A new evangelization: Toward the dialogical creation of a new culture of global solidarity

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A NEW EVANGELIZATION:
TOWARD THE DIALOGICAL CREATION OF A NEW CULTURE OF GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, human beings have struggled to satisfy their natural social inclinations by searching for a path for living a good life together. In the present age, the increasing human interconnectedness has made the identification of living justly and peacefully together even more urgent.

Undeniably, globalization has offered multiple opportunities for sharing an improved quality of life due to the advancements of science and technology and of building solidarity across national borders. In addition, globalization has been closely associated with a widening disparity between rich and poor countries, as well the escalation of internal social conflicts and the environmental destruction. Furthermore, the respect for the absolute value of the dignity of every human person, the protection of fundamental human rights, and the implementation of an authentic cultural and religious pluralism are not yet widely practiced due to an unequal distribution of social power.

Therefore, the new global configuration of human relations incorporating both a national and international commitment to the common good by pursuing justice, peace, and an environmentally sustainable development must become an absolute priority. Although this endeavor involves all the domains of social life, it primarily entails the development of a culture in which all people participate in the distribution of the universal resources as well as in political decision-making processes.

The Judeo-Christian religious tradition has played a decisive role the development of Western culture and has become a crucial element of the cultural heritage of many countries throughout the world. The universal character of this tradition is grounded in

the theological tenet that, through Jesus Christ, the God of Israel has established a new covenant with all humanity and the risen Lord has entrusted his disciples with the mission of proclaiming this good news to all nations (Matt 28:19-20).

In most Western countries, however, the Christian faith has lost its relevance for many Catholics, in spite of the continual efforts of the Church to spread the gospel of God's reign through the celebration of sacraments, the proclamation of the Word of God and the commitment to the works of justice and charity. This crisis of faith is due, in part, to one situation: openness to transcendence has been progressively replaced by a pragmatic mentality informed by empiricism and scientism. More specifically, secularization not only has marginalized faith to the sphere of private consciences, but the religious sensibility toward building up civil society has become increasingly irrelevant. Consequently, Catholics have progressively dissociated their faith from their social responsibilities and have more or less directly cooperated in the development of a culture that tolerates global injustices due to unnuanced and unconditional pluralism.

In response to modern cultural transformations that have negatively affected the public profession and transmission of the Christian faith in the Western world, the Catholic Church has launched a program for a "new evangelization."

In June 1979, during his visit to the sanctuary of Mogila in Nova Huta, Poland, John Paul II used the expression "new evangelization" to indicate the need for proclaiming the gospel in our contemporary society.[1] Then in 1983, at the assembly of the Latin American bishops at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, the Pope stated that "the

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[1] John Paul II, *Homily at the Shrine of Holy Cross, Mogila, Poland*, 9 June 1979. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19790609_polonia-mogila-nowa-huta_en.html (accessed on 06-07-2012)

commemoration of the five hundred years of evangelization will have its full meaning if it will be a commitment not to re-evangelization, but to a new-evangelization, new in ardor, methods and expressions."[2] More recently, in his address to the members of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization in 2011, Benedict XVI asserted that the term "new evangelization refers to the need for a renewed modality of proclamation, especially for those who live in the present context in which secularization had grave consequences even in those countries of Christian tradition… In this moment the Church is called to perform a new evangelization, namely to intensify the missionary action to respond to Christ's commission."[3] In this statement, the Pope seems to extend the original scope of renewed evangelization from Western European and North American countries to the global world, acknowledging that the imagination of new methods of proclaiming the gospel is central to the Church's universal mission in inculturating the Christian faith in the contemporary cultures.

The history of the Church's evangelization is intertwined with the history of the Church's mission of participating in the life of the Triune God whose essence is self-giving love.[4] This mission is grounded in the message about the reign of God that Jesus preached and witnessed to. Jesus proclaimed the vision of a new society and culture

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[2] John Paul II, "Opening Address to the Sixth General Assembly of CELAM" in *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition. 16/780, 1983.

[3] Benedict XVI, *Address to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization*, 30 May 2011. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110530_nuova-evangelizzazione_en.html (accessed on 04-22-2012)

[4] Second Vatican Council, *Decree Ad Gentes on the Mission Activity of the Church*, 1965, n.2. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html (accessed on 04-20-2012)

based on an alternative way of thinking about God, oneself, and community.[5] The disciples' faith in Jesus impelled them to form a Christian Church (Acts 11:26) and to continue Jesus' mission throughout the world. It should be added that, in addition to the apostles missioned by Jesus himself, the best missionaries of the early Church were ordinary people who preached the gospel by loving one another and taking care of others, including those who were not members of their communities.

After Constantine declared Christianity the official religion of the empire in the fourth century, Christians began to give witness to their faith by fleeing from the world and living ascetic and solitary lives. This movement, called monasticism, progressively shifted from the individual to the communal type of witness. While St. Benedict's version of monasticism contributed to the preservation of the Western secular and religious culture and to the promotion of evangelization in Europe, different forms of monasticism developed in Syria, Persia, China, and India. From the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, the mendicant movement became dominant in preaching the gospel in Western countries. In the sixteenth century, missionaries accompanied Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese explorers and began to evangelize the indigenous people of the Americas and Asia. In this context, Jesuits inaugurated a new kind of mission more attentive to local cultures and more involved in dialogue with them. Then three centuries later, an explosion of missionary activity coincided with European colonization. In the twentieth century, the Second Vatican Council encouraged the Church to appreciate indigenous cultures and urged missionaries to "learn by sincere and patient dialogue what treasures a

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[5] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue. Reflections on Christian Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011), 115-37.

generous God has distributed among the nations of the earth."[6] In the *Declaration on Non-Christian Religions*, the Council acknowledged other religions contain "a ray of that Truth which enlightens all peoples."[7] Ten years after the conclusion of the Council, Paul VI in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* articulated the Church's new and broader understanding of its mission that included evangelization of cultures and works for peace and justice.[8] Finally, John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptoris missio* has spoken of mission as a "single but complex reality" that includes also reconciliation, inculturation, and interreligious dialogue.[9]

Both prophetic witness and dialogue have marked the Church's long missionary history, grounded in the universal commitment to proclaim the good news. Christianity was born in the Middle East, spread to Europe, as well to India, Persia, and China, and even to Ethiopia and North Africa. In the course of its missionary activity, the Church entered into dialogue in various degrees with Judaism, Roman religions, religious practices of northern Europe, not omitting Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Confucianism. While many missionaries, such as Cyril and Methodius, and Bartolomé de Las Casas, understood local cultures as they promoted the well-being of the people they served,

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6 Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Mission Ad gentes*, n.11.

7 Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*: *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965, n.2. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html (accessed on 07-02-2012)

8 Paul VI, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi,* 8 December 1975, nn. 20 and 37. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html (accessed on 03-02-2012)

9 John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Redemptoris Missio.* 7 December 1990, n.41. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html (accessed on 02-14-2012)

other missionaries denigrated local cultures and religions as they supported the European colonial expansion in the nineteenth century.

The new evangelization, centered on Jesus Christ, and the new evangelizers, called to proclaim Christ, focus on the mysteries of his death, resurrection, and ascension, while stressing the importance of the Spirit in helping their listeners to discern the ethical implications on their conduct. In this respect, John Paul II in his first encyclical letter *Redemptor hominis* asserts that "Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church. He himself is our way 'to the Father's house' and is the way to each man. …Man in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community ...in the sphere of the whole of mankind, this man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission."[10] If the evangelists' eyes are fixed on Christ, they should be also fixed on their brothers and sisters who are thirsty, hungry, strangers, naked, sick, and imprisoned, since Christ identified himself with them (Matt 25: 40). James reminded the early Church that faith not followed by deeds is dead (James 2:14-18). The *Instrumentum laboris* of the recent XIII General Synod of Bishops points out that a preferential area for evangelization is charity.[11] Although every Christian has the responsibility for announcing the gospel, the mission to evangelize is exercised in various ways according to the vocation of each member of the Church.

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[10] John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, 4 March 1979, nn.13-14. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis_en.html (accessed on 11-02-2012).

[11] Synod of Bishops, XIII Ordinary General Assembly, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. *Instrumentum Laboris*, 2012, n.92. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20120619_instrumentum-xiii_en.pdf (accessed on 07-12-2012).

Lay people have specific roles in uniting expressions of their faith in Jesus Christ with their personal lives, something strongly encouraged by the Second Vatican Council. Why? Because the discussion of lay people humanizes theological concepts and render them more accessible to those who seek to deepen their spiritual lives.[12] John Paul II in the document *Christifideles laici* also points out the necessity "to reconstruct the Christian matrix of human society."[13] He acknowledges, however, that the task "to renew the Christian matrix of the Church communities" deserves an even greater commitment; it encourages the laity to bridge "the split between gospel and life."[14]

In the context of our pluralistic societies, the activities of Catholic voluntary associations and of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) committed to international charity contribute to global development. Animated by a spirit of collaboration and dialogue with other Christians and non-Christians as well respect for religious freedom, Catholics can effectively bring about positive global transformations by promoting Catholic social teaching which was originally developed with the emergence of early capitalism. Catholic social teaching is reflected by the spirit of the Second Vatican Council as articulated in *Gaudium et spes* in acknowledging "the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of men and women of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of

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[12] Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church Lumen Gentium*, 21 November 1964, n.33. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed on 01-25-2011).

[13] John Paul II, *Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici*, 30 December 1988, n.34. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici_en.html (accessed on 11-15-2012).

[14] Ibid.

Christ. This is why Christians cherish a deep feeling of solidarity with the human race and its history."[15] This vision was further elucidated in the document *Justice in the Word* issued by the Synod of Bishops in 1971 that acknowledges that "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."[16]

As a recently ordained Catholic priest in the Society of Jesus and a medical ethicist in Catholic hospitals in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, I have been wondering how this new evangelization can become integral to my ministry of preaching the gospel. On several occasions, the Church's leaders have presented the task of new evangelization as if it solely encouraged Catholics to comply with the Church's teaching on controversial issues of sexual morality.[17] Without denying the relevance of these moral issues, I contend that limiting the task of the new evangelization to the debate on abortion, marriage, *in vitro* fertilization, and euthanasia risks underestimating the

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[15] Second Vatican Council *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes*, 7 December 1965, n.1. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed on 11-02-2011).

[16] Synod of Bishops "Justice in the World" in *Catholic Social Thought. The Documentary Heritage.* (ed. by D. J. O'Brien and T. A. Shannon; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010), 306.

[17] Benedict XVI, *Homily for the Opening of the XIII Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization.* 7 October 2012. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20121007_apertura-sinodo_en.html (accessed on 11-05-2012); Synod of Bishops. *XIII Ordinary General Assembly: Final Propositions*, 7-28 October 2012 http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/02_inglese/b33_02.html (accessed on 11-25-2012)

transformative power of the gospel, particularly in giving guidance to human interactions. Therefore, I argue that an effective way to proclaim the truth of the gospel and to emphasize its relevance to the contemporary globalized world consists in forming a new generation of Catholics who become heralds announcing the important social implications of their faith as they effect global transformations toward a more just social order. In particular, I argue that by inculturating the basic principles of the Church's social teaching, these heralds provide an ethical framework that, contrary to the dominant ethos, advocates global solidarity, the equal distribution of universal resources and just relations between rich and poor countries. This ethical framework also helps to address the issues of medical ethics and sexual morality as the global common good is promoted. This faith-based transformation furthers the eschatological victory of God's just reign over discrimination, exploitation, and oppression.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I explore the biblical meaning of the Greek words *euangelizomai* and *euangelion* in order to provide an understanding for the proclamation of the good news. I then both describe six New Testament models of proclaiming the gospel adopted by the early Christian communities and identify the common features of these biblical approaches that are potentially relevant to contemporary evangelization. I then concentrate on Paul's conception of being a missionary and on his missionary theology as depicted in his letters, especially the Second Letter addressed to the Christian community in Corinth. Paul's universal and countercultural understanding of the Church's mission can be a source of inspiration. It envisions new methods of proclaiming the gospel in our post-modern global culture and for encouraging Christ's disciples to be effective agents of social transformations through the power of the Spirit.

The second chapter analyzes the contemporary socio-cultural milieu for the proclamation of the gospel, focusing on the phenomena of globalization, post-modernity, and secularization. My main purpose is to identify "windows of opportunity" in the current post-modern, secular and globalized world to give added impetus for a fruitful proclamation of Christ's liberating message.

Finally, in the third chapter, I consider a practical approach to the evangelization of the global culture based on the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity as articulated by the social teaching of the Church. The result of this process of evangelization can be the transformation of the current dominant culture of disengaged tolerance into a framework of global solidarity that respects local traditions and cultures, resulting in a more just global society.

CHAPTER 1: NEW TESTAMENT MODELS OF EVANGELIZATION

The commitment to proclaim the gospel or to evangelize with new ardor and in ways more consonant to the demands of our post-modern age should be grounded in an accurate understanding of the biblical use of the word "gospel." The current use of the word "gospel" indicates the books of the Bible that recount the story of Jesus Christ and, thus, the concept of proclaiming the gospel is generally equated with the narration of the life of Jesus. Unfortunately, this narrow meaning of the word "gospel" does not render proper justice to the biblical origin of the term. Therefore, at the beginning of this chapter I briefly analyze the meanings that the verb "*euangelizomai*" and the noun "*euangelion*" have in the Bible.

1.1. The Use of "*euangelizomai*" in the Bible

In the Old Testament, the general sense of the Hebrew root corresponding to the Greek *euanggelizomai* is "proclaiming good news" (e.g. 1 Kings 1:42), often alluding to a military victory.[18] In Isaiah 40-66 (Second Isaiah), the Greek verb as well as the substantive participle have a more specific religious connotation. The messenger from the top of the hill cries out, "Peace and salvation, Yahweh is king" (Isa 52:7), thereby announcing the victory of Yahweh over the whole world and his return to rule in Zion. In Isa 61:1 the prophet proclaims this good news to the poor. The proclamation of the royal

[18] Gerhard Friedrick, "Euangelizomai", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. G. Kittel; trans. G.M. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 2:707-37.

dominion of Yahweh, characterized by salvation and peace, becomes a reality, inaugurating a new era. The proclamation of the word is not just breath and sound but is also charged with a performative power.

In the New Testament, Jesus brings the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God. Jesus' answer to John the Baptist (Matt 11:5: Luke 7:22) confirms that the good news, expected from the time of the Second Isaiah, is now being proclaimed and this announcement has the power to bring into effect what it proclaims. According to Luke 4:18, Jesus applies the prophetic words of Isaiah to himself in his inaugural sermon at Nazareth. Although the missionary activity of the apostles began only after Pentecost, already during Jesus' lifetime the Twelve went through the country proclaiming the kingdom of God, sometimes accompanied by prodigious signs (Luke 9:1-6).

1.2. The Use of "*euangelion*" in the Bible

The performative dimension of the verb *euangelizomai* is also associated with the substantive *euangelion.*[19] In the Old Testament, the noun has a twofold meaning: "good news" (e.g. 2 Sam 18:20) and "the reward for a good news" (e.g. 2 Sam 4:10), which reinforces what was just observed, that the spoken word has the power of effecting what it proclaims. Therefore, "bad news" brings sorrow, while "good news" evinces joy. Moreover, the bearer of good news is held responsible for the good fortune he brings, whereas the bearer of a bad news is guilty of the misfortune that he announces. Among the Greeks, *euangelion* was used in connection with the imperial cult. In particular, the

[19] Ibid., 2:721-37.

accession to the throne of the emperor, proclaimed as the divine ruler with power over the whole creation, was received as "good news" for people since it marked the dawn of a new period of peace and security.

In the New Testament, Mark uses the substantive eight times compared with four times in Matthew and none in Luke (he prefers the verb). Neither the verb nor the substantive is found in the Johannine writings. The highest occurrence of the substantive is found in Paul's epistles, sixty times. Further, in Mark 1:14 Jesus is the herald of the good news that God declares to the world and whose content reflects the imminent breaking through of the kingdom of God. In Matthew 19:29 *euangelion* is equated with Christ's name. In Paul's letters, however, "gospel" has a specific content which is both proclaimed (1 Cor 15:1; 9:14; 2 Cor 11:7) and heard (Col 1:23; 1 Cor 15:1; 2 Cor 11:4). For Paul, the core of the good news is Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection (Rom 1:3-4; 1 Cor 15:1) through which God has brought about the possibility of salvation. The connotation of these gospel words is not purely historical or simply evocative of Jesus' sayings. The good news does not merely bear witness to the history of salvation but, as message and proclamation, is a living power that breaks into human life and transforms it. The transformative power of the good news is also so compelling that the receiver feels an irresistible desire to announce to others what she/he experienced. Paul's assertion "Woe to me if I don't preach the gospel" (1 Cor 9:16) suggests that the proclamation of the gospel was an obligation whose origin came from his love for Christ who commanded him to preach the good news (1 Cor 9:19-23) as well as his paternal concern for the people he served.

Through the gospel, God gathers people into salvific communities. Since "gospel" has God as its author, it is not just an empty word (2 Cor 11:7; Rom 15:16); it performs what it says. Preaching of the gospel can bring salvation to both Jews and Gentiles (Eph 3:6) by inviting them to live in communion with one another. By causing regeneration, the gospel gives new life (1 Cor 4:15). Moreover, the gospel does not entail just missionary proclamation but manifests the glory of God in history.

Through an experience of such missionary zeal, those who encounter the good news of God's unconditional love know that he forgives their sins and gives them new life through his Son. Effective missionary activity, especially when conditioned by appropriate methods of communicating God's Word, evokes a more authentic response to the typical and often degrading socio-cultural demands of human history.

1.3. Six New Testament Models of Evangelization

Historian David Bosch argues that the theology of the early Christians is essentially missionary and the New Testament is primarily a book about mission.[20] Since the New Testament writers interpreted the notion of mission for their own communities in various ways, their hermeneutical pronouncements provide potentially inspiring insights for new ways of proclaiming the same message in radically different historical circumstances. For example, St. Paul's way of being a missionary evangelizer can inspire contemporary preachers to creatively apply his universal vision and particularly his focus on the *parousia* to the current methods of proclaiming the gospel.

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[20] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission,* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991),15.

Timothy Byerley has recently identified six New Testament models of evangelization, each of which capitalizes on a specific method of proclaiming the gospel.[21] 1) The martyrdom of the deacon Stephen (Acts 7: 54-60) serves as the prototypical model of evangelization, the so called "St. Stephen model," that is grounded in the convincing power of personal witness to Christ, even to the point of giving one's life. 2) The "Jerusalem model" attests to the power of the Church's liturgical life to bring people to Christ. The Acts of the Apostles report that the first celebrations of the Eucharist (Acts 2:42, 46-47) attracted people to Jesus. 3) The "proclamation model" consists of the verbal announcement of the gospel associated with the education in the faith, as exemplified by St. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 14-41). 4) The "fraternity model" involves the proclamation of the gospel that is entrusted to a group of well-trained disciples. Jesus himself formed, empowered, and commissioned the first small group of disciples and entrusted them with the mission of spreading the message of salvation throughout Israel (Mark 3:13-19). 5) The so-called "Aeropagus model," inspired by Paul's address to the Athenians in the Aeropagus (Acts 17:16-34), concentrates on encouraging a given people and their culture to accept Christian values. 6) Lastly, the "loaves and fishes model" emphasizes the evangelizing role of Christian charity, emanating from Jesus' activity of healing and feeding the multitudes (e.g., Matt 15:29-38).

Byerley argues that none of these models can be considered as an independent approach in isolation from the others. In fact, these complementary models have been variably combined in the course of the Church's evangelizing history. Today, the

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[21] Timothy E. Byerley, *The Great Commission* (New York: Paulist, 2008),124-5.

interdependence of these six biblical models is indisputably crucial for the effective proclamation of the gospel in our socially complex and culturally pluralistic world. For this reason, the identification of the common denominators present in all of the biblical models can lay the foundation for an integrated model of evangelization.

1.3.1. The St. Stephen Model

The St. Stephen model, common among the first Christians who were ready to sacrifice their lives in providing an unequivocal witness to Christ, sprang from their meekness, patience, and courage which became channels for the Spirit of the risen Christ whereby others could accept God's love. More specifically, Stephen's plea to the Lord "not to hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60) and his resolve to forgive and to be reconciled with his executioners in imitation of Christ's forgiveness, greatly impressed those present at his execution. In summary, in the Stephen model, three elements are integral to evangelization: the Spirit poured out into the martyr's heart, the endurance sufferings in imitation of Christ's love, and the martyr's resolve to forgive enemies and to be reconciled with them.

1.3.2. The Jerusalem Model

An analysis of the "Jerusalem model" focuses on the first Christians' way of living, centered around the celebration of the Eucharist. On Sundays, the community gathered in houses to read Scripture, sing psalms, and share in the new meal instituted by

Jesus during the Last Supper. The members of the community were mutually sustained by their faith in the sacramental presence of the crucified and risen Christ in the Eucharist and by the communion among themselves made tangible through acts of concrete solidarity. The action of the Spirit in the Eucharist that made present the mystery of Christ attracted new converts to follow him. In brief, the transformative power of this model rests on the grace of the Spirit, the memorial of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and actions of mutual solidarity by the celebrating community.

1.3.3. The Proclamation and the Fraternity Models

The verbal proclamation of Christ's message, which lies at the heart of the "proclamation model," is the most basic method of transmitting the message of the gospel. In fact, all other forms of evangelization ultimately tend toward proclamation. Jesus used spoken words as the primary means of announcing the kingdom of God during his ministry. Empowered by the Spirit of the risen Lord, his disciples went out to proclaim Jesus Christ to every nation (Acts 2:5). St. Peter's discourse after Pentecost proclaimed that Jesus is Lord and Messiah, and announced that the crucified, risen Lord bestowed the gift of the Spirit upon his disciples. The power of the kerygma pervaded his listeners' hearts and minds and introduced them into the mystery of God who invited them to enter into a personal relation with Christ. The members of the first communities who listened to the preaching of the gospel were inspired by the same Spirit who had inflamed the preachers to announce them the good news of Christ. An explanation of Christian beliefs fortified the initial conversion to Christian faith brought about by the

kerygmatic proclamation of the gospel. In conclusion, effective proclamation of the Christian message, namely that God's infinite love and forgiveness became manifest in the incarnation, life, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ the Lord, depends on the intervention of the Spirit as the primary agent of evangelization. The same Spirit also inspired and empowered the first group of Jesus' disciples who, trained by Jesus himself, were sent by him to proclaim the good news of the kingdom (Luke 10:1-17) as "the fraternity model" suggests.

1.3.4. The Aeropagus Model

Paul's address to the Athenians (Acts 17) is emblematic of the meeting of the gospel with a culture apparently hostile to it. The Athenians, proud of the reputation and superiority of their culture, had, up to that point, offered sacrifices to a variety of gods. In his discourse at the Aeropagus, Paul proclaimed the truth about Jesus Christ by referring to ideas, values, and traditions within Greek culture and philosophy with the intention of transforming that culture according to the Christian values. In particular, Paul used as a point of departure for his discourse the natural knowledge of God present in Greek culture, as well as what could be called the longing for spiritual fulfillment latent in every person. Though this pioneering work of inculturating the gospel resulted in few conversions, the majority of the Athenians were unprepared to accept the message about the Jesus' resurrection. This unfavorable reaction suggests that the acceptance of the full revelation of Christ depends on a more complete form of education as well as spiritual training concerning the entire Paschal mystery. Paul's strategy at the Aeropagus,

nonetheless, indicates that the proclamation of the gospel to a new group of people must take into consideration the hopes and the afflictions of the listeners as well as engage them patiently and respectfully in order to favorably dispose their hearts and minds to the transformative action of the Spirit.

1.3.5. The Loaves and Fishes Model

The early Christians were devoted to charitable works to the members of their communities as well as to people in need outside their communities. These charitable works became the distinctive feature of this new religion that greatly impressed the Roman imperial authority and pagan writers.[22] The resulting solidarity with the poor and the marginalized, modeled on Jesus' life and ministry, demonstrated the commitment of the early Christians to breach social and economical barriers among the members of the Church and also with outsiders. In the course his public life, Jesus also proclaimed the good news with acts of restoring the physical and spiritual well-being of the sick, the poor, and the outcast, thereby integrating them more into society. John R. Donahue argues that Jesus' teaching and actions had strong social implications.[23] In his ministry, Jesus addressed both the poor and the rich, the oppressed and the oppressor, aiming at breaking down barriers of exclusion, thus building bridges between individuals and groups. In his parables, Jesus challenged his audience and their practices that excluded

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[22] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Mission* (New York: Penguin, 1990), 37-38; Thomas E. Woods, *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), 176-9.

[23] John R. Donahue, "What Does the Lord Require? A Bibliografical Essay on the Bible and Social Justice," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 25/2 (1993): 39.

certain groups of people because of religious, moral, and political grounds; rather, he associated with the marginalized, challenging first-century religious and social attitudes. He showed that God's reign is centered on maintaining an intimate connection between loving God and loving one's neighbor. Furthermore, though he inaugurated the long-expected reign of God among the least favorable members of society, he did not bring it to its completion. In order to continue his mission, his disciples were challenged to build up the reign of God by imitating Jesus' way of living and his commitment to care for the poor and the marginalized.

1.3.6. What Do These Models Have in Common?

An analysis of these New Testament models of evangelization reveals three common features: 1) Jesus' disciples proclaimed the gospel by combining the verbal announcement of the good news of God's reign with concrete acts of mercy and solidarity. 2) In proclaiming the gospel, the disciples intended to imitate Jesus' conduct and ministry. 3) Jesus' disciples was empowered and guided by the assistance of the Spirit. These common elements, however, take on a new character in view of looking closely at Matthew's and Luke's paradigm of mission. According to Matthew, a disciple needs primarily to embody fully Jesus' teaching about loving God and one's neighbor according to on "an ethics of words and deeds."[24] Disciples are called not only to teach what Jesus taught but also to be "the salt of the earth and the light of the world" (Matt

[24] John R. Donahue, "The 'Parable' of the Sheep and the Goats: A Challenge to Christian Ethics," *Theological Studies* 47 (1986): 31.

5:13-16). The Matthean community has a fundamental obligation to bear credible witness to the god news of the kingdom by enacting acts of compassion to the hungry, the thirsty, the imprisoned, and by showing humility and meekness in the face of rejection and persecution as Jesus did. The apocalyptic character of the Parable of the Last Judgment (Matt 25:31-46) reveals to Matthew's community the criteria by which they can be called "just" and by which they will be judged. Why? A more just world will be accomplished only when acts of kindness and mercy toward "the least of the brethren" of Jesus (Matt 25:40) become the norm of action. According to a recent "missionary" interpretation, the brothers of the Son of Man should be identified as Christian missionaries and thus the concept should not be extended just to persons in need. However, in order to avoid a sectarian interpretation of the parable, John Donahue argues that the way in which the Christians in mission are to be treated should be extended to all those in need.[25] The parable ultimately provides a picture of the Church as a community in mission that proclaims justice to the world and provides continual witness in the face of suffering and persecution (Matt 10:18). As Donahue points out, "all the sufferings of the 'least of the brethren' in Matt 25:34-36 are mentioned by Paul" for whom Christ's power is revealed through the weaknesses of those sent to mission to others.[26] For Matthew, the risen Lord is present in his disciples and in his Church entrusted with the universal mission of proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God to all until the end of time.

Luke's paradigm of mission, on the other hand, modeled on Jesus' life and ministry, is present in the community through the Spirit who guides and empowers it to

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25 Ibid., 25.

26 Ibid., 27.

continue Jesus' mission, even as historical circumstances change.[27] In the Acts of the Apostles (Luke's companion volume to the gospel), disciples are called to be Jesus' witnesses (Acts 1:2-8), providing testimony to what they have seen and heard, and always encouraging repentance and conversion - not merely by committing themselves to a group that has yet to accept Jesus but also by actively participating in sharing the good news to all sectors of the known world (Luke 24:48; Acts 2:38). Such public witness will undoubtedly face hostility and suffering, thus participating in God's plan known through his Son, as did Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 22:20).

1.4. St. Paul's Contribution to Evangelization

In addition, a reflection on Paul's concept of missionary activity in spreading the good news to non-Jews, as witnessed in his letters, particularly the Second Letter to the Corinthians, complements what the evangelists developed in their missionary models. Though Paul can certainly be considered a missionary, pastor, and letter writer, he was foremost an evangelizer with a great desire to spread the good news about Jesus Christ, especially to those who had never heard it.[28] As Michael J. Gorman points out, Paul believed that he received a "divine mission" to spread the good news of Christ in order to create a global network of Christian multicultural communities.[29] More importantly, Paul's missionary and pastoral ministry to the early Christian communities inspired him

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27 Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 113-4.
28 Michael J. Gorman, *Reading Paul* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2008), 22.
29 Ibid.

to articulate a missionary theology that is relevant to the Church's evangelization today.[30] In this regard, Daniel Harrington has argued that "Paul's problems are our problems and many of Paul's answers can be our answers."[31]

1.5. St. Paul's Missionary Activity

Paul's dramatic and transformative encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus so moved him that he became an intensely fervent missionary of the good news. He describes this experience as a revelation (Gal 1:15-16), a direct call from "Jesus Christ and God the Father" (Gal 1:1) to proclaim the good news to the Gentiles (i.e. non-Jews). He radically changed his theology, from persecuting the "church of God" to becoming an ardent disciple of Christ (Phil 3:8; Gal 1:13; Acts 26:9-11). In Gal 2:20, Paul forthrightly declares: "it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me."[32]

Paul followed the path of the early disciples who had begun to spread the good news throughout the Mediterranean world by taking advantage of the *Pax Romana*—the improvement of the road system and the use of Greek as the common language of the Roman empire.[33] Early Christians proclaimed the good news of Christ in the synagogues as well as in the private houses of wealthy people living in the large cities of the empire.[34]

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30 Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Theology of the Second Letter to the Corinthians* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1991), 28-30.

31 Daniel J. Harrington, *Meeting St. Paul Today* (Chicago: Loyola, 2008), 1.

32 Ibid., 9-11.

33 Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapid, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 116-22.

34 Rodney Stark, *Cities of God* (New York: HarperOne, 2006), 81-83.

The seven letters generally acknowledged as written by Paul himself (1 Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans) serve as the most informative sources for understanding his ministry and theology as he offered pastoral advice to the newly formed Christian communities on a number of problematic issues. More specifically, in the Second Letter to the Corinthians, Paul explains his particular way of being an apostle and evangelizer by revealing not only his personal struggles but also the challenges of the community he addresses (2 Cor 2: 14-7:4).

1.6. Second Letter to the Corinthians

In Corinth, a challenging city for spreading the message about Jesus, several problems arose, including an incident with one of the members whom he called an "offender" (2 Cor 2:5; 7:12).[35] In Second Corinthians, Paul seeks to foster reconciliation within the community (2:5-11), as well as between himself and the community (6:11-7:4). He also encourages the Corinthians to generously support the church in Jerusalem (8:1-9:15), and he intends to prepare his third visit to Corinth (10:1-13:10). Most importantly, Paul, in the midst of their struggles, expresses his love and affection for the Christian community in Corinth (2:12-13) and sends them a message of reconciliation via Titus and two brothers (8:16-24).

1.6.1. The Ministry of Reconciliation

[35] Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth* (London/ New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 215-18.

In the third section of his discourse on apostleship (2 Cor 5:11-6:10), Paul introduces his theology of God's reconciliation (5:18-21). According to the apostle, the faithful God (2 Cor 1:18) fulfilled his promises to restore his relationship with human beings, wounded in many ways because of their sins (Rom 5:12) by reconciling them to himself through the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (5:18-21). God's reconciliation, achieved in and through Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, is intimately related to God's promise to establish a new covenant, which represents the fulfillment of the Mosaic law (Rom 8:4). For Paul, the "the old covenant, rightly understood, unfolds into the new covenant with the coming of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit," as Thomas D. Stegman has pointed out.[36]

Paul focuses on the newness of life resulting from "the love of Christ" (2 Cor 5:14) by asserting that "whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold new things had come" (5:17). This process of new creation process gives Christians a new heart and a new ability to love God and others, fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah (Isa 43:18-19), Ezekiel (Ezek 11:19; 36: 26-27) and Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-33). Moreover, God entrusts to the Church the ministry and message of reconciliation (5:18-19): those who, through baptism, have received the gift of the Spirit and who transforms them into the "image of God" (2 Cor 3:17-18) are able of participate in Christ's mission of establishing God's reign on earth by fostering intimate bonds of union among all people.

Paul understands his role: He is an ambassador of Christ (2 Cor 5:20) entrusted with the ministry of the new covenant which entails not only the verbal proclamation of

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[36] Thomas D. Stegman, *Second Corinthians* (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academy, 2009), 91.

the good news of God's reconciliation to all humanity but also a spiritual transformation into the person of Lord. Thus he could "speak in Christ" (2:17). This embodiment consists of imitating Jesus' unselfish way of living that gave credibility to Paul's way of witnessing to Christ's gospel.[37]

1.6.2. The Collection for the Jerusalem Church

In order to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation, Paul encouraged the Gentile Christians in Corinth to materially support the predominantly Jewish-Christian church in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:1-9:15) through a *diakonia*, that is a money collection. In this context, Paul employs this same word to indicate the ministry of the new covenant. According to Stegman, "by using the same term here, Paul suggests that the collection for the Jerusalem church is part of the work of reconciliation that characterizes the new covenant ministry, the ministry set in motion through the outpouring of the Spirit."[38] Rather than being a mere act of charity, the collection was intended to foster mutual reconciliation between the Jews and the Gentiles in a practical manner and to enhance their communal bonds of solidarity as members of the same Body of Christ (Eph 2:14-16). To encourage the collection, Paul appeals to the inspiring example of generosity offered by the Macedonian Christians in their gracious act of imitating the Christ's love (2 Cor 8:9). In particular, those who find themselves financially fortunate should give to the poor according to their means, without impoverishing themselves. Doing so would contribute to God's design that people distribute their resources to create "equality" (8:13-15).

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37 Ibid., 153.

38 Ibid., 193.

Ultimately, Paul believes that the financial support of the Corinthians to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem is a manifestation of God's work of reconciliation of these people not only to himself but to one another (2 Cor 5:18-19). Paul believes that God's grace empowers the rich Christians to fulfill their responsibility of meeting the material needs of the poor and thus to give glory to God (2 Cor 9:13).

1.7. St. Paul's Way of Evangelizing: the New Creation Model

Paul's missionary theology grounded in reconciliation and new creation, provides helpful insights for understanding his personal way of evangelizing. In the course of his missionary activity, Paul deeply trusts in the power of the Spirit. He comes to appreciate the fact that God could be fully known only through Jesus, the Messiah and the Son of God (2 Cor 1:19), who lived by obedience and faithfulness to his Father's will. The outpouring of the Spirit gives rise to a new life in the Spirit (2 Cor 1:3-7; 4:7-15), which empowers Paul to embody Jesus' self-giving way of living for the sake of others and to participate in Christ's reconciling ministry as his ambassador.

Paul, aware that the ministry of reconciliation involves the embracing of human weaknesses with sufferings and afflictions in imitation of the self-giving life of Christ (2 Cor 4:7-12), feels the need to communicate this to others. Christ's salvific suffering brought about reconciliation; at the same time, this suffering overflows into the lives of his followers as they carry out the same ministry. However, through the power of the Spirit, these sufferings bring encouragement not only to the ambassadors of Christ but also to all members of the various communities (2 Cor 4:8-12). Therefore, as a servant of

Christ (2 Cor 11:23-28), Paul bears in his body "the marks of Jesus" (Gal 6: 17) and is the instrument through whom God gives life to those who come to have faith through him (2 Cor 4:9,12). Paul shares in Christ's sufferings and completes in his flesh "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is the church" (Col 1:24). For Paul, suffering is not synonymous with passivity; rather, it is an expression of the Church's active engagement in the ministry of reconciliation and thus it is a way of being a herald of the gospel.

Paul offers himself as a model to imitate, continually referring to God's initiative and Christ's grace that turned his weakness into power (2 Cor 5:19); he shuns displays of self-confidence or boasting in his accomplishments. Therefore, in light of his trust in God's power, he asserts: "For when I'm weak, then I'm strong" (2 Cor 12:10). In his own defense against the intrusive missionaries who arrived later in Corinth, Paul does not hesitate to declare his trust in the power of the Spirit. Against the accusations of lacking eloquence and attractive physical appearance (10:10), Paul affirms his trust in the power of the indwelling Spirit. Rather than place stock in external appearances and support (5:12), the Spirit enables Paul to carry out the ministry of reconciliation as an ambassador of Christ. As an apostle through the ministry of reconciliation, Paul exhorts others to develop a theology that entails self-giving love as well as sufferings and afflictions (2 Cor 1:3-7).

Paul maintains that the ministry of reconciliation is central not only to his personal call but also to the life of the entire Church, since God's ongoing work of reconciliation demands the participation of all believers in the same ministry. In the context of the ministry of reconciliation, the gospel represents the reconciling power of

the risen Christ, exercised in and through the Church. In the Letter to the Romans, Paul describes the gospel as "the power of God for the salvation to everyone who have faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom 1:16-17). For Paul, the Church is a new community marked by unity in spite of great differences. The unity within the Church is grounded in the fact that those who have been baptized in Christ are in Christ and are no longer categorized as Jew and Gentile, slave or free, male or female (Gal 3:27). Gentiles and Jews have been made "one in Christ" since Jesus, the Messiah, has created "out of two into a single new humanity in himself" and has reconciled "in a single body to God through the cross" (Eph 2:15). In his commentary on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Luke Timothy Johnson asserts that "it is only through a life of unity that the Church stands as a witness to the world" as a place of peace and reconciliation.[39] However, the unity in Christ does not eliminate or suppress any sense of individual identity. Paul uses the analogy of the relationship between husband and wife as a metaphor for unity in plurality that manifests in the community the "fullness of God's purpose in history."[40]

In Rom 12:4-8 and 1 Cor 12:12-31, Paul employs the image of the body as emblematic of the Church whereby unity and solidarity respect differences and diversity, with the result that solidarity does not mean sameness. In 1 Corinthians, the image of the body serves to illustrate the concept that everyone belongs to the same Body of Christ. The Spirit gives diverse gifts to those who are baptized into Jesus (1 Cor 12:4-11; 28-30). In addition, the weak and dishonorable who truly are integral to the Body of Christ have equal value with those who seem more fortunate (1 Cor 12:22-24), since in Paul's vision

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39 Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament. An Interpretation* (Minneapolis : Fortress, 1999), 416.

40 Ibid., 419.

every member deserves the same degree of respect; the question concerning the inferiority and superiority among the parts becomes irrelevant.

David Horrell argues that Paul's use of image of the body in reference to the Church promotes a form of solidarity characterized by the reversal of the social differences based on status and honor and equal regard for every member.[41] This form of communitarian solidarity is rooted in the fact that believers who participate in Christ's death and resurrection become equal members of the one Body of Christ. Consequently, the difference between the circumcised and the uncircumcised in terms of their identity has been replaced by a new mode of being in Christ in which Jew and Gentile together constitute a new creation (Gal 5:5; 6:15). For Paul, corporate solidarity in Christ has genuine social implications. The essential boundaries between insiders and outsiders no longer exist because Paul clearly states that there is no need for insiders to adopt Jewish practices since all possess the same theological status. By virtue of their incorporation into the Body of Christ, masters and slaves have been transformed into a single brotherhood. The social consequences of the solidarity achieved through baptism in Christ should become visible in the community's liturgy and, above all, the celebration of the Lord's supper must be devoid of distinctions and divisions (1 Cor 11:34). Therefore, according to Paul's understanding of the consequences of the Christ-event, the Church is not only a religious space giving equal access to salvation, but also a social space in which interpersonal relationships are re-constructed in light of the new ethos effected by the gospel of God.

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41 David G Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference. A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 99-132.

However, as Horrell indicates, solidarity in Christ does not erase completely the original identity of the members of the community.[42] Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free men and women all share an intimate fellowship and are bound together with an egalitarian identity as brothers and sisters, while their differences, such as gender, are always recognized and given full value. Horrell believes that Christ's humility and self-effacement in going from God's equal to that of a slave for the sake of others (Phil 2:6-11) serves as the basis for the type of respect due to each member of the Christian community. Finally, Horrell argues that the rhetoric of distinction between the holy community and the sinful world which permeates Paul's letters "does not correlate with a stance of social isolation."[43] Although Paul's focus is on the Christian community, he sees that the choice between good and evil is accessible to all human beings. Paul's appeal to practice peaceable, non-retaliatory kindness, even in response to hostility, suggests that the good Christians do will be recognized as such by others.[44]

Gorman argues that Paul's understanding of the Christian Church encompasses specific features that deserve careful consideration, especially in reference to the Church's relationship to the outside world.[45] As a community shaped by the foundational story of the crucified and risen Christ, the Church is a countercultural and multicultural group of people, who, reconciled to God through Christ's cross, advance in the Spirit of the Lord. The Church's beliefs and practices that embody the values of its Savior, in distinction to the Roman emperor, are deliberately distinct from those of the surrounding culture. According to Gorman, the Church is a visible, even political or "theopolitical"

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42 Ibid.,198-204.
43 Ibid., 276.
44 Ibid., 277.
45 Gorman, *Reading Paul*, 184-5.

entity whose members provide living witness to the good news of God's reconciliation with the human race.[46] Guided by the Spirit of Christ, Scripture, and tradition, the Church is a multicultural community in which differences among its members persist without necessarily becoming a source of division and as such is called to be a "Christofany," a manifestation of Christ in and for the world.[47] Gorman also argues that, in spite of Paul's concern for the appropriate care for the poor and the weak within the Christian communities, "…there can be no artificial line between the call for God's kind of cruciform justice in the community and a witness to God's same justice in and for the wider world."[48] Paul urges the members of the Church to live in love and peace with all, including those outside the community, even their enemies (Rom 12:9-21; Gal 6:10; 1 Thess 5:15). The Church therefore should extend the justice of God beyond its boundaries by especially reaching out to the poor and the weak. In addition, Paul, concerned about the impact that believers' attitude and conduct might have on outsiders, urges Christians to restrain themselves from judging others by being ready to serve and forgive so that they might be in a position to merit the respect (1 Thess 4:12) and admiration from society at large (1 Thess 3:12).

Although the fundamental confession that Jesus is Lord implies personal commitment, the message of the gospel is not limited to personal salvation. According to Gorman's interpretation, Paul's mode of proclaiming the gospel announces the challenge Christ's faithful will experience as they relate to one another in the world. In particular, the gospel "is a narrative about God that creates a public life together, a corporate

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46 Ibid., 183.
47 Ibid., 186.
48 Ibid., 139.

narrative that is an alternative to the *status quo* in the Roman Empire, or any other political body."[49] Therefore, the communities that developed in response to Paul's proclamation of the gospel were not so much concerned with personal salvation as an end in itself; rather, they were inflamed by the passion to be the visible signs of a new age.[50]

According to Gorman's analysis, Paul, in spite of his interest in building up the communities of faith, acknowledges that the Church's alternative lifestyle can influence the surrounding society around Christian communities that are called to manifest hope and commissioned to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ's reconciliatory mission to all nations. This has already resulted in a new, though incomplete, creation. Paul's sense of the apocalyptic does not imply the social isolation of Jesus' disciples from the society.[51] Indeed, precisely because the history of salvation moves toward God's final victory, Christians should not conform to the present world, but let their minds be transformed by their faith (Rom 12:2). Paul rejects apocalyptic beliefs that create an absolute antithesis between the present and the future age, leading to withdrawal from the world. Similarly, he rejects the position of those who disregard the world since the intervention of Christ has already overcome the world. Indeed, Paul encourages the active participation of Christians in God's new creation by building up this new order in their daily lives, bearing witness to hope in Christ's ultimate victory and definitive advent of God's reign.

In summary, the Pauline model of evangelization that emerged particularly from the analysis of the Second Corinthians integrates the six New Testament models of

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49 Ibid., 133-5.
50 Ibid., 184.
51 Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 170-77.

evangelization that I described at the beginning of this chapter. Paul's missionary approach entails both the verbal announcement of the reconciliation of God to humanity through Christ, as well as practical acts of reconciliation and solidarity effecting personal and communitarian transformation. Both aspects of this integrated approach are grounded in Paul's theology of reconciliation and new creation that urges all members of the Church to continue the work of re-construction that Christ inaugurated through the sacrificial mystery of his passion, death, and resurrection according to the new law he established under the guidance of the Spirit. The ambassadors of Christ, who cooperate with his continuing work of reconciliation, will not be spared the same sufferings and rejections that Christ endured in obedience to his Father's will and for the love of others. Paul's way of exercising his ministry entails the imitation of the self-giving life of Christ (2 Cor 5:14) as the true way to bring reconciliation and new life. Therefore, Paul maintains that the ambassadors of Christ are expected to exemplify Jesus' way of living, especially his faithfulness to his Father's will and his self-giving love. In this way, they provide the hearers of the gospel with inspiring examples to imitate (5:14). For Paul, the intervention of the Spirit has a fundamental role in determining his way of being an ambassador of Christ. The Spirit, poured out into the hearts of the baptized, empowers the ministers of reconciliation to conform to Christ's character, to bear his sufferings, and to experience encouragement and consolation not only for themselves but also for others. In addition, they are empowered to bring their message outside the Church and exercise a transformative action on the dominant culture, thereby rendering it more consonant to evangelical values. The concrete methods of performing the ministry of reconciliation

and new creation depend on the cultural conditions in which the Church finds itself in carrying out its ministry.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL MILIEU

Building on the models I have proposed, I will now analyze three main features of contemporary culture in order to identify windows of opportunity for effectively proclaiming the liberating message of the gospel through the power of the Spirit. The cultural milieu of a specific place in a particular epoch emerges from the convergence and interaction of the diverse domains of human life, which constitute the context in which the encounter with faith occurs as the Church develops new ways of proclaiming the gospel. The historical transformations of the cultural climate ultimately influence the ways in which people live their faith. In the course of Western civilization, faith and culture have variably interacted, though at times local culture rooted in religious consciousness has favored the proclamation of the gospel. Today, however, the gospel proclamation is more complex and challenging than in the past because of a progressive separation between culture and faith.

2.1. The Notion of Culture

Culture plays a vital role in the process of shaping human sensibility and identity as it embodies assumptions, values, and lifestyles that form the mindsets with which a group of individuals perceive themselves and the world, defining what is acceptable in a particular social context. In his definition of culture, Clifford Geertz emphasizes the crucial role of symbols that express a "web of significance" in revealing the diversity of

cultures.[52] Bernard Lonergan proposes an empirical view of culture as a set of meanings and values grounding a common way of life, which, at the same time, points to the existence of many cultures embodying distinct sets of meanings and values.[53] This view acknowledges the multiplicity of cultural traditions through which the Christian message might be communicated.

More recently, Michael Paul Gallagher in his book *Clashing Symbols* has described the multidimensional nature of culture by listing its essential aspects.[54] His general definition of culture integrates both the creative or spiritual aspects of culture expressing the imaginative, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of life, with a vibrant or "lived" culture normally analyzed in anthropological and sociological terms. Since cultures reflect vastly differing historical circumstances, they need to be carefully discerned and analyzed as they undergo tectonic shifts that bring about unexpected challenges. Contemporary cultural transformations also reflect new economic, political, scientific, and technological developments that have taken place throughout the world. As individuals experience increased mobility because of financial, political, or touristic reasons, they experience cultures different from their own. Such multi-ethnic societies are

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[52] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89.

[53] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972), 301.

[54] Michael Paul Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols:Introduction to Faith and Culture* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), 9-12. Gallagher's attempt to synthesize the multidimensional character of culture is grounded on the UNESCO definition of culture issued at an international conference on "Cultural Polices" held in Mexico in 1982: "Culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, values systems, traditions and beliefs. It is culture that gives man the ability to reflect upon himself. It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgment and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices."

the result of changing ethical, religious, and cultural configurations. As the most recent *Instrumentum laboris* for the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization has pointed out, the Catholic Church has been seriously committed to understand the most recent cultural developments in order to envision effective methods of evangelization in dialogue with the contemporary world.[55]

2.2. The Globalization Debate

Increased human interconnectedness, an undeniable aspect of the present age as intuited by Teilhard de Chardin, has resulted from a vast and vacillating network, as countries throughout the globe react to changing economies, political situations, and the advances made by the developments of the internet. Among others, David Held has summarized three distinct accounts of globalization.[56]

1) "Hyperglobalist" describes globalization as a primarily economic phenomenon oriented toward a model of a perfectly integrated global market. According to this thesis, globalization implies the denationalization of economics and the establishment of transnational networks of production, finance, and trade. In this economic context, states are increasingly governed by regional and global institutions and contribute to the development of a global civilization. This apparent new world order prefigures the demise of the nation-states and the emergence of a global civil society grounded in an

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[55] Synod of Bishops, XIII Ordinary General Assembly: *Instrumentum Laboris*, nn.41-89.

[56] David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 2-10.

intensified cooperation between groups of people and a deep awareness of common interests.[57]

2) The "skeptical" model rejects the myth that the power of national states has been diminished by the increased relevance of international economic relations and global political institutions. Such skeptics, in fact, argue that the contemporary scale of economic internationalization is the major result of enhanced levels of interactions between national economies pursuing progressive economic liberalization. They are also convinced that the current patterns of inequalities foster the eruption of aggressive fundamentalisms and nationalisms along with the fragmentation of the world into clusters rather than the emergence of a global civilization. For the skeptics, economic internationalization and global governance are projects orchestrated by Western nation-states in order to preserve their primacy in world affairs.[58]

3) "Transformationalists" believe that contemporary globalization is a contingent process of reconstructing the power, function, and authority of national-states. More specifically, contemporary globalization provides a central, driving force characterized by unprecedented patterns of economic, technological, political, and cultural networks. The transformationalists argue that globalization creates a new form of sovereignty which progressively displaces the traditional notion of statedhood based exclusively on the criterion of indivisible territoriality. Indeed, the resulting transformation of national power and authority can be seen in the emergence of powerful, new, non-territorial,

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57 Ibid., 3-5.

58 Ibid., 5-7.

global economic and political organizations, such as multinational corporations, transnational social movements, and international political agencies.[59]

In light of these three interpretations, Held argues that globalization, as a highly differentiated process, involves all the key domains of life, including the theological, political, cultural, economic, and military domains.[60] Based on the spatio-temporal dimensions of globalization, Held and his associates define globalization as "a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions—assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact—generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power."[61]

Although globalization in general should not be considered a novel process in human history, *contemporary* globalization is characterized by distinctive features: the historical uniqueness of its extensity, intensity, velocity, and impact propensity; the emergence of new institutions of control of worldwide social, political, and economic power relations; the rapidly developing consciousness of global interconnectedness; its less Eurocentric or Atlantic-centric character; the capacity of challenging the territorial principle as the sole basis for the organization of political authority; and the reciprocal reinforcement of the processes of regionalization and globalization in the global political domain.

In considering the distinctive features of contemporary globalization, John Paul II insisted that this process "must be at the service of the human person; it must serve

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59 Ibid., 7-9.
60 Ibid., 23.
61 Ibid., 16.

solidarity and the common good… and must not be a new version of colonialism. It must respect the diversity of cultures which, within the universal harmony of peoples, are life's interpretative keys."[62] In addition, the most recent pronouncements of the Church on globalization emphasize more strongly the fragmenting, marginalizing consequences of globalization than its beneficial effects of fostering the development of a more integrated world.

Two negative criticisms have been introduced in the preparatory document of the Synod on the New Evangelization concerning the impact of globalization on the way contemporary Christian faith is lived. 1) Globalization has been linked with a weakening of the traditions and institutions that negatively affect the social and cultural bonds of the communities. Thus the authors of this document stress the importance of communicating spiritual values and providing answers to the questions about the meaning of life. 2) Globalization has fragmented important dimensions of culture, with the result that too many Catholics cannot discern how to live out their faith with proper integrity and judgment.[63]

In order to evaluate objectively the social impact of globalization and of seeing the interlocking web of economic, political, and social networks, we need to understand both now and in the future the place of the significant cultural interaction between and among these networks. Right now, we are just beginning to glimpse the types of interaction that are taking place. Contemporary forms of communication and networking,

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[62] John Paul II, *Address to Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, 27 April 2001. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2002/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020411_p-ac-social-sciences_en.html (accessed on 10-21-2012)

[63] Synod of Bishops, XIII Ordinary General Assembly: *Instrumentum Laboris*, nn.60-62.

whether by the internet or supersonic jets, have generated an unprecedented cultural traffic of images, symbols, ideas, and modes of thought and expression. [64] The hyperglobalists predict that the homogenization of the world will develop according to the patterns of North American popular culture or Western consumerism. On the contrary, the skeptics point to the thinness of global culture in comparison with dynamic national cultures; they favor the ways cultural differences add to our understanding of what it means to be human. Tranformationalists emphasize the increasingly common hybridization of cultures that brings about, positively from their viewpoint, new and exciting global social networks.

Held and his associates argue that the existence of trans-regional and trans-civilizational cultural flows has deep historical roots. Today, the centrality of national cultures and national identities has been challenged and displaced by unprecedented global cultural flows produced by the new technologies in telecommunication and the international media. Though cultural flows continue to be generated primarily in the West, this process has begun to be reversed, especially through migration and shifting cultural patterns, such as Africans moving to Canada and Chinese moving to France.[65] In Western countries, in particular, we see the homogenization of mass consumption or consumerism, particularly among the young. This phenomenon is now spreading to the more affluent strata of the developing world, especially in East Asia and Latin America. However, Held believes that serious study should be done to see whether or not such homogenization, especially in the area of films, has been absorbed by other cultural practices, beliefs, and identities. Although it is unclear to what extent these transnational

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64 Held, McGrew, Golblatt and Perraton, *Global Transformations,* 327-9.

65 Ibid., 363-9.

cultures have affected or suppressed national cultures and identities that presently do not seem to face irreversible decline, it is quite evident that intense human interaction across national borders has contributed to the development of a global civil society.[66]

2.2.1. Global Civil Society

Though an exhaustive definition of this form of global civil society has not yet been provided, political scientist John Keene has described this reality as "a dynamic non-governmental system of interconnected socio-economic institutions that straddle the whole earth, and they have complex effects that are felt in its four corners."[67] This description alludes to the proliferation of non-governmental social movements and organizations whose activities extend across national borders, though they remain embedded in local communities. These non-governmental institutions are functionally interdependent and are involved in social initiatives aimed at repairing the fabric of global civil society. For Keene "these non-governmental institutions and actors tend to pluralize power and to problematize violence: consequently, their peaceful or 'civil' effects are felt elsewhere."[68] A distinctive feature of global civil society is the commitment to operate according to the overriding norms of civility and non-violence. At the same time, Keene argues that the inherently pluralist dimension, the heterogeneity and the transnational dimension of global civil society are sources of potential

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66 Ibid., 373; Scott R. Appleby, "Global Civil Society and the Catholic Social Tradition" in *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought* (ed. J. A. Coleman and W. F. Ryan; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005), 130.

67 John Keene, *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003), 8.

68 Ibid.

fragmentation, disorder, and conflict, posing a serious challenge to its ability to foster peace and solidarity. In general, however, the various transnational movements and organizations, by virtue of their close interaction and mutual enforcement, have contributed to the creation of an autonomous social space within which they have promoted the practices of civility, equality, and respect for human dignity.

The global civil society has been understood not as a sort of transnational civil society or universalizing community; rather, this society serves to foster the proliferation and interaction of local and regional civil societies across the world, empowering local communities. Catholic social teaching that encourages the development of a thick web of associational ties shared by people rooted in a particular place and time harmonizes with this view of global civil society.[69]

In discussing the importance of our expanding global civil society, the role of churches seems to be increasingly crucial. As David Hollenbach has argued "the churches possess unique resources that can contribute to the strengthening of other communities of solidarity in civil society."[70] Individuals, groups, and organizations of various religious denominations have participated in the constitution of transnational interreligious movements for justice and peace. This faith-based activism for the common good and human solidarity relies on the specific collaboration between Catholics and their non-Catholic partners as they come to terms with the awareness that the basic principles of our Catholic social tradition can be shared in a pluralistic society. Despite the historically important presence of Catholic associations, many Catholics believe that

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[69] Scott R. Appleby, "Global Civil Society and the Catholic Social Tradition," 137.

[70] David Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith: Politics, Human Rights, and Christian Faith* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2003), 157.

the profession of their faith remains principally a private endeavor. This perception of one's faith emerges from the view that secularization has permeated—nay, dominated—modern culture.

2.3. The Secularization Debate

Since the age of the Enlightment, philosophers, sociologists, and anthropologists have theorized that the advent of modernity, often called secularization, is associated with the separation between church and state, the inevitable decline of religious beliefs and practices, and the marginalization of religion from the public sphere into the private domain.[71] At the beginning of the last century, Max Weber argued that the Reformation and the Enlightment rational worldview, grounded in the technological application of scientific knowledge, and the industrial revolution had caused an irreversible crisis of religion's plausibility.[72] More recently, in 1969 the sociologist Peter Berger has pointed out that religion has assumed the connotation of private religiosity, devoid of any influence in the highly rational public sphere.[73] Indeed, as a result of the societal

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71 Karel Dobblelaere, "Secularization" in *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (ed. G. Ritzer. Blackwell Publishing, 2007). Blackwell Reference Online. http://www.blackwellreference.com.proxybc.edu (accessed on 01-24-2012). The original meaning of the term "secularization" dates back to the Treaty of Wesphalia in 1648 when Henry II de Valois-Longueville used the term to indicate the transfer of ecclesiastical properties to state ownership. In the early nineteenth century the term was used to indicate the emancipation of the state and the universities from ecclesiastical institutions associated with the rise of capitalism, of strong nation-states and nationalisms, as well as of social sciences. From the late nineteenth century until now, the word "secularization" has been used to signify the loss of relevance of religious practices in modern societies and the reliance on worldly presuppositions in public institutions and in various intellectual disciplines.

72 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (trans. T. Parsons; Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2003), 155-7.

73 Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of*

differentiation process, religious institutions have ceased to play their normative role of establishing "a common universe of meaning for the members of a society".[74] Berger also noted that, in the face of religious pluralism and the free competition among different religious groups, "religious institutions have accommodated themselves to the moral and psychological needs of the individual in his private life."[75] Nevertheless, from the late 1980s, clear evidence of religious vitality in modern and industrialized countries has increasingly challenged the classical theory of secularization. Andrew Greely argues that the existence of various patterns of religiosity among western industrialized nations, such as the United States, contradicts the hypothesis of a consistent and progressive movement of modern societies toward atheism and agnosticism.[76] In 1999, Berger spoke of the "de-secularization of the world," though he had previously thought in terms of secularization causing the inevitable decline of religion in modern societies; now he realizes that this was "a mistake" on his part.[77] Empirical data have shown that modernization in some countries has caused powerful movements of counter-secularization; that is, the secularization of public life has not necessarily been linked to the decline of religious beliefs. For instance, the decline of mainline American Protestantism was accompanied by a parallel rise in Evangelicalism. In addition, the upsurge of conservative movements has been registered also in the Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions. David Martin has proposed to redefine the main features of the secularization process by assessing the

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Religion (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 107.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid., 141.

76 Andrew M. Greeley, *Unsecular Man: The Persistence of Religion* (New York: Shocken, 1985), 2-16.

77 Peter L. Berger, " The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview," in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, (ed. P. L Berger; Washington, D.C.: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 2.

specific expressions of the phenomenon in various modern societies.[78] He argues that religion can function as a repository of moral values and transcendental meanings in civil society.[79]

More recently, Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart have compared the different levels of religiosity in the United States, Western Europe, post-Communist Europe, and the Muslim world.[80] Their empirical data have shown that individuals who had experienced a sense of existential security became indifferent to religious beliefs and practices, while the vulnerable populations living in poor countries maintained high levels of religiosity.[81] They conclude that "it would be a major mistake to assume that secularization is triumphantly advancing and religion will eventually disappear throughout the world" especially in light of the demographic growth in poor countries.[82]

In describing the vitality of Christian religion in Western countries, Graeme Smith argues that in Western secular society Christian ethics, supported by a persistent belief in God, though deprived of its theological doctrine, is not in conflict with a scientific mentality.[83] In spite of the decline in church attendance and a concomitant affiliation, a high percentage of people in the United Kingdom, one of the most secular countries in Europe, describe themselves as Christians.[84] Smith argues that ordinary people have

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78 David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2005),18-25.

79 Ibid., 69-71.

80 Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide (*ed. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press 2011), 28. http://site.ebrary.com/lib/bostoncollege/Doc?id=10506178&ppg=28. (accessed on 11-12-2012)

81 Ibid., 30.

82 Ibid., 40.

83 Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008), 204-5.

84 Ibid., 51.

constructed a new version of Christianity that does not include regular church attendance. Likewise, David Bosch, who describes the Church's missionary history as a succession of six paradigm shifts, earlier underscored this societal fluid identity.[85] A clear paradigm shift occurred, for instance, when the early Church moved out of the Jewish context and entered into Hellenistic culture of the Roman Empire. The early Christian writers, beginning with Paul, appropriated material from Greco-Roman moral philosophers and used them as philosophical tools for constructing a worldwide religion.[86] However, at the time when the Church faced the threat of heretical groups, such as the Arians, it held on the "most fundamental and inalienable elements of the Christian faith" and remained faithful to its essence.[87] Smith also argues that the language of decline fails to appropriately describe the contemporary Church. After the Victorian era, characterized by exceptionally and uniquely high church attendance, we are witnessing today a reversion to more normal—though perhaps lower—levels of Church practice. Today's church attendance level is comparable to that of medieval times when a minority of Christians actively practiced their faith in face of a majority of passive Christians.

Smith's interpretation of the current data concerning church attendance is grounded in the concept of "vicarious religion," likewise articulated with some success by the sociologist of religion Grace Davie. In her analysis of the religiosity in modern Europe, she argues that a large number of people interact vicariously with the Church.[88] Though these faithful do not feel a responsibility to participate in the Church's regular

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85 Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 181-9.
86 Ibid., 206.
87 Ibid., 211.
88 Grace Davie, *Europe: The Exceptional Case. Parameters of Faith in the Modern World* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002), 19-20.

life, they return to the Church in times of crisis or for family baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Finally, Graeme Smith suggests that we think of Western history in terms of a sequence of peaks and troughs, rather than as a linear progression toward the triumph of atheism. According to his model, periods of intense religious activity, such as occurred during the early spread of Christianity, the Victorian era, and the Reformation, and were then followed by periods of equilibrium and calm, such as the late medieval Church and our contemporary age.

2.3.1. De-privatization of Religion: The Public Religion Model

Sociologist José Casanova has proposed an interesting model to describe the present situation, arguing that societal differentiation does not necessarily imply a weakening of religious beliefs or transferring of religion to the private realm.[89] He asserts that the phenomenon of the "de-privatization" of religion in modern countries, such as Spain, Poland and the United States, reflects the social character of religion and its contribution to the integration of individuals into the public sphere.[90] Casanova introduces the concept of "public religion" to characterize a model of religion compatible with liberal freedoms, especially religious freedom and freedom of conscience, as well as with the process of structural differentiation. According to this model, churches and religious movements can play a vital role in promoting civil society in discussing public

[89] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 214.
[90] Ibid., 216,

issues, the preservation of moral values, and the development of the common good of the community.

In 1996, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin proposed a similar model of public involvement of the American Church in public life. In particular, he identified three major areas of interaction between the Catholic Church and American civil society: politics, economics and social justice, and culture.[91] He specifically argued that the fundamental presupposition concerning the separation of religion from the state's institutions and the respect of religious pluralism does not legitimate the marginalization of religion to the private sphere. Bernardin maintained that the relation between religion and civil society should be governed by the logic of "engagement," since citizens affiliated with a religious tradition can effectively contribute to the long-term moral development of society.[92] The theological and ethical grounds of the engagement of the Catholic Church in civil society influence the style of its participation in public life. In fact, the public engagement of the Catholic faith should provide "a testimony to the theological virtue of charity which in turn produces the civic virtue of civility."[93] Furthermore, North American Catholic bishops have repeatedly encouraged Catholics to actively contribute to shaping the moral character of society according to their beliefs. In particular, they argue that the Church's public engagement, shaped by the moral convictions of well-formed consciences, brings into the public square genuine concerns for the respect of the dignity of every human being, for the pursuit of the common good,

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91 Joseph Bernardin, "The Catholic Moral Vision in the United States" in *A Moral Vision for America* (ed. J. Langan. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1998), 146.

92 Ibid., 147.

93 Ibid., 149.

and the protection of the weak and the vulnerable.[94] Ultimately, a theologically based responsibility for contributing to the promotion of the common good urges every Catholic to actively participate in the life of civil society.

2.4. The Catholic Notion of the Common Good

The notion of the common good is rooted in the Christian tradition developed by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas as well as in the most recent Catholic social teaching.[95] For Augustine, the eschatological nature of the highest good of the human person, namely the communion with God in the heavenly Jerusalem, does not deter Christians from contributing to the transformation of their communities that participate in the love they will experience in the heavenly city.[96] Aquinas argues that there is an analogy between "God's own goodness" that represents the full common good and the good that can be reached in the world.[97] Through their participation in the civil society, Christians are called to build up in this world the common good that is an image, though imperfect, of the highest good. In more recent times, Jacques Maritain turns to the Trinity

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94 U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship : A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States with Introductory Note.* Washington, DC, 2011, http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf. (accessed on 01-12-2012).

95 David Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*. New Studies in Christian Ethics (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press),122-136.

96 Augustine, *The City of God* (trans. H. Betterson; New York: Penguin, 1972), II, 21.

97 Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas* (trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 1920) Ia-IIae, q 19, a.10. http://www.newadvent.org/summa (accessed on 09-21-2011)

to further illustrate the analogy between the divine and the human good.[98] The likeness of human person with God, who exists in three Persons living in perfect communion with one another, enables Christians to establish similar mutual relationships as they work for the transformation of social life into a closer image of the supreme good.

The most recent Catholic teaching on the common good has produced two complementary interpretations of the traditional concept that emphasizes the relevance of solidarity in opposition to individualism as well as the relevance of freedom in contrast to collectivism.[99] 1) *Gaudium et spes* highlights the relational character of human existence by which the good of each person depends upon the participation in the good of the community.[100] 2) John XXIII, in his complementary definition of the common good, describes it as "the sum total of conditions of social living, whereby persons are enabled more fully and ready to achieve their own perfection."[101] In addition, he asserts that the promotion of the common good entails the protection of the human rights of all.[102] Although human beings are destined to achieve the full good that transcends both civil society and the state, they are, nonetheless, able to achieve a temporal good that results from the combination of various goods, such as friendships, family relationships, voluntary associations, civic interactions, politics, and relationship with God, each of which is an incomplete image of the full common good.

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98 Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (trans. J.Fitzgerald; Notre Dame, IL: University of Notre Dame, 1966), 53-56.

99 David Hollenbach, "Common Good" in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (ed. J. A. Dwyer. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 192-97.

100 Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, n.32.

101 John XXIII, "Mater et Magistra," in *Catholic Social Thought. The Documentary Heritage* (ed. D. J. O'Brien and T. A. Shannon; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 98.

102 John XXIII, "Pacem in Terris," in *Catholic Social Thought. The Documentary Heritage* (ed. D. J. O'Brien and T. A. Shannon; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010),147.

The recent notion of the common good that integrates solidarity and freedom seems particularly in tune with the idea of the common good that has to be introduced in any discussion of our global society. In 1963, John XIII recognized the need for extending the notion of the nation-state common good to a more transnational entity. He noted that "at this historical moment the present [international] system of organization and the way its principle of authority operates on a world basis no longer correspond to the objective requirements of the universal common good."[103] Since the introduction of the notion of the universal common good, the official Church documents have emphasized the global dimension of the common good.

The moral responsibility of Catholics for actively participating in public life not only conforms to Casanova's model of public religion but also contributes to the development of a "healthy secularism," a term used by Pope Benedict XVI to articulate the expectation that religion be considered not as "a mere human feeling which can be relegated to the private sphere, but as a reality which is not only organized in a visible structure, but which may be recognized by the public community."[104] Indeed, a healthy secularism acknowledges that religion plays a vital role in constructing a just society. However, religious pluralism in post-modern societies, where people do not share a common understanding of the good life, renders the perspective of a more active participation of religion in the public discourse highly suspicious.

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103 Ibid., 160.

104 Benedict XVI, *Address to H.E. Mr. Almir Franco De Sa Barbuda, New Ambassador of Brazil to the Holy See,* 31 October 2011. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111031_ambassador-brasile_en.html (accessed on 01-03-2012)

2.5. The Dominant Ethos of Tolerance

In both Western Europe and the United States, the awareness of religious differences generates the fear that religious involvement in public life could poses serious challenges to the social unity and internal peace. The memory of post-Reformation religious wars and of the contemporary religious and ethnic conflicts has cast serious doubts on the positive contribution of religion to the advancement of the common good in a pluralistic society.[105] Samuel Huntington has argued that world politics in the post-Cold War era will be driven by a clash of civilizations and cultures rather than of ideology or economics.[106] In Western societies the preferred strategy for addressing cultural and religious pluralism as well as for protecting the equal dignity of all persons has been the development of tolerance. As a consequence, religious beliefs have been confined to the private sphere and visions of the good life have been treated as private opinions. Today Western countries are under the influence of a public philosophy that sees autonomy and non-interference as primary values and places a remarkable emphasis on individual self-determination at the expense of the concern for the common good. These values do not contribute to the realization of the well-being of people who are increasingly dependent on political, economic, and cultural connections.

Hollenbach argues that while tolerance of differences represents the highest social aspiration in American culture, an adequate response to the contemporary global

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105 Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 14-15.

106 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 3-6.

problems demands a re-commitment to the universal dimension of the common good.[107] An alternative to an ethos that values tolerance, the current global imbalances demand a response of solidarity that values human interconnectedness and interdependence while respecting indigenous cultures and tradition. In this respect, Hollenbach maintains that the public engagement of religious communities that accept inclusive democracy and dedicate themselves to the values of peace, human rights and justice does not pose a threat to freedom, peace and unity of society. Rather, such communities can make a distinctive contribution to the common good while respecting diversity and freedom by encouraging active participation of believers in public life and by strengthening civil society.[108] Hollenbach also argues that "Christians should be actively engaged in building up a community of freedom along with those who are not Christian."[109] A commitment to Christian faith calls Christians to promote freely accepted forms of solidarity in both nation-states and the world. The commitment to religious freedom stems from the understanding that there is one God who is Creator and Lord of all. The Catholic position articulated at the Second Vatican Council clearly rejects any form of "integralism" that reduces all forms of knowledge to theology; nor does it accept the idea that all social institutions can be reduced to one entity: namely the Church. The Second Vatican Council affirms clearly that the dignity of the human person assures the right to religious freedom.[110] Yet, the separation of religious beliefs from other dimensions of social and

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107 Hollenbach, *Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 24 and 56-61.

108 Ibid., 100-3.

109 Ibid., 113.

110 Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Religious Freedom: Dignitatis Humanae*. 7 December 1965, n.2. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html (accessed on 07-03-2012)

intellectual life, as well as the separation of the church from the state, do not prevent religion from attempting to influence public and even political life. More specifically, the meaning of religious freedom involving the engagement of religious communities in public life "comes within the meaning of religious freedom that religious bodies should not be prohibited from freely undertaking to show their special values of their doctrine in that concerns the organization of society and the inspiration of the whole of human activity."[111]

2.6. The Postmodernity Debate

Increased participation by religion within the public square is advocated not only by Catholic theologians and the ecclesiastic leadership but also by the most creative expressions of the postmodern cultural sensibility, as Michael Paul Gallagher has recently explained. Contemporary culture has been largely influenced by "postmodernism" that has adopted a critical stance toward the achievements of modernity. While postmodernism as a current stream of thought retains an attitude of irrevocable refutation of modernity, lived postmodernity "includes both a destructive attitude as well as a constructive desire of investigating new cultural approaches."[112] Radical postmodernism is characterized by a series of nihilist rejections of the achievements of modernity, such as scientific and technological progress, the deep sense of human dignity, autonomy and rights associated with modern democracies, and the absolute primacy of empirical reason,

111 Ibid., n.4.
112 Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 98-100.

as well as the question of transcendence.[113] On the contrary, one aspect of lived postmodernity attempts to purify modern presuppositions precisely to open up to new horizons.

From the point of view of religious faith, Gallagher distinguishes two poles within postmodernity: a "creative postmodernity" at the one extreme and, at the opposite extremity, a "passive or superficial" postmodernity.[114] Creative postmodernity is a new sensibility oriented to the achievement of wholeness; it attempts to bridge the modern gap between the rational and the subjective aspects of the person. In addition, it reacts against social indifference and isolation, as well as the multiple cultural fractures all too often experience in contemporary society. In addition, David Tracy views postmodernity as a new sensibility more open to religious horizons than the modern Western scientific technological, democratic culture, which is, at the same time, less arrogant than modern liberalism that implies that "Western culture is culture."[115] Charles Taylor, who analyzes modernity from the point of view of the subject and its shift in sensibility, argues that the modern self needs to retrieve the spiritual aspirations in valorizing the religious dimension of culture. As it concerns moral values, the notion of self-fulfillment is inauthentic if it does not take into proper consideration "the demands of our ties with others" or "the demands of any kind emanating from something more or other than human desires."[116] Gallagher maintains that there is a certain humility at the heart of the

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113 Carl F. Henry, "Postmodernism: The New Spectre?" in *The Challenge of Postmodernism* (ed. D. S. Dockery; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995), 34-52.

114 Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 108.

115 David Tracy, "Theology and the Many Faces of Postmodernity," *Theology Today* 51 (1994):104-5.

116 Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 35.

constructive version of postmodernity that can open a space for mystery and spirituality beyond the confines of secular modernity.[117] He is convinced that this humbler moment after modernity is a propitious opportunity for a creative communication of the Christian vision. He also claims that in recent years a less destructive stance has been expressed by some postmodern theorists. In particular, sociologist Jacques Godbout retrieves the human importance of giving of oneself and speaks of human giving as the root of a relational anthropology.[118] This "gift" language signifies a sensibility that transcends the modern paradigm of the utilitarian individual and suggests a new image of human beings strongly connected with one another. Who can doubt that this new sensibility provides a favorable climate for the inculturation of Christian faith?

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117 Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 112-3.

118 Jacques Godbout, *The World of the Gift* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 172-9.

CHAPTER 3: PROMOTION OF A NEW CULTURE OF GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

3.1. The Church's Understanding of Culture

Although culture has played a crucial role in the proclamation of the gospel and in the transmission of faith since the beginning of the Church's history, it was at the Second Vatican Council that the Church became fully aware of the anthropological and sociological dimensions of culture. In *Gaudium et spes*, the Council suggests a new definition of culture that includes both its humanistic and its sociological dimension.[119] The Council Fathers acknowledged that culture concerns not only the progress of individuals through their intelligence and artistic qualities, but also the life experience and the typical mentality of each human group, embodied in social structures and different approaches to life. The new awareness of the link between culture and different lifestyles and values implies the Church's acknowledgement of a plurality of cultures. In addition, the Council Fathers recognized an intimate relationship between culture and the promotion of the dignity of the human person and of his/her call to reach "true and authentic humanity."[120]

Hervé Carrier argues that one of the major contributions of the Second Vatican Council to the updating of the Church's mission was the recognition that living cultures

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[119] Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, n.53. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed on 11-02-2011).

[120] Ibid.

constitute new horizons of evangelization.[121] In line with this recognition, Gallagher further argues that the Council Fathers evaluated modern culture as incorporating positive values that prepare people to accept the gospel message, and provides a fully positive pastoral reading of the modern age.[122] Undoubtedly, this new development in the Church's understanding of culture was the result of the Church's acceptance of science and the methods of social and of cultural analyses. By adopting these investigative approaches, the Church has become more sensitive to the signs of the times and to the values, aspirations, and contradictions of societies. At the same time, the Church has developed its own understanding of the role of culture in the lives of individuals and societies as well as in the transmission of the faith. The fruits of the discussion about culture that occurred at the Second Vatican Council, especially in reference to the dialogue between the Church and contemporary culture, became more apparent during the pontificates of Paul VI and of John Paul II.

The new appreciation of the influential role of culture on evangelization gave rise to the development of the concept of the "evangelization of culture," introduced by Paul VI in his post-synodal exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*. In this document, the pope states that "the split between the gospel and culture is without doubt the drama of our time, just as it has been in other times. Therefore, every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly, of cultures."[123] As a result of Paul VI's contribution to the understanding of culture, the primarily anthropological interpretation of culture articulated in *Gaudium et Spes* has been enriched by the religious interpretation

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121 Hervé Carrier, *Evangelizing the Culture of Modernity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 25-8.

122 Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 48.

123 Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* n.20.

according to gospel values, which underlines the need for discerning those cultural aspects that constitute an obstacle to the liberating power of the gospel. As it concerns this new interpretation of culture, Gallagher states that by invoking "the metaphor of 'drama' this interpretation goes beyond Vatican II and recognizes an inevitable conflict in the process of confronting cultures and of transforming them with the vision of the gospel."[124]

John Paul II further develops the notion of evangelization of culture by placing a remarkable emphasis on the relationship between culture and the human potential of self-transcendence, in short, human fulfillment through mutual love and social solidarity. On several occasions, the pope emphasized that through culture human beings can become more human; he knew that different cultures embody different ways of answering the question of the meaning of human existence. In particular, he argued that a culture is a way of giving expression to the transcendental dimension of human life; the relevance of a culture depends on its ability to promote the integral development of the human person.[125] John Paul II believed in the lived dimension of culture. In the letter instituting the Pontifical Council for Culture in 1982, he wrote: "the synthesis between culture and faith is not just a demand of culture, but also of faith. A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not fully lived out."[126] In light of the cultural humanizing and dehumanizing

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124 Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 51.

125 John Paul II, *Speech at the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations,* 5 October 1995. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1995/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_05101995_address-to-uno_en.html (accessed on 10-15-2012)

126 John Paul II, *Lettera di Fondazione del Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura.* 20 May 1982.

influences on the person, the pope urges Catholics to critically understand local cultures and mentalities to identify patterns of oppression and discrimination. Since he believed that the heart of any cultural project lies in the promotion of the full dignity of the human person that includes the openness to the absolute, John Paul II advocated for the transformation of the present culture into a new ethos that, though inspired by the Christian message, respects cultural pluralism and religious liberty. Since the beginning of its history, the Church has been facing the challenge of preaching the gospel in cultural milieux marked by different cultural assumptions and mentalities.[127]

3.2. The Church's Understanding of Inculturation

Throughout the history of Christianity, evangelization has been characterized by strenuous efforts to embody the message of God's revelation in the person of Jesus Christ into different cultures in various places. This process of communicating the gospel across cultures, called inculturation, reflects the anthropological awareness of the dignity and diversity of cultures and the conviction that evangelization involves "transforming humanity from within."[128] John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio* defines inculturation as "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human

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http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_19820520_foundation-letter_it.html (accessed on 10-23-2012).

127 Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 21-38.

128 Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n.18.

cultures."[129] The theological basis of inculturation lies in the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. When John Paul II introduced this term in 1979, he explained that the dynamic of inculturation replicates the incarnation of God's Word that took place in history to and for people with particular cultures.[130] Christ continues and completes the gift of the incarnation in different historical contexts. More recently, inculturation has been explained not only in terms of the mystery of the incarnation, but also according to the redemption paradigm. In the document *Ecclesia in Africa,* John Paul II remarked that inculturation involves both "insertion" and "transformation" according to "the logic proper of the Mystery of Redemption."[131] Every culture, including the Church's, needs to be continually challenged and transformed by the gospel values in light of the Pascal Mystery. In the same document, John Paul II used the Pentecost analogy to explain that inculturation ultimately seeks to replicate the miracle of unity amid diversity. As Pentecost signifies the beginning of a new unification under the Spirit, inculturation should aim at forging new constructive and integral relationships among fragmented cultures.

In 1993, then Cardinal Josef Ratzinger stated in a speech to Asian bishops in Hong Kong, "We should no longer speak of inculturation but of meeting of cultures or

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[129] John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Redemptoris Missio,* 7 December 1990, n.52. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html (accessed on 02-14-2012)

[130] John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation Catechesi Tradendae*. 16 October 1979, n.53. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae_en.html (accessed on 11-2-2012)

[131] John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa*. 16 September 1995, n.59. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-in-africa_en.html (accessed on 10-27-2012)

'interculturality'."[132] This expression relies on the inseparability of faith and culture to such an extent that faith is always embedded in culture and culture cannot be devoid of faith. The notion of interculturality integrates both an appreciation of other cultures and religions as well as their need for purification in light of the basic Christian message of God's love for humankind. The current global evangelization demands a new inculturation so that the Christian faith might be adopted by non-believers through a variety of different strategies. In the process of selecting the most appropriate strategy, it should always be kept in mind that authentic inculturation aims at having the faith take deep roots in today's lifestyles, as well as challenging and transforming the dominant culture according to the counter-cultural gospel values.

3.3. Possible Strategies for the Evangelization of Culture

The various strategies for the new inculturation of Christian faith, grounded in different types of relationship between faith and culture, should reflect Christian attitudes toward the dominant culture. H. Richard Niebhur, described five approaches to the relationship between Christian faith and culture, as he identifies the so called "enduring problem."[133] The foundational premise of Niebuhr's work is that throughout history Christ has been seen as a threat and an enemy of culture and thus he has been rejected.[134] 1) The relation between faith and culture, designated as "Christ against culture," reflects

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132 Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI, *Address to the Presidents of the Asian Bishops' Conference*, Hong Kong, March 3 1993. http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/ratzhong.htm (accessed on 10-22-2012)

133 H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1951), 11

134 Ibid., 39-44.

the general antagonism between Christian faith and culture. This incompatible coexistence characterized the relation between Christ and Jewish culture and between the new Christian faith and Greco-Roman civilization. 2) On the opposite side lies the so-called "the Christ of culture" model of interaction that presupposes a fundamental agreement between Christ and culture. Jesus is presented as part of the cultural patrimony that must be preserved and transmitted. This approach is grounded in the claim that Christianity and Western civilization are almost inseparable. 3) According to the "Christ above culture" model, Christ represents the fulfillment of every culture. However, Christ's gifts to a culture are beyond human imagination and transcend human efforts to attain them. 4) In analyzing the "Christ and culture in paradox," Niebuhr acknowledges the authority of both Christ and culture as well as their opposition. Though supporters of this position believe that obedience to God requires obedience both to Christ and to the institutions of society, they refuse to accommodate Christ's teaching to the claims of the secular society. 5) Finally, the "Christ the transformer of culture" approach advocates a mediation between two extreme positions. In spite of the opposition between Christ and all human institutions, this antithesis does not lead either to the separation from the world by Christians or to mere endurance by them in the hope of an eschatological salvation. Indeed, Christians are called to be actively involved in transforming culture according to the gospel's values. Christ is seen as the redeemer of all people on this earth, no matter how diverse their cultures. We would be inaccurate to see him merely as the giver of a new law and the representative of the best spiritual resources in humanity.[135] At the conclusion of his analysis, Niebuhr acknowledges that these models represent artificial

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135 Ibid., 190-4.

constructs with inevitable limitations and are, by no means, exclusive of each other. For him, it is crucial to remember that the world of culture as a human product exists within the kingdom of God and that Christians have to carry on cultural works in obedience to the Lord.[136]

More recently, Gallagher has classified the Christian responses to contemporary culture into three main categories.[137] 1) "Unrreconciliable hostility" expresses a strongly negative judgment of contemporary culture seen as irreversibly sick. As a consequence, Christians must protect themselves from cultural contamination by finding their true identity only within the Church. Among the supporters of this religious stance, Stanley Hauerwas urges believers not to underestimate "the corruption of our culture" and to profess their faith as a "countercultural phenomenon."[138] But this position can lead either to fundamentalism or to a separatist attitude within the larger membership of the Church that excludes any possibility of establishing a new order of human relations based on renewed cultural assumptions. 2) The opposite response consists of a naïve acceptance of culture that entails various potential risks. A possible degeneration of this position leads to renunciation to promote alternatives to the dominant culture. Often the naïve acceptance of culture is grounded in an acritical assimilation of the dominant culture devoid of any effort to critically evaluate its practices. In some cases, this cultural stance may reflect an indiscriminate pluralism that presupposes that all cultural expressions are equally defendable. These first two stances are unlikely to provide a fruitful pattern of interaction between culture and faith since they are rooted in prejudicial evaluations of

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136 Ibid., 252-6.

137 Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 135-7.

138 Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 30 and 145.

cultures rather than in an authentic concern for human integral development. 3) A third type of response that entails reflective and genuine cultural discernment is, therefore, highly desirable.

3.4. Authentic Cultural Discernment

In this third type of response, Gallagher argues that cultural discernment from the perspective of the Church's mission is more elaborate than a mere application of the method of cultural analysis.[139] Indeed, cultural discernment entails a critical evaluation of cultural phenomena and their impact on those living under the guidance of the Spirit. In other words, this process combines an evaluation of cultural external factors with attention to the movements of the Spirit both in individual persons and in the believing community as a whole. This faith-based experience of evaluating a culture aims to discover the presence of the Spirit at work in specific societies and in human history through the examination of particular cultural attitudes and lifestyles. Gallagher also argues that the basic attitude underlying this process of discernment should be characterized as "consolation," a term rooted in Ignatian spirituality.[140] This term suggests that the basic disposition of cultural discernment should not be simply feeling good about a certain situation. Rather, consolation implies a deliberate shift away from either a hostile mindset or a naïve acceptance of something toward realizing that the world and all that is in it are grace-filled gifts of the Spirit of the risen Christ, the first-born of the new creation. This sense of hope generated by faith in Christ opens the heart

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139 Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 139-41.

140 Ibid., 142.

and mind of believers to appreciate the goodness underlying a particular culture and to dismiss any *a priori* stance of distrust. Although an authentic discernment does not prevent believers from facing conflicts between culture and their Christian values or from rejecting the dehumanizing aspects of a culture, it gives faithful the hope that in every situation they can be transformed through the power of the Spirit.

An authentic cultural discernment that constructively promotes the contemporary inculturation of Christian faith cannot be limited to the evaluation and judgment of the global, secular, and post-modern culture. Indeed, it must also involve the imagination of strategies for implementing new conditions and modes of living, reflective of the status of new creation (2 Cor 5:17). An alternative to the egoistic patterns fostered by contemporary culture, Christian communities should incarnate a radically different culture informed by self-giving love in imitation of Christ's character.

As Kenneth Himes has asserted, "an evangelized culture will both facilitate and arise from the evangelization of persons."[141] The evangelization of the person entails bringing the good news not only into the spiritual but also into the social dimension of human existence. Therefore, the proclamation of the good news of God's reign transforms everyone. The Christian way of living should give witness to the reign of God, not just as a hope for the future, but as already present here and now, historically incarnated in the Christian communities which live in a covenantal relationship with God and God's creation. When the members of the community live in relationship with themselves, with others, and with God in a right way, the reign of God becomes a present, though incomplete reality.

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[141] Kenneth R. Himes, "A New Look at Social Justice" in *The New Catholic Evangelization* (ed. Kenneth Boyack; New York: Paulist, 1992), 117.

Only when Christian faith is lived in communities marked by peaceful and just relationships will it be able to resist the pressures of the dominant culture and provide a credible witness to the gospel. For this purpose, the Church has to subject itself to constant critiques and moments of purification in order to avoid the risk of passively accepting those aspects of the dominant culture that contradict the Christian message of universal love. Although resistance to the pressures of the de-humanizing aspects of the dominant culture is the first step of the process of evangelizing a culture, the whole process includes the ultimate transformation of the external culture. The Church's mission consists of bringing about a theological vision of a new humanity re-created through and in Christ that has inevitable socio-cultural consequences, as Paul VI has clearly stated: "evangelization means bringing the good news into all the strata of humanity."[142] As consequence, the efforts of evangelizing culture cannot prescind from a clear commitment to the promotion of social justice. Himes defines social justice as the "virtue which calls for bridging the values of the gospel to bear on the way we organize communal life, correcting the failures of our social institutions."[143] The close association between commitment to social transformation and the proclamation of the gospel has been strongly stressed in the post-synodal, 1971 letter, *Justice in the World*, which points out that "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel."[144]

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142 Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 18.

143 Himes, "A New Look at Social Justice," 123.

144 Synod of Bishops, "Justice in the World" in *Catholic Social Thought. The Documentary Heritage* (ed. D. J. O'Brien and T. A. Shannon; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010), 306.

3.5. Intellectual Solidarity

Catholics are thus called to bring their faith-based vision of the good social life into the public sphere as a way of bearing witness to their faith and of proclaiming the gospel. In particular, Catholics should participate in the edification of a community of freedom along with those who do not share in the Christian life. The engagement of Catholics in civil society must be grounded in respect of religious freedom, as I have suggested in the previous chapter, as well as in dialogue with Christians and non-Christians. In this respect, I argue that the model of interaction called "dialogic universalism/ intellectual solidarity," proposed by Hollenbach, represents a suitable approach to a constructive collaboration across cultural and religious differences. This approach reflects the "recent efforts by the Christian community to combine fidelity to the particularistic vision of the human good rooted in the gospel with a commitment to discerning the common morality, needed in a pluralistic but interdependent world."[145] It is an intellectual endeavor that requires openness to others and a willingness to learn from those who hold different worldviews. Dialogue among people from different faith traditions and cultures and who hold different understandings of the good life contributes to building up a civil society marked by solidarity in freedom.

Openness to intellectual dialogue grounded in the respect of the dignity of all persons that excludes coercion and proselytism represents an indispensible requirement for the proclamation of the gospel in a pluralistic world, as well as for a collaborative engagement in global social transformations. Intellectual solidarity through dialogue

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145 Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith*, 11.

emerges from the conviction that a truth about the human good has to be pursued; it thus excludes any relativist position.[146] In this way, Catholics provide a credible witness to the truth of their faith that is aware of contemporary religious pluralism.

3.6. From a Culture of Tolerance to a Culture of Global Solidarity

Intellectual solidarity, following an authentic cultural discernment, provides the basis for the development of a global culture of solidarity. Though contemporary global transformations have been characterized by an increased collaboration among nations, they have also been marked by asymmetrical power and unequal access to universal resources because of discriminatory policies on the part of diverse ethnicities and religious groups. In his encyclical *Sollecitudo rei socialis*, John Paul II remarked that the phenomenon of globalization has assumed the contours of an ethical issue that calls all global institutions to conform to the ethical standards informed by solidarity.[147] The notion of the global common good requires the developing cooperation of international political institutions and, at the same time, moral patterns of globalization that guarantee the respect of small communities with different cultural and religious traditions. In other words, the new global configuration of political, economic and financial power "calls for rethinking international cooperation in terms of a new culture of solidarity."[148] Hollenbach clarified this notion of cultural solidarity. It should not be limited to

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146 Hollenbach, *The Global Face of Public Faith*, 12.

147 John Paul II, *Sollecitudo Rei Socialis*, n.26.

148 John Paul II, *Message for World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2000, n.17. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_08121999_xxxiii-world-day-for-peace_en.html (accessed on 10-02-2012)

tolerating different cultural and religious communities, while preserving, at the same time, their current patterns of injustice. Solidarity must entail the transformation of the prevailing global patterns into new forms of globalization that secure human rights for all.[149] To insure respect for universal human rights, one must include civil-political and socio-economical rights understood as "the minimum conditions for life in the human community."[150] Human beings can exercise universal freedom only "in a community of freedom in which personal dignity and social solidarity are promoted."[151]

In the current global context, the Catholic Church can offer its moral vision based on its social tradition whose principles of solidarity and subsidiarity are grounded in the Christian faith. In addition, the Church needs to stress the reasonableness of a natural law ethics and provide the moral foundation for a culture of global solidarity. This culture should be committed to both dialogue across cultural and religious boundaries as well as to the implementation of just economic and political patterns throughout the entire world. Ultimately the development of this culture of global solidarity incorporates the Christian values of solidarity and respect for the dignity of every human person as articulated by the social teaching of the Catholic Church; at the same time, it rejects the current culture of disengaged tolerance lacking any spiritual values.

3.7. The Principle of Solidarity in Catholic Social Teaching

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149 Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 220-4.

150 U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Economic Justice for All," in *Catholic Social Thought. The Documentary Heritage* (ed. D. J. O'Brien and T. A. Shannon; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010), 715.

151 Hollenbach, *Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 228.

Solidarity, a multidimensional concept, includes both a theoretical and a practical aspect. Theoretically, the concept of solidarity is grounded in the social nature of human beings and the equal dignity of each person that demands the respect of his/her civil-political and socio-economic rights. Practically solidarity translates this equality of all persons into contextualized policies and social structures that promote equal participation in the common good of society and mutual concern for the well-being of all. In the tradition of Catholic social teaching, the concept of solidarity has been variably articulated, namely as social charity, social justice, and liberation.[152] The notion of solidarity is strictly related to the notion of common good. As John Paul II has pointed out "solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue.. [Solidarity is] a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good" which consists of the "good of all and each individual."[153]

3.7.1 Solidarity as Social Charity

In the encyclical *Rerum novarum,* Leo XIII argued that co-operation rather than conflict is instrumental to the construction of a new social order. The Church, by promoting social charity, contributes to the establishment of bonds of friendship among various social classes that generate social harmony.[154] Similarly, in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno,* Pius XI argued that the task of reconstructing the social order goes

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152 Uzochukwu J. Njoku, *Examining the Foundations of Solidarity in the Social Encyclicals of John Paul II* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006), 122-4.

153 John Paul II, *Sollecitudo Rei Socialis*, nn.38-39.

154 Leo XIII, *Encyclical Letter Rerum Novarum*, 15 May 1891, n.18. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html (accessed on 10-12-2012)

beyond the requirements of justice and demands social charity. The pope suggested that the application of the principle of subsidiarity along with the establishment of groups of professions that include both workers and employers, called solidarism or corporatism, would implement a social order in which both the freedom of individuals and their social responsibilities are promoted. [155] In *Gaudium et Spes,* the Council Fathers considered the virtue of charity perfecting the work of justice as the remedy of global injustices.[156] The document articulates the notion of solidarity in terms of universal brotherhood inspired by the example of Christ and urges the richer nations to increase their technical and financial assistance in favor of the poorer ones.[157] Furthermore, Paul VI's *Populorum progressio* introduced the notion of " integral development" that promotes "the good of every man and of the whole man."[158] In light of this new understanding of development, the Church acknowledges that each person belongs to the human community and urges individuals and countries to practice international solidarity grounded in charity toward those most in need of assistance.[159]

3.7.2. Solidarity as Social Justice

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155 Pius XI, *Encyclical Letter Quadragesimo Anno*, 15 May 1931, n.79. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno_en.html (accessed on 03-03-2012); Carroll Stuhmueller "Corporatism" in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (ed. J. A. Dwyer. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 244-45.

156 Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, n.72.

157 Ibid., n.85.

158 Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 26 March 1967, n. 14. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html (accessed on 10-10-2012)

159 Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio,* nn.44 and 47.

Pope John XXIII in his encyclical *Mater et magistra* explained the principle of solidarity in terms of justice, though he continued to urge the rich countries to provide aid to poor ones. He introduced the term "socialization" to describe the increased interdependence of citizens that allow them to benefit from "technical and scientific progress, greater productive efficiency and higher standards of living."[160] In addition, his encyclical *Pacem in terris,* addressed for the first time to "all people of goodwill," intended to clarify the relation of human rights with the common good and justice. The notion of human rights is central to the understanding of solidarity as justice. As the pope wrote, "every human being is a person; that is, his nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. Indeed, because he is a person he has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from this very nature. And as these rights and obligations are universal and inviolable, so they cannot in any way be surrendered."[161] Human rights are grounded both in the philosophical notion that human beings are persons and have equal dignity and on the theological assertion that God made human beings in God's own image and likeness. The juxtaposition of the language of rights with that of responsibilities establishes the connection between the respect for human rights and the cooperation for the common good. More specifically, the common good includes all the social conditions and relationships necessary for the fulfillment of each person and the well-being of society.[162] In this context, the notion of "working solidarity" is intimately related to the notion of human rights, common good, and justice.[163]

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160 John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, n.59.
161 John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, n.55.
162 Ibid,, n.58.
163 Ibid., n.80.

The pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All,* issued by the Northern American bishops in 1986, provides insights inot the basic requirements for being disciples of Jesus Christ in the context of the most powerful and influential economy of the world. The principle of solidarity, a gift of God, especially when articulated in terms of basic justice rooted in human dignity, can be realized only in community.[164] Basic justice urges an enhancement of human dignity, promotes the protection of civil-political and socio-economic rights as a minimum condition for life in community, and guarantees a minimal level of participation in the economy. In addition, solidarity as a civic commitment to basic justice demands that all members of the community care for the poor and the most vulnerable.[165] From the Christian point of view, the engagement by all human beings to promote a just society serves as a sign of Christ's great commandment to love God with all one's heart and to love one's neighbor as oneself. As Charles Curran has pointed out, the U.S. bishops have defined the guidelines of "a new American experiment of partnership for the common good that insists on the cooperation of all, including the state, to secure the basic rights of everyone in the American economy."[166]

3.7.3. Solidarity as Liberation

The understanding of solidarity as liberation is grounded in the social analysis of the structural dimensions of the socio-economic problems. In light of the results of the Latin American Bishops' conference in Medellín in 1968, Paul VI's apostolic letter

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164 U. S. Catholic Bishops, "Economic Justice for All," 691.

165 Ibid., 692-713.

166 Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2002), 14.

Octogesima adveniens addressed the world's socio-economic problems. Advocating for "a greater justice in sharing goods," Paul VI viewed the principle of solidarity from the perspective of liberation and the commitment to dismantle the barriers to human development.[167] As Gustavo Gutiérrez has argued, the development project in the Third World failed to reach its goals because of the unwillingness of rich countries to challenge the *status quo* and the structures at the origin of economic disparities.[168] The willingness of the Church to make the struggles of the poor its own and to contribute to "a renewed education in solidarity" is rooted in the theological premise that God created the goods of the earth for all nations.[169]

In the 1971 document from the Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, the works of justice and the participation in the transformation of unjust social structures are considered constitutive dimensions of preaching the gospel.[170] Theologically based on the biblical image of God as the liberator of the poor, the document suggests that solidarity become the communal responsibility for dismantling the structures of injustices. At the same time, the appeal to greater cooperation does not undermine the role of local initiatives; it clearly affirms that "all peoples should be able to become the principle architects of their own economic and social development."[171]

The definition of evangelization that encompasses both the interior change of persons and the transformation of the social environment is an essential feature of Paul

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167 Paul VI, *Apostolic Letter Octogesima Adveniens*, 14 May 1971, n.43. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens_en.html (accessed on 28-03-2012)

168 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation, History, Politics and Salvation* (trans. C. Inda and J Eagleson; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 26.

169 Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, n.23.

170 Synod of Bishops, "Justice in the World," 306.

171 Ibid., n.71.

VI's apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii nuntiandi.*[172] Based on the understanding of the principle of solidarity as liberation, evangelizers are encouraged to share in the joys and concerns of the people they meet so that they provide credible witness to faith and perform "an act of evangelization."[173]

3.7.4. The Most Recent Developments of the Notion of Solidarity in Catholic Social Teaching

In his three social encyclicals—*Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollecitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) and *Centesimus Annus* (1991)—John Paul II illustrated the notion of solidarity according to the three interpretations provided by his predecessors. For John Paul II solidarity represents the response to the ethics of interdependence in which each person needs others and cooperates with them for the good of all. 1) In the encyclical *Laborem exercens,* John Paul II illustrated the principle of solidarity in terms of social justice and liberation. In order to confront current social injustices solidarity calls for a determined effort among workers similar to the workers' uprising at the end of the nineteenth century as well as the formation of new structures that promote social justice in the world.[174] 2) In the encyclical *Sollecitudo rei socialis*, published to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Paul VI's *Populorum progressio*, John Paul II updates the concept of development by arguing that "the process of development and liberation takes

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172 Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n.29**.**

173 Ibid., n.21.

174 John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Laborem Exercens*, 14 September 1981, n.37. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens_en.html (accessed on 09-21-2012).

concrete shape in the exercise of solidarity."[175] In comparison with his previous social encyclical, John Paul II articulates the principle of solidarity in terms of Christian charity and characterizes it as "undoubtedly a Christian virtue."[176] The theological view underpinning the interpretation of solidarity as social charity postulates the human person as "a living image of [triune] God" who mercifully redeems and sustains life.[177] Therefore, solidarity manifests itself in the dimension of total gratuity and "in the love and service of neighbor, especially the poorest."[178] At the level of international relationships, solidarity imposes on the richer nations the moral responsibility of helping the poorer nations.[179] Grounded in John Paul II's personalist view, the encyclical sees personal conversion as the remedy against poverty, hunger, underdevelopment, and especially against the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the so-called "structures of sin."[180] Unfortunately, this personalist approach does not adequately consider the social impact of the unjust trade relations among nation-states and the unequal universal distribution of resources. 3) In *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II reaffirms the central position of solidarity in the Christian view of social and political organizations, and associates it with the notion of equal participation. Participation not only enhances the dignity of workers who play an active role in the life of industries, but also promotes the functioning of a society in which citizens are increasingly involved in

175 John Paul II, *Sollecitudo Rei Socialis*, n.46.
176 Ibid., n.40.
177 Ibid., n.36.
178 Ibid., n.40 and n.46.
179 Ibid., n.39.
180 Ibid., n.16.

making political decisions.[181] Drawing inspiration from the lifestyle of the early Christian communities in which every member had equal access to the common resources, John Paul II maintains that the globalization of economy must be associated with the equal representation of all members of the human family.[182] Although the pope ascribes a specific responsibility to the state in defending the poor and the marginalized as a matter of social justice, he trusts mainly on the goodwill of the rich countries to alleviate poverty. At the end, however, John Paul II concludes that charity and love for others are expressed through the promotion of justice and both justice and charity are essential components of the notion of solidarity.[183]

The essential connection between charity and the pursuit justice has been a major theme in Benedict XVI's social encyclical *Caritas in veritate*. In his ethical analysis of the global economic crisis, he challenges investors and consumers to practice love founded on truth, which begins with a search for justice. He maintains that love in the truth consists both in being both just toward others and in securing "a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors.[184] He argues that integral human development requires "recognition that the human race is a single family."[185] The common good, which includes the whole human family, should be the result of a close

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[181] John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Centesimus Annus*, 1 May 1991, n. 10. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html (accessed on 04-11-2012); *Ibid.*, n.43; John Paul II, *Sollecitudo Rei Socialis*, n.46.

[182] John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, n.58.

[183] Ibid..

[184] Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter Caritas in Veritate*, 29 June 2012, n.6. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html (accessed on 03-28-2012); *Ibid.*, n.7.

[185] Ibid., n.53.

interdependence of the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity "since the former without the latter gives way to social privatism, while the latter without the former gives rise to paternalist social assistance that is demeaning to those in need."[186] He also maintains that the genuine development of humanity should be guided by fraternity and a spirit of generosity. Indeed, a fraternal disposition goes beyond the generic concept of solidarity and entails an injection of unselfish compassion and care for others into all domains of civic life. Furthermore, the pope states: "The principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must find their place within normal economic activity."[187] Finally, he acknowledges that the practice of charity in truth is essentially a work of faith, anchored in a transcendent personal vision open to God.

From my analysis of the recent Catholic social teaching on the principle of solidarity, various shifts in the understanding of the notion of solidarity have emerged. The notion of solidarity grounded predominantly in reason and natural law has recently given way to a biblical notion of solidarity. Lisa Sowle Cahill argues that the special emphasis on solidarity as a Christian virtue related to religious conversion risks isolating the Catholic social message from the larger audience, as well as isolating Catholics from the rest of society.[188] At the same, she points to John Paul II's emphasis on interdependence as a positive and normative component of the human good. I believe her remarks, in which she stresses the importance of justice, can be seen as a partial critique of *Caritas in veritate,* though we need to remember that the pope stresses fraternity and

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186 Ibid., n.58.

187 Ibid., n.36.

188 Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Globalization and the Common Good" in *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought Present Crisis*, Future Hope (ed. J.A. Coleman and W.F. Ryan; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005), 52.

generosity in imitation of God's love. This encyclical acknowledges a believer's duty to collaborate with "all men and women of good will, with the followers of other religions and with non-believers," as they work for justice and peace in the human family.[189] This contemporary debate exemplifies the perennial tension between both the proclamation of the gospel and dialogue with non-believers.

The commitment of Catholics to advocate and work for a more just economic and political world, regardless of the different interpretations of the notion of solidarity presented in the documents of Catholic social teaching, can be seen as witnessing to their belief that all human beings are created by the one God. Were each and every local culture to be considered worthy of care and support by the international community, we would have a clear sign that a new creation is appearing, one that can radically change our broken world.

3.8. The Principle of Subsidiarity in Catholic Social Teaching

In the tradition of Catholic social teaching, the principle of subsidiarity is closely related to the principle of solidarity, and reflects the Christian obligation to help others. More specifically, subsidiarity demands responsibility on the part of the state to provide support to persons and structures that cannot achieve well-being by themselves. No one would doubt that support provided by political authority would be temporary, though such authority should aim to make those who receive help independent as soon as possible. The principle of subsidiarity, grounded in the recognition of the primacy of the

189 Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, n.56.

individual and the family over the state, promotes making citizens independent so they can make decisions themselves, as well as claiming their inalienable rights and meeting their civic and spiritual responsibilities.[190]

The principle of subsidiarity, introduced in 1931 by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Quadragesimo anno,* claims that it is unjust "to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy or absorb them."[191] By enunciating the principle of subsidiarity, the pope intended to establish the proper role of government in the social and economic domains of society and to rebuild right relationships between large and small associations and organizations.

More recently, the principle of subsidiarity has entered international debates between individual nation-states and global authorities.[192] In *Pacem in terris,* John XXIII advocated the constitution of a global political authority that could protect the universal common good and provide the necessary support to individual nation-states to allow them to promote the well-being of their citizens.[193] Likewise, Paul VI in *Populorum progressio* invoked the principle of subsidiarity to reaffirm the need for an international authority that coordinates efforts to reduce economic disparities and political tensions on national and global levels.[194] Similarly, John Paul II supported the establishment of international structures and organizations that contribute to the economic and social advancement of

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190 Rodger Charles, *An Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching* (Oxford, UK: Family Publications,1999), 35-36.

191 Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, n.79.

192 Michael E. Allsopp, "Subsidiarity, Principle of" in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (ed. J. A. Dwyer; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 927-9.

193 John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, nn.140-141.

194 Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, n.78.

the less developed countries[195]. Finally, Benedict XVI argues, in line with his predecessors, that "globalization must be marked by subsidiarity" in close association with the principle of solidarity in order to avoid the development of "a dangerous universal power of a tyrannical nature" and provide international aid to local governments.[196]

The principle of subsidiarity defends the indispensible role of national communities in which people find their mutual connections. The development of the principle of subsidiarity throughout the twentieth century papal documents stresses its relevance to the current global situation. It opposes the tendency to create a worldwide community in which national, ethnic, and religious differences are willfully disregarded. "An appeal for social justice in a vision of the global common good," as Hollenbach has pointed out, "must not lead to the destruction of smaller local or cultural communities."[197]

Indeed, Catholics who publicly advocate for a greater solidarity with those who are marginalized and who act concretely to promote their integration in the global community provide a credible witness to their belief that every human being is created in the image of God. I would argue that such public witness to Christian faith is an act of integral evangelization that fulfills Christ's commission to his Church to proclaim the good news to the whole of humanity living in the Third Millennium. This initial phase of proclamation of the good news would prepare the no-longer-believers as well as the not-

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195 John Paul II, *Sollecitudo Rei Socialis*, nn.21, 26.
196 Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, nn.57-58.
197 Hollenbach, *Common Good and Social Ethics*, 225.

yet-believers to encounter the risen Christ through the action of the Spirit and to experience a conversion that would invite them to become new evangelizers.

3.9. Witnessing to the Catholic Faith in Our Global Civil Society

The recent growth of global civil society has offered a propitious opportunity for the inculturation of Christian faith in the global culture. Recently, the presence of Catholics becoming more and more socially active—illustrated by and the fact that NGOs address global issues—has become increasingly visible.[198] By emphasizing human dignity, equality, social participation, solidarity, and reconciliation, Catholics have introduced a new way of proclaiming the gospel in the global society.

The Christian language of "reconciliation," a central theme in Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, has increasingly become integral to the global discourse in highlighting the notions of healing truth and forgiveness.[199] The discourse of reconciliation has come to be closely associated with South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its charismatic leader, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who emphasized, on theological grounds, the importance of forgiveness for reconciliation. In its unprecedented international proliferation, the discourse of reconciliation has been adapted to various political situations throughout Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Northern Ireland, East Timor, and Burma. In addition, in recent years international NGOs dedicated to the transnational promotion of truth and reconciliation can be found in

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198 Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Globalization and the Common Good*, 45.

199 Jonathan Vanantwerpen, "Moral Globalization and Discursive Struggle" in *Globalization, Philanthropy, and Civil Society* (ed. D.C. Hammack and S. Heydemann; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 95.

various countries. Jonathan Vanantwerpen argues that the proliferation of discussions concerning reconciliation can be seen as a powerful example of "moral globalization."[200] This positive form of discourse, however, has not been unanimously accepted. In fact, political theorists Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thomson consider morally unacceptable and "illiberal" those faith-based positions that emphasize reconciliation and forgiveness as means for seeking social harmony.[201]

In the context of our global and pluralistic world, the evangelizing activity that intends "to bring the good news into all strata of humanity, and through its influence transform humanity from within and make it new" is a complex task that demands courage, charity and humility.[202] Most importantly, however, Christian evangelizers should be inspired and guided by the Spirit, the true evangelizer, who empowers them to wisely practice intellectual solidarity that integrates the proclamation of the gospel with openness to dialogue.

In December 2012, Benedict XVI issued an apostolic letter in which he reaffirmed the Church's call to exercise the service of charity both in local churches and at the level of the universal Church. He also emphasizes the relevance of various organized ecclesial forms of charity.[203] Reaffirming "a love nourished by an encounter with Christ," the document notes that the faithful should offer a concrete witness of charity toward those in need; furthermore, it encourages the faithful to establish agencies

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200 Ibid., 98.

201 Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, "The Moral Foundations of Truth Commissions" in *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions* (ed. R.I. Rotberg and D. Thompson: Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2000), 32-33.

202 Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n.18.

203 Benedict XVI, *Motu Proprio On The Service of Charity*, 11 November 2012. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20121111_caritas_en.html (accessed on 12-12-2012)

that can carry out specific charitable services that conform to Catholic principles and teaching. Local agencies, under the competent authority of local bishops who supervise their activities, are called to play an active role in social action. This document reinforces the statements of the October 2012 Synod of Bishops in which they confirmed that the service of faith passes through the service of charity. On the other hand, the document also emphasizes the importance of preserving the distinctive religious identity of Catholic agencies and their religious aspirations.

Although the scope of my thesis does not permit me to address the ways in which Catholic agencies can operate throughout the world, it is worth mentioning the Church's position as found in papal documents and more recently by Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Caritas in veritate*. These documents favor global financial and political institutions that should put pressure on sovereign states to serve the common good. The recent *Note* of the Council for Justice and Peace to reform the international financial and monetary systems calls for some authority capable of building up a world community inspired by love for the common good of the entire human family.[204] This would not be a world power or superpower concentrated in the hands of a few nations that would dominate the rest of the global community. Rather, this would be a set of institutions that promote a global order for the precise reason that every nation should be called to put its citizens at the center of social and political life for the promotion of the distribution of universal resources. In conclusion, by promoting global solidarity a new evangelization should become the visible expression of the Church's compassion and care for those who

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[204] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Towards Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority*, 2011. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20111024_nota_en.html (accessed on 07-12-2012)

suffer throughout the world. Such an evangelization incarnates and continues the Lord's mission of preaching the good news.

CONCLUSION

The Catholic Church has chosen the new evangelization as one of the central duties of its missionary work for the Third Millenium. According to the Church's official pronouncements, this task demands a renewed missionary zeal that envisions creative ways of proclaiming the message of the gospel to those who live in different cultures, and even to those hostile to religious faith. I have argued as a Catholic priest and as a medical ethicist trained as a physician that the program for a new evangelization should take seriously the values, political structures, lifestyles, and religious experiences of all people. Our growing multicultural societies have promoted a public withdrawal from religious beliefs and practices in order to minimize the risk of religious conflicts and disputes. In this cultural climate, all too many Catholics have become oblivious to the biblical imperatives to love God and one's neighbor; they tend to forget their creedal obligations and social responsibilities to promote the common good.

The New Testament writers reported that Jesus' early disciples proclaimed the good news of God's covenant with humanity by words and acts of solidarity with their brothers and sisters most in need. These early disciples imitated Jesus's self-giving. They persevered in giving testimony to what they had heard and seen, while at the same time they experienced rejection and persecution as had their Master. Paul, in particular, transformed by his encounter with the risen Lord, was an indomitable ambassador of Christ. Through his missionary theology, Paul explained to the various communities that God's reconciliatory initiative through his Son had inaugurated a new covenant. In this way, God, who has not yet completed his project of re-establishing the just order,

nevertheless healed a broken world. Therefore, Christian communities live in a transitional age in which they have to remain focused on the redemptive effect of Jesus' death and resurrection, while, at the same time, they nurture their hope in the *parousia*—the end time when God's redemption will be fully completed. During this transitional time, Christians, as new creatures in Christ, should faithfully cooperate with Christ's continuing transformation of the global order according to divine justice. The Church should not discriminate in any way, but rather reinforce solidarity and unity in diversity, thus serving as the paradigm of a countercultural community established by the new covenant. The Church should resist any temptation to withdraw from the world. Rather, the Christian community must labor to transform the world according to God's plan. The Church's countercultural witness to a new life brought about by Jesus Christ and marked by holiness, love for peace, inclusion, justice, and imitation of Christ's self-giving serves as a model of reconciliation and re-creation for the entire world. Today, the gospel demands an accurate cultural analysis to recognize where Christ's Spirit calls baptized Christians to cooperate in the re-creation of the world. Some hopeful signs exist: the increasing de-privatization of religion in the world; spatial and temporal connections between individuals and groups that can contribute to build up solidarity and the development of a global civil society and a new post-modern transcendental sensibility. Who would doubt that individual Christians and the Church as a whole must undergo an authentic cultural discernment with a basic attitude of hope gifted by the Spirit? Three steps are needed: authentic discernment, a strategic plan of action, and intellectual solidarity through dialogue.

1) Prayerful discernment about positive and negative elements in our society should constitute the first step of this transformation. I have argued that authentic discernment depends upon realistic and constructive optimism. In order to be inflamed by new ardor and passion for proclaiming God's reign, each and every Catholic should follow a program of re-evangelization for him/herself that helps to rediscover the life-transforming power of the gospel. The new evangelizers are believers who have had a conversion experience that calls them to proclaim the good news. Therefore, new evangelization entails first and foremost discerning more and more the presence of the living God. 2) Next entails the application of the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity to a given unjust situation that leads to the creative elaboration of a plan of action. 3) In a pluralistic society, the implementation of this plan depends on dialogical negotiation with all members of the community, one that respects religious freedom without abandoning the search for the common good.

In conclusion, building on the insights of many theologians and the official documents of the social teaching of the Church, I maintain that Christian faith can contribute positively to the development of a healthy and vibrant civil society, not only on the level of the nation-states but also on the level of the increasingly interconnected world. Catholic faith in the public square, where a common vision of the good life has yet to be defined, must be accompanied by respect for religious freedom and a serious commitment to dialogue. In our contemporary world, the engagement of the Church to promote justice and peace for all by applying the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity to specific, local situations would provide an undeniable witness to a preferential option for the poor. Every Catholic should participate according to his or her respective vocation

in this expression of contemporary evangelization. Church leaders, priests, and religious in particular should provide witness to this commitment by courageously preaching about social justice and unceasingly proclaiming the Church's moral vision for a more just global order. Likewise, the laity should participate in the current activities of Catholic voluntary associations, which provide humanitarian relief in emergency situations, and expose those unjust social structures that prevent appropriate sharing of the universal goods. The method of evangelization that I proposed in general terms must be applied and adapted to local situations in order for all to cooperate in God's continuous labor of renewal. The aim of reinvigorated and innovative forms of evangelization is at once complex and simple: to co-create with the Spirit a new heaven and a new earth wherein "God will be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

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