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No. 6

The Intercultural Mission of the Society of St. Paul in the Digital World

Teotimo S. Melliza, SSP

Loyola School of Theology

THE INTERCULTURAL MISSION OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

TEOTIMO S. MELLIZA, SSP

MONOGRAPHS

Number
6

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QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES

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First edition September 2024.

Loyola School of Theology
Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights, Quezon City 1108 Philippines
https://lst.edu/; https://publications.lst.edu/

The Intercultural Mission of the Society of St. Paul in the Digital World

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of Doctor in Theology Major in Missiology

University of Santo Tomas

Divine Word Institute of Mission Studies

Tagaytay, Cavite

March 21, 2021

University of Santo Tomas

Divine Word Institute of Mission Studies

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Sacred Theology major in Missiology

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Founded in 1914 with the charism of proclaiming the gospel through the means of social communication, the Society of St. Paul should play a crucial role in the digital world. In its 9th General Chapter (2010), the Superior General, then Silvio Sassi, asked for a renewal of mission by working for an evangelizing project connected with the digital world. This Chapter brought back memories of James Alberione, the founder, who sent missionaries to the five continents, establishing many magazines, newspapers, printing presses, radio and television stations. The Chapter challenged the Congregation to imitate the zeal of the founder by establishing multi-media apostolates, using the digital tools to proclaim the gospel.[1]

The 10th Special General Chapter of 2015, called after the sudden demise of Sassi, echoed Pope Francis' desire to transform "Catholic mission."[2] The Chapter wishes to reach "the lost, the forgotten minorities, the excluded ones, the sick, the socially marginalized, the youth who are not listened to, the victims of addiction, the unemployed and the immigrants…" quoting much from *Evangelii Gaudium*.[3] The Chapter's short document repeated three times the

[1] See Society of Saint Paul, *Final Document of the 9th General Chapter* (Rome: General House, 2011), nos. 1-4.

[2] William Gregory, "Pope Francis' Effort to Revitalize Catholic Mission," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 43, no. 1 (January 2019): 7.

[3] See Society of St. Paul, *Final Document of the 10th General Chapter* (Rome: General House, 2015), nos. 2-5.

word "periphery." The Congregation welcomes "with gratitude the exhortation of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*" that offers the Congregation "the trust for creative fidelity to the gift received."[4] What is this creative fidelity all about? Does this mean continuing with proclamation as the modality of the Congregation's mission?

The Congregation expressed its desire to deepen its transformation of mission through the conference of Pauline editors in November of 2017. During the Conference, sociologists and experts of the digital world and two successful multimedia Catholic publishing companies in Europe shared their reflections and analysis together with missionaries and theologians like Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, papal delegate to Caritas International, who are involved with the poor and the migrants.5 The conference mirrors the dream of the Congregation to venture to new and unchartered activities. The challenge is not just to focus on establishing a multi- media publishing work. It is to begin mission from the context of a world of connectivity that creates "bridges to everywhere."[6] This connectivity is unstoppable, connecting many unknown and hidden peoples of the world.[7]

Connectivity characterizes the present digital world. Its future would only be marked by more connectivity. It is estimated that the whole of the world's population will be connected to mobile phones and the Internet by the year 2025. Geographical borders are breached through connectivity. The world is not divided according to political geography that emphasizes borders of nations. The "perfect capitalism" that is reflected in "the supply chain world" relies on "functional geography" that cuts through borders and installs bridges through connectivity.[8]

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[4] Ibid., 5.

[5] See Society of St. Paul, *2nd International Seminar of Pauline Publishers, Arricia, 16-21 October 2017* (Rome: General House, 2018), 122-130.

[6] Parag Khanna, *Connectography Mapping the Future of Global Civilization* (New York: Random House, 2016), 7

[7] See Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Picador, 2007), 10-25.

[8] See Khanna, *Connectography*, xxiv-19.

Land locked countries are participating in world trade and enjoying prosperity for being part of the supply chain that produces and distributes consumer goods.[9] The journalist Parag Khanna argued that maps should contain a summary of environmental science, politics, economics, culture, technology and sociology that study connections rather than divisions. He coined the word "connectography" (in contrast to "geography") to argue that no one can stop globalization, and that connectivity has been a force in destroying walls and isolation. [10]

Globalization means not just connectivity through the Internet. It also involves fast and cheap travels by land, sea and air that enable sustained contacts and migration of peoples of different cultures and religions. This new map presents a world with no more borders, uniting peoples and cultures through these supply chains.[11] The world is no longer globalized as Khanna argues, but "hyper-globalized" because "connectivity is destiny."[12] Friedman describes this hyper globalization as the flattening of the world. The flat world is a combination of "Globalization 2.0" when multinationals through their supply chains connect the world and "Globalization 3.0" when through the Internet, individuals and small groups collaborate and compete globally.[13] Globalization has reached homes, remote tribes of the world and small offices, involving the whole humanity, implanting a "world system" of interdependency.[14]

Mission has attracted new definitions as border crossing, creating bridges, hospitality to strangers, encountering the other and interculturality. These missiological concepts have become new ways

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[9] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 27-30.

[10] See Khanna, *Connectography*, xxiv-19.

[11] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 10-35.

[12] See Khanna, *Connectography*, 5-58.

[13] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 10-11.

[14] Edgar Javier, "Interculturality: Its Challenge and Promise," *ICST Journal* (2009): 41.

to express mission in the multicultural world.[15] Khanna's claim that the forces of globalization will eventually destroy the walls separating countries. It also recognizes that connectivity has created new ones. Connectivity is a never ending process of constructing bridges because as the world connects, new walls and divisions also evolve.[16]

Missiologists have been relentless in their presentation that globalization has produced "a god" that is "the concentration of monopoly" and "capitalist wealth in the world."[17] This is an "extreme form of private ownership and control of capital spurred on by the rapid movement of money around the world."[18] The distance between the poor and the rich has become a chasm because the followers of this god "bow down to it and pursue by any means necessary to obtain it."[19] A known expert in migration and globalization Daniel G. Groody graphically explains the worsening situation of our connected planet to his grim prediction that "the richest 1% of the global population is soon expected to have at least 50% share of the total global wealth."[20]

Connectivity has not only heightened capitalism, but has also created addiction and new forms of slavery. These new walls are "invisible," "numerous," and "diverse."[21] The missiologist Edgar Javier sees this as a challenge to the missionaries to sharpen their "skills" and create new pathways.[22] How would the Society of St. Paul be able to do this? Connectivity has become a mission frontier where gaps and boundaries have to be identified, and new bridges have to

[15] See Peter C. Phan, "Crossing the Borders: A Spirituality for Mission in Our Times From An Asian Perspective," *SEDOS Bulletin* (May 17-21, 2011): 1-4.

[16] See Khanna, *Connectography*, 5-58.

[17] Dwight N. Hopkins, "The Religion of Globalization," in *Religions/ Globalizations Theories and Cases,* eds. Dwight N. Hopkins, Lois Ann Lorentzen, Eduardo Mendieta and David Batstone (London: Duke University Press, 2001), 9.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Daniel G. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015), 6.

[21] Javier "Interculturality," 42.

[22] Ibid.

be constructed. The greatest challenge thus for this Congregation is constructing new bridges that the kingdom building may be strengthened in the digital world.

John Paul II has foreseen that connectivity should unify humanity, transforming the world into a "global village."[23] This is a world without barriers and borders, a world transformed into neighbors and partners. "Connectography" thus has to pursue the constant construction of new bridges, to connect the gaps. When it becomes an instrument of making countries and peoples into good neighbors, connectography becomes a "crude" shadow of God's kingdom.[24]

During the threat of war between India and Pakistan in 2007 due to border problems, the peace negotiators were managers of corporations running the supply chain in both countries. They stopped hostilities by presenting to both presidents the economic effect. Friedman argued that those who are connected and part of the supply chains work for peace. Countries that still consider war as a strategy like North Korea and some African countries are not connected to this supply chain.[25] The harmony and peace that the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) has called for has its seeds in connectivity.[26] Connectivity implies that each country participating in the supply chain finds itself also in another country minimizing the isolation of borders. To attack the other means also inflicting a wound to oneself, and therefore no one wants to go to war, making the world a safer place to live.[27] National leaders prefer the way to peace by negotiating a win-win solution to problems. Bridge building among these countries is a constant preoccupation.

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[23] John Paul II, On the Permanent Validity of the Church Missionary Mandate, *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), no. 37.

[24] Lorne L. Dawson and Douglas E. Cowan, *Religion Online* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 6.

[25] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 450-477.

[26] See Jonathan Yun-Ka Tan, "A New Way of Being Church in Asia: The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) at the Service of Life in Pluralistic Asia," *Missiology: An International Review* 33, no. 1 (January 2005): 86 -87.

[27] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 350-377.

Dialogue as a bridge has become more imperative as seen in monthly international summits and meetings to iron out pressing problems like trade and climate change.[28]

Pope Francis' first message on World Communication Day (2014) saw this world of connectivity, the digital world as the most important mission frontier for any religion today.[29] He described this world as full of people who are often looking for salvation or hope, enduring isolation, asking for new bridges. Pope Francis emphasized "connection" (like Parag Khanna) as the flag ship of mission. Using the parable of the Good Samaritan, he asked missionaries to develop a "culture of encounter" that everyone may become a brother/sister to a stranger in need.[30] Compassion integrates communities and cultures, downgrading the "universal human tendency" of ethnocentrism.[31] Compassion is a bridge that allows missionaries to cross borders and others to cross back to the Church.

Through the culture of encounter, Pope Francis hopes to transform the multicultural world into a community of "neighbors."[32] This happens when people of different cultures reach out to one another in "solidarity" and "friendship."[33] This is the missiologists' ideal world, a multicultural community transformed into an intercultural one in the spirit of the gospel. This is the only way to break down the anonymity of migration and the great cities that John Paul II spoke about in *Redemptoris Missio.*[34] The culture of encounter is no other

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[28] Khanna, *Connectography*, 123,

[29] See Leo-Martin Angelo R. Ocampo "How To Communicate in the Age of Web 4.0?": Challenges and Possibilities for Religions of Asia," *Religion and Social Communication* 14, no. 2 (2016): 113-115.

[30] See Francis, *Message for the 48th World Communications Day: Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter* (1 June 2014).

[31] Samuel Agcaracar, *Interculturality in the Service of Communion* (Manila: Divine Word (Logos) Publications, 2019), 13.

[32] Francis, *Message for the 48th World Communications Day.*

[33] Benedict XVI, *Message for the 43rd World Communication Day: Promoting the Culture of Dialogue, Respect and Friendship* (24 January 2009).

[34] John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 37.

than the creativity to build new bridges that connectivity may reach hearts and minds, creating communion among peoples.

B. Statement of the Problem

This study is about mission in the connectivity of the digital world where the protagonist is the Society of St. Paul. The researcher poses the following main question: How can the Society of St. Paul create new bridges in connectivity and become more relevant in its mission in the digital world? The researcher answers this main question through the following sub-questions.

1. What is the Society of St. Paul?
2. Why is mission to the digital world important in the global village?
3. What is the Church's view on mission in the digital world?
4. What is the Scriptures' view on mission in the digital world?
5. How should the Society of St. Paul engage its mission in the digital world?

C. Significance of the Study

Mission theology. This research enriches missiology. Connectivity is a new context of mission where sociology has taken a major role in defining its impact on peoples and their relationship with each other. This research aims to use these sociological findings for a better understanding of mission in our times.

The Universal Church. This research contributes to the understanding of the Universal Church. Interculturality evolves from multiculturality, a characteristic of the digital world. Inculcating intercultural communication and communion among peoples deepens the understanding of the Universal Church as a communion of local Churches united in mission. Thus, this research further clarifies the role of the Universal Church and its relationship with the local Church.

The Society of St. Paul. This research affirms the apostolic activity of the Congregation in the digital world, recognizing the special charism of James Alberione and adjusting this to the context of connectivity. This actualizes the Congregation to current theology of mission as elaborated by Vatican II, Pope Francis and other Church documents.

The Researcher. This research enriches the author who is a member of this Congregation, shaping his mission in the digital world. The research has enabled him to journey across the events of the digital world, the development of the digital tools and their impact on society, making him more aware of the challenges of those who wish to evangelize using the means of social communication.

D. Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to understand the mission of the Society of St. Paul in the digital world.

1. To describe or introduce the Society of St. Paul.
2. To discuss mission in the digital world.
3. To explore and discuss the Church's view of mission in the digital world.
4. To explore and discuss the view of Scriptures of mission in the digital world.
5. To propose strategies for doing mission in the digital world.

E. Scope and Limitations

Scope: This study is about mission in the digital world. It discusses the insights and ideas of sociologists and media experts. It also includes in the discussion the documents of the Church on mission and communication especially those of Pope Francis who wants the Church to cross walls and gaps created by connectivity.

Limitations: This dissertation is not about moral evaluation or a dogmatic treatise. Thus, it does not include Church documents on pornography in the Internet. Since it focuses on the digital

communications, it does not include the other developments in communication before the digital age. Though the research dwells on the Trinity as the source of mission, it does not elaborate on the inner life of the Trinity. It focuses instead on the effects of having the Triune God as the origin of mission to create bridges in connectivity.

F. Review of Related Literature

The researcher used the following books and journals to answer the questions posed beforehand.

Books

Agcaracar, Samuel Naceno. *Interculturality in the Service of Communion: Exploring New Pathways of Mission.* Manila: Logos Publications, 2019.

This book delved on interculturality as a new missiological insight, describing it as opening new pathways for mission today. It offered a historical analysis of how this term started to filter in the Church, a response to the growing multiculturality of the world as a result of globalization and migration, and its use in particular to the Society of Divine Word. The book explained how interculturality was charting new ways of understanding mission. It clarifed the meaning of interculturality, seeing it as an encounter of cultures during the first phase of evangelization. Thus, this book supplied many insights on the discussion on Chapter V, which is about the evolution of interculturality as a missiological tool.

Eilers, Franz-Josef. *Communicating in Ministry and Mission, An Introduction to Pastoral Evangelizing Communication.* Manila: Logos (Divine Word) Publications, 2018.

This book differentiated mission and pastoral ministry, sticking to the classical definition that pastoral ministry was for the Christians, while mission, for the non-Christians. This evangelizing communication had its foundation in the *Inter Mirifica* and *Communio et Progressio*, that echoed the Trinitarian root of mission. The book summarized the evolution of the understanding of social

communications and how it affected the teaching of theology. The research took its argument that the main contribution of *Inter Mirifica* was the term "social communication." This underscored that communication is not about transfer of knowledge but about building relationships which interculturality is all about. This book was used in Chapters III and V.

Harari, Yuval Noah. *Homo Deus, A Brief History of Tomorrow.* London: Harvill Secker, 2016.

This book describes the evolution of artificial intelligence from its use in the Internet to robotics. Harari foresaw a future wherein humanity would become irrelevant, having consigned to artificial intelligence his capacity for decision. Artificial intelligence would provide people with exact panorama of their health situation, giving solutions to the mystery of death and happiness. Harari presented the "digital thought" about the *Homo Deus* that made humans the sole beneficiaries of scientific developments, presenting the birth of a new religion in "dataism." This book was used in Chapter III as a key to understand the current history of the Internet and Chapter VI with *Homo Deus* as the most important digital thought that must be answered by Christian faith.

Khanna, Parag. *Connectography, Mapping the Future of the World Civilization.* New York: Random House, 2016.

This book analyzed the direction of the world through a new map of connectivity. Connectivity first happened through the supply chains that enabled countries like China to progress and development. The book traced globalization as a history that began a thousand years ago with cities joining together to clear trade routes. The world had become hyper globalized through the Internet that had facilitated the work of these supply chains, lowering costs. This book argued that the future of the world was more connectivity, and walls would someday belong only to the museums. This connectivity is sustained by bridges created when there are gaps and conflicts. This research used this book as a main sociological source in Chapters I, III, VI.

Fuchs, Christian. *Social Media, A Critical Introduction*. London: Sage Publications, 2014.

This book criticized the naming of social media as "social." The social media like Facebook has become a big multinational corporation, raking profits from its subscribers, who put efforts without getting any pay. Its consumers had become producers. He argued from a Marxist framework that the social media had become a tool of exploitation. It fomented addiction to get more data from people and use them for advertisements. This book criticized notions that the social media had helped humanize the world. The social media was expression of capitalism seeking more profits with the slave labor of the users. This book was used in Chapter III that tackled "slave labor" as one of the challenges of the digital world.

Centro di Spiritualita Paolina. *The Diary of Blessed Timothy Giaccardo*. Trans. Romeo Hitosis. Makati City: St. Pauls, 2014.

This book contained a biography of the first priest of the congregation Timothy Giaccardo with the direct quotations from his diary from 1917 to 1948, the year before his death in 1949. This book contained his observations about the early years of the Congregation and direct quotes from the Founder who gave him daily instruction how to direct the community and its apostolic activities when he was not around. Giacardo was a witness to the sacrifice and the fervor of the early Pauline community in Alba, the place of the foundation. This book was used in Chapter II to underlie the charismatic history of the Congregation and the apostolic fervor of Alberione's first followers.

Schonberger, Victor Mayer. *Delete, The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital World*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011.

The triumph of remembering in the digital world chained many people to the past. This book emphasized that this remembering had made it difficult for many who had criminal records to change. It insisted then that forgetting was a virtue. Forgetting enabled the mind to live in the present and to adjust constantly to the changing times.

Remembering had a psychological cost. The digital world never forgot and through the Big Data enabled big corporations to do profitable businesses, transforming this constant remembering into cash. This book was used in Chapters III to emphasize that bestowing mercy and compassion could be a difficult task in the digital world.

Friedman, Thomas. ***The World is Flat, A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century.*** **New York: Picador, 2007.**

This book narrated the history of the Internet within the history of supply chains and their effect in transformation production and distribution of goods that cut across the boundaries of countries and ideologies. The book focused on the positive effects of the Internet that had removed political and economic barriers, fomenting greater productivity across the world. The lowering of costs of digital products like computers, iphones and mobile phones had given everyone the possibility to partake of the bounty of the flat world. This was the world where the center was no longer the United States or other western countries, but everyone connected. This assured everyone a voice in the planet. This book was used as part of the sociological foundation of the research, in Chapter I, III and V.

Phan, Peter C. ***Being Religious Interreligiously, Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue.*** **Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004.**

This book argued that in today's postmodern society characterized by multiculturality, the only option available is to live religiously is to be interreligious. Christians live side by side with members of the world religions, enriching their faith inasmuch as their Christian beliefs also enriched others. Asia, the birthplace of many world religions, had lived this atmosphere for centuries, challenging the lives of many in the west that it was possible to be religious interreligiously, living in harmony with others that reflects God's kingdom alive in the planet. This book was used in chapters II and V to emphasize the crossing of borders to the world religions as an effect of having the Trinity as the foundation of mission.

Alberione, James. *Abundantes Divitiae Gratiae Suae.* Rome: *Societa San Paolo, Casa Generalizia, 1998.*

This is Alberione's last will and testament done upon the request of his brothers in 1960 when the Congregation celebrated its 50th anniversary foundation. He narrated in these pages the start of doing something for the men and women of the 20th century which he identified in evangelizing using the fastest means. This book was used in Chapter II and V to see Alberione's deep spirituality as he undertook the challenge of proclaiming the gospel through the mass media.

Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission.* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998.

This classic textbook on mission presented the panorama of the shift of paradigm based on the Bible and the history of Churches. It opened with the scriptural foundation in the Old and New Testaments, concluding with the narration of the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul. The next part would be the history of mission in the Church that comprised the major Churches in Christianity, attesting to the paradigm of mission, from the Church as the origin of mission to the Trinity as the source and foundation of mission. This book was used throughout the dissertation.

Rolfo, Luigi. *James Alberione, Apostle of Our Times.* New York: Alba House*, 1987.*

This was the most complete biography of Alberione. The book narrated the early history of the Congregation till the death of Alberione in 1971. It contained details about the life of the early Paulines, their struggles and sacrifices in order to establish printing presses, magazines, books and pamphlets. It also traced the journey of the Congregation to an exclusive charism of preaching the gospel through the mass media of social communications. This book was used in Chapter II and V.

Schwab, Klaus with Nicholas Davis. *Shaping the Future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.* New York: Currency, 2018.

Klaus Schwab was the founder of Davos economic forum, a gathering of scientists, managers and government officials who reflected and analyzed the current events in the digital world. They shared opinions and observations, wanting to guide the Fourth Industrial Revolution, that is the advent of technological and digital advancements. Participants of this gathering wanted to give guidance to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, not wanting to give the entire direction to the scientists. Philosophers and other social scientists wanted to assure more connectivity, but in the light of ethics and inclusivity of the poor and the protection of the environment. This book was used in Chapter III.

Journals

Bevans, Stephen, "Pope Francis' Missiology of Attraction." *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 43 (January 2019): 20-28.

This article presented Pope Francis' missiology of attraction in contrast to the new evangelization of his two predecessors. The Church grew not from the force of proclamation or proselytism but through a more gentle way of attraction. God's love attracts, and the most attractive component of the Church is holiness. Testimony and witness attract for their sheer beauty. Pope Francis' compassionate teachings and actions attracted the men and women of our times. Pope Francis' writings and homilies were not an abstraction, but truths that resounded from the struggle of everyone. This article was used in Chapters II, IV, V and VI.

Ilo, Stan Chu. "Poverty and Economic Justice in Pope Francis." *International Bulletin of Mission Research,* 43 (January 2019): 38-56.

The article presented Pope Francis' teaching on poverty and economic justice based on the larger context of mission for the poor in the Church today. The Pope exhorted everyone to open their eyes

and see the misery of the world. The poor were the most concrete manifestation of God in history and therefore, their presence was of utmost importance. They offered theologians, pastoral agents and missiologists a direct access to Jesus. This called for a new direction in the Church that saw the poor as sources of revelation itself, especially on the suffering Christ. This article was used on Chapter II V and VI to emphasize the Congregation's need to have real contact with the poor.

Javier, Edgar. "Interculturality: Its Challenge and Promise." *ICST Journal* (2009): 39-43.

The article introduced "interculturality" as a response to the multi-cultural and multi religious context of mission. That the world had become pluralistic was already a fact, challenging missionaries to deal with the bridges established, but also the new borders that had sprung up. Missiology equipped the missionary to deal with this situation, and interculturality was a tool that facilitated dialogue and respect for differences. This article was used in Chapters I, IV, and V, elaborating on the challenge of interculturality to establish new bridges and new approaches to mission.

Gregory, William P. "Pope Francis' Effort to Revitalize Catholic Mission." *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 43 (January 2019): 7-19.

Pope Francis started in *Evangelii Gaudium* a reform of the Church in her missionary outreach. The Pope did this by clarifying that mission was about communicating God's love. Discipleship not conversion is the goal of mission. A missionary simply wanted to follow Jesus and do what he had taught. This prevented the missionary from analyzing his work based on the effect of the gospel on others. His concern was how the gospel should take root in his/her own personal life, which was something that he/she could feel and experience. This article was used in Chapters I, III, IV and V.

Motte, Mary. "Signs of a Future Transformation in Mission." *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 43 (January 2019): 30-37.

His choice of the name Francis was already an act of transforming mission. Pope Francis identified himself with the poor and embracing all those who had been alienated from the Church. He asked the Church to be in a permanent state of mission, to go forth with joy in the peripheries, to encounter the poor. The abused creation was a part of the poor. The signs of this future transformation of mission could be seen in the activities of the Pope himself, how he reached out to the refugees, kissed the feet of women during a Holy Thursday celebration, inviting scavenger and the homeless in his table. This article was used in Chapters I, II, and V.

De Felice, Massimo. "Beyond the Anthropocene: The Net-Activism and the Trans-organic Ecologies." Society of St. Paul, *2nd International Seminar Pauline Publishers* (Arricia 16-22 October 2017). Rome: General House: 40-55.

This author, a professor in mass media in Italian and Brazilian universities, argued that the network society inaugurated by the Internet was not just about humanity, but humanity tied up to the other creatures of the earth. Through the digital tools, humanity could see and observe the arising temperatures of the sea, the melting glaciers and the flooding of many areas in the planet. Humanity can then serve other creatures by being a leader in the saving the earth. With its knowledge of the events in the planet available through the Internet, humanity can indeed be a guard and promote safe keeping measures. Thus, as this book argued the Internet could be the network of salvation, a crude sign of God's kingdom present in the planet with these connections available between humanity and other creatures. This book was used in Chapters II and VI that focused on *Homo Servus* as faith's answer to *Homo Deus*.

Kattampally, Tomy Thomas. "Biblical Perspectives on Migration." *Jeevahara*, 48, no. 282 (2017): 40-49.

This article presents a comprehensive Biblical foundation why Christians should involve themselves in the issue of migration. God was the first migrant, and the book of Genesis was a long story of migration. Migration thus should be taken as something normal, part of divine revelation. God did not want a mono cultural world as such established by the constructors of the tower of Babel. Migration characterized the birth of Jesus who with Mary and Joseph became refugees in Egypt. Migration caused the multiculturality in our planet. The strangers that came in the way of these forced migration carried the face of God. This article was used in Chapter IV to support the argument that multiculturality was part of the divine plan for the world.

Le Luc, Anthony. "Cyber Theology In the Digital World." *The Gospel in the Digital Society, Research Symposium University of Santo Thomas Faculty of Theology* (October 27, 2016): 1-7.

This essay presented the cyber space as a new context of theological reflection. The author based himself primarily on Pope Francis' first message on world communication day which centered on the parable of the Good Samaritan. He argued that the Pope through the use of this parable emphasized that though the digital tools could easily inspire many to contribute to certain causes or needs, the final challenge was to encounter bodily the wounded and the needy. It was not enough to see the sufferer through the Internet or the social media. Without encountering these people in the real world, touch and help them heal their wounds, these acts of charity do not lead to authentic Christian joy. This article was used in Chapters IV and V, which dealt about real encounter with the poor and having all senses opened to the miseries of the world.

Ocampo, Leo-Martin Angelo R. "How To Communicate in the Age of Web 4.0?": Challenges and Possibilities for Religions of Asia." ***Religion and Social Communication*** **14, no. 2 (2016): 106-121.**

This article analyzed the history of the internet from Web 1.0 to Web 4.0 and how religions of Asia had used this to propagate their teachings. The article summarized the various approach of mission based on the emphasis of each Internet phases. The interactivity of Web 2.0 and the rise of Web 3.0 with its emphasis on artificial intelligence summoned missionaries to a more personal approach to mission, knowing the individual needs of peoples. The rise of Web 4.0 with the fusion of the real world to the virtual emphasized the need for authentic witness to the faith. This article was used in Chapters I, III and V.

Schroeder, Roger. "Prophetic Dialogue and Interculturality." Mission on the Road to Emmaeus, eds. Cathy Ross and Stephen Bevans. (London: SCM Press, 2015), 215-226.

This article connected interculturality with prophetic dialogue. Interculturality took a more practical aspect when applied to prophetic dialogue. The missionary had always two options: to dialogue or to prophecy. The choice should be done through prayerful discernment given the context where the missionary may find himself/herself. Yet in opting for prophecy, the missionary must maintain the dialogic spirit, always searching for ways and means to convert himself/herself before others. This article was used in Chapter IV to explain the connection between dialogue and prophecy, applied to Pope Francis' option for dialogue.

Ross, Cathy and Stephen Bevans. "Introduction, Mission as Prophetic Dialogue." ***Mission on the Road to Emmaus,*** **eds. Cathy Ross and Stephen Bevans. London: SCM Press, 2015. xi-xix.**

Mission as prophetic dialogue, as this article explains, was reflected in the story of the two disciples of Emmaus. Jesus gently guided them to understand why the messiah should suffer and die and on the third day

rise again. The two who were the hosts in the beginning of the journey ended up being entertained by Jesus. Prophetic dialogue as mission echoed through this narrative. Jesus listened to them, to their woes, and the transformation of the two disciples who ended up proclaiming his presence to others. This article traced "prophetic dialogue" from the general chapter of the Society of Divine Word in the year 2000. It has then become mission for the SVD's and many other Congregations and Churches. This article was used in Chapters IV and V.

Aghai, Sareh, Mohammad Ali Nematnakhsh and Hadi Khosravi Farsani. "Evolution of theWorld Wide Web: from Web 1.0 to Web 4.0." ***International Journal of Web and Semantic Technology*** **3, no. 1 (January 2012): 1-9.**

This article narrated the history of world wide web starting from the Web 2.0 Movement in the United States. The authors were Iranian computer engineers who continued the history of the Internet by adding Web 3.0 and Web 4.0. While the Web 2.0 emphasized interactivity, Web 3.0 focused on the advent of the artificial intelligence that enabled a more personal response to those who entered the web. The Web 4.0 was the union between the virtual and the real worlds, as manifested in the use of the Internet to ask for the services of taxis, restaurants, etc. This article was used in Chapters 111 and V.

Sacks, Jonathan. "The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid a Clash of Civilization." ***Sacred Heart University Review*** **5, no.1 (2009): 10-21.**

The author, a British Jewish rabbi, a theologian and a philosopher, argued that the Bible was a journey from the universal to the particular. The story of the tower of Babel marked the end of this universality. God forcibly dispersed peoples around the world, not wishing uniformity, fomenting the creation of different cultures and races. The essay presented this story as a contrast to the Hellenistic Philosophy that emphasized the process from particular to the universal, ushering domination and oppression. This essay was used in Chapter IV.

Maruskin, Joan M. "The Bible: the Ultimate Migration Handbook." *Church and Society* (July/August 2005): 1-35.

This article contained the key links in the Bible and why it could only be understood from the perspective of migration. The first chapters of Genesis described God who migrated to time in creation. Adam and Eve moved out from the garden of Eden. The great flood produced the first refugees of natural disasters. The book of Exodus narrated the story of migrants and their eventual migration to Palestine. Jesus was an "alien" that made his dwelling on earth and his birth had all the colors of migration, starting from the movement of the holy family to Nazareth and then to Egypt. This article was used in Chapter IV.

G. Methodology

This research uses the see-judge-act method of contextual theology. Chapters II and III present the context of this study; chapters IV and V, the judgment part and Chapter VI the acting part. Pope Francis has used this method in his apostolic writings and sermons.[35]

Chapter II explores the founder, history of the Society of St. Paul, with its charism of proclaiming the gospel through the mass media. The congregation is the protagonist of this dissertation. The researcher explains why the Trinity as foundation of mission did not take root in the Congregation after Vatican II. The researcher observed that the Congregation might have entered into *Christomonism* that has prevented it from incorporating dialogue as a component of its mission. The congregation is stuck to proclamation as its mode of mission and to the exclusiveness of the use of mass communication.

Chapter III explores the context of connectivity. The researcher discusses that amidst the connections established in Globalization 2.0 and Globalization 3.0, new gaps and borders have also been created. Connectivity has led to disconnections that ask for a constant bridge building. Social scientists, church people and digital experts

[35] Stephen Bevans, "Pope Francis and Inculturation," *Missio Inter Gentes* vol. 4, no. 1 (January 2018):63.

have joined hands in harnessing the forces of technology towards an inclusive progress and asking for more involvement in the real world. The researcher underscores bridges created to postmodern culture through the use of the social media and the digital tools as instruments in making the universal Church present in many homes during the corona pandemic of 2020.

In Chapter IV, the researcher presents interculturality as the Church's missiological response to the challenges of the digital world. The researcher narrates the history of this missiological concept, citing its application in prophetic dialogue and in Pope Francis' renewal of mission. He then explains digital interculturality as the fulfillment of social communication. Digital interculturality opens a new horizon for mission *ad gentes* and to the poor.

In Chapter V, the researcher analyzes the creation of bridges in the Bible, starting from the book of Genesis. The researcher sees Jesus as a bridge builder who connected first with the poor and the needy. Through the image of the Good Samaritan, Jesus unites peoples and races, reminding everyone that the care of the needy is a universal concern. The researcher presents Paul as an organizer of the first intercultural mission team to evangelize the multicultural Roman world, encouraging mutual enrichment of Jewish and gentile Christians through the collection for the poor of Jerusalem. The researcher presents that bridge building and interculturality have their roots in the Bible.

In Chapter VI, the researcher proposes from the discussion of chapters IV and V the real contact with the poor as the first action of the Congregation to be relevant in the digital world. This flows from having the Trinity as the foundation and source of mission, the foundation of contextual approach to publishing work. This real contact with the poor provides the Congregation's with the context for its prophetic dialogue with the men and women of today. The researcher proposes that the work of inculturation by examining the digital thought on *Homo Deus* under the light of the *Homos Servus* of the Scriptures.

This research is basically a library work, with some interviews beginning from Chapter II.

H. Definition of Terms

Digital World – Castells defines the digital world as a "network society," linked through the Internet and the computer, emphasizing the priority of knowledge and communication to capital and labor in the industrial world.[36] Pope Francis explains that the network is not about wires. It is about people who are helping to humanize the digital world.[37]

Mission—John Paul II differentiates "mission" as the work of evangelization to the non-Christians from "pastoral ministry" as deepening the faith of existing Christian communities. He also identifies "new evangelization" as a work to former Christian communities that has fallen into religious ignorance.[38] Pope Francis includes in his definition of mission people living in the periphery– the poor and the excluded who could be Christians.[39] Pope Francis expands mission to include visits to prisons and refugee camps, promoting peace and interreligious cooperation, advocating for the welfare of migrants and the environment.[40] Mission for him is "communicating God's love."[41]

The Society of St. Paul – Its Constitutions defines the Congregation as "clerical" with a charism of evangelizing through the use of the means of social communication, identified as the mass media, the television, radio, audiovisuals, magazines and books.[42] The

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[36] See Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), lvi-lvii.

[37] Francis, *Message for the 48th World Communication Day.*

[38] John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 33.

[39] See Francis, Apostolic Exhortation On the Proclamation of the Gospel in the World Today, *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), nos. 17-23.

[40] Gregory, "Pope Francis' Effort to Revitalize Catholic Mission," 8.

[41] Ibid., 9.

[42] See Society of St. Paul, *Constitutions* (Rome: General House, 1998), nos. 1-4.

Congregation thus has an exclusive mission of evangelizing using the mass media.

I. Organization of the Study

1. Chapter I Introduction. This chapter contains the main and the five sub-questions of the dissertation.
2. Chapter II The Society of St. Paul in the Digital World. This chapter answers about the first sub-question of the study: what is the Society of St. Paul?
3. Chapter III New Bridges in Connectivity. This chapter answers the second sub-question: why is mission in the digital world important in the global village?
4. Chapter IV Evolution of Interculturality as a Missiological Concept. This chapter answers the question: what does the Church say about mission in the digital world?
5. Chapter V Creating Bridges in the Biblical World. This chapter answers the third sub-question: what do the Scriptures say about mission in the digital world?
6. Chapter VI New Intercultural Bridges for the Society of St. Paul. This chapter answers the fifth question: how should the Society of St. Paul engage its mission in the digital world?
7. Chapter VII Conclusions. This chapter contains summary, findings and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIETY OF SAINT PAUL IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Introduction

This chapter is about the Society of Saint Paul (SSP), a religious congregation involved in the evangelizing mission of the Church through the means of social communication. The first part deals with the Founder, his charism and spirituality. The second part is about the Society of St. Paul, its history and expansion. The third part is about the mission of the Congregation.

A. The Founder

1. James Alberione

James Alberione was born on April 4, 1884 in San Lorenzo di Fossano, Cuneo North Italy, the fifth of a family of seven. His parents were farmers who had to work from sunrise to sunset in order to earn their daily keep.[43] At the age of six, he had already an intuition to become a priest as he remembered sharing this with his teacher and classmates.[44] Supported by his parish priest, he entered the minor

[43] See Luigi Rolfo, *James Alberione: Apostle of Our Times* (New York: Alba House, 1987), 3-9.

[44] See James Alberione, *Abundantes Divitiae Gratiae Suae* (Rome: Societa San Paolo, Casa Generalizia, 1998), 36-37.

seminary of Bra in October 1896, which was under the Archdiocese of Turin, but he was expelled after four years (April 7, 1900).[45]

The reason for this expulsion should not have been grave for he was subsequently admitted to the seminary of Alba within the school year of 1900, finishing his high school, philosophy and theology in that institution.[46] His childless uncle and namesake, James Alberione, who was financially well off, supported him in the seminary, affording him extra money to buy books.[47]

James Alberione maintained a deep friendship with his spiritual director and professor, Canon Chiesa. He shared with Chiesa his concern of evangelizing through the mass media.[48] Alberione was always in dialogue with his Bishop and soliciting support from the local clergy, some of whom viewed his foundation with serious doubts.[49] The Congregation, though tied up with the best minds of the diocese of Alba, passed through intense difficulties.[50]

Alberione's happiest moment was the promulgation of Vatican Council II's document Inter Mirifica. It was a confirmation of his work, that is, using the modern tools to evangelize was also preaching.[51] He also founded four other Religious Congregations: the Daughters of St. Paul (1915), the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master (1924) , the Sisters of the Good Shepherd (1938), and the

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[45] See Stephen Lamera, SSP, *James Alberione: A Marvel of Our Times* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1977), 25.

[46] Ibid.

[47] See Rolfo, *James Alberione*, 28-29.

[48] Ibid., 62-63.

[49] See Lamera, *James Alberione*, 27-34.

[50] Timothy Giaccardo recorded a meditation given by Alberione on December 8, 1917: "Our house passed through many storms and remained calm; that is a sure sign that God wants this work…. I was accused of being a thief… We were denounced before the Bishop, and there was the serious danger of having to close the house, but God saved us. We were often denounced in Rome before the mayor, the vice mayor and the Prefect, but an energetic Bishop saved us. Also many good persons do not understand us and talked against us…" See *Centro di Spirtualita Paolina, The Diary of Blessed Timothy Giaccardo* (Makati City: St. Pauls, 2014), 109.

[51] See Lamera, *James Alberione*, 63.

Apostolline Sisters (1957). He also established four Secular Institutes: the Annunciatinas for the single ladies; the Gabrielinos for the single-males (1960); Jesus, the Priest for the diocesan clergy (1959); and the Holy Family Institute (1960) for the married. He also initiated the Pauline cooperators (1917), a lay-inspired movement that seeks to help in the apostolate of mass communication.[52] He called this aggrupation of religious congregations and lay institutes as the "Pauline Family."[53]

Though these Congregations and Institutes have different charisms, they are connected to his main interest of preaching the gospel through the mass media. The Pious Disciples pray for the apostles of the mass media;[54] the Sisters of the Good Shepherd who work in parishes have as one of their tasks to diffuse the products of the good press.[55] The lay institutes also help the Society of St. Paul and the Daughters of St. Paul in the editorial and diffusion work.[56] The Pauline Family, in other words, has as its common charism of evangelizing using the fastest means.

Paul VI, paying homage to James Alberione in 1969, spoke of him as "humble, silent, tireless, always vigilant, always gathered in his thoughts, running from prayer to work... always intent on scrutinizing the 'signs of the times.'" He was according to this Pope "a marvel in our times."[57] At his death, the Pauline family reached some 6 thousand consecrated men and women found in 87 countries, a sign of the attraction of evangelization using the fastest means to reach as many people as possible.[58] He died on November 26, 1971.[59]

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[52] Ibid., 12.

[53] Ibid., 95-96.

[54] See Dominico Agasso, *Thecla Merlo: Messenger of the Good News* (Pasay City: St. Paul Publications, 2003) 64.

[55] Ibid.,123.

[56] See Lamera, *James Alberione*, 95-96.

[57] Ibid., 3-5.

[58] See Rolfo, J*ames Alberione*, 257.

[59] See Valentino Gambi, *Don Alberione*, trans. Aloysius Milella, SSP (Makati City: St.Pauls, 2003), 8.

2. Early Intuition of the Mission

Alberione traced the origin of his mission of evangelizing using the mass media on the night that the divided the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries (December 31, 1900 and January 1, 1901). That day, he and his fellow seminarians listened to experts who expounded the missionary challenges that awaited the Church in the coming century. These talks stirred his young missionary heart, meditating on them as he prayed for many hours to the exposed Blessed Sacrament in the Cathedral of Alba. Alberione traced the foundation of the congregation to this night of light that inspired him to use the good press for the spread of the gospel. [60]

Alberione heard the layman sociologist Toniolo explaining about the press as a powerful tool, used then by the enemies of the Church to propagate their anti-Christian teachings.[61] For Alberione it meant establishing the Catholic press in territories dominated by the socialists and the masons, the enemies of the Church.[62]

At first, Alberione believed that lay people who experienced the urgency of such mission would team up with him.[63] In 1910, the vision of a religious group of men and women who would evangelize through the use of the good press became the focus of his prayers, energies and planning.[64] This mission, done through these religious, would be more permanent and their concern for holiness would enable this mission to breed new saints in the Church.[65]

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[60] See Alberione, *Abundantes*, 38-42.

[61] Ibid., 38

[62] See James Alberione, *The Publishing Apostolate* (Rome: Society of St. Paul General House, 1998), 209-211.

[63] See Alberione, Abundantes, 39-41.

[64] Ibid., 39-73.

[65] See Dominico B. Spoletini, *Blessed James Alberione: Communicator of the Gospel*, trans. Romeo Hitosis (Makati City: St. Pauls, 2009), 55.

Timothy Giaccardo,[66] the first priest of the Congregation during his first religious profession in 1917 reflected on the search for holiness that permeated the young congregation. The sermon of the founder had a telling effect on his young mind. He felt through the words of the founder that he belonged to God and was ready to give up everything to follow him and the apostolate of the good press.[67]

3. Alberione's Theology of Mission

Alberione did not define his devotion to Jesus Master, way, truth and life as his theology of mission. This devotion, however, came after years of applying the apostolate of the means of social communication to various Christological devotions like the Sacred Heart which did not satisfy him.[68]

Alberione saw that the content of the Pauline apostolate should be dogma (doctrines), morals and liturgy. He fitted dogma to "truth," morals to "life" and liturgy to "way."[69] He also divided the Pauline way of visit to the Blessed Sacrament in three parts: reading of a holy text (truth), applying the text to one's actions (life) and praying (way).[70] Alberione connected the devotion to Jesus master, way, truth and life to practices in his mission and prayer life, offering him an easy schema to train his young followers.

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[66] Timothy Giaccardo, born in June 13, 1896, met the young priest Alberione, the parish priest of his town in 1908. Alberione impressed by his piety paid for his studies in the Seminary of Alba. Already in his 3rd year of theology, he left behind the diocesan seminary on July 4, 1917, to follow Alberione in his foundation, serving as his assistant throughout his life. He took the religious name "Timothy" in reference to Paul's faithful companion in his first vow as a religious to signify his decision to become Alberione's disciple. He founded the house of Rome in 1924, the first extension of the congregation after Alba in Italy. He served as the "heart" of the congregation and Alberione described him as the "most faithful among the faithful." He died on January 24, 1948 and was beatified on October 22,1989. For more details on his life, see *Centro di Spiritualita Paolina*, *The Diary of Blessed Timothy Giaccardo*, trans. Romero Hitosis (Makati City: St. Pauls, 2014).

[67] Ibid.,110.

[68] See Alberione, *Abundantes*, 63-64.

[69] Lamera, *James Alberione*, 138.

[70] Ibid., 137.

Whereas other devotions only put a particular emphasis on a facet of the person of Jesus, this devotion, according to Alberione, presents "the complete Christ," his mind (truth), heart (life) and will (way).[71] This devotion involved the "whole" Christ.[72] Thus, every Pauline should study Jesus as truth in his doctrine, as way by fortifying the will, and as life through the Mass and adoration.[73]

Alberione dedicated every Sunday special prayers to Jesus Master and instituting a Solemnity on the last Sunday of October in his honor. He believed that those who practiced this schema of apostolate and prayer would experience an abundance of graces and consolation, facility in becoming saints.[74] Thus, this devotion became the heart of mission and spirituality of the Congregation. Alberione participated in the General Chapter of 1969 that adopted the Constitutions to the decrees of Vatican II. The reformed Constitutions affirmed the devotion to Jesus Master way, truth and life as the theology of mission of the Congregation.[75]

4. The Danger of *Christomonism*

Alberione lived in a time when the Scriptural basis of mission was from the instruction of Jesus to the apostles to go and preach the gospel to all creation (Mt 28, 16-20; Mk 14-18). This mission mandate first entrusted to the apostles was passed on to the Church, the body of Christ, the source of mission.[76] This Christology made Christ the center of everything reducing his presence to the visible Church. Mission was then the expansion of the Church.

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[71] Alberione, *Abundantes*, 85

[72] Ibid.

[73] See *James Alberione, Personality and Configuration with Christ* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1967), 161-162.

[74] See Alberione, *Abundantes*, 22-31.

[75] See Society of St. Paul, *Constitutions*, no. 3-6.

[76] See J. Herbert Kane, *The Christian World Mission: Today and Tomorrow* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981), 15-16.

A Christology rooted in the person of Jesus without links to the Trinity and the preaching of the kingdom is "*Christomonism*."[77] *Christomonism* sees the root of mission in the incarnation, with the Church obliged to do mission due to the sending words of Jesus.[78] Those who do not know Jesus live in total darkness. Those who preach the gospel save them from damnation. Those who use the mass media to proclaim Jesus with its massive impact guide more people to salvation. This thought gave the first followers of Alberione much confidence of the importance of their mission.[79]

Alberione's prayer for mission lamented the ignorance and the errors of those living in Africa, Oceana and Asia, but not of those in Europe or the Americas (which were already Christianized).[80] *Christomonism* did not recognize that God was already at work among peoples before the arrival of the gospel and the Christian missionaries.[81] It saw the work of salvation in the New Testament, and the Old appeared only as a necessary appendix.

Alberione, however, might not be the only person who was tilting towards *Christomonism* in the years before Vatican II. The simple reason was the lack of interest in the Trinity. Studies on the Trinity before Vatican II were limited to devotions and sign of the cross.[82] After Vatican II, the theologian Karl Rahner led in the revival of the Trinitarian studies, insisting that the foundation of Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology and other theological studies should be

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[77] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 297.

[78] Kane, *The Christ World Mission*, 17.

[79] See Lamera, *James Alberione*, 280-284.

[80] James Alberione, *Manual of Prayers* (New Delhin: St. Pauls Publications), 36.

[81] Ibid.

[82] See Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (London: Burns and Oates, 1970), 10-11.

the Trinity.[83] Other theologians like Jurgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Robert Jenson and many others followed him.[84]

These Trinitarian studies acquire more vigor in missiology. Missiology liberates the Trinity from boring and abstract presentation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, finding resonance on the diversity and plurality of the multicultural world. In missiological studies, God ceases to be a static "being," but a constant "becoming" through the celebration of diversity and plurality.[85] Indeed, through missiology, the worlds' religions become an historical expression of the eternal overflowing of divine communion.[86] The Trinity widens the door of mission, widening the scope of God's reach that embraces creation and history.[87] Thus today, any Christological devotion can only make sense when connected with the Father and the Holy Spirit, avoiding the trap of *Christomonism.*

B. The Society of St. Paul

1. The Beginnings

In 1910, James Alberione accepted to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the diocesan weekly, *Gazette of Alba*, and joined an organization called the "Friends of the Good Press."[88] The *kairos* that he was waiting for was the time when the priest-editor of the *Gazette*

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[83] See Vincent Batalla, "An Examination of Karl Rahner's Trinitarian Theology," *Australian eJournal of Theology* 9 (March 2007): 9-11.

[84] See Lynne Baab, "Towards a Theology of the Internet: Place, Relationship, and Sin," *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture: Perspectives, Practices and Futures*, eds. Pauline Hope Cheong, Peter Fischer-Nielsen, Stefan Gelfgren, Charles Ess (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 278-279.

[85] Paul Knitter, *Without Buddha, I Could Not Be A Christian* (Croydon, UK: One World Book, 2010), 23-25.

[86] See Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue, Reflections on Christian Mission Today* (Manila: Divine Word (Logos) Publications, 2012), 9-18.

[87] See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission, Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998), 392-393.

[88] See Rolfo, *James Alberione*, 78-81.

of Alba lost the confidence of the Board of Trustees and the Bishop due to a furor caused by an article and debts that he incurred.[89]

The Bishop appointed him editor on April 3, 1913. On assuming the editorship of this paper, which had only four pages, the Board of Directors asked Alberione to buy the newspaper and assume all its debts. In this way, the Board of Directors would only become a counseling body. Alberione was left to decide alone on the direction of the fledging diocesan paper.[90] Alberione, on assuming ownership of the newspaper, cancelled the contract that the former editor had with a printing press. He bought printing machines to establish a school that also provided training for boys who were willing to learn the trade of printing and lived with him.[91]

The inauguration of the printing school on August 20, 1914 became the official foundation date of the Congregation. A year after May 14, 1915, Alberione opened a workshop for women. They were trained to be catechists and managed a small book store where they sold the products of the press. This would be the start of the Daughters of St. Paul, or the so-called Paulines.[92]

2. Growth and Expansion

By 1926, the Congregation was already known in North of Italy, having accepted the printing of the bulletins of many parishes.[93] The press had also started to produce books, pamphlets and the monthly magazines that catered to the needs of the parish priests.[94] From 1921

[89] See Agasso, *Thecla Merlo*, 24.

[90] See Rolfo, *James Alberione*, 81.

[91] Ibid.

[92] See Lamera, *Alberione*, 83.

[93] See Agasso, *Thecla Merlo*, 23.

[94] See Rolfo, *James Alberione*, 213-215

to 1935, Alberione established 10 magazines[95] and one of which, the *Famiglia Cristiana* (the Christian Family), a weekly magazine for families, became the most famous.[96] In 1923 -1924, he launched an edition of the gospels with 140,000 copies "with the slogan, the Gospel in every family."[97] In 1927, he came up with an edition of the Bible, printed in five languages: Italian, Spanish, French, English, and Latin, offered at a low price with footnotes to explain the texts.[98] He produced his first movie in 1937,[99] and involved himself in radio apostolate in 1940.[100]

Alberione sent his followers to other parts of the world, starting in 1931 when he sent two of them to establish a house in Brazil and Argentina. This was followed by foundations in the United States (1931), Germany (1932), France (1932), Spain (1934), China (1934), Philippines (1934), Japan (1934), India (1935), and Poland (1935).[101] Alberione sent his missionaries to these places, without any invitation from the local bishops. They puzzled the local Church officials who asked for their identities and recommendation from

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[95] From 1921 to 1935, Alberione initiated these works: La Dominica, a Sunday aid for the Eucharistic celebration, *la Domenica Illustrata* (the Sunday illustrated), a weekly cultural magazine, *Orrizonte* (Horizons), a monthly cultural magazine, *la Vita in Cristo e nella Chiesa* (Life in Christ and in the Church) a monthly liturgical magazine, *Dottrina e Fatti* (Doctrine and Facts) a monthly catechetical magazine, *La Madre de Dio* (The Mother of God), a monthly Marian Magazine, *Giornalino* (The Little Newspaper), a weekly magazine for children, *la Famiglia Cristiana* (the Christian Family), a weekly magazine for families and recreation. See Rolfo, James Alberione, 222-224.

[96] Ibid., 222-224.

[97] Spoletini, *Blessed James Alberione*, 32.

[98] Ibid., 34.

[99] Alberione founded in 1937 the Roman Film Production, making its first film entitled *Abuna Messias*, the story of Cardinal William Massala, a Capuchin Missionary in Sudan. This would be followed by other movies and the congregation would specialize in the production of 16mm movies. See Luigi Rolfo, SSP, *James Alberione, Apostle of Our Times*, 280.

[100] Ibid., 311.

[101] Ibid., 275-286.

the Holy See of which they did not have.[102] These early foundations nonetheless became successful due to the persistence and sacrifice of the pioneers.

The geographical expansion of the Congregation revealed the intense missionary spirit that its founder had instilled in his followers. The founder gave them a guideline: "Always and in every house, repeat the house of Alba."[103] Thus, in countries where the Society of St. Paul established itself, the missionaries transplanted the house of Alba, putting in one place other feminine houses of the congregations that Alberione had established, complete with the usual printing press and editorial.[104] The mission image of this time - planting Churches - was fulfilled in copying the house of Alba as the standard of foundations elsewhere.

3. The Charism

The Society of St. Paul was not the only congregation that developed "mass media" as a means of evangelization. Unlike others that made this work a part of their mission activities, the congregation by the early thirties had made this work an exclusive charism, abandoning parish work.[105] Many of Alberione's lay collaborators were people whom he encountered in his parish ministry. His first followers in fact came from the parishes. He encountered Timothy Giaccardo in his first parish.[106] The reason why he abandoned parish work might have come from mere circumstances that surrounded the history of the foundation.

The start of his letting go parish activities happened when the Bishop of Alba asked him to resign from his duties in the archdiocese after 11 seminarians from the theologate seminary, led

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[102] Ibid.

[103] James Alberione, *Letter to Father Benedict Boano, founder of the house in Brazil* quoted by Luigi Rolfo, SSP, *James Alberione, Apostle of Our Times*, 278.

[104] Ibid., 275.

[105] Ibid., 163-164.

[106] See Jose Antonio Perez, *Blessed James Alberione* (Makati City: St. Pauls, 2014), 12-14.

by Timothy Giaccardo, followed him in his foundation.[107] Priests in the archdiocese complained to the Bishop who set him free from his diocesan obligation, the last of which was his work as spiritual director of this seminary. The Bishop did not encounter any problem on this due to the abundance of priests in his diocese, allowing him the privilege of freeing one of his best priests Alberione to pursue his calling.

At the onset, there was an abundance of work for the congregation. Many parishes and dioceses invited Alberione and his first group to manage their newspapers and bulletins.[108] The printing press was labor intensive, requiring full time focus, with big daily expenses. Alberione and his little group had their hands full and had really no time for other activities. The group was divided into three: those who wrote and edited these journals, those who worked in the printing press, and those who sold the books and the pamphlets.[109]

The exclusive charism provided the Congregation with the initial push that it needed, working with a focused energy.[110] Other religious congregations had not yet included mass media as part of their agenda. The absence of competitors in its publishing apostolate made it easy for the congregation to be accepted in the parishes and dioceses.[111]

The success of the congregation's publishing activities, the spread of their magazines and other products came from the cooperation of parishes and dioceses. Alberione was in contact with his diocesan counterparts and encouraged his followers to maintain friendship with the diocesan priests for they would be their first supporters in their apostolic activities.[112] In his steps towards the exclusive charism, Alberione even deepened his roots in the parishes and dioceses.

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[107] Ibid., 15.

[108] See Rolfo, *James Alberione*, 167-169.

[109] See *Centro di Spiritualita Paolina*, 77-94.

[110] See Rolfo, *James Alberione*, 282-286.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Alberione, *Thoughts*, 193.

Its Constitutions define the Society of St. Paul as a "clerical congregation of apostolic life" with the goal of "evangelization of humankind through the apostolate by the means of social communication."[113] These means are those with "mass appeal" – "the press, cinema, radio, television, audiovisuals, mini media and the like."[114] Thus this exclusive charism is imbedded in its way of life. Evangelization means proclaiming the gospel using the mass media.

The Constitutions emphasize that work in parishes could only be undertaken in "exceptional situation" determined by "the major superior and his counselors" and "approval of the superior general with the consent of his council."[115] Whereas local communities could initiate activities through the mass media without such Constitutional regulation, the face to face contact with people through a parish has been practically reduced to a non-apostolate. By reducing its charism to proclaiming the gospel through the mass media, the Congregation has given scant attention to direct pastoral work through parishes or other social or charitable activities.

C. The Mission

1. The Composition of the Congregation

The Society of St. Paul with 853 members is found in 34 countries, a 2019 report in contrast to the 1988 statistics which recorded 1089 members in 28 countries.[116] In numbers, the most numerous are still the Italian province with 235 members, followed by India with 147 members, Philippines with 78, Mexico with 60 members, Brazil 41, Colombia 37, Japan 37, Spain 32, Korea 31, Congo 29. The rest of the countries have members below 25. The majority of the Italians

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[113] Society of Saint Paul, *The Constitutions and Directory* (Rome: General House, 1976), no. 2.

[114] Ibid., no. 68.

[115] Ibid., no. 78.

[116] See Society of St Paul, *The State of the Numbers of the Congregation, Communities and Members Updated March 15, 2019* (Rome: General House, 2019).

are already in their 80's. The average age of all members worldwide is 59.69.[117]

Attempts to form international communities started with Alberione who established the International School of Theology in 1953 where candidates for the priesthood all over the world studied.[118] The school closed down in 1970 when local Churches emphasized formation in their respective countries. The first attempt to establish an international community of missionaries was in 1992 when a Filipino, a Mexican, a Korean and an Indian came together to Nigeria. The foundation, however, was eventually taken over by India.[119] The foundations such as in Macao, Angola, Ukraine, Panama, Costa Rica, and Cuba were done by mono cultural members from Brazil (Angola), Poland (Ukraine), Colombia (Costa Rica and Panama), Mexico (Cuba) and the Philippines (Macao).[120]

Missionaries from the Philippines have reached Latin America, the United States, Italy, and Australia but their purpose mainly, is to replace the Italian missionaries who had died or had to return to Italy for questions of health. Multicultural novitiate and scholastics now exist in Italy and Spain to augment the candidates from Europe so that a sizable number of candidates could be together.[121] These multicultural communities evolve by force of circumstances of uniting forces and vocations that are falling in many parts of the world. Mono-culturality is even seen as a strength as the proclamation of the gospel needs people who are attuned to the local language and culture.

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[117] Ibid.

[118] Rolfo, *Alberione*, 221.

[119] Interview with Fr. Leopoldo Botavara who was the Filipino assigned in Nigeria dated October 15, 2019. The reason why the multicultural community collapse is that the Indian general councilor only listened to the Indian member of the community. He ended up the incognito superior of the community, and the rest had nothing to contribute.

[120] See Society of St Paul, *The State of the Numbers of the Congregation, Communities and Members Updated March 15, 2019.*

[121] Ibid.

Culture has not been a major concern of the Congregation. The pioneering Italian missionaries in the Philippines only learned English and returned back to their country without speaking Tagalog or any local tongue. Bro. Paul Ocelli who had lived in the Philippines for 20 years explained that he did not need to speak in Tagalog in order to run the bookstore. English was enough.[122] Their inability to insert themselves in the local culture, at least learning the local dialects emerged from their lack of contact with the ordinary Filipinos.

2. Success of *Famiglia Cristiana* and other Magazines

The past that Alberione led in Italy had left behind a trail of glory. A historian, analyzing the Catholic involvement in the mass media, wrote this description of a magazine that Alberione founded, *Famiglia Cristiana*, which in 1971 celebrated its fortieth anniversary:

> At first hardly noticed on the outside, from 1931 a Catholic recreational periodical in Italy developed into presumably the Catholic periodical with the highest circulation in the world, the *Famiglia Cristiana*. Founder, owner and publisher is the religious community *Pia Societa San Pablo*, internationally active in the sphere of Catholic publicity. Through a skillful organized sales system in parishes, it caused the former Sunday sheet to grow into a modern family magazine illustrated journal which printed its jubilee edition for its fortieth year of existence in an issue of two million.[123]

A magazine with two million copies distributed weekly was a resounding success anywhere. Alberione founded this magazine with a group of boys and a few adults who worked with discipline and constancy for forty years. This magazine was a fitting conclusion to his life work: *Famiglia Cristiana*, was truly a mass medium reaching many Italian homes. Alberione promised his boys that a train would

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[122] The researcher had lived with the last Italian missionaries as a scholastic in Makati in the 1980's. No one among them learned to speak in Tagalog because with English, they could already make themselves understood by their religious community. Bro. Paul Ocelli was interviewed via messenger date October 4, 2019.

[123] Gabriel Abdrianyi, *The Church in the Modern World* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 423.

enter into their compound in Alba to deliver the magazine all over Italy, a prophecy that was fulfilled.[124]

The success of this magazine came through a well-chosen formula that included in the magazine pages for every class of persons as well as answers to the readers' letters regarding political, spiritual and moral issues. Feedback from the audience became an important ingredient of this magazine.[125] Paulines tried to copy its formula for success in their foundations outside of Italy. As the congregation entered into the digital era, these models of success suffered a downtrend, with several versions folding up.

3. The Catholic Bible Society

Alberione's main concern in the early days of the foundation was the diffusion of the popular editions of the Bible. He established the Catholic Bible Society (CBS) in 1924 and it received its Papal approval in 1960. The goal of the foundation is to provide new and easy translations for the masses, helping them to have a personal relationship with Jesus.[126] To complement the diffusion of this Bible, Alberione also organized study groups in parishes that aspired for a deeper Biblical education, organizing Bible months, initiating consecration of the Bible in many Italian homes. The Daughters of St. Paul who spent mission months visiting homes, offering books, carried to many remote homes of Italy the word of God, teaching people how to read and reflect on it.[127]

The CBS in 80's gained a new life through the leadership of Francisco Anta, a Spaniard, who initiated the Bible for Latin Americans, a popular translation with commentaries. Anta contacted episcopal conferences, providing them with the facility to have access to this Bible at the lowest cost. In his report dated September 2019, he wrote that the Congregation distributed some 80 million of this

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[124] See Agasso, *Thecla Merlo*, 55.

[125] See Spoletini, *Blessed James Alberione*, 29.

[126] See Rolfo, *James Alberione*, 56.

[127] Ibid.

Bible in Latin America. "The diffusion of the Bibles was not a work," he said, but "a mission of the Church."[128]

The CBS has also created Biblical schools in Venezuela, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Colombia, directing several translations of the Bible in other languages, like French, Portuguese, English, Chinese, Polish, Ukraine, Rumanian, *Tagalog*, *Cebuano, Ilonggo, Kapampangan*, various languages among the indigenous peoples of the Amazons and India. Anta spearheaded also the production of the Bible in the digital forms like CD-rom and online that can be downloaded. The CBS, according to him, is the best legacy of James Alberione. The charism of the Congregation to evangelize using the fastest means acquires a special meaning. The massive diffusion of the Word of God literally becomes a fact.[129]

CBS is an important component of the apostolic activity of the Congregation internationally. Anta called this an ecclesial mission, having dialogued with the local Churches through their bishops. Fresh always in his memory was when CBS finished the translations of the Bible in two indigenous languages of Peru and he went there to personally give their Bibles to these tribes. The indigenous tribes who were not consulted prior to the editorial work commented that what they wanted was the Spanish Bible, wishing that the word of God would facilitate their absorption to the mainstream society. They wanted to perfect their Spanish not their indigenous tongues.[130] This encounter with the indigenous people taught him that dialogue with Bishops was not enough without first listening to these people.

The practical effect of *Christomonism* could be seen in the experience of Anta on describing his Biblical work as the mission of the Church. It would have been different if he took as the foundation of his Biblical work as the mission of the Trinity. This would have

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[128] See Francisco Anta, "La Difusion de la Biblia No Es Un Trabajo, Es Pura Mission Ecclesial," *Commission Libros Religiosos* (Octubre 7, 2019): 1-2. Anta received special award for his work with the Bible sponsored by Spanish organization of religious. He was interviewed and featured in the magazine of this group.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

made him sensitive to the voice of the indigenous people and the need to listen to them before offering anything.

4. The Challenging Mission in the Digital World

In the first document presented before the Holy See for the approval of the Congregation, Alberione described as part of its mission was to establish schools to train journalists and other communicators.[131] He attempted to establish one in Italy, but this school eventually closed down due to its inability to receive government and ecclesiastical approvals. The dream however continued to flourish with the founding of communication schools in Brazil (2000), Mexico (1998), Colombia (2013), Philippines (1992). These centers for learning deepen the Congregation's involvement in the world of communication through research.[132]

The communication school of Brazil with the help of the General government spearheaded the seminar of Pauline editors of 2017. This seminar was the first attempt to analyze the Pauline mission from the perspective of other editorials who have adjusted and progressed in the digital environment. Theologians also shared their thoughts as to what should the Congregation do in order to respond to the signs of the times.

Editors of two Catholic editorials, the Bayard of France and PCC of Spain considered, shared their success stories. The Bayard owned by the Augustinians of the Assumptions is only part of their apostolates that include ecumenism, missions, teaching and pilgrimages.[133] The PCC owned by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Spain and the Marist Brothers, has a network of parishes, schools and universities.

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[131] Alberione, *Abundantes*, 25.

[132] Ibid.

[133] See George Sanirot, "The French Context," in Society of St. Paul, *2nd International Seminar Pauline Publishers, Ariccia, 16-22 October 2017* (Rome: General House, 2018), 227.

Their other ministries provided them with advantages of exclusive market, fast feed backs to their works.[134]

Bayard owns a progressive newspaper in France, La Croix and runs another 70 magazines, with an editorial production that include videos and You Tube channels apart from their television and radio production.[135] PCC owns the largest weekly magazine in Spain, dominating the liturgical magazines and publishing a variety of books of theology, philosophy, psychology and textbooks from elementary to college.[136] Their success stories manifest that publishing work which is not considered as an exclusive charism offers advantages. Publishing work networked to schools, parishes, mission activities, and ecumenism offers more spaces for marketing and development of new products.

The French editor of Bayard George Sanirot shared that the culturally diverse French society has accepted their publishing works that include popular cartoon characters of bear and other animals. Their audience consists of practicing and non-practicing Catholics, adults of any religious or philosophical orientation, families and parents that cared about the education of their children.[137] Their mode of mission founded in "dialogue with modern society" classify the atheists in their midst as people with different philosophical orientation.[138]

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, who talked about "The Poor and the Excluded" observed that the digital media was not just about being connected with people, but had become a world to be evangelized. How should the media become the presence of the Good News was his challenged to the participants. This happened, Tagle explained, when the stories of the poor and the excluded, people from the

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[134] See Pedro Miguel Garcia, "Catholic World Publishers," Society of St. Paul, *2nd International Seminar Pauline Publishers, Ariccia, 16-22 October 2017* (Rome: General House, 2018), 235-236.

[135] See Sanirot, "The French Context," 228-233.

[136] See Garcia, "Catholic World Publishers," 236-237.

[137] See Sanirot, "The French Context," 227.

[138] Ibid.

periphery, became the center from which Christians could derive lessons of true faith, true love, true hope. These people, the Cardinal said, for all the miseries they are passing through, should have become the angriest and the most bitter but instead, they exude generosity. The people of the periphery, to his mind, are those who amidst their material opulence thought of suicide at the slightest frustration. Those in the periphery are not the poor and the excluded. These people should be in the center of the Church. The stories of these people, he encouraged, should fill the pages of the Congregation's magazines, other publications and digital presence.[139]

The seminar concluded with the analysis of the situation of the congregation's publishing activity, with 1988 as a point of comparison. Comparing 2017 to 1988, the participants described the 1988 as the peak of their publishing activity when magazines, books, TV and radio kept the members occupied. In 2017, the Congregation has lost all its radio and television stations, some magazines were closed, while the number of books and magazines sold had plummeted. Evangelizing activities in the Internet have been limited, with many projects unable to progress because of lack of continuity and financial returns. The Congregation, nevertheless, still maintains a big circulation in its liturgical pamphlets, with millions of copies printed weekly.[140]

The analysis of its apostolic activities ended with a somber note that initiative aimed at non-believers, the poor and the non-Christians were of limited quality and insufficient.[141] The editor of St. Pauls Argentina Aderico Dolzani asked for the recovery of Alberione as a prophet. He emphasized that like Alberione, Pauline editors should seek to speak about all human concerns, of teaching everything in a Christian way. This meant having publications in economics, politics, social sciences, philosophy, literature, medicine, and art.

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[139] See Tagle, "The Poor and the Excluded," 148-150.

[140] See Zanon, "Questionaire on the Apostolic Activity of the Society of St. Paul, Reading and Result," in Society of St. Paul, *2nd International Seminar Pauline Publishers, Ariccia,* 16-22 *October 2017* (Rome: General House, 2018), 285-289.

[141] Ibid.

The Congregation should not just excel in devotionals and liturgy but also cater to the needs of the atheists and the non-believers.[142] Dolzani encouraged a border crossing.

To cater to the needs of the atheists and other strangers means first that the Congregation should recognize their aspirations and dreams. This can only be done through dialogue. To focus on proclamation is to act like "forceful salesman" who does not respect the situation or opinion of the other.[143] Dialogue as a mode of mission installs bridges, establishing friendship. This closeness enables the publishing of books, magazines and other products as responses to the people's needs and aspirations. Dialogue assures the Congregation that its evangelizing products are relevant to the reader or to the audience.

5. The 10th General Chapter

Since 2010, at the celebration of the 9th General Chapter, the Congregation had prepared itself to meet the challenges of the digital world. The theme of this chapter was: "Rekindle the Gift You Have Received. Creative Fidelity to a Hundred Years of Pauline Charism."[144] The superior general then Silvio Sassi wrote to all Paulines, asking them to rekindle the Pauline charism by taking up "the digital world as a new and precious opportunity for evangelization."[145]

Silvio Sassi formulated "three sources of inspiration" as the foundation of being faithful and creative to the Founder. First, members should deepen their knowledge of the thought and work of the Founder. Second, they should believe that evangelization through communication is an authentic ministry. And third, members should have "the boldness to formulate a global project of new evangelization

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[142] See Aderico Dolzani, "Area Cidep," in Society of St. Paul, *2nd International Seminar Pauline Publishers, Ariccia, 16-22 October 2017* (Rome: General House, 2018), 309-310.

[143] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 45.

[144] Juan Antonio Carrera, SSP, "Presentation," *San Paolo, Official Bulletin of the Society of St. Paul* 8, no.435 (March 2010): 1.

[145] See Silvio Sassi, SSP, "Rekindle the Pauline Priesthood," *San Paolo, Official Bulletin of the Society of St. Paul* 85, no. 485 (March 2010): 55-61.

tied to the communication of today."[146] This boldness to formulate a global project has remained a dream as the thought and work of the Founder seemed inadequate to provide a missiological framework in the context of connectivity. The understanding of this context is an important component of that creative faithfulness, something that does not emerge from mere studies of the thoughts and writings of the Founder.

Sassi emphasized the creation of multimedia apostolate in all editorials of the Congregation, seeing digital communication as means to proclaim the gospel.[147] This was in harmony with Alberione's exhortation to adopt and use the new means of communication for evangelization.[148] The focus on proclamation tied Sassi to Alberione whose context of mission was different. Can the Congregation become relevant if it continues to focus on using digital communication to proclaim the gospel, without entering into the greater challenge of bridge building?

The 10th General Chapter (2015) promises to bring the gospel that liberates and transforms to everyone, providing a list of people in the periphery that include the forgotten minorities and the immigrants.[149] These recipients of the Congregation's mission activity are real people. Before they can be served, they must be listened first in the spirit of dialogue. Thus, this Chapter already hinted that the next steps of the Congregation should be on bridge building.

Pope Francis' mission strategy pinpoints its prime beneficiaries as people of the periphery, asking everyone to be in constant contact with these people. By defining mission as the communication of love, Pope Francis exhorts everyone to respond to the needy and the wounded. Missionaries have always to prioritize the work of the Good

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[146] Ibid., 60-61.

[147] See Sassi, "Rekindle the Pauline Priesthood," 55-61.

[148] See Alberione, *Thoughts*, 34.

[149] See Society of Saint Paul, *Final Document of the 10th General Chapter,* nos. 4-6.

Samaritan. What should be proclaimed are not simply dogmas, but a Church who encounters strangers and serves them.[150]

The Congregation is at the cross road, as it strategizes to become relevant. To do this, it must first understand the context of connectivity and the mission direction it must follow according to Pope Francis.[151] Connectivity is not just a road without blockages. The challenge to connect is to construct bridges at borders, not to give up when walls suddenly appear. Mission is to make this connectivity always an opportunity, widening its door to receive the people of the periphery.

D. Summary

The Society of St. Paul was founded to proclaim the gospel through the use of mass media of social communications. Its founder James Alberione had equipped his congregation with the devotion to Jesus Master, way, truth and life as a source and foundation of mission. Such devotion tilted towards *Christomonism* which prevented it from embracing the Trinity as the foundation of mission as called by Vatican II. This has tied the Congregation to proclamation as a mode of mission. The 10th General Chapter manifested the intention of the Congregation to join the transformation of mission of Pope Francis. In the context of connectivity of the digital world, this is a challenge to become bridge builder through dialogue and re-aligned its theology of mission to the Trinity.

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[150] See Gregory, "Pope Francis' Effort to Revitalize Catholic Mission," 7-10.

[151] Javier, *Interculturality*, 42.

CHAPTER III

NEW BRIDGES IN CONNECTIVITY

Introduction

This chapter explains why mission is necessary in the digital world. The first part contains the history of globalization and the Internet which makes connectivity as the most important and unstoppable force today in the planet. The second part are the challenges of borders and walls created by connectivity. The third part is about establishing of new bridges as answers to these challenges. The need to establish these bridges justifies mission in the digital world.

A. The Hyper Connected World

1. From Globalization 1.0 to Globalization 3.0

The sociologist Parag Khanna traced the start of globalization during the third century B.C.E. when city-states of ancient Mesopotamia traded regularly with each other, reaching Egypt and Persia. This reached its peak in mid-first millennium when the Persian king, Cyprus the Great, made Persia as the midway between Europe and China, connecting with the Silk Road to the Greek and Roman highway and maritime systems.[152] The journalist Thomas Friedman drew a most specific picture through his three-era history of globalization. The first era (1492-1800) started with Columbus's discovery of the Americas that opened trade between the new and the old worlds. Friedman calls this "Globalization 1.0" which

[152] See Khanna, *Connectography*, 35.

had countries and governments as the primary actors mustering horsepower and steam power to break down walls and driving global integration by their imperialistic interests.[153]

The forces behind Globalization 2.0 (1800 to 2000) were the multinational companies. These companies went on a global campaign in their search for markets and raw materials. The first phase of this globalization was powered by the falling of transportation costs through the steam engine and the railroad. The second phase was the lowering of telecommunication costs through the telegraphs, the telephone, the personal computer, the fiber-optic cable and the early version of the World Wide Web. Global economy was born and matured during this era.[154]

The second phase of Globalization 2.0 was marked by the emergence of the supply chains that evolved in the 1970's as corporations in the United States and other Western countries moved their production sites to countries with cheaper labor and raw materials. These supply chains would find their way to the Asian tigers, China, Mexico and other countries, churning cheaper clothes and electronic products. Supply chains empowered underdeveloped countries like China to develop their own technology and industries. The supply chains encourage investment in infrastructures of highways, ports, and airports, facilitating cheap travel costs that encourage fast transfer of goods and people from one country to another.[155] Friedman then argued that one of the roots of rapid globalization is the fall of the wall of Berlin in 1989, which set free the captive countries of Europe from Russian domination, marking the triumph of market economy against socialism, the release of the pent-up creativity of the people imprisoned by communism.[156]

Crucial to the growth of this creativity is information or knowledge. Globalization according to Friedman is a confluence of

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[153] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 9.

[154] Ibid., 10.

[155] See Khanna, *Connectography* , 3-45.

[156] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 51-53.

three major forces. The first was the fall of the Berlin wall which marked the end of the ideological borders that blocked the transfer of knowledge. The second was the development of Windows 3.0, that transformed knowledge into digital bits, and the third, was the growth of the World Wide Web with the Internet that spread knowledge everywhere in the planet.[157]

Windows 3.0 enabled individuals to write content or knowledge in digital form and was used in the IBM personal computer. The Internet is about electricity, cables and computers, and the World Wide Web is about the documents, sounds and videos in digital form stored in computers that are linked together through the Internet.[158] This has facilitated the work flow in production and sales, allowing people situated in places around the globe to work together. From the exclusive groups, used only by military, universities and intellectuals, the Internet and the World Wide Web developed into a full blown connectivity, enabling the transfer of knowledge from anywhere to anywhere by the year 2000, the official date of the start of Globalization 3.0.[159]

The primary actors of Globalization 3.0 are individuals and small groups that have been empowered through the Internet to collaborate and compete globally. The world is no longer round but flat. Individuals in their homes could buy and sell products while small companies could insert themselves and find their place in a world dominated by big multinational corporations. Individuals could launch their own You Tube channels, competing with big TV stations. Tangible effects of Globalization 3.0 is on air travel: individuals can act as their own travel agent, buying and downloading tickets at homes, printing them out, doing their check-in at home and coming to the airport just to board the plane without passing through the traditional channel.[160] Hyper globalization is upon the world.[161]

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[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid., 51-59.

[159] See Khanna, *Connectography*, 45.

[160] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 201.

[161] See Khanna, *Connectography*, 50

Globalization 3.0 marks the fast entrance of humanity to the virtual world. The percentage of Internet users in 2019 has reached 56.8% of the world's population, with the highest percentage in North America (89.4%), followed by Europe (86.8%), Australia and Oceania (68.4%), Latin America and the Caribbean, (67.5), the Middle East (62,2%), Asia (50.1%) and then Africa (37.3%). The Internet users thus in the world are around 4.3 billion from a total population of 7.7 billion.[162] Asia has the largest number of people who are connected, with 2.1 billion Internet users.

Since the year 2000, the growth of Internet users is up by 1,114.0% with Africa, having the most rapid growth at 10,105%. This leap happened after 2005, when the digital world entered into the social media like Facebook and Twitter.[163] Thus, the Internet has become ordinary, not anymore reserved for the scientists or rich people. The staggering increase of those who are connected (3.3 billion from 2006 to 2019) manifests that though the Internet and other technological innovation were first available to the rich, leaving a big chunk of the world's poor without connection, solving this digital divide is much easier than bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.[164] The "digital divide," according to observers, could be described today as a separation of the "haves" and the "have-laters," rather than "haves" and "have-nots."[165]

Globalization 3.0 has brought about a new awareness of unity in the "human family."[166] This is an invitation for missionaries to exploit the possibilities of hyper globalization. Claude Geffre observes that nowhere else in human history do people have become aware of their common destiny, the need for interdependency, accompanied by the universal awareness of defending human rights and "the rights of the

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[162] See World Internet Usage and Population Statistics, updated March 2019, at www.Internetworldstats.com, accessed on May 3, 2019.

[163] Ibid

[164] See Sara Baase, *A Gift of Fire: Social, Legal, and Ethical Issues for Computing Technology* (Singapore: Pearson Education South Asia, 2014), 348-349.

[165] Ibid., 348.

[166] Javier, "Interculturality," 40.

earth."[167] The "consciousness" of the world as becoming "whole" is intensifying through real and virtual "compression."[168]

2. From Web 1.0 to Web 2.0

The writing of the history of the Internet began after the crash of the dot.com companies in 2001.[169] The first eras to be identified were Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. The market crash was thought to be the end of business in the Internet as thousands of companies whose stocks were bought by the public ended up selling nothing. Business people led by Tim O'Reilly of Silicon Valley called for a conference to analyze the events.[170]

The conference "Web 2.0" differentiated the tech companies that managed to survive the storm, emerging even stronger, contrasting them with the "failures" which was labelled "Web 1.0." Though the market crash was a trauma for many people, O'Reilly analyzed it as a normal process of "technological revolutions."[171] It had to happen to expose the pretenders and give place to the emerging technologies, the real success stories.[172] Reilly with his friends discovered that the losers were not different from the traditional media that simply announced products or services. They were not interactive. The profitable companies involved more their users – their interactivity became their main attraction.[173]

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[167] Ibid., 41.

[168] Roland Robertson, *Globalization, Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 8.

[169] See Sareh Aghai, Mohammad Ali Nematnakhsh and Hadi Khosravi Farsani, "Evolution of the World Wide Web: from Web 1.0 to Web 4.0" *International Journal of Web and Semantic Technology* 3, No. 1 (January 2012).

[170] See Tim O'Reilly, "What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software," in *The Digital Divide*, ed. Mark Bauerkin (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 215-217.

[171] Ibid., 215.

[172] Ibid.

[173] See Tim O'Reilly and John Battele, "Web Squared: Web 2.0 Five Years On," in *The Digital Divide,* ed. Mark Bauerkin (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 217-219.

They cited the search engine Google which overtook the other search engines. O'Reilly and his friends indicated that those who wish to enter the net should take the direction of the Web 2.0, which harnesses "network effects" not only to draw more users, but to learn from them through their "digital foot prints" and build "on their contributions."[174] The crash of 2001 ushered a new era for the Internet: Web 2.0, leaving behind Web 1.0.

From a conference, Web 2.0 became a movement, joining all those who believe that the Internet will help the world become a better place to live in. It reflected the optimism that technology would usher a new period of wellbeing and cooperation among nations and peoples. Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook envisioned his work as an instrument in making the world more open and connected.[175]

The sociologist Castells derived his description of the world as "the network society" based from the development of the Internet and the social media that blurred the distinction between mass media and interpersonal communication.[176] The digital tools, according to Castells, enabled knowledge and information to emerge as the most important factors in production, becoming more relevant than capital and labor.[177]

3. Web 3.0

In the early 2001, the search engine Google through mathematical algorithms arranged the results of searches according to the number of hits. Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, a pioneer researcher of the digital footprints observed that people's search for information was itself information. When and where they searched for facts, quotes, jokes, places, persons, things or help tells more about their thoughts, desires and fears. He explained that typing a word or phrase into a compact

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[174] Ibid., 231.

[175] See David Kirkpatrick, "The Facebook Defect," *Time* (April 23, 2018): 38-40.

[176] See Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Net Work Society* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), xxvi.

[177] Ibid., 502-503.

rectangular white box of Google left a small trace of truth, that when multiplied by millions, eventually revealed profound realities.[178] The Internet in other words has become a more exact social weather station that can diagnose with precision the likes and dislikes, the feelings and ideas of all those who enter the Internet in search for something. This is the Big Data.

Before the Big Data, the only way by which social weather stations got to know how the people felt was through face to face surveys. But these surveys often don't tell the truth when it comes to sensitive issues like sex or racial prejudices. Everybody lies in surveys.[179] In the anonymity of the Internet, people share easily themselves, even their dirtiest inclinations. The algorithms decipher these data, real indications of what is present in the minds of millions.[180] Google every minute publishes "trending searchers" that reveal the current concerns of peoples of the world and in particular countries.[181]

The Big Data is a differentiation of the digital memory. It is not news, movies or photos of events long past but data that reveal habits, wants, desires of the users. It is not about of the past long gone, but about the present time. The Big Data reveals the private lives of people. Internet scientists would label the development of Big Data as already Web 3.0. The Big Data already involves the use of artificial intelligence that uncovers the users' needs and answering them in the present time.[182]

4. Web 4.0

Web 4.0 is described as the Internet of the future. This accentuates the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in organizing people, delivering "global transparency, governance and participation in industry,

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[178] See Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, *Everybody Lies, Big Data, New Data and What the Internet Can Tell Us About Who We Really Are* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017), 1-4.

[179] Ibid., 6-8.

[180] See O'Reilly and Battele, "Web Squared," 238-239.

[181] See Stephens-Davidowitz, *Everybody Lies*, 5-9.

[182] See Aghaiet, "Evolution of the World Wide Web," 5-6.

political, social and other communities."[183] The best expressions of Web 4,0 could already be seen in the efficient service of the car companies UBER and GRAB where there is "a fusion of horizon" between "the Internet and the world outside of it" through the use of AI.[184] Web 4.0 is the current frontier. Due to the advances in robotics, research about consciousness and intelligence, scientists have declared the end of humans in Web 4.0.[185]

Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum called the combination of AI and digital tools in Web 4.0 as the start of the Fourth Industrial revolution. The first industrial revolutions freed humanity from animal power through the steam engine; the second enabled mass production through electricity and the third facilitated the supply chains through digital connections. The main feature of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is AI and its capacity to fuse virtual and offline realities for productivity. AI would drive cars, trucks, ships and planes in the near future. AI's diagnosis of cancer through family history and DNA is precise and effective.[186] Its use on health and diagnosis would intensify Globalization 3.0.

Technology would play a more significant role in wealth creation through the precisions guaranteed by AI. This frontier of the digital world has transferred much of the thinking and analysis to solve human problems and create more products to the robots.[187] This digital frontier has freed the human mind from many preoccupations. But does this mean the end of humans?

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[183] Ibid., 8.

[184] See Ocampo, "How to Communicate in the Age of Web 4.0," 120-121.

[185] See Gere, *The Digital Culture*, 14-15.

[186] See Klaus Schwab and Nicholas Davis, *Shaping the Future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution* (New York: Currency, 2018), 3-12.

[187] See Matthia Schafer, "The Fourth Industrial Revolution: How EU Can Lead it," *Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies* (2018): 1-2.

B. The Challenges of Interactivity

1. The Reign of Amateurs and Fake News

The actual and palpable events in the world today still pertain to the Web 2.0 Movement. Their critics have focused on its unhealthy optimism. The sociologists Andrew Keen described it as propagator of "techno-economic utopianism," a continuation of the illusions created by the French and Russian revolutions.[188] This optimism had blinded them to address the pressing problems created by amateurs who had flooded the world with fake news.

Keen wrote that the power to upload has invited a lot of "monkeys" around the world to publish anything, removing professionalism.[189] The leaders of Web 2.0 Movement hoped that "the collection of monkeys" could produce "a classic."[190] Whereas the traditional media rewards the talented, the "elite talent," the social media has led to the loss of the real talents, creating amateurs rather than professionals.[191]

Keen saw the "Web 2.0 Movement" as an ideology that had its basis on "cultural Marxism."[192] It worshipped the "proletariat" – "the creative amateur, the self-taught film maker, the dorm-room musician, the unpublished writer."[193] This movement suggests that everyone, even the most poorly educated and inarticulate can use the digital media to express themselves. There is no more distinction between the experts and the amateurs.

The reign of the amateurs has made the social media a haven of fake news with false journalists, where people pick the news that caters only to their biases and prejudices. The big media – newspapers and

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[188] See Andrew Keen, "Web 2.0: the Second Generation of the Internet Has Arrived and Its Worse than You Think," in *The Digital Divide,* ed. Mark Bauerkin (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 242-243.

[189] See Andrew Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet Is Killing Our* Future (New York: Double Day, 2007), 1-9.

[190] Ibid.

[191] See Keen, "Web 2.0," 243-247.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Ibid.

television – have ceased to be the sources of information, as everyone can make his/her way to the net and invent his/her own news. The social media especially Facebook has become the major source of information. It has reduced the power of the traditional media where information passed through filters of editors and professionals.[194] Editors before had the final say as to which stories were published and where they should appear. The readers have taken this role through sharing in the social media. Newspapers may publish stories, but unless they are shared, their impact remains minimal.

According to a survey, people shared principally not because of good feelings, but mainly because of anger – the more a person is enraged over issues and people, the more he/she shares, inciting more anger. The social media, rather than pacifying nerves and working for peace and consensus, manufacture dissent and "outrage."[195]

The social media in fact has been used as a "weapon" through "trolls" that rain the Internet with false news, aimed at destroying reputation of persons.[196] "False news" are "weaponized lies" aiming to destroy people through a constant barrage of untruth.[197] Transforming social media into weapons is done through professional advertisement companies that take this as a job, especially during time of election, to stir populist opinions against a candidate and in favor of another.[198] The spread of lies and turning social media into a weapon have made the digital world a place of walls, isolation and frontiers without bridges.

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[194] See Jason Tanz, "Fact: the News in Crisis," *Wire* (March 2017), 48-49.

[195] Ibid.

[196] See Jonathan Corpus Ong and Jason Vincent Cabanes, *Architects of Networked Disinformation, Behind the Scenes of Troll Accounts and Fake News Production in the Philippines, Public Report with Executive Summary* (Yorkshire: University of Leeds, 2017), 27-29.

[197] See Daniel J. Levitin, *Weaponized Lies, How to Think Critically in the Post-Truth Era* (New York: Dutton, 2017), 251-253.

[198] See Ong and Cabanes, *Architects of Networked Disinformation,* 23.

2. A Non-Forgetting World

The Big Data has enabled the tech companies like Google to have precise information about their users, utilizing this data to sell products and services, catering to the individual needs. The empowerment of individuals to search and find the information that they need has flattened the world, making research easier and even comfortable inasmuch as reliance on libraries have ceased.[199] This leaves behind digital foot prints that threaten privacy and expose people to the public.

The Internet then has become an archive that can protect people from criminals and pedophiles, but also a threat to people who may have committed mistakes and willing to change. Their mistakes imbedded in the Internet for anyone to see cut them from opportunities.[200]

American scholars Jean-Francois Blanchette and Deborah Johnson examined a world without forgetting, that continually exposed the events of the past to anyone. A world in which everything was recorded was not conducive in the development of "democratic citizens."[201] Frozen records of criminals retrieved so easily through the Internet may give early warning to people who live near them, but at the same time, limit their space for growth and change.[202] Frozen digital records could be imperiling one's personal progress and dreams of reforming. The Internet never forgets, causing nervousness to those who have done mistakes. [203]

Human memory and digital memory are different realities. While digital memory is the frozen past without development and changes,

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[199] See Friedman, *The World is Flat,* 184.

[200] See Victor Mayer Schonberger, *Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Era* (London: Princeton University Press, 2010), 90-91.

[201] See Jean-Francois Blanchette and Deborah G. Johnson, *Data Retention and the Panoptic Society: The Social Benefits of Forgetfulness* (Montreal: Information Society, 2002), 33-35.

[202] Ibid.

[203] See J.D. Lasica, "The Internet Never Forgets," *American Journalism Review* (November 25,1998): 1-4.

human memory adopts itself to the demands of the present, at times changing the past and its details. It is not something static, but adjusting itself to the present, allowing spaces where people could change and evolve to become different persons. This adopting to the present is "forgetting," a product of the human mind.[204] "Social forgetfulness" is a balancing act between the need to hold accountable any person for his actions and the need also to give him a fresh start.[205] Without forgetting there is also no forgiving. Condemnation and judgment come from a mind that does not forget, having always the misdeeds in the present. In this way, the Internet may end up developing an unforgiving and unmerciful world. The walls of perpetual judgment are in the Internet.

3. Addiction

Representatives of Web 2.0 Movement claimed that the brain of digital natives had been modified by their constant exposure to digital tools. Unlike digital migrants who could only do one thing at a time, these people taught that digital natives could do several things at the same time, a multi-tasking mind that was more productive and efficient.[206] The claim that the digital tools have changed the composition of the human brain gives technology an overwhelming deterministic power, justifying and encouraging endless connectivity.[207]

The media expert Nicolas Karr argued that addiction was the reigning business model of the tech companies.[208] The faster people surf through the web, the more links and pages viewed, the more opportunities for Google and other companies to collect data and feed them with advertisements. These companies do not encourage leisurely reading, or a slow concentrated focus on the content. Their

[204] Ibid., 4-5.

[205] See Blanchette and Johnson, *Data Retention and the Panoptic Society,* 36.

[206] See Marc Prensy, "Do They Really Think Differently," in *The Digital Divide,* ed. Mark Bauerkin (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 12-17.

[207] Ibid.

[208] See Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" in *The Digital Divide,* ed. Mark Bauerkin (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 63-73.

interest is to drive people from one site to another, encouraging a habit to a life of constant distraction.[209]

Two American neuroscientists, Ramsay Brown and T. Dalton Combs had established a tech company, *Boundless Mind*, whose aim was to disrupt America's addiction to technology.[210] They had concluded that Silicon Valley's business model of keeping people glued to their screens through the use of persuasive technology had institutionalized addiction. Tech companies want to get as much data as possible from the users, and the more addicts, the better is it for them.[211] This life of constant distraction has some telling and deep effects.

Addiction to the web has made community building more difficult, creating individualism, causing the experience of being alone together.[212] Rather than having lively encounters in family and community, people prefer to be with their cellphones, communicating to the far world but unable to talk and share meaningful time with people near bye.[213] The threat to community living is the most dangerous effect of the digital tools according to Sheryll Turkle, a social scientist of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She wrote that empathy had died, the capacity to suffer with others, to place oneself in the shoes of the other, because of people trusting more technology than their fellow humans.[214]

The satisfaction of moving from one site to another, one small phrase to another, one picture after another, one movie after another, shapes an outlook that nothing should be permanent and everything

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[209] Ibid.

[210] See Haley Sweetland Edwards, "The Masters of Mind Control," *Time* (April 23, 2018): 31-33.

[211] Ibid., 34.

[212] See Sheryll Turkle, *Alone Together, Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 1-4.

[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid., 24.

should be changeable.[215] The dominance of the digital tools in a world dominate by post-modern culture of relativism has accentuated the lack of stability.[216]

Digital addiction has created restlessness. Without roots, people continually seek for the next source of excitement, the next experience, the next new thing. People are losing contact with land and nature, experiencing disconnectedness from their roots and fellow human beings.[217] The result is isolation, the breakdown of real communication, and individualism.[218] Communication through the Internet and the social media remains limited and often superficial not a substitute for a "mutual physical presence and depth of engagement which the human person is made for."[219]

Digital addiction manifests tiredness to oneself.[220] The addicts suffering from depression and loneliness want to reinvent themselves through the machines that expand their power, putting an end to their experience of limitation and finitude.[221] Many people in the process suffer from low self-esteem that they mask through wealth, achievement and success.[222] They show this through an endless upload of selfies, where they publicize anything they do, from travels to the restaurants that they have visited.[223]

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) noted that the digital addiction had led to the weakening of family bonds.

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[215] See Bede Ukwuije, "Technology and Postmodern Culture: Impact on Our Formation for Intercultural Mission," in *Intercultural Living* vol. 1, eds. Lazar T. Stanislaus and Martin Ueffing (New Delhi: Steyler Missionswissebschaftliches Institut Sankt Augustin, 2015), 299-300.

[216] Ibid.

[217] See Philip McParland, "Our Contemporary Culture," *The Furrow* (April 2017): 234-235.

[218] Ukwuije, "Technology and Postmodern Culture," 298.

[219] See McParland, "Our Contemporary Culture," 232.

[220] See Ukwuije, "Technology and Postmodern Culture," 297.

[221] Ibid.

[222] See McParland, "Our Contemporary Culture," 232.

[223] See Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur,* 1-9.

Before the Television was the place of encounter and togetherness in the family, now the iPod and the mobile phones are eroding family togetherness. The digital world is ushering individualism, leading to the gradual reduction of the sense of the family as a sacred place of intimacy.[224] Though the Bishops encouraged the use of the social media for evangelization, their alarm over addiction was the predominant theme on their encounter of 2016, asking families to treasure their life offline.[225]

Pope Francis echoed this message in *Christus Vivit*. He first recognized that the digital world had provided new tools which offers an "extraordinary opportunity for dialogue, encounter and exchange between persons, as well as access to information and knowledge."[226] Then he joined the observation of three hundred young people worldwide who prepared the document on the Synod of the youth (January 2019) that online relationships can become inhuman, prevent people from seeing the vulnerability of another human being and from self-reflection.[227]

Francis interpreted "digital migration" for many people as "withdrawal from their families and their cultural and religious values, and entrance into a world of loneliness and of self-invention, with the result that they feel rootless even while remaining physically in one place."[228] These are harsh words to describe addiction to the virtual world. The virtual world produces self-absorbed persons, not able to reach out to others in mission. Addiction to the online world threatens the very identity of the Church, which is mission,

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[224] See FABC, "XI FABC Plenary Assembly The Catholic Family in Asia: Domestic Church of the Poor on a Mission of Mercy," *For All the Peoples of Asia,* vol. 6, ed. Vimal Tirimanna, CSSR (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2017), 18- 19.

[225] Ibid.

[226] See Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to the Young People and People of God *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), nos. 85-90.

[227] Francis, *Christus Vivit*, nos. 88.

[228] See Francis, *Christus Vivit,* nos. 85-90.

producing islands of people, unable to reach to each other due to the invisible wall of isolation.

4. Slave Labor

The sociologist Christian Fuchs observed that criticisms against Web 2.0 Movement could not be limited to the psychological effects of addiction, arguing that the critique should be based on solid political and economic theories that explained addiction as capitalist ploy for exploitation and gaining more profits. He used the Marxist framework. Marxism he argued does not deal about revolution, but about finding the roots of the capitalist crisis of every age that the social media now represents.[229] The aim of his critique centered on the hidden exploitation and oppression happening in the social media.[230]

For the sociologist Manuel Castells, information and knowledge had replaced capital and labor as the most important component of production. Technology allowed decisions at the local level, while maintaining the bigger concerns in the cities.[231] These places of production had raw materials in abundance and cheap labor, distributed to many countries through a supply chain managed in the West. Through the information channeled through the digital tools, management was able to produce the exact number of products needed cheaply and effectively, avoiding wastages.[232]

Fuchs criticized the analysis of Castells of technological determinism – the giving of too much power to technology to initiate progress and human development. For him, the Web 2.0 Movement

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[229] See Christian Fuchs, *Social Media, A Critical Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 2014), 4-65.

[230] Ibid.

[231] See Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 010), 502-503.

[232] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 587.

had provided a protective shield to unbridled capitalism, especially being blind to the contribution of labor to production.[233]

Fuchs classified tech companies that belonged to the Web 2.0 Movement as "social media." That included Google, Amazon, while specifying as "social networking" Facebook and Twitter. He argued that the use of the word "social" in these two instances was deceptive. Ownership of the social media and social networking still belonged to a capitalist and the stock holders.[234] (Companies if they are "social" should be owned by the workers.) Facebook is the number 76 among the top corporations in the United States in 2018, with 15 billion dollars in profits, overtaking Amazon.Com, with only 3 billion dollars.[235] Facebook is the fastest growing corporation in revenue growth within a five-year span.[236] Facebook derived its profits through advertisements. Its product is the personalized data collected from its 2.1 billion users that it sells to companies. Fuchs wrote that understanding the social media as big multinational corporations, always working for new ways to increase their profits, was the first big step to be critical.[237]

In Marxist view, the capitalist simply seized profit that should belong to the workers. Fuchs saw the 2.1 billion users of Facebook as slaves who worked without material compensation while enriching the owners and the stockholders. They are commodities for sale, because the income of these tech companies comes from the selling their individualized data. Thus, the social media have become the biggest exploiter of labor in recent times, producing wealth which "pays no wages."[238]

The economic stakes of data gathering could only be glimpsed through the controversy that shook Facebook on March 2018. *New*

[233] See Judy Wajcman, "Addressing Technological Change: The Challenge to Social Theory," *Current Sociology* 50, no. 3 (March 2008): 348-349.

[234] Ibid.

[235] See Fortune, "Fortune 500" (June 1, 2018): 34.

[236] Ibid., 26.

[237] See Fuchs, *Social Media*, 70-90.

[238] Ibid. 92-117.

York Times and *the Observer of London* reported tens of millions of data of its users had escaped the company's control in 2014 and handed over to *Cambridge Analytica*. Outsiders had managed to harvest the data of Facebook through hacking.[239] This harvesting of personal data had led *Facebook* to institute reforms about privacy. The successful use of these data, however, revealed that *Facebook* had in its hands the most effective tool in advertisements.[240] The Big Data has become a precious commodity – the users are no longer audience, but commodities for sale.

Fuchs expounded that information and knowledge did not replace the importance of capital and labor. What digital technology does is to deepen the understanding why labor and capital remain the bigger issue through the invisible exploitation of labor, the transformation of users into slaves, thereby providing a greater cause and reason why addiction to the Internet has become an important concern.[241]

C. Constructing Bridges to Deepen Connectivity

1. Bridges of Collaboration

Khanna narrated how the supply chains had exploited the natural resources and cheap labor of many countries. The flow was not often smooth and followed through a period of conflicts. These are the frictions. Friction emerges when nations defend their natural resources and people from exploitation through policies and taxations. Flow and Friction is the natural process of connectivity. Friction controls the flow. Solution to conflicts is not about laying more borders but building bridges.[242]

The fact that problems exist does not mean preferring isolation and cutting off ties. Multinational corporations have become sensitive to social issues. They easily respond to criticisms especially

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[239] See David Kirkpatrick, "The Facebook Defect," *Time* (April 23, 2018): 38-40.

[240] Ibid., 41-42.

[241] See Fuchs, *Social Media*, 90-117.

[242] See Khanna, *Connectography*, 33-40

in connection with climate change and exploitation of certain sectors, like women and children. Multinational corporations maintaining these supply chains know their social obligation, unlike companies that are not connected. NGOs that most often discover these abuses do not begin by asking these corporations to disappear. They ask for dialogue, a way of recognizing that these corporations listen to accusation of exploitation and support solutions. Salvation comes from these bridges, not borders.[243]

Friedman compared connectivity and borders to two events: the fall of Berlin wall that happened in November 1989 (11/9) and the destruction of twin towers on September 11, 2001 (9/11). 11/9 opened the boundaries created by the communist block in Europe, implanting hope and optimism of a borderless world while 9/11 was a terroristic attempt that injected fear and borders. The choice should always be to continue 11/9, the creation of more bridges. As the terrorist network al-Qaeda had used the Internet to effect massacres and killings, so should good business people inject progress and sharing. Friedman argued that in the end technologies could make the world safe, insisting that only the "best global citizens" of free and progressive societies that used them for collaboration could make the world a better place.[244] People who pushed for collaboration, construct bridges, assuring the wellbeing of Globalization 3.0.

The discernment for more bridges or more borders is reflected by the competition among tech companies that produce cellphones. The American company Apple, for years, had dominated the market with its expensive cell phones. Their selling point was having exclusive soft wares that make their computers and cellphones safe from virus. The Apple's isolation was a technological quarantine that blocked the use of apps coming from Google and other companies. In the year 2018, their dominance collapsed, overtaken by the Chinese Huawei whose cellphones are open and inclusive, able to receive apps from

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[243] Ibid.

[244] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 607-626.

other tech companies.[245] Creating borders even in technology leads to marketing disasters. Constructing bridges is still the best way towards progress and prosperity.

2. Bridges to the Real World

Psychologists had already compared Internet addiction to drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, sex and gambling. Internet rehabilitation centers had sprung up in Germany, Korea, and China, attesting to the seriousness of the situation.[246] Too much of everything as too much of technology is not also good.

The sociologist Cal New Port argued that to recover "deep work" was a proactive way of fighting addiction. He defined this as "professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration" that pushed "cognitive capabilities to their limit." Through deep work, people would improve their skills, creating new products that are hard to copy. The soft- ware programs of the social media, he wrote, were produced by people with focus and concentration. Those who got themselves addicted to it produced nothing of value. [247] New Port spent specific time before the computer and the Internet, not carrying any cellphone. He called for abstinence of its use in places of work and study where the Internet was not needed.[248] Fruitful connectivity through the Internet is not a 24-hour affair.

Ramsey Brown and Dalton Combs had invented apps that cater to the NGOs and health, channeling the use of persuasive technology, for the benefits of people.[249] They believed that the

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[245] See Ma Si, "Apple Admits High Prices Are a Factor in Flagging Sales," *China Daily* (January 31, 2019).

[246] See Janet Morahan-Martin, "Internet Abuse: Emerging Trends and Lingering Questions," in *Psychological Aspect of Cyberspace*, ed. Azy Barack (New York: Cambridge University, 2008), 74-75.

[247] See Cal New Port, *Deep Work* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2016), 8-9.

[248] Ibid., 10-15.

[249] See Edwards, "The Masters of Mind Control," 31-33.

Internet and the social media were already imbedded in the lives of people. Knowing how software programs manipulated thinking to produce addiction, they had come up with applications that helped people quit smoking and continue with their diet programs. Soft wares make people addicted to the social media, by its reward system of liking and notification. Brown and Combs use the same reward system in their software to help people develop new habits that will make them better human beings.[250]

Sheryll Turkle proposed the ordinary conversation as a solution to the addiction and enslavement to the digital tools, especially the cellphones. Addiction means that people have lost their capacity to listen to the persons nearby, more interested as they are to other people they encounter in the Internet. To recover the essence of communication, Turkle emphasized that families should restore sacred moments, an Internet-free environment where people can enjoy the company of one another.[251] "Conversation" is the power of talk, "the most human and humanizing thing" that enables people "to listen and experience the joy of being heard, of being understood."[252] Conversation as a bridge leads to the discovery and appreciation of the real presence of others, igniting compassion.

Pope Francis' exhortations for the youth not to focus on their online life is marked by insistence. In his homily on World Youth Day 2019, celebrated in the City of Panama, he exhorted to spend more time offline. Life, he said, is not in "the cloud waiting to be downloaded." A life focused online has no meaning, and he challenged young people to be involved in their communities.[253] He repeated the same exhortation in his apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit*, encouraging the young to march on the streets for social issues of justice and protection of the environment.[254] Contact with

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[250] Ibid., 35.

[251] See Sheryll Turkle, *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in the Digital Era* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 3-10.

[252] Ibid., 7.

[253] See *Philippine Inquirer,* "Embrace Life Offline" (January 28, 2019).

[254] See Francis, *Christus Vivit,* nos. 85-90.

creation and other human beings is their bridge to a normal and missionary life.

3. Bridging Across Disciplines

Globalization 3.0 has not presented a rosy picture despite the positive effect of the supply chains of liberating countries from poverty. Underdeveloped countries have achieved prosperity. Within all countries even among the most developed and advanced, however, the gap between the rich and the poor has accentuated. Workers have started to lose their rights and unemployment has risen among the unskilled and the skilled due to the use of robots. The degradation of the environment continues as industries seek better materials for computers and batteries and other fuels in the planet.[255]

Government and private and civil society leaders participate every year in the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland since the last 45 years to analyze and come up with solutions to the pressing social and economic problems of the world. These leaders are committed to work in partnership to improve the state of the world.[256]

Western and Chinese sociologists and philosophers in their July 2019 encounter in America focused on artificial intelligence and its effect on the human person. Spearheaded by Antonio Spadaro, SJ, editor of *La Civiltà Cattolica,* these people shared their reflections on the impact of AI in the development, care and maturity of the human person.[257] This seminar affirmed that humans remained to be the most important factor. AI will not be able to communicate compassion.[258]

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[255] See Klaus Schwab with Nicholas Davis, *Shaping the Future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, (New York: Penguin Random House, 2018) 7-49..

[256] See Klaus Schwab, *The World Economic Forum: A Partner in Shaping History, the First 40 Years* (Geneva: World Economic Forum. 2010), 11-13.

[257] See Antonio Spadaro, "Artificial Intelligence and the Human Person: Chinese and Western Perspective," *Civilta Cattolica* (July 11, 2019): 66-77.

[258] Ibid., 69.

These two global movements manifest the effort to make technology at the service of humanity. Technology alone cannot direct itself. It needs the guidance of sociology, philosophy, economics and other social sciences. The Fourth Industrial Revolution that AI has inaugurated has given birth to a dialogue among digital scientists, philosophers, sociologists, economists, world leaders and the ordinary persons.[259]

The World Economic Forum had declared that the emerging technologies do not determine the fate of humanity. They only help empower humanity to chart its destiny. Humanity shapes the future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It is not a helpless bystander. To decide well, humanity should be guided by values imbedded in the technology itself. Technologies are not neutral and influence already a course of action on the part of users. An open technology like Facebook that accepts the uploading of anyone makes it an open space for fake news and trolls. The World Economic Forum had called on the owners of Facebook and world leaders to formulate policies. Facebook has unsubscribed thousands of trolls and fake news sources while governments have promulgated laws that punish the propagators of fake news.[260] The un-going cleansing of the social media of trolls and fake news is one of the results of this worldwide dialogue.

The European Union (EU) in response to the challenge of the World Economic Forum had formulated the ethics of artificial intelligence. Using AI for diagnosis on health, for instance, does not mean accepting everything that the robots say to the patient. The diagnosis of AI still needs the approval of a human doctor. The EU ethics emphasized the "human agency and oversight," not leaving to the robots everything.[261] AI has been utilized much in health care for

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[259] See Schwab with Nicholas Davis, *Shaping the Future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, 2-3.

[260] Ibid., 15.

[261] See Eleanor Bird, Jasmin Fox-Skelly, Nicola Jenner, Ruth Larbey, Emma Weitkamp and Alan Winfield, *The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence: Issues and Initiatives* (Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020), 24-40.

its precision in diagnosis which does not mean the end of suffering or curing of all diseases. Only compassion, a gift to humans, can mitigate suffering.[262]

4. A Bridge Towards Postmodernity

Relativism characterizes postmodernity.[263] Cardinal Ratzinger's last homily before his election in 2015 as Pope lingered on this theme. He described the "dictatorship of relativism" as the greatest challenge facing the Church. Relativism for Ratzinger had caused a lot of confusion to the faithful, encouraging everyone to question and challenge dogmas. Since relativism promoted an individual assessment of the truth, what resulted is uncertainty and ambiguity.[264] The Church then must be the bulwark of certainty, defining the truth according to objective standards.

Ratzinger's observation reflected a reaction to postmodernity by Christian leaders who wanted to anchor their flock on the solid grounds of truth. John Sivalon identified this reaction as rejection of postmodernity, the reason why many Catholics in North America and Europe had been estranged from their faith. To lure them back, Sivalon saw the need to inculturate the gospel to postmodern culture. The first task in this task is to discover the positive side of uncertainty.[265]

Sivalon observed that uncertainty is the solid ground for truth. It stimulates questions. When people ask, they reveal not only their uncertainty but also the willingness to search for the truth.[266] Uncertainty is a necessary step to reach the truth. Moreover, it reveals the humility of people who recognize their limits and the need to

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[262] See Antonio Spadaro, "Artificial Intelligence," 66-77.

[263] See John C. Sivalon, *God's Mission and Postmodern Culture: The Gift of Uncertainty* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2013), 3-12.

[264] See Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Homily *"Pro Eligiendo Romano Pontifice,"* (18 April 2005).

[265] See Sivalon, *God's Mission and Postmodern Culture,* 13.

[266] Ibid., 16.

listen to others.[267] Those who dialogue are still looking for answers.[268] They cannot engage the other in a fruitful exchange if they are already certain of the truths they possess.

Church people who involve themselves with the social media for evangelization often experience chaos.[269] Bishops for instance who are accustomed to a top down communication may find themselves at loss in the social media. They have to discuss in order to convince, attracting other to their viewpoints through their persuasion, mastery of words and humility to accept that they cannot have satisfying answers to all questions.[270] Truth emerges from dialogue, the result of intense interactivity.[271] A Church inculturated in postmodernity appreciates this intense interactivity and accepts that uncertainty is the usual beginning of all discussions.[272]

Pope Francis' Twitter and Facebook accounts have made his face and words familiar to billions of peoples. He has given Church organizations to do this in his behalf, especially those who want to use his name and words to promote the love for mission. For instance, *Missio* USA, an organization within the Pontifical Mission Societies has created *Missiobot*. Through Facebook, Messenger, and chatbox, *Missiobot* has allowed a one-to-one experience with Pope Francis and the activities of Catholic missionaries around the world. While this is not a direct line to Vatican, *Missiobot* responds "with kindness and

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[267] See Peter C. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), ix-xx.

[268] Ibid.

[269] See Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 87.

[270] See Peter C. Phan, "From *Magisterium* to *Magisteria*: Recent Theologies of the Learning and Teaching Functions of the Church, *Theological Studies* vol. 80 (June 2019): 412.

[271] See John Mansford Prior, "Witness and Presence, Encountering Secular Society by Putting the Last First" in Lazar T. Stanislaus and Martin Ueffing, eds, *Intercultural Mission* vol. 2 (Delhi: Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches, Sankt Augustine, 2015), 271-272

[272] See Sivalon, *God's Mission and Postmodern Culture*, 11-14.

humor just how the Pope himself might." It also adds Pope Francis' stories with "photos, videos and audio clips."[273]

Pope Francis continues thus to build bridges towards the postmodern world, believing that digital connectivity, despite the fake news and the digital liars, is a "holy pilgrimage." This space facilitates "solidarity" and "a genuine experience of fraternity."[274] Postmodernity does not care much about goals, but the process of dialogue. If people already experience respect and trust while doing this process, then uncertainty becomes a bridge to the heart of the other. Postmodernity glorifies dialogue that has become more alive today through the interactivity of digital communications. Dialogue humanizes, reveals the best in humans. To join the intense interactivity happening in the social media is establishing a bridge towards postmodernity.

5. A Bridge to Atheists and Agnostics

In an assessment of the impact of Vatican celebrations online during the Holy Week and Easter celebrations at the height of the corona pandemic of 2020, the vice director of Vatican News Alessandro Gisotti shared that the events attracted millions of viewers, with comments from atheists and agnostics who had been touched by the gestures and words of Pope Francis.[275] Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle described the attraction to Pope Francis as the introduction of the universal Church in many homes where the gospel was still a foreign object. The participation of many people who were not Christians into the celebration, listening to the homilies of the Pope amplified the missionary face of the universal Church.[276] While local churches had used the digital tools for their liturgical celebrations and other activities, the most influencing factor during the pandemic was the universal Church as represented by Pope Francis. His actions

[273] See "The Digital Pope," *US Catholic* (April 2017): 7

[274] See Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 87.

[275] See Carol Glatz, "Vatican Registers Huge Growth, Engagement Online for Holy Week and Easter," *Crux* (April 15,2020): 1.

[276] See Cindy Wooden, "Cardinal Tagle, in New Position Looks for Lessons Learned in the Lockdown," *Crux* (April 15, 2020): 2.

and words gave comfort and assurance to millions regardless of their religious affiliations.

Pope Francis had strengthened his charitable arm by appointing the Polish Cardinal Konrad Krajewski who personally drove a van taking food from factories and distributing it to the homeless staying in empty buildings at the outskirts of Rome. He extended this work to the transgender prostitutes who without work had suffered from hunger.[277] The social media and the Italian press lauded the work of this Cardinal, making this papal charitable work which was largely unknown before Pope Francis a show case of reaching the periphery.[278] The online coverage of this Cardinal who was acting in the name of the Pope presented the universal Church leading in charity, taking the risks to be in the streets for the sake of the homeless.

During the pandemic, Pope Francis described the poor as "the people of the underground." The poor are hidden. To be in mission during the pandemic, the Church must look for them. Thus, his work of charity under this Cardinal was characterized by the search for the homeless, making it a powerful witness to faith. The Pope warned against selfishness, to seek only the preservation of one's life during the lock down.[279]

The pandemic had given impulse to a more powerful connectedness.[280] Pope Francis became the symbol of God's presence, searching for the confused and the desperate during those times.[281] His presence through the social media enabled many to have a personal link with him. And thus, during the pandemic, Pope Francis became the universal shepherd. The digital tools were his bridge towards all peoples. Their power to connect globally and give people

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[277] See Philip Pullella, "Vatican's Robin Hood Helps Feed Transsexual Prostitutes Hit by Lockdown," *Reuters* (April 30, 2020).

[278] Ibid.

[279] See Austen Ivereigh, "Pope Francis Says Pandemic Can Be a Place of Conversion," *The Tablet* (April 8, 2020): 2-3.

[280] See Wooden, "Cardinal Tagle," 2.

[281] See Ivereigh, "Pope Francis," 2.

the possibility to respond and share their reactions had made these tools a necessary instrument for an intercultural mission.

D. Summary

Globalization 3.0 enables homes, organizations and individuals to participate interactively in the spread of information, market and knowledge worldwide, uniting ever more humanity. This hyper globalization did not just produce connections, but isolation and divisions caused by addiction, riches for a few and the use of fake news to destroy others. Due to these challenges, sociologists have attempted to create bridges. There is more insistence on collaboration in conflicts, of men and women of good will solving the challenges of addiction. The World Economic Forum has indicated steps that the economic benefits of Globalization 3.0 reach everyone especially the poor. Involvement in the social media is a bridge towards postmodernity and the digital tools have become the bridge that brought the universal Church to many homes during the corona pandemic. Mission in the digital world is about creating bridges to surmount the gaps and deepen the connectivity. During the corona pandemic, the service rendered by the digital tools has deepened connectivity, covering up for all the challenges of addiction.

CHAPTER IV

EVOLUTION OF INTERCULTURALITY AS A MISSIOLOGICAL CONCEPT

Introduction

This chapter explains the Church's view on mission in the digital world. The researcher sees this in the development of interculturality as a missiological concept. The first part deals with interculturality as a missiological endeavor, its history and evolution as a response to the multicultural world. The second part is about interculturality as prophetic dialogue as explained by missiologists and practiced by Pope Francis. The third is about interculturality and digital communications that has its roots in social communication.

A. Interculturality as a Missiological Endeavor

1. Encountering God in the Other

Multiculturality at a start can be defined as a description of people of different cultures, tolerating the presence of each other in without interaction in one place.[282] Khanna discussed multiculturality in the continuous "global genetic dilution" that has accelerated through "global connectivity."[283] Intermarriages among peoples of different

[282] See Roger Schroeder, "Prophetic Dialogue and Interculturalityity," in *Mission on the Road to Emmaus*, eds. Cathy Ross and Stephen Bevans (London: SCM Press, 2015), 217-218.

[283] Khanna, *Connectography*, 347.

races have accentuated and the genetics of many people in the planet contains a mixture of Asian, European, African and Arabic blood.[284]

By the mere fact that peoples of different cultures and races live side by side, sharing in space, work and education, the mixture of blood and cultures naturally happens. Countries that claim of being mono- blooded are fewer, and mono-cultural societies are limited to indigenous tribes.[285] Through migration and connectivity, multiculturality has become a daily experience of everyone.[286] The Internet is a place that teems with the universal faces that communicate and form global communities. Friedman underscores this in his observation about the flattening of the world, of people from human rights observers to the indigenous tribes, reaching out to each other.[287]

The multicultural world as a context for mission evolved from *Redemptoris Missio*. John Paul II has expanded mission *ad gentes* to include not only distant places but also the great cities with its massive population, often impoverished, with isolated and de-christianized social groups.[288] He asked missionaries to go to the non-Christians, women, the poor, the marginalized, and the youth. Bridge building is to break open the closed multiculturality, of people living in islands and isolation in the great cities.[289] This bridge building across multicultural communities and societies is interculturality.

Interculturality as a missiological concept started to filter in the United States and other Western countries that saw their parishes and congregations receiving more people from other countries due to migration. These people settled in abandoned places where the cost of living was lower, giving life to dying parishes and congregations but also challenging Christians to become more conscious of differences

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[284] Ibid., 347-348.

[285] Ibid.

[286] See Agcaracar, *Interculturality in the Service of Communion*, 4.

[287] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 102-110.

[288] See John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 37.

[289] See John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 37.

in cultures, and the need to develop an intercultural communication among themselves.[290] The intercultural living became a fundamental challenge for these parishes and congregations in order to unify their communities, preventing ethnic ghettoes.[291]

Serving the challenge of multicultural communities has passed through "significant levels of disruption and pain," challenging theologians and pastors to encourage more intercultural dialogue through a solid Scriptural and theological foundation.[292] This process from a mere multicultural community to an intercultural one has made Christians more aware of God's presence in their communities, and their responsibility to carry God's activities to others in his behalf.[293] Intercultural living has resulted to intercultural mission. This work for a harmonious intercultural living has made Christians more conscious of the dynamism of the Spirit who breaks the islands created by ethnic differences, to carry his Word across cultures and persons.[294] Their intercultural living becomes a witness to the multicultural society which they are serving. Thus, from mere concern to organize a truly fraternal community within their cultural differences, these multicultural parishes and congregations see their harmonious intercultural living as a part of their witness to evangelize their multicultural society.

These congregations then took efforts to provide a theological foundation to their effort of crossing boundaries and constructing bridges. A multifaceted vision of God could only come from his faces revealed in other cultures and peoples. Episcopalian pastor Erick H. Law argued that a mono cultural vision of God impoverishes.[295] The final reason to build bridges across cultures is the opportunity

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[290] See Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church, A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2007), 49-50.

[291] Ibid., 51.

[292] Ibid.

[293] Ibid., 19.

[294] Ibid., 18.

[295] See Erick Law, *The Word at the Crossing, Living the Good News in a Multicontextual Community* (New York: Chalice Press, 2004), 21-26.

for a renewed experience of God's presence. Interculturality then offers the possibility of a deeper God-experience, enriching the Christian faith.[296] This search for a theological foundation to support and encourage more intercultural dialogue has led to a deeper understanding of cultures, differentiating the dominant from the weak, while identifying other peoples as the new places where God hides himself, waiting to be discovered, encouraging crossing borders in communities.

2. Intercultural Living and Mission

The distinction between intercultural living and mission became more pronounced in the process undertaken by the members of the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD). Having stated the context of their mission today as the multicultural world, they first affirmed the international character of their communities. This means that they are obliged to form communities made up of members from different countries and nationalities.[297] They intentionally created religious multicultural communities. Their process to form a fraternal community is the foundation of their mission towards the multicultural world.[298]

They dealt with the issues of cultures, ethnocentrism, and the virtues necessary to live with the other who is culturally different. Community life provides the ambience for a sustained interaction among them, where they discover their cultural riches and vices, transforming and converting each other. The experience of enrichment in this community living is the discovery that every brother has something to contribute to each other, and the faces of the other reveal Jesus' presence.[299] Their intercultural living became the object of their theological reflection, seeing it as their witness in the multicultural

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[296] Ibid.

[297] See Agcaracar, *Interculturality in the Service of Communion*, 99-106.

[298] See Lazar T. Stanislaus and Martin Ueffing, eds., *Intercultural Living* (Delhi: Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches, Institut, Sankt Augustin, 2015).

[299] Ibid., "Introduction," xxiv-v.

world, their best preparation for an intercultural mission.[300] They could help others cross borders, encouraging mutual exchange and dialogue for they have done this first in their communities. As they are enriched culturally and experience conversion in their communities, so they must cultivate interculturality to the people whom they are sent.[301]

The world had been multicultural since its beginning. Through migration and globalization, this has become more visible now. The world is in a continual flux of cultural encounters of peoples and races.[302] There are rich strangers as in the case of the tourists who are welcomed and served, and the poor strangers as in the case of the refugees who suffer from discrimination. The focus is on the poor strangers with whom Pope Francis wants more encounter and dialogue.[303] In the experience of the SVD's, communities that take seriously their intercultural living become also effective in their dealing with the poor strangers.

3. Inculturation Vs. Interculturation

Cardinal Josef Ratzinger in the celebration of the 500 years of the arrival of Columbus in America (1992) proposed that "interculturation" should replace 'inculturation."[304] What happened 500 years ago in America was a "meeting of cultures." He understood "interculturation" as a mark of the death of cultures and a resurrection towards a universal culture, a synthesis that can unite peoples and nations.[305] "Interculturation," which is synonymous

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[300] See Agcaracar, *Interculturality in the Service of Communion,* 99-106.

[301] See Schroeder, "Prophetic Dialogue and Interculturality," 215-218.

[302] Pernia, "Foreword," 3.

[303] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 210.

[304] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *"Der christliche Glaube vor der Herausforderung der Kulturen,"* in Paulus Gordan ed., *Evangelium und Inkulturation (1492-2000), Graz/Wien/Koln: Styria,* 1993, 14, as cited by Paulo Suess, "Interculturality, Inculturation and Interculturation, Dossiers Regarding a Postcolonial Mission," in *Intercultural Mission* eds Lazar T. Stanislaus and Martin Ueffing (New Delhi: Steyler Missionswissenschafliches Institut, Sankt Augustin, 2015), 318.

[305] Ibid.

to "interculturality," was actually the first word invented to answer the challenge of the multicultural world. Ratzinger's insistence to use it to replace "inculturation" may have led to its substitution by "interculturality."

Inculturation evolved after Vatican II when criticisms of missionary activities of the past became more prevalent.[306] Inculturation as a missiological concept glorifies the differences of cultures, opposing uniformity that had been the characteristic of mission trust in the years prior to the council. Mission without inculturation was just colonization in disguise.[307]

Aylard Shorter observed that "interculturation" does not reveal the sinful aspects of the missionary's culture and of the missionary enterprise that had done harm to the local cultures.[308] It does not insist on the abuses of missionaries who destroyed the cultures of the people they evangelized. To remove inculturation, which reminds missionaries about the Western imposition of culture to the Americas, Asia and Africa, in favor of a neutral term "interculturation" will do much harm to mission.[309]

The use of "inculturation" by the FABC in 1971 to describe the triple dialogue with the Asian poor, their culture and religions had made it popular.[310] The use of inculturation in these instances presumes that the missionary belonged to a mono-cultural world,

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[306] See James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, "Introduction, Faith and Culture in Perspective," in *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, Faith and Culture*, eds. James A. Scherer and Stephen Bevans (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 5.

[307] Suess, "Interculturality, Inculturation and Interculturation," 319-321.

[308] See Aylard Shorter, "Inculturation: Win or Lose the Future?" in *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, Faith and Culture* eds. James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 56.

[309] See Suess, "Interculturality, Inculturation and Interculturation," 318.

[310] Stephen B. Bevans, "Inculturation of Theology in Asia ("The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences 1970-1995"), *Studia Missionalia* 45 (1996): 8.

bringing the gospel to a mono-cultural audience.[311] The focus though was an interpretation of culture that focused on its positive elements based on a theology that God is the first missionary, arriving before any human missionary, leaving behind his footprints in creation and the indigenous cultures.[312]

Ratzinger's understanding of interculturation as a meeting of two cultures (The Spanish and the indigenous), emphasized that faith is always imbedded in cultures, and the first interaction is always between the culture of the missionary and that of the recipient of his/her work. Antonio Pernia used interculturality exclusive to the new context of a multicultural world. In Pernia's analysis, missionaries in our times are already multicultural, carrying the gospel to peoples exposed also to many cultures, thus any dialogue of cultures that happens is already intercultural.[313] Thus, interculturality has evolved as a missiological concept addressed to the multicultural context, providing a contrast to the mono cultural world of inculturation.

4. Interculturality as a Partner of Inculturation

Interculturality as another "dimension of mission" becomes complete with inculturation.[314] Rather than seeing interculturality and inculturation as two separate concepts, they are partners. They complement each other starting from their roles in evangelization, their theological foundations and their practical implications in the life of the Church.

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[311] See Antonio M. Pernia, "Foreword," in Samuel Naceno Agcaracar, *Interculturality in the Service of Communion: Explaining New Pathways of Mission* (Manila: Logos Publication, 2010), 1.

[312] See Jose M. de Mesa, "Inculturation as Pilgrimage," in *Mission and Culture, The Louis J. Luzbetak Lectures*, ed. Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2012), 8-9.

[313] Pernia, "Foreword," 3-5.

[314] See Agcaracar, *Interculturality in the Service of Communion*, 99-106.

Bishop Francisco Claver designated a role for interculturality and inculturation in evangelization.[315] Inculturation, which is a Jesuit-invented term,[316] takes place only after interculturality. The first encounter between the missionary and the people with whom he/she worked is first a dialogue of cultures, which is interculturality. As his/her culture recedes to the background, it leaves the gospel free from any cultural captivity, enabling him/her to adopt the gospel to the culture of the other. This is inculturation.[317]

The theological foundations for inculturation and interculturality are also interconnected. Inculturation, which is based in the incarnation needs interculturality which is anchored in the Trinitarian theology of mission.[318] What emerges often in the elaboration of the Trinity as the foundation of mission is the glorification of the Father and the Son, a "bination."[319] The Holy Spirit is set aside, forgotten.[320]

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[315] See Francisco Claver, "The Encounter Between the Gospel and the Values of the Indigenous People in Asia: Challenges of the Future," *East Asian Pastoral Service* (2002): 350-66.

[316] See Pedro Arrupe, "Letter to the Whole Society on Inculturation," *Studies in the International Apostolate of Jesuits* (Washington: Jesuit Missions, June 1978) quoted by Carl F. Starkloff S.J., "Inculturation and Cultural Systems (Part 1), *Theological Studies* 55 (1994): 69. Arrupe's definition of inculturation centers on incarnation: " The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in aparticular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies culture, transforming and making it so as to bring about new creation." Arrupe gave this definition as a response to the exhortation of the 32nd General Congregation (1974-1975) where he was asked to define inculturation that was mentioned in the Decree 5: "The Work of Inculturation and the Promotion of Christian Life. The decree was short and the Congregation asked the general to consult experts to define what inculturation is all about, which has been the Society's missionary trust" (66).

[317] See Claver, "The Encounter Between the Gospel and the Values of the Indigenous People," 355-359.

[318] Agcaracar, *Interculturality in the Service of Communion*, 54-64.

[319] Antonio M. Pernia, "Mission: Sharing the Gift of the Spirit," *Missio Inter Gentes* 4, no. 1 (January 2018): 19.

[320] Ibid., 5-9.

Interculturality focuses in the Holy Spirit that reveals the newness of God through the experience of the holy in the strangers.[321] The Holy Spirit pinpoints to the otherness of God in people who are culturally different. These are the migrants, the refugees, the poor and those who belong to the periphery. Meaningful and long encounter with these people will enable missionaries to experience the "nearness of God."[322] Inculturation with interculturality brings missionaries back to the Trinity, where the challenges of a multicultural and multi religious world find their resonance in the differences and unity of the three divine persons.

The partnership between inculturation and interculturality leads to a better understanding of the Church. Inculturation is about the process of how the gospel in order to have permanency in the lives of people becomes culture.[323] The local Church becomes mature when its expressions of faith, worship and organization are imbedded in its culture.[324] Interculturality builds communion with other Churches through mission, emphasizing on the Church's hospitality and welcoming role. It focuses on a Church that creates bridges and harmony, an agent of reconciliation among peoples.[325]

The inculturated Church is the local face of the Church and the intercultural Church, the universal face of the Church.[326] This explains why mature local Churches must be "sending Churches" as well as "receiving Churches."[327] A mature Church does keep the riches of its faith to itself but shares them to others. Its most important gift

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[321] See Javier, "Interculturality," 38-39.

[322] Pernia, "Foreword," 2.

[323] See Jared Staudt, "Culture in the Magisterium of Pope John Paul II: Evangelization through Dialogue and Renewal of Society," *Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture* 3, no. 1 (March 2014): 53-54.

[324] See Louis J. Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures, New Perspectives in *Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 44.

[325] See Agcarar, *Interculturality in the Service of Communion*, 128-131,

[326] Ibid.

[327] See Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 44-46.

is its missionaries to other nations, a sign of its universal concern for the spread of the faith.

B. **Interculturality As Prophetic Dialogue**

1. **Prophetic Dialogue**

Interculturality and prophetic dialogue developed in the general chapters of the Divine Word Missionaries.[328] Prophetic dialogue contains the missionary experiences of Asia with its emphasis on dialogue with world religions and Latin America with its prophetic denouncement of injustices.[329] This synthesis is the SVD's strategy of mission.[330] Prophetic dialogue makes interculturality workable in the day to day pastoral or mission activities. The face of interculturality on the ground of mission is prophetic dialogue. The newness of its implications attracted many other missiologists of other Christian Churches, applying this strategy to all sorts of missions in their sphere of influence.[331]

Prophetic dialogue demands first a careful discernment. This is not just a fast reaction to any event or person but should evolve from prayer.[332] The missionary dances with the Trinity. His steps are careful and contemplative.[333] He/she first examines the context of mission from the eyes of the Trinity and formulates his/her choice whether it be dialogue or prophesy.

Prophetic dialogue places more importance on dialogue. Even if the stance is prophetic, it should not lose the language of dialogue,

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[328] See Society of Divine Word, *In Dialogue with the Word, Documents of the 15th General Chapter SVD* (Rome: SVD Publications, 2012), no. 54.

[329] Ibid.

[330] See Robert J. Schreiter, "Reconciliation and Prophetic Dialogue," in *Mission on the Road to Emmaus,* eds. Cathy Ross and Stephen Bevans (London: SCM Press, 2015), 133.

[331] See Ibid.

[332] Ibid., 123-135.

[333] See Dawn Nothwehr, "The Church's Mission of Ecojustice: A Prophetic Dialogue Approach," in *Mission on the Road to Emmaus*, eds. Cathy Ross and Stephen B. Bevans (London: SCM Press, 2015), 91.

maintaining respect, condemning the sin but not the sinner.[334] The harmony disturbed by sin can only be restored through a denouncement that aims to restore that harmony, and not the rupture of relationships.[335] It seeks the salvation of everyone, including the perpetrator of injustice. The contemplative spirit of the missionary trains him/her to speak harshly and gently so that people may be able to recognize God's voice even amidst the most terrible injustice. The same Spirit should inspire him/her to seek to transform the bad elements of a culture through gentle persuasion.[336]

2. Pope Francis' Dialogue with the Lost

Pope Francis had made a careful discernment at the beginning of his pontificate when he emphasized mercy and compassion. The journalist Andrea Tornielli saw this attractive message evolving during Francis' first mass where he proclaimed that the Lord's strongest message was mercy. The Pope used the plight of the woman caught in adultery in the gospel of John whom the scribes and the Pharisees were about to stone as prescribed by the law of Moses.[337] Pope Francis contextualized the plight of this woman to the situation of many people today who are judged and imprisoned by their past. He encouraged them to go to Jesus who has "a special knack for forgetting."[338] By choosing mercy and compassion as his mission approach, Pope Francis opted for dialogue.

The Pope presented a Jesus who did not accuse nor mention the sin of the woman. Jesus defended her from a "just condemnation" as stated by the law, a principle that Pope Francis would apply to all people carrying the burden of the law in our times.[339] His option for dialogue revitalizes the Catholic mission. His hope is that those

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[334] See Schroeder, "Prophetic Dialogue and Interculturality," 220.

[335] Ibid., 221.

[336] See Nothwehr, "The Church's Mission," 92,

[337] Ibid.

[338] See Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy a Conversation with Andrea Tornielli* (New York: Random House, 2016), ix-xi.

[339] Ibid., xvi.

who have been estranged from the Church like the divorcees and the gays may return.[340] By taking dialogue as the first step, Pope Francis set aside "sin" as the last truth to be told, focusing more on a conversation that welcomes and embraces, knowing that much can be done once these people who consider themselves outside of the Church experience the hands of friendship.[341]

Pope Francis encouraged pastors of the Church to use a style of communication that does not reflect triumphant superiority over the enemy or insult those whom "the world considers as lost." Compassionate words "can help mitigate life's troubles and offer warmth to those who have known only the coldness of judgment." It is not the role of Pastors to separate "sinners from the righteous" but "to uphold the truth with love, judging only situations of violence, exploitation and corruption, but not individuals."[342]

Pope Francis deepened his exhortation by labelling himself as a "sinner."[343] By accepting that he is a sinner among sinners, he accepts "vulnerability" as a necessary ingredient of his dialogue of mercy to people judged as sinners by ecclesiastical law.[344] This is part of his image of the Church as a "field hospital," a Church that becomes a place of treatment as if in a combat, receiving treatment "for both small and large infirmities."[345] It is a mobile structure that offers "first aid and immediate care" through the powerful medicine of mercy and compassion.[346] By calling himself a sinner, the first patient to enter the field hospital was the Pope himself.

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[340] William P. Gregory, "Pope Francis' Effort to Revitalize Catholic Mission," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* vol. 43, issue 1 (January 2019): 8.

[341] John Baker, "Prophetic Dialogue and Contemporary Culture," *Mission on the Road to Emmaus*, eds. Cathy Ross and Stephen B. Bevans (London: SCM Press, 2015), 205.

[342] See Francis, *Message for the 50th World Communications Day "Communication and Mercy: A Fruitful Encounter"* (24 January 2016).

[343] Antonio Spadaro, "A Big Heart Open to God: An Interview with Pope Francis," *America* (September 30, 2013): 12.

[344] See Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 19-39.

[345] Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy*, 52.

[346] Ibid.

Pope Francis deepened his dialogue with the sinners by doing it from the inside where judgment is seen as a product of the Holy Spirit acting through these people, not from any outsider.[347] Such outlook echoes the SVD's concept of "Anthropos" of doing mission, which means that the gospel must not enter parachuting from the outside, but starts "within."[348] Mercy and compassion are the best instruments for this entrance from within, a passage of "really seeing and really listening" giving space to the other.[349] This guides them gently to judge themselves and accept their faults. Judgment simply manifests "taking up power" that cuts connectedness with others, hardening their hearts.[350]

By avoiding judgment, Pope Francis provides the space through which these people may experience God's presence in their lives. He has given them opportunities to participate in the life of the Church.[351] This treatment enables them not to "feel excommunicated" nor "living in the state of sin."[352] They discover that despite what they have done, God loves them and welcomes them back to his community. This could be the start of their path to repentance.

Pope Francis' word and gesture express God's mercy and compassion.[353] Compassion opens hearts and minds, allowing conversation, a mutual exchange, a "life of communion."[354] Compassionate words transform hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, allowing friendship and openness to develop, avoiding the vicious

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[347] See Baker, "Prophetic Dialogue and Contemporary Culture," 204-205.

[348] Antonio M. Pernia, "Foreword" in Edgar Javier, *Anthropology and Mission: A Primer for Incarnational Missionaries* (Manila: Logos Publications, 2018.), viii.

[349] Baker, "Prophetic Dialogue and Contemporary Culture," 205.

[350] Stephen B. Bevans and Cathy Ross, "Mission as Prophetic Dialogue," in *Mission on the Road to Emmaus*, eds Cathy Ross and Stephen Bevans (London: SCM Press, 2015), xiii.

[351] See Stephen B. Bevans, "Pope Francis's Missiology of Attraction," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* vol. 43 (January 2019): 24-25.

[352] Ibid.

[353] See Francis, *Message for the 50th World Communication Day.*

[354] See Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, *Connectedness Towards Communion* (Makati: St. Pauls, 2013), 45.

cycle of condemnation and judgment. Thus, words should be properly reflected and pondered. Words coming from the lips and pen of Christians "ought to be a constant encouragement to communion."[355]

3. Opposition to Mercy and Compassion

This message is not an attraction for some. Pope Francis met opposition after the publication of his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) where he reminded pastors that the Church should avoid "judging people and imposing rules on them without considering their struggles."[356] He referred to the situations of many divorced couples who remarried and asked to receive Holy Communion. Pope Francis made a mild assertion that divorced and remarried couples may sometimes receive communion.[357] He emphasized the role of personal conscience urging the Church authorities to appreciate the context of people's lives when helping them make good decisions.[358]

Conservative priests and theologians published an open letter *Correctio filialis de haeresibus propagates* (July 6, 2017) that they described as a "filial correction" to the Pope.[359] Two years later, in their second letter, they asked Bishops to admonish Pope Francis that he may renounce the "heresies that he has already professed" in reference among others to *Amoris Laetitia*.[360] This is not surprising. Church leaders that live in an environment of laws and judgment will have difficulty in absorbing this attractive message.

The picture of a Church in mission that Pope Francis has initiated recalls the scene of Matthew 9:11 of Jesus spending time with Matthew and his friends and who received this question from

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[355] See Francis, *Message for the 50th World Communication Day.*

[356] James Martin, "Top 10 Takeaways from *'Amoris Laetitia*'," *America* (April 2016):17.

[357] Andrew Brown, "The War Against Pope Francis," *The Guardian* (October 17, 2017): 1.

[358] Martin, "Top 10 Takeaways from 'Amoris Laetitia'," 18.

[359] Michael J. O'Loughlin, "Critics of Pope Francis Level New Accusation of 'Heresy,'" *America* (May 1, 2019): 8.

[360] Ibid.

the Pharisees: "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus was also questioned when he conversed peacefully with these people. The outcome – the birth of Matthew the apostle – was worth it. Those who have experienced God's mercy and compassion learn also to share him with others, becoming effective missionaries.[361] That the lost are returning to the Church simply means that Pope Francis' choice of dialogue is right. Humanity today as in the time Jesus urgently needs mercy and compassion.

C. Interculturality and Digital Communications

1. Digital Interculturality

The approval of *Inter Mirifica*, (1963) a decree of Vatican II was hailed by Alberione as the official ecclesial confirmation of his pastoral ministry and mission.[362] It confirmed his mission because *Inter Mirifica*, which does not have any dogmatic teaching, encouraged Catholics and all people of good will to use the mass media of communications to spread the good news and good will among peoples. Such task he and the Congregation had done since its foundation.

Inter Mirifica received the most negative votes in the history of the council. According to Eilers, much of the debates centered on the use of technical terms like "mass media" and "audiovisuals."[363] The council fathers did not accept them as a term for usage in the document for being "too material and technical," that set aside "people."[364] The writers of the document then were forced to look for another term -- "social communication." The most important

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[361] See Bevans and Ross, "Mission as Prophetic Dialogue," xii- xiii.

[362] See Lamera, *James Alberione*, 14-19.

[363] Franz-Josep Eilers, "Go and Proclaim" (Mk 16: 15), Mission and Social Communication in a New Culture for Evangelization," in *Mission beyond Ad Gentes. A Symposium. Studia Instituti Missiologici Societatis Verbi Divini*. Jacob Kavunkal / Christian Tauchner (editors) (Germany: Steyler Missionwissenschaftliches Institut, St. Augustin, 2016), 103.

[364] Ibid.

contribution of *Inter Mirifica*, as Eilers and other commentaries observed, lies in these two words: "social communication."[365]

"Social communication" freed this ministry from the confines of "mass media" making the Church aware that "good communication" is not just a transfer of information but to enter into a "relationship."[366] *Inter Mirifica* planted an awareness that "social communication" is not only to broadcast or to proclaim, but includes face to face encounter and conversations that builds relationships.[367] *Inter Mirifica* then did not just confirm the charism of Alberione, but in a sense, criticized his exclusive vision of mission using the mass media. Mass media limits mission to proclamation, which reduces the audience into a passive hearer or reader, not encouraging relationships. Digital communication, a combination of mass media and interpersonal relationship, is the fulfillment of social communications.[368] Its main characteristic is its dialogic process.

Benedict XVI observed that the social media has become a venue for respect, dialogue and friendship, reaching isolated places and bridging peoples across the globe. The social media reflects the multicultural world and a venue of "forming communities and networks," of mutual "sharing of ideas and opinions." This interculturality has facilitated "dynamic forms of learning and communication. Since the social media should be the venue for dialogue, Benedict XVI asked the participants not to hide in anonymity and reveal their identities.[369] Only then can it become a venue for dialogue and friendship.

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[365] Franz-Josef Eilers, *Communicating in Ministry and Mission* (Manila: Logos (Divine Word) Publications, Inc., 2018), 17.

[366] Paul Tighe, "The Church in the Digital Culture," in *Seminar on Communications for Religious* (March 9, 2018), 2.

[367] Ibid., 3.

[368] See Baase, *A Gift of Fire*, 22-23.

[369] See Benedict XVI, *Message for the 43rd World Communications Day: New Technologies, New Relationships, Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship* (24 May 2013).

As a missiological tool, interculturality could only be understood when placed in the context of digital connectivity. More than one half of the world's population are digitally connected where everyone can enter by the touch of his/her fingers. Digital connectivity concretizes an "interactive and participative" communication that enriches everyone around the planet.[370] Interculturality as mission cannot miss the world of the Internet and its network society that links countries and nations.

Thus, interculturality through digital communications is a dialogue that starts with missionaries "of depth" who are attentive to what is happening around them, believing that the "other" has "something worthwhile to say."[371] They do not just wait for their responses, but study their audience and the context of their messages. This sensitivity to the other, to their audience is the most important prerequisite in their missionary task.

A missionary as a witness in the social media has to listen, converse and encourage the audience.[372] This means not just bombarding the people with "answers" to questions that they may not have asked, but allowing them to ask questions and express themselves fully.[373] Pure proclamation has no place in the social media. Listening implies "a willingness" to give oneself to others by "engaging their questions and their doubts" with patience and respect.[374] When people manage to express their deepest spiritual longings and questions, then the social media does not just become a "network of wires" but of "people."[375] Humanizing the digital communications means making it a place for interculturality, a dialogue of mutual enrichment between the missionaries and the recipients of the gospel.

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[370] Tighe, "The Church in the Digital Culture," 5.

[371] See Francis, *Message for the 48th World Communications Day.*

[372] See Benedict XVI, *Message for the 45th World Communications Day: Truth, Proclamation and Authenticity of Life in the Digital Age* (June 5, 2011).

[373] Tighe, "The Church in the Digital Culture," 4.

[374] See Benedict XVI, *Message for the 43rd World Communications Day.*

[375] See Francis, *Message for the 48th World Communications Day.*

Yet the Internet is an environment in which the Church has still to learn how to live. The Internet environment challenges any truth that simply comes down from the above, inspiring the Church to rethink about its understanding of *magisterium*. This does not mean abolishing the accepted dogmas. This is to accept that endless dialogue seems the way to reformulate such truths. Digital interactivity has produced a mentality that truth can only evolve from the below, through dialogue and conversation, without the imposition of authorities.[376] The challenge is not to reach the goal, but to live the process of interactivity with patience.

A "spirituality of technology" is not just about the "taming of the forces of nature to live a happy life," but the mastery of the spirit over the material. This happens when digital communication is used for the establishment and strengthening of God's kingdom.[377] God's kingdom is present in this planet when people enjoy the dialogue and the listening to one other, a sign of their mutual respect and appreciation of the Holy Spirit's presence in each other.[378] This interculturality could only function through the spirit-filled missionaries who fear not the digital tools and see them as divine-willed instruments to foment more unity and communion among peoples.[379]

2. Mission *Ad Gentes*

Digital connectivity allows people to become aware of the strangers that they would not have never known if they have no Internet connection. Thus, the Internet is the place of interculturality where strangers by millions abound. Mission *ad gentes*, which John Paul II, described as a priority in *Redemptoris Missio*[380] can begin with the videos uploaded by anthropologists and journalists about the lives of indigenous peoples at the remotest part of the world.

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[376] See Antonio Spadaro, *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet* (New York: Fordham University, 2014), vii-x.

[377] Ibid., 9-12.

[378] Ibid., vii-ix.

[379] Ibid., 9-12.

[380] John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 87.

The video of Sentilese tribe that has little contact with civilization attracts million hits in YouTube. People praise their simple way of life and asking everyone including missionaries not to touch their island and to respect their way of life.[381] These positive reactions from viewers appreciating their culture form a part of the communication established worldwide. The indigenous people who may also read the positive comments may also learn to appreciate other peoples that they have never seen, fomenting an intercultural dialogue.

Connectivity enables others to know more their values that were once only available to missionaries and anthropologists. The missiologist Edgar Javier described the renewed attraction to the culture of the indigenous peoples as a return to the "archaic." This could not have happened without the videos about their life, celebrations and customs which are easily accessed through the Internet.[382] The observation that globalization has created a universal meta-culture, at the expense of local and indigenous culture may not really hold water.

Friedman writes about the "globalization of the local," a part of the flattening of the world in Globalization 3.0."[383] The American culture symbolized by McDonald is not on the way to take over the local cultures. There is a renewed appreciation of the beauty of diversity that accompanies the flattening of the world.[384] Connectivity creates bridges, breaks down walls. Through this intercultural dialogue happening in a massive way, many more are becoming aware of God's presence in unknown tribes and indigenous peoples. This is

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[381] YouTube, "A Banned Island in India, North Sentinel Island," accessed April 27, 2019. Comments on this site are the following: "It's so fantastic that they exist. They must be left alone." "They are living peaceful lives they don't have to worrying about greed money selfishness anxiety depression etc...no wonder they don't want outsiders to corrupt their lives."

[382] See Edgar G. Javier, "The Wisdom of Indigenous People and Missiological Paradigm Shift: A Missioner's Reflection," in *Mission and the Global Church* (May 17, 2014): 30.

[383] See Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 477-488.

[384] Ibid.

the start of an intercultural mission that preserves "what is good and humanizing in each culture," ennobling them for the glory of God.[385]

Connectivity has provided bridges that allow indigenous people to make themselves known, enriching others through their values of respect for nature and sharing of resources. Their friends and supporters have also turned it into a venue for prophecy that denounces their exploitation and the grabbing of their ancestral lands. Stories of tribal exploitation like those of the threatened tribe of Akuntsu of the Brazilian Amazons abound in the Internet. Through a YouTube uploaded by a group of journalists, the destruction of their land and culture was carefully recorded. Massacres had reduced them to six members stirring anger and condemnation from various parts of the world.[386]

Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Querida Amazonia* is not just an abstraction for the rest of the world. This synodal encounter acquired more life through videos in YouTube. People could easily have a glimpse of the hunting, the dances and other rituals of these peoples, their simplicity in contrast to the greed of the miners and ranchers. Representatives of these indigenous peoples in the Synod of the Amazons "saw the peripheries" moving to the center of the "Church's attention."[387] They can do so with more effect due to their presence in YouTube.

Pope Francis' first message in *Querida Amazonia* was prophetic, lamenting their exploitation and the destruction of ecological

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[385] Javier, "Interculturality," 42.

[386] "Akuntsu" unloaded from YouTube March 3, 2020. This video has attracted millions of viewers who are all appalled and condemned the exploitation of these indigenous people. The journalists who did this work interviewed the governor who claimed that these people did not belong to Brazil but to Bolivia. The ranchers repeated the same message. Comments barrage this video from extreme sorrow and condemnation of the evil coming from the greed of the ranchers and farmers who had killed their male hunters, leaving the tribe only with old people.

[387] Mauricio Lopez Oropeza, "I was at the Amazon Synod. Here are its 3 Significant Lessons and Challenges for the Church," *America* (February 19, 2020): 9.

interconnectedness between people and creation.[388] *Querida Amazonia* placed in the background of these videos that transfer the Amazons and its people in the computer screens accentuates Pope Francis' prophetic stance, touching hearts and minds, hitting hard governments, miners and ranchers, and their allies among the multinational corporations. Digital interculturality expressed in prophecy in favor of these indigenous peoples becomes a powerful tool to stir consciences and move peoples and governments to action.

3. The Priority of the Poor in Intercultural Communication

Cardinal Antonio Tagle in the meeting of the Pauline editors 2017 argued that the digital world can be evangelized by putting more stories of the poor. They have the power to teach about Christian faith, hope and love and thus should be at the center, not at the periphery of communication works.[389] Missionaries then must consider the poor as "assets."[390] The poor have values that include "solidarity," "giving of one's life for others," "sharing bread with the hungry, and showing patience in the face of adversity."[391]

Tagle echoed "the missiology of attraction of Pope Francis" that makes the poor central to the Church's existence.[392] Their being at the center of the Church is a challenge for Christians to find Christ in them, to be their voice in their causes, "to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share" through them.[393]

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[388] See Pope Francis, Post- Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (2 February 2020), nos. 12-16.

[389] See Luis Antonio Tagle, "The Poor and the Excluded" in Society of St. Paul, *2nd International Seminar Pauline Publishers, Ariccia, 16-22 October 2017* (Rome: General House, 2018), 149-150.

[390] Stan Chu Ilo, "Poverty and Economic Justice in Pope Francis," *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, vol. 23 (2019): 51.

[391] Ibid.

[392] Bevans, "Pope Francis's Missiology of Attraction," 23.

[393] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 198.

Option for the poor has been forgotten in the previous decades due to the censures against the theologians of liberation.[394] Pope Francis' revival means that what has been condemned has been accepted as official Church teaching.[395] Speaking to slum dwellers in Nairobi, Kenya, Pope Francis reminded them of their role of evangelizing the world, congratulating them, because the path of Jesus begins in the periphery, from the poor "towards others."[396] In the same vein, he reminded priests and religious gathered in Manila Cathedral on January 16, 2015: "The poor… the poor are at the center of the Gospel, are the heart of the Gospel, if we take away the poor from the Gospel we cannot understand the whole message of Jesus Christ."[397]

Peter Phan explained that the poor are the teachers of "bishops and theologians" not by their "theological scholarship" (orthodoxy) which "often they cannot afford to acquire but by their voluntary or enforced practice of Jesus' own poverty and self- emptying (orthopraxis)." [398] They are the main source of theology, offering "pastoral agents, theologians and missiologists" a "direct access to God made man."[399]

Intercultural communication with the poor evangelizes the missionary, making him/her a credible witness of the Christian faith. This is the reason why intercultural dialogue with the poor must be cultivated first. Their stories and narratives present in the digital communication would enrich their audience. A digital intercultural communication with them would help a lot in humanizing the world.

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[394] Daniel Franklin Pilario, Lisa Sowle Cahill, Maria Clara Bingemer and Sarojini Nadar, "Editorial Globalization and the Church of the Poor," *Concilium* 3 (2015): 8.

[395] Ibid.

[396] Ibid.

[397] Francis, *Sunshine Amidst the Rain Earthquake that Awakens* (Makati: St. Pauls, 2015), 13.

[398] See Peter C. Phan, *The Joy of Religious Pluralism, A Personal Journey* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 44-45.

[399] Ilo, "Poverty and Economic Justice in Pope Francis," 39.

D. Summary

Interculturality is one of the Church's responses of doing mission in the multicultural world as attested by the current reflections from papal exhortations to those of theologians and missiologists. This interculturality is expressed through prophetic dialogue. Pope Francis has opted for the use of dialogue through his compassionate gestures and messages. Digital communication especially through social media has opened a massive way of interculturality, opening for encounter with indigenous peoples and the poor. Thus, interculturality could not be understood unless put in the context of digital communication that facilitates mission *ad gentes,* the prophetic stance against those who exploit indigenous people and preferential option for the poor. The Church thus has developed interculturality as a tool to explain mission in the digital world with its challenges of diversity and multiculturality.

CHAPTER V

CREATING BRIDGES IN THE BIBLICAL WORLD

Introduction

This chapter explains the view of the Bible of mission in the digital world. The researcher links this with the history of bridge building from the Old to the New Testaments. The first part deals about how God forced and encouraged migration in the Old Testament, by creating a multicultural world where Israel played an important role in creating bridges to the strangers. The second part tackles how Jesus reached to the strangers inviting everyone to establish bridges to the needy and the wounded. The third part is how Paul initiated an intercultural living with his companions and encouraging an intercultural mission in the Roman Empire.

A. Creating a Multicultural World

1. Migration in the Beginning

Salvation history developed through migration. The Biblical missiologist Joan Maruskin observed that it began with the migration of God's spirit in creation, ending with the book of Revelation, written by the refugee John in the island of Patmos.[400] In between the beginning and the conclusion, was a long story of human mobility.

[400] See Joan M. Maruskin, "The Bible: The Ultimate Migration Handbook," *Church and Society* (July/August 2005): 1.

God accompanied peoples, encouraging the interaction of cultures that made diversity and differences the characteristic of the world.[401]

God's Spirit first migrated in the "face of chaos." After creating the birds, fish and animals, he looked for a caretaker of creation. He created man and woman, asking them to move and fill the earth with their presence (Gen. 1, 28). They could only do this if they moved from place to place.[402] They left the Garden of Eden because of their disobedience to Yahweh, making the first cause of human mobility as "judgment."[403] Expulsed from the garden, Adam and Eve became wanderers (Gen. 3:22-24). God forced their migration.

The second person to wander in the planet was Cain who killed his brother Abel due to envy. God approved Abel's offering and did not accept that of Cain. Why God appreciated the animal offering of Abel and not Cain's with the products of the land (Gen 4:1-7) recalled the life of the Israelites when they were wandering for forty years in the desert with their flocks. Enjoying an egalitarian life in the desert, they related with each other without "envy."[404] In their settled life in Canaan, they accumulated riches through agriculture that caused the social divide between the rich and the poor.[405] Abel symbolized those forty years of desert wandering as shepherds when Yahweh conversed with them directly and Cain, their settled life in Canaan when God did not anymore make frequent appearances.[406] Yahweh's approval of Abel emphasized that nomadic life with equality was better than the settled life of riches.

The story of migration continued with Noah, who built, boarded an ark and got drifted far away from home, settling in a land not of

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[401] See Jonathan Sacks, "The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid a Clash of Civilization," *Sacred Heart University Review* 5, no. 1 (2009): 20.

[402] See M. Daniel Carrol, "Biblical Perspectives on Migration and Mission: Contributions from the Old Testament," *Mission Studies* 30 (2013): 11. 9–26

[403] See Maruskin, "The Bible," 1-2.

[404] See Ellen van Wolde, "The Story of Cain and Abel: A Narrative Study," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 52, (1991): 20-30.

[405] Ibid.

[406] Ibid.

his birth. Before the flood, the "sons of God" had sexual relationship with earthly women, a sight that incited the ire of God (Gen 6, 1-8). This reflected "the sacred prostitution" of Israel's neighbors that one found in the planet, not involved in this sacred prostitution.

The great flood that killed all the animals and people pictured how natural disasters caused vast movement of population in the planet.[407] Noah was a refugee from a climate disaster.

The story of Babel narrated how the descendants of Noah attempted to establish a society that spoke only one language (Gen 11, 5-6).[408] Their wish that their tower reached the heavens was an expression of totalitarianism where only uniformity existed and difference had no place.[409] The people of Babel planned to use their "unified power" to make a name for themselves (Gen 11, 4), which meant conquering others through "military might."[410] God destroyed their plan of filling only one portion of the planet, of having a "united humanity." [411] God's intervention created chaos and miscommunication among the builders forcing them to migrate. Migration created a new world marked by many languages and cultures.[412]

Dispersion after Babel indicated that only through migration could multicultural societies spring up and the world filled with people who were different from each other. Without migration, there was only stagnation.[413] Migration then was a divine gift, a "part and parcel" of creation that guaranteed its preservation and enrichment.[414] It was in fact a bridge. The tower of Babel symbolized

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[407] See Maruskin, "The Bible," 2-4.

[408] Ibid., 69.

[409] Sacks, "The Dignity of Difference," 18.

[410] See Creig Marlowe, "A New Take on the Tower: The Sin of Shinar (Gen 11: 4)," *The Evangelical Journal of Theology* 1 (2011): 33.

[411] See Carrol, "Biblical Perspectives," 16.

[412] See Sacks, "The Dignity of Difference," 19.

[413] Ibid., 20-21.

[414] See Tony Thomas Kattampally, "Biblical Perspectives on Migration", *Jeevahara* 48, no. 282 (2017): 41.

ethnocentrism. It could only be mitigated through migration. In a multicultural world, migration then was a necessary component for people to meet people, leading to a mutual appreciation of their cultural riches, avoiding isolation.

2. Abraham and His Call to Migrate

Babel was an attempt to build uniformity without the beauty of differences. God destroyed such plan. A mono cultural world impoverished his creation. That's why, as Sacks argued, he chose Abraham and commanded him to leave the land of his fathers, the familiar landscape and friends, to go to a foreign land and experience "the dignity of difference."[415] God called Abraham to move, far from his neighbors and friends, and be a stranger among the strangers.[416]

The Abrahamic migration was a celebration of differences. The strangers that he encountered along the road like Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, indicated to Abraham that God revealed himself to many others. Abraham did not monopolize the worship of Yahweh. Abraham recognized before Melchizedek that "the God most high" whose blessings Melchizedek brought to Abraham was "none other than Yahweh" (Gen 14; 19-22).[417] Abraham also introduced Yahweh to others. His mission had a tangible result from King Abimelech's recognition that he had to obey Yahweh who appeared to him in a dream after he innocently took Sarah as his wife (Gen 21, 22).[418] Abraham's journey from Ur to the promised land resulted to a deepening of his faith in Yahweh due to the strangers he met along the way.

Abraham's most enriching experience was his encounter with three strangers (Gen 18: 1-15).[419] The story presents the "ideal"

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[415] See Sacks, "The Dignity of Difference," 18.

[416] Ibid., 20.

[417] See Carrol, "Biblical Perspectives," 17.

[418] Ibid.

[419] See Miguel H. Diaz, "On Loving Strangers: Encountering the Mystery of God in the Face of Migrants," *Word and World* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 234.

why inclusive hospitality was always the option.[420] This encounter took place in Abraham and Sarah's home in Hebron.[421] Abraham and Sarah knew well the hardships of moving from one place to another. They welcomed the three strangers with "foot washing, rest and a sumptuous meal."[422] Their hospitality with these three led to "a divine encounter."[423] Yahweh, one of the three visitors, revealed to them the birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18, 13-21).[424]

Hebrew Bible scholars are often struck on finding that the word "neighbor" only appeared once in the Old Testament (Lev. 19;18) while that of "stranger" 36 times. Sacks observed that the frequent use of the word "stranger" indicated that it was not a challenge to love the neighbor who was a familiar face, someone closed by. God asked Abraham to leave behind his world of neighbors and venture into the world of strangers. To love the stranger was a much more daunting challenge than to love the neighbor.[425] God was not in the familiar faces of the neighbors but in the unknown strangers. Establishing bridges to the strangers had made Abraham a better man, enriched by the cultures and religiosity of others, forging with them lasting friendship.

3. Remembrance of Being Slaves in Egypt

The worst expression of totalitarianism as symbolized by the tower of Babel was slavery. The book of Exodus narrated how the Israelites found themselves the main workers in the construction of the great pyramids in Egypt. From the hospitality that they experienced in the time of Joseph, they had become outcasts and had to work to exhaustion for nothing. God intervened to save them. Their march

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[420] See Maruskin, "The Bible," 4.

[421] Ibid.

[422] See Aurelie Hagstrom, "The Role of Charism and Hospitality in the Academy" *Integritas* (Spring 2013): 2.

[423] Ibid.

[424] Diaz, "On Loving Strangers," 235.

[425] Sacks, "The Dignity of Difference," 18-21.

from slavery to freedom was the most famous in history because God walked with them across the borders.[426] In their freedom, God wanted them to remember their years of being slaves as something holy: "Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt…" (Deut 5; 15). The Hebrew word for "slave" (*abel*) also means "worshipper."[427] By recalling their being slaves, they would be able to worship God as Moses asked Pharaoh: "Let my people go so that they may celebrate a festival to me in the wilderness." (Ex 5: 1) Without this recall, there was no adoration of Yahweh.[428]

In their settled life in Palestine, God revealed his salvific action as connected with the care for the stranger. The Israelites were once strangers that God had embraced and saved. They in turn had to witness to this salvation by welcoming and loving the strangers. "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphans and the widows, and who loves the strangers, providing them with food and clothing. You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deut 14:29).[429]

In the constant human mobility of the Near East, caused by wars, famines and natural disasters, of people looking for safer and more productive places, God asked the Israelites to open their homes to the strangers as he did to them: "You will not molest or oppress aliens, for you yourselves were once strangers in the land of Egypt…. You will not oppress the stranger; you know the heart of the stranger for you were strangers yourself in the land of Egypt (Exodus 22: 20; 23, 9).[430] Having the heart of a stranger meant reliving the days when the Israelites were an oppressed "minority."[431] Their rituals and

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[426] Maruskin, "The Bible," 6-7.

[427] Ibid.

[428] Ibid.

[429] See Kattampally, "Biblical Perspectives on Migration," 43-45.

[430] Ibid.

[431] See Joseph A. Mindling, "Chosen People in Foreign Lands: Scriptural Reflections on Immigration and the Uprooted," *New Theology Review* 12, no 1 (February1999): 4.

celebrations like the Passover hammer this teaching in their memory. To love the stranger, not to enslave anyone, was at the center of their relationship with Yahweh.

The love for the strangers did not come from "emotion nor reason," which under pressure may lead "to dislike the unlike."[432] The Israelites were called to create a "society where, because of the memory of their own slavery," the strangers were "to be treated with special care."[433] Israel could not afford to be xenophobic, extending hospitality to the foreigners who came to their land.[434]

Israel did well on this task as manifested in the story of Ruth, the widowed Moabite who chose to be with her Jewish mother in law, Naomi, returning with her to Israel. She was welcomed with hospitality and married Boaz who provided her a home and a family (Ruth 2.3). But these strangers were not so many and thus attracted attention and care. The greater challenge was Israel's outlook regarding their neighbors especially peoples whom they considered as their historical enemies.[435] Did they believe that their neighbors could enrich them and they in turn could share something important to them?

4. Creating a Bridge Towards Their Enemies

It was easy to welcome strangers who came looking for sustenance, not those who had subjugated them with their armies. [436] The book of Jonah played on the Philistines with whom the Israelites had a long drawn war and the Assyrians who destroyed the northern kingdom. Though a "short fictional story," Jonah mocked Israel's

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[432] See Sacks, "The Dignity of Difference," 59.

[433] See Melba Maggay, "To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service" in *Mission in the 21st Century: Exploring the Five Marks of the Global Mission*, eds Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), 49.

[434] See Sacks, "The Dignity of Difference," 59.

[435] Ibid.

[436] See Douglas Stuard, "Jonah," in *The New Bible Commentary*, eds. D. A. Carson, R.T. France, J. Motyer, and G.J. Wenhan (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 814.

prejudice against their enemies, criticizing Israel's aloofness against these people.[437]

Not willing to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria where God asked him to announce its impending destruction, Jonah took a ship. The way to Nineveh was the land, not the sea. A storm overtook this ship. The crew of sea-faring Philistines, on knowing that Jonah had escaped Yahweh's call, was aghast and frightened, wanting to make amends to Yahweh for his sake. They did not want to follow Jonah's instruction of tossing him to the sea, wanting him to be safe (Jon 1, 10-16). The Philistines bestowed on this prophet compassion and understanding, asking Yahweh to treat him kindly. Jonah, on the other hand, manifested coldness of heart and inability to pray to Yahweh during the storm.[438]

His preaching in Nineveh was a phenomenal success for the people of this city repented in just a matter of days.[439] Jonah's preaching consisted only of a few words: "In forty days, Nineveh will be destroyed" (Jon. 3, 4). In this preaching, Jonah did not say the reason why the Yahweh wanted to destroy Nineveh.[440] The city was condemned for no reason at all! Yet, the people "broke out in repentance on the first day."[441] The most feared king of Nineveh led in this path of repentance.

This book marked the "protest" against the "narrowness and exclusivism" that often "appeared among the postexilic Judaism."[442] Jonah symbolized "the people of Israel" who had "perverted their

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[437] See Irene Nowell, "Jonah," in *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, eds. Dianne Bergant and Robert J. Karris (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1989), 461.

[438] Ibid.

[439] See Jean C. McGowan, "Jonah," *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer and Roland Murphy (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 2000), 637.

[440] Nowell, "Jonah," 464.

[441] Stuar, "Jonah," 820.

[442] McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 451.

election into pride and privilege."[443] In this sense, this book did not aim at reaching and converting the Gentiles but "the repentance and conversion" of Israel, contrasting it to the "magnanimity of God" who had reached out to the Gentiles.[444] God had no enemies, and his actions not limited to the nationalism and narrowness of Israel. The story of Jonah encouraged Israel to shed its racial prejudices and to appreciate the culture and religiosity of the peoples that surrounded them. This was a summon to create more bridges, reaching out to these people and discover their spiritual riches. The book was a call to mission which Israel did not understand.

B. Jesus and His Intercultural Mission

1. The Birth of an "Alien" Savior

John's prologue "in the beginning was the Word" (Jh 1,1) narrated the story of Jesus who was literally an alien that came among humanity. The word "alien" is no longer used to describe the stranger because of its outer space connotation. In the case of Jesus this was true. He came outside of space, from eternity.[445] Through Jesus, God entered "into the broken and sinful territory of human condition" to help men and women "find their way back to God."[446] Groody summarized this: "God's movement in love to humanity makes possible humanity's movement to God" as capsulized in John 1, 18: "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son who is close to the Father's heart who has made him known."[447]

In the infancy narratives of Luke (chapters 1 and 2) and Matthew (chapters 1 and 2), his first visitors, the shepherds and the Magi, were strangers. Though the word "shepherd" in the Old Testament described the kings of Israel, in the New Testament, to be a shepherd means to belong to the lowest class. Always on the move in search

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[443] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 18.

[444] Ibid.

[445] See Maruskin, "The Bible," 11-12.

[446] See Daniel Groody, "Crossing the Divide: Foundation of a Theology of Migration and Refugees," *Theological Studies* 70 (2009): 649.

[447] Ibid.

for better pastures, they were also suspected of stealing things from homes and places they passed by.[448] The shepherds were migrant workers that did not enjoy a good reputation. Yet the savior of the world chose to invite them to see his face. At the onset of this divine migration, the alien-savior of the world manifested his special care for these people who lived in the periphery of Israelite society.[449] Their honor was to encounter first the savior.

The Magi came to visit him days after his birth. They had embarked on a long journey across the desert. As strangers in Palestine, they asked for information about the whereabouts of the Messiah.[450] The Magi were searchers of God, those who believe that only God could satisfy the longings of the human heart.[451] Their presence could have been a great opportunity for Herod to encounter men of influence and the same time, searchers of God. Herod was made of a different kind. He did not mind killing others just to preserve himself in power. The Magi in fact succeeded to arouse the ire of the tyrant, who forced the holy family to flee to Egypt, becoming refugees, the worst experience of human mobility. [452]

The alien savior of the world preferred an intercultural experience with the poor and the needy at the beginning of his earthly life. The first bridge he created with humanity was with them.

2. The Choice to be a Stranger

"God" became "a guest" through the incarnation.[453] Not accepted by his own, he remained a stranger (Jn 1, 14). Jesus did not just pass by, but pitched his tent in an enduring permanency. To be a stranger was to be vulnerable, not receiving any welcome, depending

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[448] See Maruskin, "The Bible," 13.

[449] See Kattampally, "Biblical Perspectives on Migration," 44.

[450] See Maruskin, "The Bible," 11-12.

[451] See Kattampally, "Biblical Perspectives," 46.

[452] See Elaine Padilla and Peter Phan, "Introduction," in *Christianities in Migration: The Global Perspective*, eds. Peter Phan and Elaine Padilla (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2016), 2.

[453] See Hagstrom, "The Role of Charism," 7

on others. Jesus indeed has "nowhere to lay his head" (Lk 9: 58), a decision that he would carry through his public ministry, enduring hostility.[454]

Jesus described himself: "I was a stranger." (Mt 25:35). To be a host means having the capacity to feed and to offer hospitality like what Abraham did with his three guests. To be a stranger was the more difficult option because it meant being helpless. To be a host implied power, to give and to donate, to be at the side of the rich. To be a stranger was to be powerless, to receive and be objects of charity, to choose to be with tax collectors and sinners.[455]

Jesus moved from one town to another, suffering from hunger, at times not able to receive hospitality that his apostles one time were forced to eat raw wheat (Mk 2: 23). He became a stranger in Nazareth, with his town mates wanting to throw him down a cliff after his preaching in the synagogue (Lk 4: 14-31). He engaged himself with tax collectors to the chagrin of the religious leaders (Mk 2: 16).[456] To the people of the periphery, Jesus extended his hands of friendship, not on the basis of any superiority, but from the perspective of his needs as a stranger, his vulnerability and at times, inferiority.

3. Accepting His Vulnerability before the Samaritan Woman

Jesus dealt with foreigners, like the Canaanite woman who asked him to cure her daughter (Mt 15, 21-28), the Roman centurion, who appealed to him to cure his servant (Mt 8, 5-13). These events happened in Galilee, Israel's frontier province where gentiles at times entered. The Samaritans were half Jew and half gentile. The Jews detested them more than the "pagans."[457] In the gospel of John, Jesus

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[454] See Judith Woodward, *Welcoming the Strangers: A Dialogue Between Scriptural Understanding and Catholic Church Policies Toward Migrants and Refugees and Pastoral Praxis in the Migrant and Refugee Pastoral Care Bodies with the Archdiocese of Perth* (Perth: University of Notre Dame, 2009), 43-46.

[455] See Anthony J. Gittins, Living *Mission Interculturality* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015) 126-127.

[456] See Maruskin, "The Bible," 14-16.

[457] See McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 765.

crossed Samaria (Jn 4, 4), anticipating this engagement with the Samaritan woman.[458] He apparently wanted to enter into the world of the Samaritans and be a bridge between them and the Jews.[459]

Jesus opened conversation with the woman asking for water. He thus presented himself a stranger in need. He was not superior to the woman, but somebody asking for her extra kindness. He was tired and in need of her bucket of water.[460] His request for water apparently shocked the woman, who could not believe that a Jew and a man would have the humility to ask for it. She probably knew of other routes and other Jews had chosen them just to escape encountering the Samaritans.[461] Thus, her question: "How is it that you a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan and a woman, for a drink?" (Jn 4, 9). Thus, Jesus speaking from his own need and inferiority was able to break through the resistance of the woman. Jesus took this occasion to speak to her about the living waters.[462]

That the Samaritan did not repent when Jesus said that she had five husbands and was not married to the man she was living (Jn 4, 16-19) revealed something deeper. Feminist Bible scholars explain that this woman was actually the victim rather than the victimizer. Only men divorced their women in those times, and this woman was their victim.[463] Her five husbands could have come from the Jewish custom of forced levirate marriage of marrying relatives of widows. She could be wishing a marriage which her current man was not willing to give her.

Her dialogue with Jesus revealed that she knew the religious traditions of her people. She was not a mere simple devotee, but

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[458] See Brenda Salier McNeil ."A More Excellent Way Race and Gender Reconciliation Through Christ.," *Priscilla Papers* 14, no.1 (Winter 2000): 2.

[459] Ibid.

[460] See Surekha Nelavala, "Jesus Asks the Samaritan Woman for a Drink: A Dalit Feminist Reading of John 4," *Lectio Difficilior* 1 (2017): 12.

[461] See Brenda Salter McNeil, "A More Excellent Way Race and Gender Reconciliation Through Christ," *Priscilla Papers* (Winter 2000): 5.

[462] Nelavala, "Jesus Asks the Samaritan Woman for a Drink," 2-3.

[463] McNeil, "A More Excellent Way," 4.

a studious theologian that answered intelligently the statements of Jesus.[464] Jesus' offer of living waters attracted her because she understood its deeper meaning, not like the Jews in the first thirteen chapters of John whose hearts remained untouched despite his eloquence and miracles. The woman felt the gratefulness of Jesus in quenching his thirst through his response of giving her the living waters that would empower her to get out of her past, and leave behind her being a helpless "victim."[465]

That conversation led her to abandon her jar and ran back to the town, sharing Jesus to others. The jar was a symbol of her past, her issues and the hurt feelings. Encounter with Jesus had emboldened her to leave them. Her new and glowing appearance attracted the attention of her town mates who listened to her declaration that Jesus had liberated him from her issues.[466] Her town mates trooped to the well, overwhelming Jesus. His disciples went also to the town but were more interested in buying bread than to share Jesus to others (Jn 4, 7).

Whereas in Luke, the first missionaries were the apostles and the seventy two disciples (Lk 9, 1-6; 10), the Samaritan was the first missionary in the gospel of John.[467] Jesus, a stranger, speaking from his thirst and need of hospitality managed to break through the heart of this woman, transforming her into an effective missionary. This is in contrast to his apostles and disciples that were with him for months already but still unable to share his presence with others. Jesus' prophetic and dialogic way of conversing with her transformed her from a stranger to a friend, and someone who shared the gospel

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[464] See Nelavala, "Jesus Asks the Samaritan Woman," 8-9.

[465] See McNeil, "A More Excellent Way," 5.

[466] Ibid., 6

[467] See Raymond Brown, "Roles of Women in the Fourth Gospel," *Theological Studies*, 36 (1975): 689.

to others.[468] Jesus' intercultural dialogue with this Samaritan was a fast training for a missionary option that she exercised right away.

4. Instilling the Culture of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10: 25-37)

Jesus narrated this parable after a Samaritan village did not offer him and his apostles hospitality. The apostles wanted to rain fire on them. Jesus "rebuked" them for such a reaction (Lk 9, 52-55). The scene revealed the hatred existing between the Jews and the Samaritans. Through this parable, Jesus taught a lesson that the unwelcoming attitude was not the Samaritans' monopoly, but a characteristic of all peoples. The parable puts into a bad light the Levite and the priest, representatives of Judaism. The Samaritan stopped to apply first aid, carrying the wounded man in his mule to a tavern for his healing.[469]

Jesus' audience, in particular the lawyer who asked him to define the "neighbor" could easily detect the error in the actions of the Levite and the priest, who did not stop to care for the wounded man. Maybe, they were in a hurry to reach the temple and do their cultic responsibility. The touch of blood disqualified them from doing this. They might have thought that their cultic obligation was a priority. Their looking at the other way, far from the place of the wounded man made them less humans, lacking in mercy and compassion.[470]

The early Christian writer Origin identified the Good Samaritan with Jesus himself. Jesus many times stopped to attend to the needs of the wounded and the lost, embodying thus mercy and compassion.[471] Jesus, the Good Samaritan, came to the rescue of the wounded

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[468] See Stephen B. Bevans and Cathy Ross, "Introduction: Mission as Prophetic Dialogue," in *Mission on the Road to Emmaus, Constants, Context and Prophetic Dialogue,* Cathy Ross and Stephen B. Bevans eds. (London: SCM Press, 2015), xii.

[469] See Ruben Zimmermann, "The Etho-poietic of The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37): "The Ethics of Seeing in a Culture of Looking the Other Way," *Verbum et Ecclesia JRG* 29: 273-775.

[470] Ibid. 24.

[471] See Mikeal Parsons, *Hearing a Parable with the Early Church* (Dallas: Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University, 2006), 22.

man, humanity itself.[472] Jesus in this sense started the culture of the Good Samaritan in a world full of victims, summoning all men and women of goodwill to come to their rescue. The image of the Good Samaritan bridges nations and peoples, attracted to the human being as a person that easily responds to the needy and the wounded.

C. Paul and His Missionary Strategies

1. Fast Adjustment to Cultures

Christianity had already spread in some parts of the world even before Paul entered into the scene. Christian Jews fleeing persecution in Jerusalem had landed in Antioch and shared the gospel not only to the Jews but to the gentiles, forming the first intercultural community in the history of Christianity (Acts 11: 19-30). Thus, the first missionaries were migrants, refugees fleeing persecution. The spread of Christianity was through this "community of migrants" that brought faith to others.[473]

Paul was a student of Gamaliel, a Pharisee (Acts 22:3). Paul, born in Tarsus, was then a migrant who studied in Jerusalem, making him unique among the apostles for his knowledge of Greek philosophy and the Roman law, speaking both Greek and Hebrew.[474] Paul is the "foremost proponent and practitioner of interculturality" in the New Testament.[475] He was "equipped to carry this work "being a Jew by birth, a Greek by education and a Roman by citizenship and a Christian by faith."[476]

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[472] Ibid., 22-24.

[473] See Peter C. Phan, "Christianity as an Institutional Migrant: Historical, Theological and Ethical Perspective," in *Christianities in Migration: The Global Perspective*, eds. Peter Phan and Elaine Padilla (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2016), 10-11.

[474] See Carl R. Holladay, "Acts" in *Harper Collins Bible Commentary,* ed. James L. Mays (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1988), 998-999.

[475] See Peter C. Phan, "Evangelization and Interreligious Dialogue, Compatible arts of Christian Mission?" (2010), *Santa Clara Lectures* 7:5.

[476] Ibid.

His dream of a more stable existence as a master to his students, like Gamaliel to him, would be shattered when Jesus asked him to be the apostle to the gentiles (Acts 9). He embarked three missionary journeys that carried him to the major cities of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire.[477] He was a "bi-cultural kid" well adopted to his Greek and Hebrew listeners.[478] Paul moved around an empire that used the Greek language, enabling him to settle rapidly in any given place due to the advantage of not learning a new language.[479] He adopted his preaching depending on his audience, using philosophy to the Gnostics and the Epicureans of Athens, or the Old Testament to his Hebrew audience.[480] Not often elaborated by Bible experts was his work as a tent maker. His work place could have been the best venue for his intercultural mission.

As a missionary, Paul followed a different path from the rest of the apostles. He took it as a priority to practice his skills as a tent maker, earning a living by which he provided for himself and his companions (1 Cor 9: 4-12). He wrote about working "day and night," that is early in the morning and late in the afternoon, after the siesta (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8).[481]

Paul took his sustenance and resources to help others from his work as "a worker in leather" in Acts 18:3.[482] He learned this trade from his parents, who gained their Roman citizenship probably from their work as suppliers of tents and other leather products to the Roman army. This made Paul not just an ordinary work hand. He inherited from his parents the production and the selling of their products. The description of working day and night in the letter to

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[477] See Holladay, "Acts," 998-999.

[478] See Paul Wendland, "The Apostle Paul and Culture," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* vol. 105/3 (Summer 2008): 7-8.

[479] Ibid.

[480] See Phan, "Evangelization and Interreligious Dialogue," 5.

[481] See Ruth Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul's Mission Strategy," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 3 (July-Sept, 1997): 121.

[482] See Thomas W. Davis, "The Business Secrets of Paul of Tarsus," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 59, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 220.

the Thessalonians underscored his effort to supply the demand for his product, revealing his business skills and connection.[483]

Paul used his business skills to earn his living, to build his intercultural missionary team, helping him and his companions to adjust rapidly to the new places and cultures.[484] The communities that he established were in the cities, places of much economic activity. Paul easily sold his tents, affording him mastery of his time, to share the gospel to "the scattered households" that constituted the first Christians.[485]

Paul's companion in his first missionary journey was Barnabas, who was popular among the Christians of Jerusalem for having sold his property and given the proceeds to the apostles (Acts 4: 36).[486] Barnabas owned a piece of land in Jerusalem though he was from Cyprus through a business deal. One of the reasons why Barnabas and Paul easily blended together to form a partnership was their common background as businessmen engaged in tent making (1Cor 9:6). [487]

A quick reading of his missionary journeys, his going from one city to another, one province after another could have caused anybody temporary forgetfulness. Acts attested that Paul had no difficulty in adjusting to a new culture after months of hard work from another place. His being a tent maker gave him the facility to adjust rapidly to a new culture because he worked with people, establishing friendships through his trade.[488] Paul easily transcended the limitations of "*comunitas*" (a community built on common experience of hardships of migrants) and build a more stable community that had adjusted to

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[483] Ibid., 225-228.

[484] Ibid., 226.

[485] See Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians, The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New York: Yale University, 1983), 9-10.

[486] See Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul's Mission Strategy," 122.

[487] See Davis, "The Business Secrets of Paul," 226.

[488] See Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul's Mission Strategy," 122.

the culture and exigencies of a new country.[489] The capacity to earn one's living in the shortest time possible opened doors of friendship, a bridge to the hosts. To depend on others made the migrant often a burden. Paul understood this.[490]

But he also regarded his "work" not just as a "source of support," but in some way "characterized his evangelizing activity." He reminded the Thessalonians: "It was while we were laboring night and day, in order not to burden any of you, that we proclaim to you the gospel of God" (1 Thess 2: 9).[491] While working, he conversed the gospel to others. His intercultural mission evolved in the natural ambience of working, establishing friendship from among his clients and fellow tent makers.

2. His Work Place as a Venue for Encounter

This work then as a tent maker was not just something added to his ministry, but in fact, is the core of his missionary life. Though Acts of the Apostles reported him preaching in synagogues and in Athens, the marketplace (*agora*), and the *areopagus*, his unreported place of preaching where he could have made more conversions was his workplace.[492]

As tent maker, Paul befriended Priscilla and Aquilla, husband and wife who were tent makers in Corinth. They only preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath; the six days, they were working (Acts 18). Their workplace was the venue where they encountered more people, fellow tent makers, clients and servants/slaves who were sent for errands.[493] The *areopagus* was only for the elite people and the

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[489] See Cornelius J.P. Niemandt, "A Network Society, Social Media, Migration and Mission," *Missionalia* 41 (April 2013): 24-30.

[490] See Christ White, *The Father's Business Person, The Shift to Tent Making Strategies* (Lynbury, Virginia: Liberty University, 2012), 7.

[491] Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 27.

[492] See Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul's Mission Strategy," 122-125.

[493] See Mans Ramstad, "Priscilla and Aquilla: Paul's Firm Friends and Model Tent Makers," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 19 (Spring (2002): 29.

marketplace, only afforded short encounter with people who were too preoccupied to buy food and other supplies and return home. Paul and his partners Priscilla and Aquila could have made many conversions – especially those who stayed longer like people who wanted to earn the trade.[494]

According to Acts, Paul made conversions with the gentile of the gates, people attracted to Judaism. Some of these gentiles were rich, like the Ethiopian in Acts 6; or the ladies led by Lydia that Paul encountered in Philippi (Acts 16:12-15). These gentiles on the gates or the "God-fearers" were already monotheists and followed the Ten Commandments.[495]

Paul would encounter a different people in his work place – the real pagans (or gentiles) who struggled with their moral life in their initial months as Christians. His two surviving letters to the Corinthians revealed a moral laxity, characteristic of a community that did not pass the catechesis of the synagogue, especially on the Ten Commandments.[496] Paul's workplace as a tent maker then was the hub of conversion among various kinds of people, from business persons to slaves.[497] He preached the gospel best as a tent maker, working and conversing, sharing and receiving strangers who eventually became Christians.[498]

3. Collection for the Poor of Jerusalem

Though absent in the Acts of the Apostles, Paul mentioned this collection for the poor of Jerusalem in several of his letters, the longest of which appears in his second Corinthians (Chapters 8

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[494] Ibid., 30-31.

[495] See Conrad Gempf, "Acts" in *New Bible Commentary*, eds. G.J. Wenhan, J.A. Motyer, D.A. Carson and R.T. France (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 1080.

[496] See Siemens, "The Vital Role of Tentmaking in Paul's Mission Strategy," 122-125.

[497] Ibid.

[498] Ibid., 127-129.

and 9) where he described the motivation and how the Corinthians should facilitate the collection.[499]

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul accepted the recommendation of the Jerusalem Church to remember the poor (Gal 2, 10). Scholars comment that remembering the poor had been a policy of Paul in his mission even before the council of Jerusalem whose recommendation he gladly accepted, transforming it as a "Judean essential element" of the gospel, a proof of his obedience.[500] The "inordinate time and energy" that he spent to help the poor of Jerusalem revealed that Paul considered this work as a "significant part of his ministry."[501] This collection attempted to relieve "a desperate poverty in Jerusalem Church," a cause that Paul asked the Gentile communities to respond and show unity with their suffering Jewish brothers and sisters.[502]

The Corinthians were showing resistance to the collection for the poor outside of their community. Paul wanted them to see beyond their borders (as he did with other communities he established), to show gratitude and appreciation to their Jewish brothers and sisters, the source of their faith.[503] Chapters 8 and 9 of the second letter to the Corinthians reflected "Paul's persuasive rhetoric" in building "a genuine fellowship among Jewish and Gentile Christians."[504]

To facilitate the collection, Paul sent his missionary team headed by Titus to exhort and gather the collection among them. Only Titus, a gentile, was mentioned, but Silas, Timothy and others could have

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[499] See David J. Dovens, "Paul and the Book of Acts Revisited," *New Testament Studies* 52 (January 2006): 56.

[500] See John S. Kloppenburg, "Fiscal Aspects of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem," *Early Christianity* 8 (2017): 156.

[501] See Richard R. Melich, "'The Collection for the Saints': 2 Corinthians 8-9," *Criswell Theological Review* 4, no. 1 (1989): 98.

[502] See Jeremy Punt, "Remembering the Poor: Pauline Perspective on Poverty," *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal* (2004): 256.

[503] See Melich, "The Collection for the Saints,"115.

[504] See Michael Heredia, *The Jerusalem Collection: Paul's Method of Reconciliation Among Jewish and Gentile Christians* (Boiling Springs, NC: Gardner-Webb University, 2013), 18.

been part of this team – a Gentile-Jewish missionary community to stir the Corinthians to understand that the Church was universal.[505] Paul understood that he had to have "partners" from various cultural backgrounds that embodied his goal of uniting the Jewish and Gentile Christian communities.[506]

This missionary team sent to Corinth was the same group with whom he worked "night" and "day" (1 Thess 2:9) and also prayed "night" and "day" (1 Thess 3: 10).[507] They were practicing an intense intercultural community life. Moreover, this working together as tent makers enabled Paul to have always companions with him. Working for their sustenance could have taken much of their time, but they were together, avoiding loneliness and knowing each other better. Their common work deepened further the fraternity of their missionary community. Paul thus had no difficulty in entering new places of mission and always full of energy. He was not a "loner," deriving his strength from his brothers and sisters of different races and cultures.[508]

This collection that he organized in all his communities revealed Paul's organizing capacity that cut across cultures, starting from his missionary team who were "messengers of the Churches, the glory of Christ" (2 Cor, 8: 23).[509] The intercultural living and mission of this team was Paul's response to the Jews who were uncompromising of their ancestral customs and the Corinthians who had difficulty in accepting their responsibility to the poor of Jerusalem. The collection was Paul's "vehicle of reconciling the two cultures" that mutually benefitted from this task.[510]

The collection enabled human movements in communities, facilitating the encounter among Jewish and Gentile Christians. This

[505] Ibid., 15-17.

[506] See Davis, "The Business Secrets of Paul of Tarsus," 225.

[507] Ibid., 228.

[508] Paul Wendland, "The Apostle Paul and Culture," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 105, no.3 (Summer 2008): 7-8.

[509] See Heredia, *The Jerusalem Collection*, 18.

[510] Ibid.

would have its peak in Acts 20: 4 that narrated representatives of these Christian communities entering Jerusalem with Paul.[511] The collection for the poor of Jerusalem became then a major missionary strategy for Paul to usher communion among Gentile and Jewish Christians, establishing bridges, facilitating friendship.

In the Bible then, intercultural living and mission reached its full expression in the apostolic life of Paul. Unlike Peter who surrounded himself with Christian Jews, Paul established a community of gentiles and Jews. He enabled Christians to encounter and know each other in their common effort to provide for the poor of Jerusalem, connecting these communities divided by far distances, strengthening them to think and plan of more mission ahead.

D. Summary

God created a multicultural world through migration, a passage of meeting strangers and creating bridges. Abraham moved across Palestine, enriching himself through his encounter with many strangers. To treat justly the stranger was a divine condition for Israel to continue receiving blessings. The prophet Jonah challenged the post-exilic Israel's nationalism, asking them to discover the cultural and religious richness of their enemies. In the Old Testament, building bridges to cross borders was difficult. Israel was too much concerned about itself and thought that being the chosen people was privilege not as a gift to be shared with other peoples.

Jesus crossed borders to be with the poor and the needy, conversing with the Samaritan woman and asking his followers to be Good Samaritans to treat the needy without social or racial distinction. The apostle Paul built his intercultural missionary team through a sustained work as tent makers, facilitating encounters among the early Christians through the collection for the poor of Jerusalem. In the New Testament, this crossing of borders and building of bridges reached its peak in the apostle Paul. His missionary team practiced intercultural living, making them effective in evangelizing the multicultural Roman Empire.

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[511] See Melich, "'The Collection for the Saints'," 113.

CHAPTER VI

NEW INTERCULTURAL BRIDGES FOR THE SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL

Introduction

This chapter presents how can the Society of St. Paul be relevant in the digital world through the construction of new intercultural bridges. The first part is the bridge of a real encounter with the poor. The second is the bridge of the Trinity as the origin of mission. The third is the bridge of prophetic dialogue. The fourth is the bridge of a work in inculturation.

A. Real Encounter with the Poor

1. A New Way of Understanding *Magisterium*

The 10th General Chapter document opens: "From the origins of our religious family, the *Magisteriun* of the Church has illuminated our charism."[512] Blessed James Alberione's first foundation after the city of Alba was Rome to be near the Pope, finding an affirmation to his charism of preaching the gospel through the mass media in *Inter Mirifica*.[513] The 10th General Chapter quoted much from *Evangelii Gaudium,* evolving on the implications of "joy of the gospel," "the need for missionary disciples," and to serve the people of "the

[512] Society of St. Paul, *The 10th General Chapter* (Rome: General House, 2014), no. 1.

[513] See Alberione, *Thoughts*, 39.

periphery."[514] The Chapter delegates thought of this as continuing the tradition of seeking light from the documents of papal magisterium.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis was not only referring to himself. This apostolic exhortation has many sources that came from various Bishops' Conferences, doctors of the Church, theologians and philosophers, not only from his predecessors and Scriptures.[515] *Evangelii Gaudium* is already a manifestation of a new kind of magisterium that is evolving in the Church. The Pope gathered materials from a variety of sources, making this apostolic exhortation unique.

The Synod of Asian Bishops of 1999 marked a turning point in the understanding of the Church *magisterium*.[516] The Asian Bishops did not accept fully the preparatory document of the Synod prepared by theologians from Rome. This document has a Christological theme that proclaims Jesus as the unique and only savior of the world. The Asian Bishops resisted this Christological theme, knowing that proclaiming Jesus as the only savior of the world would put to a halt the work of evangelization in this part of the planet.[517]

The Asian Bishops argued that the Synod should deepen dialogue with the poor, culture and members of the world religions, their approach to mission since 1974. The "Asian Synod" has "something

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[514] Society of St. Paul, The 10th General Chapter (Rome: General House, 2014), no. 1.

[515] This apostolic exhortation contains quotes from the documents of the Latin American Conferences celebrated in Medellin, Puebla and Aparecida, the Bishops' Conference of Brazil, Philippines (the ecological pastoral letter of 1986: "What's Happening to Our Beautiful Land?"), France, Congo, India, theologians like De Lubac and doctor of the Church like Sts. John of the Cross, Thomas Aquinas etc, current philosophers. The exhortation came from various voices, not just from his predecessors, not from Vatican II. *Evangelii Gaudium* is reflective of the kind of magisterium that Pope Francis is still implementing.

[516] See Peter C. Phan, "*Ecclesia* in Asia: Challenges for Asian Christianity," in *The Asia Synod, Texts and Commentaries*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 249-253.

[517] Ibid.

vital to teach the Church of Rome and the universal Church,"[518] a theologizing that begins from the concrete situation of the continent. Thus, "the magisterium in the Church can no longer be conceived as a one way street from Rome to the local Churches," but a "mutual learning and teaching, mutual encouragement and correction between Rome and other Churches."[519]

In the Synod for Family in 2016, Pope Francis followed the path traced by the FABC. The media reported how Pope Francis observed silently the extensive debates whether divorced couples who remarried should be given Holy Communion. Pope Francis did not intervene and showed patience, motivated "by a long view of how the process of dialogue within the Church needs to develop." The ecclesiologist Francis Forde Plude observed that the proceedings in this Synod reflects Pope Francis' statement that the Church should not be run "like a top-down organization, with all authority and power radiating from the center." The Church should be an inverted pyramid in which the bishops and pope "exercise their authority" and "deepen their identification with Jesus in serving the people of God." Pope Francis insisted that the Church must not just hold synods but must be "synodal." A synodal Church is "a listening Church" that wishes to welcome all viewpoints, using persuasion and not imposition.[520]

Pope Francis' synodal Church first means constructing the bridge of pluralism within the Church itself. This was shown in his reaction to the complaints over the document *Liturgiam Authenticam* (2001) that insisted on "the more literal translation of the Latin texts." The Bishops of the English speaking countries said that they were not consulted on the new English translation of 2010. Pope Francis made changes on *Liturgiam Authenticam,* giving the conferences of bishops more power in the preparation and translations of liturgical books, with the final approval in their hands though still needing the confirmation of the

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[518] Ibid., 254.

[519] Ibid.

[520] See Francis Forde Plude, "A Listening Church," *America* (April 4-11, 2016): 22.

Holy See.[521] Such decision is remarkable. The Pope had decentralized Rome's control over liturgy, giving the Bishops' Conferences authority over their Eucharistic sacrifice, respecting their autonomy and the pluralism that exist among Churches.

2. From *Magisterium* to *Magisteria*

Phan synthesized the traditional understanding of *magisterium* of the Church as composed of the episcopal *magisterium*, the *magisterium* of the theologians, and *sensus fidei* (the sense of faith of ordinary Christians). The *magisteria* of theologians and ordinary Christians (through their prayers and contemplation deepen the faith) have played important roles in defining Christian teachings.[522] He argued that theologians should not be treated as enemies, having studied and taught more and hence are qualified to teach about the faith. Theologians are partners of the Pope and Bishops and should be listened to and not set aside.

Phan further amplified the *magisterium* of the Church by including the poor and members of the world's religions. Phan took his arguments for these two groups in the documents of FABC that identified them, especially members of the world's religions as sources of revelation.[523]

The Church's teaching authority is not just about definitions of truths, but a process of listening to the other four *magisteria*. In the post-modern society, where truths are no longer considered absolute and must pass through discussion and dialogue, the other four *magisteria* are a necessary component to expose the various sides of any truth.[524] The poor and members of the world's religions have become crucial voices in the writings of FABC.[525]

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[521] See John F. Baldovin, "A Liturgical Expert Explains Pope Francis' Change to Mass Translation Rules," *America* (September 09, 2017): 5-6.

[522] Phan, *The Joy of Religious Pluralism*, 32-45.

[523] Ibid.

[524] Ibid.

[525] See Stephen B. Bevans, "Pope Francis and Inculturation," *Missio Inter Gentes* vol. 4, no. 1 (January 2018): 63.

FABC'S Office of Theological Concern (OTC) in 1997 introduced conceptual tools and philosophical approach from the various Asian cultures to explain the Christian faith. OTC, for instance, recognizes that the Asian value of harmony that enables peoples to work together for peace and the building of a just society.[526] OTC explains this method as integration and inclusion, that sees the truth as a mystery with "various aspects and dimensions" of which the poor along with members of the world's religions have a crucial role to play.[527]

The traditional episcopal *magisterium* founded on Thomism presents a method of teaching that begins with the teachings of the Church and Scriptures. This traditional method sees historical circumstances as having no crucial role in the process towards the truth and even sees it as "a danger for the universal validity of the dogma."[528] Christians before studying these truths are required to make their full obedience and assent.

Phan affirmed "the bishops' right and duty to teach," "the authoritative character of their teaching" and "the assistance of the Holy Spirit." But they cannot teach whether "as individuals or as a body" without listening to the other four *magisteria* on the contemporary issues.[529] The *magisteria* of the theologians, the ordinary Christians, the poor and members of the world's religions offer an understanding of the faith from today's context, giving it more flesh and blood.

There is no spiritual renewal if the poor does not become the primary teachers of missionaries. Pope Francis insists that the poor are not just objects of charity, but "teachers and evangelizers." Francis sees the poor as a theological category. The poor share in the

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[526] Ibid.

[527] See Office of Theological Concerns (OTC), "Methodology: Asian Christian Theology," *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences: Documents from 1997 to 2002*, (FAPA) vol. 3, ed. Franz Josef Eilers (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2002), 331-351.

[528] Ibid., 351.

[529] See Phan, *The Joy of Religious Pluralism*, 32-45.

sensus fidei, in their knowledge of the suffering Christ.[530] The "new evangelization" is "an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them in the center of the Church's pilgrim way."[531] The theologian Clement Sedmonk analyzed this as a new way of understanding orthodoxy: the poor as possessing authentic teachings in the Church. This requires the Church to accept "the instruction of the people on the margins."[532]

3. Eyes Opened to the Miseries of the World

In his first World Day Communications message, Pope Francis pictures the Internet as a place teeming with wounded people waiting for the Good Samaritan. He describes it as a cyber highway, and the social media as a place of encounter among strangers, challenging everyone to be a neighbor to the lost and the wounded.[533] Using the characters of the parable of the Good Samaritan, he outlined how this encounter takes place. The Levite and the priest simply pass by, without any reaction at the sight of the wounded man, afraid to touch what they thought perhaps was a dead body. Touch of blood would disqualify these two priests to do their functions, having become impure according to their law. Unlike them, the Good Samaritan stopped and treated the wounded man, applying first aid to his wounds before bringing him to an inn and paying for his stay there. The Samaritan acted because he was simply "moved to pity.[534]

Pope Francis mentioned in particular the robber which he identified to people who use the digital tools for consumerism and treat others only as consumers.[535] Pope Francis joined the critical analysis of the cyberspace as a market, and its "most persuasive and

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[530] See Clement Sedmonk, *The Church of the Poor and the Transformation of Orthodoxy* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2016), xix.

[531] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 198.

[532] Sedmonk, *The Church of the Poor*, 174.

[533] See Antony Le Luc, "Cybertheology: Theologizing in the Digital Era," in *The Gospel in the Digital Society,* Research Symposium, University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Theology (October 27, 2016): 1-5.

[534] Ibid.

[535] See Pope Francis, *Message for the 48th World Communication Day.*

dominating voice" as consumption, sacrificing human beings for "profits."[536] Consumerism exploits, negating authentic encounter, excluding people of the periphery. New corporations have arisen from the digital world, facilitating buying and selling and the fast movement of capital around the planet, creating new billionaires, resulting to the exploitation of workers, transforming them even to slaves.[537]

The focus on the wounded in this parable reveals the one "constant" to understand the missionary conversion that Pope Francis' called for in *Evangelii Gaudium.* This is to have open eyes in order to see the misery of the world.[538] The search for real contact with the poor implies not avoiding their presence, looking for them in a world that hides their presence. These eyes should have their extension in the Internet, the source of the many stories of the wounded and victims in the planet. This misery also includes the degradation of creation that Pope Francis wrote about in *Laudato Si*. The degradation of the planet earth has transformed creation into a wounded and abused creature that summons the help of Good Samaritans. The ecological crisis could be felt in the land, the ocean and the air. The carbon imbalance is the worst part that affects everything. [539]

Seeing this misery is just the start of the process. It should result to the shrinking of distance between the person and the sufferer.[540] The online world, which is a mediated communication, already contains distance to the sufferer who is an offline reality. Pope Francis in his post synodal exhortation *Christus Vivit* called for more involvement

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[536] Nestor O. Miguez, "Markets and the Bible" *Concilium* 4 (2014): 23.

[537] Ibid.

[538] See Stan Chu Ilo, "Poverty and Economic Justice in Pope Francis," *International Bulletin for Mission Research* 43 (January 2019): 39.

[539] See Calvin Dewitt, "To Strive to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation and Sustain and Renew the Life of Earth, in *Mission in the 21st Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross eds. (London: Darton, Longmn and Todd, 2008), 87.

[540] Elie Wiesel, "The Refugee," in *Sanctuary: A Resource Guide for Understanding and Participating in the Central American Refugee's Struggle,* ed. Gary MacEoin (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 9.

in the life offline seeing that most people are not touched by what they see in the Internet. He wanted young people to see the wounded as the giver instead of the receiver. They can only receive their gifts through an embodied meeting with them.[541]

This asks for conversion which is not just about "seeing eyes," but also "touching hands" and "feeling hearts."[542] It is to leave behind the comforts of the virtual world and enter into the world of the sufferer, to feel his/her suffering, and derive lessons and teachings from him/her.

The digital tools have enabled the projection of the plight of the needy "far and wide," creating "viral philanthropy" that open people's wallets gathering huge sums of money.[543] Giving cash is not the priority. The Samaritan saw the wounded man, got down his donkey, poured in his wounds wine and oil, took him in his donkey and then to the inn, where he asked the inn keeper to take care of him after giving him money (Lk 10: 25-37). This is about a personal encounter with the victim, something that cannot be done through the Internet.[544]

Pope Francis clarified this in his speech to the members of Caritas International. He said that charity is about having an "interpersonal relationship with the poor," living with them and for them.[545] In his historic visit to the island of Lesbos, Greece (2016), after conversing with the Syrian refugees and making a speech about the global indifference about their plight, Pope Francis took with him three Syrian families consisting of twelve persons to the Vatican.[546] His daring gestures with these refugees and other actions like washing the feet of young convicts including a Muslim woman during a Holy

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[541] Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, no. 67.

[542] Chu Ilo, "Poverty and Economic Justice in Pope Francis," 39.

[543] See Le Luc, "Cybertheology," 1-5.

[544] Ibid.

[545] CNA Daily News, "Make Charity More of an Encounter and Less of Service," *The Catholic World Report* (May 27, 2019): 1.

[546] See Agence France-Presse, "Pope Francis Hailed As Saviour By Syrian Refugees Taken to Vatican," *The Guardian* (April 17, 2016): 1.

Thursday celebration, listening to the horror story of a Rohingya child in Bangladesh communicated more effectively the globalization of solidarity with the poor and the refugees, clarifying what the Catholic mission is all about.[547]

Thus, Pope Francis's message is for Christians to move from online to offline, making real and "embodied contact" with the suffering.[548] Only through these concrete gestures, of direct encounter could the Good Samaritan emerge. The work of charity of Catholic institutions should be more of encounter and less of service. This means encountering refugees walking without direction in Europe, the beggars and the homeless in the streets, the victims of human trafficking in shelter homes. The Catholic mission is revitalized through these encounters of love which means closeness to other people.[549] Through this, pastors carry the smell of the sheep.

Without direct contact with the sufferer, the missionary will miss the most important reward of this work – that is to be evangelized by poor, to be healed and renewed by their knowledge of the suffering Christ. Pope Francis asked the delegates of the 10th General Chapter of the Daughters of St. Paul (founded by Alberione with the same charism as that of the Society of St. Paul) to go out "of the streets of the world with contemplative gaze and empathy for the suffering men and women of our time." He knew that such contact will make them fruitful communicators.[550] The smell of the sheep is the smell of Jesus himself, and that is the reason why the sufferer attracts, inviting to an encounter, a closeness that makes the missionary the first beneficiary of his/her mission.

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[547] See William Gregory, "Pope Francis's Effort to Revitalize Catholic Mission," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 43 (January 2019): 9.

[548] See Le Luc, "Cybertheology," 6-10.

[549] Gregory, "Pope Francis's Effort to Revitalize Catholic Mission," 10.

[550] See Linda Bordoni, "Pope Asked Pauline Sisters To Be Challenged By Today's World," *Vatican News* (October 4, 2019).

B. The Inclusion of the Trinity

1. *Communio et Progressio*

*Communio et Progressio (*1971) a post Vatican II pastoral document, was asked by the Council Fathers in the document *Inter Mirifica* who realized that it needed a theological foundation to enrich its pastoral exhortation. The richness of *Communio et Progressio lays* on its Trinitarian theology of communication. Communication as this document explained, should reflect the self-giving love of the Son.[551] This self-giving love, a reflection of the inner life in the Trinity, makes communication a spiritual reality. Without this self-giving, communication becomes empty. Those who work in mission or pastoral ministry using the mass media should then be educated to this self-giving love. The emphasis thus of this document is on the spirituality of communication, not so much on the skills. Only persons trained to give themselves in love, like the persons of the Trinity can work effectively using the tools of communication.[552]

Eilers saw in this document the "Christianizing" of communication, connecting it with mission, with its Trinitarian theology as planted in *Ad Gentes*. *Communio et Progressio* was the start of the reflection on the relationship of communication and theology which reached its current stage in the thoughts of the German theologian Gisbert Greshake. Greshake explained that theology should not baptize communication. Theology according to him must be put under the perspective of communication. Communication with its Trinitarian foundation has become a "theological principle" by which all courses of theology should be understood.[553]

The Congregation's special general chapter of 1969 was organized to adjust to the changes of Vatican II. Alberione still participated in this chapter. The Constitution that resulted from this chapter finalized

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[551] See Pontifical Council for Social Communication, "Pastoral Instruction on the Means of Social Communication *Communio et Progressio*" (May 23, 1971) , nos. 8-11

[552] Ibid., nos. 8-10.

[553] See Eilers, *Communicating in Ministry and Mission*, 19-44.

and approved by the Holy See in 1976 presented an elaboration of the theology of Jesus Master, way, truth and life as the foundation of the Pauline mission. This Christological foundation of mission makes the Church the source of mission. The Constitutions declares: "It is the Church which has entrusted us with our mission and we must realize it in her name."[554] The "reformed" Constitution re-echoes the communication Christology of Alberione. There was no mention of the Trinity in its pages. Whereas the Society of Divine Word (SVD) included *Communio et Progressio's* definition of communication as "giving of oneself in love" in its constitution to emphasize its work in communication,[555] the Society of St. Paul did not. The threat of *Christomonism* remains real for the Congregation.

2. Towards a Missionary Spirituality

Jurgen Moltman wrote that to understand the "history of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, theology has to develop a Trinitarian concept of God" being "part of the history of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."[556] The Trinity's unity in diversity, the "creative" and overflowing love in the Trinity that spills over to creation presents a scope of mission that starts from creation itself, not just in Ascension or Pentecost, ushering a kingdom-oriented mission for the Church.[557]

Ad Gentes marks the discovery of the Trinity as the foundation of mission. It declares that "the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father."[558] The phrase "the decree of God the Father" was not purely Biblical in origin. It emerged from the realization

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[554] See Society of St. Paul, *Constitution and Directory*, no. 54.

[555] Society of Divine Word, *Constitutions*, no. 115, as cited by Eilers, *Mission in Social Communication*, 4.

[556] Moltman, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 16.

[557] Robert J. Schreiter, "Forms of Catholicity and the Shape of Mission," in *Reflections on Church and Mission, Creating a Welcoming Space Essays to Honor Larry Nemer, SVD* (North Cote, Victoria: Morning Star Publishing, 2014), 19-20.

[558] Vatican II, Decree on the Missionary Nature of the Church *Ad Gentes* (December 7, 1965) no. 2.

of missionaries that the task of working to convert members of the world religions to Christianity has become an impossible goal.[559]

Islam and Buddhism with their missionary drive have become "viable religions" in Europe and America. These religions have increased in numbers while Christianity's numbers have become stagnant. In the year 1900, Christianity numbered about 34.5% of the world population; in the year 2000, Christians are 33%.[560] In places where the world religions are strong like Asia and South Asia, "the lack of growth is a nightmare."[561] After 500 years of evangelizing work, only 5% of Buddhists and Muslims in these areas have become Christians.[562] Closed contact with these people also made missionaries and missiologists in Asia appreciate their way of inspiring billions to holiness. Such religions cannot come from the devil, as it was explained before. Their existence is by the "decree of God the Father," a divine willed event and therefore, these people are not pagans. The religious pluralism today "belongs to divine providence," not a product of human sinfulness.[563] God's self-revelation did not only happen in the Christian history. The Trinity as the foundation of mission implies seeing "the world and world history," as the places where God "works out the history of salvation."[564] This expands divine action beyond the Bible.

Vatican II marks the shifts of the foundation of mission from Christology and Ecclesiology to the Trinity and the Holy Spirit. There is a shift of focus from "the expansion of the Church" and "saving of souls as goals of mission" to embrace the whole world, seeing God's action not only in the Church and through the Church,

[559] See David Barrett and Todd Johnson, *World Christian Trends AD 30- AD 2200 Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus* (Pasadena, CA: Willian Carey Library Publishers, 2003), 4.

[560] Ibid.

[561] See Terry Musk and Frances Adeney, *Christianity Encountering the World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the 21th Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 2009), 8-9.

[562] Barrett and Todd Johnson, *World Christian Trends*, 4.

[563] Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously*, xix.

[564] Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, no. 9.

but to God's action in the world."[565] The goal of mission is no longer the "expansion of the visible Church," but "the realization of God's universal plan of salvation."[566] The Holy Spirit is active in the world and its history. *Missio Dei* compels missionaries to discover the Spirit's operation hidden in nature, cultures, the world's religions, and the poor.[567]

Christomonism sees the start of the action of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost. The theologian Dennis Edward reflecting on the Holy Spirit as the "breath of life" sees its presence in the 14 billion years' history of the universe. He observes:

If the fourteen-billion-year story of the universe were condensed into one year, the event that Christians call Pentecost would come only in the last seconds of the final year. The history of the Spirit embraces the whole year. It is coextensive with the total life of the universe. God's spirit has been breathing life into the processes of the evolving universe from the very first. The laws of nature and the initial conditions of the early universe exist only because of the empowering presence and action of the Creator Spirit.[568]

The Holy Spirit is the architect of this 14-billion-year evolution, culminating with the coming of the humans. It is the author of how the diverse minerals and gases that are the elements of stars and galaxies have evolved and interacted throughout this time, forming the planet earth and the body composition of the human being and other living creatures of this planet. To know this 14 billion of history as directed by the Creator Spirit is a more astounding story than Pentecost.[569]

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[565] See Pernia, "Mission," 3-4.

[566] Ibid.

[567] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 139.

[568] See Dennis Edward, *Breath of Life* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 33.

[569] Ibid., 5-18.

To see the Spirit's activity and presence comes from missionaries who have the Spirit "as the very heart and center of their lives."[570] The Spirit's presence in missionaries enabled them to look before Pentecost, to the origin of the universe whose evolution baffles and amazes scientists. The diversity of minerals, their complementary effect to each other, and the rise of living creatures from one celled organism is a story of beauty, order and union, done silently through the Spirit-Creator.[571] To see its activity as the "breath of life" extends to the beginning of the universe up to the development of cultures and civilizations leaving behind its presence in religions that can only be seen and elaborated by spirit-filled missionaries. Missionary spirituality creates people with depth that manage to see God's presence in what is purely scientific explanation of the evolutionary process of the universe.

Spirit-led missionaries easily appreciate the cultures of peoples knowing that they bear the footprints of the Holy Spirit.[572] Their first duty is to humbly discern God's movement among the peoples and cultures.[573] This humility consists in recognizing the "holy mystery" in which all peoples stand and "which relativizes every perspective." There is no assumption of "moral or spiritual superiority," or any "fast track to the truth."[574] Such spirit-filled mission means crossing borders, creating bridges when there is none. This continues the action of the Spirit-Creator whose main task is to bring the diverse creatures connected to each other.[575]

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[570] See Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 2-3.

[571] See Edward, *Breath of Life*, 45-60.

[572] See Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 2-3.

[573] See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 215.

[574] See Paul Lakeland, "Reflections on the 'Grace of Self-Doubt,'" in *Ecclesiology and Exclusion Boundaries of Being and Belonging in Postmodern Times*, eds. Dennis Doyle, Timothy J. Furry and Pascal D. Bazzel (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2012), 15.

[575] See Edwards, *Breath of Life*, 13-15.

Detecting the incarnated" Christ in cultures entails "encounter" with the other, a missiological term invented by Pope Francis.[576] Encounter means reaching out, fostering dialogue and friendship especially outside of the usual circles of familiar faces, involving those who are neglected and ignored.[577] The word "encounter" is not just about people meeting people, but about a prolonged contact and a personal relationship with Christ and with those whom Christ loves – the people of the periphery. Christ has incarnated his presence in them.[578] The Holy Spirit's presence is more dense among the people of the periphery whom Pope Francis designated as the new teachers of humanity. He did not give this honor to the rich. Their culture is more important than the culture of the rich.[579] Missionary spirituality inspires the encounter with the people of the periphery as a privileged divine locus in the world.

The multicultural world is not only an "environment rich in humanity"[580] but also of divinity because "the other person" points towards "the Divine 'other.'"[581] This constant encounter with Christ through the people of the periphery makes mission a place where one also draws his/her strength. Missionary spirituality inspires the person to see "the supreme importance" of God's presence in the poor strangers. They attract because they reveal the face of the "transcendent" God.[582] The ecclesiologist Roger Haight explains that spirituality always seeks a theological foundation.[583] Missionary spirituality emerges from the theology of interculturality that seeks to

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[576] See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 87.

[577] See John Allen, "Francis and the Culture of Encounter," *National Catholic Reporter* (December 20, 2013): 2.

[578] Ibid.

[579] See Sedmonk, *The Church of the Poor*, 174-175.

[580] See Francis, *Message of his Holiness on the 48th World Communication Day, Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter* (1 June 2014).

[581] See Thomas J. Eggleston, "What Pope Francis Means by Encounter," *Houston Catholic Worker* (June-August 2015): 17.

[582] See Roger Haight, *Spirituality Seeking Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 4-5.

[583] Ibid., 6.

encounter the unfamiliar face of God among the poor, the strangers, and to see their cultures as the most important in this planet.[584]

3. Towards a Contextual Publishing Work

The FABC applied this Trinitarian foundation on their the multi-cultural and multi-religious Asian continent. They did not just inculturate Vatican II to rituals and liturgy, translating the Mass and the Bible in native languages, but embarked on a unique missionary journey through the triple dialogue with the Asian poor, their cultures and religions in their statement of 1971. The triple dialogue has led them to a new understanding of being Church in the service of the kingdom.[585] Accepting the impossibility of making massive conversions among members of the world's religions, they insisted on bridge building, recognizing the presence of salvific elements in them. They entered into rapprochement, working actively with them to establish God's kingdom of justice and peace in this planet.[586]

Phan described this journey as a combination of "reception" and "subversion."[587] By becoming kingdom oriented and using dialogue as a mode of mission, FABC saw themselves activating mission as called by Vatican II, differentiating their approach from other Churches. Dialogue contextualized in Asia has made them more aware of their uniqueness. Outsiders did not see this as an authentic reception of Vatican II. In fact, the triple dialogue might have diminished interest in mission *ad gentes* as Pope John Paul II wrote in the apostolic exhortation *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) (1991) that bewailed the "waning" of interest in mission to the non-Christians, to the "nations."[588] RM emphasized that proclamation of Jesus as the

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[584] Pernia, "Introduction," 7.

[585] See Peter C. Phan, "'Reception Or 'Subversion'" of Vatican II by the Asian Churches? A New Way of Being Church in Asia." *Australia eJournal of Theology* (February 2006), 2-3.

[586] See Roger P. Schroeder, "Mission in Catholic Theology," in *Christian Mission, Contextual Theology, Prophetic Dialogue* eds. Dale Ervin and Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2018), 28-29.

[587] Phan, "'Reception. Or 'Subversion,'"12-13.

[588] See John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio,* no. 2.

one savior and mediator of humanity is still the priority and purpose of mission to the non-Christians.[589] This is a direct critic of the dialogue with members of the world's religions which FABC evolved since 1971. The priority given to dialogue as the modality of mission in Asia could thus be interpreted as "subversion."[590]

In preparation for the Asian Synod of 1998, Rome sent an introductory document that wishes to restore the primacy of proclamation.[591] The Bishops responded that "the burning issue for the Asian Churches is how to proclaim Jesus amidst the crushing poverty, competing religious systems and cultural diversity."[592] They did not do away with "proclamation" and still consider it as the "center and the primary element of evangelization" using it when the opportunity arises.[593] In Asia, "this proclamation of Jesus Christ is first of all the witness of Christians and the Christian communities to the values of the kingdom, a proclamation through Christ-like deeds."[594] Witness is to proclaim without using words.

The dialogical way of life is "the Asian way of being Church, promoting understanding, harmony and collaboration."[595] While the Asian Bishops recognize this as their strength, they also humbly accepted the lack of genuine inculturation to the triple dialogue. They ask for a peaceful dialogue with the Asian religions and for "an explicit pronouncement of the salvific value of the non-Christian religions, not independent or parallel but in relation to Christ."[596]

The document that came out of the Synod the apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* still maintained the primacy to proclaim

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[589] Ibid., no. 5-7.

[590] Phan. "'Reception. Or 'Subversion,'" 14-16.

[591] Ibid., 2-3.

[592] Ibid., 13.

[593] See Jonathan Y. Tan, "Mission as Witness and Proclamation," in *A Century of Catholic Mission*, ed. Stephen B. Bevans (London: Regnum Books International, 2013), 181.

[594] Ibid.

[595] Phan, "'Reception. Or 'Subversion,'" 14.

[596] Ibid., 14.

Jesus as the only mediator and savior of the World, seeing Buddhism, Taoism Hinduism and other Asian religions as teaching "spiritual values" that find "fulfillment in Jesus Christ."[597] The Asian Bishops would have to wait for Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*. In this apostolic exhortation on mission, he encouraged Christians to appreciate the rituals and prayers of the world's religions as "channels of the Holy Spirit." These words affirm that the world religions are salvific by their own right, as the Holy Spirit has also worked on them. Pope Francis explained:

While these lack the meaning and efficacy of the sacraments instituted by Christ, they can be channels which the Holy Spirit raises up in order to liberate non-Christians from atheistic immanentism or from purely individual religious experiences. The same Spirit everywhere brings forth various forms of practical wisdom which help people to bear sufferings and live in greater peace and harmony. As Christians, we can benefit from these treasuries built up over many centuries, which can help us better to live our own faith.[598]

By recognizing that the rites and prayers of the World religions are channels of the Holy Spirit, and hence of benefit also to Christians, without at all connecting their salvific effect to Christ, Pope Francis could already be walking the path towards religious pluralism. The Pope echoed the argument of the FABC that this religious pluralism underscores "the positive role of other religions play in fostering the spiritual welfare of their followers," demanding that "all religions, as historical institutions made of sinful beings, learn from, correct and enrich each other." In other words they must "complement each other."[599]

The 10th General Chapter dreamt of reaching the "frontiers." It first reiterated Alberione's devotion to "Jesus Master" who has entrusted to the Church and hence to the Society of St. Paul its

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[597] John Paul II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (November 6, 1999), no. 6.

[598] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 254.

[599] Phan, *The Joy of Religious Pluralism*, 130.

"mission" and "ministry" of preaching the gospel on "all existential, cultural, religious and geographical frontiers of the present time."[600] The modality of proclamation features the congregation reaching through radio and TV waves, magazines and newspapers the people who belong to the world religions.[601] The Congregation betrayed a "hierarchical ecclesiology" that sees the goal of mission "as conversion and salvation of souls," incorporating these lost people to the authority of the Church.[602] Such modality of mission might have no place in the Asian context as the FABC explains, destroying the mission that already exists through dialogue.[603]

The FABC affirmed that once mission is sourced from the Trinity, the Society of St. Paul would be able to begin a missionary journey that means not just reaching the frontiers, but border crossing, enabling mutual exchanges between races, religions and the poor, contextualizing their publishing activity. This border crossing can breed stories and narratives that will touch the hearts of everyone. The Trinity as the source of mission is a bridge to anywhere, a connectivity to everyone.

Their stories and their struggles to be with the people are the content of the books and magazines of successful publishing companies today. The success stories of Bayard of France and PCC of Spain as narrated in the seminar of Pauline Editors of 2017 come from the contextual development of their publishing work, their involvement in the work for justice and peace, ecumenism, dialogue with the world religions and the like.[604] Orbis Books focused on the "Global dimension of the Christian faith and mission," exploring "dialogue with diverse cultures and religious traditions, serving the

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[600] See Society of St. Paul, *The 10th General Chapter*, no. 3-6.

[601] Ibid.

[602] See Ioan Sauca, "Ecclesiology and Mission within the Context of Orthodox-Evangelical Dialogue," in *The Mission of God, Studies in Orthodox and Evangelical Mission*, eds. Mark Oxbrow and Tim Grass (London: Regnun Books International, 2015), 52.

[603] See Phan, "'Reception. Or 'Subversion,'"7.

[604] See Sanirot, "The French Context," 227.

cause of reconciliation and peace. Founded in 1970, it has become a successful publishing house.[605] Its story is in contrast with the Congregation's publishing house in the United States, the Alba House, which folded up 10 years ago for lack of audience. Without products that emerge from contextual mission, no story or narrative may interest people. Contextual publishing has become more active in the Church directed by Pope Francis. Without these stories, reflections and analysis from the periphery, a result of intercultural encounters and dialogue, publishing activities may have no future.

4. Towards a Deeply Pneumatological Community

The Trinity as the source of mission "has moved the Church as the implantation of itself in various cultures for the salvation of souls" to a participation in God's mission.[606] This Trinitarian paradigm implies that mission has a Church, the sacrament of salvation, an instrument to spread God's kingdom in this planet.[607] The Church has no mission because mission belongs to the Trinity. The Church "humbly" participates in this mission, together with other peoples of this planet.[608] Mission does not emerge from the events of this planet, flowing from the "mystery and intra communion and dialogue between the Father, Son and the Spirit."[609] God's salvific plan unfolds "in all places at all times," working through all human hearts to establish his kingdom.[610]

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[605] See Dale T. Ervin and Peter C. Phan, *Christian Mission, Contextual Theology, Prophetic Dialogue, Essays in Honor of Stephen B. Bevans* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2018), iv.

[606] See Dianne Bergant, "Does the Church Have a Mission or Does the Mission Have a Church?" in *Reflections on Church and Mission, Creating a Welcoming Space, Essays to Honor Larry Nemer, SVD*, eds. Ross Fishburn, Michael Kelly, Christopher Monaghan and Peter Price (Nortcote, Victoria: Morning Star Publishing, 2014), 49.

[607] Ibid., 49-50.

[608] Ibid.

[609] Edgar G. Javier, "Editorial," *Missio Inter Gentes* 4, no. 1 (January 2018): iv.

[610] Ibid.

John Fuellenbach defines God as "a family" and the "ultimate goal of creation is to participate in the communal life of the Triune God."[611] The final establishment of God's kingdom can be envisioned as "the great gathering of all human beings that have ever lived, live and will live together with all creatures of any kind, celebrating an eternal feast."[612] But this already exists in an imperfect way in the here and now through the Church and the men and women of different races and religions living, working and praying together. *Missio Dei* goes beyond the Church and sees this kingdom building as a common human endeavor. The Church exists for the kingdom, a witness that it is possible for men and women of different cultures and races to work together.

Multiculturality is internationality, with a particular emphasis on culture. God's kingdom is multicultural. Amos Yong wrote that a sign of a "deeply pneumatological" community is its ability to recognize multiculturality as a gift and use this as a witness to a world divided by races and cultures.[613] A "deeply pneumatological" community then lives the consciousness that multiculturality, a divine gift, must be used and cultivated through interculturality.[614] The SVD's recognized that the international character of their communities is not a mere result of accident or force but by choice and design of their congregation by their founder.[615] Their effort to have a harmonious intercultural living is "a commitment and ongoing responsibility."[616] This is not just being faithful to their founder, but "a missiological option to give witness to

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[611] John Fuellenbach, *Church, Community for the Kingdom* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 5.

[612] Ibid., 9.

[613] See Amos Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit, Reason and Theological Method in the Third Millenium* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2014), 162.

[614] See Philip Gibbs, SVD, "Conversion and Ethnocentrism," in *Intercultural Living*, vol. 1 eds. Lazar T. Stanislaus, SVD and Marting Ueffing, SVD (Kashmere Gate, Delhi: Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches Institut, Sankt Augustin, 2015), 3-13.

[615] See Antonio Pernia, "A Multicultural SVD in a Multicultural World," *Verbum SVD* 43, no 2 (2002): 148-149.

[616] Agcaracar, *Interculturality Service of Communion*, 103.

the unity and diversity of the kingdom of God and the Church."[617] The intercultural communities are the extension of the pheneumalogical Church, attesting to the implosion of the kingdom.[618]

The Superior General of the Society of St. Paul shared yearly his reflections and analysis of the Pauline communities, pinpointing to their shadows and lights. Their being mono cultural communities are not at all an advantage for a harmonious communal living. In 2014, Jose de Valdir, the current superior general, lamented the situation of some communities where members did not anymore communicate as brothers, relying solely on the hierarchical communication that treated others as subordinates. He wrote that "the community and the environment in which we carry out our apostolate are the first places to benefit from authentic communication" that is first founded in "communication with God."[619] Nonetheless there are "spaces where radical hierarchical-corporate structure is blindly imposed, moved by an unbridled search for efficiency, transforming the relationships that there should be between brothers in merely functional relationships, many times cold because they are centered almost exclusively on results: they are only harbingers of conflict and suffering."[620]

The apostolic down trend as reported in the seminar of Pauline Editors of 2017 serves as an indicator that something is wrong. The functional relationships do not at all lead to success.[621] Valdir recommends a focus on the interactivity of the digital tools as the new paradigm of interpersonal communication in communities.[622]

Paradigms are external presentations that appear good in the blackboard but may not address the deeper causes of problems. "Communities warring among themselves," as Pope Francis

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[617] Ibid., 104.

[618] See Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit*, 163.

[619] See Valdir Jose De Castro, *Apostle of Communicators, For a Culture of Encounter* (Rome: General House, 2014), 6-7.

[620] Ibid.

[621] Zanon, "Questionaire on the Apostolic Activity of the Society of St. Paul, Reading and Result," 289.

[622] Ibid. 9.

diagnosed, stems from individualism, selfishness, the search for comfort and self- absorption, evolving from a consumeristic society that has penetrated the walls of the convent.[623] These internal issues can only be controlled when God becomes the center of mission, not the community nor the Church.[624]

Communities in crisis need to experience God's presence through a new way. They become truly pneumatological communities when they encounter God not only through the familiar way of devotions, retreats and private prayers. Pope Francis has traced for all a "missionary spirituality" that offers a new way of experiencing God through the faces of the poor strangers.[625] The unfamiliar face of God in the poor challenges the consumerism and other forms of materialism and selfishness that plague convents today. It asks for a simple lifestyle free from attachments and addictions. Face to face encounter with the poor motivates action of compassion and justice and the poor transform the evangelizers, strengthening their faith, hope and love.[626]

C. The Bridge of Prophetic Dialogue

1. Keeping the Line Warm through Mission Stories

Among the studies on the impact of the social media to parishes was the research done by the Danish National Church among its clergy and their congregation.[627] The study is titled "Keeping the Lines Open and Warm." When the social media centered on strengthening communication in the parish, it was open. It became warm when mission stories and social activism were uploaded and shared.[628]

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[623] See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 98-101.

[624] See Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 2-3.

[625] See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 78-80.

[626] See Tagle, "The Poor and the Excluded," 148.

[627] See Stine Lomborg and Charles Ess, "'Keeping the Line Open and Warm:' An Activist Danish Church and Its Presence in Facebook," in *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture: Perspectives, Practices and Futures*, ed. Steve Jones (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 169-189.

[628] Ibid.

This research discovered how pastors assess their involvement in Facebook in connection with their pastoral work and how the parishioners see the role of Facebook in their outlook of the Church and their presence in their parishes. Since Facebook activity was seen simply as a kind of "digital information blackboard" where questions about parish life were answered directly by the pastors, the dialogue was often considered as smooth, with hardly no criticisms on the part of the parishioners.[629]

Pastors saw Facebook as an extension of their parish activities, maintaining relationships to their friends and the members of the parish. They were concerned about their role as mediator, carefully writing their comments as not to offend anybody, so that everyone could look up to them for leadership. Their personal opinion must be toned down. They must be careful to distinguish their private affairs with their role as leaders of their communities. They maintained well their profiles, sharing themselves as pastors and as private persons in their status updates so that their parishioners might be able to relate with them personally, and not as strangers. Facebook enabled them to reach out to their parishioners who otherwise after the celebrations in the Church rushed home and unable to make any encounter with them. The social media became thus an extension of the parish and an opportunity for those who had very little time during Sundays to socialize and know better their pastors.[630]

Parishioners saw the use of Facebook as a way by which their Church had become progressive, adopting to the use of technology. The active groups were socio-political in orientation that involved stories of missionaries working in other countries, the struggles against poverty, climate change and work with the indigenous peoples. The social issues and the work of missionaries caused more discussion and comments, pricking the consciences of the members of this Lutheran national Church to action, attracting students and young people, as well as retirees with fixed income at home to contribute

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[629] Ibid., 170.

[630] Ibid., 174- 175.

to the causes and mission.[631] Dialogue through the social media was kept "warm" through this trans-parish concerns, reaching activities of missionaries abroad and possibilities for the locals to be of help. Mission stories inspired more interactions, connecting to places beyond their parishes. This research attested that mission activities inspired an intercultural exchange, from a parish in Denmark to some hinterlands in Africa, allowing direct contact and dialogue with missionaries, enriching the life of faith.

2. Opting for Prophecy

Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan has a Facebook account open to comments from his readers. As the former president of the Philippine Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), he used his Facebook account to guide voters during the 2015 presidential elections asking voters to select candidates not connected with any killings and not those who do not curse the Pope. He remembered how one midnight, he typed something in his Facebook account and within minutes, received thousands of negative reactions – which meant that trolls had this account in surveillance.[632] His mission (of prophetic dialogue) that focused more on prophecy became more chaotic.

At the start of the extra judicial killings in 2015, he was one of the first to denounce this through pastoral letters and rallies in his archdiocese. That made his Facebook account busier and chaotic than ever, with more trolls and fake news directed towards his person. He was accused of having hidden wealth in the form of vacation houses. A "whistle blower" named Bikoy asked for his protection on releasing videos accusing the president and his family as heading the drug rings in the country. This Bikoy later confessed that the group

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[631] Ibid., 175-176.

[632] Interview with Archbishop Socrates Villegas, June 15, 2019. This interview was conducted through messenger when the Archbishop was in the United States of America.

that convinced him to upload his accusations was a coalition of many people headed by Archbishop Socrates Villegas.[633]

The archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan that he leads today abolished the *arancel* system and substituted by stewardship program named *Pananabangan*. Their theologians had defined this as a "way of life," lived "with gratitude," "responsibility," and a sharing that is generous.[634] It started with the clergy contributing monthly for the upkeep of the seminary, and their seminary in turn took care of the poor communities nearby. The story of how this stewardship system replaced the *arancel* is itself a long discourse of debates and discussions that started in 2009, culminating with the archdiocesan synod of 2017, where this was put into practice for the whole archdiocese.[635] His way of governance founded in constant dialogue with his clergy and the laity reflects his presence in Facebook, despite the threat of trolls and fake news.

Bishop Villegas takes his account in Facebook as a necessary part of his mission. His reflections, videos and homilies reach some 30,000 shares an indication that many follow him. The bishop qualifies as an "influencer" that convinces people to follow a certain lifestyle or to buy a product, which in this case, is the gospel.[636] Yet for all his efforts in the social media, the guidelines that he spoke about in several YouTube uploads did not influence the outcome of the 2019 mid-year elections. He is not discouraged nor does he have plans to remove his account. He explains that no part of human life, no part in the world that should not be penetrated by the power of the gospel," among which is "communications." He is in Facebook and will be there because he wants it to be filled with the light of

[633] Faye Orellana, "Ousting Duterte is not My Job As Priest-Villegas," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (June 9, 2019): 1.

[634] Oliver Joseph Mendoza, "*Pananabangan*: Stewardship Program of the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan and the Abrogation of the Arancel," *Say Pananabangan* 1 (2018-2019): 30-36.

[635] Ibid., 19-27.

[636] Morgan Gluskman, "The Rise of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Lifestyle Branding," *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communication* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 78.

Christ. "I am in Facebook not to get the likes and the dislikes, but for Christ," he said. A prophet in the tradition of Jeremiah remains in his job despite the rejection of his message.

He has endured "bashing" and therefore, there is nothing new in what he receives and will receive. As a bishop, he said, he has to teach people. He posts what his conscience dictates him and knows that fighting evil is not a walk in the park. Evil strikes back. The option he said is to keep quiet and not to get dirty. But keeping quiet while evil occupies the air means betrayal of Christ. "I cannot keep quiet as I see God being blasphemed and lies seem credible," he explained. "My mission is to do what Christ would do." Villegas goes back to his identity as a priest and a teacher, and he is in Facebook to teach and resist error, to disturb consciences and soul, and not to sow disorder.

Any mission involvement in Facebook should always begin in prayer, he explained. He asks in particular for the Holy Spirit to enlighten him what to write and post, for people who would see his posts and that God may speak through them. He includes in his prayers those who are indifferent, the bashers and the trolls that God may touch their souls. "Without the power of grace," he concludes, "Facebook is useless."

3. Opting for Dialogue

Fr. Luciano Felloni is an Argentinian diocesan priest who works in Christ the King Parish of Novaliches made headlines during the visit of Pope Francis in 2013. The Pope was his teacher in theology. As a religious, he was assigned to Korea after finishing his theological studies but he decided to return to the country as a diocesan priest, working in a poor parish and preaching in Tagalog which he has mastered. He launched his Facebook account in February 2016 *Almu Salita* which is a daily gospel reflection from the mass. His Facebook account has 194,000 followers. He asks his followers to become cyber missionaries by sharing daily his reflections. His daily reflections

were compiled in a book and became a best seller, attesting to the popularity of his Facebook account.[637]

Fr. Luciano initiated one of the first rehabilitation centers for drug addicts in Manila after getting tired of blessing the victims of extra judicial killings which were frequent in his parish. He is careful enough not to be engaged in polemics against the police, knowing well his status as a foreigner. He used the stories of drug addicts who have recovered always in connection with the gospel of the day emphasizing God's mercy and compassion. The stories of addicts undergoing rehab, his reflection over the matter, were an option for dialogue, not so much for prophecy. He projects himself as a priest who brings unity despite the drug problem in his parish.

Fr. Luciano considered his work in the Facebook as part of his being a missionary. He said that this is not a hobby, but a mission and has become a part of his daily ministry. His reflections only last 3 minutes, but the preparations for this involve many people. The work adds more things to his schedule as a parish priest, but it also opens an "incredible horizon of possibilities as a missionary." Since his focus is on the word of God, he did not receive much bashing except when his topics were about Mary and the saints. His bashers were mostly members of *Iglesia ni Cristo* and born again Christians.

His Facebook account is managed by 25 volunteers mostly young professionals that produce posters and research on the saint of the day, posting prayers and producing their weekly special "We Speak", which is a collective reflection on the Sunday gospel. Thus, *Almu Dasal* has become really a ministry, reaching out especially to the overseas Filipino workers that have become his main supporters. His live Facebook Sunday mass has attracted thousands of attendance

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[637] Interview started on August 20, 2019 through messenger. The interviewer followed this with three more interviews when Fr. Felloni started his ministry with young people who are thinking of committing suicide. His *Almu Dasal* which was just a prayer and reflection during breakfast extended to prayers at midday and at night. His volunteers participate with him in this endeavor. *Almu Dasal* has also solicited funds for their scholarship programs, thus extending their work back to the online world.

worldwide, manifesting the hunger for the word on the part of these Filipinos working abroad.

The online activities simply manifest the active life of his parish. The volunteers are mostly his parishioners, young people, who have also evolved a new mission to prevent teenage suicides. The teens themselves along with a group of psychologists and psychiatrists listen and give advice to the teenagers in trouble. *Almu dasal*, as Fr. Felloni explained, is not only about communication, but a reflection of his parish community reaching out to others.

The first requirement to be an effective cyber missionary in the social media, he explained, is to become a person of prayer. The social media is "where to say it," but prayer supplies "what to say." The second characteristic of cyber missionary is the need to be a listening person. Many people enter into the social media to have someone to talk with, to share their problems and struggles. The third is commitment. People he said wait for the message every day. Thus, this needs a lot of disciple to upload the message regularly. The dream of Fr. Felloni is this activity may become a "mainstream ministry for the Catholic Church," an opportunity to reach out to thousands with practically little economic cost.

4. The Congregation's Digital Presence

The most shared writings and interviews of a member of the Society of St. Paul come from Fr. Gabriel Amorth, an Italian exorcist who died 5 years ago. This Pauline is perhaps the most famous influencer of the Congregation as his works, interviews and exorcisms in Youtube have reached millions of hits. Yet he is famous not so much because of his communication work but because of his being an exorcist. The context of his mission, which is exorcism, in other words, is the cause of his fame.

The institutional activities of the Congregation in digital communication is limited to the masses, special celebrations and catechisms, given in Advent and Lent with its seven last words and the way of the cross. Thus, its presence in the digital communication is the continuation of its liturgical and devotional dominance in the

written medium. The seminar of Pauline editors of 2017 laments its presence in digital medium has been limited due to lack of consistency and failure to gain some financial returns to sustain such activities.

The Facebook accounts of representatives of the Congregation, from Europe, Africa, Asia and South America were always a combination posting of messages from the Bible or citations of wisdom from learned writers and holy men and women and their celebrations and travels. The Facebook accounts were one way to be in touch with each other, used to maintain interpersonal relationship. Birthdays, ordination and profession celebrations were remembered. Those who posted or shared mission stories are few, many of them already seniors who had done some mission work in Africa or South America.[638] Communitarian based presence in the social media happened when the Congregation organizes Bible quizzes and Biblical encounters or seminars, but this was to announce events, attract participants or sell products like books.

Catholic influencers in the social media always speak from a missionary context, whether it be a parish or social or charitable activities. Archbishop Socrates Villegas and Fr. Felloni did their work from the context of the drug addiction and extra judicial killings. The study on the use of Facebook on the Danish National Church revealed that when social media was only used to facilitate inner communication of parishes, the conversation was often bland. When it reported about missionary activities especially to foreign countries with the poor and the indigenous people, these attracted attention and lively dialogue. The dynamics of prophetic dialogue could only come alive through contextual mission. Thus, the Congregation

[638] One of them is Bro. Bernardo Favaretto, 85 years old who worked and still lived today in Venezuela. He established a Bible school in this country and is touch with many indigenous people. He has likewise spearheaded translation of the Yanonami gospel. The Yanonami are a stone age tribes of the Amazon. The author observed for two weeks the entries of St. Paul members from Italy, Spain, South America and the Philippines. They post Biblical quotes and wisdom of holy men and women, except for contextual missionaries like Favaretto who promotes the indigenous wisdom, their stories of struggles and deaths in the jungles of the Amazon.

needs to develop more activities that involve direct action with the poor, or causes of justice and peace. Without this, its social media presence would only be about posting Biblical messages or saying from saints and wise people, a proclamation, without encouraging a space for a lively interaction.

D. An Attempt to Inculturate

1. The Search for a "Digital Thought"

The paradigm shift initiated by *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) makes clear the relationship between mission and communication.[639] John Paul II, after discussing mission as a matter of territory, presented the "new *areopagus*," the first of which is the "world of communications. [640] Normally, exhortations on communication appear in communication documents, but John Paul II included this in *Redemptoris Missio*, a document on mission. In this shift, the Pope no longer saw the use of the means of communication for evangelization as a priority, putting as a bigger challenge, the "integration of the message" in the culture produced by social communication. This means that a task given to missionaries is "evangelization of the digital culture."[641] Communication is no longer about instruments, but is considered a place which must undergo the process of evangelization through the inculturation of the gospel.

Cultures are often identified with a group of people who live in a distinct place and country. Digital culture is different. There is no country or distinct place to refer to. The place given here is the "network society" as the sociologist Manuel Castells wrote, that extends to all parts of the world.[642] Paul VI in his in *Evangelii*

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[639] John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mission*, no. 37.

[640] Ibid.

[641] See Josef-Franz Eilers, *Communicating in Ministry and Mission, An Introduction to Pastoraland Evangelizing Communication* (Manila: Logos (Divine Word) Publications, 2018), 16-17.

[642] See Manuel Castells, "The Network Society," in *The Network Society From Knowledge to Policy* eds. by Manuel Castells and Gustavo Cardoso (Washington: Center For Translantic Relations, 2005), 4-20.

Nuntiandi insisted that before any regeneration of culture, there must be proclamation of the gospel. The proclamation of the gospel assures the "encounter with the gospel" from which inculturation begins.[643] How can this proclamation of the gospel be accomplished in the digital culture whose sense of place is different and thus, difficult to define?

This proclamation, as *Redemptoris Missio* emphasized, begins with the study of "the new culture created by modern communications," taking into account its "new languages, new techniques and a new psychology."[644] This study underscores the penetration of its "criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, *lines of thought*, sources of inspiration and models of life."[645] This constant and careful study of the digital culture also includes "discernment," facilitating "the identification of values and counter-values, so as to build on the former and vigorously combat the latter." The counter-values are a times difficult to perceive. Digital culture can subtly project an "earthly vision of a better world"[646] that hides its evil in the glorification of humanity.

Benedict XVI dwells on the challenge of inculturation in the digital culture when he presented the challenge of "digital thought." He explained that inculturation is not only a matter "of expressing the Gospel message in contemporary language" but about "the relationship between faith, the life of the Church and the changes human beings are experiencing." He then proposed this question as key in the work of inculturation in the digital culture: "what challenges does 'digital thought' pose to faith and theology? What questions and requests?"[647] Identifying the "digital thought" that presents the most

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[643] See Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World *Evangelii Nuntiandii* (8 December 1975), nos. 18-20.

[644] See John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mission* no. 37.

[645] See Pontifical Council for Culture, *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture* (23 May 1999), no. 4. The emphasis is by the author.

[646] Ibid., nos. 4-5.

[647] Benedict XVI, *To Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications* (Monday 20 February 2011).

important challenge to faith is a task of inculturation, to which the Congregation must participate.

2. *Homo Deus* as the Most Challenging Digital Thought

The sociologist Charlie Gere described the current frontier of the digital world as the "end of humans" and "the rise of the post human" due to the advances in "robotics and research about "consciousness and intelligence."[648] The historian Yuval Noah Harari observed that through these robots and artificial intelligence (AI) Google, Facebook and Youtube, are now able to know more about persons, their habits and lifestyle.[649] Harari sees humanity, not anymore using its intelligence, relying solely on what the computer could tell him/her.[650] The GPS in Google manifests how AI works – catering to the needs of drivers who do not know the way and in search of exact direction to their destination. Drivers trust GPS more than themselves.[651]

Humanity, in surrendering its powers to decide to AI, becomes "useless." Harari noted that this future runs in contrast to the achievement of the first industrial revolution that took authority from God and the Bible, placing it to the individuals. The *Homo Sapiens*, product of that first industrial revolution, who is a producer, has evolved to a non-creative individual – the *Homo Deus*.[652]

Harari described scientific researches financed by the billions coming from the founders of Amazon, Google, and Facebook may extend the lifespan of humans to 150 years. The ultimate goal of these scientists is to obliterate the causes of death which are all

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[648] See Gere, *The Digital Culture*, 14-15.

[649] See Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus, A Brief History of Tomorrow* (London: Harvill Secker, 2016), 377-381.

[650] Ibid.

[651] Ibid.

[652] See Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens, A Brief History of Humankind* (Toronto: Signal Books, 2014), 245-256.

biological and technical. Harari argued that life without death is not an impossible goal in the digital world.[653]

Digital scientists have discovered that happiness is tinkering with the human "biochemical system" through "the direct artificial electrical stimuli" to certain spots of the brain, and the manipulation of the DNA.[654] Again, the player is the AI that collects and analyzes data from people in this planet. Humanity has long thought that what stimulates happiness is satisfaction of desire or the absent of it (Buddha), but researchers pinpointed that the immediate cause is on the brain, "a biochemical event' that can be directly provoked.[655] Thus, AI guarantees happiness for everyone.

Harari speaks then of "Dataism" as a new religion, the supreme authority about life, death and happiness.[656] Religion, as he analyzed, is about the highest authority that a person turns to when faced with problems. "Dataism" is about reliance and trust on the analysis of the AI.[657] Its instruments are no longer Churches, but the tech companies like Amazon, Google and Facebook. Its high priests are Billy Gates and the founders of Amazon, Facebook and Google.

"Dataism" attempts to present solutions to the "vaster human problems" like death and the composition of life.[658] Any scientific activity that presents its discoveries "with a very high spiritual value" ends up competing with the gospel.[659] Digital technology has entered into the sphere of the "mystical," a space that was once forbidden

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[653] Ibid., 15-21.

[654] Ibid, 29-43.

[655] Ibid.

[656] See Oliva Solon, "Question and Answer, The God Complex: How Big Data Will Fuel A New Religion," *Wired* (March 2017): 18-19.

[657] Ibid.

[658] See Mary Midgley, "Strange Contest: Science Versus Religion" in *The Gospel and Contemporary Culture* edited with an introduction by Hugh Montefiore (London: Mowbray, 1992), 41.

[659] Ibid., 43-44.

by scientists who see their limits within the natural order.[660] While secularism removes God and anything related to him in culture, "Dataism" wants to invade the domains of the supernatural.

"Dataism's" promises of perfect health, perpetual happiness and immortality in this planet reflect the rewards of the afterlife reserved for the righteous. If these divine promises could be fulfilled through science and technology without even passing through the ethical demands, then God becomes useless.[661] "Dataism" thus continues the tradition of science and technology of providing a "comfortable religion" that promises rewards without putting any ethical requirements.[662]

Dataism presents the human person as the sole beneficiary of digital connectivity. This anthropomorphic view has created walls between humanity and other creatures of this planet. Humanity's glorification in *Homo Deus* challenges the current theological and scriptural efforts to make people just a part of creation, in an interconnectedness with other creatures, without any human domination. It challenges the argument of Christian humanism which does not glorify human perfection "while being completely blinded to the well-being and flourishing of others."[663] *Homo Deus* is at the frontiers of digital thought, separating humanity from the rest of creatures. Humanity has become the lord, being the sole beneficiary of technological development. This undermines the whole Christian tradition.

3. The Remembrance of *Homo Servus*

The sociologist Stefan Gelfgren saw in the net-work society a "crude" shadow of God's kingdom through its fostering of relationships

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[660] See Michael Reagan, *The Hand of God: Thoughts and Images Reflecting the Spirit in the Universe* (Conshohocken, Pennsylvania: Templeton Press, 2011), 36.

[661] See Harari, *Homo Deus*, 234.

[662] Midgley, "Strange Contest," 45.

[663] Anthony de Luc, "Christian Humanism, Anthropocentrism, and the Contemporary Ecological Crisis," *New Theology Review* 30, no.2 (March 2018): 10-19.

among peoples of the world with "little cost."[664] The sociologist Massimo di Felice saw in the digital world humanity entering into the seas, mountains, rivers and other "non-humans," getting in touch with the rigors of climate change that became possible due to digitalization of information.[665] Massimo di Felice already sees this network society not focusing only on humans but humanity tied up to other creatures of the earth, becoming their spokesperson of the perils of climate change.[666] In an apparent response to the arguments of Yuval Noah Harari, Massimo di Felice pictured humans serving other creatures of the earth through the digital tools, saving through these tools our common home. The purpose of network society is not the creation of *homo deus*, but to affirm humanity as *homo servus.*

Castell's view of the world as a net-work society should be placed in the background of the original net-work universe traced by the biblical accounts of creation in the book of Genesis. God created all creatures from the earth, and thus, animals and humans, having the same origin, should help each other as partners.[667] God gave humans the power to give names to other creatures, a work of a servant to others. In this partnership, humans are at the service of other creatures (Gen. 1 and 2).[668]

Biblical scholars Bruce Birch, Walter Brueggerman, Terence Fretheim and David Petersen noted from these chapters that God did not present himself as "powerful" and other creatures as

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[664] Stefan Gelfgren, "'Let There be Digital Networks and God Will Provide Growth?'" Comparing Aims and Hopes of 19th Century and Post-Millennial Christianity, in *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture, Perspective, Practices and Futures* ed, Steve Jones (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 239-240.

[665] Massimo de Felice, "Beyond the Anthropocene: the Net-Activism and the Trans-organic Ecologies." Society of St. Paul, *2nd International Seminar Pauline Publishers, Ariccia, 16-22 October 2017* (Rome: General House, 2018), 41.

[666] Ibid.

[667] See Carol J. Dempsy, "Earth, Wind and Fire," in *Biblical and Theological Perspective on Creation*, eds. Carol J. Dempsy and Margaret Pazdan (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004), 3-4.

[668] Ibid.

"powerless."[669] The Father did not choose to be dictatorial, taking the risk of involving his creatures, especially human beings, sharing power to others who are not like him. God gives them freedom and autonomy, a certain independence, sharing with them the task of creation through multiplying (to all animals) and giving of names (to human beings). God "established a relationship with human beings in such a way that their decision about creation truly count."[670] In this sense, God venerates all his creatures, having come from his molding hands. The original network universe created by God aims first to teach humanity of its service to others by empowering other creatures, as God also empowered the humanity. Humans have to allow the birds to fly, the animals to roam the forest and the fish to glide through the waters.[671] Humanity empowers the trees, plants and the waters by protecting the eco system, avoiding the exploitation of the earth's resources.

In this divinely created network universe, God is love because he allows his creatures to be what they are, not imposing anything. By maximizing the complexity and diversity of these creatures, by allowing humanity the full use of its freedom, even at the risk of sinning, God provides the ambience through which love and service may really reign supreme. [672] Humanity cannot exist without other creatures. His salvation lies not by becoming *Homo Deus,* but by being Homo *Servus*. *Homo Servus* is not the thinking, rational animal, but someone who lives in "awareness" that his/her only way to a meaningful existence is to serve others, be a channel of compassion

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[669] Bruce C. Birch, Walter Bruggermann, Terence E. Fretheim and David L. Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nasville: Abingdon, 1999), 46.

[670] Ibid.

[671] Dempsy, "Earth, Wind and Fire," 5-7.

[672] Ernst M. Conradie, "John Haught on Original Sin: A Conversation," *Theological Studies* 72 (October 2016): 2

in a day to day basis, from the moment he/she wakes up to the time he/she confronts the traffic on going home from work.[673]

When the "self" is no longer the center of attention, *Homo Sapiens* and *Homo Deus* disappear from the scene, substituted by *Homo Servus*, the servant of all creatures in the network universe. The *Homo Servus* is humanity in action teaming with other creatures to save the common home. It is the bridge that connects humanity to other creatures, being their servant in the effort to stem the tide of ecological destruction of the planet.[674] The *Homo Servus* continues to communicate mercy and compassion, which AI and robots would not be able to do. His compassion towards other creatures is what would save the planet.[675] For the Congregation then, this trust to promote the *Homo Servus* should be one of its direction in publishing work -- tracing the ways and means that humanity may deepen its role as the servant of this planet.

E. Summary

From the viewpoint that interculturality is the first stage of evangelization, the process of mutual enrichment, the Society of St Paul should seek a real encounter with the poor. The poor who are now considered part of the new magisterium enrich the Congregation, its lifestyle, spirituality and community living. To engage the members of world religions, it should insert its devotion to Jesus master in the Trinity. This is the basis for a contextual publishing activity that addresses real needs and concerns of others. Its exercise of prophetic dialogue will then become more active and more relevant to the times, emerging from social and religious issues of which it has a direct hand. The second stage of evangelization is inculturation. This demands a study of the digital culture, in particular the development of a digital thought that asks some answers from Christian faith.

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[673] See David Foster Wallace, This is Water, *Some Thoughts Delivered on Some Significant Occasion, About Living a Compassionate Life* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 2009), 6-12.

[674] Ibid.

[675] See Spadaro, "Artificial Intelligence," 69-70.

Digital historians have theorized the existence of *Homo Deus*, the sole beneficiary of technological advancements that promise freedom from death, sickness and sorrow, allowing humanity much freedom from work and other concerns. The answer to the challenge of this digital thought is *Homo Servus*, which is the image of humanity that emerged from the network society in the book of Genesis. This is humanity in service to other creatures, sustaining the planet not through domination, but empowering other creatures inasmuch as God had also empowered it to make this planet a home for everyone.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

A. Summary

Chapter I provides the context of this dissertation -- the connectivity that produces gaps and walls in the digital world. This is the context where the Society of St. Paul has to enter and play a role, creating bridges to make its apostolic presence more relevant.

Chapter II contains the history of the Society of St. Paul and its mission. Its history focused on the effort of Alberione to use the mass media for evangelization and utilizing the devotion to Jesus Master way truth and life as the foundation of its mission. The Congregation failed to adopt the Trinitarian foundation of mission. With its exclusive charism, it has remained in proclamation as modality of mission, tilting towards Christomonism.

Chapter III presents the history of globalization and the Internet. The connectivity has become hyper through globalization 3.0 that enabled individuals and homes to join the network society. Sociologists have identified the gaps and the borders this has created. As these gaps and borders are identified, so do they work to create bridges so that connectivity may continue to deepen. Mission as border crossing and creation of bridges continues in the work of Pope Francis who has made himself present in the social media.

Chapter IV presents the Biblical support of this dissertation, giving light to the multicultural world as part of God's plan in the world. Migration is the way towards this multicultural world, the

only way to encounter strangers and be of service to them. Migration enriches through encounters with the strangers. Jesus the alien savior of the world was with the strangers like the Samaritan woman, encouraging his followers to meet the victims of this world. Jesus' intercultural exchange is done through compassion and mercy. The apostle Paul established an intercultural missionary team to evangelize the multicultural world of the Roman Empire.

Chapter V presents interculturality as a missiological tool that has evolved in the Church as a response to the complexity of a multicultural world. Prophetic dialogue is its practical application to do mission in the world. Pope Francis has deepened the option of dialogue through his attractive message of mercy and compassion. Interculturality cannot be understood unless placed in the context of digital communication. Digital interculturality has given indigenous peoples an opportunity to be in contact with all of humanity, enriching the civilized people with their values, making it also easier to denounce the injustices and the exploitation that they are experiencing. Digital interculturality has thus become a venue for mission ad gentes and a place where the poor can enrich other Christians with their stories of faith, hope and love.

Chapter VI explains the new intercultural bridges that once initiated could put more life to the Society of St. Paul. Real contact with the poor and dialogue with them will enable them to learn from these new teachers. Through the inclusion of the Trinity as the foundation of their mission, they will be able to contextualize their publishing apostolate, equipped them with a missionary spirituality that will strengthen their community life. Their work of communication will become more contextualized and thus relevant. Their efforts towards inculturation is not just adjusting or using the language of the digital communication, but answering the challenges of the digital thought. The most challenging of this digital thought is the discussion on Homo Deus, humanity as the recipient of the benefits of the digital communication and the answer to this in presentation of Homo Servus, humanity in service to all creation that emerged in the original network society of the book of Genesis.

B. Findings

1. What is the Society of St. Paul?

The Congregation has entered the digital world, with proclamation as his modality of mission, founded in the mission theology of Jesus master way truth and life. In its 10th General Chapter, the Congregation wishes to reach the frontiers and the people of the periphery. Mere proclamation would not do this. The Congregation needs to construct bridges of dialogue, based on a theology of the Trinity in order to reach its dream of reaching the atheists and members of the world religions. It needs dialogue as its mode of mission.

2. Why is mission in the digital world important in the global village?

The digital world is about the connectivity developed through the supply chains and the hyper globalization through the Internet. This connectivity has created chasms and borders. Sociologists have created bridges to assure that connectivity continues to serve the interest of humanity. Connectivity has become unstoppable and everyone should join hands in order to assure that the connections serve to make better the lives of people. Mission in the digital world is about creating of bridges in the chasm left behind by economic inequality, addiction, the trolls and their fake news, assuring humanity that truth and not lies, prosperity and not underdevelopment will dominate human history. This mission through these bridges helps to make the digital world a reflection of God's kingdom of justice and peace.

3. What is the Scriptures' view on mission in the digital world?

The Bible which is a story of migration presents a God who created a multicultural world, enabling people like Abraham to enrich themselves in their encounters with the strangers along the way. The destruction of the tower of Babel, a symbol of mono cultural domination, presents the second phase of God's creation, which is the multicultural world. Encounter with the strangers and

even with Israel's enemies echoes through the Old Testament. Jesus, the alien-savior of the world invited strangers to visit him during his birth, encountering the Samaritan woman and transforming her into a missionary. His parable of the Good Samaritan encourages encounter with the needy and the wounded who are often not welcomed. Paul was the example of an intercultural missionary, who encouraged an intercultural communitarian life among his fellow missionaries through tent making, transforming his work place into a venue for an intercultural mission. He likewise fomented an intercultural encounter among the Gentile and Jewish Christians through the collection for the poor of Jerusalem. The Old and the New testaments affirm that intercultural living and mission evolved from the multicultural world that God has created.

4. What is the Church's view of mission in the digital world?

Interculturality as a missiological tool developed in the Church as a response to the challenges of mission in the multicultural world. This term has evolved from interculturation. Interculturality rests in the assumption that all missionaries come from a multicultural setting and they encounter people who likewise have come from a multicultural world. Inculturation basically is a mono cultural ambience that asks for the expression of faith in the customs and traditions of a mono cultural people like the indigenous people. Rather than one eliminating the other, inculturation and interculturality are missiological tools that complement each other. Inculturation reflects the maturity of a local Church, having expressed its faith in its culture. Interculturality emphasizes the bridge building and hospitality that characterize the Universal Church. Interculturality finds its practical application in mission as prophetic dialogue. Pope Francis has practiced dialogue by opting for mercy and compassion in his communication work, welcoming the lost, refraining from judgment. This intercultural dialogue happens in a massive way through the digital communication that encapsulates the meaning of "social communication." This means not only a transfer of information but of establishing a relationship. This digital interculturality has enabled the indigenous people to attract civilized society to their values and

a place of prophetic denouncement to their exploitation, a good start of mission *ad gentes*. This digital communication too should contain stories of the poor, the primary teachers of evangelizers and the Church today.

Interculturality as a missiologial tool is clear in presenting the Church's response to the challenges of the multicultural and digital world.

5. How should the Society of St. Paul engage its mission in the digital world?

Interculturality asks first from the Congregation the construction of a bridge towards the poor. The poor has become a part of the magisterium of the Church. Encounter with the poor enriches the missionary. The missionary needs the poor especially to understand better the suffering Christ and the call for simplicity and fraternity of their communities. The Congregation should include the Trinity in its mission. This establishes bridges to world religions, cultures and the poor. The Trinity widens the horizon of mission, implanting a missionary spirituality, extending the work of the Holy Spirit from Pentecost to include 14 billion-year story of the universe. The Trinity will guide the congregation to establish a contextual publishing activity, making it more responsive to the needs and concerns of the atheists and other people of the periphery.

The bridge of prophetic dialogue becomes more urgent due to the social media that gives every member of the Congregation the capacity to dialogue with men and women of our times. This dialogue can only happen once members start their work from a mission context, such as encouraged by Catholic influencers like Villegas and Felloni who draw their sharing from the issues of drug addiction and extra judicial killings happening in our land. The last bridge is that of inculturation. The Congregation must answer the challenge of Pope Benedict XVI who lays down the "digital thought" as the place where missionaries must apply their knowledge of Christian tradition and scriptures. The most challenging of this digital thought is the rise of *Homo Deus* that missionaries must counter with *Homo Servus*

as stated by the original network society of the book of Genesis. The congregation thus needs to focus on *Homo Servus* as its way of inculturation in the digital world.

Real contact with the poor, inclusion of the Trinity in its devotion to Jesus Master, prophetic dialogue and inculturation are the bridges by which the Congregation reaches out to others in the digital world.

C. Recommendations

1. The Society of St. Paul must be able to adjust its devotion to Jesus Master Way Truth and Life under the ambience of the Trinity. In this way, it may avoid the dangers of Christomonism. This will enable it to have the perspective of achieving the dream of the 10th General Chapter that speaks about reaching the frontiers and answering the needs of the world religions and the poor.

2. The digital world is still in continuous evolution. The hyper globalization still has to reveal many of its faces in the development of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its consequence in the human life. This frontier of digital technology should attract more research on its effect on human relationships. The Congregation thus has an important challenge of deepening the understanding of the digital world evolving through AI.

3. The Bible is a source of many narratives that portray the travails of a multicultural world, especially the migrants. The presentation of this dissertation is just a tip of the ice berg. There is still a further need to present Biblical narratives that reflect the interculturality already present in the Old Testament, and most importantly, in the New Testament with the activities of the apostles.

4. Reflections on interculturality is still an ongoing work. This dissertation simply summarizes the ongoing process, with its addition on the intercultural dialogue going on in the Internet and the social media. There should be more research to deepen the intercultural prophetic dialogue going on in the social media.

5. The four bridges presented for the Congregation place as a priority the real contact with poor. Mission today asks for deeper

involvement in real life situations and encounter with the poor as Pope Francis has explained. It needs therefore to invent apostolic activities that give it opportunity to have real contact with the poor, a ground for the promotion of *Homo Servus*. Humanity in service of creation should be at the forefront of its publishing activity, concretized in active work to save the planet earth and an option for the poor in concrete actions in their behalf.

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