob who would have lynched him otherwise. At that moment, the great power of God was upon him.<sup>75</sup> Thereafter, Paul briefed them of his Jewish origin, religious background, and zealous approach for his ancestral law, and for God, just as each one of them today. Paul confessed of his having persecuted the followers of the "Way" upto the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about that (cf. Acts 22:3-5a). Subsequently, when Paul revealed his conversion story before the audience, as to how he was sent to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 9:1-19a; 22:6-21; 26:12-18), they shouted, to kill him forthwith, without any further excuse (Acts 22:22b). The sufferings of Paul at such a terrifying situation were humanly unimaginable.

As a great missionary, Paul struggled in pursuit of his faith against the Jewish Zealots. It is enough to think of the 40 men who had conspicuously vowed not to eat or drink until they could kill Paul (cf. Acts 23:12). Similarly, Paul had to tackle the issue against pagan fanatics as well as the revolt of the silversmiths in Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:21). He had to confront with Festus the governor who declared him mad (cf. Acts 26:24) and also with the Greek philosophers who ridiculed him. Even in that situation, there were a few people who wished to hear him again on resurrection of the dead (cf. Acts 17:32). Paul noticed that amongst the Jews gathered,

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75 Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 187.

some were Sadducees and the others were Pharisees.

Though the Jews plotted for Paul's imminent death, their plans were thwarted and Paul was taken to Caesarea for trial. In the morning, the Jews joined in a conspiracy and planned to do away with him before he arrives. That conspiracy was also thwarted by the centurion who tackled to take Paul to the tribune as Paul wanted something to be reported to him. Thereafter Paul was escorted safely with an introductory letter to the Governor Felix. This was done during the night, under armed protection. "Paul's sufferings are described as the believers' glory – they are central to the success of the Gentile mission in the world (cf. Eph 3:13)."<sup>76</sup> It is considered that Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea took place between 57 and 59 A.D. Paul's trial before Felix is referred to in Acts 24:1-23ff. According to Acts 24:24-27, Felix came with his wife Drusilla, to hear Paul as they sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning faith in Christ Jesus. Here, Paul discusses justice, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened, then, the successor of Felix by name Porcius Festus was about to come into the picture in his place, Felix left Paul in prison as a favour to the Jews and left.

Thus for two years Paul had to suffer in prison for no fault of his own. At the end of two years, when Felix was recalled, he felt that it was to his advantage to keep Paul imprisoned in order to gain favour with the Jews. "This is a testimony of the fact that he considered Paul innocent of the charges laid against him. A partial parallel with Pilate can be seen here, for the latter actually affirmed

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76 Mac Donald, "Ephesians", 1681.

the innocence of Jesus, yet capitulated when the threat of having his misrule exposed at Rome put fear into him.”<sup>77</sup> Here also, Paul considered his suffering as a characteristic mark of his apostolic ministry and more particularly as a proof of the legitimacy of his apostleship (cf. 1Cor 2:1-5; 2 Cor 11:23-29; Gal 6:17; Phil 1:29-30; 2 Tim 1:11-12; 2:9).

In Caesarea, although serious charges were framed against Paul by the Jews, they could not prove them. Paul categorically stated in his defense that he had in no way committed any offense against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor (cf. Acts 25:8) Festus having conferred with his council, decided that Paul having appealed to the emperor, will go to the emperor (cf. Acts 25:1-12ff). Three days later, Paul called together the local leaders of the Jews and repeatedly affirmed that though he had done nothing against their people or the custom of their ancestors,<sup>78</sup> he was compelled to appeal to the emperor even though he had no charge to bring against his nation (cf. Acts 28: 17-19). “He knew the unbounded animosity cherished toward him by unbelieving Jews who would go to any length to kill him if he returned to Jerusalem for trial.”<sup>79</sup>

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77 Timothy-Johnson, “The Hope of Israel, the Salvation of Gentiles”, in *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 475-476.

78 Cf. Therath, “Ancestor”, 536. Israelites maintained most cordial respect and love towards their ancestors. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel etc. are of prominence. God keeps his commitment to his covenants because of his promise to the ancestors (Deut 1:5; 6:10; 9:5; 30:20; Gen 2:7; 17:1-8; 28:13-15).

79 Harrison, *Interpreting Acts*, 388.

Later, Festus laid Paul's case before the King Agrippa and Bernice at Caesarea when Agrippa decided to hear Paul by himself (cf. Acts 25:22a). So the next day, Festus briefed before King Agrippa at the audience hall that he had found nothing against Paul deserving death; and since Paul appealed to his Imperial Majesty that he decided to send him on the ground that he felt unreasonable to send a prisoner without indicating the charges against him (cf. Acts 25:23-27). Even after Agrippa's declaration of Paul's innocence, surprisingly he was not released. Agrippa seems to indicate that the governor could not pronounce an acquittal after the act of appeal to the emperor<sup>80</sup> Thus, Paul had to appear before a number of Roman judicial authorities as a defendant with false allegations and misleading charges against him, all of which Paul encountered patiently as a privilege to suffer for Christ (cf. 2 Cor 12:10; 2 Cor 1:8-11). Evidently, Paul had to face all such judicial proceedings, with utmost zeal and enthusiasm.

### **2.3. PAUL'S SUFFERINGS: IN JOURNEY TO ROME AS PRISONER**

Paul had to undergo a very tedious journey to Rome by sea in 59–60 AD. Paul reached Rome as a result of his imprisonment and to present his case before Caesar. When Paul wrote to the saints in Rome from Corinth during the course of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:2; Rom 16:23), he had expressed an intense longing to visit those Christians. The desire and determination to make such a journey turned into a journey as a prisoner to stand before the

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80 Cf. Harrison, *Interpreting Acts – The Expanding Church*, 410.

highest Roman authorities as a witness of Jesus and to convince them of his mission. Paul had a dream to call on all God's beloved ones in Rome whom Paul deemed to be saints, in the love of God. "The patience of Paul, of which Clement speaks, is an expression of Paul's communion with the Passion of Christ, of the generosity and constancy with which he accepted a long journey of suffering so as to be able to say 'I bear on my body the marks of Jesus' (Gal 6:17)."<sup>81</sup> It shows that communion with the passion of Christ is inevitable to a missionary for the successful discharge of his mission duties.

Paul, along with centurion Julius of the Augustan Cohort, embarked in a ship of Adramyttium that was about to set sail from Caesarea to the ports along the coast of Asia. They travelled, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. (cf. Acts 27:1-2). They continued their travel under guarded surveillance to Rome in which though Paul was one of the prisoners, he was the dominant personality to whom all looked for support and encouragement. His unshakable faith in God gave him confidence which causes others to trust him even in the most dangerous situations (Acts 27:1-28; 31).<sup>82</sup> "This is the most remarkable account of ancient sea navigation in the annals of history. Incidentally, the accuracy of Luke's record is a striking example of the precision of the biblical narrative."<sup>83</sup> Even at the hour of sufferings and distress in rough sea, Paul was hopeful and did not lose his courage as the Lord entrusted him a great mission to carry the gospel.

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81 Pope Benedict XVI, "St. Paul: Our Guide to Christian Life", 1.

82 Cf. Hayfords, "Acts", 342.

83 Jackson "Paul's Two Year Roman Imprisonment", 2.

### **2.3.1. PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME: RESULT OF AN UNFAILING PROMISE OF GOD**

As the sea was rough during the sailing, the people on board were subjected to a dangerous situation concerning safety of their life consequent to which they desisted to eat and remained without food for a long period of time. It was Paul who earnestly urged them to keep up their courage, by assuring them that there will be no loss of life among them. He could say so based on a revelation he had received by the appearance of an angel of the God who stood beside him and comforted him that he must stand before the emperor and that God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with him (Acts 27:23). Paul appealed to the people on board the ship to be courageous. On the fourteenth night while they were drifting across the sea of Adria by about mid night the sailors suspected that they were nearing land, the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and set it adrift (cf. Acts 27:21-32). Just before daybreak, Paul urged all of them to take some food, since that was the fourteenth day that they were in anxiety and without eating any food. To inspire and encourage the people on board the ship, Paul took bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, broke it and began to eat.

There are certainly Eucharistic overtones in this meal and the ship itself seems for a moment to become a symbol of the Church, tossed about on stormy waters but offering safety to those on board. In case the ship would run aground and begin to break-up, the soldiers wanted to kill their prisoners so as to prevent their escape. The centurion forbids this in order to save Paul and plans the operations

by which all safely reach Malta (cf Acts 27:44).<sup>84</sup> Paul realized that it showed God's providence and His unfailing faithfulness. When the promise was given to Paul that he would see Rome and bear witness there (Act 23:11), no assurance was given of a calm and uneventful trip. What is significant is that God's promises (Isa 43:2) are proven and are ever valid, irrespective of crisis or critical situations. God's unfailing promises were fulfilled in Paul during his voyage to Rome and they still continue in the Church to His glory.

### **2.3.2. PAUL IN MALTA; ACCOMPANIED BY SIGNS OF GOD**

The ship carrying Paul and the team got stranded in Malta island. Paul there showed the signs of those who believed in the mighty power of the Lord. The natives of Malta treated the survivors with kindness, which was not always the fate of those who suffer a shipwreck. They were deeply impressed when Paul suffers no harm from the viper from the firewood (Acts 28: 3-6). "When Paul survives the possible attack of the poisonous snake and cures many who were ill, the community welcomed Paul."<sup>85</sup> Followed by this, Paul was received by a rich and affluent person of the island, named Publius. Paul cured the father of Publius who was sick. After that, rest of the people of the island also brought sick persons before Paul and got cured by the power of the Holy Spirit. Before them,

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84 Cf. Justin Taylor, "Acts of the Apostles", in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2019) 1581-1621, 1618

85 Hayfords, "Acts", 342.

Paul gave strong witness, by healing the sick and doing miracles to the glory of God. It shows how wonderfully God takes care of His trusted ones in their distress. Here again, the Word of God worked through the hands of Paul (Mk 16:18). God's gracious hands were with Paul and miracles happened through him, even at the time of his own sufferings.

### **2.3.3. PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME: ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOD'S PLAN IN PAUL**

1.1. Three months later, they set sail on a ship that had wintered at the island, an Alexandrian ship with the twin brothers as its figurehead. They were put in at Syracuse and stayed there for three days; then they weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. After one day there, a south wind sprang up, and on the second day, they came to Puteoli. "According to human foresight, the ship and everyone on board should have sunk, but Luke insists that it was the Holy Spirit and not the wind that actually guided the ship. Paul was the one who sailed the crew to Rome, not vice versa. The revelation which the apostle continued to have during the voyage confirms this."<sup>86</sup> There they found believers. And there they were invited to stay with them for seven days. The believers from there, when they heard of them, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns and met them. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. When they came to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him (Acts 28:11-16). It is clear that between the believers, there is true fellowship and that they

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86 Grech, *Acts of the Apostles Explained – A Doctrinal Commentary*, 144.

would be willing to share the burdens of fellowmen in the love of God and in the Spirit of oneness in Christ. To Paul, his sufferings overwhelmed his endurance throughout the missionary journey.

#### **2.4.FULFILMENTOFSUFFERINGS;PAUL'SMARTYRDOM**

It was Paul's great wish to visit Rome as part of his missionary journey. He could accomplish his wish, inspite of many hurdles and he reached Rome by 60 AD. "First, while it is true that Paul was granted some rather unusual liberties, (cf. Acts 28:16; 30-31), nonetheless, he was still a prisoner subjected to considerable stress. He spoke of himself as 'The prisoner of Christ' (cf. Eph 3:1) or "the prisoner of the Lord." (cf. Eph 4:1), an "ambassador in chains" (cf. Eph 6:20) where chains were commonly viewed as an object of shame (cf. 2 Tim 1:16). There were multiple references to his "bonds." It was an amazing series of events that brought Paul to Rome, the great capital city of the empire. The effort Paul expended in deliberations in Rome with the Jewish leaders is tremendous. From morning to evening he argues the case for Jesus. The final word spoken to Jewish leaders is one of rejection!"<sup>87</sup> Even on that account, he encountered sufferings for Christ as he had gone there with great hope but the Jews rejected him ultimately.

After possibly spending two years of renewed missionary labours there, it appears that he might have been arrested again in Rome. He might have been charged with preaching a religion (Christianity) which Rome had outlawed in those days due to

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87 T Johnson, "The Hope of Israel, the Salvation of Gentiles", 468-477, 475-76.

which once again Paul becomes a prisoner in Rome. Paul now is fully prepared for his martyrdom. Paul affirmed that he had fulfilled his mission towards Jews and Gentiles. He risked his life among the pagans to preach salvation through faith and for that reason he suffered persecution even from some of his own brethren. He endured all the persecution with the confidence that he was carrying out his Lord's mission and therefore, no adversaries could defeat his mission.

The martyrs even dared to declare that their discipleship is an indication of their preparedness, not only to suffer for Christ but also for sacrificing themselves for Christ (cf. Phil 1:29-30). Paul realizes that suffering for Christ is a privilege. Such a realization was the outcome of the transcending power of Jesus on Paul (Acts 9:16). According to Paul, it is Christ who graciously strengthened him to follow Him along the way of His passion. To Paul, Christ the crucified was his gospel (cf. 1 Cor 1:23).

Paul trusted the Word of God unconditionally in spite of his afflictions and refusal from all trusted corners. His fair-weather friends deserted him (cf. 2 Tim 1:15; 4:10). Luke remains steadfast (2 Tim 4:11). Paul asks Timothy to come to his relief, and to bring Mark with him (2 Tim 4:9, 11, 13). Even in the midst of abandonment by his friends, Paul endeavored his trust in God, and considered his suffering as an imitation of Jesus' sufferings (cf. Ps 22). He already has Luke with him (see Col 4:10, 14; Philem 24). "Noteworthy is Paul's request concerning his parchments (leather scrolls), probably of the Old Testament. The closer Paul was to death, the stronger he

felt the need of the scriptures.<sup>88</sup> See how powerful was Paul's trust in the word of God at the time of his distress. "The more he advances along this way, the less he can boast of his success. The reasons for his delight are now totally different: the pains, the wounds, and the power of God that is manifested even in his weakness."<sup>89</sup>

The ancient Christian tradition witnesses unanimously that Paul died as a victim of persecution in Rome. Only in the Second Letter to Timothy we do find these premonitory words; "For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time to set sail has come" (cf. 2 Tim 4:6; cf. Phil 2:17). Two images are used here, the religious image of sacrifice that he had used previously in the Letter to the Philippians, interpreting martyrdom as a part of Christ's sacrifice, and the nautical image of casting off: two images which together discretely "allude to the event of death and of a brutal death."<sup>90</sup> With sure hope in Christ in his final victory of life, Paul marched forward to his martyrdom. Due to his zealous approach to the Kingdom of God, he set apart the sum total of his life's goal for the gospel and the brethren.<sup>91</sup> Hence, Paul realized his suffering as a privilege and therefore courageously accepted the same in true adherence of his commitment before the Lord.

The apostle had a long cherished desire to visit Spain (cf. Rom

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88 Cf. Enrique Nardoni, "2 Timothy", in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, eds. William R Farmer, Sean Mc Evenue, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1751.

89 Kaitholil, *Encounter with St Paul*, 152-153.

90 Pope Benedict XVI, "St. Paul's Martyrdom and Heritage", 1.

91 Cf. Kaitholil, *Encounter with St Paul*, 168.

15:24-28) and there is evidence that he actually preached the gospel in that country; “for Clements Romanus, who was his contemporary and fellow labourer, positively affirms that he travelled “to the extremity of the west.”<sup>92</sup> The first explicit testimony of St. Paul’s death comes to us from the middle of the 90s in the first century, thus more than three decades after his actual death. In his writings to the Church of Corinth Clement I, the Bishop of Rome of 1<sup>st</sup> century affirms: “Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and the west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into a holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.”<sup>93</sup> Every missionary is expected to aspire for such a striking entry into the most holy place in his turn.

It transpires that Paul through his suffering makes known to the believers that the power at work in the ministry of his apostolic life comes from God as he belongs to God. Paul portrays himself as a “fragile and vulnerable” pot that carries the precious treasure of the gospel (cf. 2 Cor 4:7). This metaphor has a corrective function with regard to the apostolic ministry of Paul. It is faith in the

92 Killen, “Paul’s Second Imprisonment and Martyrdom”, *Peter, his Epistles, his Martyrdom, and the Roman Church.*”[http://biblehub.com/library/killen/the\\_ancient\\_church/chapter\\_x\\_Pauls\\_second\\_imprisonment.htm](http://biblehub.com/library/killen/the_ancient_church/chapter_x_Pauls_second_imprisonment.htm)The Ancient Church [accessed on February 15, 2017].

93 Pope Benedict XVI, “St. Paul’s Martyrdom and Heritage”, 2.

transcendent power of God that sustained Paul and his co-workers in the face of the adverse circumstances of their ministry.<sup>94</sup> The key to understand how significantly the apostle had taken his suffering to achieve his goal was revealed in his words that he was content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions and constraints for the sake of Christ; for whenever he was weak, then he was strong (cf. 2 Cor 12:10). Paul lived every tribulation in the ardent desire to live in and be with Christ and be like Christ.

Thus as a zealous missionary and apostle of Christ, he underwent all kinds of sufferings and illumined the world with his doctrine and opted martyrdom as his choice for Christ and His mission. His example as a missionary is exceptionally inspiring for the Christian missionaries. Challenges, crisis, serious dangers to life, persecutions, shameful treatments, betrayals, misunderstandings, trials, condemnations, frustrations etc. were part and parcel of the missionary life of Paul.<sup>95</sup> To Paul, suffering or martyrdom did not matter; his soul was in absolute bondage of gratitude to Christ. Jesus' command was truly accomplished in Paul, in letter and spirit, by becoming a "martyr" and a true witness of the Resurrected Jesus, the Son of God. Paul believed that his sufferings in his flesh "filled up what was lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the Church" (Col 1:24). This should not be taken to mean that there was something lacking in Christ's atoning sacrifice. Rather Paul shared the sufferings of the Servant-Messiah inasmuch as he too suffered for the sake of the elect in proclamation of the gospel

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94 Cf. Kaithakottil, "Paul and Sufferings", 370.

95 Cf. Ammanathukunnel, "Paul His Life and Apostolate", 30.

with eternal glory (cf. 2 Tim 2:10)<sup>96</sup>. Thus, the zealous attitude of Paul towards sufferings even at the point of his death is inspirational and gives courage to those who follow Christ in similar mission endeavours.

### **3. PAUL'S LIFE: A LIBATION FOR GOSPEL**

This is a reflection based on the bidding farewell of Paul with Timothy his beloved child who was associated with him in his mission endeavours. Here, John Chrysostom, who calls this letter 'a testament of consolation,' remarks that Paul, to describe his death, uses words conducive to consolation and joy so that it is not seen as a death but as a sacrifice, a pilgrimage, even a transfer to a better world."<sup>97</sup> Before doing so, Paul took stock of his solemn commitment before the Lord and God, Jesus, by whom he has been called upon to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Paul deemed it to be something great to render his life whom he lived for and on whom he had reposed his trust. It was similar to the sacrifice rendered by Christ himself.<sup>98</sup>

By comparison of his death with a sacrificial libation and the satisfaction of a mission fulfilled, Paul says that his life, which is set apart exclusively for the Lord is finally coming to its finishing point. Paul had given hint of his reaching upto the point of death for the

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96 Cf. C.G. Kruse, "Afflictions, Trials, Hardships", *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. G.F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 18-20, 19.

97 Nardoni, "2 Timothy," 1751.

98 Cf. Thomas Kochukarottu, *The 1 and 2 Letters to Timothy*, ABC Vol 8 eds. M. Karimattom, J Pamplany, M. Vellanickal and S. Kizhakkeyil (Thalassery: Alpha Institute of Theology and Science, 2012) 49-74, 70.

sake of the gospel (cf. Phil 1:21-23; cf. 2 Cor 5:2).<sup>99</sup> “The apostle sees his death as a sacrificial libation of his blood, a departure for the final harbour. He feels the satisfaction from an accomplished mission and an unwavering loyalty to Christ. Therefore, he is fully assured of his glorious reward.”<sup>100</sup> The language here is typical of Paul’s farewell; he is a libation already poured out (cf. Phil 2:17); he has fought the good fight (1 Tim 6:12), run the race (2 Tim 2:5; 1 Cor 9:24). His crowning achievement is: “I have kept the faith” (v.7), which means both his careful handing over of the gospel to his successors (cf. 2 Tim 2:2) and his faithfulness in his office as evangelist and teacher.<sup>101</sup>

To Paul, his time of death is not merely a time of suffering, as he maintains great hope in the resurrection and the esteemed eternal reward in store for him, which he is going to receive from the gracious Lord Almighty. For Paul, his life has reached the point where it must be sacrificed. The word he uses for sacrifice was *spendesthai* which literally means to pour out as a libation, a drink offering. Every Roman meal ended with a kind of sacrifice. A cup of wine was taken and was poured out as *spendesthai* to the Roman gods. It is as if he was saying: ‘The day is ended; it is time to rise and go; and that his life must be poured out as a sacrifice to God. He did not think of himself as going to be executed; he thought of himself as going to offer his life to God. “Ever since his conversion, he had

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99 Cf. Kochukarottu, *The 1 and 2 Letters to Timothy*, 70.

100 Nardoni, “2 Timothy,” 1751.

101 Cf. Jerome H. Neyrey, “2 Timothy”, in *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, eds. Dianne Bergant and Robert J. Karris (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1989) 1208-1214, 1213.

offered everything to God – his money, his scholarship, his time, his physical strength, the acuteness of his mind and the devotion of his heart. Only life itself was left to offer, and gladly he was going to lay it down.”<sup>102</sup>

Such an absolute surrender of Paul for the cause of the Lord’s mission renders him a paradigm or model to the missionaries of the Church at all times. Even at the hour of his imminent death, Paul consoled and strengthened Timothy courageously by telling him to keep calm, in every sense and to accept being wronged; do the work of one who announces the gospel and carry out fully the ministry that is entrusted to him.

Paul spoke of his own imminent martyrdom by revealing that his own blood was to be offered as a wine-offering. He informed of the time set for his embarkation shortly. His confidence was that he contented in the fine contest and had run the whole track by keeping the faith in Jesus. His confidence was that whatever happens, there lies in store for him the crown of the upright life with which the upright judge, the Lord, will recompense him on that Day – and not only for he himself but also to all who have set their hearts on the revelation of Jesus.<sup>103</sup> What a commendable farewell discourse (cf. 2 Tim 4:6-8) of the greatest missionary who set apart himself solely for Christ and for His noble Kingdom! Thus, before giving his final greetings and benediction, Paul

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102 William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009) 159-251, 235.

103 Cf. Jerome D. Quinn and William. C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans 1995), 773.

opened up his inner thoughts before Timothy by affirming (i) his confidence before the Lord that he had fulfilled his commitment with utmost dedication, (ii) he had absolute confidence and trust in the Lord of receiving His crown of righteousness on the Day of Judgment and (iii) he wanted to inspire and strengthen by giving assurance to Timothy and all those who had kept up their faith in the Lord and longed for His appearance that they too would receive similar crowns of righteousness from the Lord on the day of His appearing.

Ultimately, to Paul, Christ was everything! (cf. Phil 1:21). Paul earnestly urges Timothy to proclaim the message more attentively and with persistence, whether the time is favourable or unfavourable, with a will to convince, rebuke, and encourage the listeners, with utmost patience in teaching. Paul specifically cautioned Timothy of the fast approaching adverse times when people would not put up with sound doctrine, but ‘having itching ears’, they would accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and would turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths (cf. 2 Tim 4:3).

The expressions as above, given by Paul at the hour of his farewell are of paramount relevance to the missionaries at all times. It transpires that basically, the Spirit of God guided and inspired Paul in his mission endeavours. It is through the same Spirit of God that Paul guides and inspires Timothy to be diligent in proclaiming Gospel messages. Paul realizes that Christ Jesus is the ultimate judge of the living and the dead, and that before Him

and His kingdom, everyone ought to appear. With confidence Paul stated: The Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the Word fully, that all the Gentiles must hear it (2 Tim 4:17).<sup>104</sup> “At the conclusion, Paul shows his imperturbability in the face of death, accomplishing the ideal of a great man facing death in the Greco-Roman world”,<sup>105</sup> presenting the greatest model for the missionaries. Hope in the resurrection of Christ has sustained Paul in his suffering. By pouring out himself as a libation for the gospel, Paul targeted absolute fulfilment of the Lord’s mission entrusted to him. The Pauline spirituality is conceived by the Church at all times to re-dedicate itself to the cause of the gospel.

## CONCLUSION

Conceptually, Pauline contribution for the missiology (= the study of mission related steps) and the pastoral theology of the entire Church is significant. The theological concepts offered are exceedingly reflective of his zealous approach to his call. Basically, Paul is a proponent of the divine grace showered by Jesus through His sacrificial death on the cross for the redemption of humanity. The ecclesial vision of Paul provides excellent insights on ecclesia as an integral part of Paul’s teaching on the people of God. By the term ‘ecclesia’ Paul conceptualizes a corporate identity of those converted in the Gentile mission. The theology behind the ecclesial vision is also an exposition of Pauline missionary zeal about his conviction that the faith in Jesus Christ is the decisive criterion for anyone to

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104 Cf. Bruce, “Paul the Apostle,” 719.

105 Nardoni, “2 Timothy”, 1751.

become a disciple of Christ and be part of the Body of Christ. Paul adduced different connotations of the Church, i.e., Church as the people of God, the dwelling place of God, the household of God etc. Paul theologized that the innumerable sufferings, which he had encountered, were part of a divine fulfillment and also a privilege with the true spirit of his apostleship.

Contribution of Paul on the effects of Christ-event, such as Justification, Sanctification, Transformation, Reconciliation, Redemption, New Creation, Salvation and Glorification provided illuminative thoughts for Christian theology. His proclamations to the ends of the earth undoubtedly discloses his missionary zeal. Paul the Apostle of Christ is instrumental to the theological evolution of the Church as a universal reality, as envisioned by Jesus Christ (cf. Col 1:24; Eph 5:29). This is one of the most significant contributions of Paul for the Church at all times.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# ST. PAUL AS ARCHETYPE FOR THE MISSIONARIES

### INTRODUCTION

1. It was through Paul, the second pillar, who along with Peter, firmly stood in defining the inner reality of Christianity and made it a new movement that continues even today, with the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul's missionary contributions are significant in as much as they reflected a paradigm for evangelization strategy. He witnessed Christ in Synagogues and a large number of Jews accepted faith and embraced Christianity. Apart from preaching the gospel to the Gentiles and founding local churches, he established them structurally with proper leadership support and adequate follow-up by sending letters and repeated visits to his mission stations for continued spiritual enrichment. The zeal and enthusiasm with which Paul carried out his missionary endeavours is evident from *Corpus Paulinum*, Acts of the Apostles, the teachings of the Church Fathers and other great theologians and historians. The Church of every age sees an essential role model in Paul through his Christ experience, his apostleship as a chosen disciple and as an ideal pastor for the

mission. Through his missionary journeys, his letters, his attitude towards sufferings for the mission, his initiatives to build up a sound ecclesiology and above all his prayerful apostolate, Paul rendered an incredible contribution to Christianity.

## **1. CHRIST EXPERIENCE: MARK OF MISSION LIFE**

Prima facie, personal encounter with Christ is an essential pre-requisite for a person to accept discipleship of Christ and in that Paul is no exception. Paul's Damascus experience became a profound force to change himself to a proclaimer of the gospel. "In his encounter with Jesus, the central significance of the Cross had been made clear to him: he understood that Jesus had died and rose for all and for himself. Both these things were important: universality- Jesus really died for all, and subjectivity- he also died for me."<sup>1</sup> This probably is the fundamental truth Paul realized about Jesus for the first time. In addition, "Paul understands the Lordship of Christ as a consequence of the resurrection."<sup>2</sup>

Paul paved the way to grow in Christ according to the divine plan of God and he fully accomplished the Lord's will with absolute dedication and surrender. "The impact of the radical transformation and the profound saving experience of God in the person of Christ, was so great in Paul that he had to proclaim the good news of God's

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1 Pope Benedict XVI, "The Importance of the Cross of Christ" "General Audience" 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008, <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/b16stpaulind.htm> [accessed June 23, 2017].

2 J.M.G. Barclay, "Jesus and Paul", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 492-503, 500.

grace in Christ, the gospel, to every human being he met.”<sup>3</sup> In line with the Pauline spirituality, one can easily state that a Christian missionary needs to be one who has experienced the Risen Lord and who proclaims Jesus fearlessly through his words and deeds, and take up challenges with God’s love for the marginalized. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an Event, a Person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”<sup>4</sup> Only such a person, in the larger perspective would be able to bear the torch and go for Christ and His mission and bear fruit. Anyone who has realized the power of resurrection of the Risen Lord will feel an urge to get out of oneself and share that with the rest. People who carry with them the kingdom of God will go to any land which they think badly needs the same<sup>5</sup>. Paul’s Christ experience and initiatives are inspiration for the cause of the mission and they render a paradigm to the Christian missionaries at all times.

## **2. A GOOD MISSIONARY: A CHOSEN DISCIPLE**

As for the Apostleship of Paul, though the synoptic Gospels name the 12 Apostles of Jesus with the exception of Paul, he had a clear conviction that he was a chosen instrument in the hands

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3 Francis Pereira, “The Christology of St Paul” in *The Relevance of Saint Paul – An Indian Reading of His Letters*, eds. Kurian Kunnumpuram and Rekha M. Chennattu (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2009) 97.

4 Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est*. (25 December, 2005) 1; See 8 (2006) 217.

5 Cf. T. Manjaly, K. Poovathumkudy and Haokip Peter., *In the Service of Mission, Studies in Honour of Archbishop Thomas Menamparambil* (Shillong: Oriens Publications, 2006) v.

of the Lord and an Apostle of Christ. That is evidently clear from the Letters he wrote and the Acts of the Apostles (14:14). Having convinced of his apostleship, Paul begins his ministry in order to make his own people zealous, and thus save some of them. Paul's apostolate to the Gentiles, his mission journeys, arrest and imprisonment in Jerusalem, imprisonment in Caesarea, voyage as a prisoner to Rome, apostolate in prison at Rome, martyrdom in Rome and, all the more, the epistles he wrote are manifestations of his zeal and reflections of his mission consciousness.

Paul begins most of his epistles with profound joy and zealous dedication as a chosen Apostle of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim: 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; Rom 1:1; Gal 1:1; Ti 1:1). Evidently, through such an expression, Paul wanted to emphasize his title as an Apostle of Jesus Christ, with full legitimacy of his evangelization. To address any possible apprehension of questioning his apostleship by others, he categorically addressed the legitimacy of his own apostleship (1 Cor 9:1-3). His great letter to the Romans opens by categorically indicating the functional role of his apostolic ministry which is essentially set apart for the gospel of God (Rom 1:1). "St Paul understood himself as an apostle in the strict sense. It is certain that at the time of the early Christians, no one covered as many kilometers as he did over land and across the seas, with the sole aim of proclaiming the Gospel."<sup>6</sup> The apostleship of Paul bestowed on him great courage to be a witness of the resurrected

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6 Pope Benedict XVI, "Transformed by Grace at Service of Christ", General Audience on Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008, 1, <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/b16stpaulind.htm> [accessed June 23, 2017].

Jesus. He dared to proclaim Jesus amongst his own people in Jewish synagogues<sup>7</sup> and focussed on the Gentiles as well, thus becoming a chosen disciple and a role model to the missionaries of the Church.

## **2.1. MISSIONARY AND MINISTERIAL COMMITMENT**

In order to understand the ministerial commitment of a missionary, it is good to follow and analyze the path of Paul's missionary commitment. To Paul, his ministerial commitment was to exalt Christ himself by word and deed in the power of the Holy Spirit and was motivated primarily by a realization of the love of Christ for all (2 Cor 5:4).<sup>8</sup> Being an apostle of Christ, Paul realizes that it is not the worldly heroism that works for a perfectionist approach towards the Lord's ministry. Instead, his approach was that of the grace given to him by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.<sup>9</sup> To fulfill His designs, God does not need heroes but people with hearts full of His love, committed to draw others into intimacy and leading them lovingly to Christ. For Paul, Mission was, in part a geographically definable accomplishment. Paul's commitment as the central goal of his missionary endeavors was founding and nurturing Christian communities in particular regions. Paul's ministerial commitment towards Christ enabled him to maintain

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7 Acts 9:21-22. By proclaiming that "Jesus is the Son of God", Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

8 Cf. C. G. Kruse, "Ministry", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. G.F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove; Intervarsity Press, 1993) 602-608, 605.

9 Cf. Paula Fredriken Landes, *Augustine on Romans*, 49.

communion with his beloved Lord and to be sensitive to the feelings of those around him, which speak of his concern for humanity. As a minister, Paul zealously mobilized resources for the Church in Jerusalem (cf. Rom 15:25).<sup>10</sup> Paul encouraged the Corinthians to be generous by drawing attention to the generous approach taken by the Macedonians during severe ordeal of affliction (cf. 2 Cor 8 and 9). He spoke of resource mobilization with dignifying names of grace sharing and ministry, as they had delivered themselves to the Lord and to the Apostle.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.1.1. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR HIS MISSION**

Paul maintained a profound concern for the mission entrusted to him by the Lord. His mission policy was to win as much Gentiles as from the Gentile world for Christ within his lifetime.<sup>12</sup> With his generous heart he realized that God wants everyone to be saved. With regard to his apostolic ministry, Paul portrayed himself as a “fragile and vulnerable” pot that carries the precious treasure of the Gospel (cf. 2 Cor 4:7). Paul had always in mind Jesus who proved to be radically “weak” on the Cross. He saw an inseparable unity of power and weakness in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ and the same vision he maintained in his apostolic ministry.<sup>13</sup> The

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10 Cf. Fred B Craddock, “Minister” in *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary* eds. Paul J. Achtemeier, Roger S. Boraas, Michael Fishbane, PHEME PERKINS, William O. Walker, Jr. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1990) 620.

11 Cf. Sanchez-Bosch, “2 Corinthians”, 1646.

12 Cf. F.F. Bruce, “Paul in Acts and Letters”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. G.F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 679-692,687.

13 Cf. Kaithakottil, “Paul and Suffering”, 370.

Lord having entrusted him the apostleship for taking-up the gospel to the Jews and to the Gentiles as well, Paul committed himself, by all means, for taking up that mission. Such an unconditional commitment of Paul is an expression of his deep concern for the mission and it affirms his apostleship as a chosen disciple of Christ.

### **2.1.2. PAUL'S DEDICATION FOR HIS MISSION**

In a retrospection on his past and his call, Paul considers himself grateful to Christ for having strengthened him and judged him faithful and also appointed him to his service as the grace of the Lord bestowed and overflowed on him, with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus (cf. 1 Tim 1:12-14). “The fundamental element of Paul’s ministry was his dedication in preaching the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor 1:17). 1 Cor 1:18). He was under an obligation to preach this gospel, and he consistently preached free of charge (1 Cor 9:16-17; 1 Cor 9:18; 2 Thess 3:8).”<sup>14</sup> Thus he becomes a model and even a prototype of the sinner saved by grace (1 Tim 15-16).<sup>15</sup> “According to Paul, spreading of the gospel is “bearing fruit and growing in the whole world” (Col 1:6), and his own apostleship is “for obedience of faith among all the nations” (Rom 1:5).<sup>16</sup> In view of his dedication for the mission, Paul not only fought good fight, but also earnestly

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14 Kruse, “Ministry”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 605.

15 Cf. Hans-Hartmut Schroeder, “1 Timothy”, in *The International Bible Commentary – A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, Sean McEvenue, Armando J. Levoratti and David L Dungan (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1733-1746, 1736.

16 Bowers, “Mission”, 608-612, 612

insisted that Timothy also must fight the good fight, having faith and a good conscience (cf. 1 Tim 1:18-19).

### **2.1.3. PAUL'S CONSISTENCY IN MISSION INITIATIVES**

As part of his commitment, Paul pursued unparalleled mission initiatives amongst the Jews and the Gentiles by travelling extensively, visiting many Port cities of repute and other islands. Apart from that he repeatedly visited many places which he had visited earlier<sup>17</sup> as is evident from the Acts and the Epistles. He wrote letters not only to the communities he had visited but also to other persons and addressed the issues wherever spiritual guidance was needed. The persistent efforts of Paul for the cause of evangelization were instrumental for the setting up of Christian communities in the early Church and for the spiritual enrichment of the entire Church. Paul preached the gospel message in the light of the traditions as a fragrance (cf. Wis 24:15) which spreads the knowledge of God.<sup>18</sup> In all, the consistent mission initiatives of Paul to spread the gospel and develop Christian Communities even in the first century itself, up to the end of the earth, is inspirational and it renders a paradigm to the Christian missionaries to follow at all times.

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17 Places Paul repeatedly visited were: Perga in Pamphylia (Asia Minor), Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium in Lycaonia, Derbe in Lycaonia, Lystra in Lycaonia, Mysia, Philippi in Macedonia, Corinth in Achaia, Ephesus in the province of Asia Minor, Caesarea and Jerusalem.

18 Cf. Francis T. Fallon, "2 Corinthians", *New Testament Message, Vol. 11, A Biblical – Theological Commentary*, ed. Wilfred Harrington, O.P. and Donald Senior, C P. Wilmington (Delware: Michael Glacier, Inc., 1980) 26.

## **2.1.4. MISSION AS PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST THE CRUCIFIED**

The ultimate goal of Paul and his mission was to proclaim Christ the crucified. Paul is fully convinced that to those who are called, irrespective of Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (cf. 1 Cor 1:24). Paul's personal experience of the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus the Lord (cf. Phil 3:8) reinforced his apostolic commission and commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel.<sup>19</sup> Paul admits that he did not proclaim the mystery of God to them in lofty words of wisdom and that he approached them in weakness and fear and in much trembling (cf. I Cor 2:1-5). While his speech and proclamation were not with any externally impressive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and His power so that their faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God (cf. 2 Cor 1-5).

Paul apparently adds an early hymn of "even death on a cross" (cf. Phil 2:6-11). Here, Jesus' life as God's obedient Son is at the center of the stage, and his obedience is seen most profoundly in his willingness to embrace rejection, human suffering and a heinous death by crucifixion. Paul reiterates that Christ's death "is the fullest expression of [his] life, and it establishes [for us] the pattern of a life of love and obedience." In these and in many other ways, Paul shows how Christian thought and life must be built on the foundational

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19 Cf. W.B. Hunter, "Prayer", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 725-734, 731.

event of the cross of Christ.<sup>20</sup>

Christ's role in salvation history is central to Paul's thought.<sup>21</sup> The paschal mystery consists of the fact that the crucified man was raised on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures (cf. 1 Cor 15:14), as pro-Christian tradition attests. The whole teaching of Paul the Apostle starts from and arrives at, the mystery of Christ whom the Father raised from the dead. "It is our Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age."<sup>22</sup> It is Paul who asserted that if Christ had not been raised, their faith is futile and they are still in their sins" (cf. 1 Cor 15:17). Thus, Paul makes it clear that the decisive importance he attributes to is the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately Paul affirmed that he has been crucified with Christ and it is no longer he who lives, but it is Christ who lives in him (cf. Gal 2:20). The strategy adopted by Paul in exclusively focussing on Christ the crucified in his proclamations is a paradigm to the missionaries.

## **2.1.5. MISSION AND INCULTURATION**

"The Sacred Scriptures, both the Old Testament and the New Testament, written by hundreds of authors, in diverse cultural contexts and countries during a period of over a millennium, inspired

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20 Cf. J.B. Green, "Death of Christ", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 201-209, 203.

21 Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 1393.

22 Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 1395.

23 Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, "*Theology of the Cross: Not a Theory*", "General Audience" 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008, <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/b16stpaulind.htm> [accessed June 23, 2017].

by the power of the Holy Spirit is the most inculturated religious document.”<sup>24</sup> The Word of God is living and active and is incarnated in Jesus who gave himself and continues his mission in the human hearts, irrespective of generations through the evangelization process in accomplishment of God’s design for a new humanity and a new heaven and a new earth (cf. Rev 21). In that context, it can be conceived that the incarnation of Jesus itself is the culmination of inculturation.

Thus, inculturation is an inseparable element of evangelization as we see from the life and growth of early Christianity where, inculturation just happened in as much as the first Christians became Jewish Christians and the Gentiles became Gentile Christians. (cf Gal 2 & 3; Acts 10, 11 & 15) with the power of the Holy spirit through the apostles.<sup>25</sup> The Acts reveals a series of episodes in the life and faith of the early Church towards the rise of Christianity out of Judaism with deep roots in the Jewish faith and then graciously moved out in a mission to Gentiles. The proclamation of the gospel to peoples and groups who do not believe in Christ, must involve a process of inculturation if the gospel is to take flesh in each people’s culture.<sup>26</sup> With his in-depth knowledge in Torah, Paul realized that Jesus is the Messiah of whom Paul’s proclamation to the Jews

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24 Augustine Kanjamala, *The Future of Christian Mission in India – Toward a New Paradigm for the Third Millennium* (Bengaluru: Theological Publications in India, 2016) 218.

25 Cf. [http:// http://www.fabc.org/offices/oe/docs/doc3.pdf](http://www.fabc.org/offices/oe/docs/doc3.pdf) “Evangelization and Inculturation” by The FABC Office in collaboration with the National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), Bangalore, India from 1-4 March 2000. [Accessed on December, 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020].

26 Cf. CCC 854.

and the Gentiles, by means of his ardent inculturation strategy, is significant. More than half of Acts is devoted to the ministry of Paul and his travels to preach the good news. The Lord worked through the hands of all the apostles especially through Paul who was sent to bring the name of the resurrected Lord before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel. Pauline inculturation approach to win souls for Jesus is a paradigm to the missionaries.

### **2.1.6. MISSION IN IMITATION OF CHRIST'S HUMILITY**

In substantiating the humility of Christ Jesus, Paul instilled in the minds of his listeners to be of the same mind and with the same love of Christ, and to remain in full accord with the mind of Christ Jesus (Phil 2:6). Although both Adam and Christ were human beings made in the image of God (Gen 1:26; Phil 2:6), Adam disobeyed and grasped after being like God while Christ obeyed God and instead of grasping for equality with God chose the way of servant-hood and mortality. As a consequence, the first Adam was cast out of paradise because of his self-seeking, but the last Adam, Christ, was exalted by God and given Him the highest place because of His self-giving.<sup>27</sup>

“The mystery of the humiliation of Christ that led him to death on the Cross and to his exaltation in the resurrection”<sup>28</sup> is an ideal

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27 Cf. G.F. Hawthorne, “Philippians Letter to”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 707-713, 712.

28 Ortiz “Philippians”, Ortiz, Pedro. “Philippians”, in *The International Bible Commentary for the Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, et al. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 1692.

factor of strength and courage to every missionary. Therefore, Paul urged his listeners to work out for their own salvation, with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in them enabling them both to will and to work for His good pleasure (cf. Phil 2:13). By doing so, Paul builds-up his appeal for humility and unity to his audience by appointing them to pattern their lives on Christ.<sup>29</sup> All the more, Paul wanted them to do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that they may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which they shall shine like stars in the world (cf. Phil 2:1-15). When “Paul speaks of the humiliation suffered by Christ – it is clear that Christ is the model for the attitude the Christian ought to have by reason of being a Christian and being united to Christ.”<sup>30</sup> Paul is a paradigm to Christian missionaries as he practises humility, by following Christ whole-heartedly.

### **3. PAUL AS AN IDEAL PASTOR FOR THE MISSION**

As a master builder Paul laid the foundation and that foundation itself was Jesus Christ. He was a pioneer in carrying the mission to the farthest regions and particularly to the Gentiles as we read from his epistles (cf. Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 10:16). The preaching of Paul paved the way for growth of gospel work in a large way and the evolution of Christian communities in different mission stations, as envisaged.

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29 Cf. Carolyn Osiek, *Philippians Philemon*, in Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000) 52.

30 Ortiz, “Philippians”, 1690.

He actively sought individual conversions as part of his calling and at the same time he did not picture himself as a maker of bricks but as a builder of buildings (cf. 1 Cor 3:10). His mission was focussed on corporate achievement.<sup>31</sup> Looking at the Pauline ministry, Cardinal Newman observed that he who had zest and peace in the love of Christ, is not satisfied without the love of man; he whose supreme reward is the approbation of God, looks for the approval of his brethren. In a word, as a special preacher of divine grace, he is also the special friend and the intimate partaker of human nature. It is he who reveals to us the mystery of God's Sovereign Decrees, manifests at the same time the tenderest interest in the souls of individuals.<sup>32</sup> He was a team-builder and executed his ministry through team work.

### **3.1. IN TERMS OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES**

A Christian leader is one who has a firm commitment to Christ and his mission. Paul envisioned higher goals for the kingdom of God and was consistently on the path of evangelization. In that sense, as a leader, Paul adopted a strategy in accordance with the mission and lived up to that by maintaining and inspiring leadership qualities. He had a wide circle of co-workers at various levels. (cf. 1 Cor 9:1-12; Gal 1:15-16).<sup>33</sup> He realized that leadership is empowering others. He exercised his authority in order to inspire, encourage and

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31 Cf. W.P. Bowers, "Mission", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 608-619, 609.

32 Cf. Hermann Geissler, "Discipleship" in *Faith Magazine* Nov-December 2014 <http://www.faith.org.uk/article/saint-Paul's-apostolic-zeal-cardinal-news-man's-perspective> [accessed May 19, 2016].

33 Cf. Manjaly, "Paul's Ways of Community Building", 220.

to build up as he was conscious in his endeavours “for building up and not for tearing down” (cf. 2 Cor 13:10). He trusted his co-workers, delegated power and commended them for their significant contribution as is evident from the titles and the type of ministry they were engaged in (cf. Rom 16:1-21).

Letters of Paul reveal that women were involved in the animation of house churches. (cf. Rom 16:4-5) and in Ephesus (cf. 1 Cor 16:19), to the church in Chloe’s house (cf. 1 Cor 1:11), and to the church in Nympha’s house (cf. Col 4:15). Paul commends Phoebe, the deacon of the church at Cenchreae exercised the ministry of “service” (cf. Rom 12:7) in a continuing and officially recognized capacity.<sup>34</sup> It is quite possible that women were engaged in the management of house churches, enabling them active participation in the Gospel work at Paul’s guidance in those Christian communities. The New Testament teaches that all followers of Christ were ministers according to the teaching and example of Christ.<sup>35</sup> Clearly, Paul trusted his co-workers, delegated power and commended them for their significant contribution. This renders Paul a paradigm to others.

### **3.2. IN TERMS OF TEACHING SOUND DOCTRINES**

Scholars unanimously agree that the Letter to Romans enjoys primacy over all the other Letters of Paul.<sup>36</sup> “Paul teaches that a new

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34 Cf. Byrne, *Romans*, 447.

35 Cf. Craddock, “Minister”, 620.

36 Cf. Pauline Chakkalalal, “The Relevance of Paul’s Doctrine of Justification For Today”, in *The Relevance of Saint Paul – An Indian Reading of His Letters*, eds. K. Kunnumparam & R.M. Chennattu (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2009) 110-132, 112.

period in the history of man began in the coming of Jesus Christ. His coming was a manifestation of divine uprightness and fidelity whereby: “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who has faith” (cf. Rom 1:16) has become a reality. Paul now explains positively how this is so. Paul highlights an important aspects of the effect of Christ event as salvation through faith (Rom 1: 16; 21-23).<sup>37</sup> In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul instructs congregational leaders to teach “sound” or “healthy” doctrine” to others, ever alert to avoid theological error and to crush its dissemination from other sources (cf. 1 Tim 1:3-7, 10-11; 4:6-10; 2 Tim 1:8-14; 2:2; 3:1-9; Titus 1:9-11). The effectiveness of the gospel to initiate people into life with God is subverted by theological compromise. Therefore, it calls for alertness over the “wolves” from within and without the congregation who might threaten the purity of our rule of apostolic faith (cf. Acts 20:29-30).<sup>38</sup> Thus distinct instructions were given to different segments of the people such as the older men, older women, younger women, younger men, slaves, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God the Savior, as the grace of God had appeared, bringing salvation to all (cf. Titus 2:1-11a). The doctrinal teaching of Paul remains to be a great model and has already made significant contributions to the Christian theology.

#### **4. PAULINE LETTERS: PARADIGM FOR MISSION**

“The collections of Paul’s canonical letters were apparently made towards the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (Canonicity,

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37 Joseph A Fitzmyer, “Letter to the Romans”, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. ed., Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970) 310.

38 Cf. Keek, “Acts”, 227.

67:58).<sup>39</sup> These letters are significantly distinct for the churches ever since they were written. “Since the Churches Paul addressed and the Churches today are essentially one Church under God, living the same New Testament epoch of kingdom history, God’s message addressed to the first century Churches are relevant even today.”<sup>40</sup> Pauline letters are historical sources to know how deeply Paul involved himself in developing the Christian community in the early Church, in true Christian values. It was Paul’s untiring effort to strengthen the Churches he founded and that prompted him in the first place to write letters to them.<sup>41</sup> Going through the letters of Paul, one would be fully convinced that he was in touch with the first-generation Christians and the Christian theologizing relevant at all times.<sup>42</sup> The Pauline letters in general and more particularly the Pastoral Epistles assume great importance in the canon of the Bible.

As a person in Christ, Paul attempted to address through his letters, the problems faced by the Churches and their members, because of their faith in Christ. They played an overwhelming role to project Christian faith in its infancy outside the Jewish religion. Paul has the single largest share of writings in the New Testament which are basic to Christianity and to the Christian faith. “Paul’s

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39 Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “New Testament Epistles”, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed., Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970) 215-222, 221.

40 S. Greidanus, “Preaching from Paul Today”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 737-743, 741.

41 S. Kizhakkeyil, *The Pauline Epistles an Exegetical Study* (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2011) 10-11.

42 Cf. James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 2.

message centered on Christology and eschatology (=the end of the world doctrine) as well (Gal 1:16; 1 Cor 1:23 cf. 1 Cor 15:12; cf. Acts 13:30-37; 17:31). The content of his message was described by a variety of terms, such as, “Word of faith” (Rom 10:8), “Jesus Christ as Lord” (2 Cor 4:5), “the gospel” (Gal 2:2; Col 1:23) or “the gospel of God” (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Cor 11:7; 1 Thess 2:8), “the faith” (Gal 1:23) or “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8) and in all of them, Christ is the central theme.<sup>43</sup> “Through his letters Paul not only exhorted his faith as a Christian but also articulated the same as part of his calling, by writing and instructing others to grow in their Christian faith.”<sup>44</sup> Although addressed to specific persons and/or congregations, they increasingly were valued for their universal applicability and apostolic authority within the first and second centuries. They are “ideal sources for contemporary preaching because of their *kerygmatic* (= of proclamation of truths) nature that existed by the beginning of the third century. These, along with the Gospels and the other letters which now make up the New Testament, were declared “canonical” by the council of Carthage in AD 397.<sup>45</sup>

Through his letters, Paul rendered theologically rich and conceptually sound contributions, by providing insight on the living Word of God, for the enrichment and development of Christianity

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43 Cf. R.H. Mounce, “Preaching”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 735-737, 735.

44 Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 2.

45 Cf. A.G. Patzia, “Canon”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 85-92, 90.

right from the very beginning of the Church and they render a paradigm in up-holding the gospel values and the missionary zeal, to a great extent.

#### **4.1. LETTERS ISSUED IN CAPTIVITY**

“Shortly before Paul’s martyrdom, i.e., ca. 61-62AD is taken as the captivity period of Paul in Rome (Acts 28). Here, Paul foresees his liberty close at hand. As Paul enjoys partial freedom, he continues his apostolic work. Hence, four letters, i.e., Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon are considered to have been written by Paul during this period.”<sup>46</sup> Although, the “captivity” letters are traditionally linked with Paul’s final years in prison in Rome, a different view was expressed by certain theologians: (i) Ephesians and Colossians are too general (ii) 2 Timothy is clearly located in Rome (2 Tim 1:17) and (iii) Philippians and Philemon, may be associated with earlier imprisonments (cf. 2 Cor 11:23).<sup>47</sup> Common doctrinal traits exists in the case of Captivity Letters in areas such as the supremacy of Christ, the mystery of the Church, unity of time and place, and in similar external settings. At any rate, these letters render distinctive insights and are logically consistent.

In Philippians, Paul brings out an important call to all missionaries to imitate Christ’s humility as part of their missionary endeavors. Letter to Philemon reveals Paul’s compassion to the poor and needy that needed support of his master. This letter gives

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46 Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology*, 128.

47 Cf. L.C.A. Alexander, “Chronology of Paul”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 115-123, 118.

us a masterful and tender example of Christian love. 2 Timothy was written at a time when Paul was contemplating his own death (4:6-8), so it has the character of a testamentary instruction. Here, Timothy is urged to be strong in Christ's grace (cf. 2:1-7) and is reminded of the essentials of the gospel (cf.:8-13). This letter is considered a Pastoral letter in view of its universal acceptability. By writing letters even in captivity, Paul's missionary zeal and concern for the gospel till the end is evident.

## **4.2. TIMELY PASTORAL EPISTLES**

1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are usually classed together under the title "Pastoral Epistles", a title that was apparently given to them.<sup>48</sup> These letters reflect the beginnings of organizational life in the Church. In the strict sense, Timothy and Titus were not serving as pastors but they served as official missionary delegates of Paul to assist the churches, in policies, polity and practice. Although the letters were written to individuals they were not only personal but also official in character. They were clearly intended to be read by a wider audience. There is guidance for the young pastors who are trying to lead the Church. "The writing is not only that of teacher to pupil, father to son, but also of long-time peer to peers."<sup>49</sup> 1 Timothy has substantially contributed as an outline for Church hierarchy and other ecclesiological aspects, relevant to magisterial evolution in the Church. It issues instructions concerning false teachers and

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48 Cf. D.A. Carson & Douglas J. Moo, "The Pastoral Epistles", in *an Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1992) 554-587, 554.

49 Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology*, 25.

their money motives (cf. 1 Tim 6:3-10). 2 Tim brings-out very valuable instructions: while salvation is a free gift from God, it is also demanding high degree of response. This signifies that missionary work demands high order of commitment on the part of the missionary and on the recipients as well. Paul emphasizes the importance of “sound teaching” (cf. 2 Tim 1:13), which some people may even reject.<sup>50</sup> Here what is envisaged is a faithful witnessing in the face of opposition (cf. 2 Tim 1:6-2:7).<sup>51</sup> The Letter to Titus specifically advises that the Christian Church is not intended to function only in cozy, respectable environments.

The gospel embraces all, including the most unpromising of people, as the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.<sup>52</sup> The very fact that in the patristic Church, the Pauline letters were received into the New Testament canon, based on their Pauline authorship,<sup>53</sup> renders them precious paradigms, on account of their immense contribution to the pastoral and ecclesiological perspectives.

## **5. EXTENSIVE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS IN THE MIDST OF DANGEROUS SITUATIONS**

Paul having undertaken his responsibility to proclaim the Gospel from the Lord as his bounden duty, he does not consider that

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50 Cf. D.A. Carson & Douglas J. Moo, “2 Timothy”, in *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1992) 577-581, 581.

51 Cf. E. E. Ellis, “Pastoral Letters”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 658-666, 665.

52 Cf. D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, “Titus”, in *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1992) 581-587, 584.

53 Cf. Ellis, “Pastoral Letters”, 659.

as a ground for boasting. At the same time, he recognizes that any laxity on his part in the proclamation of the gospel will amount to a woe, as the same would amount to a departure from his commitment before the Lord (cf. Cor 9:16). Inspired by such an attitude, all his mission endeavours, including extensive missionary journeys, were undertaken by him with utmost earnestness to his commitment before the Lord. Acts 13:4 - 20:3 gives an account of his missionary journeys.

Paul as the apostle to the nations was perhaps the most travelled person within the NT world and he benefited enormously by the travel route in the Roman Empire. “Assuming that he made three missionary journeys from Antioch (cf. Acts 13:1-21:17) and made the trip to Rome (cf. Acts 27:1-28:16) and several other minor excursions, the total distance covered was approximately 6,200 miles.”<sup>54</sup> These journeys were performed by him at a time when there was no regular transport system in existence. However he travelled in spite of the travel constraints, as he had the specific objective to win the Gentile world to Christ, a mandate to which he was firmly committed. Paul travelled in a series of merchant sailing ships which took him around Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete, Malta (where he was shipwrecked) and Sicily before landing in Italy (cf. Acts 27:1-28:16).<sup>55</sup> This was followed by his meeting the Jewish leaders in Rome and preaching the gospel to them (cf. Acts 28:17-30).

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54 Kreitzer, “Travel in the Roman World”, 945.

55 Cf. L.J Kreitzer, “Travel in the Roman World”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 945-946, 946.

Nonetheless, Paul renders a paradigm to the missionaries through the relentless journeys performed by him for the mission.

### **5.1. PAUL: A GOOD SOLDIER OF CHRIST JESUS**

Paul maintained the conviction that in order to be strengthened in the Lord and to be effective in carrying out the mission endeavours and also in standing against the wiles of the devil, it was necessary to put on the whole armour of God<sup>56</sup> (cf. Eph 6: 10-17). It emerges that “Christians must pray, stand alert, and be ready to do battle with the evil forces around them. Christ is the head of all things (Eph 1:22). Even when the Church members have experienced salvation (Eph 2:8), they must be cautious not to get into the clutches of evil. Paul is convinced that the struggle is not against the enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers of this present darkness, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. “The picture presented here is of a soldier waiting attentively and not of a soldier provoking aggression, as the protection comes from Christian attributes.”<sup>57</sup> Paul advised Timothy to share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus as the suffering is for the sake of Jesus (2 Tim 2:3). Paul thus insists that the missionaries must put on the shoes of the soldier of Christ and wear the whole armour of God, as the battle involves a spiritual warfare against the wiles of the devil and his malevolent cosmic forces that penetrate even the heavenly places.

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56 “God’s armor”, in line with OT ideas (Isa 11:5; 59:16-17).

57 MacDonald, “Ephesians”, 1685.

## **5.2. BRINGING THE LORD'S NAME BEFORE THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL**

Before the Romans, Paul stated that the power of God for salvation was to everyone who has faith is the gospel, as the righteousness of God is revealed through faith; to the Jew first and also to the Greek (cf. Rom 1:16b-17a). This he has done, as he realized from his Old Testament background that “the one who is righteous will live by faith” (cf. Hab 2:4). Paul admits openly that he himself is an Israelite who loves his kinsfolk, and desires their salvation.<sup>58</sup> For the same reason, wherever he went during his missionary journeys, he invariably visited the synagogues and proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews (cf. Acts 13:4-5; 13:13-46; 18:7-11) with a view to win Jews for Jesus (1 Cor 9:20). However, he would try to win them indirectly through his Gentile mission also (cf. Rom 11:13-14; cf. 10:19). As all who heard him were amazed, Paul became increasingly more powerful and he confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah (cf. Acts 9:20-22). Paul’s starting point was that the Messiah of Israel (Rom 9:5) came to be the hope for both Jews and Gentiles alike (cf. Rom 15:8-13).<sup>59</sup> There were occasions when he had severe threat to his life, during which his believers came to his rescue (cf. Acts 9:30).

Paul invariably utilized all opportunities for proclamation of the gospel. Concerning the Israel and the Gentiles, Paul maintained

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58 Cf. Campbell, “Israel”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G.F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993 441-446,441.

59 Cf. Scott, the Apostle to the Gentiles, 799.

clarity in his mind (cf. Rom 9:30-31). "What the Gentiles were not seeking, (namely, righteousness) it obtained; what the Israel was most zealously seeking (namely, a law of righteousness), it has not. This is the situation that appears to have made a mockery of God's 'Word' to Israel (Rom 9:6a)."<sup>60</sup> Despite their present rejection of the gospel, he refuses to regard Jews as irretrievably rejected by God. He sees them as bearers of a spiritual heritage which has now been opened up to Gentiles also. Paul was confident of Israel's ultimate inclusion in the community of salvation (cf. Rom 11:1-32).<sup>61</sup> He never suggests that the Gentiles have displaced Israel or that Israel has no role to play in God's future. Rather he sees God's gift to Israel as irrevocable; he believed that Israel occupied an inalienable place in the divine economy of salvation.<sup>62</sup> "Paul's concern for the salvation of his people stems not merely from patriotism, but more particularly from the call of God upon his life."<sup>63</sup> Paul adhered to God's call with utmost devotion. Such an untiring endeavour of Paul to proclaim the Gospel before the people of Israel made him a paradigm to the whole Christian missionaries.

### **5.3. BRINGING THE LORD'S NAME BEFORE THE NATIONS**

Basically, Paul was an apostle to the Gentile for the sake of Israel (cf. Rom 1:5; 11:13; cf. Gal 1:15-17; 2:7-8).<sup>64</sup> Bringing the

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60 Byrne, *Romans*, 308-309.

61 Cf. Byrne, *Romans*, 328.

62 Cf. W.S. Campbell, "Israel", 441-446,441.

63 Scott, *The Apostle to the Gentiles*, 799.

64 Cf. Byrne, *Romans*, 799.

name of the Lord before the Gentiles was of significant concern for Paul. It can be conceived that Paul assumes a significant role in projecting God's plan for the world (cf. Rom 1:5, 13; cf. 15:16-19; 16:26). Paul having given his best for the Gentile ministry, claims that he glorifies his ministry in order to make his own people jealous, so as to save some of them (cf. Rom 11:13b-14). Paul admits that he had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the Gospel for the circumcised (cf. Gal 2:7)

“Paul’s attitude to the Gentiles is intimately connected, on the one hand with his understanding of the status of Israel and on the other with his experience of a call to be apostle to the Gentiles.”<sup>65</sup> Subsequent to the coming of the Holy Spirit, and with the beginning of the new movement as the Church, doors were opened to all, fulfilling the promises given to Abraham that the Gentiles and generations will be blessed in him and people rushed to accept Christ. It is here Paul emphasized: “Just as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, so you see those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. The scripture, foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and it declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, all the Gentiles<sup>66</sup> shall be blessed in you. For this reason, those who believed are blessed with Abraham who believed” (cf. Gal 3:6-9). Jesus directed his disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (Cf. Mt.28: 19; Acts: 9:15). By performing mission journeys to Antioch (cf. Acts 11:26),

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65 Lacey, “Gentiles”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 335.

66 Ibid, 337.

Asia Minor (Acts 12:28) etc. Paul proclaimed gospel to the Gentiles. It is legitimate to state that Paul is an “Apostle to the Nations.”

In the oneness of Spirit, all were baptized into one body, irrespective of whether they were Jews or Greeks, slaves or free individuals (cf. 1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:11). Thus the nations came to the fold of salvation through Jesus Christ and for that Apostle Paul became an apt tool in the hands of the Lord. The response to faith creates a community – the people of God (cf. Gal. 6:16). In the service of Christ, there is no place for selfish individualism, no matter how great or impressive one’s abilities may be. The weaker members of the Church actually are indispensable for the proper functioning of the body. Hence a failure to help the weak (cf. 1 Thess 5:14) is a failure to recognize the mutual dependence of every member of the unit that characterizes Christ’s body (cf. 1 Cor 12:12-13).<sup>67</sup> The central act of worship is the Lord’s Supper – a common meal in which the community celebrates the presence of Christ and anticipates his coming (1 Cor 11:23-26). Paul opened up his mind and disclosed the commission of God’s grace that was given to him in this regard (cf. Eph 3:2-7). Although he was the least

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67 Cf. D.A. Black, “Weakness”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 966-967, 966. Paul’s concept of weakness is, in sum, markedly theocentric. God depends neither on human strength nor on human achievements, not even in the Church. Instead, He seeks out the weak, the ungodly and the hostile to redeem them and to fit them as vessels of His own strength. Weakness is – as the Lord Himself had expressed it to Paul – the place where God’s power is perfected (2 Cor 12:9). Thus between Christ and the believer, there is such an intimate identification in weakness that he can live “by the power of God” (2 Cor 13:4).

of all the saints, grace was given to him to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ and to make everyone see the plan of mystery hidden for ages in God. Accordingly, he proclaimed the knowledge of Jesus to Gentile nations previously untouched by Christian preaching or knowledge of the Jewish Messiah.<sup>68</sup> Thus the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel (cf. Eph 3:6). The Gentile mission, far from being a contingency plan or reaction to the gospel's failure among the Jews, stands at the heart of the affirmation of the righteousness of the God who has consigned all of humanity to disobedience, in order that his mercy may extend to all of humanity (Rom 11:32). Rom 15:7-12 reinforces the point. "The Gentile mission is a natural concomitant of the unity of God and of his grace."<sup>69</sup>

Here, Paul foresees the marvellous way in which God wonderfully planned the reconciliation of the world in Christ Jesus as a result of which the nations became children of God through faith in His grace. It is God's will that the Gentiles are brought to salvation (Acts 13:47). After having received such an insight, Paul warns the Gentiles that they must no longer live as Gentiles live in the futility of their minds. The missionary travel account of Paul to such a large number of places for proclamation of the gospel, especially to the Gentiles, is an unparalleled reflection of his missionary zeal for the gospel and is a paradigm to the missionaries at all times.

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68 Cf. Byrne, *Romans*, 437.

69 Lacey, "Gentiles", 338.

## **6. PAUL'S SUFFERINGS FOR THE MISSIONS**

Paul suffered imprisonment in Caesarea and was taken as a prisoner to Rome. "Paul's imprisonment covers a period of trial and he endured a long captivity and came to the end of his life."<sup>70</sup> Throughout his sufferings, he maintained high esteem of his mission. Of all his afflictions, Paul counted the pressure of his daily anxiety on behalf of his Churches as the climax of what he had to endure, as a result of his calling (cf. 2 Cor 11:28; cf. 2 Cor 2:4,13).<sup>71</sup>

### **6.1. SUFFERING FOR CHRIST, A PRIVILEGE**

Similar to Moses (cf. Heb 11:26), Paul too considered his innumerable sufferings as his God-given privilege. Paul's anxiety was for all the Churches he had planted. He considered their weaknesses as his own and similarly, their strengths as his own. Paul considered his afflictions as hardships of evangelical proclamation (cf. Rom 5:3; 8:35; 2 Cor 1:4, 8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4).<sup>72</sup> Here, the prophetic words of Ezekiel are echoed "I will put my Spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (Ezek 36:27). Paul alludes the death of Christ for humanity and emphasizes that God can go no farther than this; it signified the truth that if in Christ God had gone to such an extreme, this must save us.<sup>73</sup> It transpires that the love of God poured out through the Spirit enables a missionary to build up his hope, even

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70 Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "A Life of Paul", 221.

71 Cf. S.J. Hafemann, "Suffering", 919-921,919.

72 Cf. Mora Paz, "Colossians", 1703.

73 Cf. Aletti, "Romans", 1572.

during his sufferings.<sup>74</sup> Considering the significance of evangelical proclamation, Paul instructed Timothy about the sufferings and persecutions he had encountered in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra and emphasized that the Lord rescued him from all of them. He warned that all who want to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus, will have the privilege to be persecuted. (cf. 2 Cor. 11:16; 2 Tim 3:11-12).

God chose the path of suffering as the means to save the world. “One of the recurring themes in the letters of St Paul is the inevitability and purposefulness of suffering in the life of a Christian and in the life of an Apostle like him.”<sup>75</sup> In the true spirit of the apostolic call, Paul underwent all forms of miseries for the mission (cf. 2 Cor 6:4-10). His attitude was to accept everything from the Lord, for the sake of Christ Jesus. Thus Paul considered his sufferings as a God- given privilege for the manifestation of God’s power. He instructed that just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ (cf. 2 Cor 1:5). All the more, Paul maintained the trust that if we suffer with Christ, we may also be glorified with him (cf. 2 Cor 6:4-10; Rom 8:17). Paul recognizes the inseparable unity of weakness and strength in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ Jesus. For that reason, no missionary can survive without drawing strength by identifying himself with the power of the Cross in faith. Therefore, “not only is believing in Christ a grace of God; suffering for him is also a privilege that manifests a special election of God (cf. 2

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74 Cf. Byrne, *Romans*, 166.

75 Kaithakottil, “Paul and Suffering”, 358.

Cor 12:10; Acts 5:41)<sup>76</sup>. The concept that suffering for Christ is a privilege is a novel concept of Paul and is a paradigm to motivate the Christian missionaries at all times.

## **6.2. SUFFERING IS TO CHOOSE LORD'S WILL AT ANY COST**

According to theologians, the cost of discipleship is not always persecution or prison. To Paul, suffering for Christ is purposeful as his ministry is for glorification of God and in that sense suffering is obeying God's will. Paul did not heed to the warning of his co-workers to avoid the suffering predicted by the Spirit because the Spirit had also directed him to go to Jerusalem (cf. Acts 19:21; 20:22). The suffering that awaits him there is the cost of his obedience to the Lord's call. "In Paul's case it is exemplary not because he suffered but because he chose to obey the Lord's will at any cost."<sup>77</sup> Such an approach of Paul is a paradigm to the missionaries to accept suffering as a challenge. In the world into which Christianity was born, animal sacrifice was almost universally the central feature of worship. Here, Paul emphasizes that Christ's sacrifice puts away the sins of mankind as Christ loved us and "gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:2).<sup>78</sup> Paul conceived Christ's great sacrifice to God in fulfilment of His mission. Keeping the same analogy, it was Paul's endeavour to suffer for Christ. Paul preferred

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76 Ortiz, "Philippians", 1689.

77 Keek, "Acts", 230.

78 L. Morris, "Sacrifice, Offering", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 856-858, 856.

to choose Lord's will and to accept its consequences, rather than neglecting the same and seeking alternatives. "Even as he laboured unceasingly to safe-guard the truth of the gospel (cf. Gal 2:5, 14) on the grace of Christ (cf. Gal 1:6), he also strove to clarify, beyond misunderstanding, the appropriate response to the gospel: faith in Jesus Christ, without any diluting mixture of works of the Law (Gal 2:16)."<sup>79</sup> The confidence with which Paul fought the fight and finished the race is a direct action of Paul to choose Lord's will at any cost and is certainly an act of faith and a source of inspiration to Christianity (cf. 2 Tim 4:6-7). This renders a paradigm to all the consecrated men and women who have dedicated themselves for the cause of the gospel.

## **7. PAULINE ECCLESIOLOGY AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES**

The Pauline ecclesiology brings out meaningful thoughts with wider ramifications from theological point of view, for the accomplishment of Lord's Mission. "For all its rarity in the gospels (Mt 16:18; 18:17), the word *ecclesia* is found abundantly in the Pauline letters. It does not occur in the first four chapters of Acts, and thereafter it occurs only once in (5:11) in the sense of "the Church" before the story of Paul begins (8:1-3). It apparently took some time before the early Christians could realize their union in Christ in terms of *ecclesia*."<sup>80</sup>

In the early Church, Christ's followers were known as the

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79 A.B. Luter, Jr., "Gospel", in *Dictionary Paul*, 369-373, 371.

80 Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 825.

‘people of the Way of Christ’ (cf. Acts 9:2). “Integral to Paul’s teaching about the people of God is his use of the important word *ecclesia*, a term meaning “congregation”, “gathering” or “assembly.”<sup>81</sup> Paul called all his communities *ecclesia*, a brilliant choice and a significant word to express a sense of unity amongst those who are in Christ. This word was holistically coined by Paul at an infant stage of the early Church and has made tremendous impact in the history of the Church ever since its inception and enshrined a significant place in the creed<sup>82</sup> of the Church. It also holds an integral part of the profession of the Christian faith since Christ brings unity in the Church. Paul mentions Christ in connection with the term *ecclesia* (cf. Rom 16:16; 1 Thess 2:14) which brings out Christ as the source of the Church’s life. God’s act of founding the *ecclesia* is mediated through Jesus Christ and his gospel. This was true of the *ecclesia* in Thessalonica, and churches in Judea. With this analogy, the churches of the New Testament are the congregations of God in Christ, or the Churches in Jesus Christ (1 Thess 2:14; Gal; 1:22), or the Churches of Jesus Christ (Rom 16:16).<sup>83</sup> “It is true that for St Paul, the centrality of the kingdom of God, crucial for the proclamation of Jesus, was transformed into the centrality of Christology, whose crucial point is the Paschal mystery. And it is from the Paschal mystery that the sacraments of baptism and of the Eucharist derive, as a permanent presence of his mystery

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81 O’Brien, “Church”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 123-131, 123.

82 Cf. Article 9 of the CCC begins with declaration “I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.”, in paragraph 2, The Church – The People of God, Body of Christ, and Temple of the Holy Spirit is narrated.

83 Cf. O’Brien, “Church”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 123-131, 126.

from which the body of Christ grows and the Church is built.”<sup>84</sup> According to Paul, Christ is the head of the Church, and He is its savior (cf. Eph 5:23). “He is the head of the body, the Church; He is the beginning, the first born from the dead, so that He might come to have first place in everything” (Col 1:18). It is a Pauline concept that in Christ, the Church is an integral reality for witnessing and proclamation of Christ. Surely, Pauline ecclesiology brings out meaningful insights conceptually, for evolving an enhanced synergy for active participation, involvement and acceptance of the mission goals for witnessing Christ.

### **7.1. PEOPLE OF GOD, A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST**

“Even at the early stages in the New Testament era, Paul identifies Christianity as the ‘Israel of God’, in opposition to the historical people of God.”<sup>85</sup> Paul views the disciples of Jesus as the continuation of the people of Israel. The heads of Israel betrayed God’s promises to Abraham and abandoned the true Israel. “Even when Paul refers to the Israel who have rejected the gospel, he still uses the title because he thinks of the people as a whole as a religious entity, the historic people of God. In Rom 2:17, 28-29 and Rom 3:29, Paul speaks of the “Jew” but in Rom 9-11, his clear preference is for “Israel/Israelite.”<sup>86</sup> The true and definite Israel can be found in the communities of Jesus’ disciples, both Jews and Gentiles, as

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84 Pope Benedict XVI, “St. Paul’s martyrdom and heritage”, General Audience, (4<sup>th</sup> February 2009), 3, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2009/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi) [accessed June 21, 2017].

85 Campbell, “Israel”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 441.

86 Campbell, “Israel”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 441.

the promises to Abraham were addressed even to a small segment of humanity, apart from the rest.

Conceptually, Paul extends the people of God to the far corners of the world because that was the plan of God revealed to Abraham. Paul sees in them the beginning of a new humanity reunited in a shared life in which diversity is united in love and solidarity.<sup>87</sup> Thus, “the convert, as a part of a community of faith, enters a cosmic drama of creation that God inaugurated at the resurrection of Jesus Christ and will bring to completion at the *Parousia*.”<sup>88</sup> The concept “People of God” is well conceived in the Church encyclicals.<sup>89</sup> This concept is brought-out by Paul in his letter (cf. Gal 6:15-16). “New Creation”, is an expression Paul uses in 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15. It is closely related to the expression “new human [ity]”, in Eph 2: 15, 4:23-24 and Col 3:9-10. The significance of becoming a “New Creation” is emphasized by Paul. The conceptual value of the same is much more than the observance of rituals for the sake of mere observance. (cf. Gal 6:15). The expressions ‘new creation’ and ‘new humanity’ essentially points to two quintessential values that characterize the community of faith whereby the community

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87 Cf. Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology*, 98-99.

88 J.R. Levison, “Creation and New Creation”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G.F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press Illinois, 1993) 189-190.

89 L.G.9. The characteristic feature of the people of God is brought out in CCC No.782. At all times and in every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right has been acceptable to Him. He has, however, willed to make men holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge Him and serve Him in holiness.

anticipates the final cosmic restoration of creation's goodness.<sup>90</sup> The Pauline ecclesiology that the people of God is a new creation in Christ, opens new vistas for enhanced mission endeavours in the Church.

### **7.1.1. RECONCILIATION AND NEW CREATION**

Reconciliation is a concept in which enmity between God and the humanity, or between human groups, is overcome and peaceful relations restored by virtue of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.<sup>91</sup> "For Paul, the reconciliation is made possible through the expiatory function of Christ's death (Rom 3:24-26)."<sup>92</sup> Reconciliation is vital for establishment of peace between God and humanity so as to enable people to build up spiritual gap vertically and horizontally. Through Christ, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of Jesus on the cross (cf. Col 1:20; Rom 5:11). "The dominant theme of 2 Cor 5:17-21 is that believers, who themselves have been reconciled to God, must continue by the apostolic ministry of proclamation and witness to bear testimony to the reconciliation of the world to God, which God inaugurated through Jesus."<sup>93</sup> The apostolic ministry of proclamation is incumbent on those who are reconciled to Christ and are part-takers of the Body of Christ and have become a New Creation. Therefore, every Christian is a missionary and is called

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90 Cf. Levison, "Creation and New Creation", 190.

91 Cf. S.E. Porter, "Peace, Reconciliation", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. G.F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press Illinois, 1993) 695-699, 695.

92 Byrne, *Romans*, 172.

93 Levison, "Creation and New Creation", 190.

upon to reconcile himself with God and fellow-men as Christ has reconciled and build up the gap and restored the relationship once and for all in the cross. The basis of such a reconciliation is that he/she is a new creation in Christ. Prior to Paul, there is not much precedent for the use of the idea of “reconciliation” in a religious sense, i.e., as applied to the divine human relationship. But, Paul conceived that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation in Christ. Such a realization is vital for those who are in Christ Jesus as they are expected to accept newness in their life by renewing the attitude and approaches in life in all respects as everything old has passed away.

The concept of New Creation in Christ entails rejection of worldly standards and adherence to heavenly standards. This new standards take place when believers cease living in worldly standards and judging others according to worldly standards. The presence of a New Creation entails that new standards of unity and peace replace old standards of judgment and divisiveness. Moreover, individual rivalry has no place in the new creation irrespective of whether they belong to ethnic groups, church leaders, or to any individual believer who participate in the new humanity. He or she must put away conduct that characterizes the “old humanity”, such as greed, slander and abuse (cf. Col 3:5-9; Eph 4:25-30) and put on the new humanity, “which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator”, i.e., which is being restored to its original goodness.<sup>94</sup> It is in this context that Paul calls the believers as God’s chosen, holy and beloved ones and inspires them to cloth

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94 Cf. Levison, “Creation and New Creation”, 190.

themselves with compassion, patience, truthfulness (cf. Col 3:12-17; Eph 4:23-24; cf. Col 3:11) which are the characteristic elements of new humanity that fulfill reconciliation and eliminates hostility between one another.

It is God, who reconciled humanity to Himself by ignoring their trespasses against Him through Christ Jesus and entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to him (2 Cor 5:17-19). As the persons who are in Christ are transformed into new creation, they are bound to go in for Christ and undertake His missionary activities as they are bought for a price, the price of the precious blood of Christ Jesus. The ecclesiological contribution of Paul in this regard renders a paradigm to the Missionary activities of the Church.

### **7.1.2. DIVINE GRACE SURPASSES THE BONDAGES OF LAW**

To Paul, love is the heartbeat and center of his ethic.<sup>95</sup> The depth of his love is revealed in his epistle. (cf. Rom 8:35). Paul is the main proponent of the term *charis* normally translated “grace” in NT as 100 out of 154 instances in the NT are reflected in all the thirteen of the traditional Pauline letters. All the Pauline Letters begin and end by sounding a note of grace. It is not unlikely that the apostle intended all of his writings to be viewed within the all-encompassing framework of divine grace, from beginning to end. Also, Paul cautions that the Gospel must always be presented sensitively and graciously (cf. Col 4:6) and verbal communications between Christians is to focus

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95 Cf. Schreiner, “Law of Christ” in *Dictionary of Paul*, 544. Gal 5:13 enunciates the “Law of Christ” as another way of describing the “law of love”.

on edification and needs, especially by purposefully aiming to “give peace” and for reflection of divine grace. For Paul, the grace of God encompasses a broad arena; reaching back to the grace of God’s pretemporal electing purpose (cf. Eph 1:3-6). Paul himself found a unique personal experience of divine grace in the midst of the weakness of prolonged suffering with his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor 12:9). The *charis* of God manifested in salvation (cf. Titus 2:11) has further effect of training believers in a disciplined, godly lifestyle as they await the appearing of their great God and Savior Jesus Christ (cf. Titus 2:12-13) and for the same reason their gratefulness for the divine *charis* should motivate a response of zeal for good works (cf. Titus 2:14).<sup>96</sup> As the effectiveness of any mission initiative depends upon the charism and divine grace of the missionary, Paul inspires the missionaries to strive for the divine grace.

### **7.1.3. BODY OF CHRIST BUILDS THE LORD’S MISSION**

The metaphor of the Body of Christ employed by Paul to describe the Church is a significant notion of the Church and is applied in varied nuances.<sup>97</sup> By embodying these values, this community anticipates the final cosmic restoration of creation’s goodness. In the same analogy, Paul reiterates that even though we are many and are members of one another, in Christ we are one, being the Body in Christ (cf. Rom 12:5). “Body of Christ” denotes to Jesus Christ himself in so far as he relates to God, others and the world. Paul illustrates that the oneness in the Body of Christ means

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96 Cf. A.B.Luter, Jr. “Grace”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 372-374.

97 Cf. O’Brien, “Church”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 123-131, 127.

(unity in diversity) by applying it to the major social divisions of his time (cf. 1 Cor 12:13).<sup>98</sup> Apart from that, in depicting the Church as the “Body of Christ” (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Rom 12:4-5), Paul emphasizes the unity of the community and the inter-dependence of its members in doing the work of God.”<sup>99</sup>

The metaphor ‘Body of Christ’ was consistent with Paul’s recognition that believers are called to a *koinonia*, often translated as “participation in” or “in fellowship with”, a concept central to what it means to live as disciples of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9).<sup>100</sup> Paul’s endeavor is to give Christ Jesus to the Gentiles so that they might give up their old life style and become imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved and gave himself up for them, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (cf. Eph 5:1-2).

By highlighting the significance behind the holy Eucharist, Paul imprinted in the minds of the people that by becoming part-takers of the holy Eucharist, they become not only the sharers of the Body of Christ but also become one body, as the bread eaten is one and they themselves are many (cf. 1 Cor 10:16). Moreover, Paul inspired and strengthened the Gentiles by assuring them that they are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with

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98 Cf. Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology*, 97.

99 William Baird, “Theology”, in *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, eds. Paul J. Achtemeier, Roger S. Boraas, Michael Fishbane, Pheme Perkins, William O. Walker, Jr. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1990) 620.

100 Cf. C.M. Robeck Jr., “Tongues”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 966-967, 966.

Christ Jesus himself as the corner stone (cf. Eph 2:19). Thus Paul related Eucharist as the source and energy that integrates, builds and strengthens the Church, which is the Body of Christ. The source of the Church's unity is both Christ and the Spirit (cf. Eph 4:4, 5). The Church grows as its members are properly related to Christ the head and to one another as members of the same body (cf. Col 2:19; Eph 4:16). "The Body of Christ is usually the locus of the Christian ministry."<sup>101</sup> Only by doing so they would foster the Body of Christ and grow in the richness of the Holy Spirit for the build-up of the Lord's mission for the glory of God. Paul's theological contribution in this regard is significant and is a paradigm to the Christianity.

## **8. PAUL'S PRAYERFUL APOSTOLATE, A MODEL TO THE MISSIONARIES**

We note that Paul's apostolate began in prayer (cf. Acts 13:3) and, according to tradition, ended in prayer as he was martyred. His whole ministry was grounded in, and developed from, prayer. According to Paul, the Christian experience was essentially (and unceasingly) an act of Prayer.<sup>102</sup> Paul uses "Amen" in affirmation of his personal integrity in the ministry of the Gospel, referring to God's faithfulness (cf. 2 Cor 1:18), which is supported by Christ's faithfulness in fulfilling God's promises (cf. Cor 1:1:19-20).<sup>103</sup> It is pertinent to note that the Pauline prayer vocabulary is the richest

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101 R.Y.K. Fung, "Body of Christ", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 76-82, 81.

102 Cf. Hunter, "Prayer", 725.

103 Cf. J L Wu, "Liturgical Elements", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 557-560, and 558.

in the NT, and the Apostle uses prayer terms more frequently than any other writer.<sup>104</sup> Paul realizes that Christian life in this world is an unending struggle against “rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph 6:12; cf. 2 Cor 2:11). Therefore, to Paul, prayer enables him to win confidence of Christ’s faithfulness in fulfilling God’s promises. He regards prayer as a concrete manifestation of faith in God. In his famous passage on “spiritual warfare”, Paul depicts faith as the shield by which all the attacks of the devil can be thwarted (Eph 6:15).<sup>105</sup>

Similarly, Paul realizes that believers needed the supernatural armour of God to resist temptation and “stand against the devil’s schemes.” Keeping such convictions in mind, Paul exhorted that the believers are to pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests and be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints (cf. Eph 6:18). Paul’s basic theology of prayer was thus constructed on the rational certainty that God exists and personally and providentially sustains the creation (cf. Col 1:16-17). In the wake of his apostolic mission, Paul sought prayer requests (cf. Eph 6:19-20; Col 4:3-4) so that the Lord may be pleased to (1) open a door for the word of the Gospel; (2) give him uninhibited boldness or confidence in preaching; and (3) give him facility of speech for his proclamation. Prayer to God is vital in the apostle’s understanding

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104 Cf. Hunter, “Prayer”, 729.

105 Cf. C.F. Arnold, “Power”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 723-725, 724.

of evangelistic work.<sup>106</sup> “Prayer buttressed all his mission work – in advance of visits, during them and after he had departed. All his plans were conceived under the constant sense of the guidance and will of God.”<sup>107</sup> By praying and invoking the power of the heavenly Father, Paul paved the way for an effective evangelization and rendered a paradigm for the missionaries to follow.

## CONCLUSION

The typical Christ experience of Paul is a paradigm to the entire Church in as much as it highlights the truth that without a real Christ experience and a holistic call, no missionary will be able to go in for the mission of the Lord. As a chosen disciple in the hands of the Lord, Paul witnessed the risen Lord wherever he went and proclaimed the Lord’s mission with esteemed concern. He proclaimed Christ the crucified amongst the Jews and the Gentiles as well and inspired his listeners to imitate Christ’s humility and pursued mission initiatives persistently. In all these, as an apostle of the crucified, Paul encountered innumerable sufferings which were considered by him as his esteemed privilege. As part of his ministerial commitment to Christ, Paul moved with the fire of love and dedication and transformed people into intimacy and led

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106 Cf. Hunter, “Prayer”, 732. For Paul, the “struggle” of prayer was not an attempt to wrestle God into the changing of his will. Praying according to God’s will was crucial to Paul, because he understood all activity in the world in terms of good and evil. In fact, he requested prayer (Eph 6:19-20; Col 4:3-4) that God would: (1) open a door for the Word of the Gospel; (2) give him uninhibited boldness or confidence in preaching; and (3) give him facility of speech in his proclamation. Prayer to God was essential in the Apostle’s understanding of evangelistic work.

107 Hunter, “Prayer”, 729.

them lovingly to Christ. Paul excelled as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, and as an ideal Pastor as well. As a good soldier, he fought to proclaim the truth revealed by Christ the Lord and savior the hope of humanity. As a minister, Paul zealously mobilized resources for the Church in Jerusalem. Paul insisted that every person be subjected to the governing authorities for there is no authority except from God. As an ideal Pastor he wrote letters to churches and individuals even during his imprisonment and quite a few of them are popularly known in the Church as Pastoral Epistles.

As an inspired leader, Paul envisioned higher goals for the kingdom of God and was consistently on the path of evangelization and performed extensive missionary journeys by road and sea-routes. He trusted his fellow-workers and delegated powers and also commended them for their significant contribution. His contribution for the development of Christian theology is exceedingly overwhelmed. As a great theologian of the early Church, Paul taught sound doctrines. He had great concern for the Gospel and for the people as well. The distinct characteristics of Pauline spirituality is that throughout his apostolic mission, he kept himself zealous and had a strong conviction of his apostleship and was conscious of his specific call for the Gentile mission and before his own people.

The missionary model of Paul typically excelled not only the missionaries of the early Church, but also of all times. Paul dared to tell the Gentile readers “You were grafted in”, “to share the rich root of the olive tree” (cf. Rom 11:17-18) since “it is the root that supports the branches and not otherwise.” These words of the apostle to the

Gentiles echo before each one of the baptized and part-takers of the Body of Christ as Jesus has paid an invaluable price by shedding his own precious blood on the cross for each one, at the expense of his very life. As the Church throughout the world is passing through tough times of persecution as was prevailed in the early Church, the strategy zealously followed by Paul in the crisis times of persecution is inspirational to the missionaries of the Church.

According to Paul, the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith (cf. Rom 1:16). Keeping the above in mind, the vocation of every baptized is to sow generously with the power of the Lord, to fight the evils of darkness and to leave the rest to the God. In all these, Paul rendered an unbeatable paradigm to the Christianity. By proclaiming the Gospel, Paul taught uprightness to the whole world and after having borne witness before the authorities, and having proved himself the greatest model of endurance, he was taken from this world and went to the holy place.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

# **MISSION DIOCESE OUTSIDE KERALA AT RANDOM IN PAULINE PERSPECTIVE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is a matter of fact that Christianity came to India, in the first century, even before it reached the European countries and the historical precedence of the Church of St Thomas Christians cannot be overlooked. With that conscience, it is for the Church to arise with her mission call more vibrantly than ever. As reaping the earth's harvesting is imminent, the angel calls with a loud voice to use the sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe (cf. Rev 14:15; 18). There is no more time to wait for up-keep as majority of the labourers are idle and the horrors of the word of God are echoing in the ears, alerting to look around and see how much the fields are ripe for harvesting (cf. Jn 4:35b). Possibly, the labourers are awaiting their call even at 5 o'clock (cf. Mt 20:7). Therefore, motivating and sending the labourers to the vineyard is the need of the hour. The paradigm characterized in Apostle Paul is very much relevant to the missionaries of the Syro-

Malabar Church at this hour of the day as the time has come to rise up. As a chosen instrument, St. Paul having zealously proclaimed the gospel, was confident of the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, had reserved for giving him (2 Tim 4:7-8).

Although the Christians are numerically a small minority in India, its presence among the poor and the downtrodden people here to improve their quality of life is no doubt an effective testimony of selfless service amongst them in the true spirit of love. Christianity has made commendable contributions in the building up of the Indian society through its active involvement in the fields of education, socio-medical services, fight against social evil, women empowerment etc. This small Christian community in India has contributed substantially to the build-up of modern India. The Church realizes that her principal task is evangelization. As part of evangelization, problems related to justice, liberation, development and peace are looked into. Ultimately a zeal for the salvation of souls, a passion that has its source in the very heart of Christ is aimed. Extending love, care and concern to the needy and down-trodden and evangelization are two sides of the same coin. Considering the development of human aspects, the Church endeavors to focus on groups like the Dalits, Tribals, women, the poor and the unorganized labour.

Jesus's parting directive to His disciples was to preach the good news to all creation. Expressions like "to all nations", "to make disciples of all nations" (cf. Mt 28:16), "preach the Gospel

to the whole creation” (cf. Mk 16:15), “so I send you” (cf. Jn 20:21), all point to the same direction and to the same “mission.” The missionary command of the Lord is forever. The entire Church recognizes that the initiative for all missionary activities flows from the fountain of love of God the Father and that the missionary activity is the greatest and the holiest duty of the Church. In that respects all the Churches in India, irrespective of Rites are imparting towards achieving the mission goal. The Holy Father Pope Francis has graciously authorized the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, in October 2017, to provide for the pastoral care of the Syro-Malabar faithful through-out India by erection of two eparchies and by the extension of two eparchies already in existence, to foster the growth in love, communion and service. Accordingly, the trust reposed on the Syro-Malabar Church by the Holy See enhances the scope of their Mission thrust still further.

As for Paul, his Gentile apostolate appears to have been acknowledged by the leader of the Jerusalem Church (Gal 2:7-8). But there was no other witness at hand when the Lord commissioned him. Paul could produce nothing like the credentials of the Twelve. His credentials were the converts he had won and the churches he had planted – more than adequate credentials, in his conscience. He had worked zealously and preached more extensively than any of those who had seen the Risen Christ before; he had planted churches more widely and observed the harvest of the Spirit growing in the lives of those who had turned to Christ through his ministry.

## 1. AN OUTLINE OF THE MISSION TODAY

The emergence of mission as a key concept in the life of the Church is an overwhelming reality which she stands for in the world. The early Church understood its role as a missionary movement. It has never been easy, and it must continue to overcome challenges, criticism and opposition. The mission today in India is facing severe problems due to various political issues. The Church continues in time and space the very same mission of the Son's fountain of love. The Church continues the mission of Jesus for she is in a state of mission always and everywhere. Therefore, mission by definition is an ecclesial action.<sup>1</sup> "There are various groups of people among whom the Church needs to be present, such as people of other religions, people without any knowledge about God and people who deny the existence of God. It is an ardent desire of the Church to be implanted among peoples and cultures in the same way that Christ was incarnated in the particular social and cultural circumstances of the people among who he lived."<sup>2</sup> The Church's policy is very clear. It strictly forbids forcing anyone to embrace the faith, or alluring or enticing people by worrisome wiles. By the same token, she also strongly insists on her right that no one should be frightened away from the faith by unjust and/or vexatious plans on the part of

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1 Cf. Xavier Kochuparampil, "Ecclesiastical, Social and Political Contexts of the New Movement of Evangelization", in *Missionary Legacy of the Syro-Malabar Catholics*, ed. Peter Kannampuzha (Kakkanad: Thomas Christian Heritage, LRC Publication 2013) 37-58, 37-38.

2 Decree *Ad Gentes* on the Mission Activity of the Church No.10. [http://www. File //C:/Users/User/Desktop/Ad Gentes.html](http://www.File//C:/Users/User/Desktop/Ad Gentes.html) [accessed on June 2, 2016].

others.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the Church warns the faithful not to use coercive methods to invite people to faith. Church does not want anyone to embrace faith without one's own free will. The ecclesiastical laws are very cautious on this point. Religious freedom is maintained, lest anyone should be hindered from embracing the Church by unjust harassment.

In spite of all that, the missionary movement went on fruitfully. The Church today is challenged to focus on that model as she tries to make herself relevant in her context.<sup>4</sup> As far as the ecclesiastical ministry of the Eastern Churches in India is concerned, they are basically concentrating their mission endeavours in pastoral ministry in general in Kerala and more particularly in pastoral ministry amongst its migrants through its mission dioceses outside Kerala and outside India as well. The various congregations and institutes of the consecrated men and women of all the Rites are involved in the mission endeavours of the Church in the respective charisms which they stand for. Through their challenging ministries, the Church not only strives to cater to the spiritual needs faithful in these of the segments, but also renders concerted efforts to reach the unreached by proclamation of the gospel and to render service to varied sections of people, irrespective of any discrimination as to their socio-economic or religious background.

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3 Cf. Decree *Ad Gentes* on the Mission Activity of the Church No.13. [http://www. File //C:/Users/User/Desktop/Ad Gentes.html](http://www.File//C:/Users/User/Desktop/Ad Gentes.html) [accessed on June 2, 2016].

4 Cf. Anthony Chirayath, "Golden Jubilee of Vatican II: An Impetus to Mission Shaji Jerman", in *Thomas Christian Heritage*, Vol VII, No.13, ed. Peter Kannampuzha (Kakkanad: LRC, 2014) 15-23, 17-18.

The Church imparts evangelization process with the objectives of development of humanity and to achieve the ultimate goal of the mission. Often it is debated that in “the present tribal context of the mission, we need an incarnational theology which emerges from the lived experience of the missionary and which merges into the life situation of the tribal man. Our theology has to come down to the level of the peasant in his toil and struggle for existence and where ‘the ploughman homeward treads his weary way’ in the evening.”<sup>5</sup> At the same time it is also very relevant to consider that: one who preaches God must be a person of God. Without holiness, the words and deeds of a missionary will not produce result.<sup>6</sup> Consciously, our missionaries render their service in the mission stations with absolute dedication and commitment for the cause of living the gospel.

The farsighted approach of the missionaries is appreciable in the context of imparting basic orientation on gospel values and grooming the youngsters to be Christ-centered so as to set them free, with the power of the Holy Spirit, from the clutches of unethical practices. The power of the Holy Spirit attained through personal prayer is an inevitable element in the life style of the missionaries, for their being effective in their endeavours. The Church renders missionary service in mission stations through its eparchies and

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5 Alexander Maramattam, “Missionary Activities among the Tribals”, in *Mission Theology of the Syro-Malabar Church*, ed. Peter Kannampuzha (Kakkanad: LRC Publications 15, 2008) 241-249.

6 Cf. Sr. Regis, “Missionary Activities through Educational Institution”, in *Mission Theology*, 249-256.

with the cooperation and support of its institutes of consecrated life, i.e., by the consecrated men and women and by the concerted effort of its diocesan priests. Liberation of the oppressed is no less a prime concern of the missionaries in line with the gospel values (cf. Lk 4:18). The pitiable predicament of the lower class in India made the Christian missionaries more authentic models of the gospel truths. In this process, the liberation of the oppressed in the Indian villages received a positive impact from the missionaries.<sup>7</sup> Considering the community as part of the body of Christ, the efforts of the missionaries are focussed on illumining the hearts of their listeners with the power of the Holy Spirit and as witnesses of Christ, with devotion. The Church conceives that mission is the Lord's work and that it is the Lord who works through the missionaries for the salvation of souls.

Through its mission stations, educational institutions and other charitable institutions, the Church endeavours to proclaim the good news for the good of the souls of the Christian faithful, with a zealous discipline, that they may flourish more and discharge the function entrusted to them, under the protection of the blessed and glorious Virgin Mary, who is truly called *Theotokos* and who shines

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7 Cf. S. Ponnunmuthan, "Impact of Christianity as a Liberative Force in the Social Milieu of Kerala", in *Mission and Conversion – Towards a New Ecclesiology*, ed., Selvister Ponnunmuthan and Shaji Jerman (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2008) 422.

forth as the exalted mother of the universal Church.<sup>8</sup> The Church follows the general norm that when a religious house of a particular rite opens in other places with different rites such a religious house should follow the rite of that Diocese.<sup>9</sup> The mission eparchies outside India are dedicated for the growth of the mission in the respective countries in the true spirit of the gospel values and for building up of the kingdom of God.

## **2. AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF A MISSION FROM A LAYMAN'S VIEW**

In pursuit of knowing the Mission and to acquire a first-hand awareness of the actual situation prevailing in mission stations, the author undertook two mission journeys to a few mission stations of the Eparchy of Chanda in Maharashtra State with the blessings of the Parish Priest, who placed his hands on the author and prayed before the mission journey started.

### **2.1. THE CRITERIA BEHIND CHOOSING CHANDA FOR STUDY**

The Eparchy of Chanda is of long standing and is the first mission diocese of the Syro Malabar Church. Chanda was considered for study at random without much calculation or planning.

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8 Cf. Pope John Paul II, "Apostolic Constitution Sacri Canons", in *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches – Latin-English Edition* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1995) xxi – xxviii, xxviii.

9 Cf. V. Chittilappilly, "Contribution of Consecrated Men In the Building up of the Syro-Malabar Church", in *Consecrated life – a Call to Wake Up the World*, ed. P. Kannampuzha (Kakkanad: LRC Publication 2016) 148.

## **2.2. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF CHANDA DIOCESE**

It is noted that the very launching of Chanda Diocese<sup>10</sup> itself was a historic decision of the Holy See for the Indian Church. As far as the Syro Malabar Church is concerned, the launching of the Chanda Mission was an unprecedented experiment in the Indian ecclesiastical history when Msgr. Januarius Palathuruthy CMI was appointed as the first ecclesiastical superior with duties, privileges and faculties of an Apostolic Exarch and he was the innovator of a great missionary movement in the history of evangelization in India. The hurdles which Chanda mission had to encounter at the initial stages were on four counts: (1) Chanda was the first ecclesiastical territory entrusted to the Syro-Malabar Church outside Kerala, (2) the CMI Congregation which presented Msgr. Januarius to be the leader of this new adventure, also did not have a radical field-experience in the ministry of direct evangelization, (3) the area entrusted to his care was an area of high cultural and linguistic diversity as it was the meeting point of South Indian and North Indian cultures, and (4) at that time there was not even a single local Catholic in this entire territory. <sup>11</sup>

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10 Cf. *Eparchy of Chanda Directory* (The Diocesan Curia, 2016) 73-74. Pope John XXIII, by the Apostolic Decree *Ad Lucem Sancti Evangelii* of 31 March 1962 erected the Ecclesiastical Unit of Chanda. On 26<sup>th</sup> Feb 1977 by the Bull “*Nostra Imporum*” Pope Paul VI established Chanda as a Diocese and Msgr. Januarius CMI was appointed as its first Bishop. He was ordained Bishop at Ballarpur on 03 may 1977. The task entrusted to Bishop Januarius was comparatively difficult, strenuous, and at the same time challenging.

11 Cf. Mathew Kaniampampil, “A Unique approach to Evangelization”, in *A Missiology For Third Millennium* ed., Thomas Aykara (Bangalore: Dharmmaram Publications, 1997) 31-40, 31.

In spite of those hurdles, right from the beginning, Msgr Januarius exhibited a passion for accomplishment of his mission in those villages. He travelled extensively and visited practically all the villages there, and encouraged his missionaries to reach the unreached. His famous “walking distance, cycle distance, bullock cart distance, motor bike distance, jeep distance ” was in order to connect to the otherwise unconnected people, far and near. He had deep concern for the poor and the marginalized and led his missionaries to those vulnerable sections in the society. In order to mobilize the required funds, he approached funding agencies like the CRS, Misereor, IGSSS and others. He did not have for them any major projects, except the minimum, which could be executed at the local village level. The projects he submitted for the all-round development of the people were essentially small in size, easy to implement and rurally important and family oriented. The project cost of a sample “Farm Project for a Mission Centre,” consisting of price of land; fencing, levelling, bunding; two wells and two pump sets; two pair of bullocks; other agricultural implements, seeds, fertilizers and a small farm house was \$5,000/-.<sup>12</sup>

The diocesan territory is spread in a vast area of 32,233 square Kilometers and its population was 45, 62,214.<sup>13</sup> During 2016, the diocese had a catholic population of 15,000<sup>14</sup> of which 50% were in

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12 Cf. Thomas Chirappurath, *Peripheries to the Centre - Launch and Growth of Chanda the First Syro-Malabar Mission: A CMI Initiative*, ed., Benny Thettayil (Bangaluru: Dharmmaram Publications, 2017) 666.

13 Cf. *Eparchy of Chanda Directory* 2016, 213.

14 Cf. Information received through an e-mail dated 23.2.2020 from Fr. Jeevan of Chanda Diocese.

town parishes and the remaining were located in interior scattered villages, which were inhabited by illiterate *gareebi* peasants in small groups. Out of the 50% in town parishes, half of them were also very poor and the remaining half were in somewhat financially better category. The Chanda mission had thirty two Balbhavans, twenty three medical units, forty six schools, three schools for mentally challenged, two schools for physically disabled, four hospitals, seventeen dispensaries, two hostels, five social work centres, two tailoring centres, one typing centre, one home for unwed mothers, two Grihini schools, one home for mentally ill restitutes, two centres for destitutes, one Jr. College, one B.Ed. College, two Retreat Centres and thirty two village chapels for service of the people, apart from six Provincial Houses, fifteen religious houses for men and seventy religious houses<sup>15</sup> for women.

### **2.3. THE FIRST MISSION JOURNEY**

The Mission journey was performed during the period from 27<sup>th</sup> April to 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016 from Cochin. The journey to Chanda was initiated by the author based on an inspiration received by him after the study of the Pauline missionary zeal and it was possible as the Parish Priest of Ashirvan Church, Chincholi and Rev. Father Rajat Valiamangalam of Chanda Diocese welcomed the proposed visit.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the journey was fixed straight away without any advance

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15 Cf. *Eparchy of Chanda Directory* 2016, 213,214.

16 Cf. *Eparchy of Chanda Directory* (Ballarpur: The Diocesan Curia, 2016) 113. Chincholi Church was established in 1981. Here, two institutions are in function (1) Ashirvan Balbhavans for Boys and Girls and (2) Ashirvan Convent is run by 2 Sisters of SD Congregation.

planning, ignoring the severe drought situation that prevailed throughout India at that time. Maharashtra, at that time was the worst-hit State in India, without any rain for months together. As for the trip, it was the author's conviction that since the mission journey was initiated according to the Lord's plan, the Lord would take care of the journeys,<sup>17</sup> in proper time.

When the train reached the Ballarshah Railway Station, it was mid-day noon in hot sun. Rev. Fr. received the author at the Station and took him in his Jeep to his Parish which was 45 Kilometers away, after reporting to the Bishop's House en-route. The journey along the thick forest area was really a wonderful experience altogether. In spite of the heavy drought condition that prevailed, on the way to the village Parish, miraculously, all of sudden rain started and the forward journey was completed through the welcome rain. Thereafter, on most of the evenings it rained. Once again it was proved that, with Lord, nothing is impossible and that the Lord reigns majestically and the nature listens to the movement of the Lord. On reaching the destination, journeys commenced to the mission substations one by one. It started on the same day of reaching the parish.

As part of this visit, the following activities were undertaken at the mission station:

(1). A Retreat was sponsored for the Parishioners of the St. Thomas Chapel, Subai, for 4 days followed by Holy Qurbana on all days. The speakers for the Retreat were from Mumbai who

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<sup>17</sup> It was a matter of faith that "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" (Gen 22:8).

spoke Marathi and Hindi as well. Home mission was done to all parishioners. All the local parishioners whole-heartedly attended the retreat which they could follow in their own language<sup>18</sup> as the message. The Holy Qurbana was fully inspired by the Holy Spirit. Incidentally it was noted that the condition of Subai Chapel was in a pathetic condition. The floors and the altar were found badly dilapidated. It was learnt that the Church was donated by a well-wisher almost 35 years back and that since then no maintenance could be done on that building due to shortage of funds, as the Priest-in-charge informed.

(2). Actively participated in the home mission to parishioners' huts at Indira Nagar, Thomapur and Subai Villages (5 KM off) on 4 days along with parish priest, the sister-in-charge and the guest speakers.

(3). The huts of parishioners of Ashirvan Church were visited along with the Rev. Father and Rev. Sister on three days.

(4). Mission journey to Podsa (a far-off interior village 52 Kms away through forest area) was done in a Jeep on two occasions. In Podsa, 8 families (converts from Hindu background) were there. Visited their shelters. Holy Qurbana was celebrated in the Podsa

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18 Here literally, the Word of God manifested on the gathering as the Holy Spirit bestowed His power on all gathered (cf. Acts 2:4; 6) as all of them could hear the messages in their in their own mother tongue.

Chapel<sup>19</sup> (built 35 years back) in which the peasant parishioners attended. It is learnt that here, Holy Qurbana is celebrated once in 4 months or so depending upon the availability of the priest.

(5). Distributed food packets at Ballarshah Railway Station (50 Kms away from Subai) to stranded beggars as part of the celebration of the 'Year of Mercy'. The food packets were prepared by the '*gareebi*' parishioners of Subai chapel and they were taken to Ballarshah Railway Station in Jeeps for distribution of the food packets and dined along with them.

(6). Attended ordination function of Fr. Satish (Peter) Jamnik<sup>20</sup> at St. Thomas Cathedral, Ballarshah.

(7). Visited the home for mentally challenged women at Karunalayam, Chandrapur (63 Kms away).

(8). Visited mission station at Wirur- Ashadam Hospital and Santhinivas Church 12 Kms. away from Chincholi, Warur Tera Prem Church, Lakkadakod Mission Centre and Church and Calvary Giri, Way of the Cross Station.

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19 This Chapel was built by the Chanda Diocese long back (say when the missionaries came there for the first time) and the presently the same is in a deplorable state due to lack of maintenance. The spiritual needs of the parishioners appears to be neglected due to lack of adequate nurturing periodically. The author witnessed a very large size well in use by the villagers who are mostly the parishioners. It is learnt that this Well near the Chapel was built by the great missionaries of the Chanda diocese who pioneered through the far sighted vision of Mar Januarius Palathuruthy, the first Bishop of Chanda. This Well of course remains as a souvenir of the Chanda diocese and even today it caters to the needs of the poor village community as the same provides abundant water, the only source for catering the needs of the village.

20 The Priest was groomed by Chanda Diocese from the local community and he is ordained for the Diocese by His Excellency Mar Ephrem Nariculam.

(9). Visited Amruthaguda village, 12 Kms from Chincholi. Attended Holy Qurbana<sup>21</sup> in one of the houses of the converts from Hindu background who had accepted faith and got baptized earlier. It is learnt that in this village ('Mass Station'), Holy Mass is celebrated once in a while at one of the huts, as they have no chapel there.

(10). Took catechism classes for the high school students of the Chincholi Parish in English by using English/Hindi Bible for 8 days on an average of 3 hours per day.

(11). At the request of the parish priest, the author agreed to provide financial assistance for construction of a small terraced house for a deserving parishioner of Chincholi church during 2017. He was a very poor Hindu convert and a man of high Christian character. His wife was bed-ridden due to paralytic problems. His only daughter was studying. His financial condition was too bad to support the family or to build a shelter for them. Their old shelter was in a very dilapidated condition and they lived in a plastic covered shed as their old shelter was likely to fall at any time on his bed-ridden wife. The parish priest arranged the house construction work in the land owned by the parishioner and promptly completed the work to the full satisfaction of all concerned.

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21 In Amruthaguda, such fellowship gathering is done very rarely due to indisposition of priests. It was spiritually most inspiring and reflective of the spiritual realm in the early Church as contemplated in Acts 2:46. The rarity of such gathering hinders the spiritual growth of the community as they are stranded and they have no other source for fellowship.

## **2.4. THE SECOND MISSION JOURNEY**

The second journey to Chanda was carried out during the period from 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018 to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018, in furtherance of the previous journey. This time, 8 other senior citizens of the author's parish, viz., Little Flower Church, Elamkulam, also joined the author for the mission visit as a team. Having inspired by the mission zeal of St. Paul, these two mission journeys were performed with the intention of an actual participation and personal involvement in the mission endeavours of the Church and to learn as to how far it meets the mission expectations in the present context. It was also intended to understand the kind of struggle to which the missionaries were put and to discover how far it could be mitigated to actualize the joy in fulfilling the Lord's mission.<sup>22</sup> This time, the team was provided accommodation at the dormitory of the mission school close to Krupasroth Church premises, of Mul village, 63Kms away from Bishop's House in Chanda. The activities in which the team was engaged were as follows:

- (1). A retreat was sponsored in the Mul Church for 4 days in which parishioners from 29 scattered villages attended. A Marathi speaking guest speaker was arranged for the retreat. On the final day of the retreat, followed by Holy Qurbana, food was given to all the participant villagers. These villages were spread

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22 The Authors journey witnesses, what was, from the beginning of these mission stations, what have been heard, what have been seen with his eyes, what have been looked and touched with his own hands concerning the Lord's Mission to that part of the world concerning the life prevailed in the mission to which the Syro-Malabar Church is concerned whereby the joy may be complete as it is in the beginning (cf. 1 Jn 1:1-4).

within a radius of 35 Kms. There was participation from about 200 families.

- (2). All the 14 mission stations within the region were visited by the team along with Rev. Fr. Rajat.
- (3). Home mission was undertaken along with the parish priest and the sister in charge as part of the retreat programme.
- (4). A new house built for the poor family was blessed on 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018 by Rev. Fr. Rajat Valiamangalam and the keys were handed over to the bed-ridden wife of the parishioner. The blessing ceremony was celebrated by the whole village community irrespective of caste and creed, with profound joy and praised God for gift to the family. It was also a wonderful inspirational experience to the team which accompanied the author to the Mission.

### **3. INSIGHTS ON MISSION ENDEAVOURS IN CHANDA DIOCESE**

The author having rendered Mission Journeys to the mission stations of Eparchy of Chanda,<sup>23</sup> is in a position to share the feel of the mission-fire that prevailed in those mission stations. During the course of home mission in the village huts of the parishioners, it was noticed that invariably, the parishners displayed in their huts items such as (1) A Cross, (2) the Holy Bible in their vernacular, (3) Holy Picture of our Lord Jesus Christ and (4) Candle stand etc.

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23 Cf. *Eparchy of Chanda Directory* (The Diocesan Curia, 2016) 73-74. Pope John XXIII, by the Apostolic Decree *Ad Lucem Sancti Evangelii* of 31 March 1962 erected the Ecclesiastical Unit of Chanda.

in prominent place of their dwelling place where they kneel for prayer. It is learnt that these items were provided to them as part of the seven point programme<sup>24</sup> introduced by the diocese to the parishners. Structurally, and canonically, the eparchy is adequately laid-out and maintained properly.

The significant factor noticed was that the zeal with which the consecrated men and women worked at Chanda in the interior villages, far-off from their home-town, with minimum amenities of life, was a matter of great inspiration. Within their limited parameters they were really doing a great service as their solemn sacrifice<sup>25</sup> through their proclamation of the love of Christ in that part of the world. To Paul, the word sacrifice conceives important truths about Christian service. He exhorts the Romans to present their bodies “a living sacrifice” (Rom 12:1), a vivid and forceful way of indicating the need for the complete offering of the worshipper to God. Within the context of a growing awareness of the great goodness and grace of God, Pauline spirituality is characterized by a rising hymn of thanks giving to the gracious God; this alone is the gateway of Christian entry into fruitful engagement with a world which has not yet experienced the reason for that gratitude which rises from a life in which, in the power of the Spirit, faith is working through love. This reveals the spirituality<sup>26</sup> of the missionaries of those days in real terms.

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24 Cf. Poovatholil, *Chanda Mission*, 505.

25 Cf. Morris, “Sacrifice, Offering”, 857.

26 Cf. R.P. Meye, “Strong and Weak”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 916.

### **3.1. CHANDA MISSION - AN INCREDIBLE MIRACLE**

“The unconditional and unwavering commitment of the missionaries to the person and mission of Jesus Christ under the guidance of Mar Januarius Palathuruthy CMI, the philosopher and visionary pastor, created an atmosphere for the blooming of the Chanda Mission and attracted the attention and imagination of many in India and abroad.”<sup>27</sup> His Excellency’s motto was “Let us share everything dynamically divine (*Sambhajemahi Dhivyani*)” and had graciously nurtured the Chanda Ministry during the period from 1962 – 1990)

### **3.2. CHANDA: A DIOCESE OF ACCEPTANCE BY ALL**

As far as Chanda Mission is considered, it has a gracious precedent of acceptance by all sections of the community without any barriers. The mission started to grow from the grass root level. The missionaries, especially the consecrated men and women, were most respectfully and affectionately welcomed by all sections of political leaders and public men and their full co-operation and support was being extended for the services of the priests and sisters. This continues even today. Right from the time of Bishop Januarius Palathuruthy, Chanda Mission had won a reputation of being an epitome of missionary progress in India. His Excellency’s successor Bishop Vijay Anand Nedumpuram CMI, who assumed charge from 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1990, maintained a great vision to see the whole

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27 Paulachan Kochappilly, “Chanda Mission and the Evangelization Efforts of the Syro-Malabar Church”, in *Be My Witness*, ed. Sebastian Kizhakkeyil (Kakkanad: Mount St. Thomas, 2011) 425-468, 439.

world as one family or (*vishwakutumb*), where God is the Father and all human beings are His children. The motto was inspired by the words of Paul (Eph 1:1) and motivated by *Lumen Gentium* 28/7.<sup>28</sup>

Bishop Vijay Anand Nedumpuram daringly took initiative for inculturation through his simple life-style, which took him closer to his people. The simplification and adaptation made in his *insignia* was his humble attempt to assimilate the rural culture and local customs into the Christian faith and proclamation.<sup>29</sup> The mission started to grow up from the grass root level. The missionaries were most respectfully and affectionately welcomed by all sections of political and community leaders. On retirement of His Excellency Mar Vijay Anand Nedumpuram, on his becoming the Bishop Emeritus on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014, Mar Ephrem Nariculam assumed charge of Chanda Diocese and led the mission with the motto “Thy Kingdom Come” (*Tava Rajyam Ayatu*).

It is observed that the eparchy is set-up with fore-sight, as it holds sufficient landed property and structures for eventual development and growth. The mission stations have wide potential for proclamation of the love of Christ for two reasons: (1) the missionaries maintained cordial relations with the local people who were poor and needy and at the same time receptive to the gospel values and (2) the missionaries earned the respect of the political leaders of the locality by virtue of their good deeds. The eparchy

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28 Cf. Chirappurath, *Peripheries to the Centre*, 693-694.

29 Cf. John Poovatholil, *Chanda Mission – Orientations and Confrontations In Evangelization* (Bangalore: Dharmmaram Publications, 1998) 496.

has thirty five Mission Stations<sup>30</sup> coming under nine parishes spread throughout their territorial jurisdiction and is managed by the concerted efforts of all concerned. The eparchy has twelve formation houses including a Minor Seminary where fifty six aspirants were pursuing their studies (2016) and it had Novitiate houses of FCC, MSMI etc. The ministry was rendered by a team of forty six diocesan priests,<sup>31</sup> fifty one religious priests (of CMI, CMF, VC and SG), six religious brothers and four hundred fifty seven religious sisters<sup>32</sup> belonging to twenty two congregations, apart from forty one lay missionaries/catechists.

### **3.3. CHANDA, A DIOCESE OF STANDING BUT LACKING ADEQUATE GROWTH**

Even though various scattered mission stations were started many years ago in most of the churches of the eparchy by the very

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30 Cf. *Eparchy of Chanda Directory* 2016, 7-9, 200. In accordance with the decisions of the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church to establish partnership relationship between the dioceses within Kerala and those outside Kerala, the mission diocese of Chanda has got the diocese of Kanjirapally as its partner diocese. Parishes/Mission stations of both dioceses have been linked for mutual prayer and collaboration in pastoral and evangelization activities.

31 Cf. *Eparchy of Chanda Directory* 2016, 212. Out of forty six diocesan priests, thirteen are born and brought up in the Diocese of Chanda of which 8 are of Chanda while 2 are from CMF and 3 from CMI Congregation.

32 Cf. *Eparchy of Chanda Directory*, 2016, (The Diocesan Curia, 2016) 210-211 and 212. Out of the four hundred and fifty seven religious, 53 are born and brought up in the Diocese of Chanda and groomed in various Formation Houses of SAT, ASMI, SHSP, SABS, SAB, Benedictine, SJB, SMS, FCC, CMC, DW, SD, Claretian, SH, DMI, HC, St. Ann's Luzern and SMI. The dedicated services of these Congregations in this Mission Diocese is inspirational and renders a challenging message to those who are yet to go in for mission endeavors for Christ.

sincere efforts of the priests of those days, it appears, that much could not be done to enhance the tempo of the spiritual growth and to improve the daily life of the poor parishioners. According to the first-hand knowledge of the actual situation gathered by the author, there is inadequate sacramental nourishment or nurturing<sup>33</sup> of the faithful of the scattered community in the mission stations. Pitiably, the missionaries are not able to give adequate support and upliftment of the poor community materially or spiritually. Consequently, there has been no spread of the gospel, commensurate with the long existence of the mission diocese, instituted long back.<sup>34</sup> This is the state of affairs of the mission stations visited by the author. Incidentally, on sharing this with His Excellency, the Bishop of Chanda, the reply was a question as to what can be done. May be, His Excellency was helpless as he had to manage within the shortcomings, due to obvious reasons.

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33 Cf. Bowers, "Mission", 610. Paul adopted a Mission strategy of focusing his missionary efforts not only on founding but also on nurturing the believing communities which appears to lack parallel in his day. The deliberateness with which Paul pursued a geographically definable expansion of the faith unexpectedly proves on closer review to be an approach to religious outreach apparently lacking effective parallel in his day.

34 Cf. Although this community was set up long back with great ambition and hard efforts of the missionaries who worked at that time, the all-round growth of the community appears to be inadequate considering their long existence. It gives a pitiable impression that of a person of 35 years old having only 3 year mental and physical growth, ill-affected due to mal-nutrition and starvation, pitiably strives to live in a skeleton and skinny physical structure incapable of doing anything is lying helpless.

## **4. CONSTRAINTS LIKELY TO PREVAIL IN MISSION DIOCESES IN GENERAL**

It is an incredible fact that the mission dioceses in general outside Kerala of all the Rites are rendering invaluable services to humanity irrespective of any discrimination based on caste or creed mostly by utilizing the initiatives of the consecrated men and women and other religious of the respective Rites. However, it is relevant to say that the mission dioceses deserve much more attention from all corners of the Church as there is much scope of enhancing the tempo of the mission endeavours with the active participation of all the baptized who are instilled by the Holy Spirit. This calls for highlighting the shortcomings that need be addressed.

### **4.1. LACK OF ADEQUATE MINISTERS (Consecrated Men, Women and Laity)**

If we look at Chanda, it could be gathered that its territory is spread over thousands of Square Kms and its mission stations are widely scattered. By 2016, the total number of priests and the religious available in the diocese were only 97. With that strength the diocese looked after its varied needs, including the management of the day-to-day administrative responsibilities of the dioceses and its institutions, such as the boarding schools. It appears that there existed a real gap in looking after the spiritual and pastoral needs of the mission. The number of lay missionaries available in the dioceses was also negligible. It appears that there is need for additional manpower i.e., the priests, the religious and the lay workers to look after its ministry. It is an accepted fact that a church is not truly established

nor is she a perfect sign of Christ, unless there is a committed laity working along with the hierarchy. Considering such an aspect, the new Bishop of Chanda had a plan to give the laity the role and responsibility, which are due to them in the church, on the basis of their quality and involvement. For that purpose, the priests and the religious must have a new way of thinking, a new kind of behavior and a new style of working.<sup>35</sup> The relevance of such an observation is still valid and need be looked into with adequate concern.

The mission stations are just managed, with very minimum man-power and spiritual attention. It is quite natural that after managing the diocesan institutions, only the remaining priests are looking after the large number of scattered mission stations, by rotation. Consequently, the periodicity of service of holy sacraments especially Holy Qurbana etc. to such mission stations was once in four or five months due to shortage of man power. For instance, the SD Convent attached to the Chincholi parish has only two sisters who have to attend to every need of the scattered mission stations also when required. It is learnt that the same is the case with most of the mission stations and the convents attached thereto. The gravity of such an issue is significant on the following grounds:

Most of the faithful converts in the mission stations are only in the infancy stage of their faith formation, even after a long period of having embraced Christianity, as they lack necessary sacramental support, catechism and constant nurturing to strengthen their Christian faith. Consequently, they themselves are not free from

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35 Cf. Poovatholil, *Chanda Mission*, 499.

following their old practices or to witness Christ. There is every possibility that they would give up their faith and go back to their old background, due to lack of constancy in spiritual support or follow-up by their spiritual leaders. It is quite possible that similar issues may prevail in many mission dioceses in India in general.

As the Church in Kerala is conscious of her pastoral ministry in Kerala, she meets the requirement in Kerala largely on a regular basis by building-up a spiritual routine system since adequate consecrated persons are available here for service. Moreover, the faithful here in Kerala have long ancestral standing and support to have a mature and stable faith, formed over a long period of time, as most of them are Christians by birth. On the other hand, the state of the religious standard of the majority of the faithful in the mission stations outside Kerala is deplorable. It is pertinent to note that at the inception of the Chanda diocese, there was not even a single catholic family in the mission territory. Even now, the strength is not significant nor commensurate with the long period of the existence of the diocese, obviously due to inadequate nurturing. It needs to be examined as to how the problem could be addressed on priority basis to ensure that adequate number of ministers, consecrated men, consecrated women and laity (both men and women) for ministry are identified and deputed to the mission stations as part of a time-bound program. Contextually, one can see how significantly Paul emphasized the urgency of resolving such issues in his messages in the early Church by asserting: “the salvation is here and now” (cf. Rom 1:16-17) and re-iterated: “Look, now is the acceptable time,

look, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2). The repeated usage of the word “now” conveys a sense of urgency; salvation is not to be deferred to some convenient time in the future. Salvation is now. The gospel must be accepted now.<sup>36</sup> The Word of God is the same and is being echoed even today, and exhorts the human hearts to take incarnation. Being a matter of significance, there must be concerted efforts of all concerned to address the problem since the urgency of harvesting, contemplated in the word of God, is ever valid and imminent (cf. Jn 4:35b; Rev 14:15; Rev 14:18).

The Second Vatican Council teaches that the celebration of the Eucharist is at the centre of the process of the Church’s growth. The Council reiterates that “the Church, as the Kingdom of Christ already present in mystery, grows visibly in the world, through the power of God.”<sup>37</sup> It is implied that the one who is incorporated into Christ by baptism needs to be constantly renewed and consolidated, by sharing in the Eucharist Sacrifice. “St. Paul’s vision on the Eucharist in his first letter to the Corinthians is highly significant for the Christians because it affirms the importance of the Eucharist for the life of each Christian as it deepens the understanding of this great mystery, especially as a memorial celebration.”<sup>38</sup>

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36 Cf. L Morris “Salvation”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993, 858-862, 861

37 Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia De Eucharistia*, dated. 17<sup>th</sup> April 2003. Chapter two, Section 21, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/special\\_features/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_20030417\\_ecclesia\\_eucharistia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html) [accessed April 9, 2020].

38 Jack Peterson, “Paul and the Eucharist”, <https://catholicexchange.com/paul-and-the-eucharist> [accessed on April 9, 2020].

It is a fact that many of the Catholics in Kerala take part in the Holy Mass and take Holy Communion on a daily basis and or at least on Sundays. Also, they take part in other Holy Sacraments and Novena of most of the Saints in the Church and are spiritually updated and remain in more or less in comfort zones to meet the spiritual needs of themselves and their families. It is doubtful whether they are really conscious of the mission realities, as obtained in the mission stations of various mission dioceses especially the constraints of the missionaries in those stations. In fact who will shed tears for the poor parishners of the mission dioceses and the poor missionaries who struggle for making both ends meet and for catering to the spiritual needs of their faithful in the scattered villages? Can the Body of Christ ignore the concern and seriousness of the neglects of the newly converts and the unattended mission tasks of the missions as such?<sup>39</sup> Surely, no one can do that consciously! It is here, Paul becomes an exemplar to the missionaries: “I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the Churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?” (2 Cor

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39 D.A. Black, “Weakness, Apostleship and Christian Spirituality”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 966. Paul’s view of weakness is not to be understood only as an abstract doctrine, for it was developed in view of actual conditions. In the first place, weakness speaks of the reality of human finiteness and dependence upon God. It is just this that Paul declares when he says he is weak. He can claim no credit for any of his successes, for he knows that he has been sustained by God. If he has achieved anything, it is only because of God’s power working through a weak but consecrated vessel (cf. 2 Tim 2:20-21).

11:28-29)<sup>40</sup>.

The author firmly believes that the mission dioceses need physical presence and dedicated service of many more ministers, consecrated men, consecrated women, and laity to cater to the spiritual and material needs of the varied mission stations. It is imperative that concerted efforts are vital for imparting an effective and vibrant mission strategy for evangelization, for regular celebration of the holy Eucharist and for presenting holy sacraments in the mission communities, in order to enrich their faith in Jesus. Ensuring spiritual growth of the community in the mission stations is a must for their growth. The need of the hour is certainly a realization at all levels in the Church to address the seriousness of the issue by adopting a renewed approach to the problem. It is hoped that more and more missionaries will come forward to the mission field with the vibrant spirituality and zeal of Paul to make them realize the truth, since truth alone will set free the souls.

## **4.2. INADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

The mission stations really experience constraints due to lack of adequate financial resources. For example, the mission stations are widely scattered in underdeveloped villages or in forest areas,

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40 A.G. 38 to 41 stipulates that every member of the Body of Christ has an obligation to help the body grow. Bishops (A.G 38), priests (A.G 39), religious (A.G 40), and laity (A.G 41) all play a role. Section 28 clarifies: The Christian faithful, having different gifts (cf. Rom 12:6), according to each one's opportunity, ability, charisms and ministry (cf. 1 Cor 3:10) must all cooperate in the Gospel. Hence all alike, those who sow and those who reap (cf. John 4:37), those who plant and those who irrigate, must be one (cf. 1 Cor 3:8), so that in a free and orderly fashion cooperating toward the same end,(1) they may spend their forces harmoniously for the building up of the Church.

without even regular road access. Often, the missionaries have to travel through mud roads and marshy fields, necessitating use of private transportation facilities like Jeep etc. provided by the diocese. Apart from the cost of purchase of vehicles, their running expenses for fuel, regular maintenance, tax, insurance, cost of spares parts etc. are substantial and are being incurred by the dioceses. Often, the mission stations experience cash shortage situations. The author recalls many instances of pitiable financial situation of the priests and other consecrated men who are occasionally subjected to difficult situations due to unanticipated expenditure. The author noted many instances of break-down of the Jeep during travel to mission stations in the midst of forests making it difficult to continue the travel. It was the Lord's grace that managed those critical situations.

In spite of the financial constraints, the mission dioceses manage their ministry without losing their initiative and drive. As the missionaries work amongst the poorest of the poor villagers, there would be no means of any cash generation even to cover the routine expenses. Rather there occurs situations amongst the village community, seeking financial relief for their survival. When the missionaries encounter financial crisis in mission stations as the communities are financially weak, where will the mission dioceses go and stretch their hands for financial support? The mission dioceses have their own limitations. Yet, the heavenly Father, the great provider and comforter interferes and channelizes supports. Surely resourceful parishes of enlightened dioceses of the Church can exceedingly tackle the issues very generously and judiciously

so that all concerned will have participative sharing of the mission work to a great extent.

In Pauline concept, the use of money and the spiritual and material aspects of giving and receiving are closely related. Requests for money are rooted in partnership in the gospel as one gives out of thankfulness for the spiritual benefits received. In Pauline letters it is clear that the way Christians use their money should be an extension of the message of the gospel and the ministry of the Church.<sup>41</sup> With this realization, each faithful of the Church is expected to be compassionate and considerate to the needs of the mission stations in the wider spirit of the gospel values. In the service of Christ, there is no place for self-importance, no matter how great or impressive one's abilities may be. "The weaker members of the Church actually are indispensable for its proper functioning, just as the human body is dependent upon its weaker internal organs (heart, lungs), whose protection is that which the stronger members provide. Hence a failure to help the weak (1 Thess 5:14) is a failure to recognize the mutual dependence of all the members of the Church that represents Christ's body (1 Cor 12:12-13)."<sup>42</sup> In the service of Christ, there is no place for self-individualism, no matter how great or impressive one's abilities may be. The weaker members of the church actually are indispensable for the proper functioning of the body, just as the human body is dependent upon its weaker internal organs (heart, lungs), whose only protection is that which the stronger members

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41 Cf. J. M. Everts, "Financial Support", in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 295-300, 299.

42 Black, "Weakness", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* 966.

afford. Hence a failure to help the weak (1Thess 5:14) is a failure to recognize the mutual dependence of every member of the unity that characterized Christ's body (1 Cor 12:12-13). This perspective on the charity collection is explicitly stated in Romans 15:27. All these issues are matters of significance and call for practising austerity at all levels in the Church and to extend financial support on a regular and systematic way to the mission in time. The Church may also take effective measures to create an awareness amongst all sections of the community about the need to support mission centers.

Paul urged the churches to give voluntarily (1 Cor 16:1; 2 Cor 8:3; 8:11-12; 9:1-5) and generously (2 Cor 8:2-4; 9:6-15), as a demonstration of their concern for the Jerusalem church. The Gentile Christians of the diaspora also wanted to be involved in the relief effort and, in so doing, to show to the mother Church (Acts 24:17) their thanks for their spiritual heritage (Rom 15:27) and also as a proof of their love (2 Cor 8:24).<sup>43</sup> It is quite possible that most of the faithful in the parishes in Kerala may not be aware of the genuine difficulties and shortcomings of the mission dioceses. Obviously, they have very little exposure to the heat of the mission-fire from the mission stations. The members of the Church, all over the world, will have to extend full co-operation for the cause of the mission stations in India. On the part of the mother Church, it needs to take genuine steps to inspire the faithful by adequately apprising them of the genuineness of the cause through appropriate

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43 Cf. S. McKnight. "Collection for the Saints", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 143-147, 145.

parish-based initiatives and all other appropriate means. As a proof of the love and commitment to the rich spiritual heritage of mission in India, it is time for the Church to take initiatives to mobilize adequate resources for the cause of the mission, in the true spirit of the apostolic call (cf. Acts 24:17; Rom 15:27; 2 Cor 8:24), as in the early Church.

### **4.3. UNDER-UTILIZATION OF LANDED RESOURCES IN MISSION STATIONS**

For the daily up-keep of properties, managing the estates, cultivation in the fields, nurturing, harvesting etc., substantial manpower is required. The missionaries are struggling to make both ends meet. Most of the landed and other agricultural resources of the mission stations are kept idle or under-utilized even after seeking assistance of the locals in a limited way. It is promising to learn that the missionaries themselves to work in the land for earning their daily bread.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Paul himself was a tent-maker and he earned his living out of his hard work. Paul is proud of his hard toil for earning his bread. Significantly, Paul connects his work with his ministry. He reminds the Thessalonians: “We worked night and day so that we might not burden any one of you while we proclaimed to you of the Gospel of God.” (1 Thess 2:9). It is clear that Paul’s work was physical and arduous. Paul writes of labor and toil. We worked night and day (cf. 2 Thess 3:8; Acts 20:34). It gives an impression of one whose daily life was characterized by hard physical labor, which began before sunrise.

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44 Cf. P. W. Barnett, “Tentmaking”, in *Dictionary of Paul*, 926.

The stipulations of *Ad Gentes* are: “But in mission lands, let laity, whether foreigners or autochthonous (=of local population), teach in schools, administer temporal goods, cooperate in parish and diocesan activities, and organize and promote various forms of the lay apostolate, in order that the faithful of the young churches may be able to take part as soon as possible in the life of the Church”<sup>45</sup> These activities are yet to be fully undertaken as envisioned, even after a lapse of more than half a century. At any rate, it is worth considering the optimum utilization of the resources of the mission stations by suitable measures.

#### **4.4. UNDER-UTILIZATION OF MISSION POTENTIAL**

It is learnt that towards achieving the mission goal, there is great potential for mission harvest inspite of difficulties that prevail due to various constraints. People living in poverty without adequate care or support by authorities are receptive to gospel. In spite of that, full potential could not be harnessed. In the process it is upto the eparchy to think weather anything more can be done “to bring good news to the poor” (cf. Lk 4:18a). It can also think of paying more attention to its pastoral services to the scattered community more frequently and by eliminating the shortcomings in achieving the mission goals, entrusted by the Lord (cf. Lk 4:18b). It reminds us of the truth: “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few: therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest” (cf. Mt 9:37-38; Lk 10:2-3).

Each diocese may have its own genuine constraints to carry

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45 A.G.41.

on the mission. Actually they need whole-hearted support from all corners in all respects. It is high time to keenly listen to the word of God and realize that it is the Lord of the harvest who sends out the labourers into the harvest. Therefore, what is lacking is persistent prayer; prayer at all levels followed by concerted efforts by everyone who has heard the gospel and was baptized, to carry His yoke<sup>46</sup> for the cause of the mission. The yoke and the burden of Jesus are submission to the reign of God. This imposes no further burden on those who accept it, but rather makes it easier for them to bear the burdens they already have. Jesus's invitation is specific: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Mt.11:28-29). Here the weary and the burdened are the poor, who have good news proclaimed to them. Jesus invites them because he is one of them. Jesus invites every baptized person to be part of His mission team and to carry the gospel to all.

The mission potential needs be harnessed to the fullest extent. The prestigious mission stations established long back with great expectation by the noble missionaries should not be allowed to limp due to lack of adequate number of missionaries or for any other reason whatsoever. The mission dioceses need missionary support of many more consecrated men and women, and also dedicated laity

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46 Cf. John L. Mc Kenzie, "The Gospel According to Mathew", in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, et al. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970) 62-114, 83.

to cater to the needs of the varied mission stations, to witness Jesus to the people who have never heard of the Gospel and also to nurture those who have already heard but needed further spiritual support.

The responsibility of every baptized is to look around and see what more he can do in compliance of Lord's call towards the mission front. To be part of the mission is a matter of grace and a matter of great privilege as the Lord speaks.<sup>47</sup> Pertinently the harvest is great, the labourers are few. Here, both the sowing and reaping of this harvest is the work of God. The disciples, who will reap a quick, must remember that this can only be because of the nature of the Word they will sow, a Word that has already been sown by Jesus himself and by all who revealed the Word before him. Thus the reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. The word of God is relevant at all times: 'One sows and another reaps'. "I send you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour" (Jn 4:35b-38). The author witnessed the truth and reiterates: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest" (Mt 9:38). The word of the Lord is living and is vibrant with much relevance even today. Those who have encountered Jesus and listened to His call will accept the challenge to reap the harvest so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. Of course, the sower is the Lord and the reaper is he who meets Jesus as part of his spirituality, irrespective of whether he/

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47 Cf. Bruce Vawter, "The Gospel According to John", in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 414-466, 432. (cf. Mt 9:35-10:1; Lk 10:2).

she is a priest, or one of the religious or the laity. It is hoped that the entire machinery of the Church irrespective of Rites need to rise and geared up to take up higher tasks for the Lord with the power of the Holy Spirit for full utilization of mission potential in Indian villages.

## **5. CONCERN FOR THE MISSION – A RESPONSE TO TAKE UP LORD’S MISSION**

A missionary journey through the interior villages of the mission station is indeed an inspiring challenge as it entails acceptance of a mission call, through discipleship. Moving along with the missionaries as one among them, with a shoulder bag, for meeting the gareebi parishioners in their earthen huts was very touching. It imparted meaningful insight into the life pattern of the Master, since it is the Master who works through the disciple and makes the disciple a part of the mission for the buildup of His Kingdom. Invaluable service is rendered through the hands of our missionaries who toil in the mission stations. On the whole, the real joy of a missionary is the sense of participation in the Lord’s mission. It enhances his trust in the Lord who will take care as a great shepherd. Inspired by such a spirit, all the senior citizens who joined the team for the second journey to Chanda, were filled with the joy of participation and a sense of fulfilment with a missionary zeal, looking into the affairs of the mission. Since quite a few of the participants were above 75 years of age, it was realized that for a mission endeavour, age is not a barrier. Later on, from that team, sponsorship was made of four brothers for the mission dioceses,

under ‘Sponsor a Brother’ scheme of the Syro Malabar Mission (SyMM).

Looking at the facts ecclesiastically, concern for the Lord’s Mission is a God given gift and is nurtured by the Holy Spirit for having responded to the Lord’s call. Surely, the Lord speaks through His trusted ones and the call is received and accepted in the minds of those who have absolute humility and dedication to the will of God. Above all, the grace of the Holy Spirit is significant. “It is upon the human conscience that these obligations fall and exert their binding force. The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into the mind, at once quietly and with power.”<sup>48</sup> The apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit. They followed Him zealously and the Church continues its mission, impelled by the Spirit of God. What is needed is to adhere to the word of God and co-operate with His voice gracefully as the Lord invites all to invest whole-heartedly their resources, intelligence and energy in serving the cause of God’s kingdom. But it is fatal to forget that without Christ we can do nothing (cf. Jn 15:5).<sup>49</sup> Realizing that Christ is the treasure, Paul affirms: “I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For the sake of knowing the Lord I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ” (Phil 3:8). Therefore, responding to the call of Christ is a choice in

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48 Pope John Paul VI, *Dignitatis Humanae*, [http://vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-II\\_decla\\_dignitatis\\_humanae.en.html](http://vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-II_decla_dignitatis_humanae.en.html) [accessed on July 21, 2017].

49 Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (Bangalore: Catholic Truth Society, 2001) 35.

the affirmative, exercised with the power of Holy Spirit.

It is the Spirit of God that dwells in people which matters for leading a spiritual life and keeps them away from the influence of the flesh. It is here Paul categorically states that anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him (cf. Rom 8:9). Recognizing the overwhelming Spirit within each and every baptized Christian, it is not only the consecrated men and women, but every Christian in the wider sense is basically called upon to take up the Lord's yoke as missionaries as they belong to Christ.<sup>50</sup> For Paul, regards both himself and the individual Christians as the *doulos*, "slave" of Christ who is the *Kyrios* (cf. Gal 1:10; Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 7:22). Yet this relationship of the Christian to the *Kyrios* is not one of despotism or tyranny; it is the very basis of Pauline "freedom" – bound over to Jesus the *Kyrios*, the Christian is freed from self and free for others. Before writing to the Romans, Paul practised his discipleship in letter and spirit in accordance with his call as a zealous missionary of Christ.<sup>51</sup> This involves a hearty obedience to the will of God (Rom 6:17) and, above all, a focus on Jesus Christ the Son of God, into whose image the believer is being transformed by the Spirit.

India's patron St. Thomas, and all other saints of India laid their foot prints in this land for Christianity to follow, apart from the zealous missionary approach envisioned in St. Paul. For that reason, every baptized is bound to follow their footsteps on the mission

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50 Cf. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 812.

51 Cf. R. P. Meye, "Spirituality", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 916.

front. The Churches in India need to bestow their best endeavours, with the gracious participation of its consecrated men, women religious and laity all over India, in spite of various limitations.

## **6. PAUL, A REAL MODEL FOR THE MISSIONARIES**

Mission being a primary task of the Church, the entire baptized Christians in the Church are bound to realize their responsibility in this regard. Paul was a chosen one in the hands of the Lord to proclaim the Gospel to the nations and he has rendered an excellent ministry. Paul has become a prime model for the missionaries of the Church. His motivation was multifaceted. He was essentially driven by a realization of the love of Christ for himself personally and for all humanity in general (2 Cor 5:14-15; Gal 2:20). Apart from that, he maintained an esteemed sense of obligation to carry out the apostolic commission which had been given to him (Rom 1:14-15; 1 Cor 9:16-17), and a realization that he must give an account of his life and work to God (1 Cor 4:1-5; 2 Cor 5:9-10). Such a realization transformed the life of Paul and it also helped in illumining the hearts of all the missionaries in the Church and in inspiring many sons and daughters for the cause of the mission. From observing the life pattern of Paul, the main factors relevant for taking up the mission challenge, are discussed below.

### **6.1. ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS – A CALL OF GOD TO SERVE HIS PURPOSE**

Paul's encounter with Christ completely changed his scale of values. All that was to his advantage before, is no longer anything of

value to him. The knowledge of Christ (that includes the decision to live for him and to love him) relativizes everything else.<sup>52</sup> God calls people according to His own will and purpose (cf. Rom 8:28; cf. 2 Tim 1:9). This calling rests, not on any work done by the recipients of the call but upon the grace of God alone. Those whom He predestined for salvation, He calls (cf. Rom 8:30). Thus Paul's encounter with the Risen Lord (cf. Acts 9:4-16) was instrumental to his conversion. "Paul's conversion is presented in the form of a call narrative, like that of the prophets (cf. Jer 1:4-10). This is clear from his most extensive account" (Gal 1:11-17).<sup>53</sup> By a specific call, Jesus chose Paul and named him: "the instrument I have chosen"<sup>54</sup> (Acts 9:15), "the vessel of election." Saul is an agent enjoying divine favor in the mission he is to accomplish before the Jews (Acts 13:5,14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1-4, 10, 17; 19:8), before the Gentiles (17:22; 18:16-11; 19:10) and before kings (26:1-29). Paul filled with the Holy Spirit, the gift of God that incorporated Saul into the early Church; by virtue of which, all else followed. Paul's calling as an apostle was according to the purpose of God (cf. 1 Cor 1:1). By his calling, Paul realized that his whole life would be dedicated to the proclamation of the gospel (cf. Rom 1:1), something for which he continued to feel quite unworthy (cf. 1 Cor 15:9).<sup>55</sup> Even then, Paul graciously accepted the call, boldly witnessed Jesus and zealously proclaimed the gospel. He travelled extensively; not only founded Churches but

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52 Cf. Ortiz, "Philippians", 1767.

53 Cf. Baird, "Paul", 759-760.

54 Dillon, "Acts of the Apostles", in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 165-214, 186.

55 Cf. Kruse, "Call, Calling", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 84-85.

also nurtured them throughout Asia Minor and Europe.<sup>56</sup> As Paul had great conviction of the crown he was going to receive, he was in a position to invite all who have a longing for the Lord's appearing, to respond to the call of the Lord for the gospel.

## **6.2. A MISSIONARY OF PRAYER**

Basically, a missionary is expected to be a man of prayer. According to the gospel, God's promises are ever valid. God promises that "ask and it will be given" (Mt 7:7a). In general, prayer to most of the people means prayer of petition. "The deliberate repetition of the threefold formula, ask-receive, seek-find, knock-be-opened, is intended to assure the disciples that prayer is heard and to encourage them to present their petitions to God" (cf. Mt 7:7-11).<sup>57</sup> Those redeemed and overwhelmed by the sovereign grace of "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," intentionally and purposefully pour out their lives as a perpetual act of thanksgiving, ever conscious of dependence on an omnipresent and omnipotent God, as they are motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit.<sup>58</sup> To Paul, his whole ministry was grounded in, and developed from prayer. Paul finds mercy in the ordinary affairs of life. He prays for mercy (cf. Gal 6:16), especially in his greetings (cf. 1Tim 1:2; 2Tim 1:2, Titus 1:4). For example, he prays for Onesiphorus's household to find mercy (cf. 2Tim 1:16, 18) and he sees evidence of God's mercy in the recovery of Epaphroditus from a serious illness (Phil

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56 Cf. Fitzmyer, "Pauline Theology", 805.

57 John L. Mc Kenzie, "The Gospel According to Matthew", in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 62-114, 75.

58 Cf. Hunter, "Prayer", 725-734, 725.

2:27).<sup>59</sup> Mercy is a quality believers should show as well as receive (cf. Col 3:12) through the channel of prayer. In Ephesians, Paul speaks of continual prayer as the Christian's armour (cf. Eph 6:10-17).

Christians are expected to draw power from the Lord's mighty power. God arms himself as a warrior to defend his people.<sup>60</sup> Paul always conceived that all his plans are under the constant guidance and the will of God, revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. He relied unfailingly upon the ministry of intercessory prayers and supplication of his own and those of fellow believers.<sup>61</sup> It follows that the effective missionaries are persons of prayer. Personal prayer and intercessory prayer ministries are reliable sources of power and are vital tools in the hands of missionaries for effective proclamation and evangelization ministry. The mission is of the Lord, and all the elements of the mission such as the field, the seed, the sower, the ultimate giver of the harvest and everything allied thereto are of the Lord. The missionary must realize that he/she is only a tool in the hands of the Lord. Therefore, it needs to be stressed that the missionary remains as a chosen tool in the hands of the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit who strengthens the missionary and empowers him to be effective in his endeavours and makes his effort fruitful. Throughout his mission endeavors Paul rendered a fruitful service as he relied on the power of the Holy Spirit. The prayerful approach

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59 Cf. L Morris, "Mercy", in "*Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 601,602, 602.

60 Cf. Joseph A. Grassi, "The Letter to the Ephesians", in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 341-349.

61 Cf. Hunter, "Prayer", 729.

characterized in Paul is a paradigm to the missionaries at all times.

### **6.3. A MISSION STRATEGY OF INCULTURATION**

Throughout his proclamation, Paul contextualized the gospel.<sup>62</sup> His speeches were in fact well adapted to his audience and circumstances. For example, when he speaks to the Athenians, he first gets his audience on his side, suggesting that the God whom he preaches is not a new divinity but the one whom the Athenians have been unknowingly worshipping all along. The message he had brought to the Greek world was that there is only one God and this God has raised Jesus from the dead and appointed Him to judge the world, so that all should now turn from their old ways. While the foolishness of nature worship or idol worship is a dominant theme in the book of Wisdom (e.g., chapter 13; cf also Isa 44:9-20), the Greek philosophy also had concluded that there can be only one truly divine being, so in the first part of his speech Paul, preached that to the converted.

Although a sharp reaction greeted his reference to the resurrection of the dead and only a few believed, he then sets out the facts to his hearers who are likely to admit (cf. Acts 17:22-26) that God the creator of the universe of the human race does not dwell in temples (cf. Isa 66:1-2; Acts 7:42-49), and that He has no need of sacrifices (cf. Ps 50:10-13). In his central argument (cf. Acts 17:27-28) Paul made it clear that it is for human beings to seek and find the God in whom they live and move and have their being, and for that

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62 Cf. Jack W. Hayford, "Acts", in *Hayford's Bible Handbook* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 332-342, 339.

reason, they must give up the worship of idols. Finally, his hearers were exhorted (Acts 17:30-31) to repent and believe in the gospel. The speech shows an amazing openness before Paul's audience by inculturation to accept the best in their culture and philosophy as a preparation for the gospel.<sup>63</sup> In the process, Paul has not changed the message of Jesus and resurrection. But he has put the message in a form suited to the thought patterns of his listeners. This shows Paul's zealous approach towards preaching the true God with conviction by adapting an inculturation strategy. As his ultimate goal was to proclaim the gospel without dilution of scriptural values, he adopted a strategy of inculturation to win the souls, as is evidently clear from the following:

- (1) Though he himself is free with respect to all, he has made himself a slave to all, so that he might win more of them. To the Jews he became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law he became as one under the law (though he himself is not under the law) so that he might win those under the law.
- (2) To those outside the law, he became as one outside the law (though he himself was not free from God's law but was under Christ's law) so that he might win those outside the law.
- (3) To the weak he became weak, so that he might by all means save some. In all, his ultimate goal was to proclaim the gospel.
- (4) He does all that for the sake of the gospel, so that he might

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. R.P. Meye, "Social-Scientific Approaches to Paul", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 892-916, 909.

share its blessings (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23).

## 7. PAUL AS AN IDEAL PASTOR

“In the *Corpus Paulinum* the term “pastor” occurs only once in Ephesians 4:11, where the office of pastor is described as one of the gifts of the Risen Christ to his church. The fact that one definitive article is used for both “pastor” and “teacher”, it indicates that the pastoral office is here closely linked to the teaching or “feeding” the flock.”<sup>64</sup> Even so, Paul is an ideal pastor of the first century. Pauline letters are clear testimonies of his pastoral heart and are a product of his pastoral care for the Churches which he or his converts had founded. As a pastor, his proclamations were reflections as to how the gospel interacts with the world in which gospel values are to be lived by the recipients. In particular, three of his epistles, written to individual pastors (young “bishops”), were known in the Church as Pastoral Epistles in view of its contextual relevance on pastoral environment. It is believed that the epistles 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus were written by him during his first Roman imprisonment. Through these epistles, Paul not only issued Church orders<sup>65</sup> (magisterial instructions) but also final testament or farewell disclosure to the pastors. As a pastor, Paul provided Timothy with authority, importance, and urgency that he might not

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64 P. Beasley-Murray, “Pastor, Paul As”, in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. G.F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 654- 658, 654

65 Cf. Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology*, 240. Both 1 Timothy and Titus are easily recognized as “Church Orders”; smaller sections with other NT writings might also be similar in genre.

have had, otherwise.<sup>66</sup> Those Church orders contain instructions about the organization, practices, leadership structures and other practical matters for the Christian communities. The sacrament of Holy Orders<sup>67</sup> is envisioned in the Pastoral Epistles. In the backdrop of his impending death, Paul outlines his charge to Timothy to succeed him in his ministry of evangelization and teaching, by following Paul's example of preaching, irrespective of constraints. Thus, as a pastor, Paul renders a paradigm to the universal Church.

As contemplated in the parable of the lost sheep (cf. Lk 15:3-7; Mt 18:12-14; cf. Jn 10; Ezek 34:11-16), in following Jesus, Paul conducted himself as an ideal Pastor.<sup>68</sup> The Evangelist Mathew depicted the parable of the lost sheep among the instructions to the apostles about their obligations as pastors of the Church. A lost sheep will lie down helplessly and refuse to budge. The shepherd is forced to carry it over a long distance; this can be done only by putting it on his shoulders. He clutches the forelegs and hind legs with each hand; if he must use his shepherd's staff, he holds all four legs with one hand firmly against his breast. Luke uses the parable to answer

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66 Cf. Roland Collins, *I & II Timothy A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002) 265.

67 Cf. Pamplany, *Pauline Letters and Theology*, 245. Both Titus and Timothy: two young bishops were ordained by laying of hands (1 Tim 1:18-20). Candidates chosen by "prophetic utterance" (1 Tim 1:18-20). Episcopal ordination through laying of hands (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). Priestly ordination: also by laying of hands (1 Tim 5:22). Requirements of a Bishop or Priest (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-16), requirements of a Deacon or "Servant"– 1 Tim 3:8-13) and responsibilities of the Pastors are brought out by Paul in his letters: (1 Tim 5:1-2; Titus 2:1-10; 1 Tim 6:17-19; 1 Tim 5:3-16; Titus 2:9-10; 3:1-8; 2 Tim 4:1-5).

68 Cf. Carroll Stuhlmueller, "The Gospel According to Luke", in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 148.

why Jesus welcomes sinners. While Mathew focuses seeking; Luke, focuses the joy of finding. To achieve his goal, the Pastor is expected to create a life style, free from impurity, possessions and influence of power.

According to Paul, those who are called by God and nurtured by God's Spirit to lead a life of purity is measured by their faithful ministry of the word of God (cf. Acts 20:20). How Pastors use their possessions are of greater practical importance to Paul than doctrinal purity. The abstract truth of a word about God's grace is tested in the real world by the test whether or not the handling of their goods is also gracious and not greedy. The motive of Christian ministry must never be monetary or momentary. In the simplicity of one's lifestyle and the sharing of one's goods, the truth of God's generosity towards us all is made more concrete.<sup>69</sup> Paul is concerned of a pure service through his ministry.

To Timothy, Paul specifically wrote so that he himself and other bishops must cooperate with God's calling and be cleansed of evil things, and be fit and faithful ministers of the gospel. He also cited an appropriate imagery to clarify and differentiate the diverse gifts in the Church by highlighting gold, silver, wood, and clay by realistically, pointing to the truth that the people in the Church are variously gifted (cf. 1Cor 12). What ultimately counts is not the material of the vessel but its holiness, its being set aside exclusively for the Lord's work. The contaminations to be avoided are twofold: (1) youthful passions and (2) senseless disputations.

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69 Cf. Keek, "Acts", 227.

What positively consecrates a minister in pursuit of the Christian virtues is righteousness, loving service, peace, and faithfulness.<sup>70</sup> Pastors who imitate such holistic pattern of mission endeavours are drawn to ministry by the Holy Spirit to serve the redemptive interests of God and the needs of God's flock. Here, Pastors can find a holistic approach in Paul as a paradigm for their onward journey on mission front. As an ideal Pastor, Paul imprints in the hearts of the missionaries, great insights for excelling in their pastoral initiatives. Looking at the Mission initiatives based on the random study made on Chanda Mission from the kaleidoscope of Pauline pastoral perspective, significant insights in five sub-sections are highlighted here.

## **7.1. CONCERN FOR THE GOSPEL – COMPASSION FOR THE PEOPLE**

Paul proclaimed the gospel as a matter of prime concern and did not consider that as a means of livelihood, as he physically toiled to make a living for himself. He had done so, not because he did not have the right (cf. 1 Cor 9:13-16), but in order to give them an example to imitate. For Paul, preaching the gospel is rooted in his call; it is a necessity, not a ground for boasting. The only “meritorious” thing he could do is proclamation of the gospel, free of charge.<sup>71</sup> Such an attitude of Paul is unparalleled and is a benchmark to follow in its true spirit by all missionaries.

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70 Cf. Neyrey, “2 Timothy”, in *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, 1211.

71 Cf. Lambrecht, “1 Corinthians”, 1617.

### **7.1.1. IN TERMS OF CONCERN FOR THE GOSPEL**

As a missionary and a great proclaimer, Paul maintained deep concern for the gospel and the whole enterprise was undertaken “by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 15:19), and the Spirit’s guidance was experienced by him at special junctures” (cf. Acts 16: 6-10).<sup>72</sup> Paul’s concern for the gospel is evidently clear in his words and deeds. Watch how delicately Paul rendered his ministry before the Thessalonians! To the Thessalonians Paul wrote like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children (cf. 1 Thess 2:7). He cared for them, with a determination to share with them, not only the gospel of God but also his whole person, because they were considered very much dear to him.

### **7.1.2. IN TERMS OF COMPASSION FOR THE PEOPLE**

Paul had great compassion for the people. Paul considered the proclamation of gospel as his fundamental obligation, in view of the commission entrusted to him (cf. 1 Cor 9:17). He calls his converts as his children in the faith (cf. 2 Cor 6:13); that his heart is “wide open” to them and that there is no restriction to his affliction for them (cf. 2 Cor 6:12). These words reveal that he had great compassion towards them. His letters are full of expressions of love towards the recipients: for example, he had abundant love towards the Churches i.e., the Corinthians (2 Cor 2:4); the Philippians, who were his “crown and joy”, he regards with “love” and “longing” (Phil 4:1; Phil 1:7); because of his “deep care” for the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:8), he longs “with great eagerness” to see them face to

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72 Bruce, “Paul in Acts and Letters”, 687-688.

face (1 Thess 2:17). Paul frequently calls his converts his “beloved” (1 Cor 4:14; 15:58; Phil 2:12; Philem 16; 2 Tim 1:2). Undoubtedly it was precisely because of his love for his Churches that he was so indignant when he felt that they were threatened (Gal 1:6-9’ 4:16-20; 2 Cor 11:13-14).<sup>73</sup> He dealt with his own missionary adaptations, irrespective of Jew or Gentile by getting down into their own specific situations so that he could share in its blessings (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23).<sup>74</sup> As a missionary is called to live for the people, commitment to the welfare of the people demands genuine love. The work of evangelization presupposes in the evangelizer an ever increasing love for those whom he is evangelizing.<sup>75</sup> St. Paul manifests his love for the people and his commitment to the welfare of the people. Commitment to the welfare of the people and love for the people demand from missionaries their concern, tenderness, compassion, openness, availability and interest in the problems of the people.<sup>76</sup> The ultimate goal of Paul was to win the souls for Christ, irrespective of whether they are under the law or not. As Paul could do well with that strategy, the same is a paradigm to the missionary church.

### **7.1.3. IN TERMS OF COMPASSION FOR THE OPPRESSED**

Paul maintained great concern towards the helpless and the oppressed. Even towards the fellow prisoner Onesimus, who turned to be a useful man for the Lord during his imprisonment, Paul

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73 Cf. P. Beasley Murray, “Pastor, Paul as”, in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, 654-658, 655.

74 Cf. Lambrecht, “1Corinthians”, 1617.

75 Cf. EN 79.

76 Cf. RM 89.

extended great concern. This is clearly evident from his epistle to Philemon. Paul considered “Onesimus as a brother because he, like Philemon, an adopted son of God through baptism (cf. Gal 4:5; Rom 8:15). Both are now related “in the Lord”<sup>77</sup> cf. Col 3:22-4:1; Eph 6:5-9). It is wonderfully clear as to how conversion to Christian faith breaks down all social, racial and economic barriers. Although Paul does not speak directly for the abolition of slavery, this letter exemplifies, as much as any other writings of his, the truth of Galatians 3:28. Here, a new relationship and partnership has been formed in that situation where master, slave and apostle are all part of one family in Christ (Philem 16).<sup>78</sup>

Paul treated him with love as a child and sent him back to Philemon out of his compassion, to whom he was a slave earlier. It was with great hope and confidence that he sent him as he sends his own heart; with an appeal to welcome him as if he welcomes Paul himself. Paul also appealed Philemon to treat him no longer as a slave but as a beloved brother, both in flesh and in the Lord. Paul did not fail to take responsibility if at all Onesimus has wronged him in any way, or he owes him anything, and earnestly urged Philemon to charge the same to Paul’s account (cf. Philem 1:8-19). If Paul displays so much concern about a runaway, a thief, and a robber and sends him back with such helpful commendations and without feeling any shame about it, “how much more does it befit us not

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77 Joseph A Fitzmyer, “The Letter to Philemon”, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 332-333, 333.

78 Cf. A Patzia, “Letter to Philemon”, in *The Dictionary of Paul*, 703-707, 706.

to be careless in such matters?”<sup>79</sup> The compassionate attitude of Paul towards slavery is evident in the letter of Paul to Philemon. In that respect, the letter has found its well-deserved place in the Canon.<sup>80</sup> The letter of Paul to Philemon is an expression of Paul’s compassion to the helpless and the oppressed and is a model to the missionaries at all times. Paul’s concern for the oppressed is an eye-opener to all concerned as the same is characterized by virtues of love, forgiveness, equality and fellowship by setting a model for all missionaries to follow.

With great compassion, Paul proclaimed Christ the crucified (cf. 1 Cor 2:2) and he insisted that the faith might not rest on human wisdom but on the power of God (cf. 1 Cor 2:4). Jesus always showed great compassion to the big crowd gathered around him for listening to His words. To Jesus, they were like sheep without a shepherd (cf. Mk 6:34b). Luke presents three parables in his Gospel (cf. Lk 15:1-32), which obviously are known as the ‘Parables of Mercy’ toward sinners. Luke thus presents the distilled essence of the good news, the gospel within his Gospel.<sup>81</sup> Jesus wanted his disciples to extend the same compassion towards their followers which Paul complied with in true spirit.

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79 Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Letter to Philemon”, in *The Anchor Bible – A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Doubleday: The Anchor Bible, 2000) 34.

80 Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Letter to Philemon”, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds., Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970) 332-333, 333.

81 Cf. Stuhlmüller, “The Gospel According to Luke”, 148.

## 7.2. PREPARING THE LAITY AT EACH LOCALITY

Paul realized that leadership is for empowering others. He had mobilized a wide circle of co-workers at various levels who were laymen<sup>82</sup> and associated them in the mission endeavours. Grooming of laity side by side is suggested in line with the provisions of *Ad Gentes*. Obviously they are active for the cause of the charismatic movement or part of retreat movement of the church or in any of the ministry of the diocese or parish either in full time /part time service. Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica to build them up by strengthening their faith and encouraging them to live accordingly (cf. 1 Thess 3:1-5). He saw the Church as God's field where he and the other ministers were to labor. "Timothy, his 'beloved son' had played an important role in the mission of Paul in establishing Churches (cf. Acts 16:1-3). Paul calls Titus as brother (2 Cor 2:13; 8:22-23) whom he sent to Corinth to deal with a very difficult situation and to organize collection (cf. 2 Cor 8-9)."<sup>83</sup> Paul urged Timothy to remain in "the teaching" that "Christ is the Savior" whereby he will save himself and those who would hear him (cf. 1 Tim 4:16).<sup>84</sup> Paul engaged women in the management of house churches, where they became capable of looking after their assignments. Paul affirms the ability of women to learn and he proposes educating them so that they may learn "quietly and submissively" and may again reflect their witness within society. It transpires that in the present day scenario, it opens the way to novices to learn, so as to ensure a

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82 Cf. *Ad Gentes*. 41.

83 Manjaly, "Paul's Way of Community Building", 208-210.

84 L. Morris, "Salvation", in *Dictionary of Paul*, 858-862, 859.

desired behavior pattern for the whole Church (1 Tim 2:2).<sup>85</sup> By all means, Paul strengthened the mission endeavours to the maximum extent possible. Paul's contribution in grooming the laity, including women, for the mission is commendable.

Paul believed that the ministry includes all that the exalted Christ did and is doing through his people for the building up of his Church.<sup>86</sup> "The apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it. Sacred scripture clearly shows how spontaneous and fruitful such activity was at the very beginning of the Church (cf. Acts 11:19-21; 18:26; Rom. 16:1-16; Phil. 4:3)"<sup>87</sup>. Paul stressed the spirituality behind the theme 'one body with many members' (cf. 1 Cor 12:12; 12:18). It is high time that we realized that the laity being part of the Body of Christ, are His people and that they also have the responsibility to build-up the Church using the immense spiritual resources vested in them.

The mission being the most important responsibility of the Church for its very existence, preparing laity at each locality with focus towards the mission is of paramount importance. Paul attentively listened to the mission call of Jesus and became a witness to the very ends of the world. Mission being the voice and life of

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85 Cf. C.S. Keener, "Man and Women", in *The Dictionary of Paul, and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 583-592, 591.

86 Cf. C.G. Kruse, "Ministry", in *The Dictionary of Paul*, 602-608, 602.

87 Pope Paul VI, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on The Apostolate of The Laity, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651118\\_apostolicam-actuositatem](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem)[accessed on April 10, 2020].

Jesus, its needs must be attentively addressed to energize the mission by all means. By keeping such a strategy, Paul set a paradigm by equipping laity including women for the evangelization process and mission endeavors. “Jesus Christ was the center of Paul’s life, thought and spirituality. Therefore, it is imperative to empower the laity in the Church,”<sup>88</sup> to involve the whole Church in the missionary activities and make our families participate in the missionary efforts of the Church. Give the lay faithful, from all walks of life, adequate opportunities to serve in the mission stations of the Church.

### **7.3. OBEDIENCE TO THE AUTHORITY**

According to Paul, obedience to the authority is the will of God. Therefore Paul advises that in order to shine as light in the world, the congregation must always obey him and work out their own salvation.<sup>89</sup> Here, Paul emphasizes obedience and selflessness: While *fear and trembling* denotes to a stereotyped OT expression (Ex 15:16; is 19:16; Pa 2:11; Jdt 2:28), Paul insist to work out each ones salvation with a humble reverence and dependence born of faith in God. It denotes the eschatological fulfillment of Christian hope, both in its corporate and individual aspects, depends on the moral conduct of the individual. Paul instructs to obey all higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God and anyone who resists the authority opposes whom God has ordained. In order to remain

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88 Paulachan Kochappilly, “Chanda Mission and the Evangelization Efforts of the Syro-Malabar Church”, In *Be My Witness*, ed. Kizhakkeyil, S. (Kakkanad: Mount St. Thomas, 2011).456.

89 Cf. Fitzmyer, “The Letter to the Philippians”, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 247-253, 251.

blameless and to be innocent children of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, all members of the Church must carry out every instruction without murmuring and arguing (cf. Phil 2:12-15), as there is no room for grumbling before the Lord. It also contains a general principle. "Obedience to civil authorities is a form of obedience to God himself, for man's relation to God is not limited to a specific or religious cultic sphere."<sup>90</sup> Paul teaches the believers that they are bound to be subjected even to the civil authorities as authority comes only from God.

It is absolutely necessary that such teachings are complied with by all sections of the people irrespective of their faith or belief. This being the fact, how much it is dis-heartening and injurious to the Body of Christ, if any section of the community within the Church disregards the apostolic directions of the Church and resorts to public agitations, unbecoming of their discipleship? As Disciples of Christ the crucified, the missionaries are to uphold their integrity and commitment to the Lord, as consecrators of the Holy Sacraments, proclaimers of the word of God and witnesses of the risen Lord. There shall be no room for any dichotomy between proclamation and real life. Therefore, all the baptized, are bound to be subjected to the authorities especially to the apostolic authorities. In the spirit of the teachings of Paul, it is incumbent on all the baptized that they must be blameless, be innocent children of God and be obedient to the authorities. By doing so, they would be building up the Body of Christ, based on the perspective for which they were called.

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90 Fitzmyer, "The Letter to the Romans", 326.

#### **7.4. MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES FOR THE POOR**

By revealing the story of the generosity of Macedonians, Paul encouraged the Corinthians to be generous in their endeavour to mobilize financial resources for the poor and the needy saints of the Jerusalem church. Here, “Paul testifies that the Macedonians voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means and that they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to him (Cf. 2 Cor 8: 1-5; 9:1-2)”<sup>91</sup>. The charis was the opportunity of contributing to the collection for the Jerusalem community (cf. 1 Cor 16:1-5), it is a grace because it is an opportunity for doing good. Christian joy enables one to do anything that is necessary and more besides. To give when one has little is to give the more in God’s sight (cf. Mk 12:21-24; Lk 21:1-4). The generous attitude of Paul to help the poor and the needy makes him a model for the missionaries to follow. It is all the more so since the mission stations are situated in poor villages where ample opportunities are available for doing good work.

#### **7.5. CONTINUOUS FOLLOW-UP AND NURTURING OF THE MISSION**

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, curing every

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91 John J. O’Rourke, “The Second Letter to the Corinthians”, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed., Raymond E. Brown, et al. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970) 276-290, 284. The generosity of the Philippians is underscored in Phil 4:15. This collection had been recommended to the Galatians by indirection (Gal 2:10). An earlier collection for Jerusalem Church had been made by the faithful of Antioch; Paul himself had been one of those who had taken its proceeds to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30).

disease and every sickness among the people (cf. Mt 4:23). In line with the Master's precedent practice, the apostles also went from place to place, proclaiming the Word (cf. Acts 8:4). Similarly, Paul went from place to place as a measure of continuous follow-up of his ministry by means of repeated personal visits or by sending emissaries and by writing letters to the various churches in Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:18-21), Corinth (cf. Act 18: 1-18), Thessalonica (cf. 1 Thess 1 4-18; 2 Thess 1:1) etc. The persistent efforts of Paul enabled him to set up Christian communities and to build up their fellowship and communion. Through such initiatives, Paul nurtured the faith of those new Christian communities planted by him.

By adopting a strategy of giving the gospel in the communities, and by continuous follow up for nurturing the faithful in their initial stages of faith formation, Paul facilitated 'disciplining' as well as encouragement to enrich their Christian faith. For example, "Paul instructed the Thessalonians about a Christian lifestyle (cf. 1 Thess 4:1-12). Because his converts misunderstood his witnessing, he had to write a second letter to warn them against idleness and irresponsible conduct."<sup>92</sup> Paul could establish and nurture churches by proper exercise of gifts through his ministry which Christ bestowed upon all his people, as well as the ministry of those who followed Paul<sup>93</sup>. As similar gifts are bestowed by Christ on all, the missionaries are required to look after their ministries by providing adequate catechetical and sacramental care to nurture their faith, through proper ministerial service and the exercise of divine

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92 A.A. Trites, "Witness", in *Dictionary of Paul*, 973-975, 974.

93 Cf. Kruse, "Ministry", 602.

gifts. Any deficiency in this regard must be recognized as a lapse for timely remedial action so as to ensure the fruitfulness of the ministry. As for Paul, as and when he established a church and gave it the basic teaching, his hope was that he could pass on to another place with the confidence that the already established Church would take up his gospel witness and spread the message to another.<sup>94</sup> Such a strategy of Paul helped for the growth of the churches planted by him. This is conceptually ideal and relevant even today.

## CONCLUSION

“There is a general feeling that in the Church we have got wedged into traditional ministries, and discernment has become a verbal gimmick, thinking that we have founders, pioneers and visionaries who in their own milieu discerned the will of God in their mission and in their communities. This is true of dioceses, congregations, parishes, institutions and small Christian communities. It seems to be struck with the historical Jesus of Nazareth and have lost sight of Christ living today.”<sup>95</sup> Although the reason for the low progress is not discussed here, it is observed that much more could have been achieved in a mission diocese like Chanda which was established long back as a dream project of the Church. By targeting mission as the principal goal of the Church, there is much scope for re-winding the system with added enthusiasm of the disciples who accepted

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94 Cf. Bruce, “Paul in Acts and Letters”, 688.

95 Francis Scaria, “Practical Implications of the Centripetal and Centrifugal Aspects of Evangelization”, in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 160-173,168.

the command of the resurrected Lord to proclaim the gospel. Paul planted new Christian communities in the early Church, and nurtured them by providing continual pastoral care, considering that each congregation should be an extension of his apostolic ministry. Consequently, the churches rose to his expectation and passed on its fruits for the planting and growth of another church, whereby the gospel spread in the near-by regions. That strategy of Paul can be followed in the Indian mission stations also. The mission policy of Paul was to win the nations for Christ as much as possible within his lifetime. When it became clear that the task would not be completed within his life time, he even tried his best to share that vision to the Christian community of Rome. The system adopted by Apostle Paul is very much relevant to the missionaries of all Rites even today.

Paul's mission endeavour is essentially an act of prayer. Prayer enabled Paul to win the confidence of Christ's faithfulness in fulfilling God's promises. He regarded prayer as a concrete manifestation of faith in God. He teaches that the believers needed the supernatural armour of God to resist temptation and "stand against the evil forces." He exhorted the believers to pray on all occasions and to keep on praying for all missionaries. The whole evangelical enterprise of Paul was undertaken by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's guidance was experienced by Paul at special junctures where his steps were diverted. In the wake of his apostolic mission, Paul requested prayer from the community also, as he was a man of prayer and the Holy Spirit was his source of power. Paul pursued evangelization amongst the nations by means of presenting

Jesus through the gospel, in their socio-cultural settings. By doing so, they could taste the joy of the kingdom of God. It is hoped that the mission approach of the Church in the coming years would be widely opened with the active participation of all including the laity, leading to the evolution of a more vibrant new generation missionaries from the mother Church, to support and supplement the existing team of missionaries, for a better harvest.

As reaping the earth's harvesting is fast approaching, the angel calls with a loud voice to use the sickle to reap because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe (cf. Rev 14:15; 18). There is no more time to wait. The majority of the labourers are idle while the horrors spoken by the word of God are echoing in the ears. Time has come to look around and see how much the fields are ripe for harvesting (cf. Jn 4:35b). Possibly, the laborers are awaiting their call even at 5 o'clock (cf. Mt 20:7). Therefore, motivating and sending the laborers to the vineyard is the need of the hour.

## CHAPTER SIX

# LET ALL THE BAPTIZED RE-VAMP THE MISSION

### INTRODUCTION

In the words of Archbishop Bernard Mores: “The Church exists by mission, as fire exists by burning. Therefore, her mission – the mission of Christ actualized in the mission of the Church – is the basic entity for the existence of the Church. The fundamental element of the mission is proclamation of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> The Pauline concept is that the Church is an integral reality for witnessing and for the proclamation of Christ. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. According to *Ad Gentes*, every baptized individual in the Church must be clothed with the power from on high to proclaim and witness the risen Lord and particularly to those who have never heard of Jesus. In the words of Pope Francis: “Every Christian, by virtue of Baptism, is a missionary disciple to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus. One cannot fail to take this into account in the updating of the Curia, whose reform, therefore, must provide for the involvement of laymen and women,

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1 Bernard Mores, “The Mission of the Church Today in India”, in *The Mission Theology of the Syro-Malabar Church*, ed. Pauly Kannoorkadan (Kakkanad: LRC Publication, 2008) 39-44, 39.

even in roles of government and responsibility.”<sup>2</sup>

Most of the Rites in Kerala are rendering their pastoral ministry mainly for their parishes on a day- to- day basis. This is so because the density of their community here in the Church is high and for the same reason the number of parishes here also more. Therefore, the faithful here are more or less in a comfortable position to meet their spiritual needs. Whereas, the state of affairs of the faithful in mission dioceses outside Kerala, more particularly in mission dioceses like Chanda is far different. There, the mission territory itself is widely extended in rural areas. In mission dioceses, the challenges are many. Firstly, the missionaries have to look after and meet the spiritual needs and nurture the existing baptized members of the Church who are new to the gospel. They have to locate the migrants in their mission territory and extend pastoral support to them. Further, they have to reach out to other people of the territory as witnesses of the love of God. At present the mission dioceses are not in a position to expand their work due to various constraints. Resource persons are needed for spiritual harvesting, i.e. for proclamation as well as for meeting the sacramental needs of the faithful. As the gospel is new to most of the villagers, they obviously have a silent cry in their hearts, as no body approached them with the good news or spoke to them of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. As there is nobody to console and comfort their sorrows, they continue to remain like the stranded, lame and weak sheep of the Good Shepherd. It is here, Paul asks,

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2 Pope Francis, Apostolic Constitution on Roman Curia *'Praedicate Evangelium'* enters into force on 5 June 2022 <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2022-03/pope-francis-promulgates-constitution-praedicate-evangelium.html> Accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

“how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are to proclaim him unless they are sent?”<sup>3</sup> (Rom 10:14-15). Here lies the relevance of the apostleship of the baptized Christians of this apostolic Church to be the witnesses of the Risen Lord and proclaimers of the gospel to such masses of India.

### **Preliminary Remarks**

On the mission front, today there is mounting opposition to the work of missionaries. Although Christianity was received and held in high esteem for many centuries, the situation has changed drastically. Today, Christianity is viewed with suspicion and animosity. Even the contribution of the Church in various fields such as education, health care and social uplift for the building of the nation is viewed with suspicion. Some of the emerging trends in the Indian society are real threats to the Church’s mission in India. Though known for centuries as the land of tolerance and non-violence, bloodshed and violence are on the increase in India in the name of religion. While there are powerful religious movements, a sort of indifference towards everything spiritual and religious is also evident in our land. Communalism and fundamentalism are obstacles to unity and integrity of the nation. The political parties exploit communal feelings. Though propagation of one’s faith is guaranteed by the Indian constitution, anti - conversion bills have been passed in some of the Indian States. In short, our work of

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3 Rom 10:14-15.

evangelization in India in recent years has been under fire.

We are well aware of the present complex situation. Truly, we have to take into account the religious, cultural, political, economic, and historical complexities of our nation and the world. Indian society is a composite of different races, religions, languages, castes and sub-castes, ethnic groups and tribes. Almost half of the Indian population falls below the poverty line. Illiteracy, unemployment, unequal distribution of wealth, female infanticide, child labour, cruelty to women, lack of basic facilities like drinking water, electricity, road roads, etc. are just a few of the Indian social problems. However, being aware of our responsibility, we are now determined to face all these challenges and are determined to share the good news to all our brethren. Missionary work, we are aware, is our responsibility and we are not true disciples of Jesus Christ if we do not proclaim Him to the present Indian masses. They do have a right to know Jesus and to hear His message. It is our duty to announce this message with enthusiasm and to accept the same in return. Jesus, the Word of God is to be left to the freedom of the hearers.

What matters here is to have a concern for the gospel in the hearts of the baptized to move with compassion for the people so that the light of the gospel reaches those who have not heard of Jesus. Indeed, God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (cf. 1 Tim 2:4) that is, God wills the

salvation of everyone through the knowledge of the truth<sup>4</sup>. Salvation is found in the truth. As the missionary motivation emanates from God's love for all men that the Church in every age receives both the obligation and the vigour of her missionary dynamism.<sup>5</sup> Those who obey the prompting of the Spirit of truth are already on the way of salvation. Being the Body of Christ, the Church to whom this truth has been entrusted, must go out generously to meet their desire, so as to celebrate the joy of the gospel by all in the days to come.

## **1. INVOKE THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE MISSION**

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ itself as Christ inaugurated the same in the synagogue by highlighting the uniqueness of the Spirit of the Lord as part of his imparting the good news of deliverance (Isa 61:1-2; Lk 4:18-19). As his disciples could not realize the significance of their Lord's mission at that time, the Lord accomplished the mission through them by providing the Holy Spirit at the appropriate time. Subsequent to his resurrection also, as the Lord walked along with the disciples who were on their way to Emmaus, Jesus opened- their minds to understand the scriptures, and commanded them that they are the witnesses of those things and

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4 Cf. Therath, "Truth", 940-942. In the OT, the primary meaning of truth is loyal commitment to the covenant of God. Yahweh is deemed to be the trusted God by Israelites. The heavenly truth is in line with the kindness of God. God looks at the covenant basically with his kindness (Ex 34:6f; 2 Sam 2:6; 15:20; Ps 89; 138:2). The Bible introduces Word of God and God's Law as truths (2 Sam 7:28; Ps 19:10; 111:7f; 119:86; 138, 142, 151, 160). Because, Yahweh is the God who keeps up his covenant, is trust-worthy in his promises, and who unsparingly loves (Deut 7:6; 32:4; Ps 31:6; 89; 132:11; is 49:7).

5 Cf. CCC 851.

that He is sending upon them what His Father had promised and to remain to be in the city until they were clothed with power from on high (cf. Lk 24: 45-49). This is vividly portrayed in Acts where the coming of the Spirit is associated with the beginning of the post-Easter proclamation of the gospel with its infusion of power from the high (Acts 2, 4:8, 31; 6:10; 8:29; 10:44), and with the specific direction of Peter, Paul and Barnabas at key points (Acts:19-20; 11:12; 13:2-5; 16:6-10).<sup>6</sup> Thus, the Holy Spirit empowers and impels the Christian mission as He has intimate connection with the gospel message.

As the Holy Spirit is the protagonist, “the principal agent of the whole of the Church’s mission”, it is He who leads the Church on her missionary paths.<sup>7</sup> Apostle Paul affirms that whatever he had said and done was with the power of the Holy spirit (cf. Rom 15:18-19) as the Spirit accompanied him in his missionary preaching (1) by confirming the truth of the message in his hearers’ hearts; (2) by empowering Paul to effect signs and wonders and (3) by filling new believers in such a way that the Spirit’s presence was unmistakable. Wonderfully, the Spirit gives believers in turn boldness and wisdom to testify Jesus (cf. 1 Thess 2:2). More than any other New Testament writer, Paul presents the concept of the Holy Spirit as a guiding force to abide within the believers for living the Christian life. It is the Spirit, the power of God, who convince the believers of the truth of the gospel and empowers them to promote its preaching. It

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6 Paige, T. “Holy Spirit” in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993) 404-413, 408.

7 Cf. CCC 852.

is the same Spirit who showers grace upon those who come to faith in Christ and become new creations.<sup>8</sup> Because the Holy Spirit is the anointing power through Christ, it is Christ who, as the head of the Body, pours out the Spirit among his members to nourish, heal, and organize them in their mutual functions. It is the Spirit that gives a new life to the believers, sends them to bear witness, associates them for self-offering to the Father and guides them in their prayers for the whole world.<sup>9</sup>

## **2. THE NEW EVANGELIZATION; THE NEED OF THE HOUR**

New evangelization is the only genuine hope for a better world and a brighter future. Ever since Vatican II, the Holy Spirit has been speaking to the Church loudly through Pope Saint John XXIII, Pope Saint Paul VI, Pope Saint John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, the present Holy Father, and showing the clear direction of the New Evangelization. They have time and again affirmed the unchangeable nature of the Church as Missionary, a Church that exists to evangelize. With political will and determination, if we would like to fulfil the missionary mandate of the Risen Lord and to be sent out on a great commission (Mt 28:19, Mk 16:15, Lk 24:27, 48, Jn 20:21, Acts 1:8), the only way is the new evangelization which calls for a right response of the Catholic Church to the demands of the challenges today especially from inside and outside as well. Challenges from inside the Church

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8 Cf. Paige, T. "Holy spirit" 409.

9 Cf. CCC 739.

detrimental to evangelization are, ignorance of Scripture and the Magisterium, ignorance of fundamental identity, ignorance leading into the spirit of the ritualism, ignorance of the only work of the clergy as clericalism, sex scandals, sex abuse, child abuse, abuse of power, money or conscience, waste of pastoral energy and lack of missionary creativity.<sup>10</sup>

Looking at the Pauline zeal and initiatives in the early Church, the necessity for re-evangelization in the Church is felt at all corners of the Church. Although the Church continues to expend considerable energy towards achieving the mission of Christ the Redeemer, it is still far away from reaching the goal even today. On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate, it is affirmed: "An overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service."<sup>11</sup> As for Apostle Paul, two things inspired him to go boldly for proclamation. (1) His conviction that a necessity is laid upon him and (2) his apprehension that it would be too bad for him if he does not preach the gospel (cf. 1 Cor 9:16). For a re-dedication, it is imperative to have these two convictions to each and every baptized Christian in the Church at all levels.

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10 Cf. Paneer Selvam, "New Evangelization In India: Achievements, Challenges and Scope", in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020) 43-57, 44-46.

11 Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, Encyclical Letter of 7<sup>th</sup> December 1990 [accessed on July 7, 2020] [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_07121990\\_redemptoris-missio.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html).

## **2.1. THE NEW EVANGELIZATION – DIALOGUE WITH OTHER RELIGIONS**

In the multi-religious context of India, followers of different religions live in constant interaction. In such a situation dialogue is not an option for the missionaries but a necessity. Human qualities are required for such dialogues. But they are not sufficient. “Since dialogue forms an integral part of the mission of the Church, and an expression of mission *ad gentes* (EA 31), there should be specific gifts of the Spirit to enable a missionary to engage in it.”<sup>12</sup> In the light of the economy of salvation, the Church sees no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in religious dialogue.<sup>13</sup>

In our interaction with the followers of other religious traditions, we shall bear in mind the principle laid down by the Church regarding religious freedom, “that all men should be immune from coercion on the part of individuals, social groups and every human power so that, within due limits, nobody is forced to act against his convictions in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in association with others”<sup>14</sup> One cannot ‘convert’ another person. Conversion takes place in the depth of one’s heart, when the Spirit acts upon a person. Sharing, dialogue, proclamation and witnessing can create conditions favorable for the Spirit to act in a person. “A vast field lies open to dialogue, which can assume many forms and expressions: from exchange between experts in

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12 Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, DECREE on “Mission Policy of the Syro Malabar Church” (Prot. No. 93/2006 19 March 2006) 6.4.

13 Cf. R.M.55.

14 D.H.2.

religious traditions to cooperation for integral development and the safeguarding of religious values; and from sharing of the respective spiritual experiences to the so called “dialogue of life”, through which believers of different religions bear witness before each other in daily life to their own human and spiritual values, and help each other to live according to those values in order to build a more just and fraternal society”<sup>15</sup>

## **2.2. MISSION: A UNIFIED ACT TO BUILD-UP THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Every baptized person having been incorporated into the Body of Christ, their faith rests on the Trinity. With the humility of a prisoner in the Lord, Paul urged the Ephesian community to lead a life worthy of the calling which they have received, with great humility, gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love and making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The ultimate objective of such a call was to build up the Body of Christ. Such a unity conceived by Paul is inevitable for a sustained growth in the power of the Holy Spirit and to stand as witness of the resurrected Lord. Although each one in the Church was given the grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift, there is only one body and one Spirit, just as each one is called to the one hope of his own calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.

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15 R.M.57. George Thanchan, “Religious: Forerunners in the Missions” in *Thomas Christian Heritage*, LRC Vol VI, No.11, Ed., Peter Kannampuzha, (Kakkanad: Mount St. Thomas, 2013), 59-79, 64.

Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, each one in the Church is called upon to be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind so that each one will be in a position to ensure unity and build-up the Body of Christ. Doing things without selfish motives and considering others as better than oneself with humility will help to build unity and also to create a pattern that was in Christ Jesus who humbled himself to the point of death (cf Phil 2: 1-7). Paul emphasizes that anything contrary to such an attitude is from evil forces and needs to be rejected. He highlighted fullness of life in Christ, for in Him the fullness of divinity dwells bodily, and we have come to fullness in Him, who is the head of every ruler and authority and in Him we were buried through baptism, and we are raised with Him through faith in the power of God who raised Him from the dead (cf. Col 2:9-12).

The sacred mystery of the Church's unity highlights that the Church is one because of her founder: for the Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross, restoring the unity of all-in-one people and one body. The Church is one because of her "soul." It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the Church's unity." Unity is of the essence of the Church.<sup>16</sup> "Having a team is not enough; the spirit of travelling together (synodos) is

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16 Cf. *Unitatis redintegratio* 2; CCC 813.

what is essential. It is important to have the team spirit. Teamwork is itself the message. In the Church, teamwork is ultimately inspired by the Holy Trinity. In teamwork we witness to the Holy Trinity.”<sup>17</sup> Teamwork reveals unity. Unity is an ideal virtue that demands great amount of self-giving from each constituent individual.

The Gospel emphasizes the indispensability of Spirit’s role in the spiritual maturity of the disciples (cf. Jn 16:5-8). The Holy Spirit indwells in believers. It requires absolute surrendering of oneself to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The gospel gives further insight into the Spirit’s relationship with Jesus and the Father (J 16:14-16). This is one of the clearest passages in the gospel about God and Trinity in unity. As Jesus glorifies the Father in his life and is indeed the Father’s very glory (cf. 1:14), so the Spirit dwells in the disciples, in guiding and teaching them so as to enable them to be of Jesus’ glory (cf. 17:10), 22-24). The persons in the Trinity exist joyfully and freely for each other. It should be the same among those who remain in Jesus (Jn 17:22-23).<sup>18</sup>

The Church being the continuation of Christ, Church’s Mission cannot be translated simply in terms of development and social work; it is rather, the process of making dignified human beings

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17 Francis Scaria, “Practical Implications of the Centripetal and Centrifugal Aspects of Evangelization”, in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 160-173,167.

18 Cf. Teresa Okure, “John” in *The international Bible Commentary, An Ecumenical Commentary For The Twenty First Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, Sean McEvenue, Armando J. Levoratti and David L Dungan, John Pathrapankal, Erik Eynikel, (Bangalore: Theological, Publications In India, 2019) 1512-1576, 1565-66.

and nourishing them so as to make them a distinguished Christian community by way of a meeting with Christ and his good news and becoming integral part of the Body of Christ. It is the helping of human beings to enter into an inner union and to make their human lives fully realized. In the words of Dr Paulachan Kochappilly “Evangelization is not the selling of a product but the sharing of one’s Christ experience; it is an invitation for liberating diverse entanglements and to celebrate life in its fullness. Ultimately, the Mission makes available the presence of Christ, his values and attitudes through the life and witness of the Church.”<sup>19</sup> In order to evolve an effective evangelization process for the build-up the Body of Christ, unity and active participation of all the religious and the lay faithful are inevitable for fulfilment of the mission task of the Church.

### **2.3. THE NEED OF SELF CRITICISM**

On the mission front, people respect us on account of three things: (1) if we practice what we preach (2) if we bring sincerity to our work and (3) if our institutions present reflections of God’s love charity. Even then, we have no reason for becoming complacent. When we deal with people, especially the typical tribal communities, it is our duty to respect them and build up a sense of equality. Adopting an attitude of superiority or looking down on them or their

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19 Anto Amarnad, “The Role of Catechesis in the Evangelization Mission of the Church in India” in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 223-241, 226-227.

trustfulness is unfair. Even an illiterate person speedily perceives when he is not respected or when his culture is seemingly held in low esteem.<sup>20</sup> In all, the endeavour of the mission is to witness Christ the Lord.

## **2.4. ESTABLISHING A NEW WAY AND A NEW MISSION**

There could be a new way of being a Mission or being in a Mission. The fact is, to be in a mission we can simply be in a place. We may have a small prayer centre or rented house for a priest/lay person to stay. He might mostly pray, visit homes in the neighborhood, pray for the sick, if interested tutor the students, create awareness when meeting people in person, etc. This does not need a lot of investment – only the simple maintenance of the priest/religious/lay person and a small dwelling place. Externally it may not bear witness to the people as in the case of our big institutions or centres but would help us to spread the message of Jesus Christ, our Lord, through personal experience of Jesus Christ in and through our prayer, visiting the sick, house visits, interaction with people and with children on a personal level.<sup>21</sup> This may not call a big investment and it may not much provoke anti-Christian elements, as we are working on a one-to-one level, not as a big group or with a lot of action, commotion and arrogance. Of course, it is a challenging situation no doubt, because such a missionary

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20 Cf. Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible* (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2021), 171.

21 Cf. Paulson Muthipeedika, “Perspectives on Evangelization” in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St. Pauls, 2020), 281-295, 293.

should be a person of prayer and integrity. He will have to lead a simple life. He would have to be available for house visits and visits to the sick. He has to find time to interact with people. He cannot be unforgiving, intolerant, uncharitable, merciless, immoral, non-transparent and such like.<sup>22</sup>

It is worth mentioning the yeomen services rendered to the Dalits by Saint Kunjachan of Ramapuram worked for the uplift of the Pulayas and Parayas for about 40 years. The state of these low castes was really miserable. Moved by their pitiable condition, Saint Kunjachan decided to work for their betterment. The Saint had his own unique missionary vision and a unique method. Constantly visiting them in their hut-like houses or at their work-fields, calling each and every one of them by name, the Saint made it clear that they two are redeemed by our Lord and hence are worthy to hear the saving word of God.<sup>23</sup>

It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that St Paul pursued and built up his mission endeavours in the early Church by starting in a humble way and extended over far and wide in the Mediterranean world and even upto Europe.

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22 Cf. Paulson Muthipeedika, "Perspectives on Evangelization" in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St. Pauls, 2020), 281-295, 287.

23 Cf. Xavier Kochuparampil, "Ecclesiastical, Social and Pontifical Contexts of the New Movement of Evangelization" in *Thomas Christian Heritage*, LRC Vol VI, No.11, Ed., Peter Kannampuzha, (Kakkanad: Mount St. Thomas, 2013), 37-58, 32. St. Kunjachan was so successful in bringing the Good News to them that no less than 5000 Dalits received Baptism and joined the Church. The Saint is one of the foremost missionaries among the Dalits in India.

## 2.5. THE CHURCH'S INSTITUTIONS

“Our institutions are both our strengths and our weaknesses!! Continuously living in big institutions, there is a great danger of becoming totally forgetful of the communities around us, their expectations and aspirations, and of being lost in our own “internal gossip” and our internal conflicts! When institutions multiply in a neighborhood, Church personnel tend mostly to interact among themselves and grow totally oblivious of social events, processes, trends, currents, undercurrents, opinions, and radical views in the vicinity, especially their views about us. Only when something shocking happens to us are we awakened to the hard realities around us.”<sup>24</sup> Incidentally, it may be highlighted that if we look at the Christian map of Madhya Pradesh, we can see that Christian presence there is limited. There are many small towns and tehsils without the footprint of missionaries in MP.

There are many towns and tehsils where there is no Christian presence at all. But the Church there does have many priests and religious sisters and lay missionaries but most of them consider the Catholic Mission in terms of institutions or centres. This kind of thinking or strategy needs a lot of investment in resources and personnel for undertaking the new mission in all the towns and tehsil headquarters of MP. We do, of course need institutions and infrastructure to be effective in mission work. I think we have already established ourselves well in terms of institutions and infrastructure.

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24 Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible* (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2021), 171.

Now the time has come to reap their fruit for the mission.<sup>25</sup> The author fully endorse this view This aspect is relevant in the context of the criticism, signs of threats or challenges against our institutions by external agencies, often with their ulterior motives.

Authentic religious spirit and vitality have been drained away by excessive institutionalization. The security of religious institutions has removed the basic insecurity demanded by the gospel (cf. Mt 5:3-12). The religious are no longer seen as the people of the cutting edge, but rather are viewed as upper class people, intimately connected with maintaining the institutions of the Society.<sup>26</sup>

Institutions, like human bodies, keep healthy when they are slim and well exercised, when they keep to the needed size, own just the necessary amount of land and property and serve a needed purpose; when spaces are not wasted but fully utilized; when activities within them are interrelated and complementary (not competitive) to other Church services in the neighborhood; when the entire Church work is fully inserted into local society in a variety of ways.<sup>27</sup> The Gospels reveal that throughout all His endeavors, our Lord maintained a sign value to glorify His father. More or less in similar lines the services rendered in our institutions were reflections of the gospel value in earlier days. It is time to examine whether there has occurred any

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25 Cf. Paulson Muthipeedika, "Perspectives on Evangelization" in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 281-295, 293.

26 Cf. George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2018), 167.

27 Cf. Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible* (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2021), 172.

dilution in the concept. It is inevitable to ensure that our institutions typically continue to maintain sign value to the society in which they exist. “If our work of education, health and social transformation has no sign value, it has lost its purposefulness and is a soulless service. If it does not speak of something beyond itself and its immediate goals, it lacks life and pointedness. The visible and tangible targets must be transcended. It is its sign-value that makes the difference in the long term.”<sup>28</sup> Jesus’ work of healing and feeding pointed beyond the immediate benefit it conferred. He explained the significance of what he had done through a saving message. It was after he had opened the eyes of the blind man that he spoke of himself as the light of the world. It was after he had fed the crowds that he referred to himself as the Bread of Life. The ‘word’ explained the ‘image’. And the message was clear. It is only when we begin to look beyond the visible goals, that the visible goals themselves will be meaningfully attained.

## **2.6. NON-INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP FOSTERS THE MISSION ENVIRONMENT**

Missionaries used to share more in the non-institutional set-up. The religious are more prone to discover God in the poor, the down-trodden, and the suffering during their day to day ministry, more than that of their service in the institutional set up. Here, the religious are able to find time to take up with the Lord, the issues of the poor, the needy and the sick whom they met and are able to

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28 Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible* (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2021), 87.

see God during their evening prayer and at night, a peak moment in their day-to-day life. By doing so, they are able to take the word of God and connect that to their day's struggle and the struggles of their people. In other words, personal prayer enlightens, comforts and challenges them to move forward in the mission and the mission leads them back to God in silence and stillness and to the word of God.<sup>29</sup> Here, they are able to experience the living presence of the Lord in their day to day mission and to grow in Christ.

## **2.7. INWARD LOOKING PARISH MODELS TO UNDERGO CHANGE**

The parish models tend to become rather closed enclave serving their own internal needs. These models are invariably, inward-looking, where efforts are aimed largely at maintaining the parish and enlivening it by keeping its people well provided with an increasing number of traditional prayers, sacraments and withdrawal into oneself. It basically encourages a status quo mentality and the idea that pastoral programs are simply to proceed as they did in the past.

Ecclesial movements offer the possibility of going beyond boundaries so as to broaden the horizons of witness in relation to mission and ministry. They enjoy a measure of flexibility and fluidity, apart from the ability to appeal to people who want to engage in a particular apostolic activity, witness to their faith, use a certain style

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29 Cf. Sr. Inigo Joachim\*, "An interview given to Sr. Claudette, Miranda, DSP" in *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, Ed. George Kaitholil, (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2018), 198.

of prayer, or follow a set of spiritual practices. Ecclesial movements tend to be aware of their mission, more focussed on their methods and audiences, and additionally, willing and keen to innovate, which makes them well positioned and adequate in their witness and evangelization. The Church must not entertain a ghetto mentality: it must get out of itself and become awake to the community. It is absolutely essential that the Church come alive to the inspiration of the Spirit and the signs of the time appearing in the horizon.<sup>30</sup> A Church cannot evangelize without being renewed. Evangelization could rightly be considered to be growing in spirituality as well. Pope Francis opines that the Church has to be put on a diet of evangelization for its proper growth.<sup>31</sup>

The apostolic ministry of proclamation is incumbent on the faithful, who are reconciled to Christ and have become a new creation in Christ. If a mission oriented approach is adopted at parish level, it may open up a way for development of missionary talents in every parishes for being diverted for harvest in the vineyard. Such an approach might also eliminate the whims of the idling talents who might say: “Because no one has hired us” (cf. Mt 20:7), and evolve a *koinonia* in mission harvest at all levels. It is imperative that on the part of the Church, she may target the laity and focus on them to realize their potential for the build-up and strengthening of

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30 Cf. Cyril Kuttiyanickal, “Evangelization and Emerging Ecclesial Movements in India”, in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020) 117-141, 139-140.

31 Cf. Paulson Muthipeedika, “Perspectives on Evangelization” in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 281-295, 287.

the mission. The following aspects in this context are considered relevant:

The Church teaches that “the Christian faithful are those who, in as much as they have been incorporated in Christ through Baptism, have been constituted as the people of God; for this reason since they have become sharers in Christ’s priestly, prophetic and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church, to fulfil in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each one.”<sup>32</sup>

The missionary activity of the Church lays great emphasis to train the laity for the cause of the missions: “To be equal to all these tasks, laity need the necessary technical and spiritual preparation, which should be given in institutes designed for this; so that their lives may be a witness for Christ among non-Christians.”<sup>33</sup> The significance of the training process is very much relevant in the present mission context. As part of training and grooming of the laity for the mission, they may be provided adequate knowledge of the word of God, the Church tradition, its teachings, and all other relevant aspects which are deemed necessary. According to the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, it is for each Church *sui iuris* continually to take care that, through suitably prepared preachers sent by a competent authority in accord with the norms of the common law, the gospel is preached in the whole world under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff. By knowing Christ they will not

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32 CCC 871.

33 A.G.41

only love Christ but also live in Christ.<sup>34</sup> It is promising to note that in certain dioceses like Thalassery, effective measures are taken to impart proper education to the laity, the religious and the catechism teachers who are interested in the learning the mission work by a massive education process, through the relentless efforts of the great visionaries of the eparchy.

### **3. THE LAITY AND THEIR ROLE IN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION**

When prophet Ezekiel was taken to the valley of dry bones, the situation of hopelessness, the Lord's guiding and leading presence gave him the hope that these dry bones can become an army (Ezek 37:1-12). With the hope and vision, Ezekiel spoke constantly the word of God and gave the Spirit of God. The formation of the baptized persons, as the multitude of missionary disciples, is a process of continuous, committed and creative catechesis of the complete gospel for a new evangelization. Now they may look like dry bones. In the same way, if we have the hope and vision in this time, when we see dry bones everywhere and go ahead with the proclamation of the spiritual truth of the gospel and the presence of the Holy Spirit, we can surely make an army of missionary disciples in our own places at least by the year 2033 which is the Greatest Jubilee of Salvation.<sup>35</sup>

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34 Cf. CCEO can. 585.

35 Cf. Paneer Selvam, "New Evangelization In India: Achievements, Challenges and Scope", in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020) 43-57, 49, 56.

The Gospel highlights the necessity of maintaining watchfulness.<sup>36</sup> “If the people do not have a real goal or purpose for living, they will just live, work, age, die and go into oblivion without really fulfilling the very purpose for which God has sent us to earth.”<sup>37</sup> There is a rising tide of individualism in the society, leading to pick and choose forms of religion, the characteristics of which are spirituality without moral obligations, religiosity without belonging to a community of believers, search for spiritual experiences without accompanying religious discipline, admiration for religious leaders without accepting their authority or being true to their central teachings<sup>38</sup>.

When the Lord calls, one cannot simply escape by lame excuses saying “I am not a prophet, nor a prophet’s son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel’” (Am 7:12-15). It is the Lord who makes the choice. Jesus clearly says, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide” (Jn 15:16). Again he says, “I chose you out of the world” (Jn 15:19). Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law when God called him out to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. He was not willing to risk going back to Egypt, but the Lord

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36 Mt. 24:38.

37 Paulson Muthipeedika, “Perspectives on Evangelization” in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 281-295, 293.

38 Cf. Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible* (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2021), 419.

helped him to overcome his inhibitions and fears. Nor did Jeremiah choose his own career as prophet. He too tries to evade the mission saying, “Ah, Lord God Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth” (Jer 1:6). Isaiah realizes that he is a man of unclean lips living among people of unclean lips (cf. Isa 6:5-13). Jonah wanted to avoid the uncomfortable ministry to the people of Nineveh. Hence instead of heeding to the Lord’s instruction to go to Nineveh, he decided to flee to Tarshish (Jon 1:3). This clearly tells us that they were called to do the Lord’s job.<sup>39</sup>

Faith in Jesus being an imperishable treasure that would transform the people to become the inheritors of eternal wealth and possessors of Heaven, a missionary has to necessarily share Jesus and the treasures of the Bible, by following a missiology which is a witnessing of the salvific presence of Jesus in society. He may not necessarily have to run up and down to put up a big building and get permission from governments for running schools etc. He can be in contemplation and in an intimate personal relationship with Jesus, be available for the people in the neighborhood to pray for them, with them and over them, visit them periodically, console them in their sickness and difficulties, give tuitions or coaching to the children or work towards creating awareness among people in various matters when we meet them personally. He must necessarily be a peace maker even within families and neighborhoods, and offer to pray for individuals and families and if they welcome it, do pray

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39 Cf. Francis Scaria, “Practical Implications of the Centripetal and Centrifugal Aspects of Evangelization”, in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 160-173, 162-163.

for them. In that way he will be more effective in sharing the message of Jesus, his compassion, mercy and love. The personal experience is far more effective than words.<sup>40</sup> “Listening to the often silent cry of our brothers and sisters for a drink, we want to let down our jar or bucket and fill it in order to offer the water of sincere welcome, hospitality and care. We want to discover the real dimension of being a neighbour in reaching out to the needy, with compassion, benevolence and blessing.”<sup>41</sup>

Vatican II states in *Lumen Gentium* No.33 that “the apostolate of the Laity is a sharing in the salvific mission of the Church. Through baptism and confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself. *Ad Gentes* No.28 urges every member of the Church “to collaborate in the work of the gospel, each according to his/her opportunity, ability, charism and ministry. It was a great and significant proclamation of *Ad Gentes* No.21, “The Church is not truly established and does not fully live, nor is it a perfect sign of Christ unless there is genuine laity existing and working alongside the hierarchy.”<sup>42</sup> The faith formation in the Church is directed towards the laity. They must be well-educated to understand their role in living the invitation of their vocation received in the sacrament of

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40 Cf. Paulson Muthipeedika, “Perspectives on Evangelization” in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 281-295, 294.

41 George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2018), 192.

42 Anto Amarnad, “The Role of Catechesis in the Evangelization Mission of the Church in India” in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 223-241, 239.

baptism and established in the sacrament of confirmation. Only a laity-oriented and mission-based catechesis can strengthen the Church's commitment in the world.<sup>43</sup>

Jesus is the unique model. At the second level, apart from Saints, we have many saintly human beings from time to time as there have been many unknown and unsung heroes living within the four walls of many families in our society, carrying out ordinary activities with extraordinary faith, prayer and zeal. The Mission is an extraordinary task, entrusted to us feeble humans, in the ordinariness of our lives. A response is a must, for lack of response is the worst response.<sup>44</sup> Moses was not given a route-map in advance. He had to simply follow the Lord. The Lord had not made all the provisions for their journey although He is the Almighty. They are bound to constantly depend on God for guidance and for meeting their needs.<sup>45</sup>

### **3.1. THE MISSION IN PAULINE MODEL: HARNESS THE POTENTIALITIES IN LAITY**

A glance at the origins of the Church is very much illuminative as the same gives insight as to the functioning of the ministries of the apostles in those days. Moreover, it provides an experience which

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43 Cf. Anto Amarnad, "The Role of Catechesis in the Evangelization Mission of the Church in India" in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 223-241, 240.

44 Cf. Francis Scaria, "Practical Implications of the Centripetal and Centrifugal Aspects of Evangelization", in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 160-173, 172-173.

45 Cf. Francis Scaria, "Practical Implications of the Centripetal and Centrifugal Aspects of Evangelization", 163.

was all the more valuable in that it enabled the Church to consolidate herself and to grow and spread.<sup>46</sup> Under the Pauline concept, believers are called to a *koinonia*, often known as “participation in” or “in fellowship with”, to live as disciples of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9). This is achieved through baptism. “The term ‘laity’ is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in the Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state, approved by the Church. They are the faithful who by baptism are incorporated into Christ and integrated with the People of God, as sharers in their particular way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.”<sup>47</sup>In the same analogy, the ‘Body of Christ’ builds the Lord’s mission. In fact, every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus.<sup>48</sup>

As a branch grafted to the olive tree, it is the bounden duty of every baptized to share the richness stemming from the root of the olive tree (cf. Rom 11:17) and be fruitful. By doing so they would foster the Body of Christ and grow in the richness of the Holy Spirit for the build-up of the Lord’s mission for the glory of God. In the Gospel, Mark speaks of the fig tree in leaf alone (11:13). When the Lord searched for fruit in it, nothing but leaves alone were found, for it was not the season for figs. Before the responsibility of every Baptized to bear fruit, it points to a significant aspect as to when

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46 Cf. E.N. 72.

47 CCC 897.

48 Cf. E.G. 120.

such fig trees bear fruits for the Kingdom? It is pertinent to recall that the Lord searched for the fruits in the fig tree at a time when that was not the season for bearing fruits. Relevantly, if the tree did not bear fruit at all at no point of time of its existence, how can it stand before the Lord and answer that it will bear fruit at a time when the Lord search for fruit at His choice of time? It is Here, Paul renders an evergreen paradigm (1 Cor 9:16; 2 Tim 4:7; Heb 12:17). Paul says to the Romans: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News! (10:15). Paul presents the glorified Jesus as the Lord in his epistles (Rom 1:4, Phil 2:11). Christ’s second coming is dealt with in the NT as the glorified coming of the Lord (1 Cor 11:26; 16:22; 1 Thess 4:17).

There remains a fundamental lack of understanding among the faithful regarding their vocation and role in the Church’s mission.<sup>49</sup> According to Pope John Paul II, “there is so much need today for mature Christian personalities, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world!”<sup>50</sup> If a person does not put his personal encounter with Jesus Christ at the forefront of the practice of the faith, there is no possibility at all to answer the question convincingly as to why he believe in Jesus

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49 Cf. Rani Mathew, “Formation of Families for Evangelization” in *Prospects and Pathways in India – Missio Ad-Inter Gentes*, Ed. Lazar T. Stanislaus, (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2018), 136.

50 John Paul II, Message for the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, 30<sup>th</sup> May 1998 accessed, January 7, 2022 from [www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19980527\\_movimenti.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19980527_movimenti.html)

Christ at all!<sup>51</sup> Pope Francis says, "...the mission is only authentic if it begins from its immutable centre, which is Jesus. It is not an initiative of individual faithful or of groups and even less so of large aggregations, but it is the mission of the Church, inseparably united to her Lord. No Christian proclaims the gospel on "his own," but it is only sent by the Church, which has received the mandate from Christ Himself."<sup>52</sup>

We are the gifted heralds of the treasures of the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth who are invited to share and nurture humanity with an inner authenticity of the Christian faith and foster the formation of committed Disciples of Christ.<sup>53</sup> Since the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the people of God, this Sacred Synod invites all to develop a deep interior renewal, so that, after having a vivid awareness of their own responsibility for spreading the gospel, they may do their share in missionary work among the nations. As members of the living Christ, incorporated into Him and made like unto Him, through baptism and through confirmation and the Eucharist, all the faithful are duty-bound to cooperate in the expansion and spreading out of Christ's Body, to bring it to fullness as soon as may be (Eph 4:13).

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51 Cf. Raju Mathew Pulikuzhy, "Evangelization in M.P.: Achievements, Scope and Challenges", in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020) 58-66, 61.

52 Francis Scaria, "Practical Implications of the Centripetal and Centrifugal Aspects of Evangelization", 163.

53 Anto Amarnad, "The Role of Catechesis in the Evangelization Mission of the Church in India" in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 223-241, 241.

Therefore, all sons of the Church should have a lively awareness of their responsibility to the world; they should foster in themselves a truly Catholic spirit; they should spend their forces in the work of evangelization. And yet, let all of them know that their first and most important obligation for the spread of the Faith is this: to lead a profoundly Christian life. Their fervour in the service of God and their charity towards others will cause a new spiritual wind to blow over the whole Church, which will then appear as a luminous sign lifted up among the nations (cf. Isa 11:12).<sup>54</sup>

### **3.2. IMPART MISSIONARY FORMATION TO THE LAITY**

There is need for proper animation and formation to the laity to enable them to play their missionary role. Missionary zeal in our parishes seems to be on the decline. Steps have to be taken to facilitate better mission awareness in our parishes. Means and methods may be found out, so that parishes can have direct communication with the missions. Resourceful parishes must take up mission programs, with involvement of the laity. Our lay persons must be encouraged and given chance to work as active missionaries in our mission areas. They must also be encouraged to fulfil their role as formators at home. Ecclesial recognition of charisms given to the lay people should be a priority in this regard. There should be a programme to adopt the mission dioceses by the dioceses of the mother Church in Kerala. A comprehensive training program for laity must include doctrine, lay-life, lay-spirituality, inculturation, study of the languages of the mission areas and missionary skills. Training must

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54 A.G. 35, 36.

be given primarily at the level of family, parish and small ecclesial communities. Special theological centres are to be established for higher theological formation of laypeople. The laity has to be trained to be involved in the mission not only in the financial affairs but also in the actual evangelizing activities of the Church. Laypersons who are interested in active mission ought to be identified, properly trained and encouraged to take up responsibilities in mission fields. Provisions must be made for lay missionaries to settle as families in mission areas.

### **3.3. EMPOWERING THE LAY WOMEN IN THE CHURCH**

The Apostolic Letter *Spiritus Domini*<sup>55</sup> issued in the form of *Motu Proprio* by the Supreme Pontiff Pope Francis on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021 modifying Canon 230 Section 1 of the Code of Canon Law (CIC) regarding access of women to the ministries of Lector and Acolyte is indeed a positive step on the part of the Church authorities to give more space to lay women in the ministries of the Church, wherever required.

The presence of lay women missionaries in the mission stations is rarely noticed even though women religious are rendering services in the rural villages of India, inspite of the constraints and hardships. The services of the women religious in the village amongst the poor are indeed praise worthy. Most of the convents of mission stations function with bare minimum strength of just 2 sisters as observed. It

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55 Apostolic letter issued *motu proprio spiritus domini* by the supreme pontiff francis [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu\\_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20210110\\_spiritus-domini.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20210110_spiritus-domini.html).accessed on January 12, 2021.

is heartening to note that in the wake of the massive spread of Covid 19 pandemic in villages of mission stations in Maharashtra, where the medical facilities of the Governmental set-up is very limited, the women religious of certain congregations dared to take care the Covid patients even in courtyards of their convents, by setting up temporary shelters like cloth-covered shamiyanaas where the villagers brought their cots and sought refuge to secure medical care from their reverend sisters who have shown concern for their wellbeing. Such tidings are clear expressions of the love of God and the whole-hearted dedication of the missionaries towards the poor and the down-trodden, and in turn the trust and hope of the villagers in the consecrated hands of the missionaries who take care of them in their distress.

It is pertinent to point out here that these missionaries deserve high appreciation and support of the Church as they are doing extremely incredible service to humanity even at the cost of their life. It is desirable that more and more consecrated women as well as lay women (catechists) need be deployed to the mission stations since they can contribute very much in these stations as there are large number of women population in the villages who deserve guidance and support. This is an area very much neglected, although there is wide scope for harnessing the mission potential by imparting guidance and by extending God's love through helping hands. With this objective, the possibility of arranging mission visits to selected mission dioceses from amongst the women religious and lay women/lay women catechists would be worth considering so that they will

have an outreach to such places which may eventually help them to contribute for the growth of the missions by their familiarity with the village environment of the missions. Grooming lay women with a burning mission fire in their hearts is necessary to enable them to serve the missions compassionately and to win souls for Christ. They must be given proper missionary training so as to develop their counselling capabilities and communication skills. By enhancing their strength in the mission stations, they can strengthen the women folk. The community in turn will embrace the love of God.

### **3.4. SHARING THE WORK WITH THE LAITY**

Motivated by the Vatican Council II of the last century, the present century may be called the century of the Laity. More and more lay people are extremely committed, generous and ready to do many of the traditional works of priests and the religious.<sup>56</sup> According to the nature of the apostolate, we have in hand the lay talent available. We ought to consider lay people equal partners in our apostolic work, be it in the field of education, health, social service, catechesis or evangelization. Attention should be paid mainly to the effective carrying out of a given task. The door should remain open to a wide range of possibilities. Then only, we shall cease to be a closed fortress of privileges and would become an open team of goal-oriented apostolic workers. Our sense of mission unites us in a firm bond.<sup>57</sup> “There is something great in every person

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<sup>56</sup> George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities* (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2018), 166.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible* (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2021), 74.

who is capable of looking beyond himself/herself and taking trouble of others. All are potential co-workers. Our mission is to make that relationship operative and place it at the service of humanity.”<sup>58</sup> Our ultimate goal is to accomplish God’s plan on earth, in which many hands and many hearts may join together in a common motive to do their might.

### **3.5. ENCOURAGE THE LAY INITIATIVES FOR EVANGELIZATION**

It is promising to note that Mission-oriented lay associations too helped the process of evangelization during this period in history. Started in a very small way by persons with mission fire in their hearts, associations came into existence with the sole intention of evangelization. In that the contribution of associations like Cherupushpa Mission League (CML), Fiat Mission, and Jesus Youth etc. in the Church are notable and praise worthy. Started functioning in 1947 in Bharananganam by late P.C. Abraham, Pallaattukunnel under the saintly leadership of Bishop James Kalacherry of the diocese of Changanacherry, CML remains Asia’s largest lay organization. CML is a forum for young people in parishes that helps missions by raising funds and offering prayers. It conducts regular programs on the life and needs of missions in India and overseas. The league has nearly 1.7 million members and about 41,500 of its former members are now nuns and priests serving the Church

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58 Thomas Menamparampil, in *Attempt the Impossible*, 76, 77.

throughout the world. Among them are 37 bishops<sup>59</sup>. As CML is actively involved in inculcating mission orientation in youngsters, their services are praise-worthy for the buildup and fostering of missionaries for the Church.

As an ardent follower of Jesus Youth, the Chairman of FIAT Mission and FIAT Media Publication Pvt. Ltd. has brought out a Bible in Maram, a dialect of Imphal diocese, Manipur India. It focuses on ensuring the availability of the divine word to those who do not have the Bible. Till date Fiat Mission has brought out translations of the Holy Bible in no less than 18 languages. The monthly output of the printed Bible is 50,000 copies and the target for 2019 was 10,00,000.<sup>60</sup> These Bibles are supplied free of cost or at subsidized price to those who want to read the Holy Scripture in their mother tongue.<sup>61</sup> Their contribution for the evangelization process is incredible. They are actively involved in doing evangelization work of global dimension, with great enthusiasm and a sense of fulfilment. Similarly, Jesus Youth is an international Catholic movement that challenges young peoples to live a meaningful, creative and fulfilling life. It is approved by the Holy See and is present in 25 countries.

Shalom Television, the most popular Indian Catholic Christian

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59 Xavier Kochuparampil, “Ecclesiastical, Social and Pontifical Contexts of the New Movement of Evangelization” in *Thomas Christian Heritage*, LRC Vol VI, No.11, Ed., Peter Kannampuzha, (Kakkanad: Mount St. Thomas, 2013), 37-58, 50-51.

60 Ceetly George, “The Role of Lay Missionaries and Associations in Evangelizing India” in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 192-198, 198.

61 *Fiat Mission Brochure* published by Fiat Mission.

television channel based in Peruvannamoozhi, Kozhikode, Kerala was founded by a laity in the year 2005. The channel broadcasts programs which included live Holy Mass daily and also in Tridentine Mass format. The broadcasts include the traditional Nasrani rosary recitation apart from various other devotional programmes. The broadcast coverage is now world-wide. Chev. Benny Punnathara a great visionary and a profound missionary is the personality behind this channel. He has dedicated himself for gospel with an *impressum* 'for God through God' and it is through the media that he fosters the noble cause of evangelization with the power of God. He is the founder and Chairman for Shalom Ministries, Shalom Television, Shalom World, Shalom Times and Editor in charge for Sunday Shalom Tidings which are all the proven initiatives of his missionary zeal for the proclamation of gospel, introduced without any advertisement and offered to all free of charge. All these are run exclusively with the ultimate objective of evangelization.

Similarly Shekinah Channel, an initiative by Br. Santosh Karumathra, Trissur is rendering excellent service to enrich the spirituality of humanity in general and the Catholic community in particular. It acts as the voice of the Catholic faithful to a large extent. This television channel also covers the global network and is telecast free to all and without any advertisement. It is worth mentioning that these endeavours are initiated and managed as nonprofit organizations and are run purely on the support of its benefactors and with the ultimate providence of the Lord. See, how much potential we have in the lay people who were inspired by the power of the Holy

Spirit! The spiritual contribution of these two television channels to its viewers across the world is unparalleled in as much as it telecasts the Holy Mass live and shows excellent devotional programs round the clock. These programs are very much appreciated and regularly watched by the viewers, especially, by the sick and bed-ridden at home, people at the care homes and patients in the hospitals, apart from the general public to whom the gospel is open 24 x 7. The live telecasts of the Holy Mass, especially in the pandemic times of complete lockout, when the doors of the Churches throughout the world were closed to the public, are most praise worthy. They were appreciated by all sections of the people as they offered the only source for strengthening the inner person of the faithful who were forced to be away from the sacredness of the Church atmosphere. In a critical situation like the one which everyone had to undergo in pandemic times, the services of the Television channels like Shalom, Shekinah, Goodness (promoted by the Vincentian Congregation) etc. are praise worthy and are providing a truly holy atmosphere in the Christian homes, as the word of God and the live telecast of the Holy Mass were wholly devotional and means of inspiration in times of great distress.

Very few lay initiatives were only referenced here for want of space. In fact there are very many such initiatives in different Rites for the cause of the Mission. It is time for the Church to harnesses the full potential of lay initiatives by encouraging more and more people to the main stream for achieving the evangelization goal harmoniously with the consecrated men and women as a powerful

team for the mission endeavors of the Church.

### **3.6. ORGANISE LAY CATECHISTS FOR THE MISSIONS**

Lay catechists are anointed by the Holy Spirit; they are specially called and so well prepared that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them.<sup>62</sup> They are essential participants in the Church's fundamental mission of teaching all nations (Mt 28:20), a mission which ranks with the work begun by the one "Teacher", Jesus Christ (Jn 7:16). The ministry of missionary lay catechists is significant. They can make up in good measure the insufficiency of adequate missionaries in the missions. If the missionary priest has reliable lay catechists with him in the parish, he can multiply his apostolic endeavours, as they can cover some deficiencies and overcome several difficulties with their help. However, well trained lay catechists continue to be in short supply in many areas of the missionary Church. A lay catechist who possesses the required qualities can be admitted permanently to the ministries of Lector and Acolyte.<sup>63</sup> When the necessity of the Church warrants it and when ministers are lacking, lay catechist, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply for certain of the offices, namely, to exercise the ministry of the Word, to preside over liturgical prayers, to confer baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion in accord with the prescriptions of the law.<sup>64</sup>

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62 CCC, 901; LG, 34.

63 The Code of Canon Law, in collaboration with Collins, England (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1983), 230 1; CCC, 903.

64 Dunning Gonsalves, "The Role of Lay Catechists in Evangelization" in *Prospects and Pathways in India – Missio Ad- Inter Gentes*, Ed. Lazar T. Stanislaus, (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2019), 20-243, 223; LG.35.

As the mission stations at present are short of sufficient number of missionaries for proclamation, the follow-up and nurturing of the mission is not carried out in certain missions as mentioned earlier. It is high time that the Church realized this fact. The Church must take effective measures to rectify the deficiencies by developing lay men and women catechists with appropriate training for deployment to Missions on a need basis.

3. It is a matter of crossing the 'Red Sea.' If the Church realizes the necessity, at least at this 5<sup>th</sup> hour, she may lift-up her staff and stretch out her hand (cf. Ex 14:16) towards the right direction of mission. The Lord who did wonders to create dry land across a stretch of the Red Sea will render great wonders at this hour also and the Church will cross the tides of crisis on the mission front, to be the witnesses of the Lord of all. As part of his ministerial commitment to Christ, Paul moved with hearts seized by the fire of love and dedication, transformed people into intimate fellowship and led them lovingly to Christ. Such a strategy of Paul was found useful for the growth of Christianity and for the fulfilment of his mission goal. Obviously, the challenges before the Church today in India are such that our missionaries are to step up the level of their generosity. They have to become more like "Icons of God's love for His people." It would seem tough to carry out their mission, but then by carrying it out we will be shielded by the Cross. The Cross will go before us, move with us, gently press itself onto our shoulders and sometimes even weigh heavily on our feeble physical frames. However, the Cross will never fail us, for it is the instrument of

our redemption.<sup>65</sup> It is through this proven sign that each one of the baptized is gracefully sealed for eternity and is redeemed.

#### **4. MISSION FOCUSED RE-DEDICATION OF THE CONSECRATED**

“Since Christ was made perfect through his suffering in obedience to God and thus was qualified to be a true high priest, every disciple of Jesus on the journey to Christian priesthood will be qualified to be a true high priest. Every disciple of Jesus on the journey to the Christian priesthood will be qualified through the Christ-like perfection that comes by means of innocent suffering in obedience to God.”<sup>66</sup> This calls for a continuous re-dedication of the consecrated life, as the primary duty vested on them is to witness Christ and be the proclaimers of divine grace to all through their innocent suffering in obedience to God. With abundant priestly and religious vocations, the Church carries out her missionary apostolate, in many States outside Kerala and in many parts of the world, in addition to its pastoral ministry in Kerala. The pastoral ministry in the dioceses of the Church in Kerala is rendered by numerous consecrated men and a large number of the religious.

The ministry of the Church outside Kerala, is dedicated to the noble cause of evangelization in the mission areas of interior

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65 Cf. Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible*, 79, 80.

66 Timothy Gollob, “The Bible and the Servant-priest-disciple” in *The international Bible Commentary, An Ecumenical Commentary For The Twenty First Century*, eds. William R. Farmer, Sean McEvenue, Armando J. Levoratti and David L Dungan, John Pathrapankal, Erik Eynikel, (Bangalore: Theological, Publications In India, 2019) 271-273, 273.

villages, with the objectives of development of the local people through its mission dioceses and for fostering the spiritual growth of the migrants of the mother Church, settled in those places. The Church carries out its missionary responsibilities through an evangelization process in which the consecrated men and women of the Church, consisting of diocesan priests, priest-brothers and sisters of various congregations, participate. The Church recognizes that in the work of evangelization, the missionary “planting” and expansion of the Church require the presence of the religious, in all its forms.<sup>67</sup> On the mission front outside Kerala, there is abundant scope for proclamation and witnessing in new territories where Jesus could be more fruitfully introduced in the minds of fresh believers, as there are millions of people in India to whom Jesus is a stranger. This is a challenging task for the missionaries who are inspired by the zeal of Paul to win many souls in India for Christ.

If we take a close look at what men and women in the Church today expect from the priests, we find that they have one great expectation from the priests as persons thirsting for Christ. Everything else – their economic, social and political needs – can be met by any number of other people. But from the priest they ask for Christ! And from the priest, they have the right to receive Christ, above all through the proclamation of the Word and the consecration

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67 Cf. CCC 927. Pertinently, in the Pauline approach, evangelization endeavors to carry Christ’s name to areas where it is unknown (cf. 2 Cor 10:15-16; Rom 15:20).

of the Eucharist, the living heart of the Church and of priestly life.<sup>68</sup> Every Christian congregation or society comes into existence with a great sense of mission and takes giant strides forward during the period, retaining a great measure of idealism. It is possible to note that in another period of the congregation's history, *faith diminishes, idealism falls*, and distance grows between projected plans and actual performance, between desired goals and verifiable attainments. A community begins to serve as a highly sophisticated establishment rather than a source of assistance to humanity in one of its urgent needs or to the Church in one of her present priorities. Under such circumstances, vision begins to vanish, cohesion weakens, spiritual exhortations become empty rhetoric and updating programs become instruments for taming and softening the demands implied in the initial objectives.

Communities become inward looking. Individuals are more apart and they form separate interest groups. "Collective consciousness grows nebulous. Emphasis shifts from *duties to rights*. What was once a stimulating challenge presents itself as a threat? The generous service that was once considered a proud privilege becomes a burden."<sup>69</sup> It is in such a scenario that the re-dedication of the community becomes inevitable for ensuring a more vibrant teamwork for achieving the goals for which the congregation or the society was formed.

"If we are complacent with the present, we shall not take any

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68 Cf. Timothy Gollob, "The Bible and the Servant-priest-disciple" in *The international Bible Commentary, An Ecumenical Commentary For The Twenty First Century*, 271-272.

69 Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible*, 70.

risk and venture into the untrodden terrain. We tend to forget that our God is one who tells us to “leave” and “come away”. This inevitably involves risks. For many among us, success seems to be simply ‘not having any trouble’. In fact it is just the opposite. There is no Christianity without the cross. Persecution is an identifying mark of the real Church.”<sup>70</sup> The Decree *AD GENTES* on the Mission activity of the Church emphasizes the Church’s mandate on proclamation of the gospel to everyone. Driven by the inner necessity of her own catholicity, and obeying the mandate of her founder (cf. Mk 16:16), the Church is divinely sent to the nations of the world to be a universal sacrament of salvation in which she strives to proclaim the gospel to all men.<sup>71</sup> According to Pope Francis, every consecrated person is a gift for the people of God on their journey.<sup>72</sup> We have many congregations in the Church who are dedicated to the cause of the mission. While appreciating the incredible role played by the consecrated men and women, it is time to look at the whole mission scenario afresh and see how best the same can be improved upon by re-dedication in the spirit of Pauline model already discussed. A successful missionary is a person who loves the Lord most intensely and has a compassionate mind for seeking the lost ones and experiencing the inherent joy of finding them.

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70 Francis Scaria, “Practical Implications of the Centripetal and Centrifugal Aspects of Evangelization”, in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 160-173,169.

71 Cf. A.G.1.

72 Cf. Pope Francis, “On the World Day for Consecrated Life”, in *Consecrated Life: A Call to Wake Up the World*, ed. Peter Kannampuzha (Kakkanad: LRC Publications, 2016) 245.

Despite the fact that the missionaries are struggling at the mission front with enthusiasm and zeal in the midst of their varied constraints, there remains a wide gap for them to build-up as they are not able to fully meet the spiritual needs of their community and to effectively initiate evangelization process in the mission dioceses. Evangelization takes place in obedience to the missionary mandate of Jesus (Mt 28:19). We have to respond to the Lord's call by leaving our own comfort zone in order to reach out to all on the "peripheries," where people need the light of the gospel (*EG* 20).<sup>73</sup> The consecrated men of the Church being the back bone of the Body of Christ, they must essentially have an identity towards the ultimate mission goal of the Church.

"Priests personally represent Christ, and are collaborators of the order of bishops in their sacred task which by its very nature belongs to the mission of the Church. Therefore, they should fully understand that their life is also consecrated to the service of the missions. Now by means of their own ministry – which consists principally in the Eucharist which perfects the Church – they are in communion with Christ, the Head of the Church and are leading others to this communion. In this effort, they cannot but feel, how much remains to be achieved to attain the fullness of that Body, and how much therefore must be done that it may grow from day to day. They shall therefore plan their pastoral care in such a way that it will serve to spread the gospel among non-Christians."<sup>74</sup> This

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73 Kusumam Joseph, in "Evangelization Through Prayer, Presence and Family Visit" in *Sharing The Message of Jesus Christ – Missiological Search for India Today*, Ed. Paul Muthipeedika (Bandra: St Pauls, 2020), 174-191,191.

74 Cf. AG.39.

can be achieved by them by imparting supportive measures to the missions so that the missions in turn may reach the unreached, by proclaiming the gospel to them, by building up a communion with the believers and by grooming them to the main stream.

“In their pastoral activities, priests should stir-up and preserve amid the faithful a zeal for the evangelization of the world; by instructing them in sermons and in Christian doctrine courses about the Church’s task of announcing Christ to all nations; by enlightening Christian families about the necessity and the honour of fostering missionary vocations among their own sons and daughters; by promoting mission fervour in young people from the schools and Catholic associations so that from them there may arise future heralds of the gospel. Let the priests teach the faithful to pray for the missions, and let them not be ashamed to ask alms of them for this purpose, becoming like beggars for Christ and for the salvation of souls.”<sup>75</sup> This could be achieved only by undergoing a re-dedication process by the consecrated men and women, irrespective of the position they hold or the role they assume in the Church so that they would play a participatory role in the mission proper, in addition to their existing responsibilities. The relevance of such a role is that the entire consecrated men and women in the Church can move the laity, as they hold enormous potential for mobilizing the laity.

“Let the clergy highly esteem the arduous apostolate of the laity. Let them train the laity to become conscious of the responsibility which they as members of Christ have for all men; let them instruct

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75 A.G. 39.

them deeply in the mystery of Christ, introduce them to practical methods, and be at their side in difficulties, according to the tenor of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* and the Decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.”<sup>76</sup>

The consecrated men and women in the Church are resourceful to inspire, motivate and strengthen the laity by grooming and developing leadership qualities, as they themselves are self-motivated by their re-dedication for the cause of the mission. Pope John Paul II emphatically exhorted: “In the name of the whole Church, I sense an urgent duty to repeat this cry of St. Paul. From the beginning of my Pontificate, I have chosen to travel to the ends of the earth in order to show this missionary concern. My direct contact with peoples who do not know Christ has convinced me even more of the urgency of missionary activity, a subject to which I am devoting the present encyclical.”<sup>77</sup>

With utmost zeal, Paul travelled with the gospel. Initially, Paul proclaimed to his own fellowmen Jews in the synagogues, followed by his outreach to the nations. As the ultimate goal of proclamation and mission endeavours of the Church is to transform the whole world into a new creation and new humanity in Christ. By availing of the virtues of Christ-event, let everyone in the Church be part of this glorious journey. In a special way, this is true of the consecrated people, who are called to follow Christ “more closely.” Thus, it can be said that consecrated persons are “in mission” by virtue of their very consecration and they must bear witness in accordance

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76 Cf A.G. 21.

77 R.M. 1.

with the ideal of their Institute.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, consecrated life itself is a mission, as was the whole of Jesus' life. The more consecrated persons allow themselves to be conformed to Christ, the more they are re-dedicated and Christ is made present and active in the world for salvation of all.

#### **4.1. RENEWAL OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT**

The Church is blessed with a large number of religious women compared to the number of religious men. They play an incredible role in the Church through their ardent service to develop the community. It is imperative to think how best more women religious could be mobilized to the missions as they graciously possess a more compassionate approach to the needy in mission proper through their inherent faculty of a natural affinity to mother Mary.

Religious life is a gift made to the Church and for the good of the Church. The religious persons are signs of the strength of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, present and active in the Church. Being a mystical and spiritual reality, the religious constitute a *sacramentum mundi*, a sign to the world.<sup>79</sup> The religious life being a total self-gift and total service to God; it is a special mode of consecration to the Lord (P.C.1), a more intense consecration (A.G.18). It is a fuller expression of baptismal consecration (P.C.5). The terms “religious life” and “religious state” express the idea of a definite choice. As the Council says, “the religious live only for

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78 George Thanchan, “Religious: Forerunners in the Missions” in *Thomas Christian Heritage*, LRC Vol VI, No.11, Ed., Peter Kannampuzha, (Kakkanad: Mount St. Thomas, 2013), 59-79, 66.

79 L.G. 43, 44. Cf. George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2018), 185.

God” (P. C. 5); by a special title they are destined to the service and love of God (L.G.44). Such a consecration requires a journey from the world to God.<sup>80</sup>

The religious are expected to follow Christ closely. If so, they can have no other mission than that of Christ himself (cf. Lk 4:18). “Unfortunately, the sense of mission is being gradually replaced by professionalism and, worse still, by careerism and the pursuit of personal ambitions. Today, only a small percentage of religious in India is burning with a ‘passion for Christ and for humanity.’<sup>81</sup> “We need to re-interpret our three vows: our prayer life should lead us from being just pious to spiritual beings; from just professionalists to missionaries; from just being workers in the institutions to committed and God-experienced religious. Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let our religious awake!”<sup>82</sup>

History, gives us any number of instances of a determined group of people attaining unbelievably great things because they had a common vision that united and motivated them. Every religious congregation or society comes into existence with a great sense of mission in this manner. If at a later stage of its history its enthusiasm weakens, it is the task of every member to inspire, challenge and motivate and strengthen the fellow religious to renew their community’s spirit and urge them to remain at the service

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80 Cf. George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2018), 20-21.

81 Cf. George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, 168.

82 Inigo Joachim, “An interview given to Sr. Claudette, Miranda, DSP” in *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, Ed. George Kaitholil, (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2018), 200.

of the wider society. This mission is fulfilled in the wider world in collaboration: within a parish, diocese, Catholic Church and the community of Christian believers.<sup>83</sup> It is heartening to belong to a religious community and to feel a sense of being part of an enthusiastic team, and to contribute in a mighty way to rejuvenate the weak and the under privileged.

Community life demands from the members, faithfulness to their religious commitment, besides their presence in the life of the community, its work, joys and sorrows, in praying for and with the community, in sharing responsibility in planning for the community and in showing brotherly love, concern, respect and care for one another among the members.<sup>84</sup> “Genuine obedience is founded on the firm faith that God is love and what He desires is our good. God’s will and His love are the same; it is life-giving and liberating. Just the divinity and humanity dwell in the Word that became incarnate (cf. Jn 1:14) the combination of divine and human realities transforms the obedience of the religious into a continuation of the holy Incarnation.”<sup>85</sup> Therefore, we find fruitfulness, perfection and joy only in obeying the holy will of God who is the source of our existence.

Almighty God manifests His glory by becoming one among the poorest of the poor and by helping the poor and the oppressed. The poor can claim and expect from God the protection denied to them by man. God’s justice is His mercy and love towards the

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83 Cf. Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible*, 79, 67.

84 George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, 24.

85 Ibid, 124-125.

poor and the weak.<sup>86</sup> “Everything takes on a new meaning when we remind ourselves of the call that we have received. As long as this sense of call is alive in our hearts, we preserve a *sense of mission*. Even the smallest thing we do acquires a new spiritual quality, orientation, direction.”<sup>87</sup> Today’s religious in fact need to read in a prophetic manner the signs of our changed times and to reorganize their life and the ministry. That is necessary to make their religious life more transparent, more relevant and more fruitful. Therefore, it is the time to appreciate the authentic religious life of those who live it faithfully. This is also the time to deepen our understanding of religious life and to admit into it healthy changes and adaptations to make it more meaningful and productive, in our altered situation. Religious life needs to be renewed and revitalized, and the only way to do so is to return to the basics, accepting the real challenge.<sup>88</sup> People expect the religious not to be simply efficient administrators or competent professionals but first of all “spiritual guides,” who not only show the way but “walk the talk”. They look for humble and happy religious, brimming with a deep spirituality, rather than being just achievers, specialists or professionals. Unfortunately, in many formation houses of the religious today, there is more emphasis on professionalism and technical training rather than on spiritual training. In any case, it needs to be ensured that more than the worldly achievement, the ultimate goal of the religious shall be on a much higher plain to win the souls for Christ for which purpose

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86 Cf., 64.

87 Thomas Menampampil, in *Attempt the Impossible*, 372.

88 Cf. George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, 137.

they have dedicated themselves as a self-gift to the Lord.

## **4.2. REVAMP THE FORMATION**

Revamping the formation programs is a necessity of the day. Since the primary call of a religious is to consciously search for God, the formation of a religious unit or institution facilitates such a search, which is a continuous process towards a Unitive Experience. The candidates for the religious life come from different family backgrounds and are at different stages of human development. Therefore, the psycho-sexual, psycho-social and faith related factors of the persons must be seriously addressed at all stages of their religious formation. “Further, taking into consideration the changed conditions in which they are called to live out their commitment, they are to be trained and revamped for collaborative partnership in the mission with other congregations, the laity in the local context and people of other faiths.”<sup>89</sup>

One can see mostly in missions, that the religious are drawn to new ministries of justice and women’s issues, organizing youth groups, finding fulfilment in working for the poor and the marginalized, even teaching but not in organized institutions, but teaching children in slums, or railway platforms, on the streets and in prison. Education has not become irrelevant in our country but who do we educate and where are the issues? Health care has also not become irrelevant because still people are dying for lack of health facilities. Many NGOs (Non- Government Organizations) are also doing social ministry but God always calls a group to consecrate

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, 181-182.

and dedicate their lives to new ministries. But people still need those religious who live their life, with mystical dimensions and prophetic visions.<sup>90</sup> “The sacrifice the celibates make is the fruit of their discovery of something far greater.”<sup>91</sup> Since the consecrated lives of men and women and the religious are solemnly called to love Christ above all things and to awaken the world, their imminent re-dedication to the cause of the mission is the need of the day, by accepting the new standards for the betterment of the people of God, from all corners to His Kingdom.

The testament before the Seminarians and the Novices is the gospel of our Lord, which the apostles preached. “It is the gospel which makes men and women able to stand firm. God said to Ezekiel ‘stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you (Ezek 2:1). The gospel is a power which enables us to stand firm and upright against the shocks of the world and the assaults of temptation.”<sup>92</sup> The gospel takes its source in Christ and is transmitted by men and women. Without Jesus Christ, there can be no gospel at all; but, without trusted people to transmit it, others can never hear it. As the situation that prevails at the mission stations for the interior villages in India is far inferior to those prevailing in cities and towns of the country, those with a burning fire for the mission in the heart alone prefer to work in the village-based mission stations. By knowing the life of the people in the mission areas, the missionaries get inspired

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90 Cf. Sr. Inigo Joachim, “An interview given to Sr. Claudette, Miranda, DSP” in *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, Ed. George Kaitholil, (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2018), 199.

91 George Kaitholil, *Consecrated Life Challenges and Opportunities*, 54.

92 Barclay, “The Letter to the Romans”, in *The New Daily Study Bible* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009) 260.

by the love of God and they start loving the mission.

Practical suggestions for grooming the mission-oriented priesthood were given by Bishop Vaniakizhakkal. His Excellency suggested that every year, at least one seminarian from each diocese in Kerala should be sent for theological studies to a mission seminary, as that would be very helpful in creating mission awareness amongst the priests and through them among the people of the Church for the formation of our future missionaries.<sup>93</sup> The proposal of His Excellency is very much timely and meaningful, as the real situation in the mission stations is very different. Since the mission stations are widely scattered and the villagers are living in far off places without proper road access and other amenities for conducting holy sacraments and for offering spiritual support. Periodical nurturing of the faith requires the ardent services of adequate number of clerics, consecrated women and catechists. Therefore, there is great scope for providing the beginners with adequate insight to realize how precious are the services provided to the villagers in the mission by our missionaries and how do they build up their community and live with them in the true spirit of the gospel values.

In the matter of evangelization of humanity, the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, suggests that missionaries, either native or non-native are to be qualified in the necessary skills and ability; they are to be suitably formed in missiology and missionary spirituality and instructed in the history and culture of the people

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93 Cf. Mar Mathew Vaniakizhakkal, "Steps to keep the Syro-Malabar Church Actively Missionary", in *Be My Witness*, 557-558, 558.

to be evangelized.<sup>94</sup> It is worth considering to start faculty for missiology in our Seminaries/ theological Institutes since study on an academic level is also important for keeping up the spirit of the mission amongst the seminarians with the objective of creating the proper formation of the missionary personnel for the cause of the formation of the mission aspirants.

## **5. EVANGELIZATION; AN INCULTURATION OF FAITH**

While incarnation is the unique event of the Son of God taking the human flesh, its proclamation to the whole world is a principal and fundamental responsibility of the Church at all times. Towards proclamation of the gospel amongst the Greeks, Romans and other nations, Paul adapted a strategy of effective inculturation in true spirit of love and without dilution of the gospel values, and succeeded in proclaiming the gospel to many nations of the world. “The sacred scriptures, both the Old Testament and the New Testaments, written by hundreds of authors, in diverse cultural contexts and countries, during a period of over a millennium, inspired by the power of the Holy Spirit, is the most inculturated religious document.”<sup>95</sup> The word of God is alive and active, and is incarnated in Jesus who gave himself and continues his mission in the human hearts, through the evangelization process according to God’s design. The spread of the gospel has been entrusted to the Church for building up a new humanity groomed for a new heaven and a new earth (cf. Rev 21).

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94 Cf. CCEO can. 589.

95 Augustine Kanjamala, *The Future of Christian Mission in India – Toward a New Paradigm for the Third Millennium* (Bengaluru: Theological Publications in India, 2016) 218.

The incarnation of Jesus itself is the culmination of inculturation. The proclamation of the gospel to peoples and groups who do not believe in Christ, must involve a process of inculturation, if the gospel is to take flesh in each native culture.<sup>96</sup> With his in-depth knowledge in Torah, Paul recognized and realised the Messiah in Jesus and became a witness for Him through his ardent proclamation of the gospel by reaching out to the Jews and the Gentiles by means of an inculturation strategy. Inculturation is an inseparable element of evangelization as we see from the life and growth of the early Christianity where, inculturation just happened in as much as the first Christians became Jewish Christians and the Gentiles became Gentile Christians (cf Gal 2 & 3; Acts 10, 11 & 15) with the power of the Holy Spirit, through the hands of the apostles.<sup>97</sup> The Acts reveals a series of episodes in the life and faith of the early Church towards the rise of Christianity out of Judaism with deep roots in the Jewish faith and graciously moved out in a mission to the Gentiles. More than half of the Acts is devoted to the ministry of Paul and his travels to preach the good news.

“At the origin of Christianity, the church of the Aramaic speaking Judeo-Christians in Jerusalem, Antioch, Asia Minor, Latin Church of Rome, the Greek speaking church in Alexandria and in Constantinople and the East Syrian church in Persia were conspicuously very different in cultures, in theological perspectives,

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96 Cf. CCC 854.

97 Cf. [http:// http://www.fabc.org/offices/oe/docs/doc3.pdf](http://www.fabc.org/offices/oe/docs/doc3.pdf) “Evangelization and Inculturation” by The FABC Office in collaboration with the National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), Bangalore, India from 1-4 March 2000. [Accessed on December, 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020].

liturgy, spirituality, ecclesiology and church organization.”<sup>98</sup> The Lord worked through the hands of all the apostles especially through Paul who was specially sent to bring the name of the resurrected Lord before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel. Pauline approach to win souls for Jesus through his inculturation strategy is a paradigm to the missionaries.

India being a country with rich and varied cultures, inculturation is an effective vehicle in the hands of the Church to reach the millions in their cultural environment, to witness the love of God and to improve the culture of the recipients so that they get the power of the Holy Spirit and receive the vitality and orientation from the gospel. The Church is open to an inculturation strategy in its mission endeavors. Chanda is a good example as to how best the inculturation strategy is applied by the missionaries even at the very beginning of the mission as we see from the footprints of Mar Januarius Palathuruthy CMI, and his successors. As the ultimate objective of inculturation according to Paul is to reach out and win souls, (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23) there is great potential for the missionaries to win the souls in the right perspective by following such a strategy to enable the gospel to manifest itself in the diverse cultural background of the people of our country.

## **CONCLUSION**

Jesus fulfilled his mission to the fullest extent and completed the redemptive mystery at the expense of his own life and entrusted the mission in the hands of his trusted Apostles. Jesus called Paul, revealed

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98 Kanjamala, *The Future of Christian Mission in India*, 218.

Himself and set apart him to bring His name before the Gentiles and the kings and before the people of Israel. That was a turning point in the life of Paul whereby, he completely changed his scale of values and transformed himself into a truly committed person in Christ. He was keen to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and to share willingly, His sufferings by becoming like Him in His death, so that he would also attain the resurrection (Cf. Phil 3:10).

The paradigms crystallized in Paul are brought out in this book, stage by stage. They are precisely in terms of his dedication, his consistency towards the mission initiatives, and his proclamation of Christ the crucified, his inculturation strategy for proclamation and in terms of his imitating Christ's humility. As an ideal Pastor, Paul excelled in his leadership qualities and in teaching sound doctrines. Paul keenly associated lay men and women from each locality and groomed them towards the evangelization process. As a good pastor, Paul rendered a series of missionary journeys to the end of the earth and proclaimed the gospel to the Jews and the Gentiles as well. The letters which he addressed to communities of Christian believers were intended for public use within the congregations. Above all, he was a good soldier of Christ Jesus who fought a good fight as a great missionary of the Church.

In the evangelization parlance, St. Paul is known as the Apostle to the Gentiles or the Apostle to the nations. The ministry of Paul and his missionary travels were exclusively with the power of the Holy Spirit who guided and strengthened him. Converted by a special favour, Paul worked more than any other Apostle as is evident from the events reflected in historical backgrounds presented in the New Testament. In the words of James Alberione,

Paul expressed, presented and represented Christ actively, vividly and fruitfully, making himself a model for every Christian to follow and his form is made after the form of Christ Himself, even to the extent his martyrdom. Thus, Paul occupies a unique place in the history of the Church.

As far as the Church is concerned, her missionary consciousness has always been a source of humanization. She is gifted with the presence of her very many Congregations for Men and Women. The Church realizes that her first and foremost task is evangelization. Pauline ecclesiology conceived illuminative thoughts on the 'People of God,' and the 'Body of Christ.' According to Paul, a person in Christ is a 'New Creation.' In the Pauline concept and in accordance with the teaching of the Church, the apostolic ministry of proclamation is given to the faithful also, who have become a new creation in Christ.

To be a part of the mission is a matter of grace and great privilege. The word of God, 'One sows and another reaps', is relevant at all times. Of course, the sower is the Lord and the reaper is he who meets Jesus as part of his spirituality, irrespective of whether he/she is a priest, religious or laity. The author witnessed the truth (Mt 9:38) on the mission front and would wish to reiterate that there is great potential for the mission harvest in the Indian villages. As Pope Francis affirms, the Church has to be put on a diet of evangelization for its proper growth as she is still far away in reaching the goal even today although she continues to impart considerable energy towards achieving the mission of Christ the Redeemer. She continues her stride with the power of the Holy Spirit

who takes the initiative and directs the mission ahead. Seeking the same power from the high, this book has presented the route map as to the strengths to be harnessed from the top hierarchy and the systems to be introduced from within, to re-vamp the missions with the concerted efforts of the consecrated, the religious and the entire lay people of God. Being a giant tree bearing ripe seeds, the Church is fully conscious of her missionary responsibilities and it waits for a powerful wind of the mission force to spread the seed of her missionary zeal to new areas and new heights. The whole history of the Church reveals that the Word of God takes its stride through those who gracefully receive it in their hearts.

In the Pauline perspective, a Missionary is basically driven by a realization of the love of Christ for himself personally and for all humanity (cf. 2 Cor 5:15-15; Gal 2:20). He recognizes his sense of obligation to be of Christ and to be in Christ. His strength is in Christ the crucified and in the resurrected Lord who is the Lord of all. He recognizes that he is a precious one of the Lord and he is bought on a price by Christ; he is bound to give an account of his life based on the grace bestowed on him (cf. 1 Cor 4:1-5; 2 Cor 5:9-10). Similarly, every Christian is bound to be motivated by a strong desire to impart a saving knowledge of Christ and be a witness for Him wherever he is and to those who are left unheard of Him. Christ carried out the mission of the Lord. He fulfilled it absolutely and entrusted His mission to the Church. The Church carries His mission to the end of the earth. Being part-takers of the Body of Christ and the sharers of the grace bestowed on it, every baptized are gifted to be sharers of the mission, the mission of Christ. As the Holy Spirit leads the mission through His gifted ones, St. Paul exclaimed of them “How beautiful are the feet of those who Bring Good News!”

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