

## **Culture, Conversion, Baptism in the Indian Mission Context**

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### **1. Introduction:**

The evangelising mission of the Church in India in the pluralistic context of different religions faces conflicts and challenges. The religions are often strongly convinced of the uniqueness of their own faith. Sometimes this conviction leads to the extreme form of religious fundamentalism<sup>1</sup> which hatches animosities among religions enough to threaten the very unity of the country.

Hinduism is very critical of Christianity's mission calling for conversion and some State Governments are trying to thwart conversions through legalizations.<sup>2</sup> Naturally baptism is the first object of attack and is viewed as the mechanism for imposing western culture to root out the native Hindu, Indian culture.<sup>3</sup> In this context the doubt may come whether the Church's mission work in India gives rise to conflicts among the people of India. In that case baptism will appear as a counter sign of the Christian principle of unity and love.

My attempt here is to emphasize the necessity of Baptism in the context of the strong opposition from the part of Hinduism to the Christian mission and conversion.<sup>4</sup>

### **2. Identifying Hindu Culture with the Religion**

No one is born as a Christian but a Hindu is. A Hindu is born not only into his religion but also even into his very caste.<sup>5</sup> Birth itself appears to be the initiation ceremony. By birth a Hindu is initiated into his religious, social and cultural structure. Thus, Hinduism with its Hindutva movement uncompromisingly asserts the intimate unity between Hindu Culture and Hindu religion.<sup>6</sup>

One's affiliation to Hinduism is so deeply rooted that no one can change one's Hindu religious, social and cultural identity, as no one can enter into one's mother's womb and be born again. Some Hindus by their Hindutva movement are going a step further by identifying Hindu Culture as the only Indian Culture.<sup>7</sup> The radical Hindutva movement rejects Jesus Christ and Christianity mainly because of the Christian mission and the conversion leading to baptism.<sup>8</sup>

### **3. Identifying European Culture with Christianity:**

The perception of the culture of the majority as the Indian national culture is only one of the rationales behind Hindu opposition to any conversion from Hinduism leading to Christian initiation i.e., baptism. Though Christianity in India is of some 2000 years old often some Hindus are identifying European or Western culture with Christianity and are considering Christianity as foreign religion in India.<sup>9</sup>

The allegation that Christian faith is purely European is not without ground.<sup>10</sup> The experiences of the aggressive mission practised<sup>11</sup> by some missionaries in the past backed by the colonial powers,<sup>12</sup> give room for the suspicion that Christian mission in India is still indirectly exercising colonialism.<sup>13</sup> Some thoroughly westernised life styles of the Christians in some parts of India make the Hindus to turn their suspicion into paranoid conviction:<sup>14</sup> Baptism is the medium to reject Indian culture, to embrace foreign culture and thus to destroy systematically the culture of the land,<sup>15</sup> leading to denationalization if not to anti-nationalism.<sup>16</sup>

Gandhi was against conversion. He considered conversion as denationalisation.<sup>17</sup> Even though he himself was greatly influenced by Christianity, especially by the ethics of Jesus, he strongly objected to 'proselytism', 'the conversion' and to what he regarded as the denationalisation. He said: "Every nation considers its own faith to be as good as that of any other. Certainly the great faiths held by the people of India are adequate for her people. India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another."<sup>18</sup>

The suspicion that baptism is an agent to alienate the Hindus from their cultural heritage vindicates the fact that still a large number of Hindus consider Christianity as a religion of the western culture. Most of the Hindus may be even ready to accept Jesus as their favourite Deity. But from the moment the necessity of baptism and thus joining the Church is stressed, things take a different turn. According to some Hindus baptism is not merely a religious rite, it has social and political implications.<sup>19</sup> Through baptism a Hindu is leaving his community<sup>20</sup> and is embracing a different culture and even a new national identity.<sup>21</sup> Thus leaving the Hindu fold and becoming a member of another religion is a betrayal of the nation.<sup>22</sup> No wonder the converts are often expelled from the Hindu community and are completely ostracised by the whole Hindu society. They are even rejected by their own parents, relatives, friends and the village community.<sup>23</sup> Extreme forms of antagonism towards conversion can be seen in the activities of RSS with their threats against the missionaries and also against the converts.<sup>24</sup>

#### **4. Different positive responses to Christ and to the Church:**

Jesus Christ and Christianity are evoking positive waves among a large number of Hindus. There are different grades of positive responses:

- i. They are prepared to accept Jesus Christ even as God. However, they do not accept him as the only Saviour. For them, the Hindu gods and Christ are only the different manifestations of the same God.<sup>25</sup> They are ready to accept the moral teachings of Jesus. But they are not committed to him.<sup>26</sup> Examples are Rammohan Roy and Mahatma Gandhi.
- ii. They believe in Christ as God. But they do not see the necessity to embrace the Christian religion, much less the Church.<sup>27</sup> In some instances they preach Christ and exercise a healing-ministry. They have „response and commitment to Christ, and Christ alone, within the context of Hinduism itself, but with either indifference to or a total rejection of the Church”,<sup>28</sup> for example, Kalagora Subba Rao.<sup>29</sup> A survey shows that in the Chennai (former Madras) city there are about 200,000 ‘non-baptized believing Christians’.<sup>30</sup>
- iii. There are others who believe that Jesus is the only saviour and even recognise the need to embrace the Christian religion. But they do not find it necessary to undergo baptism in order to embrace Christian religion. They cannot give a positive answer to the question “Is it

necessary in India, for those who acknowledge 'Christ is Lord' always to be baptized in order to be recognized as our fellow followers of Christ?"<sup>31</sup>

iv. They believe in the necessity of baptism but hesitate to undergo baptism because of the fear that by undergoing baptism they will be losing their parental culture and heritage. This fear is not a past reality<sup>32</sup> but also a present one.<sup>33</sup> Often they live as 'Secret Christian'.<sup>34</sup> The converts will be rejected by their parents, relatives, friends and community.<sup>35</sup>

In all these positive responses some common denominators can be identified. They all stop short of baptism. This is motivated by the internal conviction or coercive conviction: Hindu religion and culture are identical and that by undergoing Christian initiation one will lose one's Hindu cultural heritage.

## **5. Differentiation between culture and religion:**

The great religions "claim to transcend particular cultures and be present to many of them. In the process they differentiate between religion and culture."<sup>36</sup> Most of the religious tensions in India are arising from falsely identifying Hindu Culture, even Indian Culture, with Hindu religion. In this situation in spite of the intimate unity between culture and religion<sup>37</sup> their difference has to be maintained. Indian culture cannot be simply identified with the Hindu Culture. Indian culture is a product of the interaction of various cultures that arose in India or came to India down through the millennia. It is the culture produced by the interaction of pre-Aryan, Aryan and post-Aryan cultures and religions in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>38</sup>

Even in Aryan civilization, i.e., in Hinduism there is a possibility of distinguishing culture from religion. The early Indian Christians, St. Thomas Christians, who were initiated to Christianity by St. Thomas the Apostle,<sup>39</sup> showed the possibility of dividing the allegedly unbreakable relation between Hindu Culture and Religion. By receiving baptism they found a new identity. At the same time they faithfully kept some of their Hindu cultural traditions. They even kept their higher caste identity.<sup>40</sup> Before the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>41</sup> it was practically difficult to distinguish St. Thomas Christians from the Hindus except by some specific Christian symbols that the Christians wore.<sup>42</sup> The Churches were built at that time almost in the style of Hindu temples so that in the outward appearance a Christian Church was distinguishable from a Hindu temple only by the presence of the cross.<sup>43</sup> Some external forms of Christian celebrations and festivals were similar to those of the Hindus'. The Christians even participated in the local Hindu festivities.<sup>44</sup> And there was not only mutual tolerance but also intimate collaboration between these two communities. St. Thomas Christians were Hindus in Culture and Christians in their religion.<sup>45</sup> That means St. Thomas Christians by undergoing an initiation to a new religion acquired a new identity, but the same time they did not lose their parental cultural identity.

## **6. Christian faith in the Hindu Culture:**

If early St. Thomas Christians lived their faith in their Hindu cultural identity, Brahmabandab Upadhyaya,<sup>46</sup> a convert from Hinduism, basing on some of the principles of Hinduism itself, tried to give a theoretical explanation for the intercultural style of life. He found, in Hindu *Dharma* (religion) or rather the *Sanadanadharma*, two inherent factors: *Samaj dharma* (social obligation) and *Sadhan dharma* (religious faith).<sup>47</sup> According to him the social and cultural factors of Hinduism are fundamentally rooted in the Hindus by birth.

On the other hand the religious faith is left to the individual freedom. A Hindu can belong to any religion.<sup>48</sup> Thus he claimed that he was culturally a Hindu, while a Christian in faith. According to him the Indian Christians converted from Hinduism are Hindus by birth so far as their physical and mental constitution is concerned. And they will remain Hindus till death.<sup>49</sup> But in regard to their immortal souls they are Christians. As *dvija* (twice-born) by virtue of their sacramental rebirth, they are Christians: "By birth we are Hindu and shall remain Hindu till death. But as *dvija* (twice-born) by virtue of our sacramental rebirth, we are Catholic; . . ."<sup>50</sup> "We are *Hindu Catholics*." Upadhyaya claimed. "The test of being Hindu can not therefore lie in religious opinions".<sup>51</sup>

Upadhyaya considered Hinduism as one of the many cultures in the world. On the other hand he considered the Christian faith as universal. It transcends all the cultural boundaries. He said: "In customs and manners, in observing caste and social distinctions, in eating and drinking, in our life and living we are genuine Hindus; but in our faith we are neither Hindu nor European, nor American nor Chinese, but all-inclusive. Our faith fills the whole world and is not confined to any country or race, our faith is universal and consequently includes all truth".<sup>52</sup> St. Paul identified the universality of the Christian faith transcending any particular culture, when he was speaking about baptism: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:27-29). Similarly II Vatican Council states: "...the church,...is not bound exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, any particular way of life or any customary way of life, ancient or recent" (GS 58<sup>53</sup>). In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* the Gospel and therefore the evangelization is not identical with culture: "The Gospel, and therefore evangelization, are certainly not identical with culture, and they are independent in regard to all cultures. . . . Though independent of cultures, the Gospel and evangelization are not necessarily incompatible with them; rather they are capable of permeating them all without becoming subject to any one of them." (Paul VI, EN 20<sup>54</sup>)

## 7. Born into a Culture not into a Religion

Upadhyaya's insight of dividing culture and religion encourages us to examine the implications. One is born into a social, cultural and even into a religious milieu. By birth one can inherit almost everything from one's parents: physiological, psychological, social, cultural aspects. Even though one is born into a religious milieu one cannot inherit by birth the parental religion. Religion or the faith element in a religion transcends the social, cultural even national identity. There is an important factor in the religion which demands the individual's decision. When the parental religious faith encounters an individual, it demands conversion or decision from the part of the individual with his freedom. In the initiation it is precisely this that is taking place. There the religious faith of the community, in the symbolic form, encounters the individual demanding an answer of conversion. The individual of its own free will answers symbolically to the demands or invitation. These two factors are joined symbolically in the initiation. Even though religion is very intimately united with the social and cultural milieu,<sup>55</sup> religion qua religion is deeply rooted in the personal act of the individual with his free choice as regards the acceptance of the invitation to the religious faith extended by the community.

In the initiation both the individual and the community have a great role. The faith encounters the individual through the community, i.e. through the religious symbols. And the individual answers to the invitation by accepting the communitarian symbols.

We have seen that a Hindu is born a Hindu and that birth is the initiation ceremony. Still in a sense one can say that there is an initiation ceremony which may be practically effecting a Hindu's entrance into Hindu religion. It is the Upanayana.<sup>56</sup> It is an initiation ceremony by which a Brahmin (or even a *Kshatria*, a *Vaishya*) is initiated into reading Vedas and offering household sacrifices.<sup>57</sup> It is remarkable to note that by this ceremony one is *dvija*, twice born. It is a second birth, a second initiation. In that case one is religiously a Hindu not only by birth from the Hindu parents but by *upanayana* (initiation, second birth, *dvija*). In the first birth one is culturally a Hindu. In the second birth one is religiously a Hindu.<sup>58</sup> It seems that Hinduism is insisting that one must be culturally a Hindu in order that one may be religiously a Hindu. For example the initiation *upanayana* is only allowed to the Higher caste Hindus, such as *Brahmanas*, *Kshatrias* and *Vaiśias*.<sup>59</sup> Not even all those who are culturally Hindus will be allowed to undergo *upanayana*, for example the lower caste Hindus, *Sudras*.<sup>60</sup> The outcasts are not at all entitled to the initiation.

## **8. One is born to a Culture but one chooses one's religion.**

A human being born into the social, cultural and even into a religious milieu has to grow not only by his determinative or 'givenness' factors, but also by his self-determinative factor, which is exercised by his freedom. He has to exercise his freedom in the social and cultural contexts. But his supreme exercise of freedom will be his choosing his religious faith.

In one's life there is the passive reception of the cultural milieu and the active reception of one's religion through conversion leading to initiation. The dynamism of the passive reception of the cultural milieu and active reception of the religion can be illustrated by Ambedkar's<sup>61</sup> courageous leadership in the conversion and initiation of himself and thousands of *Dalits* into Buddhism.

We have already seen that the lower castes, *Sudras* and the outcasts, *Dalits*,<sup>62</sup> are denied the initiation, *upanayana*. *Dalits* are culturally and religiously not Hindus. Even though *Sudras* are born into the Hindu Culture, their situation is not different from the *Dalits* born into the *Dalit* culture. Both *Sudras* and *Dalits* were denied initiation into the Hindu religion and for that matter into any religion.<sup>63</sup> They were slaves of the higher caste Hindus without having any freedom let alone religious freedom.<sup>64</sup> They were often treated worse than animals.<sup>65</sup>

Ambedkar wanted to liberate *Dalits* from their slavery and to assert the religious freedom of *Dalits*. He found that even though a *Dalit* is born into the *Dalit* culture within the wider framework of the Hindu culture, he is free to choose his religion. He declared "I had the misfortune to be born with the stigma of 'untouchable'. But it is not my fault, but I will not die a Hindu for this is within my power".<sup>66</sup> For the convenience of keeping the *Dalits* as their slaves Hindus enlist the *Dalits* as 'Hindus'.<sup>67</sup> But Ambedkar once again asserted that "the question whether we belong to Hindu religion or not is to be decided by us once for all".<sup>68</sup>

Ambedkar together with thousands of other *Dalits* resolved to leave Hinduism and to accept any religion that treats all the members of the religion equally.<sup>69</sup> They preferred Buddhism as it was a moral religion, a rational religion, a religion of equality, a respected religion, a religion of Indian Origin.<sup>70</sup> Ambedkar together with 50,000 to 500,000 was initiated to Buddhism on the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment, on Oct. 14, 1956.<sup>71</sup> Thus by being initiated into Buddhism the *Dalits* chose their religion, a basic human right which had been denied them from time immemorial.

## 9. Baptism in the Mission context of India

Discussions are there in India on whether the Church must insist on baptism in the present day mission context of India. The question is not whether there must be an inculturation for the ceremony of baptism (which, after the II Vatican council,<sup>72</sup> is a foregone conclusion), but whether there is any relevance for Baptism at all.

In the divisive multireligious context of India some Indian theologians doubt the necessity of baptism stressing the fact that the inner core of Jesus' message is love and not division. "If the ultimate meaning of ecclesiality is love, communion and fellowship – as envisioned by Jesus – then, the rite of Christian baptism, in the view of several Indian theologians, could become sometimes a hindrance to this ideal in as much as it could separate the Christians from the larger community of people".<sup>73</sup> Others argue against baptism drawing attention to the inner reality of baptism as the participation in the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection and thereby entering into the Kingdom of God which transcends the ritual and institutional baptism. Puthanangady writes: "Formerly baptism automatically implied alienation from one's community; today we would like to describe its meaning as a celebration of one's conversion from individualism to sharing with others on the model of Jesus, from bondage to self to commitment to the Kingdom of God, where freedom, fellowship, justice and responsible love reign, where we work with others for a truly human society for all".<sup>74</sup>

Based on the principle of communion yet others seemingly argue for the replacement of the sacrament of baptism (often viewing it as a sacrament of division) with the Eucharist (seeing it as a sacrament of communion). In a society where people are often divided because of their religions and castes, the basic need will be for building up fellowship and communion among the different faiths. In this context the stress can be on bringing people to the Eucharistic communion, rather than giving baptism and separating them from their culture. "In such situations of communion in day-to-day life, people of other religious traditions show great desire in participating in the Eucharist where they are able to experience with Christians the community of love and fellowship of the Kingdom Jesus envisioned. Baptism on the other hand is often viewed as a ritual hindering wider communion and community. Hence it is being asked whether in India the Eucharist could be the first Christian sacrament that can more easily lead the Christians into universal communion with the neighbours of other faiths".<sup>75</sup>

There is also another vision of baptism. It is in the background of India's abject poverty and divisive and oppressive caste systems. Here baptism is identified with the selfless service to the people. The foundation of the Christian community is the selfless service to humanity after the model of Jesus Christ who washed the feet of his disciples. Therefore "whoever is unwilling to wash the feet of others cannot become a disciple of Jesus. For washing the feet is the baptism through which one becomes a disciple of Jesus, it is the card which certifies one's Christian identity".<sup>76</sup>

There is also a call for the development of the theology of the baptism of desire. It is in view of those Hindus who hesitate to receive baptism not because of the lack of internal conviction but because of the external threats and social pressure. Bishop Valerian D'Souza claims: "We need a deeper theological and pastoral study of this baptism of desire and its relationship with the visible Church. ...The Church has to discover ways of dealing with these believers in Jesus Christ, on the one hand, to understand their social, cultural, economic and

family difficulties and, on the other hand, to lead them to full communion with Christ and his Church".<sup>77</sup>

## **10. Initiation Necessary for Belonging to any Religion**

As mentioned earlier when Ambedkar and thousands of *Dalits* converted to Buddhism they were not content with merely adhering to the principles of the Buddha. But they opted themselves to be initiated to Buddhism. This also shows that an internal conversion and consent to an abstract faith are not enough to enter into any religious community.

Human beings are expressing themselves through symbols. Their very languages are symbols. The religious symbols are charged with the faith content of the religion. Acceptance or rejection of symbols of a particular religion is almost equal to accepting or rejecting that particular religion. Initiation is a symbolic act by which the community offers its religious faith through various symbols and the converts freely accepts those symbols of faith. Thus, initiation binds the community with the individuals and vice versa to form one religious community. All the religions of the world insisted and are insisting on the need for some kind of initiation.

## **11. Reception of Baptism Necessary to have the Effects of the Sacrament**

The initiation ceremony of a religion not only shows the very core of the religion but also in a way symbolically causes to effect the reality contained in the faith of the religion in the individuals. That is why the *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Asian Synod stated that it is not only through the life witness of the Christian that Christ can be presented to the people of Asia but also through the sacraments.<sup>78</sup> The necessity of sacraments for salvation comes from the uniqueness and the universality of Jesus Christ for the salvation of all.

## **12. Uniqueness, Universality of Jesus Christ, Unicity of the Church the Universal Sacrament**

It is beyond the scope of the present article to deal in a systematic manner the questions: 1. the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ and 2. the unicity of the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation. But it is unquestionable that the necessity baptism for the salvation for all people is intimately connected with the universal salvific mediation of the Church which itself is from the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ.<sup>79</sup>

Jesus Christ is unique and universal for he is the only historical incarnate Son of God (cf. Mt 16:16) who is with God (cf. Jn 1:1) and is 'one in being with the Father' (DS 125,<sup>80</sup> DS 301<sup>81</sup>) in whose being his Spirit also equally shares (DS 527<sup>82</sup>). It is only through the Son, the eternal Logos which "was in the beginning with God" (Jn 1:2), all things were created (Cf. Jn 1:10<sup>83</sup>, Cf. Col 1:16,<sup>84</sup> 1 Cor 8:6<sup>85</sup>). Only the Son who shares intimately the Father's mind (cf. Mt 11:27; Jn 1:18).),<sup>86</sup> only the Son, the Logos, who participated in the act of creation has the wisdom, knowledge, power and authority to save the world (Cf. Col 1:15-20<sup>87</sup>, Eph 1:8-10<sup>88</sup> Heb 1:2,<sup>89</sup> GS 45<sup>90</sup>). And so He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6).

The Father loved His own creation so much that He sent His own Son to save the world (cf. Jn 3:16,<sup>91</sup> Jn 3:35<sup>92</sup>) as the one and the only Mediator (cf. 1Thim 2:5-6,<sup>93</sup> between God and man as the only source of salvation for all cf. LG 56,<sup>94</sup> PO 2,<sup>95</sup> UR 20,<sup>96</sup> *Communio Et Progressio* 10,<sup>97</sup> *Dominus Iesus* 30<sup>98</sup>). The Son, in his love to the world and to the mankind

(cf. Jn 13:34,<sup>99</sup> Gal 2:20,<sup>100</sup> *Dives In Misericordia* 7<sup>101</sup>, RM, 7<sup>102</sup>), did not remain as an outsider (cf. Phil 2:6-8) in achieving the redemption of the world. As sent by the Father with the mission of salvation of the world (cf. Jn 5:36)<sup>103</sup> the Son by the power of His Spirit (cf. Lk 1:35) (who is also sent by both the Father and the Son (cf. DS 527<sup>104</sup>)) descended into what had to be saved, by his incarnation (cf. Jn 1:14, AG 10<sup>105</sup>).

As in him “the whole fullness of divinity dwells in bodily form” (cf. Col 2:9-10),<sup>106</sup> Jesus Christ himself has the ‘sacramental’ aspect. Jesus Christ is the eternal divine Son in history; this Son who is the image of the invisible God (cf. Col 1:15)<sup>107</sup> is also the historical visibility of the invisible Father (cf. Jn 14:9).<sup>108</sup> As a true ‘Sacrament’ Jesus Christ effected the salvation of the world by His words and deeds in the world, and ultimately by His death, resurrection and by the sending of His Spirit (cf. Acts 2:1ff, 2:32-36; Jn 7:39, 20:22). Jesus Christ who fulfilled the whole mission entrusted to Him by the Father (cf. Jn 17:4)<sup>109</sup> is the only one mediator (cf. 1 Tim 1:5-6)<sup>110</sup> and the fullness of all revelation. Conscious of his mission to the gentiles St. Paul writes: “. . . there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, . . .” (1 Tm 2:5-7; cf. Heb 4:14-16). Jesus of Nazareth, “the Word of God made man for the salvation of all . . . is at the centre of God's plan of salvation, . . .” (RM, 6<sup>111</sup>). The Second Vatican Council teaches: “By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines forth in Christ, who is at the same time the mediator and the fullness of all revelation”.<sup>112</sup> Thus the “the universal salvific will of the One and Triune God is offered and accomplished once for all in the mystery of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God.” (*Dominus Iesus* 14).<sup>113</sup> “It is precisely this uniqueness of Christ which gives him an absolute and universal significance, . . .” (RM 6).<sup>114</sup> Pope John Paul II reemphasises the absolute and the universal significance when he writes: “No one, therefore, can enter into communion with God except through Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit. Christ's one, universal mediation, far from being an obstacle on the journey toward God, is the way established by God himself, a fact of which Christ is fully aware.” (RM 5).<sup>115</sup>

For the continuation of the single economy of salvation for the whole humanity Jesus Christ instituted the universal sacrament, the Church and entrusted His mission to her (Cf. RM, 1<sup>116</sup>). “Rising from the dead (Rom 6:9) He sent His life-giving Spirit upon His disciples and through Him has established His Body which is the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation” (LG 48,<sup>117</sup> cf. also GS 45<sup>118</sup>, LG 9<sup>119</sup>, GS 45, AG 5<sup>120</sup>). Jesus Christ instituted the universal sacrament, the Church as necessary for salvation. The Church is the salvific mystery because Jesus Christ “himself is in the Church and the Church is in him (cf. Jn 15:1ff.; Gal 3:28; Eph 4:15-16; Acts 9:5).” (*Dominus Iesus* 16).<sup>121</sup> Once again it is because the Lord Jesus Christ, the source of salvation of all mankind, is present in the Church that the Church is necessary for salvation (RM 9).<sup>122</sup> The “Church, now sojourning on earth as an exile, is necessary for salvation” (LG 14<sup>123</sup>).

Jesus Christ also instituted the seven sacraments (cf. Council of Trent (1547) DS 1600-1601, cf. also CCC 1114, 1117<sup>124</sup>) including the only door to the universal Sacrament, the Baptism (cf. Mt. 28: 19-20,<sup>125</sup> CCC 1122<sup>126</sup>).

### 13. Necessity of Baptism for the Salvation of All

To attain salvation one has to enter into the Church through the door of baptism. That is why the door of baptism (cf. LG 14<sup>127</sup>, AG 7<sup>128</sup>) is also necessary for all people for their salvation (cf. Jn 3:5,<sup>129</sup> Mk 16:16,<sup>130</sup> Tit 3:5, LG 14,<sup>131</sup> CCC 1215, 1257<sup>132</sup>); for it is an

entrance into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 6:3-4, Col 2:12). Conscious of the great responsibility that she is “sent by Christ to reveal and to communicate the love of God to all men and nations” and “to offer all of them the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God . . .” (AG 10<sup>133</sup>), the Church with love, urgency and duty proclaims and invites all to enter through the door of baptism in order to enter into the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ for the salvation (Cf. NA 2<sup>134</sup>, *Dominus Iesus* 22,<sup>135</sup> AG 5<sup>136</sup>).

Acknowledging Jesus as the Saviour by participating in his death and resurrection (Cf. Rom. 6:3ff., 6:1-12; Eph. 2:5-6, 11-13; Col. 2:11-14; 3:1ff; 2 Tim 2:11; LG 7;<sup>137</sup> UR 22;<sup>138</sup> CCC 537, 985, 1227, 1258<sup>139</sup>) and thereby entering into the believing community (cf. LG 11<sup>140</sup>; CCC 804, 1185<sup>141</sup>) is not in an abstract or theoretical form but is in the actual life.<sup>142</sup> The radical nature of baptism: the participation in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ is very strongly expressed by the “*Baptism of blood*”:<sup>143</sup> “The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This Baptism of blood, like the desire for Baptism, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament.” (CCC 1258<sup>144</sup>)

By baptism one enters into a new form of communitarian life based on the Trinitarian community of love. One’s entrance into such a communitarian life is enacted through the sacrament of baptism (Cf. LG 31, 64<sup>145</sup>; SC 6<sup>146</sup>; cf. PO 5<sup>147</sup>; CCC 265, 2156<sup>148</sup>). II Vatican Council states that Jesus Christ Himself “affirmed the necessity of faith and baptism (cf. Mk 16:16; Jn 3:5) and thereby affirmed also the necessity of the Church, for through baptism as through a door men enter the Church.” (LG 14<sup>149</sup>; cf. also AG 7<sup>150</sup>; RM 55<sup>151</sup>; CCC 1129<sup>152</sup>, *Dominus Iesus* 20<sup>153</sup>).

Faithful to Her Lord’s command the Church teaches: “Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament (Cf. Mk 16:16.)” (CCC 1257, cf. also 1277<sup>154</sup>). And the Church takes care not to neglect the mission that she has received from Her Lord to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them as the Church “does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude. . .” (CCC 1257<sup>155</sup>).

#### **14. Duty to proclaim joyfully the received divine gift of baptism**

Baptism is not a right that a Christian has acquired by his/her sheer merit but a gift freely received from the Lord Jesus Christ who in His bounty is offering it to all peoples and nations as they are all called for immortal life by sharing in the loving communion of the Holy Trinity. It will be an utter selfishness from the part of a Christian if he is not expressing openly that others should also receive the gift which he himself has received with gratitude and with great delight. Every Christian has a duty and responsibility to joyfully proclaim the received gift of baptism so that others may also come to know this great gift from Jesus Christ through His Church. The Church teaches that Christians should not merely content themselves with the reception of baptism. They have also the duty to confess publicly their baptismal faith: “Those who belong to Christ through faith and Baptism must confess their baptismal faith before men” (CCC 14<sup>156</sup>). While reciting the profession of faith of the Church the believer declares again and again “one baptism for the forgiveness of sins”.<sup>157</sup>

#### **15. Responsibility to Proclaim the Full Truth Includes Baptism**

The Church is greatly concerned about religious freedom and dignity of human being. And that is why she has the duty of speaking out the truth of the commission she has received from her Lord: "Thus He spoke to the Apostles: 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined upon you' (Mt. 28: 19-20). On their part, all men are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and His Church, and to embrace the truth they come to know, and to hold fast to it." (DH 1).<sup>158</sup> And while speaking about inter-religious dialogue the declaration *Dominus Iesus* states that in the inter-religious dialogue context Indeed, the Church, is guided by charity and respect for freedom, but at the same time She "must be primarily committed to proclaiming to all people the truth definitively revealed by the Lord, and to announcing the necessity of conversion to Jesus Christ and of adherence to the Church through Baptism and the other sacraments, in order to participate fully in communion with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus, the certainty of the universal salvific will of God does not diminish, but rather increases the duty and urgency of the proclamation of salvation and of conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ." (*Dominus Iesus*, 22<sup>159</sup>).

## 16. Conversion sealed by Baptism

For accepting new members all societies and social institutions insist on the performance of some form of symbolic initiation. A member who, for whatever reason, hesitates to undergo the ceremony will not be transformed by the truths, the principles and the communitarian influence of the society. In spite of its origin from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church is not merely a super terrestrial society, completely and utterly independent of the world. The Church is also in the world and for the world. Church, a constitutive element of society, is in history and in the human society.<sup>160</sup> There is a communitarian dimension for the Christian faith in the Church.<sup>161</sup>

The II Vatican council insists on the reception of baptism.<sup>162</sup> Even though the Council recognizes the presence of Jesus Christ and the operation of the grace of his Spirit in other religions in an unseen way (GS 22<sup>163</sup>, cf. also LG 16<sup>164</sup>; Cf. also AG 7)<sup>165</sup> the council stresses that an individual's belief in Christ and in the Church has to be sealed by the reception of baptism: "Therefore those men cannot be saved, who though aware that God, through Jesus Christ founded the Church as something necessary, still do not wish to enter into it, or to persevere in it." (LG 14, 24<sup>166</sup>; AG 7<sup>167</sup>; cf. also John Paul II, RM, 9<sup>168</sup>; cf. CCC 846-847<sup>169</sup>. *Dominus Iesus* 20<sup>170</sup>). The above statement is not, of course, directed to those people who are living according to the dictate of their conscience and at the same time are not in position to receive baptism because of no fault of their own. (cf. LG 16).<sup>171</sup> Pope Benedict XVI reiterated this conviction: *Zenit* reports: "Whoever seeks peace and the good of the community with a pure conscience, and keeps alive the desire for the transcendent, will be saved even if he lacks biblical faith, says Benedict XVI."<sup>172</sup>

## 17. Necessity of Preaching Christ, Conversion Leading to Baptism

Addressing the Asian Bishops John Paul II noted that they had to gladly acknowledge: "whatever is true and holy in the religious traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam as a reflection of that truth which enlightens all people. . ." (RM 55<sup>173</sup>). At the same time the Pope stresses the necessity preaching Christ leading to conversion and to the reception of baptism. The Pope reminded the Bishops of their duty and resolve "to proclaim without fail Jesus Christ who is 'the way, and the truth and the life'...The fact that the followers of other

religions can receive God's grace and be saved by Christ apart from the ordinary means which he has established does not thereby cancel the call to faith and baptism which God wills for all people." (RM 55<sup>174</sup>)

## **18. Intrinsic Relation of Conversion and Baptism**

John Paul II perceiving the danger of, especially among those who are in the context of mission, separating conversion and Baptism, clarifies that the reception of baptism followed by conversion is willed not only by the Church but also primarily by Jesus Christ himself: "Conversion to Christ is joined to Baptism not only because of the Church's practice, but also by the will of Christ himself, who sent the apostles to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them (cf. Mt 28:19). Conversion is also joined to Baptism because of the intrinsic need to receive the fullness of new life in Christ. As Jesus says to Nicodemus: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5). In Baptism, in fact, we are born anew to the life of God's children, united to Jesus Christ and anointed in the Holy Spirit. Baptism is not simply a seal of conversion, and a kind of external sign indicating conversion and attesting to it. Rather, it is the sacrament which signifies and effects rebirth from the Spirit, establishes real and unbreakable bonds with the Blessed Trinity, and makes us members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church." (RM 47, cf. also 48<sup>175</sup>).

At the same time it will not be the mind of the Council, which holds other cultures in high esteem and calls the Church to absorb the custom and traditions of the people,<sup>176</sup> that those who are initiated to Christ and his Church must be cut off from their familial, social or cultural heritage. "What Christianity offers in any culture is a content to inspire all aspects of a man's outlook on his own life and the world, it does not deny any culture, but inspires it from within by giving it substantial content".<sup>177</sup>

## **19. Baptism Giving Cultural Tensions and Challenges for Renewal**

An inculcated form of baptism taking inspiration from some of the external forms of Hindu *Samskaras*, for example, *upanayana*<sup>178</sup> may help to reduce to some extent the anxieties of cultural alienation. Still the sacrament of baptism will give rise to the cultural tension,<sup>179</sup> a rift between Gospel and culture (cf. Pope Paul VI, EN 20<sup>180</sup>). Baptism will demand to die, to abandon the sinful conditions (if any) in any culture. According to Ratzinger without a certain kind of exodus and breaking away from the evils of the past culture one cannot have fellowship with Jesus Christ and the Church.<sup>181</sup> Of course one has to discern carefully what the sinful conditions are in a given culture, otherwise in the haste of eradicating the evil elements in a culture one may inadvertently label even the good elements of a culture as the designs of the devil.<sup>182</sup> As any where in the world, in India too initiation into the Christian community,<sup>183</sup> Christian civilisation, the Christian ethos, Christian Culture (Cardinal Ratzinger sees Christian Faith as Christian culture)<sup>184</sup> (not to confuse with western culture with Christian culture)<sup>185</sup> will challenge the individuals and communities to be critical of the evils of their culture<sup>186</sup> not to destroy it but to regenerate it in the light of the Gospel (cf. Pope Paul VI, EN 20<sup>187</sup>) for the building up of an Indian culture.<sup>188</sup>

## **20. Conclusion:**

In the inter-religious context if the opposition to baptism comes because of some misunderstandings about the sacrament (it seems often that is the case in India) then one has

to strive to project the correct understanding of baptism. Baptism in India is not to replace Indian culture with the European culture. The insistence on the necessity of Baptism does not imply a forced or coercive conversion. The sacrament of Baptism, an invitation to participate in Jesus Christ's suffering death and resurrection, has to be accepted with freedom as a gift from God. The Christians must not give in to some allegations of some Hindu fundamentalists and do not succumb to the temptation of throwing overboard their faith in the sacrament of baptism but must stand up for the full Christian truth. By upholding the necessity of baptism in the Hindu religious context one is not just arguing for salvaging a simple religious ceremony in some remote mission areas but standing for the fundamentals of Christian faith. The ultimate and uncompromising argument for the necessity of baptism for the salvation for all has the firm Christological foundation: Salvation is effected only and ultimately by participating in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who is the incarnated Word of God for the salvation of the mankind. That is the reason why Jesus Christ not only instituted the sacrament of Baptism but also commanded his disciples to baptize. The Apostle Thomas who confessed the risen Lord as "my Lord and my God" faithfully followed the risen Lord's command. The apostle not only preached the Gospel but also administered the sacrament of baptism and thereby initiated the Church in India. This early Christians in India even in the face of cultural conflicts with their parental Hindu culture of that time did not waver on the necessity of baptism and continued to administer the sacrament. Such a tradition continued courageously down through the centuries in India in spite of all challenges especially in the mission regions in India. Even though baptism is not to destroy or replace Indian culture, there is an inevitable challenging character in Baptism in the context of encountering a culture. Baptism will demand to die to (to abandon) the sinful conditions in any culture so also in Indian culture. This is not to destroy but to purify the culture so that the Indian culture can reach to the full bloom. The fulfilment of Indian culture which is reflected in the prayerful ardent desire of ancient Indian *rishis* for the salvation "*mṛtyorma amṛtamgamaya*" ('from death lead me to immortality!')<sup>189</sup> will be completed through baptism which is the participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lord who "is the goal of human history, the focal point of the longings of history and of civilization, the centre of the human race, the joy of every heart and the answer to all its yearnings (GS 45<sup>190</sup>, cf. also RM 29<sup>191</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> "Communalism in the Indian context essentially amounts to organising an exclusive religious group on the basis of hostility to other groups at the social level. This communal tendency has reduces the spirit of revivalism into fundamentalism, which promotes conservatism and stagnation, breaks the basic unity of the people in a pluralistic society like India. A shift of accent, from Hinduism as a religion to Hindutva as an ideology, is increasingly visible to day. The former stresses a certain other-worldly spiritual dimension of human life, whereas the latter is a welfare Hindu State to be brought about through political power and domination over other religions groups." L. Malieckal, "Total Inculcation as Mission of the Churches in India," F. Kanichikattil, *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996 p. 197. Cf. Also B. Puthur, "Mission of the Church in the context of Communalism," in Arulsamy ed., *Communalism in India*, Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 1988, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, pp. 101-102. Cf. also Anand, Subhash. "The Emergence of Hindutva," in Mattam, J. And ArokiaDoss (Edt.) *Hindutva: An Indian Christian Response*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2002. pp. 103-196.

<sup>3</sup> ". . . due to historical and sociopolitical factors, the call to conversion and baptism has been problematic in the Indian context." Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> This opposition was evident during the visit of Pope John Paul II in India. Most of the north Indian Press were quite critical about the visit. Cf. L. Malieckal, "Total Inculuration as Mission of the Churches in India," F. Kanichikattil, *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996 pp. 197-198.

<sup>5</sup> In India the caste system is not a phenomenon of the past. According to the latest Anthropological Survey of India headed by K.S. Singh caste norms and hierarchy still exist in 90% of the communities. Cf. K.L. Singh, "People of India: the Profile of a National Project," in *Current Sciences* Vol. 64, no. 1, (Indian Academy of Sciences 1993); quoted in L. Malieckal, "Total Inculuration as Mission of the Churches in India," F. Kanichikattil, *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996, p. 198.

<sup>6</sup> "Hindutva is a complex concept; it includes several components. It takes for granted several elements as existing in Indian and Hindu culture and absolutises them. His very words and explanations testify to this fact." Mattam, J. And Arokiadoss (Edt.) *Hindutva: An Indian Christian Response*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2002. p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> "A shift of accent, from Hinduism as a religion to Hindutva as an ideology, is increasingly visible to day. The former stresses a certain other-worldly spiritual dimension of human life, whereas the latter is a welfare Hindu State to be brought about through political power and domination over other religious groups." L. Malieckal, "Total Inculuration as Mission of the Churches in India," F. Kanichikattil, *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996 p. 197.

<sup>8</sup> The organized opposition to Jesus Christ, Christianity and to the Christian mission "in the modern times can be traced back to Dayanand Sarasvati (1524-1883) and his followers. In 1875 he founded "Arya Samaj" to fight missionaries and purify Hinduism. His motto was "back to the Vedas." He originated the Sudhi movement to reconvert Christian and Muslims back to Hinduism. Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940) founded "Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh" (RSS) to organize Hindus and to overthrow foreign rule as well as foreign missionaries. "The main ideologist of RSS was Veer Savarkar (1893-1966). In his book *Hindutva* [Hindu Nationhood] he argued for Hindu rashtgra and ridiculed Western civilization and Western missionaries who were still living in the jungles when the great Indian civilization was flourishing. His policy was: "Hinduize all politics and militarize Hinduism." Kanjamala, Augustine, S.V.D., „Redemptoris Missio and Mission in India," in Burrows, William R. Edt. *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993., p. 201.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 103. Cf. also Ambrose, Yvon. "Hindutva's Real Agenda and Strategies," in Mattam, J. And Arokiadoss (Edt.) *Hindutva: An Indian Christian Response*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2002, pp. 11-102.

<sup>10</sup> Here one is reminded of Hilaire Belloc's (1870-1953) slogan "faith is Europe and Europe is faith"; quoted in L. Malieckal, "Total Inculuration as Mission of the Churches in India," F. Kanichikattil, *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996 p. 200.

<sup>11</sup> In 1522 a visiting Dominican Bishop, Durate Nunes, wrote from Goa to the Portuguese king: "Regarding the people of Goa they have in the island temples decked out with figures of the enemy of the Cross and statues, and they celebrate their feasts every year. These feasts are attended by many Christians. It is a big mistake to continue to show favour to their idolatry. It would be to the service of God to destroy in this island alone these temples, and to raise in their stead churches with Saints. And let him who wants to live in the island become a Christian, and he shall possess his lands and houses, as he has till now done; if not, let him leave the island." M. Mundandan, "Emergence of Catholic Theological Consciousness," *St Thomas Academy of Research Documentation (STAR)*, No. 7, Bangalore: 1985, p. 14. Cf. also Cf. Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, pp. 103-104.

<sup>12</sup> "The policy of the Portuguese was to make their converts renounce all their distinctive Indian customs. Converts were given Portuguese names and compelled to adopt European habits of food and clothing, which meant that they became out castes to the Hindus.... Even a holy man like St. Francis Xavier, who is the patron of Catholic missions, made no attempt to discriminate. To him all Hindus, especially Brahmins, were devil worshippers." Avila, CMC. "The Cultural Milieu of India and the Necessity of Inculuration," in F. Kanichikattil, *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996, p. 154. Cf. also Griffits, Bede. *Christ in India*, Bangalore: ATC, 1986, p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> "The Christian attack on the indigenous religions of India from a position of colonial power was understandably seen by many as a threat to their identity and even their very existence. The continued impression that Christianity is a foreign religion in India also has much to do with the colonial legacy and the reluctance of Christians to look positively on the traditions and cultures of

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India." Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 7. Cf. also Cf. Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 103.

<sup>14</sup> "Since the coming of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, more alienation to Indian Culture is seen among Christians, especially among the Portuguese Catholics of Goa, Bombay and Bangalore....The Goan Catholics are today looked upon as the elite of the Church in India. After Kerala, the majority of vocations in India come from Goa and Bangalore. But these Catholics remain cut off from the mainstream of Indian Culture, though recently they are trying to adopt the Church to Indian Culture. It is perhaps due to this 'Goan encounter' that the Catholic Church in India appears a foreign element and a relic of colonialism." Avila, CMC. "The Cultural Milieu of India and the Necessity of Inculcation," in F. Kanichikattil, *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996, p. 154. "Baptism became the symbol of a break with the whole of one's past and marked the assimilation of the convert to European ways and customs. By impoverishing the Church's genuine 'Catholic' image, the colonial missions have left the young Churches of Asia, Africa, South and Central Americas with a heavy historical burden till the present." Saldanana, Julian. "Conversion without change of Community," *Indian Missiological Review* 8 (1986) 4, as quoted in Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 108.

<sup>15</sup> "It is not altogether surprising, therefore, to find that conversion and baptism are misunderstood and regarded with suspicion by some followers of other faiths who may see them as a rejection of Indian culture and even as a political threat." Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, pp. 7-8.

<sup>16</sup> According to Manilal Parekh baptism had come to "mean membership of a westernized and often materialistic community. It means joining a community which stands as a distinct social and political body with its own aspirations, which are very often anti-national and far from being Christian in any proper sense of the term: and has come to mean absolute severance from one's own community". Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 120, cf. also pp. 105, 107, 110.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, pp. 106-107.

<sup>18</sup> M.K.Gandhi, "Foreign Missionaries," *Young India*, (April 23, 1931), p. 83.

<sup>19</sup> Chandran, J. R. "A Scandal or Challenge," *Religion & Society*, No. 1, 1972, p. 51, as given by A. Karokaran, *Evangelization and diakonia: A Study in the Indian Perspective*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1978, p. 122.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 111.

<sup>21</sup> "... in Asia and Africa baptism had become a repudiation of one's ancient cultural heritage and acceptance of an alien culture." Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 115.

<sup>22</sup> A. Karokaran, *Evangelization and diakonia: A Study in the Indian Perspective*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1978, p. 122.

<sup>23</sup> A. Karokaran, *Evangelization and diakonia: A Study in the Indian Perspective*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1978, 122. Cf. Also R. S. Saksena, "Indian Integration through Ancient Wisdom," in D.C.Scott, *W.C.C. Review*, 1970, pp. 9, 50.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. S. Doraisawmy, Christianity in India: Unique and Universal Mission, Madras: CLS, 1986, pp. 92ff.

<sup>25</sup> While describing some perceptions of Christ in Asia the *Instrumentum Laboris* states: "In some cases, followers of various Asian religions are increasingly prepared to accept Jesus Christ even as God. However, this does not seem to be a reason for them to accept him as the only saviour. The trend among the followers of these religions, especially the Hindus, is to consider all religions as equally good. For them, the Hindu gods and Christ are only the different manifestations of the same God." *Instrumentum Laboris: Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops*, in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Ed.), 25 Feb. 1998, § 30, p. VI cl. 3.

<sup>26</sup> S. J. Samartha, *The Hindu Response to the Unbound Christ*, Bangalore: 1974, p. 117; quoted in A. Mookenthottam, *Indian Theological Tendencies*, 1978, p. 156.

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<sup>27</sup>The *Instrumentum Laboris* states that there are instances where followers of various Asian religions prepared to accept Jesus Christ even as God. But they do not accept Jesus Christ as the only saviour and do not see the necessity to embrace the Church: "Even those who believe in Christ as God do not see the necessity to embrace the Christian religion, much less the Church . . . ." ,Instrumentum Laboris: Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops,, in *L'Osservatore Romano*(English Ed.), 25 Feb. 1998, § 30, p. VI cl. 3. „Instrumentum Laboris: Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops,, in *L'Osservatore Romano*(English Ed.), 25 Feb. 1998,p. VI. Bishop Valerian states: "The *Instrumentum laboris*, n. 30 mentions those who believe in Christ as God, but do not wish to embrace Christianity." D'Souza, Valerian (Bishop) "Obstacles that stand in the way of Baptism in India," in "Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops [19<sup>th</sup> April-14 May, 1998]," in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English, Weekly Edition), N. 18, 6 May 1998, p. 6 cl. 2.

<sup>28</sup> S. J. Samartha, *The Hindu Response to the Unbound Christ*, Bangalore: 1974, p. 117; quoted in A. Mookenthottam, *Indian Theological Tendencies*, 1978, p. 156.

<sup>29</sup> Subba Rao 1912 of Andra Pradesh stays in the cultural context of Hinduism, is committed to Christ, preaches Christ and exercises a healing ministry in the name of Christ. He rejects baptism and every form of religion. For him Christ is a guru to be followed. Cf. S. J. Samartha, *The Hindu Response to the Unbound Christ*, Bangalore: 1974, pp. 121-128.

<sup>30</sup> "In a survey of the population of Madras by the statistics department of the Madras Christian College some years ago, it was discovered that there were about 200,000 'non-baptized believing Christians' in the city, that is, those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour but have not taken baptism and joined a congregation. Since there are about 400,000 Christians in Madras, this means that half again as many Christians are outside the visible boundaries of the church." S.J. Samartha, Between Two Cultures: Ecumenical Ministry in a Pluralist World. Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1997, pp. 194-195.

<sup>31</sup> Following are some of the responses of a few Hindus who openly claim loyalty to Christ but do not want to be baptized: A Brahmin says: "I would call myself a Christian Brahman, for I am trying to live my life upon the principles and spirit of Jesus though I may never come out and be an open follower of Jesus Christ, but I am following him." A Hindu doctor expresses: "I am a Christian, but I have not taken baptism, for I feel no need of it. The thing that strikes me about Jesus is that He connected sin and the cure of disease - the two went together." A Hindu professor says: "I may live and die a Hindu, but my attachment is to Christ. He has become my centre and my joy. My soul has been unfolding to Him like a flower in the sun" quoted by Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 112.

<sup>32</sup> A missionary writes: "...But let no one despair of success in the end; for at least the minds of multitudes are dissatisfied in the vicinity of Vizagapatam; many have acknowledged themselves convinced of the evil and folly of their ways: and some that they are Christians at heart but afraid to confess it openly." Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, Vol. II, p. 39; quoted in A. Karokaran, *Evangelization and diakonia: A Study in the Indian Perspective*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1978, p. 21. Another missionary records: "It is comparatively easy to get intelligent men to adopt Christian views, but very difficult to get them to join the Christian community....while holding the Christian beliefs many Hindu young men conserve their place in the family and the caste by stopping short of baptism." Tomory, *History of our Bengal Mission*, pp. 33-34; quoted in A. Karokaran, *Evangelization and diakonia: A Study in the Indian Perspective*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1978, p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> In the missionary situation of India, baptism sometimes puts people in a difficult situation of severing them from their social and cultural heritage. Valerian D'Souza bishop of Poona, India, has raised this concern on the floor of the Synod of Bishops of Asia. He has said that there are people in India who wish to be baptised, but because of some serious reasons these 'believers' do not ask for Baptism. According to the Hindu personal law a convert to other religion will totally disinherit the ancestral property. Finding a marriage partner becomes difficult. For example: even the sisters of Hindu lady who gets baptised will find it extremely difficult to find partners, because of her conversion. These 'believers' have accepted Christ and wish to belong to the Church and to receive the Holy Communion. But they belong neither to their own religious community nor to the visible Church." D'Souza, Valerian "Obstacles that stand in the way of Baptism in India," in "Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops," (19th April-14 May, 1998, in *L'Osservatore Romano* (weekly Ed. English), 6 May 1998, p. 6 cl. 2.

<sup>34</sup> "Then there are the 'Secret Christians' of Sivakasi, a group of women believers who confess the lordship of Christ, but who, because of cultural constraints, remain unbaptised. They have their own 'secret' prayer places, they join in the social activities of the Church. Taylor claims that 'it is estimated that half of the women folk of Sivakasi are secret Christians'." Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 113.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. A. Karokaran, *Evangelization and diakonia: A Study in the Indian Perspective*. Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1978, p. 122, also cf. p. 20.

<sup>36</sup> Amaladoss, Michael. *Beyond Inculcation: Can the Many be One?* Delhi: Vidyajyoti Education & Welfare Society/ ISPCK 1998, p. 62.

<sup>37</sup> Es gibt nicht "den kulturfreien Glauben...und...die religionsfreie Kultur außerhalb der modernen technischen Zivilisation. . ." J. Ratzinger, "Der Christliche Glaube vor der Herausforderung der Kulturen," in Pauls Gordan (Hrsg.) *Evangelium und Inkulturation* (1492-1992), Köln: Verlag Styria, 1993, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> "Indian culture is the aesthetic continuum in which Indian people, as a whole, have down the ages, found a certain unity of vision. It is the total horizon in which the pre-Aryan religions of India, the Aryans and the various races who entered the sub-continent after them and the various religions which emerged later, found a common view of reality, an all encompassing myth in which the various beliefs were found." Chethimattam, J.B. "Indian Culture and the Christian Civilization." F. Kanichikattil, *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996, p. 139. One can say the major culture of India is the Hindu culture. Around 80% of 900 million total population of India is Hindus. The percentage will be still decreased if the 20% of the Dalits consider themselves not belonging to Hinduism. This trend is growing among the Dalits.

<sup>39</sup> Traditionally it is held that Christianity began in India by the preaching of St. Thomas, the Apostle, in Malabar, Kerala, South India, from 52 AD onwards. Cf. L.W. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, Cambridge, 1956. The number of St Thomas Christians during 16 and 17th C. was about 80,000, and in 1644 there were about 92 churches. At present there are about 4.5 million St Thomas Christians (both Catholics and Jacobites).

<sup>40</sup> The St Thomas Christians were regarded by the Hindus as a caste occupying a high place with in their caste hierarchy (with cult, priesthood, episcopate). Cf. Forrester, Duncan B. *Caste and Christianity: Attitudes and Policies on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missions in India*. London: Curzon Press, 1979, pp. 100-101.

<sup>41</sup> St. Thomas Christians kept almost all of their Hindu identity in the form of culture and social practices. The real and sudden blow to this style of life was unfortunately due to the sanctions and corrections of the illegal synod, the synod of Diamper, in Kerala in 1599 imposed on the Church. There were numerous prohibitions. To name one example, the churches were not allowed to be built after the model of the Hindu temple! The Synod discouraged to follow the traditional ways of life and established social customs and introduced in their place Western customs of life and manners of worship. The synod came down heavily on the tolerant attitude of St. Thomas Christians towards Hinduism. (Diamper synod, Act III, Decree IV, 37 and 39). Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*, Rome, 1958.

<sup>42</sup> For instance, there were no practical difference between the Thomas Christians and the Hindus in dress and ornaments, with the exception that the Christians wore as their distinguishing mark a metal cross in the tuft of hair or in the case of women a cross on the gold ornament called *tāli* or *minnu* worn by married women. Cf. T. Kochumuttom, *Comparative Theology: Christian Thinking and Spirituality in Indian Perspective*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1985, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Up to about 1570 the Churches were built according to Hindu architecture (after the style of local Hindu temples), and adorned them with Indian symbols and artistic works so much so that externally the churches looked like a Hindu temple except for the cross. Cf. T. Kochumuttom, *Comparative Theology: Christian Thinking and Spirituality in Indian Perspective*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1985, pp. 3-4.

<sup>44</sup> The Christians took active part in the festivities in connection with the national festivals like *ōnam* and *vishu*. Cf. T. Kochumuttom, *Comparative Theology: Christian Thinking and Spirituality in Indian Perspective*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1985, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Placid Podipara wrote that the St Thomas Christians were "Hindu in Culture, Christian in faith and Syrian in worship." Podipara, *The Malabar Christians*, Alleppy, 1972, p. 27ff.

<sup>46</sup> Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya (Bhavani Charan Banerji) (1861-1907).

<sup>47</sup> Upadyaya wrote: "Our *dharma* [religion or duty] has two branches: *samaj dharma* [social obligation] and *sadhan dharma* [religious life...]" Animananda, *The Blade*..., p. 200; quoted in R. BOYD, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*. Madras: The Christian Literature Society, (1969) 1979, p. 69. Cf. also P. Turmes, "Samaj Dharm and Sadhan Darm" in *The Clergy Monthly Supplement*, 1962-3, pp. 330-4; and H. Staffner, "May a convert retain his spiritual identity?" in *Vidyajyoti* 1976, pp. 356-62.

<sup>48</sup> He writes: "We are Hindus. Our Hinduism is preserved by the strength of *samaj dharma*. While the *sadhan dharma* is of the individual, its object is *sadhan* and *muktee* (Salvation).... It has no connection whatever with society. It is a matter known to the *guru* and *shisha* only. A Hindu, so far as *sadhan* goes, can belong to any religion." B. Animananda, *The Blade: Life and Work of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya*, Roy and Son, Calcutta, n.d. but probably c. 1947, p. 200, as quoted in R. BOYD, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*. Madras: The Christian Literature Society, (1969) 1979, p. 69.

<sup>49</sup> Upadhyaya, B. "Are We Hindus." *Sophia* (Jan. 1898) a monthly journal, in Lipner, Julius, and George Gispert-Sauch, ed. *Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*. Bangalore: The United Theological College, 1991. (Vol. 1), p. 24. cf. also B. Animananda, *The Blade: Life and Work of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya*, Roy and Son, Calcutta, n.d. but probably c. 1947, pp. 71 f. as in R. BOYD, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*. Madras: The Christian Literature Society, (1969) 1979, p. 69.

<sup>50</sup> Upadhyaya, B. "Are We Hindus." *Sophia* (Jan. 1898) a monthly journal, in Lipner, Julius, and George Gispert-Sauch, ed. *Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*. Bangalore: The United Theological College, 1991. (Vol. 1), p. 24.

<sup>51</sup> Upadhyaya, B. "Are We Hindus." *Sophia* (Jan. 1898) a monthly journal, in Lipner, Julius, and George Gispert-Sauch, ed. *Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*. Bangalore: The United Theological College, 1991. (Vol. 1), p. 24. Cf. also B. Animananda, *The Blade: Life and Work of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya*, Roy and Son, Calcutta, n.d. but probably c. 1947, pp. 71 f. as quoted in R. BOYD, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*. Madras: The Christian Literature Society, (1969) 1979, p. 69. Cf. also P. Turmes, "Samaj Dharm and Sadhan Darm" in *The Clergy Monthly Supplement*, 1962-3, pp. 330-4; and H. Staffner, "May a convert retain his spiritual identity?" in *Vidyajyoti* 1976, pp. 356-62.

<sup>52</sup> Upadhyaya, B. "Are We Hindus." *Sophia* (Jan. 1898) a monthly journal, in Lipner, Julius, and George Gispert-Sauch, ed. *Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*. Bangalore: The United Theological College, 1991. (Vol. 1), p. 24. Cf. also K. Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, Madras / Bangalore, 1969, p. 124.

<sup>53</sup> II Vatican Council, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*

<sup>54</sup> Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*.

<sup>55</sup> "Throughout human history religion and culture have been indissolubly connected. There has never yet been a great culture which did not have deep roots in a religion. When religion is separated from culture it becomes anaemic. Religion cannot live on itself, it has to live on life." S. Neill, "Religion and Culture: A Historical Introduction," in Scott & Cook etc. *Gospel and Culture*. California, 1979, p. 1; quoted in L. Malieckal, "Total Inculturation as Mission of the Churches in India," F. Kanichikattil, *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996 p. 202.

<sup>56</sup> "It is a ceremony in which a *guru* initiates a boy into one of the three 'twice born' castes. The *upanayana* appears to be the continuation of a prehistoric initiatory rite, like that of the Jünglingsweihe or induction of a youth into full membership of the community, a practice common to early tribal units throughout the world. [James Hastings (edt.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh, 1960, Vol. VII, p. 323.] The 'Zoroastrians had a similar ceremony, a form of which is still practised by the modern Parsis' [A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, 1954, p. 161], but it had 'little or no trace of overt sexual symbolism..[like the] initiation ceremonies among more primitive peoples, as rite fitting the initiate for sexual life'. [A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, 1954, p. 162.]" Margaret and James Stutley, *A Dictionary of Hinduism: Its Mythology, Folklore and Development 1500 B.C.-A.D. 1500*. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1977, p. 311.

<sup>57</sup> For some of the aspects of the Upanayana ceremony cf. R. Panikkar, *The Vedic Experience. Mantramañjarī: An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man and Contemporary Celebration*, (Revised Indian edition) Pondicherry: All India Books, 1983, pp. 238ff.

<sup>58</sup> Some Hindu scriptures mention about 16 sacramental rituals connected with the transitional period of a man's life. But normally a Hindu will be receiving only three, such as *upanayana* (initiation), rite of marriage and rite of cremation or burial. Kanitkat, V.P. "Hinduismus:..." p. 128. There are about 12 *samskaras*, sanctifying creemonites enjoined on the first three or twice-born classes. These ceremonies purify one from the taint of sin contracted in the womb and lead one to regeneration. *Manu's Law Book* ii, 27, give the following *samskaras*, viz. 1. *Garbhadhana*, 2. *pum-savana*, 3 *simantonnayana*, 4. *Jata-karman*, 5 *namakarana*, 6. *Nishkarman*, 7. *Annaprasana*, 8. *Cudakarman*, 9. *upanayana*, 10 *kesanta*, 11. *Samavartana*, 12. *Vivaha*. Sometimes the ceremony performed on a dead body for cremation or burial is also called as *samskara* (p.1120). *Jatakarma* and *nāmakarana* falls under the 16 rituals. *Jatakarma* is a birth-ceremony consisting in touching a newly-born child's tongue thrice with ghee after appropriate prayers. Monier, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p.1120, p. 417. Even though there is the name giving ceremony (for example *nāmakarana*, one of the 16 rituals) for the infants in Hinduism the important secret name is given to the child at the time of his *upanayana*. The secret name is usually "known only to its bearer and his preceptor (*guru*) or family priest by whom it (and a secret *mantra*) are whispered into a boy's ear at his initiation ceremony (*upanayana*). Margaret and James Stutley, *A Dictionary of Hinduism: Its Mythology, Folklore and Development 1500 B.C.-A.D. 1500*. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1977, p. 202.

<sup>59</sup> Margaret and James Stutley, *A Dictionary of Hinduism: Its Mythology, Folklore and Development 1500 B.C.-A.D. 1500*. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1977, p. 311.

<sup>60</sup> "Nonetheless, the *śūdras*, unlike the wild tribes of mountain and jungle, constituted a part of Vedic society, although not 'twice-born', and hence not eligible for initiation into the Indo-Āryan community." Margaret and

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James Stutley, *A Dictionary of Hinduism: Its Mythology, Folklore and Development 1500 B.C.-A.D. 1500*. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1977, p. 287.

<sup>61</sup> Dr B.R.Ambedkar, a dalit, was a philosopher, social reformer and above all the architect of the Indian Constitution. Cf. S. Doraisawmy, *Christianity in India: Unique and Universal Mission*, Madras: CLS, 1986, p. 89.

<sup>62</sup> The 'tamed', 'subdued', 'disorganised' people. The Outcasts were *Panchamas*, (*Atishudras*, *Avarnas*, *Antyajas*, *Namashudras*), *Chuhras* of the Punjab, the *Chamars* of North India, The *Mahars* of Central and Western India, the *Paraiyar* of South India, etc. They were mainly field labourers, leather workers, watchmen and village menials, and scavengers. Dalits were to be found all over India. Cf. John C.B. Webster, *The Dalit Christians: A History*, Delhi: ISPCK. 1994, pp. 1-29.

<sup>63</sup> "The untouchables, then and now are butchered: their houses burnt, women raped. When they sought to change their religion, Hindus merely reacted violently." S. Doraisawmy, *Christianity in India: Unique and Universal Mission*, Madras: CLS, 1986, p. 89.

<sup>64</sup> "But a *sudra*, whether bought or unbought, may be compelled to do servile work; for he was created by the self-existent (*svayambhu*) to be the slave of a *brahmin*. A *Sudra*, through emancipated by his master, is not released from servitude; since that is innate in him, who can set him free from it?" *Manu Dharma Sastra* (VIII, 413-414). The Rig Veda states that Sudras have been sprung from the feet of Purusha. Cf. RV. ix,20,12; In the *purusha-sūkta* (RV., X. 90) the hierarchical order of the caste system according to its origin is described: The *brahmana* from the head of the cosmic *purusa* was regarded as the receptacle of the mind, centre of the sensory organs, and held to be superior to the *rājnaya*, represented by the arms, and to the *vaiśya*, represented by the legs, all three being regarded as superior to the *sūdra*, the lowest level, the feet of *purusa*. The Geetha upheld Chaturvarnya. D. Keer, *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1981, p. 420. *Gita* 4:13 states that the fourfold caste was created by God.

<sup>65</sup> "These untouchable Hindus were treated by the caste Hindus as sub-humans, less than men, worse than beasts." D. Keer, *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1981, 1981, p. 2. Hindus boasted that "their religion treated even animals with forbearance, but [they] treated their co-religionists worse than cats and dogs". D. Keer, *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1981, p. 74.

<sup>66</sup> In the Bombay Presidency Depressed Class Conference in Yeola, Dr. Ambedkar spoke to about 10,000 harijans on Oct 13, 1935, "Bombay Harijans' Resolution," G (October 17, 1945), p. 670; quoted in John C.B. Webster, *The Dalit Christians: A History*, Delhi: ISPCK. 1994, p. 107.

<sup>67</sup> "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had to wage war against Hinduism, to get the untouchables out of the clutches of the Hindu yoke of bonded slavery, treacherous dealings in all matters, using the untouchables as their cheap farm labourers and coolies." S. Doraisawmy, *Christianity in India: Unique and Universal Mission*, Madras: CLS, 1986, p. 89.

<sup>68</sup> D. Keer, *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1981, 1981, p. 90.

<sup>69</sup> "Bombay Harijans' Resolution," G (October 17, 1949) 670; quoted in John C.B. Webster, *The Dalit Christians: A History*, Delhi: ISPCK. 1994, p. 107.

<sup>70</sup> Dhanjay Keer, *Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission*, (3rd Ed.: Bombay, 1971), pp 440, 454, as given by John C.B. Webster, *The Dalit Christians: A History*, Delhi: ISPCK. 1994, p. 156.

<sup>71</sup> Conversion oath: "I embrace today the Buddha Dhamma discarding the Hindu religion which is detrimental to the emancipation of human beings and which believes in inequality and regards human beings other than Brahmins as low born." *Dharma Deeksha*, New Delhi, n.d.; quoted in John C.B. Webster, *The Dalit Christians: A History*, Delhi: ISPCK. 1994, p. 157.

<sup>72</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* gives directives for the cultural adaptation in the Liturgy and says that "it shall be for competent territorial ecclesiastical authority..., to specify adaptations, especially in the case of the administrations of the sacraments, the sacramentals, processions, liturgical language, sacred music, and the arts, but according to the fundamental norms laid down in this constitution." II Vatican Council, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 39. The *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Asian Synod stresses the need for the inculcation of the sacraments and sacramentals in the Asian context. "In this regard,..greater attention be given to the inculcation of the faith, so as to search for ways among Asian mentalities and cultures – while remaining faithful to the essential content of the faith – to express more clearly and effectively what it means to live in Christ" (30). „Instrumentum Laboris: Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops,, in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Ed.), 25 Feb. 1998, p. VI. For the need of inculcation of the message of Christ, refer II Vatican Council, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* 53. Pope Paul VI, at the Eucharistic Congress in Bombay in 1964, exhorted Christians "to express their faith and devotion in harmony with the civilization of India and in truly Indian forms." Pope Paul VI, "To the People of India," Bombay, December 4, 1964; quoted in F. Gioia, (edt.), *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, USA: Pauline Books & Media, 1997, p. 128 § 203.

<sup>73</sup>F. Wilfred, *Beyond Settled Foundations*, Madras: University of Madras, 1993, p. 202. Kaj Baago argued that "Baptism in its present form, would have to be given up for the sake of the Gospel, since it is a denial of the universality of Christ" quoted by Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 115. Bernard Lucas is also another proponent of 'no baptism', and he argues that "Baptism has no place in the propagation of the Gospel and that caste is no hindrance to Christianization" quoted by Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 116.

<sup>74</sup>Paul Puthanangady (ed.), *Sharing Worship – Communicatio in Sacris*, (Final Statement of the Seminar), Bangalore: NBCLC, 1988, pp. 794-795; quoted in F. Wilfred, *Beyond Settled Foundations*, Madras: University of Madras, 1993, p. 202.

<sup>75</sup>F. Wilfred, *Beyond Settled Foundations*, Madras: University of Madras, 1993, p. 202. Wilfred refers to Sara Grant, "Towards a Practical Indian Ecclesiology," *Vidyajyoti*, 49, (1985), pp. 29-36.

<sup>76</sup>F.X. D'Sa, "The Dharma of Religion: Towards an Indian Theology of Religion," in Kurian Kunnumpurnam and Lorenzo Fernando, *Quest for an Indian Church: An Exploration of the possibilities Opened up by Vatican II*, Gujarat: Sahitya Prakash, 1992, pp. 91, 93.

<sup>77</sup>D'Souza, Valerian. "Obstacles that stand in the way of Baptism in India," in "Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops," (19th April-14 May, 1998, in *L'Osservatore Romano* (weekly Ed. English), 6 May 1998, p. 6 cl. 2.

<sup>78</sup>"... the rites of the sacraments, devotions, prayers, etc. also reveal, in their own way, the person of Christ, making his saving message known and providing a powerful invitation to the unbeliever towards participation."(30). „Instrumentum Laboris: Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops,, in *L'Osservatore Romano*(English Ed.), 25 Feb. 1998, p. VI.

<sup>79</sup> "The expository language of the Declaration corresponds to its purpose, which is not to treat in a systematic manner the question of the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ and the Church, . . ." Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *"Dominus Iesus"* 3. "As a consequence, it is held that certain truths have been superseded; for example, . . . the unicity and salvific universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ, the universal salvific mediation of the Church, the inseparability — while recognizing the distinction — of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the Church, and the subsistence of the one Church of Christ in the Catholic Church. . . .

.....

On the basis of such presuppositions, which may evince different nuances, certain theological proposals are developed . . . in which Christian revelation and the mystery of Jesus Christ and the Church lose their character of absolute truth and salvific universality, . . ." Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *"Dominus Iesus"* 4.

<sup>80</sup> First Council of Nicaea, *Symbolum Nicaenum*: DS 125.

<sup>81</sup> Council of Chalcedon, *Symbolum Chalcedonense*: DS 301.

<sup>82</sup> "We believe also that the Holy Spirit, who is the third person in the Trinity, is God, one and equal with God the Father and the Son, of one substance, also of one nature; that He is the Spirit of both, . . ." XI Council of Toledo, DS 527.

<sup>83</sup> "... the world came into being through him; . . ." Jn 1:10

<sup>84</sup> "for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him." (Col 1:16).

<sup>85</sup> "... for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist." 1 Cor 8:6.

<sup>86</sup> "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him" (Mt 11:27). "No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed him" (Jn 1:18).

<sup>87</sup> "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was

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pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.” (Col 1:15-20).

<sup>88</sup> “With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” Eph 1:8-10).

<sup>89</sup> “. . . in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.” Heb 1:2.

<sup>90</sup> “For God's Word, by whom all things were made, was Himself made flesh so that as perfect man He might save all men and sum up all things in Himself.” II Vatican Council, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* 45.

<sup>91</sup> “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” Jn 3:16.

<sup>92</sup> “The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands.” Jn 3:35.

<sup>93</sup> For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all. . . .” 1Thim 2:5-6.

<sup>94</sup> Jesus is ‘the one and only Mediator.’ II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* 56, cf. also 28.

<sup>95</sup> “He is the only mediator who in the name of the whole Church is offered sacramentally in the Eucharist . . . .” II Vatican Council, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 2

<sup>96</sup> Christians “make open confession of Jesus Christ as God and Lord and as the sole Mediator between God and men . . . .” II Vatican Council, Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* 20.

<sup>97</sup> “As the only mediator, between the Father and mankind He made peace between God and man. . . .” Pope Paul VI, Pastoral Instruction *Communio Et Progressio* 10.

<sup>98</sup> “In the New Testament, the universal salvific will of God is closely connected to the sole mediation of Christ. . . .” Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration “*Dominus Iesus*” 30, cf. also 14, 15.

<sup>99</sup> “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. Jn 13:34.

<sup>100</sup> “And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Gal 2:20.

<sup>101</sup> “It is love which not only creates the good but also grants participation in the very life of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For he who loves desires to give himself.” John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dives In Misericordia* 7.

<sup>102</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*.

<sup>103</sup> “But I have a testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me.” (Jn 5:36).

<sup>104</sup> “Therefore, we believe that this Holy Spirit was sent by both, as the Son was sent by the Father; . . . .” XI Council of Toledo, DS 527.

<sup>105</sup> II Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes*.

<sup>106</sup> “For in Christ the whole fullness of divinity dwells in bodily form” (Col 2:9-10).

<sup>107</sup> “He is the image of the invisible God, . . . .” (Col 1:15).

<sup>108</sup> “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” (cf. Jn 14:9)

<sup>109</sup> “I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.” (Jn 17:4).

<sup>110</sup> “For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all. . . .” 1 Tim 1:5-6.

<sup>111</sup> “Christ is none other than Jesus of Nazareth: he is the Word of God made man for the salvation of all.” John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 6.

<sup>112</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei verbum*, 2.

<sup>113</sup> “It must therefore be *firmly believed* as a truth of Catholic faith that the universal salvific will of the One and Triune God is offered and accomplished once for all in the mystery of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God.” Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration “*Dominus Iesus*” 14.

<sup>114</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*.

<sup>115</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*.

<sup>116</sup> “The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion.”

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 1. “The Church, in fact, “cannot withdraw from her permanent mission of bringing the Gospel to the multitudes the millions and millions of men and women-who as

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yet do not know Christ the Redeemer of humanity. In a specific way this is the missionary work which Jesus entrusted and still entrusts each day to his Church." John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 31.

<sup>117</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*

<sup>118</sup> II Vatican Council, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*

<sup>119</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*.

<sup>120</sup> II Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes*.

<sup>121</sup> Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Dominus Iesus*.

<sup>122</sup> "It is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for salvation." John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, 9.

<sup>123</sup> "This Sacred Council wishes to turn its attention firstly to the Catholic faithful. Basing itself upon Sacred Scripture and Tradition, it teaches that the Church, now sojourning on earth as an exile, is necessary for salvation. Christ, present to us in His Body, which is the Church, is the one Mediator and the unique way of salvation." II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* 14.

<sup>124</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>125</sup> 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined upon you' (Mt. 28: 19-20). "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world" (Mt 28:18-20; cf. Lk 24:46-48; Jn 17:18,20,21; Acts 1:8), cf. Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration "*Dominus Iesus*" 1.

<sup>126</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>127</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*.

<sup>128</sup> Christ Himself by stressing the necessity of faith and baptism "confirmed the necessity of the Church, into which men enter by baptism, as by a door" II Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes* 7.

<sup>129</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Jn 3:5.

<sup>130</sup> "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." Mk 16:16.

<sup>131</sup> "Christ, present to us in His Body, which is the Church, is the one Mediator and the unique way of salvation. In explicit terms He Himself affirmed the necessity of faith and baptism (Mk 16:16, Jn 3:5) and thereby affirmed also the necessity of the Church, for through baptism as through a door men enter the Church. Whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in it, could not be saved." II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* 14.

<sup>132</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>133</sup> "The Church, sent by Christ to reveal and to communicate the love of God to all men and nations, is aware that there still remains a gigantic missionary task for her to accomplish. . . . The Church, in order to be able to offer all of them the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, must implant herself into these groups for the same motive which led Christ to bind Himself, in virtue of His Incarnation, to certain social and cultural conditions of those human beings among whom He dwelt." II Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes* 10.

<sup>134</sup> II Vatican Council, Declaration *Nostra aetate*

<sup>135</sup> "One understands then that, following the Lord's command (cf. Mt 28:19-20) and as a requirement of her love for all people, the Church ,proclaims and is in duty bound to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6). In him, in whom God reconciled all things to himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-19), men find the fullness of their religious life' (Second Vatican Council, Declaration *Nostra aetate*, 2.)." Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Dominus Iesus* 22.

<sup>136</sup> "The mission of the Church, therefore, is fulfilled by that activity which makes her, obeying the command of Christ and influenced by the grace and love of the Holy Spirit, fully present to all men or nations, in order that, by the example of her life and by her preaching, by the sacraments and other means of grace, she may lead them to the faith, the freedom and the peace of Christ; that thus there may lie open before them a firm and free road to full participation in the mystery of Christ." II Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes* 5.

<sup>137</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*.

<sup>138</sup> II Vatican Council, Decree *Unitatis redintegratio*.

<sup>139</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>140</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*.

<sup>141</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>142</sup> 61] "Acknowledging Jesus as Saviour involves not simply confession of sin but a change of heart, that is, accepting Jesus Christ as Lord of one's life in an ongoing process of conversion" (26). „Instrumentum Laboris: Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops,, in *L'Osservatore Romano*(English Ed.), 25 Feb. 1998,p. VI.

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<sup>143</sup> “In so far as Jesus referred to his death as a baptism, we could also speak of a baptism by blood.” Kavunkal, Jacob. “Baptism in the New Testament,” in Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul’s Publication, 1996, p. 69.

<sup>144</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>145</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*.

<sup>146</sup> II Vatican Council, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

<sup>147</sup> II Vatican Council, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.

<sup>148</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>149</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*.

<sup>150</sup> II Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes*.

<sup>151</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*.

<sup>152</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>153</sup> Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *“Dominus Iesus”*.

<sup>154</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>155</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>156</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>157</sup> First Council of Constantinople, *Symbolum Constantinopolitanum*: DS 150.

<sup>158</sup> II Vatican Council, Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*

<sup>159</sup> Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *“Dominus Iesus”*.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. Mundadan, Mathias. “The Church of the Third Millennium,” *Third Millennium*, 1 (1998) 1, (pp. 6-18), p. 10.

<sup>161</sup> “Der Glaube ist ja nicht ein Privatweg zu Gott; er führt in das Volk Gottes und in seine Geschichte hinein. Gott hat sich selbst an eine Geschichte gebunden, die nun auch die seinige ist und die wir nicht abstreifen können.” J. Ratzinger, “Der Christliche Glaube vor der Herausforderung der Kulturen,” in Pauls Gordan (Hrsg.) *Evangelium und Inkulturation* (1492-1992), Köln: Verlag Styria, 1993, p. 20.

<sup>162</sup> “Basing itself upon Sacred Scripture and Tradition, it teaches that the Church, now sojourning on earth as an exile, is necessary for salvation. Christ, present to us in His Body, which is the Church, is the one Mediator and the unique way of salvation. In explicit terms He Himself affirmed the necessity of faith and baptism (Mk 16:16; Jn 3:5) and thereby affirmed also the necessity of the Church, for through baptism as through a door men enter the Church. Whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ would refuse to enter it or to remain in it, could not be saved.” (II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* 14, II Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes* 7 ).

<sup>163</sup> II Vatican Council, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*

<sup>164</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*

<sup>165</sup> As a consequence there are a lot of attempts in the Catholic Church in India to present Jesus in the Indian garb using the support of various philosophical and cultural concepts of Hinduism and Buddhism. *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Asian Synod recognises these attempts (30). „Instrumentum Laboris: Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops,, in *L’Osservatore Romano*(English Ed.), 25 Feb. 1998, p. VI.

<sup>166</sup> II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*

<sup>167</sup> II Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes*

<sup>168</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*

<sup>169</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

<sup>170</sup> Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *“Dominus Iesus”*

<sup>171</sup> “There are people who are in ignorance of Christ’s Gospel and of his Church through no fault of their own, and who search for God in sincerity of heart; they attempt to put into practice the recognition of his will that they have reached through the dictate of conscience. They do so under the influence of divine grace; they can attain everlasting salvation.” (II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* 16 ). Cf. also CCC § 1260, § 1261.

<sup>172</sup> “Nonbelievers Too Can Be Saved, Says Pope,” Zenit, Nov. 30, 2005.

<sup>173</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*. Cf. also and also Letter to the Fifth Plenary Assembly of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (June 23, 1999), 4: *L’Osservatore Romano*, July 18, 1999.

<sup>174</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*. Cf. also and also Letter to the Fifth Plenary Assembly of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (June 23, 1999), 4: *L’Osservatore Romano*, July 18, 1999.

<sup>175</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. II Vatican Council, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* 53, cf. also Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes*., II Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*.

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<sup>177</sup> Chethimattam, J.B. "Indian Culture and the Christian Civilization," in Kanichikattil, Francis. *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996, (pp. 139-152) p. 149.

<sup>178</sup> For a draft for an inculturated form of baptism in India cf. Anand, Suhbah. "Khrista-Upanayana (baptism)," *Word and Worship* 22 (1989) 7, 273-275. For the presentation of an Indian rite for baptism as a contribution towards inculturation cf. Chinnappa, S. "Rite for an infant baptism," *Word and Worship* 22 (1989), 4, pp. 158-160. For baptism in the context of *Diksa* in Saiva Diddhanta cf. Arulsamy, S. "Diksa in Saiva Diddhanta," *Indian Theological Studies* 16 (1979), 1 & 2, pp. 55-70. Hindus believe that "the sacramental rites (*Samskaras*) are vehicles of sanctification." Upadhyaya, B. "Are We Hindus," *Sophia* (Jan. 1898), in Lipner, J., and Gispert-Sauch, ed. *Brahmabandhab Upadhyay*, 1991. (Vol. 1), p. 25.

<sup>179</sup> ". . . whatever efforts we may make to keep the converts in their caste and society, given the fact of anti-God values at work in our country, if we are faithful to Christ and his message, we are going to invite opposition and persecution, for the 'sword' brought by Jesus is a dividing factor in a world of sin. When we followers of Christ are committed to working for a new, just social order which will image the Kingdom, there will be opposition and persecutions. While we avoid sociological division, we positively welcome the type of opposition that comes from our radical following of Jesus." Mattam, Joseph, "Indian Attempts towards a Solution to the Problems of Conversion." In Mattam, Joseph and Sebastian Kim, Edt. *Mission and Conversion: A Reappraisal*, Mumbai: St. Paul's Publication, 1996, p. 126.

<sup>180</sup> Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

<sup>181</sup> When Abraham was asked by Yahweh to go out from his land, from his relatives and the house of his father, Abraham faced with the cultural crisis. "Ein solcher Bruch mit der eigenen Vorgeschichte, ein solches Ausziehen wird immer am Beginn einer neuen Stunde der Glaubensgeschichte stehen." (p. 19) "Wer in die Kirche eintritt, muß sich bewußt sein, daß er in ein eigenes Kultursubjekt mit einer eigenen historisch gewachsene und vielfältig geschichteten Interkulturalität eintritt. Ohne einen gewissen Exodus, einen Umbruch des Lebens in all seinen Bezügen kann man nicht Christ werden." J. Ratzinger, "Der Christliche Glaube vor der Herausforderung der Kulturen," in Pauls Gordan (Hrsg.) *Evangelium und Inkulturation* (1492-1992), Köln: Verlag Styria, 1993, pp. 19, 20. Cf. also Karo tempel, Sebastian. "Christian mission and cultural formation amid the conflicts of cultures," *Indian Missiological Review* 7 (1985) 3, pp. 267-278.

<sup>182</sup> A prayer by Francis Xavier: "You, my God, have made me to your likeness, and not the *pagodas* idols, which are the gods of the heathen in the form of irrational cattle and beasts of the devil. I renounce all *pagodas*, magicians, and soothsayers because they are the slaves and friends of the devil.." George Schurhammer and Joseph Wicki, ed., *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii* 1 (Rome: 1944-45), 221.

<sup>183</sup> "Der Glaube ist selbst Kultur. Das bedeutet dann auch, daß er ein eigenes Subjekt ist: eine Lebens- und Kulturgemeinschaft, die wir "Volks Gottes" nennen." J. Ratzinger, "Der Christliche Glaube vor der Herausforderung der Kulturen," in Pauls Gordan (Hrsg.) *Evangelium und Inkulturation* (1492-1992), Köln: Verlag Styria, 1993, p. 17.

<sup>184</sup> "Der Glaube selbst ist Kultur. Es gibt...nicht nackt, als bloße Religion. Einfach indem er dem Menschen sagt, wer er ist und wie er das Menschsein anfangen soll, schafft Glaube Kultur, ist er Kultur. Diese sein Wort ist nicht ein abstraktes Wort, es ist in einer langen Geschichte und in vielfältigen interkulturellen Verschmelzungen gereift, in denen es eine ganze Gestalt des Lebens, den Umgang des Menschen mit sich selbst, mit dem Nächsten, mit der Welt, mit Gott geformt hat." J. Ratzinger, "Der Christliche Glaube vor der Herausforderung der Kulturen," in Pauls Gordan (Hrsg.) *Evangelium und Inkulturation* (1492-1992), Köln: Verlag Styria, 1993, p. 17.

<sup>185</sup> There "is the identification of the Christian civilization with the civilization of Europe, from where in recent centuries, starting with the sixteenth, most of the militant missionaries went out into the rest of world, with the declared purpose of conquering the world for Christ. But the simple, obvious fact is that Western civilization as it is today is incompatible with genuine Christian civilization." Chethimattam, J.B. "Indian Culture and the Christian Civilization," in Kanichikattil, Francis. *Church in Context: Essays in honour of Mathias Mundadan CMI*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1996, p. 142.

<sup>186</sup> "Some customs and symbolism will be found to be incompatible with the message that Jesus came to teach and embody and Christians in Asia, as elsewhere in the world, have a duty throughout the world to challenge their cultures and seek to purify them." (50) „Instrumentum Laboris: Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops,, in *L'Osservatore Romano*(English Ed.), 25 Feb. 1998, p. XI.

<sup>187</sup> Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

<sup>188</sup> It is by the encounter of Christianity in India, for example, that the evil practise of *Sati* in the Hindu culture was abolished. "And if what they [the missionaries] did was considered by some as an attempt to disrupt Hindu social life and traditions and therefore blameworthy, the blame belongs to God. Every reform movement in India in the 19th century and after, beginning with Raja Ram Mohan Roy and continuing till today both at the social

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and political levels have deeply affected the traditional religious life of the large Hindu community. The impact of Christian thought and Christian service to India in education and social transformation, has contributed effectively to the Indian and particularly the Hindu Renaissance of the last hundred years.” Lacombe. L. and Lawrence Sundaram, *Blame It on God: If Brahmins became Christians*, Bombay: Better yourself Books, 1996, p. 7.

<sup>189</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I,3,28

<sup>190</sup> II Vatican Council, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*).

<sup>191</sup> “. . . every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in every human heart (Address to Cardinals and the Roman Curia, December 22, 1986, 11) . . . . This is the same Spirit who was at work in the Incarnation and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and who is at work in the Church. . . . Whatever the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions serves as a preparation for the Gospel.” cf. in John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* 29.