

- Padilla, C. Rene
1982 "The Unity of the Church and the Homogeneous Unit Principle." *International Bulletin of Missiology: Research*, Vol. 6, No. 1, January, pp. 23-30
- Pierard, Richard V.
1986 "Volkish Thought and Christian Missions in Early Twentieth Century Germany." *Terr Haute, Ind.*: Indiana State University. Unpublished paper, pp. 1-26
- Risso, M., and W. Boker
1964 "Delusions of Witchcraft: A Cross Cultural Study." *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 114, No. 513, pp. 966ff.
- Rosen, Martin "Moishe" Meyer
1972 Letter to the Editor, *The Christian Century*, 89, No. 27, 19 July, p. 778
- Shearer, Roy E.
1966 *Wildfire: Church Growth in Korea* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Van Engen, Charles
1981 *The Growth of the True Church* Amsterdam: Rodopi Press.
- Verkuyl, Johannes
1978 *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans
- Warner, Timothy
1985 "Power Encounter in Evangelism." *Trinity World Forum*, winter, pp. 1, 3
- Webber, George W.
1964 *The Congregation in Mission* Nashville: Abingdon Press
- Winter, Ralph D.
1972 "Quality or Quantity," in Donald McGavran, ed. *Critical Issues in Missions Tomorrow*. Chicago: Moody Press, pp. 175-187
- Wodarz, Donald M.
1979 "Church Growth: The Missiology of Donald Anderson McGavran." Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University. Unpublished D. Miss. dissertation.
- Works, Herbert M., Jr.
1974 "The Church Growth Movement to 1965." Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary. School of World Mission. Unpublished D. Miss. dissertation.

Doing Mission: The Catholic Experience (Catholic mission theology as expressed in the lived experience of the Maryknoll missionary)

JOHN J. CASEY, M.M.

Concentrating on the "lived experience" of Maryknoll missionaries, the author points to distinct changes in the perception of how mission is done. From 1911 until shortly after World War II, evangelization of non-Christians and developing an indigenous Catholic church were the traditional priorities. Mission was seen as a priestly function, and carried out from the top down, under the international oversight of the Propaganda Fide. Changes precipitating a dramatically new orientation, especially after the sixties, were: redeployment of missionaries from China and Japan, the crucial experience of Latin America, mission decrees of Vatican II, and the new prominence given to local theology and ministry at the grass-roots. Today's missionaries, Casey believes, are being profoundly transformed by the cultural, religious, and political contexts in which they work.

Each historical era develops a particular way of approaching the task of theologizing. This does not mean that some entirely new way replaces the old, but simply that each era has its own comfortable response to the theological needs of the people of the time. In the Catholic Church today, in particular in the third world churches, this way can be described best as reflection on the lived experience of being a Catholic Christian in a particular cultural, social, and political milieu.

Such reflection has resulted in a kind of theological realism that reveals to us the warts as well as the beauty spots on our own personal and ecclesial Christian image in a way that we never recognized before. Such realism is of recent origin, as recent as the movement that gave rise to the Second Vatican Council. Before that time we were universally Platonists in our

John J. Casey, M.M., a Maryknoll missionary in Hong Kong from 1971-1984, now serves as Dean of the Maryknoll School of Theology.

theological reflection. We recognized that we as Christians, and the church as an ecclesial community, had no lack of wars. But that did not make any difference because what existed in this world was not the real communion of saints, the real church, rather it was a copy. The real was the ideal that transcended time and place, of which we only get glimpses in our attempt to understand more clearly under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit. And these glimpses were individualized in the saints and heroes of the church through whom we saw the real church shining through. On the other hand, the villains and hypocrites in the church never tarnished the ideal reality since they were only parts of the copy. That is the traditional way of looking at the church.

If I were to give a talk on Catholic mission theology in the traditional way—and this way is still strong in the church today—I would be concentrating on that ideal activity known as evangelization. Pope Paul VI did this in 1975 when he issued the Apostolic Exhortation *On Evangelization in the Modern World*. My task would be simply to paraphrase what Paul VI wrote. But since you are professors of mission, I am sure you are all familiar with that document. So a much more meaningful way to express what Catholic mission theology is today is to use the particular theological approach of our era and reflect on the lived experience of my own mission community—the experience of doing mission for the last 68 of the 75 years the Maryknoll Community has been in existence.

What has emerged in the historical experience of my community during the past 68 years is a distinct change in the way of doing mission, a change from a way that was in vogue from the beginning of the Society until after the Second World War to a way that has been in development from the postwar period up to the present. There was no sharp dividing line between these two, rather for a time they blurred together and some elements of the old still exist. But they are distinct enough to have caused commotion within the community before the second became recognized as the inevitable movement of the church.

In setting forth these two ways of doing mission in recent Catholic tradition, I am going to speak of the Maryknoll experience within the context of five major concerns of the total mission task. First, who the missionary is in the Catholic Church. Second, where the missionary goes and how he or she receives his or her commission as a missionary in the Catholic Church. Third, the mission field—where it is and what peoples it embraces. Fourth, the bringing of the message or what it is that a missionary does when he or she goes on mission. And, finally, the accomplished task—the return of the missionary to the sending church. I am sure that each of these concerns is recognized by you in your own teaching and research as a basic part of the doing of mission. And so with that said, let us turn to the history of doing mission in Maryknoll.

Mission Experience to World War II

The Maryknoll Community—officially known as the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America—began in 1911 as a clerical society, that is, a society of priests. From the beginning there was also a group of auxiliaries who were not priests but were known as auxiliary brothers. In the plan, the priests were to be the missionaries and the brothers were to be their auxiliaries, not directly involved in evangelization but providing special services which the priests would need. These services largely concerned building and caring for the residences in which the priests lived.

Missionary Training

Since the missionary was to be a priest, the Maryknoll physical plant began as a seminary for the training of priests whose specific task would be mission. They would be considered the representatives of the diocesan clergy of the United States on the missions. If you visit Maryknoll today, you will find a beautiful piece of property with a number of buildings on it, but one stands at the center and dominates all the others and that building is still called the seminary. Now, at that time and up until the 1960s, only students preparing for priesthood could attend a seminary. I don't know what the Protestant tradition was at that time, but in the Catholic seminary if you were no longer interested in preparing for priesthood, you did not finish your academic course and then take your leave, as you might do today, you left immediately. The course was strictly for future priests and was to be taken only by those preparing for priesthood. The auxiliary brothers, for instance, did not attend the seminary. Ministry was the domain of the priest so it was not even considered an option that an auxiliary brother could attend. The Maryknoll Sisters when they began their congregation never attended. They, too, were auxiliaries. The missionary was the priest.

The course that the seminarian preparing for priestly ministry on the missions took in the seminary differed hardly at all from the course in the seminarian would take were he preparing for priestly ministry in a diocese in the United States. Eventually a special year was added just before the seminarian began his four years of theological study. This year concentrated on preparing the seminarian for his community role as a member of Maryknoll rather than preparing him to be a missionary. The four years of theology followed the curriculum prescribed in the code of canon law for all seminaries. Specific mission training, such as it was conceived of at that time, consisted of language study and apprenticeship and would take place in whatever mission the seminarian would be sent to after he was ordained a priest. Professors in the seminary rarely had any experience as missionaries themselves nor was this considered a desirable experience for those teaching the scholarly disciplines of theology.

Mission Territory

When the Maryknoll seminarian was completing his seminary course, he was given an assignment by the Society administration, the General Superior and his council. He was assigned to a specific mission territory which belonged to the Society by virtue of a *jus commissiois* or territorial grant given by an agency of the Holy See. The role of this agency was to oversee the entire Catholic mission venture in the world. Like most agencies in the Catholic Church, it had a lengthy history.

After the Council of Trent and the start of the Counter-Reformation movement in the sixteenth century, a committee of cardinals had been established in Rome as kind of an ad hoc committee on planning for the Counter-Reformation. Early in the seventeenth century—1622—during the papacy of Pope Gregory XV, the idea of an ad hoc committee was expanded into an agency known as the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith which became a part of the Roman Curia. Its specific purpose was the oversight of spreading the Catholic faith in countries whose governments were non-Catholic, be they Orthodox, Protestant, or non-Christian. By the time Maryknoll was founded in 1911, almost 300 years later, with few exceptions the only countries that continued to fall under the oversight of the Congregation were the non-Christian countries of the world. The Congregation in a sense was like a land commission, so that all the religious orders of priests engaged in mission along with the strictly missionary societies of priests were given specific territories in which to work by a *jus commissiois* or territorial grant of the Congregation.

At its inception, a territory was designated a prefecture. At that stage it was beginning an independent existence as a mission. The priests of the mission, in conjunction with the leadership of their mission society, recommended one of their number to the Congregation to be appointed a Prefect Apostolic or mission leader. As the mission developed, it would be raised to the rank of a vicariate and the same process would be followed for the appointment of a Vicar Apostolic who would then be ordained a bishop. The vicariate was called such because it was not a fully established local church with its own local bishop, rather, it fell under the direct episcopal care of the Holy See. The Vicar Apostolic as bishop was simply the vicar of the pope unlike the bishop of a diocese who is the bishop of a local church in his own right. A vicariate would remain in this condition until it was judged to have developed into a truly self-sustaining local church at which point it would be established as a diocese.

The Maryknoll mission world was divided into a number of vicariates and prefectures. For instance, by 1940 in South China, there were three vicariates and one prefecture.¹ The vicariates were Kongmoon, Kaying, and Wuchow, while the prefecture was Kweilin. The newly ordained Maryknoll priest, then, was assigned to a mission-vicariate or prefecture—to work

with, and under, the direction of his fellow Maryknoller, who was vicar or Prefect Apostolic of that mission. And his mission field, as established by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, was an area where the Catholic Church was not yet established in its ordinary diocesan structure.

Missionary Work

The work that the Maryknoller did in his mission fell under two broad headings, the evangelization of non-Christians and the building of a native or indigenous church. The former was prior to the latter in that a certain number of Catholics were needed in an area before missionaries could concentrate on the indigenous church structure. But both of these works were clearly understood to be based on the mandate of Jesus to "go forth and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). In the Catholic context with its network of specific missions, this was localized to mean the bringing of the good news of salvation to the people of the mission area to which you were assigned and to form them into a church. All this was nicely summed up in the first systematic treatise on Catholic missiology which was published in 1919 by Joseph Schmidlin, Professor of Mission Science at the University of Munster. Mission work was defined as the spreading of Christianity among pagans whose individual salvation depended upon knowledge of Jesus Christ, interior conversion, and enrollment in the Catholic Church through baptism (Schmidlin 1931:42-48, 78-79, 260-265).

Each mission made a yearly progress report. The annual report filed by each mission territory with the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome was basically statistical and reported progress in terms of numbers of baptisms. Even the quality of conversion was measured quantitatively in the number of confessions heard and communions received. A report showing a steady increase in the reception of these three sacraments—baptism, penance, and the eucharist—was a sure sign of a successful mission. And, of course, it was on the basis of such reports that areas that were prefectures were upgraded to vicariates.

Direct Evangelization In the early years of the Maryknoll Society, the work of its priests was situated in China. During these years, the main thrust of Catholic evangelization in China was to reach the uneducated farmer in the countryside to the neglect of city people. Earlier efforts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had been more balanced with some missionaries working in the countryside and others, mostly Jesuits, working in the cities. This latter group attempted to Christianize the country from the top down by converting the literate or scholarly elite on whom rested the duty to preserve and foster the Chinese sociopolitical way of life as well as the spiritual tradition known as Confucianism. However, the spiritual tradition of China caused difficulty. In 1742 Pope Benedict XIV condemned these so-

called Chinese Rites and required all missionaries in China to take an oath against the Rites. At this point the Jesuit experiment came to an end. By identifying Confucian public ceremonies as idolatrous and superstitious, the church antagonized the Chinese elite who, because of their rank or office, had to perform, or at least attend, the ceremonies. The resulting ban on Christianity and the persecutions which followed drove most missionaries out of China and the Chinese Christians themselves into the countryside.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the reopening of China to Christianity under the guns of Western nations rekindled the hatred of the Chinese officials and elite. Forced to bow down to the technical and military superiority of the West, they resented the cultural arrogance and encroachment displayed by its missionaries. Given this animosity and since most of the old Chinese Christians lived in villages, the Catholic Church now focused its apostolic work on the countryside to the detriment of the cities. The new missionaries considered city dwellers to be too engrossed in their work to find the leisure, the energy, and the reflection necessary to consider conversion. In addition, because the city met most of the needs of its inhabitants in matters of livelihood, education, and health, it was not viewed as a favorable milieu for conversions. Wuchow, for instance, was called the "city of no conversions" by the Maryknollers who worked in that area. By contrast, the Chinese village was considered a better environment for a successful apostolate by the Catholic missionaries who could assist in helping with the basic needs of the people.

By the time Maryknollers arrived in China, then, despite the increased interest from some missionary circles in the Chinese elite, the majority of foreign missionaries still insisted that the hope of the church in China lay in converting the countryside where four-fifths of the population lived. The first Maryknollers in China were told that "conversions are almost impossible in the cities. The people there left their gods of stone and wood to serve Mammon and Venus. The people in the villages are more simple-minded and accept the faith more readily. So Christ foretold and so it has always been."²

The goal was to convert as many Chinese as possible and it is interesting to note that in the first half of this century, there was some perplexity on the part of the church as to why after so many years of effort so little had been accomplished. The two papal documents on the missions from that period—the Apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV and the Encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* of Pope Pius XI—mention this perplexity. Benedict XV, after reviewing the mission work of the church, stated: "Now considering all this, we may well wonder at the numerous heathen who are still sitting in the shadow of death, for according to recent studies their number amounts to a billion" (Walsh 1947:250). And Pius XI expressed a similar sentiment when he wrote: "We ponder over the fact that pagans

number, even in our day, almost a billion" (Walsh 1947:263). Given this situation, to achieve the goal of converting as many Chinese as possible, Maryknollers were advised to use two methods. One, direct evangelization, was to go out to the non-Christians and invite conversion and entrance into the church. The other, indirect evangelization, stressed the establishment of medical, educational, and charitable institutions which, by their display of Christian charity, would attract non-Christians and ultimately result in their conversion and entrance into the church.

In the practice of direct evangelization—to go out to the non-Christian and invite conversion and entrance into the church—the indispensable right arm of the missionary was the native Chinese catechist. Missioners in South China were ill-fitted to live in a physical environment that weakened their bodies and undermined their energy—a tropical climate with poor food, spartan conditions, and lack of medical care. The human environment was equally trying because the Chinese people often were suspicious of foreigners, and their language, culture, and customs were impossible to master in a brief period of time. To overcome these handicaps, the missioners trained and supported a well-organized and widely spread group of catechists. They were the extension of the priest in so many ways in the mighty task to convert China. The more catechists, the higher the potential conversion rate would be. And in 1918, this rate leveled off to just under 100,000 in all of China. At this rate, wrote a French Vincentian missionary, it could take 4,000 years to convert 400 million Chinese (Planchet 1916:28). So the first thing the Maryknollers decided they had to do was develop a strong group of catechists well grounded in the faith.

Maryknollers decided to hire as catechists, local Catholics who had attended successfully a training course of from four to six weeks in doctrine, skills, and techniques. In addition they planned to call catechists together annually for a monthlong improvement course and to review their work plans. As one missionary wrote, "The matter of catechists is life and death to our work and to the souls committed to us. We must supply them. I will move heaven and earth to get catechists and make them efficient."³

The skills of a catechist consisted of 1) training in the catechism, a question-and-answer booklet covering the basic doctrines found in the short creed known as the Apostles' Creed, 2) a training in ethics dealing with the Ten Commandments and the seven sacraments, 3) the study of the Bible so that the catechist would have a wealth of stories to illustrate his doctrinal teaching, 4) the study of the meaning of the ordinary daily prayers and the meaning of the mass. Catechists were examined at various times to make sure they understood all they were taught and attended summer courses to deepen their knowledge of these necessities. As they became more proficient, their salaries increased.

The use of the catechist varied somewhat. Some missionaries used them

primarily as teachers in special centers where, after initial contact, those wishing to become catechumens would gather together for a live-in intensive course on church teachings. Other missionaries sent them out to villages to set up village catechumenates, where those interested in the doctrine would study at night in preparation for baptism. Other catechists went out together with the missionary to act as the contact person while the priest actually did the teaching and preparing of the catechumens for baptism. Of all three usages, the village catechumenate in the initial contact and conversion was the most successful, although it was also the one in which the missionary had the least personal contact with the people. In retention of new converts after baptism, the priest-catechist team was the most effective.

In the village catechumenates, large numbers of people would sign up to study the doctrine, but by the time the course was completed, for one reason or another—more often than not, the judgment of the missionary concerning the suitability of catechumens—the number of those baptized would be only half the original group. This selectivity might seem strange when one thinks of the fact that the missionaries were out to convert everyone. In short, then, these were the activities of direct evangelization.

Indirect evangelization—the use of institutions to attract the non-Christian—was more suited to the city rather than the countryside and, for this reason, Catholic participation in this method was limited. In cities like Shanghai, of course, the Jesuits responded to the strong demand for Western education and opened Aurora University in 1903. In 1911, Father Vincent Lebb, a Vincentian, opened the first Catholic public lecture hall in Tientsin, and although most of the topics were directly concerned with the Catholic faith, the hall was packed with listeners from the non-Christian elite. In 1915 the first Catholic daily newspaper was started by Lebb. Within three months it became the leading Chinese newspaper in North China, widely appreciated by Chinese intellectuals for the accuracy of its news and its independent outlook. In Maryknoll areas, however, institutional work took the form of orphanages and clinics. These were looked after by Maryknoll Sisters. But the sisters also engaged in direct evangelization, particularly of women.

Building an Indigenous Church So this was the basic work that Maryknollers did in their mission territories that had to do with their first mission task, the evangelization of non-Christians. Their second work, as I mentioned, was the building up of a native or indigenous church. It is interesting to note that the first set of constitutions for the Maryknoll Society approved at Rome in 1915 called for the Society "to form at its earliest opportunity a native clergy as the most efficacious means of perpetuating its work of conversion."⁴ Through the years of formation at the seminary, the future Maryknoll missionary became deeply imbued with the idea of prepar-

ing an indigenous clergy in the mission territory. It was only in this way that a true local church could be established and the work of the missionary brought to completion.

Thus, very early in the history of Maryknoll missions, missionaries began to teach Latin to boys in the parishes whom they considered suitable prospects for the priesthood. Out of this grew the first Maryknoll pre-seminary school—or minor seminary as it was called. This school, one missionary described as "our true motive for coming to China, to found a native church, and the vocations so far presented to us argue well for the strength of the Catholicity in our section of China in the years to come."⁵ When the boys finished this pre-seminary or minor seminary course, they then went to the South China Regional Seminary in Hong Kong to study two years of philosophy and four years of theology before ordination to the priesthood.

Most of the candidates to the minor seminary came from villages of farmers and fishermen. The Chinese custom of early betrothal, especially in Guangdong and Guangxi barred from entrance many possible candidates from the better-educated and wealthier families. By the time they reached ten or twelve years of age, many boys were already engaged. Since such espousals were not easily broken, Maryknollers made few attempts to interfere with such arrangements. As a result, the majority of seminarians came from poor families who could not afford an early espousal for their young sons.

Parents were usually pleased that a son below the age of sixteen or so, and not yet needed on the small farm, would receive free room, board, and education in the pre-seminary, especially since most schools in the countryside offered only primary education, and this gave the student the opportunity to pursue secondary education. However, after the age of 16, the same parents often put pressure on their sons to withdraw from school to work at home. The feeling was that, if the son completed the whole secondary course, he would then go to the seminary in Hong Kong. Sometimes this might mean the difference between poverty and comparative comfort to the parents in later life because for a son to become a priest would leave the parents without their old-age security. For this reason, Maryknoll missionaries avoided the recruitment of firstborn sons.

Old Catholic families and a strong Christian environment produced most of the indigenous clergy. As a result, a few families and villages produced most of the Chinese priests. The majority of Catholic families who were new to the faith did not understand the traditions of priesthood very well. As a result, graduating minor seminary students were carefully selected by the missionaries to continue on into the seminary. Thus, in the early years, only a small number were ordained in each Maryknoll mission, although by the late 1950s or early 1960s, it was expected that at least one vicariate would be ready for local church status. But the events of history

radically changed all that. Thus the period of Maryknoll work in China saw strides made toward indigenization but never did a mission reach the point where the missionaries saw themselves as ready to return to their own homeland after finishing the task of building up the local church.

In brief, then, this was the Maryknoll mission experience up to the end of the Second World War. This first way of doing mission that Maryknoll missionaries experienced, while not easy, was very clear in all of its aspects. Mission was basically a priestly function and was neatly organized from the top down. The mandate of making disciples of all nations was transmitted by the church through the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to religious orders and communities of priests who were given specific mission areas in which to work. The task given was twofold: first, teach the non-Christians about Christ and his church, thereby bringing them to conversion and baptize them into the Church; second, establish the church in each mission to the point where there is an indigenous clergy adequate in numbers and training to staff and run a local church. When this was done, the missionaries' work could be considered brought to a close and the missionary would move to a new mission territory. The established local church would then continue on its own in its task of converting all non-Christians within its territory to Christ.

Contemporary Missions

Missionary Identity

The change to the contemporary way of doing mission first made its way into the mission consciousness of the Maryknoll Society by an accident of history. That accident was the Second World War which involved the Orient in a way that did not allow the deployment of new missionaries to our missions in China and Japan. Yet new missionaries were being ordained and the problem arose as to where they should work while waiting for our missions to be available to personnel again. Also repatriated missionaries displaced by the war needed a place to work during the time of their exile. Latin America was suggested by Rome, and Maryknollers went off there to work.

Latin America, in the Catholic way of looking at mission, was not really a mission territory. The church there was established in a number of local churches, each under its own bishop, and the vast majority of the people were Catholic Christians. True, there were some very backward Indian groups, but in general it was not mission territory. So it did not fit into the ordinary categories of what constituted the mission endeavor. As a result, there was a certain uneasiness about working in Latin America. But, given the limitations of the time, at least it was work outside the continental United States, and there was one aspect of it that fitted into the missionary picture. That was the developing of an indigenous clergy which certain

places in Latin America never had developed. The task of the Maryknollers, then, would be to develop a native priesthood. Thus, even though the basic thrust was not really mission, this at least was close to the mission ideal.

A second factor that led to the contemporary way of doing mission was an ecclesiastical change that was perhaps not understood in all of its consequences when it first happened but which, added to another accident of history, became the basis for all the changes that took place in the contemporary doing of mission in the Catholic context. That second factor was a sudden raising of many vicariates to the status of dioceses in the church. That meant that the bishop of a mission was no longer the vicar of the bishop of Rome in a mission territory, but now was bishop in his own right of a local church.

The first time this was done, it involved Japan and it took place before the Second World War. We had just been given a mission in Japan at that time—Kyoto. It was evidently this experience which made the Holy See sensitive to certain conditions that could cause difficulty to the church if the church did not appear firmly established in a given country. In Japan in 1939, the government passed a Religious Organization Bill. Originally, the Japanese government intended to make all Christian groups into one religious organization. The Catholics attempted to tell the government that they could not be part of such a restructuring. But to show goodwill and to come to an agreement, all the foreign missionary Vicars Apostolic and Prefects Apostolic resigned and Japan was restructured into dioceses—local churches—with Japanese bishops at their head.⁶ The war came shortly thereafter, and missionaries like Maryknollers from the Allied countries were either interned in civilian internment camps or repatriated. But missionaries from neutral or Axis countries remained working. Since this ecclesiastical setup meant that the *jus commissionis* was no longer operative, a new juridical commission called the *regio missionalis* was established which entrusted an area within the diocese (perhaps even the whole area) to the missionary congregation but kept it juridically subject to the Japanese ordinary. As might be expected, such juridic maneuvering could not last long. What was clear was the establishing of dioceses under native bishops which spelled the end of the *jus commissionis*. And the end of the *jus commissionis* spelled the end of the missionary and his mission society as dominant in the area.

At first for Maryknollers, this was not immediately evident because the vicariates raised to dioceses had Maryknoll bishops at their head. And the Holy See raised the vicariates to dioceses in China when the reality of the Marxist Liberation was already evident. But the change was evident in going into new mission areas. Gone was the grant of a territory by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith under the *jus commissionis*. Replacing it was the invitation by and contract with the local church drawn

up between the missionary society and the bishop. In this situation, the missionary was reduced to a helper, an auxiliary to the local church. In the late 1950s and early 1960s when the major vestiges of colonialism were swept away, the indigenization of the local church in almost all parts of the old mission world was complete. Juridically, now, the missionary in the old mission areas had a status no different from the Maryknollers who had gone to Latin America to work. Both were auxiliaries to the local church.

It was to be expected that a juridical change of status for the missionary would bring about a personal crisis of identity. This came about gradually but inevitably. Under the *jus commissionis*, the native priest was the helper of the missionary, gradually moving toward self-reliance when he would continue the work of the departed missionary. Under the new setup, the missionary was the helper of the native priest, and the missionary had to measure himself against the native priest who was the rightful priest of the local church. The missionary had to search for his own difference—the characteristic that marked him as missionary and not just another foreign priest working in a local church. If he were simply another foreign priest working in a local church, the comparison between himself and the native priest was an odious one indeed. In the all-important question of language and culture, particularly in the Orient, the foreign priest in relation to the native priest had great limitations.

The Vatican Council's Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity—*Ad Gentes Divinitus*, promulgated in 1965—continued to place the mission trust squarely on the shoulders of bishops and their indispensable helpers, the priests. But it placed this trust on the local bishop and priests. At the same time, it recognized the identity crisis of the missionary institutes but did little to reestablish their identity in the present world. Speaking of these congregations, the decree says:

"Often vast territories to be evangelized were committed to them by the Holy See in which they assembled a new people of God and established a local church around its own pastors. By their zeal and experience, and in brotherly collaboration, they will serve those churches which were established by their sweat and even by their blood, either by undertaking the care of souls or by fulfilling certain special tasks for the common good. Sometimes they undertake more urgent tasks throughout a particular region: for example, the evangelization of groups or peoples who for some special reason have not yet, perhaps, accepted the gospel message or so far resisted it. If necessary, let them from their experience be ready to train and help those who engage in missionary activity for a time. For these reasons, and since there are still many nations to be brought to Christ, these institutes are still extremely necessary" (Abbott 1966:618). Not a very powerful statement. More like a retirement statement.

While the Vatican document does not confirm very clearly or strongly the professional missionaries, it does state that "those people who are endowed with the proper natural temperament, have the necessary qualities and outlook, and are ready to undertake missionary work, have a special vocation whether they are natives of the place or foreigners, priests, religious

or lay people. Having been sent by legitimate authority, they go forth in faith and obedience to those who are far from Christ as ministers of the Gospel" (Abbott 1966:614). What is interesting about this statement is that the location of mission activity is now as diffuse as the Church itself, and missionary activity is now recognized to be also a vocation for lay people. From the time of the Second Vatican Council until now—a period of 21 years—the number of candidates for missionary priesthood with such temperament, and so on, has decreased dramatically, while the whole movement of lay missionaries has grown dramatically. Two characteristics are evident here. First, the lifetime commitment missionary—the priest and the religious brother and sister as well—is becoming a smaller and smaller group, whereas the limited-time commitment of the lay missionary is becoming greater and greater. This, in turn, is attracting priests and religious from U.S. churches to spend a limited-time commitment on mission. Second, in the mission milieu today where the missionary is called upon to work as an auxiliary, rather than in a leadership position, the priest-missioner is beginning to be less desirable because his office by its nature is a leadership office.

Missionary Message

Perhaps by far the most important change in the contemporary mission endeavor of the Catholic Church is the message. And it was the thrust of the Second Vatican Council that has made much of the difference here. It is true that the basic message of evangelization is salvation in Christ Jesus, and the basic call is to conversion in the context of this message as witnessed to by baptism into the Catholic Church. But Vatican II placed the responsibility for this message squarely in the ecclesial context rather than in the mission congregation context. Thus it is the local church that develops the evangelization package that is to be presented to the non-Christians and lukewarm Christians within its borders. What I am talking about here is local church theology.

The reality of local theology means that no missionary can come from another church with his or her message all set to present. What must happen is that missionaries be evangelized by the receiving church so that they can be fit auxiliaries in the mission endeavors. Let me briefly give one example. For instance, if you are going to India, then you must first understand the mission thrust in India.⁷ The Catholic church in India has existed for a long time in several states in a very strong position and in the rest of India as a small minority among a deeply religious people. In presenting the message of Jesus to the people of India, the church comes in contact with the challenge of the great religions and, in particular, the great Hindu religion. Within this context, the church is experienced by the Hindus with their great spiritual tradition as indeed spiritually inferior. And it is admired for all the wrong reasons—because of its organization, its international

character, its modernity, its security, and so forth. All these things are hardly of importance to the Christian message. What is important to the church in India is a theological perspective where God's plan for the salvation of the world can be explained in the reality of the Indian context. In that reality, to see the totality of salvation within the limits of the institutional church, is to dismiss hundreds of millions from any dialogue on the mystery of Christ in their lives.

Thus, while the church can be seen as having a unique and specific role as the leaven, salt, and light of the world, the mediation of Christ in saving all people is a much broader role, a role by which Jesus brings his saving grace, his kingdom to all peoples. In this context, the Spirit breathes where he wills, even through the great non-Christian religions of the world. Called kingdom theology, this way of thinking embodies the dialogue between Christianity and the great Eastern religions. For a missionary to evangelize in India, he must first learn to dialogue within this context. That is one example of how the missionary must be evangelized before he or she can be an auxiliary.

Missionary Role

Lastly, then, the contemporary way of doing mission is quite different from the way that preceded it. Still difficult, it is much less clear in its definition. It is auxiliary in nature and exists at the grass-roots level rather than at the leadership level. The missionary today tends to be the committed layperson, the religious, and the hyphenated priest. By hyphenated priest is meant one who is not engaged completely in priestly ministry but in some form of indirect evangelization such as justice and peace movements; workers' movements, and so on. Also there is much less of an involvement with Catholic institutions as such and more with movements or civil institutions. There are no longer specific mission areas. Both old and new churches are considered areas in need of evangelization, and the message is couched in terms of the local church as it evangelizes people within the local culture and social context. Indeed, the very name of "The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith" has been changed to "The Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples." The purpose of evangelization remains the same, but the place of baptism into the Catholic Church is set more as an ultimate goal to be played out in God's own time and choice rather than as a proximate goal. The proximate goal is much more diffuse and general in attempting to see that the place of Christ in the world might be gradually revealed to the people of our own time. And, finally, the method is more dialogic than proselytizing.

In brief, then, this has been the experience of the Maryknoll fathers and brothers in our 75-year history. I am sure our founders—James Anthony Walsh and Thomas Frederick Price—never had the slightest in-

king that there would be such a change in the doing of mission during the first 75 years of the society's existence. What it will be like 75 years from now is anyone's guess. The only certainty is that there will be missionaries and that they will be evangelizing, but who they will be, how and where they will be evangelizing, who will be the recipient of their evangelistic efforts, and when they will consider their task completed, remains to be seen. Too bad we are so short-lived.

Notes

1. The material on Maryknoll's work in China in this paper is taken from a book on the subject soon to be published. Thanks are due to the author, Jean Paul West, for permission to use this material.
2. Diary of First Departure Group, 1918, p. 43.
3. Letter of Father Bernard Meyer to Father James A. Walsh, April 11, 1922.
4. "General Rule of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America," 1, 2.
5. Yeungkong Convent Diary, December 1924.
6. Based on *The Catholic Encyclopedia* article on "Japan."
7. For a clear exposition of this theology, see M. Annaladoss, "Culture and Dialogue," in *Vidyotsah: Journal of Theological Reflection*, Volume XLIX (January, 1985), pp. 6-15.

References Cited

- Abbott, Walter, M., ed.
1966 *The Documents of Vatican II* New York: Guild Press
- Planche, J. M.
1916 *Les Missions de Chine et du Japon* Peking: Imprimerie des Lazaristes
- Schmidlin, Joseph
1931 *Catholic Mission Theory*, Ill.: Techny Mission Press
- Walsh, James E.
1947 *Maryknoll Spiritual Directory* New York: Field Air Press