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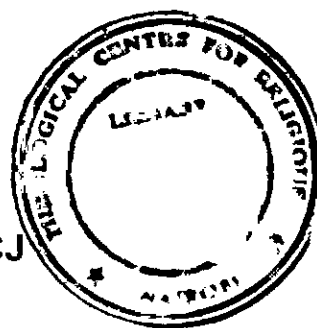
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## MISSION THROUGH COMMUNICATION

Long essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for Bachelor of Arts, Religious studies.

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## DECLARATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Saint Paul used to preach in many places and one of them, was the *Areopagus* which represented the cultural centre of the learned people. Saint Paul went to the *Areopagus* and preached the Gospel in the language that was appropriate and understandable to all. In our days, this *Areopagus* can be used to represent the different sectors in which the Gospel has to be preached. The *Areopagus* that is very strong today is the means of social communication, which is influencing the whole society. This has become a challenge for the missionary, who, instead of fighting against it, is encouraged to use it for the benefit of the mission and of the people.

First, when we went to the mission during the long holidays, we noticed that the missionaries working in that area, that is Wamba in the Diocese of Marsabit, after many years working with the *Samburu People* still use Swahili as the main language to communicate with them instead of using *Samburu language*. Hence, we started wondering about the effectiveness of the missionary work among the *Samburu People* as much as how Evangelization could take roots through a language that is not considered part of that people.

Second, going through the courses of Public Speaking and Homiletics and seeing the importance of a well done speech in order to get a message across. Much more, we think, is needed in order to achieve a better result in our missions.

Lastly, looking around, we can see that the Mass Media has brought to us many forms on how to reach out to the people starting from the young up to the old in order to sell many ideologies as well as to have certain control over a nation. From this we found

ourselves challenged as our means of communicating to the people still remains far behind of catching up as they lack a much broader variety.

In order to understand the relation between mission and communication, we did a thorough research on both aspects.

By presenting this essay in an organized manner, we followed the methodology: See, Judge and Act. This is the methodology that will be utilized for the three chapters developed in this essay. We will begin the first chapter by seeing the facts about mission and communication. Next we will examine the meaning of mission and communication in the secular and religious sphere. Finally, we will deal with the historical background. In these three parts of the first chapter we want to see how mission and communication are understood and how they are developed through history.

Judging mission through communication, we present the vision of the church on mission and communication in the second chapter. We will start with the Vatican Council II documents and then deal with the Code of Canon Law, presenting the norms, views and exhortations on mission and communication.

Lastly, but not least, action, we add some suggestions that could be taken into consideration for improving mission through communication in the third chapter. In order to approach this theory we will discuss the vision of the Consolata Missionaries on how they are dealing with mission through communication.

At the end of the essay there is a conclusion about the findings and highlights we encountered while writing this essay.

## CHAPTER I

### Meaning of Communication and Mission

#### 1.1. *Meaning of Communication*

When we hear the word communication, one of the things that comes to mind is the media of communication: radio, television, newspapers, magazines and all other kind of means which help us to send information to each other. Also communication is termed as fashionable, which can be used today in reference to the latest advances in technology. Moreover, communication is described through the expression "Mass Media", which refers to a particular form of communication that conveys information to an audience. The mass media is not concerned with the communicative "interactions of human beings in their public expressions within a respective society or cultural group"<sup>1</sup> As a result, mass media has no obligation, it is uncompromising in its relationship to the ones who receive its information (message) because there is no exchange of ideas or concepts but only it is focused on achieving its goal, which is to capture the public attention. As for communication, in the proper sense, it means to have something in common, to share. Therefore, in this sense, whoever receives it is bound to a relationship of exchanging more than ideas but also sharing certain expressions either from a particular society or culture.

#### 1.2. *Christian meaning of communication*

"In the Christian sense communication is related to 'communio', that is,

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<sup>1</sup> Eilers, Franz-Joseph, Communicating in Community, (An introduction to social communication), Manila: Logos Publications, 1994, p. 11

'communion' which finally leads to community"<sup>2</sup> From this viewpoint, communication is more than a simple exchanging of information, but it entails bringing people with common goals to live and share their daily life, that is, in community. As the community in Christianity is synonymous with concern, responsibility, justice, peace, sharing, then communication will be the basis for it to grow in continuous harmony with those qualities.

The importance of communication is essential for any human being where all of us need communication in order to live and to relate to each other in a community.

"In looking at the role of communication in the personal and social life of human beings one can distinguish a psychological and a societal function of human communication. Whereas in the psychological perspective the individual is more in focus, in the societal approach his environment, culture and society are considered."<sup>3</sup>

With regard to these two functions, psychological and social, human beings are presented according to their intention of the process of communication. With the first one, the psychological, the individual makes use of communication as a tool. This brings him/her to the outside world as a member of a society. Also it reveals something from his/her personality to others, as much as he/she is relating to somebody else who is of concern or not. As for the second one, the societal, communication is more a matter of passing or transmitting information, entertaining or interpreting what has been given.

"Communication is a general fact and essential of human life which must be

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 11

<sup>3</sup> Eilers, Franz-Joseph, Communicating in Community, p. 12

seen in a more dialogic way as an ongoing process in human society."<sup>4</sup> This shows that communication is not just a mere exchange of messages but a process where contact is established and signs are exchanged in order to reach a common meaning. This is a process which occurs in inter-relation with other factors like the environment and society. Thus, "communication as a process is an ongoing dialogic relation between two or more persons exchanging signs for a common meaning and understanding."<sup>5</sup> It refers mainly to a specific relationship, which occurs in a definite human environment or in a context shadowed by culture that determines the ways or means for communication used in any particular group of people.

Common to all these concepts of communication are the elements needed for a complete communication process. Those are:

- **The sender** is the person that originates the communicative action;
- **The receiver** is the person receiving the message from the sender;
- **The message** is the formulated content to be transmitted;
- **The channel** is the medium used to transmit the message (human voice or technical device);
- **Encoding** - putting the message into respective signs to be exchanged and understood by the recipient who will decode the signs transmitted;
- **The context or background** of the receiver that shapes the message, selection of a channel and determines the encoding and decoding;
- **Feedback** is a reaction from the receiver that might strengthen or modify an ongoing communication."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 14

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 16

<sup>6</sup> Eilers, Franz-Joseph, Communicating in Community, p. 20

### 1.3. The Church's Mission

Looking at mission, we encounter a number of definitions, which can lead to much confusion. To avoid this, we will stay with the meaning that the Christian Church gives to it, that is, mission is the task given to a religious group to proclaim the message of Christ to all peoples in any foreign land that has not heard of it. This can be seen in the following:

"At the very moment a church commences to turn away from the introversion in which it is steeped by its acceptance of being primarily an established institution, and looks at its real field, the world, a new realism awakens."<sup>7</sup>

Now the church started to look outside itself in order to reach out for those who were not included in its "perspective of salvation". As a result, many institutions (congregations) concerned about this reaching out sprang. Each one emphasized different aims or goals as well as a distinctive identity or Charism. Some are concerned with first evangelization, which requires a step-by-step acceptance by the locals or indigenous who never heard of anything Christian before. After acceptance, depending on the situation, proclamation of the gospel will focus on more basic things such as human promotion. Other groups are concerned about maintaining life of faith in those who had received it, but now because of many difficulties, it is fading away. These

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<sup>7</sup> Hesselgrave, David J., Communicating Christ Cross-culturally. An introduction to Missionary Communication, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991, 2nd Ed., p. 21

difficulties can come from faith being reduced to a routine which makes people find that their faith is meaningless. Also, the difficulties come from the constant speedy development of the society, which drives people to look for more "speedy" changes of lifestyle. However, the church moves at a slow pace, not catching up with these many changes that are taking place in the world, and the people lose their faith. Many other causes can be cited, but these already show that the existence of certain approaches and structures are essential for the strengthening of the religious faith in those who have it but are losing it.

To deal with this reality, the church has tried to reach out to the others but has not forgotten to look at itself as well. Moving from its previous introversion, now the church is both introverted and extroverted. This means that by strengthening its roots it will be able to hold out its branches more strongly.

By being extroverted, the church started sending missionaries to the field. As soon as they reach the field, the first difficulties appear.

"...They [Missionaries] arrive on the field, they begin to realize that in this modern age it is nothing to travel great distances.

...

He [Missionary] stands face-to-face with the people of his respondent culture and he is unable to communicate the most simple message!"<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hesselgrave, David J., Communicating Christ Cross-culturally, p. 69

This shows that mission from the beginning encountered real problems, but much more is present today. Traveling great distances is much easier than it used to be. The main difficulty is how to get across a message to a people of different culture, language and habits. The latest discoveries have not so far dealt with this problem. Even though in our days there is computer software which is able to translate any given language to a specific language, the real meaning is always left aside. This occurs because a computer is not made to think in the human sense and, therefore it is unable to communicate to the real meaning of a text. Even though the missionary, is able to learn a language and capture most of the meaning of a given culture, he is still attached to his own culture which does not allow him to go deeper into the respondent culture. This is so because

"he will never be an indigenous source. The language of that culture will always have an element of strangeness. That culture will always be his adopted culture, never his nature culture."<sup>9</sup>

#### **1.4. The Relation: the Missionary and the People**

In truth, communication in the mission is most often a monologue. The missionary talks and the receptors listen to him, without the challenges of a relationship. Also, "church leaders demand that would-be receptors learn a new vocabulary in order to understand what [they] are saying."<sup>10</sup> Instead of crossing the barrier of the culture, the missionary chooses to turn away from it and imposes his own culture to be incorporated

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 74

<sup>10</sup> Kraft, Charles H., Communication Theory for Christian Witness, New York: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 17

unto the respondent's culture, and it starts by them learning a new vocabulary. Moreover, there is a presumption that the missionary is bringing something new which cannot be handed over through the local language, but it has to be communicated through the complicated terms of the "wise" missionary.

As a result it is assumed that the receptors should learn the language, the customs, come to appreciate the music, arrive at the places of worship at the appointed times, adopt the life style, and associate with the kind of people that the missionary is associated with.<sup>11</sup> As a missionary he was sent out to the people in order to proclaim the Gospel of life. Instead, in most of the missions, the missionary is bringing the people in to him. This is clearly visible by the kind of structures established in many places. The structures are created in what is called the missions. These missions contain the basic needs from food and clothing to building materials which are supposed to help in human promotion. The landmarks of these missions are a church, a school, a workshop, a community hall, and in few places, a hospital. In truth, these structures restrict much of the contact with the people, though their purpose is to bring people together. Those evangelized are part of the mission and those not evangelized do not belong to the mission. The relation of the missionary with the people is centered on himself.

Furthermore, "so often the preacher as a propagator of information has replaced the relational pastor. The lecture (we call it a sermon), an efficient means of presenting sizable amounts of information, has replaced the participation-centered worship that characterized the early Christian churches."<sup>12</sup> Thus, this presents a more recent reality of

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<sup>11</sup> Kraft, Charles H., Communication Theory for Christian Witness, p. 17

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18

the mission, from which the pastor who use to relate with his congregation in the early Christian church, now became a tool to propagate information. This means that he can be included in the project of the Mass Media, which does the same by propagating information. Even worse the pastor makes no compromise whatsoever with his congregation. The congregation must to listen to him or better to his information. This information is a single lane which leads to direct access to the church, the Gospel, social gatherings etc., but it does not lead to the richness of the message given through a relationship.

Another challenge to the mission through communication is the variety of languages in certain areas, which makes more difficult the proclamation of the Gospel. From this, the missionary often chooses to learn one language that reaches all the ethnic groups. This is useful in many occasions when all the ethnic groups use that specific language to communicate among themselves. But, when the specific language is not familiar to all the ethnic groups, then a gap between the missionary and the people is very wide. That is because he often has to make use of an interpreter whose reliability is frequently questionable.

## **1.5. Historical Background**

### **1.5.1. Mission**

From the time of the first missionaries, the Apostles, up to today a lot has taken place in the missionary work. The first missionary activities were seen as a threat to the imperial and dominant religious powers of the time. Thus, missionaries were faced with continuous persecutions which in many occasions ended up with martyrdom. Martyrdom throughout the centuries has been held as the true way of witness to the

Good News, because of the strength of the missionary's faith.

After the period of Constantine, the Christian church was allowed to go on gathering more faithful to God's Kingdom. Restrictions were not any more imposed on the Christians and martyrdom was shortly forgotten.

Around the year 1500, with the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors, the church saw the need for reaching out for the non-Christians. Though the difficulties and deficiencies were many, the advantages were on the same level. The negative factor during this period was that the church became the persecutor of those who did not accept its doctrines.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Church of Europe made an effort to evangelize the world by sending missionaries to all parts of the planet. The missionaries encountered many difficulties from the start, such as long voyages, shipwrecks, wars and martyrdom. Also the immense territories posed a great difficulty to the limited number of missionaries. Even though the difficulties were many, the missionaries helped to change the views of the Europeans on humankind and religions. This was done through the missionary literature, which gained some status among the Jesuits and also among other religious. The missionary literature was enriched mainly by the correspondence. Letters were sent to the superiors in order to keep them informed about the situation of their missionaries as well as to know the environment and culture of the country. Outside the religious frame, the letters also provided scientific information, for example to know how porcelain was made in China and the chicken ovens or artificial incubators in Egypt). Many were the accounts about the different places of mission. There was a great consideration from the Jesuits in China about a possible merging of the Chinese

traditional religions with Christianity. Hence this caused many disputes which led to the suppression of the Jesuits by Pope Clement in 1773. As the most powerful religious order of the time, the Jesuits were put aside in order to avoid major theological disputes concerning the tolerance of other religions. From this, it meant that other religions could not be infused into Christianity. Though many parts of the world were evangelized, still it was in a slow pace caused by the religious disputes and other events such as the Padroado opposition to mission work outside Spanish-Portuguese colonies, the Rationalistic climate of the enlightenment and the French revolution.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.5.2. Communication

Starting from the concept that without communication there could not be a human society, it leads to the possibility that in a certain period of time, there was a community of human beings exchanging signs and sharing their meanings. Many discoveries of paintings in caves were proofs that there was human communication from the beginning of history. The paintings still communicate to us, showing that the first human beings were able to express themselves in art.

In the ancient times, attempts were made in order to preserve information and ideas expressed through language. Most of the first writings were made through pictures forms like the old Egyptian writing, hieroglyphs and they were written on rocks, wood, wax, parchment and later on came papyrus. Papyrus was a material made from the plant called Papyrus, originating from Egypt. From this kind of material, it was possible to

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<sup>13</sup> Comby, Jean, How to Understand the History of Christian Mission, London: SCM Press, 1996, pp. 103-114  
 Karotemprel, Sebastian, Following Christ in Mission, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995, pp. 178-180

produce the first books, often they had the form of roles or were bound together with wooden plates.

In the early times of European history, the church bodies started showing concern in keeping, developing and producing books of different kinds. This task was undertaken by the monasteries.

The invention of paper by the Chinese minister Tsai Lum in 105 B.C.<sup>14</sup> was an important step for the development of communication. The first fabrication of paper in Europe is documented only for 1340 in Fabriano.

During the Medieval period, communication deepen its roots through the press and printing, which was based on the production of paper in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The invention of movable letters for printing by Gutenberg in 1450 was really a boost to the production and dissemination of books. This kind of printing revolutionized the written communication from the late 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries onwards. As expected, the printing process once more developed among the clergy, considering that among the monasteries the preserving of the libraries was an important task.

During the time of reformation after 1517, the new printing method of Gutenberg had a special role in it. With the easy production of books, the theologians, the philosophers and interested lay people were having easy access to them.

With the growing number of publications made available for the people, political and church powers started to realize that soon many challenges to them would start.

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<sup>14</sup> Eilers, Franz-Joseph, Communicating in Community, p. 52

Thus, prohibitions were issued from the secular as well as from the religious level, giving way to a controlled press.

In the modern times, the missionaries started making use of the new printing method for their own work. A printing press was started in 1626 by the Propaganda Congregation in Rome. This became a turning point in Catholic mission work. For specialized books on language, low costs, distribution of Bibles, spreading of God's word, these were some of the reasons that the congregation held.

With all the improvements of the printing process, the elite readership (17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century) changed to a cheaper popular press in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Eilers, Franz-Joseph, Communicating in Community, p.

## CHAPTER II

### TEACHING OF THE CHURCH ON COMMUNICATION AND MISSION

#### ***2.1. Communication in the Vatican Council II Documents and Pontifical Teaching***

The church, by realizing the importance of the late advances on communication in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, started showing its concerns on the proper management of social communication. First, the Church was supplied by audiences or messages given by the Pope on matters of communication. From these came out documents like encyclicals and council documents. Two encyclicals were written in order to promote the positive side of the communications as well as to condemn any abusive use of it. The first encyclical published was “Vigilanti Cura” on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1936 by Pope Pius XI. This encyclical’s main goal was to support the so called “Legion of Decency” in the United States, which was trying to go against all possible immoral films. The second encyclical published on September 8<sup>th</sup> in 1957 by Pope Pius XII was “Miranda Prorsus”. This encyclical treated mainly about the electronic media of cinema leaving aside the press<sup>16</sup>.

These two encyclicals, though pointing out to specific targets of the growing media, are to be considered the two first steps of the church towards the “appropriation of the social communication”. By appropriation of the social communication, the church meant to encourage and support the use of the means of communication. This use was not suppose to be only for the church but for the benefit of the society at large.

As the first steps given by the church, these two encyclicals became the sources

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<sup>16</sup> Eilers, Franz-Joseph, Communicating in Community, p. 199/200

for the Second Vatican Council on social communication. The Second Vatican Council published on December 4<sup>th</sup> in 1963 a document called “Inter Mirifica”<sup>17</sup>. It was a decree on the instruments of social communication, which changed the whole approach of the Church towards communication as it was the first Council document that treated this subject. With it, the council introduced the world Day of Communication that is celebrated every year up to today. The theme of each celebration is proposed by the Holy See<sup>18</sup>.

In “Inter Mirifica”, the concerns of the church are expressed in three points ending with a conclusion. Starting with the Doctrinal part, the church established itself as having the right to use communication. Also it addressed the Moral order, information and art are presented according to the expected standards of the society.

Obligations of all, that is, all are involved in the process so much so that the proper choosing of programs, books and magazines must follow the orientation towards the good sense of the person.

Activities of the church are carried on not only by the priest but also the faithful are included. With the help of the faithful the church can make sure of the spread of the good news. This reflects the need for using the means of social communication in the mission. If not, the church would remain behind in its way of spreading the Gospel. For appropriate help, training is required for all who are in direct contact with the means of communication.

The promotion of social means of communication is supported economically by

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 202

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 203

the faithful. As an expression of full support, a world day of communication is of interest in order to sensitize the people about the most common mean used in the society, that is, communication.

Under the same activities of the church, there are the institutions which will help in monitoring and guiding towards a better organization of the means of communication. These institutions are established at the Pontifical level, at the Diocesan level, at the National and at the International level. They are not on their own but are closely related in order to work for the benefit of the society.

At the end there is the conclusion which refers to a Pastoral instruction that is to be published and invites all men to use the communication for the good of humanity, for it is more dependent on its use<sup>19</sup>.

The pastoral instruction “*Communio et Progressio*” was published on May 23, 1971 by the Pontifical Commission for the Means of Social Communication. The document came out as a result of the recommendations given by “*Inter Mirifica*”. “Considered to be one of the most professional and positive church documents on social communication,”<sup>20</sup> it gives a whole set of basic points to be followed on how to handle the transmission of the Doctrine as well as the commitments by the Catholics to the media.

Concerning the use of communication for proclamation of the Good News, it emphasizes that, like the apostles whom were sent by Jesus to teach all nations and they

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<sup>19</sup> Flannery, Austin, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, *Inter Mirifica: Decree on the means of Social Communication*, 4 December, 1963, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975, pp. 283-292

<sup>20</sup> Eilers, Franz-Joseph, *Communicating in Community*, p. 204

used whatever means available at the time in order to announce the Good News, it is so for today's missionaries. "The Second Vatican Council invited the People of God 'to use effectively and at once the means of social communication zealously availing themselves of them for apostolic purposes'"<sup>21</sup>. This invitation is expressed to the People of God because the Church was founded on the principle of continuing Christ's mission and without the use of means of communication, the people of God would not receive the same mission.

This Pastoral instruction goes further telling how the means of social communication are to be used according to the standards reached by the civil society, that is, in today's society, people are receiving high quality programs which means that the church, in order to be relevant has to reach the same standards or better ones. With the variety that is present in the world, the church's teaching is looked at with closed eyes and covered ears. In this respect, the church has to be the light for the people to see in the same way that Jesus was Light.

As a whole, "Communio et Progressio" points at the right of the church to have access to the means of social communication, points to the right of the people of receiving information and education and points to the right of the means to be used in a proper manner for the benefit of the whole People of God.

After the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pastoral Instruction "Communio et Progressio", a second Pastoral Instruction was published by the Pontifical Council for social communications on February 22, 1992, called *Aetatis Novae*. Going through this document, it is easy to notice that much of the content from the first Pastoral Instruction

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<sup>21</sup> Flannery, Austin, Vatican Council II, p. 334

is repeated. It does emphasize two points: 1- Pastoral Priorities and Responses; 2- The need for pastoral Planning. Among all the church's priorities, social communications are to be addressed not only to keep up with the latest advances but to prevent the society of being manipulated and dominated by the great powers on this field. For this, all aspects involving communication is to be addressed for example, culture, development, formation and care for working conditions. On the need for Pastoral Planning, the church strongly encourages the bishops to take firm steps towards a better approach to the means of social communication. This should be done through the Episcopal conferences.

At the end of "Aetatis Novae" there are some guidelines on how to design a pastoral plan "for communications in a Diocese, Episcopal conference or patriarchal Assembly"<sup>22</sup> These guidelines did not come only to be a point of reference, instead they reinforce the previous documents on the importance and relevance of the means of communication in the church.

## **2.2. Communication in the Code of Canon Law**

By looking at the church's primary or canonical form we can see the stress given to communication in the Christian Church. Its canon gives straight forward instructions on the use of means of communication. As long as they are for the benefit of the Church, they are to be used according to the teaching of the church.

"Can. 761 While pride of place must always be given to preaching and catechetical instruction, all the available means of proclaiming christian doctrine are to be used: the exposition of doctrine in schools, in institutes of higher learning, at conferences and meetings of all kinds;

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<sup>22</sup> Pastoral Instruction Aetatis Novae, On Social Communications on the Twentieth Anniversary of Communio et Progressio, Nairobi: Saint Paul Publications - Africa, Feb. 22, 1992, p. 27

public declaration by lawful authority on the occasion of certain events; the printed word and other means of social communication.”<sup>23</sup>

In this canon, there are no restrictions, instead it puts clearly that “all available” means are to be used in the exposition of the Doctrine. By its rules, the church encourages the use of means of social communication for the proclamation of the Gospel as well as for a good understanding of it. Adaptation is not excluded as it helps to incarnate the preaching of the word of God among his people. This is seen in “Can 769 Christian teaching is to be explained in a manner that is suited to the condition of the hearers and adapted to the circumstances of the times.”<sup>24</sup>

The two canons quoted above are reinforced by the following Canons 822 and 823, which promote the use of the means of social communication, not only by the clergy, but also together with the lay people. Together with the lay people, the clergy can work better in order to facilitate the process of evangelization. Meaning that together they can secure the teaching of the doctrine to the faithful. As a whole, the means of social communication are used for the welfare of the Church and of its members.

“Can. 822 #1 In exercising their office the pastors of the church, availing themselves of a right which belongs to the Church, are to make an ample use of the means of social communication.

#2 Pastors are also to teach the faithful that they have the duty of working together so that the use of the means of social communication may be imbued with human and christian spirit.

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Can. 823 #1 In order to safeguard the integrity of faith and morals, pastors of the church have the duty and the right to ensure that in writings or in the use of the means

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<sup>23</sup> The Code of Canon Law, London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1983, p. 140

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 141

of social communication there should be no ill effect on the faith and morals of Christ's faithful. They also have the duty and the right to demand that where writings of the faithful touch upon matters of faith and morals, these be submitted to their judgement. Moreover, they have the duty and the right to condemn writings which harm true faith or good morals."<sup>25</sup>

### **2.3. Missionary activity in the Vatican Council II Documents and Pontifical Teaching**

#### **2.3.1. Ad Gentes**

The Decree on the Church's missionary activity was published by the Council on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1965. Its main goal was to address the spreading of the Gospel among the nations that have not heard of it before. As a first affirmation, also mentioned in the Canon, is that the Church is by its nature missionary.<sup>26</sup> As the Church cannot deny its nature, it responds to its mandate of spreading the Kingdom of God to all Peoples.

"On the day of Pentecost, however, he came down on the disciples that he might remain with them forever; on that day the church was openly displayed to the crowds and the spread of the Gospel among the Nations through preaching, was begun."<sup>27</sup>

Here we can see the clear origin of Church's mission. It was not by any human intervention that the mission started, but through a divine intervention, the Holy Spirit, who gave the strength to the apostles in order to preach to all peoples of different languages. Communication was based on preaching, the first mode of spreading the Gospel. Moreover, missionary activity extends the saving faith of the Church, it expands and perfects its unity, it is supported by its apostolic work, it activates the sense of its

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<sup>25</sup> The Code of Canon Law, p. 149/150

<sup>26</sup> Vatican Council II, Ad Gentes, N. 2

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., N. 4

hierarchy and bears witness to its sanctity.<sup>28</sup> Though the church holds this as a master's command, it recognises that her missionary work goes according to specific cultures, places and people. Some can accept the good News as soon as they hear it, others can reject it in no time, and for this the church recommends one of the virtues, that is, patience. Patience which leads to witness in silence until acceptance will take place.

The document also introduces the need for preparation for those who are to undertake the task of carrying the Good News. This preparation includes the formation of the person as a whole and the pastoral training in order for the person to be apt for the task given to her. The preparation takes place in the seminaries or institutions established by the competent authorities.<sup>29</sup>

On the organization of missionary activity, the document points to one competent congregation, namely, "Propagation of the Faith", which is responsible for the direction and coordination of the missionary work and missionary cooperation throughout the world.

Of the many tasks undertaken by this congregation on directing and coordinating, one is to be mentioned "that it should use scientific method and instruments adapted to modern conditions [and] be guided by present day research in theology, methodology and pastoral missionary work."<sup>30</sup> This suggestion brings to mind that the world is in constant changes and by making use of the modern instruments it will help the missionary work in the field of better understanding of one's faith.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., N. 6

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., N. 23-27

<sup>30</sup> Vatican Council II, Ad Gentes, N.29/30

The last part of the Decree, shows the need for cooperation among the faithful. As the whole church is missionary, all faithful must assume their responsibility for the spread of the Gospel among the nations. This cooperation starts among the hierarchy, who are the main responsible of organizing and sending missionaries to the respective sights of mission and goes to the lay people who in their own witness collaborate in the spreading of the Gospel.<sup>31</sup>

A later document was published on August 6<sup>th</sup>,1966 by Pope Paul VI called *Ecclesiae Sanctae III*, that pointed out the norms for the implementation of the decree “Ad Gentes Divinitus.” Throughout “*Ecclesiae Sanctae III*”, missionary work is emphasized and how it should be done. The implementation involves every faithful, religious or lay people. This is in accordance to the Church’s nature of being missionary.

### 2.3.2. *Redemptoris Missio*

The Encyclical “*Redemptoris Missio*” was published on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1990 by Pope John Paul II, with the aim of renewing the Church’s commitments towards the missionary activity. The missionary activity, according to the encyclical, is just at the beginning and for this reason that there is an urgency in strengthening the spread of the Gospel. The spread of the Gospel is not to be seen as a task of imposing to people the Good News, but to be seen as a way of freedom to men. This is opposite to the enslaved world where men are mere tools of the development.

“But what moves me even more strongly to proclaim the urgency of missionary evangelization is the fact that it is the primary service which the church can render to every individual and to all humanity in the modern world, a world which has experienced marvelous achievements

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., N.35-41

but which seems to have lost its sense of ultimate realities and of existence itself.”<sup>32</sup>

In this quotation, the Pope puts forward the need of evangelization. He recognized that man cannot go on alone, instead, with the alternative of the church’s missionary activity, a chance has been given to him to choose the kind of life that he wants. At the same time, the Pope recognized the value of the achievements reached by man, which improves his standards of living. Still, the Pope saw the need for proper guidance in order for man to stay in control of his own life.

From the many exhortations and encouragement of the encyclical, the fourth chapter presents “The Vast Horizons of the Mission Ad Gentes”. These horizons are expressed through social and geographical changes.

Through the social changes are present

“certain phenomena such as urbanization, mass migration, the flood of refugees, the de-christianization of the countries with ancient Christian traditions, the increasing influence of the Gospel and its values in overwhelmingly non-Christian countries, and the proliferation of messianic cults and religious sects.”<sup>33</sup>

These respective changes increase the need for a better organization of the missionary work, though, as it is, it has already established many churches capable of providing for the needs of their own communities and, as well, sending people to evangelize other churches and territories.

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<sup>32</sup> Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, Nairobi: St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1990, N. 2

<sup>33</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, N. 32

Through the geographical changes are present the vast territories to be evangelized. This is also recognized by the Second Vatican Council, still the church continues her activity despite its limitations to cover all the territories. As pointed out by the encyclical, the geographical changes are the main frontiers towards which missionary activity must be directed.<sup>34</sup>

The cultural aspect is also highlighted by the encyclical as one of the areas to be covered by the preaching of the Gospel. One of the new cultural aspect in our days is the world of communications. The world of communications has unified and turned the humanity into a “Global Village”. What is more important in the Global Village is to have access to information and education, guidance and inspiration for the benefit of the individuals, families and society at large. On the other hand, this world of communications was not put on the first place by the missionaries, instead other means of spreading the Gospel were used. The encyclical encourages the union of the means of communication and the Gospel.

Many other forms of culture are present among us and they can be addressed to in the proper work of the mission. “Redemptoris Missio” is an encyclical that portrays the same commitment of previous documents and add more as the new changes take place in the world, so the church has the opportunity of bringing the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nations.<sup>35</sup>

### 2.3.3. The Church in Africa

The post-synodal Apostolic exhortation “Ecclesia in Africa” of Pope John Paul

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., N. 37a

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., N. 92

II, published on September, 1995, reaffirms all the previous documents about the church's mission and the use of means of communication. The aspect that it stresses is the need of supporting the mission in Africa, not only by the outsiders, but by the same evangelized people of Africa. Concerning the means of communication, it stresses that the old means of communication cannot be dismissed like the Oral Tradition, which keeps a strong bond among the people. Also, it recognizes the deficiency of the modern means of communication, which in the first place are neglecting the cultural values of Africa. As a solution, it suggests a proper training for the personnel, so that the use of the means of communication can be directed towards the promotion of the people as well as of the culture.

As whole, the document still emphasizes the need of word and of witness in order to spread the Gospel, starting from the family to the society. The Gospel is to take roots as a new model for the young churches in Africa towards the third millennium.

#### **2.4. *Missionary Activity in the Law***

There is in the law an affirmation that all Christ's faithful are part of the missionary activity. They are part because as long as they belong to the Church and the Church as a whole is of its nature missionary, then they cannot turn away from this responsibility.

“Can. 781 Because the whole Church is of its nature missionary and the work of evangelization is to be considered a fundamental duty of the people of God, all Christ's faithful must be conscious of the responsibility to play their part in missionary activity.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The Code of Canon Law, p. 143

From this Canon follow the other Canons which point to a specific kind of missionary activity. This specific missionary activity is done by the Institutes of Consecrated life and competent ecclesiastical authority who are in charge or responsible for sending missionaries either religious or lay to far off countries where people have not yet heard of the Gospel yet.<sup>37</sup>

Among other responsibilities, the missionaries are the first ones to bring forward the “taste” of the Good News to the people who are tasting it for the first time. This is done in cooperation with the Diocesan Bishop who coordinates and listens to the needs of the people of God. The coordination is done under the vocation promotion for the mission, missionary initiatives promotion, a day for the missions celebrated annually and a proper financial support through the Holy See.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Can. 783; Can. 784

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Can. 791, p. 145

## CHAPTER III

### HOW TO IMPROVE MISSION THROUGH COMMUNICATION

#### **3.1. *Written Communication***

Writing about communication, about mission, about the relation of the two, we realize that doing so, we are writing to communicate and to spread the gospel. Writing has been one of the most used mean of communication after the spoken word. New technologies have perfected the ball pen and the softness of the paper, still writing is the easy way to send a message to a specific receiver near or far, present or absent. Though many new forms of communication have come up, but writing remains as the basis for all of them. Through writing, many accounts of the past has reached us with teaching, wisdom and encouragement to do the same or better. Better is what we stick to, because mission through communication has to make use of it. This affirmation looks a bit too obvious, compared with the historical background of the missions, where many missionaries made use of it as much as it was possible. We do not deny this but we add that in our days, writing in order to be attractive and transmit a relevant message has to catch the reader's eye. How to do it? Do we do it in poetry? Do we do it in prose? Or do we do it in current text? All of them are good forms of writing and able to catch the reader's eye to s specific taste. This is not all. One thing that leaves writing in the dust of the society is the high level of vocabulary and the stuffed pages of a well formatted blocked text. The high level of vocabulary is an obstacle for the spread of the gospel among the people who are literate enough to read a current daily leaflet. More difficult is to read three or four pages of difficult words and catch its real meaning. Taking the

Bible as an example, we can see that the writing was addressed to a specific group (Pauline Letters and the evangelists). Though, many of the Bible translations today lack the originality of the writings, still the writings were easy made according to the relation of the writer and of the people. This relation portrayed the writing as from the readers perspective and not from the writer's. The writer address to the people what is from the people like their problems of daily life. As a way of improving mission, writing should be done always from the perspective of the people.

Concerning the well formatted blocked text, it is possible to say that there is nothing wrong with a well formatted text. Without it we would not have the scientific advances or the fundamental religious teaching written in books. In so far, this has been always an advantage. Instead, for mission work this is not quite helpful. For the missionary to have access to it is fine, but for the people who have not gone through the same academic arcade of the missionary, it really becomes a scare crow. Taking for example the missionary magazines, which their main goal is to give information about the mission as well as to sensitize people about their responsibility towards the spread of the gospel. It is admirable the great effort put into this publications, but it is sad to see the little impact into people's life. Of course, much of the concern must come from the people themselves, but without the push of these tools, the responsibility is left with the missionaries only.

These magazines should reduce the formatted text to a style that focus in a more relational writing. This relational writing should call the attention of everybody, starting from the children to the old. This kind of writing involves knowing the situation of the people and the acceptance that a religious publication would have on them. In many

cases, the advantage of a religious publication is that it is accepted by the majority. This is because the source of it is of fine representation.

The disadvantages in this case is that the religious publications is acquired in order to help the religious institutions and the publication at the end of the day serves just as a decoration of a "Christian home".

Another aspect that can added to the religious publication is that of collaboration. According to the decree of the church's missionary activity, cooperation is needed among the faithful in order to spread the gospel. This same cooperation should be present among the missionaries institutes who on their own, undertake the task of writing to a specific group or society. Instead with the collaboration of all them, it would enrich the whole church with the new light for the young and adult. Cooperation can also financial, but more will be on the side of reciprocal exchange of ideas and information in order to have the best of writing that can reach all the levels of the society. Closer and closer relations between the missionary press would mean more unity towards the teaching office of the church. The diffusion of missionary publications should be embraced by all the missionaries, avoiding the personal gain and having the full success of transmitting the good news through writing. The training of local personnel in the art of writing should be a priority so that, through them, the message would be truly incarnated. Once properly trained, the local personnel can give an authentic look to the missionary activity in the respective countries.

As the last support for the missionary writing, the hierarchy should fully back up the writings in order to promote in the whole church, a sense of communion with the universal church.

### **3.2. Oral Communication**

Another tool of the communication in the missionary field that has been used all along is preaching. Though, it has been mentioned in the first chapter, which refer to the missionary monologue. This kind of monologue can be enriched or improved by its relevance. In many missions, the number of outstations to be attended are as many as the size of the area where they are located. For this keeps the missionary busy throughout, which does not allow any contact with the daily experience of the people. At the weekend, then the preaching would refer to anything but to the people's life. The message becomes like the seed thrown on the rocks, it will whither away. The relevancy of the message comes from the receptors' point of view. By this we mean that the preaching has to come from the frame of reference of the people; the missionary has to be familiarized with the language and cultural background of the people. We know that language is the main priority for the missionary, but because of the urgency of the spreading of the gospel, missionaries are given short period of time to pick up the language, that in many cases, the broken language leads to broken message.

When the message is not well understood, confusion and doubt become the fore runners to the increasing disunity and breaking away from the good news. As presented in the first chapter, the difficult of the language and in the second chapter the encouragement of the church to the missionaries in order to undertake the same task of the first missionaries (apostles) who received the holy spirit and started talking different languages according to the different audience surrounding the Pentecost event.

Moreover, the preaching involves relationship with the people. Though the missionary is telling them about the kingdom of God in the monologue form, still, when speaking the people's language, a relationship of communion is present. However, just

speaking the same language is not enough. For it to be well understood, it should have a certain degree of demonstration. This demonstration is done through the concrete daily experiences. When these daily experiences are shared between the people and the missionary, it would be easy to follow and understand the message that comes from the missionary. In another words, demonstration helps to incarnate the preaching in the people's life. Preaching has been and always will be one indispensable mean of communication for the church. For this reason, a proper training of the future missionaries should be carried out. The relevancy of it in many of our institutes of higher learning is overlooked. Though it is present in the curriculum of many institutions, it has been given a short period of time with few qualified personnel in order to attend to the high number of students going through this subject. A missionary with all the theological course and without the capability of preaching is like the latest Mercedes car in the market without an engine, he does not go anywhere.

### **3.3. Catechesis**

After preaching, there is another resourceful means of communication within the church that is used by the missionaries, that is, Catechesis. Catechesis has been from the beginning of missionary work, a systematic religious instruction. In our days, catechesis has to be looked at as a way of preparing the faithful to hold strongly to his faith. The Doctrine of the Church has to be taught, but not only through the handing over, instead through a personal conviction. This is achieved by the preparation of the catechists and elaboration of Catechetical material that reflects the teaching of the church. Also, catechists should be chosen from the people who are already living an authentic Christian life. With the catechist, the missionary would always have the extra-hand to spread the good news.

As help for the missionary, catechesis should make use of all other means available in order to instruct a proper Christian living. The use of books, magazines, audio-visuals make catechesis easy to be assimilated by the people. The church has got a variety of gifts, different people with particular mentality, so catechesis has to reach every person with an instruction adapted to her conditions. For this, the lay people are called upon to help.

### **3.4. Mass Media**

It is mentioned in the Vatican Council II documents that, the church should promote the use of mass media and wherever possible to own it. This affirmation becomes stronger and stronger with the latest advances of the secular media. This secular media has created a culture of its own, which determines our world, the church, under this aspect has to show some concern for a proper use and training for the media that is in her hands or under her influence. Though the church owns and influences some of the media, still it requires an approach that will lead to a better appropriation of the media. Very often the church wants to portray an image that in secular terms means traditional. This traditional image of the church is seen in the secular society as a form of holding back the development that is taking place. Instead, the church should portray herself in the image of the traditional through the modern. In order to achieve this, the church in the missions should make use of the media that is available for the proclamation of the good news. It does not mean that the missionaries must get a television channel license or Radio station. The missionaries should create their own media that would help in their Apostolate. By starting with the awareness of the people towards the media, the missionary should present the importance of dealing with the media. A second step should be directed towards training. The training should involve people in the preparation of Theatre, music, audio-visuals and other related topics that could give a boost towards the awareness and training.

In the mission, the presence of Christian schools, is an opportunity to have media education. This media education should be directed towards a critical use of the media. With the mass media culture selling more and more its way of controlling the world, the media education is important in order not to let people be misled by the media culture. The shadow of a continuous growing culture, not only the people would be misled but the spreading of the gospel would be compromised. In this manner, the media has to be studied and used in favour of the missionary activity.

### **3.5. The Church in Africa**

Though the exhortation and recognition of a deficient use of the means of social communication were clearly stated in the African Synod, still, little has been done.

In Africa, the increasing number of sects, of new opportunities in the market is bringing a new setting, which the African Church cannot overlook.

The Muslims, the Sects and other movements are making full use of the mass media in order to promote and spread their own ideologies.

The church in African should start having her presence in the mass media also. Though the suggestion of owning means of communication is emphasized by the Church documents, still the church in Africa should use the available secular means of communication. Also, as a response to the need of solidarity among the local churches in Africa as suggested in the African Synod, there should be a collaboration for the preparation of religious programs to be presented through the mass media. This would evoke a sense of awareness of the importance of communication for the mission.

As one of the aims of the African Synod was to build up the Church as God's Family, it is necessary to make use of the right tools and material to build up God's Family. For this some of the tools are the means of communication which haven no barriers in order to reach the last faithful. And the material is the proclamation of the Good News to all.

### **3.6. IMC<sup>39</sup> and Mission Through Communication**

The Consolata Missionaries, a society for foreign mission (Ad Gentes) was founded by Blessed Joseph Allamano in 1901 with the aim of spreading the good news among those who have not heard of it yet. The founder, after the foundation of the society, started giving orientation to the first missionaries on how to go about the mission. Among these orientations one is: "The evangelization of non-Christians can and must include every kind of work, and use all the means, necessary or useful to

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<sup>39</sup> IMC stands for Consolata Missionary Institute

achieve this purpose according to the circumstances of time and place, and with the approval of the Holy See.<sup>40</sup> In this we find the reason for the Consolata Missionaries to exist and also how the mission should be carried out. On how to carry it out, it mentions that all means, necessary or useful with the approval of the Holy See are to be used in order to evangelize the non-Christians. The Consolata Missionaries received “approval for agricultural farms and industrial workshops, for schools and home visits, for orphanages, boarding schools, and for giving medical assistance and others.”<sup>41</sup> According to this quotation, the Consolata Missionaries have got a full hand to use in the mission.

Looking at one particular means, mission through communication, the society is involved with part of it. From the beginning the founder Bld. Joseph Allamano recommended the study and practice of the language. Still, today this is a priority and should always be as the need arises. The purpose of studying the language involves the familiarization with the people, learning the culture and the transmission of the good news.

After learning well the language, another tool for the mission is preaching, which according to the founder is of great importance.

“Besides choosing carefully the matter for your preaching, you should give great importance to style, in order to deliver your sermon well. Your style shouldn’t be exaggerated, but must be convenient.”<sup>42</sup>

Though the gift of preaching is not for all, the missionary still can do a lot if he prepares himself to deliver a good sermon. Also, the convenience presents the intention of the founder that preaching should be relevant to the people who receive it. Through preaching the word is incarnated among the non-Christians, who, according to the message delivered, will accept or reject it.

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<sup>40</sup> The Spiritual Life, From The Spiritual Conferences Of The Servant Of God Joseph Allamano, Rome: Consolata Society for foreign missions, 1982, p. 6

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 147

As something common to most missionary congregations, publication press is a task undertaken by the Consolata Missionaries. It started from the time of the Founder with the magazine called *La Consolata*<sup>43</sup>. One of the magazine's purposes was to reveal the Marian orientation as well present in other publications. Today, in most places of evangelization, we have a publication press. This publication press has the main goal of informing and awakening the concern about mission among the people. As the whole church is missionary, it is a right for the people to have access to this kind of publication. A secondary effect of the publication is that by knowing the needs of the mission, people can give financial support to the mission so that projects and other forms of evangelization can go on.

In the General Chapter of 1969, the Consolata Missionaries, in communion with the church, pointed out that the instruments of social communication are to be used because of its dimensions of social efficiency. The spread of the Gospel through the means of communication is of great importance for the missionary.

Regarding the participation of the laity in the process of communication, the Consolata Missionary is encountered to take over the education of the laity so that the laity can "make good use of the technical instruments of communication."<sup>44</sup>

In Kenya, the Consolata Missionaries are dealing mainly with the press publication. One of its achievements is the publication of "The Seed Magazine", which promotes the missionary concerns through information, correspondence, reflections and entertainment. According to its content, it has plenty of material, but with regard to its style, it still has to be improved in order to reach more readers.

Concerning the mass media, mainly radio and television, the society has made some single initiatives at some missions due to lack of more sophisticated forms of communication. For example, the society has implemented the Radio Call for the areas of difficult access. The main purpose of Radio Call is to make it possible for the missionaries not only to communicate but also to external help in case of emergencies.

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<sup>43</sup> Consecration and Mission, IMC Post Conciliar Reflections, Rome: Consolata Missionaries, 1997, p. 518

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74

Audio-visuals have been created mainly for the purpose of missionary animation among the people. This includes videotapes, slide projectors and photographs. In some of the missions, there is the presentation of videotapes to the local people as a way of entertainment and education. Naturally, the use of these means is determined by the circumstances: the situation of the region, the level of evangelization, local possibilities, etc.

Although we are a society that makes use of many means in order to proclaim the gospel among non-Christians, we are still lacking in some areas of our missionary activity better instruments that will enhance our evangelizing. However, this is also true in the church as a whole due to the many difficulties encountered in missionary areas.

## CONCLUSION

We would like to conclude this essay with some final thoughts and some suggested actions. Going through the preparation and writing of this essay, we realized that mission and communication are deeply interrelated in the church. Without this, the church can not fulfill her mission. This is so because the church herself is mission-and-communication at the core. In essence, as long as the church is doing mission, she is communicating and as long as she communicates, she is missionary. The problem we found is that many people, both religious and lay, are unaware of the fact that true mission and true communication are essentially related. Although the will to proclaim and spread the good news is strongly visible, the question of tools and method to be used is a real concern.

The church from the time of the apostles started proclaiming by using all available means at the time. Today, the means have increased, but the church has not fully used all. Although the Church has developed strongly in the published word, with regard to the spoken media and televised media, the church is poorly present and this deficiency is most true in mission territories. The exhortation the church must write and witness to is its commitment to true social communication.

Another aspect we saw, the importance of education. The church has truly since promoted universal education, but she still has to merge into the curriculum some space for the appreciation and importance of social communication.

As a whole, we conclude that mission through communication must speed up to catch up to the lightening fast development our world is undergoing.

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