

JUSTICE and RECONCILIATION

The Sad but Living Story of a Church in Fetters

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Preface

What is the future of our Indian Church? This is a question that is agitating the minds of many of us. In this land characterised by high thinking, varied religious quests and different cultural heritages, the Indian Church, if evolved properly, can contribute greatly to their own faithful and even to Christianity as a whole. Obviously we need a church of unity, beauty and brotherhood. We need a church of love, where everyone accepts the other with dignity and honour. We need a Church in which justice of the Lord reigns and no group wants to dominate the other. We need a Church where basic freedom of self-expression is guaranteed so that the unity does not become uniformity and friendly bonds do not degenerate into bondage. We need a Church which is authentically Indian, courageous and far-sighted enough to incorporate the genuine cultural values of this country into our ways of life and at the same time taking care to preserve what is authentically Christian and thus essential to our Christian faith. I look forward to seeing the emergence of such a Church in India.

Providence has, however, placed us in a peculiar situation and whether we like it or not, we have to accept it. The Indian Church today is a community comprising three Churches. The Indian Church we envisage for the future, whatever be the form of synthesis it may finally have, should emerge from the happy co-existence of these three churches. Each individual Church has to contribute to the building up of the Indian Church we would like to have in the future. In order that this may be possible we need mutual understanding, spirit of acceptance and peaceful co-existence. The individual churches, each with its different traditions, can be regarded as a blessing because each tradition may reveal certain aspects of reality and religious realization of the same which the other may not have experienced. Thus these various traditions can be complementary. The co-existence of different individual churches can, on the other hand, be looked down upon as a curse if we are determined to see only disharmony and internal

dissension in these churches. Hence, it is not so much the co-existence that is the problem, but the attitude with which we look at co-existence. Because the fact of the individual churches is already there, I do not think we have any alternative but to learn to co-exist and work for greater harmony and understanding. The prime condition for such a harmonious co-existence is the basic freedom of existence and expression of every individual Church. Only in such a humanized situation dignified cooperation and working for higher unity is possible. But unfortunately our situation is very unsatisfactory in this respect. The Oriental churches in India, though Apostolic in origin, are denied freedom. This is the main problem of the Church of India. Some people do not like the expression: three individual churches. They claim that we have only one church with three rites. In practice this makes no difference, provided the promoters of this expression do not mean thereby superiority of the latin rite over other rites. What we really need is equality for all rites, not just in theory, but in *practice*. So that this may be possible, a community belonging to one rite should not be placed under another community. Nowhere in history has such a situation been justified nor has it lasted long in maintaining peace and harmony. Hence it is not so much the expression 'three individual Churches' or 'one Church with three rites' that ultimately matters. What really matters is our readiness to accept the other as a person, a real thou of equal dignity and importance. And this must be the attitude of all the parties involved, so that we may have a happy Church in India. How can we plead for authenticity and unhampered freedom of self-expression in worship and the running of institutions in a country with an overwhelming Hindu majority when in our Catholic community we deny the same freedom to certain groups? Is this not a flagrant example of double standards which we manifest when we argue on this point with our Hindu brethren and our Oriental brethren? A scandal, a dirt, a sign of gross selfishness? Those who have occupied larger areas of territories or to be exact, have declared territories to be theirs, simply refuse to allow others to come in, unless they give up all their individuality and patrimony. Our Hindu brethren do not demand this. On the contrary, in the light of the noble vision of our Constitution, they respect the minority rights of each community. It is sad that the Church

in India cannot adopt the same attitudes with regard to its own churches with different traditions. The Latin Church consistently and constantly refuses to accept the Orientals, to give them the right of self-expression and self-government. If our Hindu brethren had been so cruel as this to us Christians in this country of vast Hindu majority, no Christian Church would have ever been put up in this country as places of Christian worship. What a paradox! What an unchristian mentality within the Christian Church and what fine Christian magnanimity among the followers of a so-called pagan religion! It is this sad state of things about which many Christians are absolutely unaware or are misinformed through the existing means of communication and the continuous demand from various circles for copies of the paper presented in the theological seminar at Bombay that has prompted me to place this booklet before you. The sense of justice that is in every one of us also forced me to voice my conscience against such an unjust ecclesial structure prevailing in this anomalous way only in the Church of India.

By speaking up for the rights of the Oriental Church in India, I do not mean to give up my basic commitment to Indian spirituality and to the possible emergence of a genuinely Indian Church. Actually I am now working on a book, *An Initiation in Indian Christian Spirituality* which, I hope, will see the light of day within a few months. But I do believe that the Oriental Church in India has a greater inclination towards Indian spirituality by its very nature and has really succeeded, to a large extent, in making itself Indian. Of course it has to go farther in the same direction. Some of my friends working in the Latin dioceses are not happy with the extension of the Oriental Church to the North as they seem to think that Oriental means slavish preservation of the Chaldean way of life. This is simply not true. We are not slaves of any culture or any ecclesial expression of the same. Yet we have a lot to learn from a genuine tradition which has been ours for centuries and creatively adapt it to our contemporary living situations and cultural transformations. I do not think that anyone with the right attitude will oppose this idea, though with regard to the actual details of working it out here there will be differences of opinion. This is bound to happen and

this is to be accepted as a healthy sign of a living and thinking church.

The Oriental mind has its own distinctive approach to reality. This is true also with regard to the Reality which is God and the experience and the expressions of the same. A mystical rather than rational approach to religious realities, a synthetic rather than an analytic view of life, a personal rather than a 'thingly' attitude to everything are some of the characteristics of an Oriental mind. A respect for sacredness of life everywhere accompanied by a love for serenity and peace, a quest for orthodoxy and refusal to bring about too many changes too quickly distinguish an Oriental mind. I do not mean that the West does not consider these values as good and desirable. But there is certainly a difference in approach. And this can be seen in the very question about jurisdiction itself. The Orientals have a personal approach to the whole problem as in everything else. The Latin Church, on the contrary, has an 'empire' approach: one territory, one jurisdiction, no matter who lives there, what tradition they belong to, what cultural heritage they consider sacred. The Orientals think differently: each pastor should lovingly take care of his people, no matter where they are, and no pastor should desire to have sovereignty over the faithful of other communities. The difference is very clear. In the Latin concept of authority man is reduced to territory (thingly approach). In the Oriental concept of authority territory (thingly dimension of man) is discarded in favour of the person. The refusal to understand and respect this difference in approach to the realities of life is the crux of our problem.

As Indians we all are expected to have an Oriental mind. But a thoroughly westernized way of education and life can destroy our Oriental character altogether. Religion and the worship patterns they follow play an important role in building and unbuilding this character. It is sad to hear reports from bishops and to read editorials in Church papers that they fail to see the differences between persons belonging to either rites. These statements are made solely by looking at thoroughly westernized Orientals who from their very childhood were brought up on western education, liturgy and ways of life. The way of thinking and behaving is even more different in really Oriental

communities. Oriental does not mean just a liturgy. The Latin Church in India seems to understand it in that way. By Oriental is meant a bent of mind, an attitude to life and its varied problems, including a way of worship expressive of all these values. Yes it must be open to any other presence and even be willing to be influenced by it. But this does not mean that it should be replaced by the other as it happened, by and large in the case of the Indian Church, especially in the North. Hence the need for this booklet.

On the contrary theologians maintain that the Western way of thinking dominated by the Greco-Roman culture, is to a great extent at variance with the Oriental thinking of the biblical world (Cf. John Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology*, Harper and Tow, p. 19). The Greek attempt was to determine and classify man as something in the unity of the cosmos. The biblical description of man is radically different from this. Created as the image of God, man stands out in the midst of Nature as a unique creation resembling God.

Man cannot be submerged in Nature, or merged in the laws of cosmos, so long as he remains true to his destiny. The Creator's greatest gift to man, that of the personal 'I' necessarily places him, in analogy with God's being, at a distance from Nature. (W. Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament*, SCM. Press, p. 30.)

This Greek and, consequently the Western idea of reducing man to nature is well reflected in the Latin insistence of 'one territory one jurisdiction.' It is only natural to be expected that such a theory should emanate from the West. But why should we stress it in this Oriental world where we have a different world-vision and a different approach to the realities of life in which person is considered above cosmic nature. The Oriental Church in India taking its origin from the biblical land certainly carries with it much of the Oriental genius of the Bible. It is also an indisputable truth that the Indian mind in general, belonging as it does to a leading country in the Orient, had cultural similarity to the biblical land, despite its own distinctive characteristic and contributions to the world. As Indians all of us are expected to participate in the Indian mind. But this has been vitiated by the super-structures that interested

parties have imposed upon us. To the extent we are westernized we also develop a western mentality. Rite, as a reality intimately related to life and culture, certainly affects one's mental formation. A thoroughly western rite will help build up a western mind in man. The tendency to Indianize the western rite is welcome. But true Indianization does not mean simply changing a few symbols and superficial structures, though this also is needed. Indianization should start with a real change of mind. *If the Latin Church wants to be really Indian the first thing it has to do is to give up the desire for domination over the Orientals, because it is an offshoot and a still lingering remnant of Western colonialism.* The Orientals never ask for domination over the Latins, though the Oriental Church was established much earlier in this country. This clearly shows the difference in attitude.

To bring to light this difference in attitude and the disastrous effect it has had on the Indian Church, I place before you this small booklet. This booklet contains the paper which I presented at the annual meeting of the Indian Theological Association held in Bombay from October 22-24, 1982. The theme of the Seminar was "Reconciliation in India." There were about 40 theologians from all over India. My paper was on "The Struggle for Justice in the Church and the Call for Reconciliation." All the papers of the seminar together with the group discussion reports are now made available in the book entitled: *Reconciliation in India*, edited by Dr. Kuncheria Pathil, the Secretary of the Association, and published by St. Paul Publications, Bombay. Though there was strong opposition against including my paper in the book, in the end justice prevailed and the association decided to publish it along with all the other papers, together with their responses. But since there was continued demand for the copies of my paper from different theological circles working in India, and abroad I am placing the same article before you, with no substantial changes whatever, for your reading and assessment. The paper evoked strong reactions and gave rise to mixed feelings and I was not at all surprised by that. A clear denunciation of injustice applied to concrete circumstances will certainly evoke strong reactions. It is not like giving a good exhortation leading us nowhere, which can easily be praised for its theological excellence and emotional balance. My paper is not like that. Rather it is an open analysis of a

concrete situation, unjust and anomalous, and an unambiguous commitment to the call of basic justice and reconciled existence. It is not to my natural taste, nor do I find great pleasure in writing a paper like this. I feel more at home in works of Indian Spirituality and theological reflections related to the same. I have felt more comfortable whenever I prepare and present papers on such topics. But sometimes in life we have to face a different type of challenge, voice the dictates of conscience with courage for the betterment of our own Church in India, denounce a situation which we find obviously unjust and in which we have to live. I am facing such a situation and am living in it. Hence the exigency of this paper. In order that I may not be misunderstood I began my exposition at Bombay with these introductory words:

If there are two people on earth how can they live in peace? The only way for lasting peace is that they accept each other on a basis of equality. In the same way if there are two or more individual Churches or Rites in a country how can they live in peace? The only way for lasting peace is that they accept each other on a basis of equality. This is the only demand my paper places before you: let us accept each other respectfully. But sadly enough, this is not the situation of the Church in India today. The Latin Church consistently refuses to accept the Oriental Church as an equal. Rather it insists on domination over the Orientals. The first part of my paper, is only a phenomenological analysis of the power-structure and the way of its operation. Naturally this may not be liked by all. In the second Part I am proposing ways and means to overcome our situation in the spirit of reconciliation and mutual acceptance.

The broad outline of the original draft of this paper was drawn up in Bhopal where practically I had no books to refer to on this subject. Back in Dharmaram I found that Paulo Freire has methodically expressed much of what I wanted to articulate with regard to the experience of negation and oppression my Church was going through. Hence in the analysis of the Indian ecclesial situation I have patterned my thoughts on the lines of Paulo Freire. This only points to the fact that the experience of oppression to a reflecting mind was basically the same, though in entirely different fields.

Emotionally Overcharged?

Some of the critics have stated that the paper is emotionally overcharged. I do not deny the presence of emotional force along with penetrating analysis. Continued experience of negation and rejection do evoke emotions, as well as provoke thinking. Is Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* emotionally overcharged? Is Gustavo Guitierrez' *Theology of Liberation* emotionally overcharged? Is our denunciation of oppression and social injustice as expressed in several Christian publications emotionally overcharged? If all these are emotionally overcharged, I would readily agree that this paper also is overcharged emotionally. This paper also uses more or less the same language in its struggle to expose the same type of inhuman situations.

My prayer and request to my friends and confrères is just this: "When you denounce injustice be consistent in denouncing it in all spheres of life; not only in socio-economic and political fields but also in colonial religious structures." It is not a pleasant task to speak about the 'rights' of some people. It has an unpleasant look because it points to the fact that the other side is unfair. It is far more easy to speak about something else. And some of my friends actually told me that this way of writing will make me unpopular and unacceptable in many circles. Their assessment and caution may be right. But my answer to them was simply this: "Jesus who spoke so marvellously about prayer, providence and the love of the Father had his strongest words of criticism directed against the Pharisees and the religious leaders of his time, though he knew very well that he would have to suffer the consequences of the same." Misuse or selfish use of any power is evil. The more divine the power is, the greater is the evil involved in its misuse. Exclusive use of power and curbing the equal rights of the other is to be understood as misuse. Jesus identified himself with the powerless, discriminated and discarded group of people, the Samaritans, for example. In this paper I am only trying to identify myself with a Church deprived of power, discarded and confined to a narrow territory in this vast subcontinent. The only thing this community demands is the right of self-rule as envisaged in Vatican II, which is a natural and fundamental right of any community on earth. The stubborn denial of this minimum demand and the unchristian arrogance with which it has been handled up to

this day only made me think on such stern lines much against my own natural liking and way of writing.

Those who know me personally know very well that I am not an Oriental fanatic. I do not believe in slavish commitment to any system or structure, though I would like to value what is positive in everything. I believe in co-existence of various groups of people, with love and harmony. I also believe that in order to make this co-existence a loving and living reality we have necessarily to appreciate and accept the identity and culture of everyone else. In my classes, courses and seminars I have come across several fathers, brothers and sisters belonging to all rites in India. I have loved them all and still cherish great love for all of them, whatever may be their rite, language or culture. I have also established very happy and friendly relations with many persons belonging to the Latin Rite and different language groups, all of whom I have found very charming and friendly. This paper is not at all intended to stand in the way of any such human relationship and friendships. Rather it wants to foster them by accepting each one for what he is, in his individuality and uniqueness. What it aims at is to redeem all of us from an enslaving structure in which we all are now living.

Never before in history of the Church has the legitimate right of one community been so brutally suppressed by another. This is not possible as long as the human consciousness contains the dignity of the Divine Reflection within itself. The sense of truth and justice that is in you and me will eventually speak up for the establishment of a just society. This is what is now happening in the Indian Church. Let us hope that something good and acceptable to all concerned will come out of this present tension.

Essential Presuppositions

The paper presupposed many facts, past and recent, with regard to the existence and relationship of the three individual Churches in India. Since the vast majority of readers do not know much about the past history and the recent developments, I am now presenting very briefly some of the major presuppositions on which the paper is based.

1. In the Catholic Church there are several Rites and every Rite has equal dignity, right and obligation with regard to evangelization and pastoral care of their people.

(Vat. II, *Decree on EASTERN CHURCHES*, art. 3)

2. Accordingly, the newly published Latin Code of Canon Law makes provision for Oriental Jurisdiction where Oriental Churches exist. The Latin Hierarchy in India is trying its best not to apply this canon in the context of India whereas it is applied practically everywhere in the world, even though the Oriental Churches came up there only very recently.
3. The Oriental Church of India, known as the Church of the Apostle St. Thomas has existed in India from the first Century onwards. As the only Church in India, it enjoyed All-India jurisdiction. Its bishops and archdeacons were known as the Metropolitan/Archdeacon and the Gate of all India and its confines.
4. In the year 1599, that is nearly a century after the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries the Oriental Jurisdiction was suppressed completely and the Oriental Church was put under Latin Hierarchy. This was clearly a triumph of ecclesial colonialism. This situation continued for nearly three hundred years until the Catholic Thomas Christians were given in 1896 three Vicar Ap. of their own rite and nationality under the Propaganda Congregation.
5. In the year 1923 Rome re-established the Oriental Hierarchy with the official name: the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy/Church.

But the Orientals were legally forced to confine themselves to 0.47% of the great Indian subcontinent. Thus, despite the establishment of the Oriental Hierarchy, the basic existential right of the Catholic wing of Thomas Christians remained denied.

6. A few years later Rome further extended the Oriental jurisdiction to parts of Karnataka and Tamilnadu states.
7. In the year 1965 the Vatican II promulgated its decrees which guaranteed equal rights to all Rites not only in theory but also in practice. (Cf. the passages given below.)
8. In 1962 the Oriental Church was given its first mission in the North (Chanda).
9. By 1977 six more missions were entrusted to the Oriental Church.
10. Meanwhile thousands and thousands of Oriental Catholics migrated to different parts of India and created substantial pockets of the Oriental Church in the North. But the Pastoral care of these faithful remained an unsolved problem.
11. All through these years the Latin Church kept on recruiting vocations for priesthood and religious life from the Oriental Church on which it had imposed severe restrictions.
12. In 1978 the venerable Pope John Paul I appointed Mar Antony Padiara, the Archbishop of Changanacherry as an Apostolic Visitor to inquire into the problems of the immigrant Orientals all over India. It is said that this is the only document this Pope signed in his short life of one month as a Pope. Can this be taken as a providential hand determined to restore justice?
13. In 1979 Archbishop Padiara submitted his report on the situation of the Orientals in India.
14. In 1980 the Oriental bishops submitted a memorandum to Pope John Paul II pleading for justice in the Indian Church and the Pope promised them equity and justice.
15. In 1982, at the plenary session of the CBCI held at Tiruchirappally the three bishops representing the three Rites

presented their papers. Bishop Mar Joseph Powathil represented the Malabar Church, Cyril Mar Baselios represented the Malankara Church, and Bishop Henry D'Souza represented the Latin Church.

16. In October 1982, the Indian Theological Association met at Bombay for their Annual conference in which this paper was presented for discussion.
17. In January, 1983 the plenary session of the CBCI was held in Bombay in which once again the problem of Rite was discussed. The CBCI agreed to take some provisional arrangements for the time being and postponed the whole matter for further study and discussion in the next plenary session of the CBCI.
18. Meanwhile according to the provisions of the new Canon Law Rome suggested restructuring of the CBCI in which each individual Church would be an autonomous unit and CBCI of all India would have only a general structure comprising all autonomous units.

Struggle for Justice in the Church and the Call for Reconciliation

INTRODUCTION

This topic has been assigned to me, presumably because of my interventions in two previous meetings of our association, where theological issues relating to political and socio-economic power structures were discussed. I was all praise for those papers, especially for their clarity of expression and their commitment to the cause of justice. But my predicament was that I found the same structures of injustice operating in the Church too, especially in the Church of India, and particularly in the relationship between the Latin and the Oriental Churches in India. These somewhat inconvenient questions were not answered then, unfortunately, perhaps because, though we genuinely disapprove injustice and structures of injustice, when it actually comes to condemning the structures in which we are personally involved, we feel uneasy to do so. This is, of course, understandable, for the same reason, I too was somewhat reluctant to accept this theme for my paper. Some of my friends also cautioned me, and were apprehensive especially after hearing about some of the ideas I was planning to put into the paper, and said that no good would come out of it. However, I would like not to take such a pessimistic view. I still have faith in the basic goodness of human conscience, which, though initially it may oppose the change of structures, will ultimately give in to the call of justice and love. It is, thanks to the insistence of Fr. Puthanangady, the president of the Association, who suggested my name to Fr Pathil, the secretary, that I now present this paper. I take this opportunity to congratulate Father Puthanangady, not for assigning the paper to me, but for throwing open this topic for a theological discussion. This problem of autonomy and reconciliation is now being discussed in the CBCI and, I believe,

we theologians have a duty to analyse the situation and offer suggestions for the amelioration of the Church in India.

In this paper I shall deal with the problem of the relationship between the Latin and the Oriental Church in India. I have divided my paper into two main parts:

- I. The analysis of the present situation, which calls for a reconciliation.
- II. Proposals for and possibilities of a mutual acceptance and reconciled existence.

PART I

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION OF THE CHURCH IN INDIA

I make this analysis in the light of my own views and experience. Obviously, it has its limitations. I do not claim that I have seen all aspects of the truth and am therefore open to correction. However, I would like to present this analysis as a free and open confession of our situation, for your own assessment. Speaking about free press and voicing his opinion in confidence, Karl Marx wrote more than a century ago:

It is the confession without reservation of a people to itself—and, as we know, confession is a liberating force. It is the spiritual mirror in which a people sees itself—and self-knowledge is the first pre-requisite for wisdom... It is the ideal world constantly springing from the real world and flowing back to it, always enriched in spirit, in order to bring fresh life to it.¹

So we are looking at our situation as it actually is today to see how far we are from the ideal and what is needed so that we may transform this, as far as possible, to approximate the ideal. In this analysis of our existing situation, I want to be as clear and frank as possible realizing that I am speaking to a limited but enlightened group of theologians of the Church. If certain aspects in this frank analysis seem 'distasteful' to some

1. Karl Marx, "Debate on the Freedom of the Press", *Rheinische Zeitung*, 1842 quoted in *Birthingright of Man* (New York, UNESCO, Unipub Inc. 1969), p. 239, Hereafter, UNESCO.

or engender certain feelings of discomfort, I would like to assure you that it is not my intention to hurt anyone or create any ill-will. I am only too keen to use this appraisal for suggesting constructive ways and means for promoting a reconciliation and friendly co-existence. After all, I will only be voicing the feelings, insights, aspirations and even conciliatory proposals of an oppressed Church, a Church in fetters, kept so, perhaps, for the convenience of and domination by a few in the Church in India. It is such an anomalous situation which urgently calls for reconciliation.

1. Reconciliation and the Fact of different Individual Churches in India

In India we have three individual Churches.² That is the simple truth. But though this is recognized in theory, it is not fully accepted in praxis. And this is the crux of our problem. When one Church refuses to accept another Church, naturally, harmony and concord are disturbed and we have a problem-situation. In India we had an Oriental Church with all-India jurisdiction from the very beginning of Christianity. When the Portuguese missionaries arrived, co-existence was not a problem. They warmly welcomed it. But the problem arose when the missionaries failed to show the same degree of tolerance to the indigenous Church which was already in existence there. It is very sad, and students of history know this very well, that this spirit of intolerance ended up in the division of the Kerala Oriental Church, and the cruel deprivation of autonomy of that section of the Church, which wanted to remain faithful to the Holy See. It was sad and unusual then. It is all the more strange now, because, though the colonial powers disappeared from the scene long ago and the world consciousness has advanced in its violent attack on all forms of colonialism, still the basic colonial power structure that had been imposed on the Oriental Church of India remains the same. My thesis is very simple: The Latin Church, which came to India through colonial expansion of the Western Powers, maintains this colonial attitude even now, especially in its relation to the ancient Oriental

2. An Individual Church is a Church with its own Liturgy, discipline, spirituality, theology and cultural heritage. Cf. *Vat. II. Decree on the Eastern Churches*, paras. 1 & 2; cf. also *Christian Orient*, Vol. III, Nos 1-2 (1982), p.21.

Church in India. Colonialism is sharply condemned by people, and is almost disappearing from the face of the earth, though various types of neo-colonialism still continue. Liberation Theology strongly condemns the structures of neo-colonialism operating in the world, especially in Latin America.³ Since the Indian situation is not very different, in our own country many theologians have taken up the issue, especially the Jesuits, after their General Chapter Decision to stand up for Faith and Justice in the modern world. This decision has done much good to the world at large, and also to India. It has also awakened in many the need for justice, though this seems to be confined almost exclusively to injustice prevalent in the socio-economic fields. Nevertheless, I take this as a welcome sign, and with a ray of hope I wish to point to the same type of ecclesial injustice operating in the heart of our Church, namely, presence of a colonial and imperialistic structure and attitude. Structures are made by man, and if any power-structure enjoys too much power it does so by restricting and usurping the legitimate rights of some other. Human ingenuity in spite of its struggle to remain good, can also adopt this disastrous mode of operation.

2. The Dynamics of Power and Freedom In Human Creativity

Man, unlike animals, by his praxis, that is reflexive action transforming reality, can create the realm of culture and history. The transforming action of man produces not only materially good things, but also social institutions, ideas, concepts and religious structures. All of these are conditioned. Because of the dehumanizing tendencies in man, all these can become less human and help create inhuman structures which eventually choke and kill the true humanity. The structures thus built up could be to the material advantage of an individual or a group and to the disadvantage of others.⁴ In the neo-colonialist era the imperialists establish and maintain such structures to their advantage and naturally to the disadvantages of the colonized

3. Cf. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1973). Ignatius Ellacuria, *Freedom made Flesh* (New York: Orbis Books).

4. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (Penguin Books, NZ) 1974 (first published in 1972), pp. 73ff.

countries. Such an imperialist control, especially in the field of economy, is exercised by the USA over Latin America, by the European Community over Black Africa, by the Soviet Union over the countries of Eastern Europe and by Japan over a major part of South-East Asia.⁵ But imperialist control exists in the Church as well and, therefore, I will add that to the list, and in ecclesiastical matters, by the Latin Church over the Orientals in India. But such a situation can never continue indefinitely.

When this situation becomes acute it is called limit-situation:

Limit-situations imply the existence of both persons of whom one is directly or indirectly served by the situation and the other who is negated and curbed by the same. But when the latter begins to see the situation as the frontier between being and being human, that is between being treated as it and thou, they become critical and direct their action towards achieving *the untested feasibility* implicit in that perception. On the other hand, those who are served by the present limit-situation regard the untested feasibility as a threatening limit-situation, which must not be allowed to materialize and act to maintain the *status quo*.⁶

Two main concepts emerge from this as constitutive of a limit-situation: Domination and Liberation. Those who dominate stand for the maintenance of the *status quo*, whereas those who suffer from the domination envisage liberation as the objective to be attained at any cost.

The Indian Church is certainly in a limit-situation. The dominant group is obviously the Latin Church and the Oriental Church is struggling for liberation. The untested feasibility is "freedom in the North" (the ecclesial term is jurisdiction) which is vigorously opposed by the dominant group. The dominant group, because it systematically controls and curtails the freedom of the other group, turns out to be the oppressor.

3. The Oppressor-oppressed Dialectics in the Indian Church

Any situation in which A objectively exploits B or hinders his pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one

5. Samuel Rayan, "Jesus and Imperialism" in *Anawim*, No. 26.

6. Paulo Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with man's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. With the establishment of a relationship of oppression violence has already *begun*. Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed. How could they be the initiators if they themselves are the product of violence?⁷

The Oriental Church's demand should be understood in this perspective. It wants only to be responsible for itself all over India. But this is being objected to. And we all know how the Latin Church in India really lives on the exploited personnel of the Oriental Church, since without any doubt, the vast majority of the missionaries, men and women, working in the Latin dioceses are drawn from the Oriental Church. Therefore there is oppression and systematized violence.

The dominant group naturally advocates a theory of dependence, because it is wholly on a dependent population that this power is based. I do not deny the need for order and subordination to a just and genuine authority in the Church. But this should not mean depriving the legitimate rights of another. In our case the Latin Church wants the Orientals to be totally dependent on them. But since the Orientals are many, especially in the mission field, once they are liberated this power-structure may crumble. This could be the reason why they want to keep the Orientals in their present state as voiceless dependents. But this is using the one for the other. Analysing the dialectics of dominance and dependence, Hegel writes:

The one is independent and its essential nature is for itself; the other is dependent and its essence is life or existence for another. The former is the Master, or the Lord, the latter the Bondsman.⁸

The Latin Church is the Master, the Lord, who can make decisions, the Orientals are Bondsmen who have to serve the Master. The master may even demand the *kenosis* of those who serve him for the well-being of the Master. Incidentally, this

7. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

8. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of the Mind*, quoted in P. Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

was actually demanded by the Archbishop of Bhubanesvar in his talk, representing the Latin Hierarchy, at the CBCI consultation in Trichy.⁹

The master-consciousness fails to see that if 'having' is a condition of their well-being, it is so also for others. Instead they tend to make concessions. "The Orientals may say Mass in their own rite, if they so desire." This mentality is reflected in one of the Editorials of *The Examiner*:

Oriental Christians have migrated from Kerala in large numbers to other cities. Provided they are given the liturgy in their own rite, is there any need for establishing separate parishes and dioceses in a territory which is already under the Latin jurisdiction?¹⁰

Concessions are made, when the power is seriously threatened, in order to retain the people as subjects and to perpetuate the unjust power-structure. This is called manipulation, which will be discussed later. *The Examiner* further advances the arguments that the Orientals were inactive in Mission and it is because of the initiative of the Latin Church that India has been evangelized; and therefore, it is not right for the Oriental Church now to put claim for evangelization where the Latins have established their Church. I do acknowledge the contributions of the Latin Church in evangelizing India. But as I mentioned above there was all along a spirit of aggressiveness in the missionary work. The Oriental man is by nature less aggressive. This has its good and bad aspects. An aggressive nature tends to be more adventurous; this leads man to creativity. A non-aggressive nature tends to be more peaceful; of course it can have the bad side-effect of inertia. I do not claim that the Orientals are all perfect. But to create structures which take away the scope for the other man's creativity is wrong. That is why colonialism was condemned and all forms of neo-colonialism are now being condemned. If *The Examiner's* stand is correct, any unjust structure in the world, established by human efforts and creativity need not be changed. It can always be said that others, if they wanted or were able to, could have done the same earlier. If we all accept this kind of argument then

9. Cf. Henry D'Souza, "Latin-Oriental Relationships in the Church in India" in *Christian Orient*, op. cit., p. 48.

10. *The Examiner*, Vol. 131, No. 38 (1980), p. 2.

why do we fight against injustice at all? All unjust structures are made by man, of course, with the initiative and effort of those who made it. In fact Paulo Freire refers the same kind of argument on the part of the oppressors of the Third World:

The oppressors do not perceive their monopoly of having more as a privilege which dehumanizes others and themselves... For them, having more is an inalienable right, a right they acquired through their own 'effort', with their courage to take risks. If others do not have more, it is because they are incompetent and lazy and, worst of all, is their unjustifiable ingratitude towards the 'generous gestures' of the dominant class.¹¹

But *The Examiner* is expected to say this because in the ecclesiastical dialectics of the oppressor and the oppressed, *The Examiner* is the Organ of the Oppressor. On the other hand, the claim that the Latin Church has evangelized the whole of India is a myth and, if taken seriously, a big lie. After all this vigorous evangelization by the Latin Church for four centuries, the Catholic population in India is still less than two per cent, and half of this are members of the Oriental Church; and the evangelization that has been done, was accomplished with substantial assistance from the Oriental Church and its personnel. What the Latin Church has really done with regard to the whole of India is that it declared the whole of India as its territory for evangelization, disregarding and annihilating the counter-claim of another Church. Declaring an area to be under my power and jurisdiction is not really evangelization; it is desire for power over the territory and not necessarily concern for the faithful. Except for a few pockets the Indian sub-continent is still a non-Christian country. The Oriental Church in India does not make any claim over those pockets of Christianity for which the Latin Church is responsible. The question is still about missionary work in a predominantly non-Christian country, specifically about the members of their own Church dispersed all over India. There is something very wrong about this unquenchable desire for power over other persons. According to Eric Fromm it points to a tendency towards sadism:

11. P. Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

The pleasure in complete domination over another person (or other animate creature) is the very essence of the sadistic drive. Another way of formulating the same is to transform a man into a thing, something animate into something inanimate, since by complete and absolute control the living loses one essential quality of life-freedom.¹²

I will not go so far as to say that there is a sadistic tendency in the Latin Church's desire for power. But I do find that in India the Orientals lose one essential quality of life, namely freedom, the freedom which as an Indian citizen he is entitled to have, but as an ecclesiastical citizen he is deprived of. To remedy this sad situation those who wield power should be ready to give up their imperialistic attitudes.

4. The Dynamics of the Imperialistic Attitude in the Indian Church

As Samuel Rayan, sj. rightly puts it, "Imperialism is a structure, and not just a collection of wicked people."¹³ When I say there is dynamics of imperialism in the attitude of the Latin Church towards the Orientals, I do not intend to point my finger at any particular person. Actually, many of my good friends are in the Latin Church and I admire them profoundly. I am, all the same, questioning a power-structure in which we are all somehow involved: "Imperialism exists where one country or society dominates another in a relatively stable manner. It is a species of domination."¹⁴ Samuel Rayan, basing himself on J. Galtung's work, proceeds further, specifying the basic mechanisms used by the imperialists. They are: exploitation, penetration, fragmentation and marginalization. Paulo Freire, in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* also mentions four mechanisms of the imperialists, or in Freire's language, of the oppressors. They are the technique of conquest, divide and rule, manipulation and cultural invasion. Basically both these authors are in agreement. A close look at the situation of our Church in India, at the struggle for autonomy of the Oriental Church and the tenacity of power by the Latin Church, will reveal to us how the mechanisms of imperialism are at work in our

12. E. Fromm, *The Heart of Man*, quoted in P. Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 35

13. *Anawim*, No. 26.

14. *Ibid.*

Church. Following Freire, I am only trying to outline how these mechanisms of the imperialists are really at work in the attitude and behaviour of the Latin Church towards the Orientals.

i) *Conquest*

The first characteristic of anti-dialogical action is the necessity for conquest. The anti-dialogical man, in his relation with other men, aims at conquering them—increasingly and by every means, from the toughest to the most refined, from the most repressive to the most solicitous (paternalism).

Every act of conquest implies a conqueror and someone or something which is conquered. The conqueror imposes his objectives on the vanquished and makes them his possessions. He imposes his own contours on the vanquished, who internalize this shape and become ambiguous beings 'housing' another. From the first, the act of conquest, which reduces men to the status of things, is necrophilic.¹⁵

This spirit of conquest and its aggressive tendency of domination is often presented within the Church as 'missionary zeal'. However, I do not deny the fact of mission work done. But it has also a sad undercurrent of aggressiveness. In our context the Latin Church is the conqueror and the Oriental Church the conquered. From a cultural point of view all whether Latin or Oriental have felt the dominance of the western conqueror. But it is the Oriental Church, which had to suffer the severest effects of this conqueror attitude, and it is still suffering from it. After the arrival of the Latin Church the Oriental Church was mercilessly forced to confine itself to 47 sq. k.m. (14613 sq. k.m.) of the Indian subcontinent (3125044 sq. k.m.). This situation continued nearly for 300 years. Now also the situation is not substantially different. The often repeated blame that the Orientals are Kerala-addicted has this cruel fact behind it. The conqueror turns the vanquished into an object to suit his self-growth and power domination. Slaves are thus dehumanized persons, with no freedom of their own, but used for the exclusive growth of others. The Catholic Church condoned slavery for a long period just as it condoned and still condones the massive exodus of the Orientals to the Latin Church, namely,

15. P. Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

using innumerable Orientals for the exclusive purpose of building up a Latin power structure. It is said they like to do this voluntarily. But the truth is not that; many do this because they have no other alternative. The vanquished is given no other alternative, but to internalize the conqueror, and thus, as Paulo Freire puts it, "they become ambiguous beings 'housing' another." A long tradition of "housing" another leads them to a psychological identification with the conqueror, makes them to accommodate themselves to that life-style, and eventually begin to forget the oppression involved. Some of them may even defend the *status quo*. This is especially so when they are favoured with ecclesiastical honours or positions in the Church. This is another technique every oppressor makes use of, to keep the community of the oppressed under control. Thus in the Indian Church, positions of honour and power control are generally given to the members of the Latin Church, but rarely to members of the Oriental Church origin, especially when they have effectively given up their Oriental identity.

The norm of authentic relationship between human beings is that of an I-Thou relationship.¹⁶ Every "I" has to accept the "Thou" as a real thou, as a person with integrity and history, that is to say, to accept the other as he really is, with equal dignity and honour. If the Latin Church accepts the Oriental Church, it should be done in this just and honourable way, accepting that Church in its wholeness and integrity, as a "thou" of equal dignity and honour, respecting her age-old traditions, heritage and internal structures. This does not mean all these traditions and life-styles are to be eternally preserved. I am not at all in favour of that. We do need change, evolution, and even synthesis through mutual influence. But these changes, even if considered desirable for the Church by some, can never be unilaterally imposed by one party, and not at all, when the other is in an enslaved situation. That is why all the pleas made by the Latin Church to keep the Orientals under them, on the pretext of better administration, is bound to fail.

I do not mean that no person of one Church should serve the other Church. Such a situation is to be condemned as lack of openness. But this should be done in an atmosphere of full

16. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*.

freedom. Once the situation is redeemed from the tyranny of law unilaterally enacted in favour of the Latin Church, and the ban prohibiting the Orientals from working in the whole of India in their own Rite is lifted, then only there will be real freedom and those who want to work for another individual Church may freely do so.

ii) *Divide and Rule*

This is another fundamental dimension of the theory of oppressive action which is as old as oppression itself. As the oppressor minority subordinates and dominates the majority, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power. The minority cannot permit itself the luxury of tolerating the unification of the people, which would undoubtedly signify a serious threat to their own hegemony. Accordingly the oppressor halts by any method (including violence) any action which even in incipient fashion could awaken the oppressed to the need for unity. Concepts such as unity, organization, and struggle, are immediately labelled as dangerous. In fact, these concepts *are* dangerous—to the oppressors—for their realization is necessary to actions for liberation.¹⁷

I do not claim that the Orientals are in the majority in the Latin dioceses. Not at all. But innumerable Orientals are scattered all over the Latin dioceses. Any attempt to unify them is vigorously opposed as “dangerous”. It will pose serious threat to the unity of the Universal Church! But the Council of Vatican II says exactly the opposite: “Between these (Individual Churches or Rites), there flourishes an admirable brotherhood that this variety within the Church in no way harms her unity, but rather manifests it...”¹⁸

When Archbishop Padiyara submitted his report to Rome, there was a certain amount of disquietitude among the Latin Bishops. Actually there was nothing to fear. Just a census and a report. And that too to the highest Head of the Church, not to any political head. No patronage (*padroado*) of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi or any other political figure was sought. Yet

17. P. Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

18. Vat. II. *Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches*, No. 2.

the fear was there and a considerable amount of loose talk against the whole thing. The psychological reason is clear; any power established by suppressing another has the inherent curse of carrying the threat of the awakening of the oppressed. Therefore the awakening of the oppressed and any step towards their unification or organization will be systematically opposed. The mechanism that works here is the old imperialist principle of *Divide and Rule*.

Similarly when the Oriental Bishops submitted a memorandum to the Pope, the then Cardinal President of the CBCI (which in the Indian situation practically functions as an association of the Latin Bishops) wrote to the Cardinal Prefect of the Oriental Churches:

There is a fear expressed by several Latin Bishops that some of the actions of the Holy See may, unwillingly no doubt, not have been conducive to the unity of action which is essential for the Church in India to fulfil its mission. The recent '*ad limina*' visit of the Oriental Bishops and what seemed to be 'secret' dealings with the Holy See have aroused misgivings.¹⁹

Actions of the Holy See had been extremely painful to the Oriental Church. But to the credit of the Holy See it is also to be said that when matters are made clear, the Holy See, though extremely slow, has also shown its goodwill to rectify the situation. Viewed in the right perspective rectifying a situation or giving back to the Oriental Church the inalienable right that have been taken away from her due to the pressure from outside, need not be a matter of fear or threat at all. But definitely such an act would mean a threat to the imperialist mechanism of *Divide and Rule*.

iii) The third mechanism that operates in such established power-structures is *manipulation*.

Manipulation is another dimension of the theory of anti-dialogical action, and, like the strategy of division, is an instrument of conquest: the objective around which all the dimensions of the theory revolve. By means of manipulation the dominant elite try to make the masses conform to their

19. *Christian Orient*, op. cit., p. 39.

objectives. And the greater the political immaturity of these people (rural or urban) the more easily can they be manipulated by those who do not wish to lose their power.²⁰

The comparatively non-assertive character of the Orientals, sometimes interpreted as 'submissive' and 'obedient', is a favourable factor for manipulation, and this may very well correspond to the political immaturity of the masses. It is also very delicately related to the principle of obedience in the Church. Hence in the Church, obedience to Rome becomes a ground for manipulation. Therefore, to put pressure in Rome against any decision in favour of unifying the Orientals can be its strategy. In this context the question can be asked whether the memorandum of the Oriental Bishops to the Holy See can be regarded as manipulation. If the memorandum secretly demands the deprivation of the just rights of the Latin Church, it is certainly a kind of manipulation and deserves to be condemned. But as far as my knowledge goes the memorandum demands only the permission to live and exist with dignity and honour in the whole of India, not being subject to the whims and fancies of another power structure. If the obedience principle were not there, there would be no need for such a memorandum or any reason to seek the intervention of the Holy See. It is the Church structure and the desire of the Oriental Church to maintain the unity of the whole Church, that demanded such a representation to the Holy See. But social analysts seriously doubt whether justice will be obtained by way of memoranda and requests, if no programme of praxis, reflection and action, is attached to it.

Manipulation can take very attractive forms of promises and concessions and this may engender a sense of satisfaction in the oppressed.

Within certain historical conditions, manipulation is accomplished by means of pacts between the dominant and dominated classes—pacts which, if considered superficially, might give the impression of a dialogue between the classes. In reality, however, these pacts are not dialogue, because their true objectives are determined by the unequivocal interests of the dominant elite.²¹

20. P. Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

In this way the giving of new territories to the Oriental Church was considered to be a great concession to the Oriental Churches. This concession was made to avert the great threat of the unification of all the Orientals scattered all over India, and under condition that this 'right' should never be insisted on. But even that ideal and programme of action which was envisaged in the All India Seminar²² and renewed in Calcutta CBCI meeting²³, was later suppressed. I am not against the principle of coming to an agreement or a pact between the Individual churches in India. Actually we need it. But any pact or agreement we make should respect the principle of equality and freedom for all. Manipulation becomes necessary only when the suppressed are awakened.

In this historical phase, manipulation becomes a fundamental instrument for the preservation of domination. Prior to the emergence of the people, there is no manipulation (precisely speaking), but rather total suppression. When the oppressed are almost completely submerged in reality, it is unnecessary to manipulate them. In the antidialogical theory of action, manipulation is the response of the oppressor to the new concrete conditions of the historical process. Through manipulation, the dominant elite can lead the people into an unauthentic type of 'organization', and can thus avoid the threatening alternative, the true organization of the emerged and the emerging people.²⁴

Another mechanism with which the imperialists safeguard their power is:

iv) *Cultural Invasion*

The theory of antidialogical action has one last fundamental characteristic: cultural invasion, which like divisive tactics and manipulation also serves the ends of conquest. In this phenomenon, the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group and, ignoring the potential of the latter, they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade

22. "All India Seminar", *Church in India Today* (Bangalore, 1969), pp. 206-218.

23. *Christian Orient*, op. cit., p. 51.

24. P. Freire, op. cit., p. 117.

and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression.²⁵

Cultural invasion is a technique used by all power structures and is partially valid with regard to the Oriental Church itself. Yet the Oriental Church in Kerala has deeper cultural roots in India than the Latin Church. Impartial observers do acknowledge this fact. Here are the words of Fr Masson, SJ, the Missiologist of the Gregorian University:

They are 'latinized' and thus cut off, save in Kerala, from traditional Indian culture. To a great extent the work of making Christianity 'indigenous' has yet to be taken in hand.²⁶

Except in Sacred Liturgy, which they kept intact, the Oriental Church in Kerala has developed a life-style that is much more congenial to the culture of the place. This was more so before the advent of the Portuguese. Yet the Chaldéan cultural invasion was definitely there, especially in worship patterns, though even there as in marriage and other sacramentals, the inculturation process was already at work. As regards Liturgy, the opinion on Indianization is divided, just as the Indianization of the Roman Liturgy is opposed by some in the Latin Rite. But I should like to say here that there is a strong group in the Oriental Church which thinks on the lines of deeper and more radical Indianization of the Church. This does not mean giving up the old traditions altogether, but these traditions can be adapted and further developed.

As things stand now, in Kerala ecclesiastical meetings and prayer services related to them are always conducted in the language of the people. In Kerala I also see an innumerable number of religious priests and sisters praying their breviary in Malayalam in perfect Indian rhythm, except in a few religious houses belonging to the Latin Rite, where even now the Western breviary in English is used for prayer. In my own experience, it was only when I began my visits to the North to participate in ecclesiastical conferences and to give courses in different religious communities, especially of sisters, I realized how westernized our Church is. These sisters, the vast majority of whom

25. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

26. *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vols, 3/4, p. 71.

are from Kerala, are deprived of their cultural consistency and rhythm, especially in their prayer-life. A thoroughly western way of prayer-life has been imposed on them with an English Liturgy, Breviary and Hymns. The community language is also declared to be English, not the language of the place. Yet we cry aloud for 'inculturation'. Is it not an anomalous and irrational situation? These girls were well inculturated before they entered into these International Congregations. They would have remained essentially inculturated, at least in the rhythm of their prayer-life, if they had joined some Oriental congregations, because they have full breviary in their own mother-tongue and good Indian music. So also various other programmes of prayer-life. I do not mean that the people from Kerala should bring their culture or their language to the North. But a transition from one local language of India to another local language, be it northern or southern, is far easier than to go in for English rhythm in life and then bring about inculturation. But this is what is happening in India, especially in the whole of the North which is under Latin dominion. This is also true with regard to the vocations from Tamil Nadu and other language speaking areas, irrespective of the rite. Culture and language are the most potent means of domination. If the prayer-life and the medium of communication in the house is the local language, naturally the Westerners or the westernized Indian who can hardly speak any Indian language or pronounce the words correctly, loses his or her importance. The system is especially accepted and maintained for the dominance of these people. I am well aware of the new inculturating tendencies in the Church of India today. But I am also aware that much of this does not work in real communities (not in places where courses are given), because the Anglicised group objects to it on the plea that community programmes should be followed and enjoyed by everyone. I also do not deny the need of a link-language when people from different language groups meet. But this link-language of communication need not be the language of our prayer-life, nor the language of the house. The language of the house should rather be the language of the place. But that is not the case in many religious houses; they are not even allowed to use the language of the place in the community. Once people are deprived of their language and cultural rhythm, naturally their creativity drops and originality sinks. They be-

come objects. They have to imitate the language of the master. They are no more the real actors, though they may have the illusion of acting.

Whether urbane or harsh, cultural invasion thus is always an act of violence against the persons of the invaded culture who lose their originality or face the threat of losing it. In cultural invasion (as in all the modernities of antidialogical action) the invaders are the authors of, and actors in, the process; those they invade are the object. The invaders mould; those they invade are moulded. The invaders choose; those they invade follow that choice—are expected to follow it. The invaders act; those they invade have only the illusion of acting through the action of the invaders.²⁷

Our ecclesiastical situation is not very encouraging, nor very comfortable. But we have to face it and rectify it. Even now, where entry is denied to many Indian religious, because fortunately or unfortunately they were born in an ancient Church of India which happened to be Oriental, and are unwilling to give up what they are, (and Rome does not allow this 'giving up' business), entry is free to any foreigner, whatever his origin or culture, to start an institution or get involved in pastoral work provided he belongs to the Latin Rite. I am not at all against this international mingling but I fail to understand the same privilege is denied to the people of this country, in the name of Rite. And I have seen to my right and left houses of religious sisters where 95 or even 100 per cent of the inmates are from the Oriental families of Kerala, and yet their own brothers belonging to the same language, culture and Rite, are denied permission to render any official help to them, whereas any European is automatically entitled to the same, because he belongs to the Latin Rite. And yet we speak of inculturation! Is this not hypocrisy and insincerity? For whose advantage is this system? In this country it is not the non-Catholics, Hindus, Muslims or even atheists who have refused to accept us, the Orientals, as we are, but—I am very sad to say this—our fellow brothers of the Catholic Church. Hindus do not ask us to change our way of life or the style of our worship in order that we come and settle down in a new place in India, and get involved in some activity. But the Latin Church demands this. Thus it is

27. P. Freire, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

the painful reality and sad state of things some of your Catholic Brethren, namely the Orientals, are experiencing. A congregation like mine finds it very hard to live under such ruthless repression. It is simply not possible intellectually nor is it possible in the dynamics of its own life.

The cultural invasion gives birth to a counter-reality on the side of the oppressed. This is called the 'culture of silence' namely, a silent acceptance of the invading culture. Thus hundreds and thousands of Orientals are now living in the so-called culture of silence, and a vast number of them as members of the international congregations. But the era of the culture of silence is coming to an end. People, religious as well as lay, are beginning to realize the big ecclesial fallacy of this artificial unity and peace-making. Thus some of the leading congregations, the Capuchians and OCDs for example, have already opened Oriental provinces in accordance with the explicit directive given in the *Decree of Vatican II*.²⁸ There are many other congregations with innumerable Orientals as members still living steeped in the culture of silence. Though the Latin Church keeps saying that they all have received Latin rite 'freely'; but the fear is there whether, given real freedom which is not yet given, the situation will still be the same.

This study only shows that the same dynamics which the worldly powers use for the maintenance of the unjust systems they have created for retaining and performing their power, are operative also in our Church. We have to give up this mentality so that we may have a happy Church. The Christian vision of authority and power is entirely different. This is very clear from these words of Jesus addressed to his disciples:

You know that those who are supposed to rule over the gentiles lord it over them and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be the slave of all.²⁹

28. "Religious societies and associations of Latin Rite working in Eastern countries or among Eastern people are earnestly counselled to multiply the success of their apostolic labours by founding houses or even provinces of Eastern Rites, as far as this can be done." *Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches*, No. 6.

29. Mk 10:42-44.

A glance at the world situation will show us that we are far too slow in abandoning our prejudices and creating a just situation for all.

5. The Problem of Rites: The World-Situation versus India

The problem of the Co-existence of different Individual Churches or Rites is not a new problem for the Catholic Church, and by no means a problem restricted to the Indian subcontinent alone. In fact, today, almost all over the world various Individual churches co-exist, and that too with multiple jurisdiction. I quote a relevant passage from the account given by Mar Joseph Powathil, Bishop of Kanjirappilly: "For the Latin Catholics in Eastern territories their own hierarchies are established. So for example, in the Holy Land, there is a *Latin Patriarchate* in Jerusalem for about 5000 *Latins*. In Bulgaria there is a diocese and an Apostolic Vicariate for the Latin Church. In Ethiopia there is an Apostolic Vicariate. In Greece there is an Archbishopric, bishoprics and Apostolic Vicariate. In Iraq there is an Archbishopric for 2500 *faithful*. So also in Iran and in Turkey. There may not be more than 200000 Latin faithful in the above mentioned countries and yet they have so many vicariates, bishoprics, Archbishoprics and even a Patriarchate. Different Rites thus have their own proper hierarchies in the same territory. This is justified on the ground that it is required for the genuine good of the faithful which should be the primary aim of any jurisdiction.

For the Orientals who are in the West, their own hierarchies are established. In France, there are two Apostolic Exarchates for Ukrainians and Armenians. For the Chaldeans, Greeks, Maronites, Melchites, Rumanians, Syrians and Russians there is an Oriental Ordinariate. The same is true of the Orientals in Austria. In England and Germany there are Apostolic Exarchates for the Orientals.

In the United States, there is an Archbishopric, an bishopric and Apostolic Exarchate for the Ruthenians who are organized into 400 parishes at least. In Canada there is an Archdiocese, and three dioceses for the Ukrainians with 560 parishes. The Maronites have 43 parishes in the USA which are looked after by their own pastors. So also there are 24 parishes for the Melchites and 16 for the Rumenians. This shows that

with regard to territory both the Latins and the Orientals have jurisdiction in common (multi-jurisdiction) but with regard to the faithful, each Rite has got personal jurisdiction. Even multi-residences in the same place are found in many cities like Jerusalem, Bagdad, Beirut and different cities of USA and Canada.”³⁰ Why not in India? Cyril Mar Baselios provides an explanation:

At present there are about 20 particular and Individual Churches including the Latin Church in the Catholic communion, and in every one of them the Catholic Church is rendered present. All the Individual Churches except the Maronite Church have counterparts in the Non-Catholic Churches and ecclesial communities...

The apprehension and the preoccupations we show in the co-existence or even the possibility of co-existence of 3, out of 20, Individual Churches of the Catholic communion in India, betray either our ignorance of the actual situation of the Catholic Church, for that matter of the whole Christianity, or our unwillingness and inability to live together.³¹

Is this country of ours, which preached the doctrine of *ahimsa* and *panchasila*, *sarvodaya* and *lokasangraha*, the only place on the face of the earth where two or three Catholic Communities or Rites cannot co-exist? This is radically opposed to the philosophy of religious tolerance India has developed. India is quite accustomed to varieties in religious worship, and Hinduism itself is a big religion accommodating varieties of autonomous groups and sects and their worship patterns. If any country can adjust itself with great ease to the varieties of religious experience and expression within the same religion, it is India. She already witnesses so many varieties of prayer-forms, worship-patterns, even those which are completely Western and the Indianized forms, all in the same Church. She also witnesses different religious congregations operating on adjoining or the same campus, and their queer ways of dressing, and accepts them all as varieties within the same religion, based on their own historical traditions. Indians are not at all scandalized by any of these. On the contrary they are scandalized by our insistent pleading for importing Western missionaries to this country.

30. *Christian Orient*, op. cit., p. 19.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

whom they look upon as a danger to the cultural integrity of this nation, or when European delegates represent the Indian Church in the International conferences. A parish of the Oriental Community in a city which pursues a variety of religious expressions, is not at all going to be a scandal. The truth is quite the opposite at least as far as my experience and our community's experience is concerned. We have gained hearty acceptance from our Hindu brethren. Dharmaram in Bangalore and Divyodaya in Coimbatore, two institutions I am in touch with, are examples. Our problem is to obtain such acceptance from the Latin Church. The scandal of the counter-witness on which the Archbishop of Bhubaneswar dwells so much is, in fact, a projected argument, and an exaggeration of a few stray incidents. Even if this mode of argument is right, we cannot do away with such a scandal of divided Christianity, as long as non-Catholic communities exist in India. For non-Christians, Christianity is all one, the religion of the followers of Christ and it is divided any way in the world-scene, and so also in India. Two Rites in the same Church do not give rise to any new scandal at all. In this context I would also like to remind us of the fact that the greatest scandal and tension we had recently in our Church was in Bangalore, which was not based on Rite differentiation, but between two factions of the same Latin Rite. In fact, the Oriental Catholics in Bangalore whose rights are more denied, outnumber the Kannada Catholics who led the struggle against the Archbishop of Bangalore. Tensions may arise in history, testing our capacity for co-existence. This is to be handled with understanding and gentleness. To deprive a person of his natural right so that tension may not rise is against all principles of basic morality.

The real reason behind this persistent refusal of freedom to the Orientals is to be sought elsewhere. Here are a few clues to those hidden reasons;

1. Unlike other countries of Latin jurisdiction, where Oriental co-jurisdiction is allowed, here in many places or dioceses of the Indian sub-continent, there is no real church, but only declared territory with a large number of missionaries from the Oriental Church. The very anomalous situation is a threat.
2. The comparatively greater Indianness of the Oriental Church, its Apostolic Origin, ancient rootedness in the

Indian soil, its missionary potential, is another problem. Given freedom, will this make the Latin Church less important?

3. The fear of losing a considerable number of faithful to the Oriental Church who are well established and loyal.

Naturally these reasons are never mentioned and no established power will mention its selfish and hidden motivations. What is mentioned is unity and peace of the Church. We all know unity and peace do not mean dictatorship or monopoly of power. We had perhaps better order and political stability and a sort of peace emerging from that during the period of British empire, because of the unity of the government. But we did not opt for it, though we foresaw the possibility of communal upsurges and linguistic clashes. Rather we preferred a more authentic peace for our country, learning to live together in harmony and concord, accepting the other as he is and not subjecting ourselves, to one, huge, despotic empire-styled power structure. Real and authentic peace can never be obtained by the tyranny of law, by unshared, dictatorial power (in the ecclesiastical language, by one person's jurisdiction over all individual churches). Then why do we try this colonial illusion in the Church? Why can't we be open enough at least to the degree of the awakening of secular consciousness? The conditions for peace and harmony were well articulated by the Thomist Philosopher, Jacques Maritain in his speech at the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris, in 1947:

We all know that if peace is to be prepared in the thoughts of men and in the minds of the nations, it can only be done if those minds come to profound conviction of principles such as the following: that a good policy is first and foremost a just policy; that every nation must endeavour to understand the psychology, development and traditions, the material and spiritual needs, the personal dignity and historic vocations of other peoples, because each nation must keep in mind not only its own interest, but the common good of the family of nations; that a community of free men is inconceivable without the recognition by it that truth is the expression of what is right and just and not of what, at a given moment, is most advantageous to a group of men; that it is not possible to put an innocent man

to death because he has become a useless and costly burden to the nation or because he obstructs the activities of a particular group; that a human being has a dignity on which the good of the community is founded and which, in its own interest, it must respect, and that as a human being, as a civic being, as a social or working being, he has fundamental rights and fundamental duties; that the common weal must take precedence over individual interests; that the working world is entitled to undergo the social changes demanded by the fact that it has come of age historically, and that the masses are entitled to their share of the benefits of culture and of the intellect; that freedom of conscience is inviolable; that men of different creeds and different spiritual associations must recognize mutually their rights as fellow-citizens in the civilized community; that, for the common good, it is the duty of the State to respect religious liberty and freedom of research; that because of the essential equality of men, racial, class or caste prejudices and racial discrimination are an affront to human nature and to personal dignity and a crucial threat to peace.³²

This is the decency and gentleness of the secular man. How many years more will we have to wait to see the same in the ecclesial consciousness of our Indian Church, in the *sensus Ecclesiae*³³ about which the Archbishop of Bhubaneswar so eloquently speaks, when he talks about the priest in charge of the Orientals? The secular consciousness has gone far ahead in this matter. Already about three centuries ago, the Philosopher Spinoza, speaking about the organizing power of the State wrote as follows:

From the origination of the State... it follows quite clearly that its ultimate purpose is not domination, not to repress men through fear, or to put them under an authority other than their own; but the very opposite, namely, to free them from fear by enabling them to live as safely as possible, or, in other words, to provide the way in which each may

32. Cf. UNESCO, *The Birthright of man*, pp. 519-520.

33. Cf. *Christian Orient*, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

best retain his right to exist and act, i.e., without hurt either to himself or to others.³⁴

Such a spirit of generosity and human decency should animate also the ecclesial power-structure; and all the more so, because it is a spiritual authority and is so much involved with the delicate problem of obedience. Of course, we need order and harmony, arrangements and understanding. But these can never be successfully obtained by curbing the rights of another person, and absolutely impossible, once the consciousness of that person is awakened.

6. The Awakening of 'Solidarity' among the Orientals

The Oriental Church in India is now passing through one of its critical periods in history and is making an attempt towards liberation as any other groups or communities trying to liberate itself from the oppressive structures interested parties have created. Generally we see such situations in socio-economic fields, often also in socio-political fields. Thus the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century witnessed freedom struggles of nations trying to liberate themselves from colonial power-structures. Today there is great awareness with regard to the economic structures which the colonial nations have established for their benefit disregarding the needs and rights of the developing countries. The basic principle that underlies the liberation theology is precisely this; the structure that has been built, ignoring the right of another, though it has continued for a long time, is not justified, because it lacks inner justice for its justification. Its inner core is selfishness and hence ultimately sinful and therefore something to be rejected.

In socio-economic and political fields the presence of injustice is understood easily, and normally the popular support is also easily available. Within the Church it is very different. First of all the awareness of the lack of social justice within the Church comes rather slowly. The popular awareness advances at a greater speed than the ecclesial. But the Church on the other hand lays foundation for such a social justice. Secondly, within the Church, the oppression is based on thoroughly eccle-

34. Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, 1670, quoted in *Birth-right of Man*. p. 130.

sial power-structures, which many may not even understand. The oppression in the Church is, therefore, of a very subtle nature and many are not even aware of this oppression. But this does not justify the case. Many slaves were not aware of their own pitiable situation. The word conscientization coined by Paulo Freire came to be used as a pedagogy of the oppressed. It is taking into consideration all these points that we now come to the core of the ecclesial oppression within the Church.

There is also a third element involved in this particular issue, namely, it is a fight against an oppressive power-structure to which the oppressed have to give their obedience at any cost and this alone explains the continuation of such a situation in the Church. Though the injustice of the situation is so obvious and clear, and all the documents from the highest authorities demands the abolition of the situation, it continues. The simple explanation: those who have usurped power for their benefit do not and will not willingly give it up. Because they believe the oppressed has to be obedient they do not expect any revolt either. Hence the holy and divine principle of obedience actually perpetuates injustice and helps breed established violence. Whether this type of obedience is sinful I do not know. Any way I have my doubts on that point.

Russia is a super power. But she is an anti-colonial power-structure, especially against the colonial western interests. It is she who generally pleads for the third world countries in the international circles. But for her own interest she too fosters colonial exploitation. This is the story of many nations in Eastern Europe. Poland is said to be the victim of her colonial interest. The Solidarity that has been formed among the workers of Poland is suppressed by the Russian authority. But the structures of suppression, religious or anti-religious have much in common. Let us make an analysis of the suppression in Poland and compare it with the type of ecclesial suppression we have in India.

What is Solidarity?

Halina Bortnowska, a member and adviser of the Solidarity Movement in Poland explains it as follows:

Solidarity is a concrete historical, social movement which is now one of the most important expressions of what I

call the subjectivity of Polish society, its capacity to act as subject rather than object of history, in the perspective of the "solidarity of conscience" of those values for which the movement exists.³⁵

Solidarity is a liberation movement. It is the awakening of a collective consciousness for truth, justice and freedom. In Poland it is fully supported and maintained by the Church. It is an ecclesial movement as well.

The struggle for freedom led by the Oriental Christians in India is also an ecclesial movement, an attempt of a collective Christian consciousness for justice. The main difference is that the Oriental Christians are fighting against another power-structure within the Church. It is the power-structure of Latin jurisdiction which keeps the Orientals under them and exploits their personnel for their own survival in India. The Solidarity Movement is a movement of subjectivity: that is a definite refusal to be the objects of any other power-structure. This is what exactly is happening in India. The colonially established Latin Church in India is vastly different from the Latin Church in any other part of the world. In India the Latin Church has no personnel, especially for mission work. They recruit personnel from the Oriental community. Without any hesitation or pricks of conscience all international congregations use people from the Oriental Church, but seldom allow the Orientals to live as Orientals. They are simply made objects: latinized. It is only as such that they are allowed to do some missionary work in India. Thus Orientals in India are made objects solely for the growth of the Latin Church. We may enumerate any number of examples to substantiate this. Nagaland mission is the most glaring example. Calicut diocese is another example. Many Latin congregations in India today survive on account of the vocations from the Oriental Church. This practice has continued in open defiance of the teaching of the Church. Vatican II, clearly states the policy to be followed in these circumstances.³⁶

35. *Cross Currents* (Fall, 1981), p. 335.

36. *Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches* states:

"They enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, even with respect to preaching the Gospel to the whole world under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff." All commentators agree that this article three was formulated taking into

Taking into consideration all this, it seems to me that the Latin jurisdiction in India, as it operates today, is one of the most inhuman and unchristian power-structures that exists in our world. It is inhuman, because it denies human dignity and equality to the Orientals. They are denied the right to exist and express themselves freely. It is unchristian because it is against the Law of Christ, which is love, to keep a people suppressed by the tyranny of Law, for the benefit of another group. After Vatican II the present structure is also illegal, in the sense that the structures are retained in flagrant violation of the directives of the Decrees.³⁷

Until and unless this unjust situation is rectified, until and unless equal dignity and honour is accorded to every member of the Church, whether Latin or Oriental, until and unless we are ready to accept and appreciate each other as we really are, not making the other our servants or slaves, the Church in India will never be happy. It will always have to live in the fear of being conscientized about the unjust situation she has created and will keep bleeding from the lethal wound this colonially characterized ecclesial power-structure has inflicted upon her. May I now conclude this section with the words of Tagore who envisaged a humanity of love and concord:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into
fragments by narrow domestic walls...
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
Let my country awake.³⁸

account the strange situation in India where the Orientals did not have this fundamental right to preach the Gospel according to their own ecclesial heritage. "The real reason why the right to preach the Gospel, that the right to engage in missionary activity, is especially mentioned among the rights and obligations of all the Individual churches is to be traced to the situation in India, where the Malabar Church, which has a large surplus of priests, was until recently only permitted to convert people to the Latin Rite."

(*Commentary of the Documents of Vat. II*, edited by Herbert Vorgrimler, Vol. I. London, 1967, p. 515; cf. also Victor J. Pospishil's, *The Decree on the Eastern Churches of the II Vat. Council* (New York, 1965).

37. The Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, N. 6.

38. R. Tagore, *Gitanjali*, No. XXXV.

PART II

CALL TO RECONCILIATION AND MUTUAL ACCEPTANCE

Though I have very clearly unveiled the facts of oppression and described the sufferings of an individual Church under the colonial aggression of an empire-minded Church, this does not mean mutual reconciliation is not possible. The searching analysis was made so that we may ultimately overcome the situation. The Orientals also may have their own limitations, short-comings and failures. These also are to be set right. Many writers have said that in the initial struggle for liberation, the oppressed may imitate the oppressors and turn out to be counter aggressive. This may not be good policy for establishing lasting peace. Though I do not see this kind of aggressiveness in the Oriental Church, I do see an exaggerated tendency to hold on to tradition, and thus a refusal to change. This may be due to a preservation complex, especially because they feel threatened by a big power. This situation also is to be remedied. Just as the charism of a religious congregation does not put the congregation in a predicament of stagnancy so also no authentic Apostolic Experience will keep a Church for ever a slave of the past. Genuine experience is to be given expression. And expression should be congenial to the culture she lives in. My humble claim is just this that the Oriental Church has done it comparatively better.³⁹ She has still to go very far. And in this march she has also to take into consideration the presence of a Latin Church now present in India, appreciate their missionary enterprise and to accept them as a reality with which she has to co-exist. What we all have to look up to is a Church which is a world of mutual acceptance and appreciation, with equity, equality, dignity and honour. The ideal before us is the ideal of the Kingdom of God which Christ our Lord preached. Fr George Soares-Prabhu S.J. summarizes the core message of the Kingdom as follows:

Briefly, then, the core-message of Jesus contains an *indicative* which epitomizes all Christian Theology and an *imperative* which sums up all Christian ethics. Its indicative

39. Cf. V.F. Veneeth, "Pneuma and Charisma in the Indian Church" in: *Jeevadhara*, No. 70 (1982), p. 275.

is the proclamation of the Kingdom, that is, the revelation of God's unconditional love. Its imperative is a call to repentance, that is, the demand that we open our heart to this love and respond to it by loving God in neighbour. Behind the high and tangled hedge of abstract speculation that the theology has built around it, this is really what the message of Jesus is all about.⁴⁰

The message is clear and unequivocal: God is love, we are called to accept the love of God and we can do this only by loving God in neighbour. When this core-message is accepted and put into practice, then it will give birth to a new world. If we practise it in the Church, we will witness the birth of a new Church, a Church in which freedom, fellowship and justice are guaranteed to all...

When the revelation of God's love (the Kingdom) meets its appropriate response in man's trusting acceptance of this love (repentance), there begins a mighty moment of personal and social liberation which sweeps through human history. The movement brings *freedom* in as much as it liberates each individual from the inadequacies and obsessions that shackle him. It fosters *fellowship*, because it empowers free individuals to exercise their concern for each other in genuine community. And it leads on to *justice*, because it impels every true community to adopt the just societal structures which alone make freedom and fellowship possible. Freedom, fellowship and justice are thus the parameters of the Kingdom's thrust towards the total liberation of man. Together they spell out the significance of the Kingdom, and tell us what the Kingdom, in practice, means today.⁴¹

We are all to be reconciled in the new Kingdom which Jesus has opened for us all: a kingdom of justice, freedom and love. Our power of unity is the bond of this love which accepts everyone, appreciates everyone and in that loving, free atmosphere, inspires everyone to offer himself for the service of the

40. G.S. Prabhu S.J., *The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a New Society* (Bangalore, NBCLC, 1981), p. 24.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

other. Reconciliation as the Greek word signifies is restoration.⁴² If we really want reconciliation, the alienated human rights should be restored. Then only a world of equality and freedom will emerge, where all can smile and greet one another without any heaviness of heart, without the feeling of being exploited. But the reconciliation is not just restoration alone.

It is a radically new way of looking at the reality of life transformed by Jesus Christ. The Jews regarded Gentiles as enemies and unacceptable to their religion. But Christ has pulled down the barrier and fashioned a new humanity where Jews and Gentiles were both accepted on the basis of equality. This new reality was simply to be accepted, whether the Jews liked it or not, whether the Gentiles liked it or not. So also masters and slaves were brought together to a new humanity on a basis of equality. The Gentiles were not asked to be circumcised, though even after Pentecost, it was a problem for the apostles. Nor were the Jews asked to follow the way of the Gentiles. In the new humanity inaugurated by Christ, neither circumcision nor non-circumcision matters. "What matters is faith that makes its power felt through love."⁴³ This community of love can really contain everyone, every culture and every tradition. And all are equal. The messianic vision of the Kingdom of God portrayed in Isaiah gives us a picture of this Kingdom. It is a wonderful co-existence of different kinds of people in perfect peace.

Wolves and sheep will live together in peace and leopards will lie down with young goat calves, and lion cubs will feed together and little children will take care of them.⁴⁴

A real picture of fellowship is presented here accepting each one in its own variety and beauty. Every animal is not given a leopard-skin so that they may get an entry into the Kingdom. They are all admitted to the kingdom as they really are and the Spirit of God will give their king wisdom, knowl-

42. J.M. Pathrapankal, "Reconciliation and the Kingdom of God", paper presented in the Annual meeting of the Indian Theological Association, held at St Pius College, Bombay, Oct. 22-24, p. 1&2.

43. Gal. 5:6.

44. Isaiah, 11:6.

edge and skill to rule his people and he will rule them with justice and integrity.⁴⁵

Any system we evolve or envisage to solve the problem of Rites should have this basic characteristic of justice and integrity, this readiness and openness to accept variety and pluralism.

Coming to the real, practical solutions for reconciliation we have three possible alternatives proposed by different groups of people. They are: multi-jurisdiction in overlapping territories; single territory and single jurisdiction; and One Rite, One jurisdiction for the whole of India. I would like to be basically open to all these possibilities, though they present certain difficulties, especially the last one. The Orientals insist on multi-jurisdiction whereas the Latins prefer single jurisdiction. By pressing for single jurisdiction the Latins do not lose anything; but by demanding multiple jurisdiction the Orientals want to regain their rights which were taken away from them. Let us make a brief survey of these possibilities.

1. Multiple Jurisdiction

In principle, multiple jurisdiction does not go against the spirit of the Church. It is only a theology of mutual acceptance and equality of all communities and traditions in the Church. It is only against an empire-consciousness which unfortunately got the upper hand in the Church structures, where territory is considered more important than human integrity and the freedom of the individuals.

In asking for multiple jurisdiction the Orientals ask only permission to exist and to give free expression to what they are, instead of being under any other oppressing power-structure. This in itself is a very simple and reasonable demand. The Orientals do not demand that the Latins should be under them. But in insisting on one jurisdiction, the Latin hierarchy demands that the Orientals should be under them; and that too in a country where the Oriental Church was in existence long before the Latin Church, with an all India jurisdiction.

Moreover, the denial of the possibility of establishing multiple jurisdiction practically gives a death blow to all ecume-

45. *Isaiah*, 11:2&5.

nical movements in India and will certainly have wider repercussions all over the world. Given the possibility of a reunion, are we going to press those churches to accept the jurisdiction of the Latin bishops in India? This will be certainly humiliating for them, and this is by no means a justifiable demand.

2. One Jurisdiction with Freedom and Justice to All

If the principle of multi-jurisdiction is not at all acceptable to the Latin hierarchy, then they should propose an alternative. In this alternative both parties should come to a closer understanding of the valid points of the other, and a way of mutual acceptance and appreciation must be guaranteed. As this possible alternative we can think of a single jurisdiction—territories under bishops, Latin or Oriental. This system, if acceptable, should guarantee the inalienable right of existence and freedom of expression of the various groups or Rites in the same diocese, no matter who the bishop is. There must be certain norms for guaranteeing these rights so that they are not left to the arbitrary decision of a Bishop of either Rite. In this alternative single jurisdiction is guaranteed as also basic freedom and equality to all. Hence:

1. There may be parishes of either Rite in the same diocese, but under one bishop.
2. Communities belonging to either Rite will be allowed (basic freedom) to open their houses in either diocese.
3. A community which is largely or totally made of Oriental personnel should be considered an Oriental community and their worship patterns must be Orientalized accordingly, not only in Mass but also in other details.
4. The parishes may also be bi-ritual or even tri-ritual, all organized under one bishop.
5. In short for all practical purposes it will be a bi- or tri-ritual diocese where equality is guaranteed for all.
6. The bishop of such a diocese need not always be Latin or Oriental. The best priest in the diocese, irrespective of the Rite, should be selected to be the bishop.
7. Naturally with regard to the unevangelized areas it appears reasonable to follow the Rite of the people

who work there as missionaries. But this should not rule out the possibility of another group or congregation coming there and working for the Kingdom. In all systems we should be able to accommodate and follow the principle of pluralism.

8. This principle, if accepted, should be applied to the whole of India, including Kerala.

3. One Rite, One Jurisdiction for the whole of India

There is a one Rite movement in our country. *Vaidika-mitram* basically stands for that. It is *anathema* for some, both from the Latin and Oriental Churches. Because it involves many problems and therefore requires to be investigated further, I am not in a position to speak anything definite about it. By no stretch of imagination can a new Rite be created overnight and imposed on anyone. It is a gradual process which can eventually lead us to that goal.

It seems to me that any successful move in that direction is possible only after we having worked out the first or the second alternative we have mentioned. Once basic freedom and mutual acceptance are guaranteed, though initially there will be a struggle for self-assertion, gradually people will be more willing to think on constructive lines. Thus in the free and loving atmosphere of the Church the individual churches may produce Indianized versions of their Liturgy and, as necessary, other worship-patterns. These forms will co-exist along with other traditional patterns. The One Rite or one jurisdiction that may eventually emerge will actually contain all these various forms, though the unpopular forms will naturally die out. Will such a Rite be condemned as hybrid or unnatural? If Rites can come into being and develop through the influence of culture and through the co-existence of other Rites, there is nothing unnatural in this proposal. But evidently, it cannot be artificially made all on a sudden, but is to be allowed to evolve. In any case it should be able to accept and accommodate variety and pluralism. This suggestion gives rise to another delicate problem. Supposing this one Rite is possible, in the larger ecclesial context, how are we going to designate this Indian Church? Having originated in India, will it be known as an Oriental Patriarchate? Or will it be a part of the Latin Church? This question is

important because it helps decide much of its autonomy and freedom. To have an Indian Patriarchate with its own autonomy and freedom will be certainly good for India. If we continue to remain part of the Latin Church, will we really have that kind of freedom and autonomy? On the other hand, if that emerging Church or Rite is declared to be an Oriental Patriarchate, will it please the Latinites in this country? These and many other problems deserve to be seriously considered before we say anything definite on this matter. Perhaps a redeemed situation, in which the Kingdom of God once again begins to reign supreme in the Indian Church promising freedom, fellowship and justice to all may one day land us there. Whether such a thing is possible or not, at present our duty is to make the Kingdom a reality in India, in the India of our own time, a Kingdom in which peace and unity meet and love and concord reign. I conclude this paper with a prayerful wish for such a Kingdom, a wish with which our fathers concluded the most ancient religious literature of our country:

United your resolve, united your hearts,
may your spirit be at one,
that you may long together dwell
in unity and concord.⁴⁶

46. *Rig Veda*, X.191.4.

Further Clarifications

Recently I happened to hear from the leaders of the Church as well as read in some of the ecclesial papers a new wave of arguments raised against the rights of the Oriental Church in India. The most widely quoted of them all is the new ecclesial slogan: the sons of the soil. Many, perhaps innocently begin to use this slogan without properly understanding the anti-missiological torpedo it carries within it. A philosophy of the sons of the soil sounds nice because of its apparent concern for and commitment to the people of the place. I would welcome this idea in this sense. But how to reconcile this slogan with the idea of mission.

The word mission takes its origin from the Latin root *mitere* which means "to send". Mission is essentially a sending. A true missionary is one who is sent. He is the message-bearer of Christ. He carries his message to all parts of the world. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19). If the sons of the soil philosophy is stressed too much, then there is no point in going or being sent. Everybody is expected to do mission work in the soil they were born or in the region they belong to. Mission or sending does not mean more than that. Of course the concern for his own people must be very central to every man and a missionary from among themselves because he is culturally better equipped will be a better suited person to bring the good news to them. Even if this principle is accepted who should bring the good news to the teeming millions of non-Christian Indians? Is it missionaries from abroad or men and women of this country? It is the Oriental Christians who are all Indians who have the highest missionary potential in this vast country with 98 per cent of non-Christian population. Who can ever bring the good news of the Gospel to a place where no one from the land is a missionary? And why a missionary from India cannot when a missionary from Europe can?

The sons of the soil slogan is used only against the Orientals—and hence on that account very partially and insincerely. The

very people and leaders of the Church who preach the sons of the soil slogan work hard to keep the foreign missionaries in this country. This was very evident recently when on political grounds Indian Government demanded the deportation of a foreign missionary. I am not at all against having foreign missionaries in this country. But the sons of the soil slogan, if accepted, will most adversely affect the foreign missionaries in this country. It will also badly affect the Latin Church, because many Latin dioceses in India are simply declared territories with no Christians from the soil. No evangelization work can be done there unless people come from elsewhere. The few Mangaloreans, Goans or Anglo-Indians who are now working in these regions as missionaries are certainly not the sons of the soil. A certain sister belonging to the Latin Rite once told me about the sons of the soil slogan against the coming of the Kerala Church to the North, while she herself was for more than 29 years a principal of an English Medium school in the North. Sometimes we dig pits in which we ourselves unknowingly fall.

Hence the slogan as it is presented is to be rejected. We need cooler and more mature thinking in this respect. Perhaps what we really need will be another slogan: *Culture of the soil*. Any missionary sent anywhere should certainly carry the message unchanged, but should also adapt himself to the culture of the people. Hence the slogan "culture of the soil" does make sense. But this is precisely neglected by the Latin Church in the North, especially in the matter of language which is predominantly English and worship forms which are largely western. No church in India has penetrated into the culture of the soil as the Church of St. Thomas in Kerala. And because of this very reason they get greater acceptability in India. By this I do not mean that the Kerala Church should be transplanted to the North exactly as it is now. It may need further transformation to the culture of the new soil. But a Church which is comparatively better used to the culture of an Indian soil will be certainly able to continue the process elsewhere in India as well. Let us therefore be more sincere and speak from our inner conscience. In our missionary enterprise what we need is not a sons of the soil slogan but a readiness to accept the culture of the soil. The sons of the soil philosophy will take away the very idea of mission from the Church.

Evading the issue

It seems that there is a tendency to evade the issue proposed in the paper by directing our attention towards some greater problems. For example the respondent to my paper at Bombay concluded as follows:

Given the more vital interest of the larger sections of the people of India I feel that I must direct my energies to issues outside the Church. In a country where lakhs of women are being raped every year, the literacy rate among certain sections of women as low as one per cent, how could I strive to provide Oriental liturgy to a small group of sisters who have voluntarily come to serve the people of North India?

First of all I have already said in my preface that the question of the Oriental Rite is not simply a matter of liturgy alone. Secondly even if this kind of argument is accepted as valid, why can't we be above such national issues directing our attention to still greater international problems? Even the very survival of this planet is threatened by an atomic war. Often we find in politics this type of tactic. When a leader is incapable of settling internal problems he tries his level best to divert the attention of the people to problems of threat from outside. What we really need is a real will to solve both our internal and external problems.

As regards the sisters who have come to the North from an Oriental Church, it is to be admitted that they have every right to continue to be Orientals. The question of freedom does not arise at all. None of them was really free because no alternative was possible.

"Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same." *Indian Constitution*, art. 29.1.

"Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right to manage its own affairs in matters of religion." *Indian Constitution*, art. 26.2.

Relevant Passages from the Documents of Vatican II

1. Decree on Eastern Churches:

Art. 3: Such individual Churches, whether of the East or of the West, although they differ somewhat among themselves in what are called rites (that is, in liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline, and spiritual heritage) are, nevertheless, equally entrusted to the pastoral guidance of the Roman Pontiff, the divinely appointed successor of St. Peter in supreme governance over the universal Church. They are consequently of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others by reason of rite. They enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, even with respect to preaching the gospel to the whole world (cf. Mk. 16:15) under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff.

Art. 4: Therefore, attention should everywhere be given to the preservation and growth of each individual Church. For this purpose, parishes and a special hierarchy should be established for each where the spiritual good of the faithful so demands. The Ordinaries of the various individual Churches which have jurisdiction in the same territory should, by taking common counsel in regular meetings, strive to promote unity of action. Through common endeavour let them sustain common tasks, the better to further the good of religion and the more effectively to safeguard clerical discipline.

All clerics and those aspiring to sacred orders should be well instructed in various rites and especially in the principles which are involved in inter-ritual questions. As part of their catechetical education, the laity, too should be taught about these rites and their rules.

Finally, each and every Catholic, as also the baptized number of every non-Catholic Church or community who enters into the fulness of Catholic communion, should everywhere retain his proper rite, cherish it, and observe it to the best of his ability. This rule does not deny the right whereby persons, communities, or areas may in special cases have recourse to the Apostolic See, which, as the supreme judge of inter-church relations, will directly or through other authorities meet the needs of the occasion in an ecumenical spirit and issue opportune directives, decrees, or rescripts.

2. Decree on Liturgy:

Art. 4: Finally, in faithful obedience to tradition, this most sacred Council declares that holy Mother Church holds all lawfully acknowledged rites to be of equal authority and dignity; that she wishes to preserve them in the future and to foster them in the future and to foster them in every way. The Council also desires that, where necessary, the rites be carefully and thoroughly revised in the light of sound tradition, and that they be given new vigour to meet the circumstances and needs of modern times.

3. Decree on Ecumenism:

Art. 15: Everybody also knows with what love the Eastern Christians enact the sacred liturgy, especially the celebration of the Eucharist, which is the source of the Church's life and the pledge of future glory. In this celebration the faithful, united with their bishop and endowed with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, gain access to God the Father through the Son, the Word made flesh, who suffered and was glorified. And so, made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4), they enter into communion with the most holy Trinity. Hence, through the celebration of the Eucharist of the

Lord in each of these Churches, the Church of God is built up and grows in stature, while through the rite of concelebration their bond with one another is made manifest.

In this liturgical worship, the Christians of the East pay high tribute, in very beautiful hymns, to Mary ever Virgin, whom the Ecumenical Synod of Ephesus solemnly proclaimed to be God's most holy Mother so that, in accord with the Scriptures, Christ may be truly and properly acknowledged as Son of God and Son of Man. They also give homage to the saints, including Fathers of the universal Church.

Although these Churches are separated from us, they possess true sacraments, above all—by apostolic succession—the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in a very close relationship. Therefore, given suitable circumstances and the approval of Church authority, some worship in common is not merely possible but is recommended.

Moreover, in the East are to be found the riches of those spiritual traditions to which monasticism gives special expression. From the glorious days of the holy Fathers, there flourished in the East that monastic spirituality which later flowed over into the Western world, and there provided a source from which Latin monastic life took its rise and has often drawn fresh vigour ever since. Therefore Catholics are strongly urged to avail themselves more often of these spiritual riches of the Eastern Fathers, riches which lift up the whole man to the contemplation of divine mysteries.

All should realise that it is of supreme importance to understand, venerate, preserve and foster the exceedingly rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches, in order faithfully to preserve the fullness of Christian tradition, and to bring about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians.

4. Decree on Pastoral Office of Bishops:

Art. 23: For the same reasons, where there are faithful of a different rite, the diocesan bishop should provide for their spiritual needs either through priests or parishes of that rite or through an episcopal vicar endowed with the necessary faculties. Wherever it is fitting, the latter should also have episcopal rank. Or, the Ordinary himself may perform the office of an Ordinary of different rites. If for certain reasons, these arrangements are not feasible in the eyes of the Apostolic See, then a proper hierarchy for the different rites is to be established.

