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AN INWARD MISSION OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL  
AND  
ITS REFLECTION IN THE GE'EZ RITE DIVINE LITURGY

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Date:



**AN INWARD MISSION OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL  
AND  
ITS REFLECTION IN THE GE'EZ RITE DIVINE LITURGY**

A  
THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of Graduate School of  
St. Mary's University in Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THEOLOGY

by

Brother S. Bdeho

San Antonio, TX

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## **Acknowledgments**

The blessings I receive from God always surprise me. They are always beyond my expectations and to none do I merit. Therefore, this stage of my life is both a sum and a distinctive blessing of God. All praise, glory, and worship be to Him forever and ever. Amen.

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## Abstract

# AN INWARD MISSION OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND ITS REFLECTION IN THE GE'EZ RITE DIVINE LITURGY

Brother S. Bdeho

St. Mary's University, 2023

Thesis Advisor: Allison L. Gray, Ph.D.

Various themes of the Fourth Gospel have been explored by scholars. The exploration of its concept of mission and worship is also present. However, the missionary method and its inseparability from worship have not been examined adequately. This thesis examines this unique feature of the Gospel in three major sections. First, the Catholic Church's contemporary teaching on mission is reviewed based on *Ad Gentes* (AG) and *Redemptoris Missio* (RM), which offer the core teaching. The findings show the *ad extra* missionary praxis is inspired by the Gospels (AG) while RM shows a move towards *ad intra* missionary praxis inspired by the Fourth Gospel. Second, the Fourth Gospel is examined in its historical context and for theological content. The historical context study shows the evangelist's missionary style (inward) in responding to his historical situation. The inward missionary method and model (friendship) condensed from the historical examination is applied to a close reading of John 17 to show the inseparability and mutual nourishment of mission and worship in the Gospel. Third, an application of John's Gospel to the Christian community of today is examined. The Ge'ez rite

liturgy reflects John's Gospel, i.e., its liturgy incorporates mission in worship as essential and integral. The mission of the Fourth Gospel is distinctively inward, and a response to the text is observable in the Ge'ez rite liturgical worship.

Keywords: inward, mission, worship, friendship, Fourth Gospel, Johannine community, Ser'ate Qeddasie, Ge'ez rite

# Contents

Acknowledgments.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1.....	4
The Roman Catholic Church’s Contemporary Understanding of Mission.....	4
The Impacting Sources and the Objectives of <i>Ad Gentes</i> .....	4
Background of <i>Ad Gentes</i> .....	5
<i>Lumen Gentium</i> as a Base for <i>Ad Gentes</i> .....	8
<i>Ad Gentes</i> ’ Mission Articulation.....	9
Doctrinal Foundation of <i>Ad Gentes</i> .....	11
<i>Redemptoris Missio</i> : its Missionary Objectives .....	14
Context of <i>Redemptoris Missio</i> .....	14
Doctrinal and Pastoral Objectives .....	17
Refreshing Missionary Vision.....	19
Chapter 2.....	22



Composition of the Text and Historical Development of the Johannine Community.....	22
Authorship and Date.....	22
Emergence of the Johannine Community: History, Purpose, and Mission.....	25
<i>The Johannine Circle</i> by Oscar Cullmann .....	25
<i>The Community of the Beloved Disciple</i> by Raymond E. Brown.....	28
Summary remarks .....	30
Mission View according to Cullmann and Brown .....	31
Model for the Missionary Concept of John’s Gospel .....	32
Individual Missions in the Book of Signs .....	32
Community Mission in the Book of Glory .....	38
Missionary impact of realized eschatology .....	39
Friendship Model .....	43
Chapter 3.....	45
<i>Ad Intra</i> Friendship Mission and Worship of John 17:1-26 .....	45
Framing the Setting of John 17 .....	45
<i>Ad Intra</i> Friendship Mission and Worship of John 17 .....	52

John 17:1-8: Completion of Mission and Jesus' Glory .....	52
John 17:9-19: Unity in and through Friendship .....	54
John 17:20-26: <i>Ad Extra</i> Mission through <i>Ad Intra</i> .....	57
Chapter 4.....	61
The Reflection of Missionary Features of John's Gospel in the <i>Ser'ate Qeddasie</i> of the Ge'ez Rite Divine Liturgy .....	61
Ge'ez Rite, an Eastern Church Rite.....	61
The Liturgy in Orthodox Missiology according to James J. Stamoolis .....	66
Missionary Features in the <i>Ser'ate Qeddasie</i> of the Ge'ez Rite .....	70
Exhortations.....	72
Evangelical Gestures of the <i>Ser'ate Qeddasie</i> .....	75
Prayers of Disposition .....	80
Verifying Relationship .....	81
Synthesis .....	84
Bibliography .....	89
Primary Sources .....	89

Secondary Sources .....	90
Appendix.....	95
Vita.....	97

## List of Figures

Figure 1.....	36
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## Introduction

The missionary concept of the Fourth Gospel has been attracting the attention of many scholars. One wonders at realizing the extreme opposites of scholars' understanding of the Gospel's missionary attitude. Some scholars conclude that the Gospel has nothing to say about mission.<sup>1</sup> Others view the whole Gospel as missionary.<sup>2</sup> In this astonishing range, I do not think that the Gospel's unique inward missionary nature, its (friendship) model, and worship concept have been recognized. This research paper aims to demonstrate the inward/*ad intra* mission of the Gospel, and how John the evangelist purposefully orchestrates the encounter with Jesus at the individual and community level to execute the mission. In order to demonstrate this, my thesis will explore the revelatory nature of the Gospel's mission concept<sup>3</sup> and its inseparability from worship. Thus, I argue for a Johannine inward missionary nature and its reception in the Christian life of the Eastern Ge'ez Rite Church. This paper aims to serve as an invitation to interested scholars to study the *lacuna* in the missionary concept, and the challenges of the Ge'ez Rite Church in diaspora where Western theology governs.

In Chapter One, this research paper begins by attempting to understand the Catholic Church's contemporary understanding of mission. What is the Church's definition of mission? What are the inspiring Biblical texts for the teaching office? How does the Church implement the

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<sup>1</sup> Okure notices scholars with such position. See Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1-42*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/31 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Abide and Go: Missional Theosis in the Gospel of John* (Didsbury Lectures 2016; Eugene, 2018), xvii.

<sup>3</sup> Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission*, 27.

agenda of mission? These are some of the questions that prompt the search for understanding. To answer these questions, I will analyze two main documents, *Ad Gentes* (decree of Second Vatican Council, 1965) and *Redemptoris Missio* (Encyclical letter of John Paul II, 1990). The approach that undergirds the texts, the biblical texts inspiring these documents, the peripheries they address, and their ways of implementation will be the focus of the study. The purpose of this Chapter is to reveal that the Catholic Church's missionary method is inspired by the synoptic Gospels, and to set a ground for the alternative missionary way the Fourth Gospel offers.

In Chapter Two, the research turns to John's Gospel to study its missionary nature based on the historical emergence and life of the Johannine community. This historical context of the community is studied using a varied approach based on the work of Johannine scholars. The study focuses on the main threads that undergird the missionary current. The chapter concludes in finding out that inward/*ad intra*, friendship, and worship are the major and integrated missionary threads.

Chapter Three is a theological application, exegeting John 17 based on the missionary threads studied in Chapter Two. John 17 serves as a locus of the concept and method that makes the Gospel distinctive.

In Chapter Four, I explore the Ge'ez rite divine liturgy as a reflection of the Johannine missionary concept and method. The Ge'ez rite divine liturgy reveals the legacy of the logic of the Fourth Gospel. This study does not argue for any historical lineage but for a contemporary reader's response to the Gospel.

The thesis paper serves as a call to rethink the Biblical texts that inspire the missionary way of the Catholic Church. To allow the alternatives to speak is to approach the Biblical text in

justice and open one's heart to the Holy Spirit rather than to the tradition. Moreover, the thesis paper leaves one with a moral obligation to offer pastoral care to the Ge'ez rite Christian practice lived in the diaspora. Followers of the rite in the diaspora are exposed to the Western theology, which at times threatens the Biblically inspired and spiritual practice of Eastern Christian heritage.

# Chapter 1

## The Roman Catholic Church's Contemporary Understanding of Mission

### The Impacting Sources and the Objectives of *Ad Gentes*

The Second Vatican Council offers fresh and valuable teaching of the Catholic Church. It produced sixteen documents, of which four are core documents, Constitutions: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: *Lumen Gentium*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium et Spes*, Constitution on Sacred Liturgy: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: *Dei Verbum*. They are core because they offer incredible insights into the Catholic Church's self-awareness and inspire the rest of the documents. The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes*, is one of the texts inspired by these documents, especially by *Lumen Gentium* (LG) and *Gaudium et Spes* (GS). The Six Chapters in forty-two paragraphs could be categorized into a doctrinal (2-9) and a practical treatise (10-42); marking the missionary mandates of the Church within the Trinity, the decree lays out its practicality. In this section of the thesis, I argue that *Ad Gentes* (AG) introduces a new theological insight into the concept of mission. The mission of the Church is a perpetuation of the mission of the Trinity, while holding its old / traditional objective, *ad extra*. Furthermore, the missiological view and objectives of the encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio* will be studied for the purpose of tracing the legacy of AG and the Church's understanding of mission.



## **Background of *Ad Gentes***

A close reading of the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity reveals that there are external (secular) and internal (faith) factors that impacted its content. Two major factors could be mentioned which gave shape to the overall content of the decree. In the first place Vatican II was convoked as colonialism was coming to an end. This new age has undoubtedly impacted the overseas missionary activity of the Church. On the one hand, independent nations were constraining the work of foreign missionaries. On the other hand, mission centers were lacking the human resources and the decrease of missionary vocations from the sending countries.<sup>4</sup> This situation certainly affected the local churches negatively, in personnel and economy. At the same time, the authors of the Second Vatican Council explicitly expressed that it was the secular factor that caused the urgency of the decree. The Council's authors, reading the signs of the times, noticed that "there is a new situation for mankind,"<sup>5</sup> and were aware that "there still remains a gigantic missionary task" to be fulfilled.<sup>6</sup> This secular historical phenomenon impacted the councilors in creating the decree.

The second factor could be extracted from the ecclesial and missionary overtones of the text. The defining point of Vatican II was its new definition of the Church as "missionary by its very nature." Hastings points out how this bridging between ecclesiology and missiology was evolved from the very beginning of the preparation for the Council. The Central Commission of

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<sup>4</sup> Adrian Hastings, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council*, Vol. I (Darton, London: Longman & Todd Ltd, 1968), 205-6.

<sup>5</sup> Paul VI, *Second Vatican Council: Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, Ad Gentes* (December 7 1965), 1, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651207\\_ad-gentes\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html).

<sup>6</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 10.

the Council decided that decrees (pastoral ones) “should not be treated apart in special missionary decrees but in common documents concerning the whole Church.”<sup>7</sup> This becomes clear in realizing the adaption of *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* in the decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity. Furthermore, in their separate commentary work, William R. Burrows and Adrian Hastings look at the members of the missionary commission to explain the factors that create dynamics in the text. Burrows unveiled that the pre-conciliar preparatory commission formed by Pope John XXIII in 1960 was dominated by Roman Curia personnel and academics. Their systematics of the matter could be explained by noticing their reference to patristic sources, but their juridical overtones as a foundation of the text was roundly rejected by the vote of the bishops of the Council.<sup>8</sup> It is important to notice that almost one third of the Council authors were missionary bishops, which were the fruit of the zealous missionary work (overseas) of the Church since mid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the pre-conciliar missionary commission was replaced by the Conciliar Missionary Commission. The members of this commission were dominated by missionary bishops erected to the hierarchy from within native or local communities.<sup>10</sup> The shift of commission members from Roman Curia and

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<sup>7</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 207.

<sup>8</sup> William R. Burrows, “Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity: *Ad Gentes Divinitus*” (December 7 1965). In *Vatican II and Its Documents: an American Reappraisal: Theology and Life Series 15*, edited by Timothy E. O’connell (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1989), 182-3.

<sup>9</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 204-5.

<sup>10</sup> Burrows, *Vatican II and Its Documents*, 182.

academics to missionary bishops (natives) perpetuated the *ad extra* objectives of the decree while embracing the refreshment that the Church as a whole is a missionary church.<sup>11</sup>

The dominant presence of missionary bishops in itself had a twofold role in informing the background of the text. Missionary bishops cry to the ‘sending’ churches to continue to collaborate in the mission work. At the same time they look at the young churches to take over the responsibility of mission *AG*. After a century of fervent missionary work, it seems clear that one of the main objectives of missionary activity had been accomplished as one sees in *AG* 6:

Thus from the seed which is the word of God, particular autochthonous churches should be sufficiently established and should grow up all over the world, endowed with their own maturity and vital forces. Under a hierarchy of their own, together with the faithful people, and adequately fitted out with requisites for living a full Christian life, they should make their contribution to the good of the whole Church.<sup>12</sup>

It could be implied by this time that the respective local hierarchy was concerned with pastoral care rather than missionary activity. Observing this, Hastings challenges the traditional concept of missionary activity. One could put this in question form: how could the priests working in Africa and Asia, mainly concerned with pastoral care, be considered missionaries while priests in Europe going out to the de-Christianized would not be considered missionaries?<sup>13</sup> *AG* takes these

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<sup>11</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 225; Hastings observed that both Chapter Five and Six speak of co-operation; the likely distinction could be that Chapter Five is still holding on the old tradition in addressing the missionary societies as professional missionaries while Chapter Six addresses the missionary duty of Christians obtained at baptism. In my view, the beginning paragraph of Chapter Five, article 28, is an introduction for both Chapters; it convokes the faithful to be actively involved in the missionary duty according to each one’s gifts and state of life.

<sup>12</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 213-4.

new phenomena to heart and renews the theology of mission while preserving its traditional objectives.

### ***Lumen Gentium as a Base for Ad Gentes***

The decree *AG* states in its opening paragraph that its foundation is the Church's missionary nature taught in *Lumen Gentium*.<sup>14</sup> In *Lumen Gentium*, the councilors called the Church to self-consciousness of its very nature. The opening paragraph of *Lumen Gentium* lays out the doctrinal teachings on the Church which are explained or elaborated throughout the constitution:

*Christ is the Light of nations* [Christological confession]. Because this is so, this Sacred Synod gathered together in the Holy Spirit eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature (cf. Mk 16:15), *to bring the light of Christ to all men* [Missiology and content/message], a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church. *Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument* both of a very closely knit *union with God* and of the unity of the whole human race [Ecclesiology], it desires now *to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission* [purpose of the constitution/council].<sup>15</sup>

This quote marks the theology of ecclesiology and the activity that flows from it. The Church obtains its existence and nature by its very “union with God.” Thus, the mission of the Church cannot be fully understood separately from its very essence, “union with God.” In His Paschal

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<sup>14</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Paul VI, *Second Vatican Council: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium* (November 21, 1964), 1, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html). This teaching of *LG* is fundamental mark in the whole Vatican II. It contains three fundamental doctrines: Christological, Ecclesiological and Missiological teaching. Three of them are inseparable and indispensable. The essence of the Church is the “union with God” which is revelatory by its very nature, “countenance of the Church.”

Triduum, Christ united the Church to Himself and gave birth to it (Cf. Jn 12:32; 19:34).<sup>16</sup>

Through this mysterious inauguration, the Church exists as a “sacrament of unity”.<sup>17</sup>

The Church’s missionary nature flows from its being a sacrament of union with God, because “union with God means union with the three persons of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>18</sup> By reawakening the union of the Church with the Trinity, the Council teaches that the Church lives the mission of the Trinity. Within this Trinitarian mission the Council placed its teaching of “the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation.”<sup>19</sup> Hence, it is important to note that the Second Vatican Council authors make a whole circle from article one to article 17 of *Lumen Gentium* by framing the very nature of the Church (1) and its universal mission (16) with the Trinity (2-4,17).<sup>20</sup> AG’s Trinitarian doctrinal foundation (2-5) and *ad extra* objective (10) are consequential and the respective implication of *LG*.

### ***Ad Gentes’ Mission Articulation***

The Trinitarian model of the mission set the Church onto a new vigor to proclaim the good news. A close reading of *Ad Gentes* makes clear that the emphasis is placed on the responsibility of the Church to proclaim the Gospel message to the unbaptized. The decree offers insight on how this mission to those who have ‘not yet heard the Gospel message’<sup>21</sup> is to be

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<sup>16</sup> Paul VI, *LG*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Richard R. Gaillardetz and Catherine E. Clifford, *Key to the Council: Unlocking the Teaching of Vatican II*, (Minnesota: Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 2012), 53.

<sup>18</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 37.

<sup>19</sup> Paul VI, *LG*, 48.

<sup>20</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 41.

<sup>21</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 6.

carried out. The Council defined the Church as missionary by her very nature. This missionary nature of the Church is lived out in accordance with the circumstances and the condition of the recipients.<sup>22</sup> The ‘not yet baptized,’ which the decree estimated to be around two million worldwide,<sup>23</sup> is categorized under one of the many ministerial offices of the Church. To nurture the ardor to reach the unbaptized *AG* looks at a necessary source.

*AG* supplies its new missionary aspiration with personnel and material sources. The decree looks at young churches as a source of missionary vocations:

In order that this missionary zeal may flourish among those in their own homeland, it is very fitting that the young churches should participate as soon as possible in the universal missionary work of the Church, and send their own missionaries to proclaim the Gospel all over the world.<sup>24</sup>

This could be seen as a corollary outcome due to the decrease of vocations from the de-Christianized nations which were a contextual factor of the decree. Hastings sees the tackling of the decree concerning the young Church as a transition from an old system to a new one. The old churches who were the “sending” may not remain as “sending churches,” and the young Churches who were “receiving churches” may not remain as “receiving churches.” A church

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<sup>22</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Paul VI, *AG* 10. There are discrepancies of sources whether the authors of the council estimate those who were not baptized as two million or two billion. The Vatican website says two million while other hard copies say two billion; read, Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Vol. 1 (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, Inc., 1998), 824.

<sup>24</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 20.

must be both. In fact, the health of a church is to be discovered by assessing/determining whether it is a giving church and a missionary church, regardless of its challenge.<sup>25</sup>

The decree was also innovative by including the laity as active missionaries. Article 21 addresses how the laity should witness Christ within their own life-setting:

They must be acquainted with this [the social and cultural framework of their own homeland] culture; they must heal it and preserve it; they must develop it in accordance with modern conditions, and finally perfect it in Christ, so that the Faith of Christ and the life of the Church are no longer foreign to the society in which they live, but begin to permeate and to transform it.<sup>26</sup>

This article, like article 20, was created in the final redraft of the text<sup>27</sup> and was an innovation of the Conciliar Missionary Commission. Furthermore, Hastings, noticing the drastic decline of seminarian missionaries, commented on the role of the laity that the laity was the sole hope for the continuation of mission work.<sup>28</sup> Whether it was due to the historical factor (de-Christianization and thus the lack of resources for mission) or the new ecclesiological theology, *AG* aims at proclaiming the Gospel to the unbaptized through the spirit of communion and having the laity live out their baptismal duty.

### **Doctrinal Foundation of *Ad Gentes***

The doctrinal foundation of mission in *AG* is the mission of the Trinity. For the salvation of the human race God the Father sent his only Son into the world. The Son, establishing the Church as the seed of the kingdom of God on earth, sent the Holy Spirit from the Father to

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<sup>25</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 221.

<sup>26</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 221.

<sup>28</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 230-1.

perpetuate the act of salvation.<sup>29</sup> Based on this inspiration of *LG*, the Council authors defined ecclesiological activity in terms of the mission of God; “the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature.”<sup>30</sup> This doctrinal teaching is thoroughly inspired by Scriptural texts. These textual references are not limited to specific, but references are heavily relied on the synoptic Gospels. *AG* grounds on Jesus’ election of the twelve apostles (cf. Mk 3:13; Mt 10:1-42) and commanding them to go and proclaim the good news (cf. Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15). Stephen B. Bevans observes that by holding the traditional understanding of the biblical texts *AG* diverges from the inspiration of *LG* which views the entire Church as missionary.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, it is proved that the Church’s model of the mission of the Trinity is understood through the traditional thought.

The renewal in ecclesiology impacted the theology of mission in essence. “Mission,” which had been understood as a mere activity and duty of professional members of the Church, became the identity of the Church:

The whole of revelation is the story of mission from God in the world, and the whole meaning of the Church lies in her possessing and fulfilling this mission today. No mission, no Church. Evidently when mission is seen like this, as it must be, it cannot then be restricted to the activity of ‘missionaries’ in the traditional sense.<sup>32</sup>

The mission of the Trinity is the divine mission of the Church. Every baptized, the People of God - as in *Lumen Gentium* - is missionary by essence. However, *AG* retains the traditional usage of the term mission or “missions” as an outreach to the unbaptized.<sup>33</sup> To do this, the

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<sup>29</sup> Paul VI, *LG*, 48.

<sup>30</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen B. Bevans and Jeffrey Gros, *Evangelization and Religious Freedom: Ad Gentes, Dignitatis Humanae* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2009), 34.

<sup>32</sup> Hastings, *A Concise Guide*, 216.

<sup>33</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 6.



Councilors recognized varieties of Church activity “not due to the inner nature of the mission itself, but rather to the circumstances in which this mission is exercised.”<sup>34</sup> Such rethinking of territorial mission and sensitivity to particular circumstances are expressions of the awareness of the missionary identity of the Church.<sup>35</sup> This enabled the council authors to clearly distinguish the pastoral care and the ecumenical activity from the missionary activity.<sup>36</sup>

The self-awareness of the Church enables it to articulate its existence in terms of mission, in order to bring the human race into communion or “union with God.” But this might not give a full picture or understanding of the Church; specifically, who are called *to be* those from which Christ’s brightness shines primarily? The Council authors are aware of this: “The first plan of God was [is] to raise men to a participation of the divine life.”<sup>37</sup> The Church in Christ is the restored human community participating in this divine life. The very creation and the call of the human race is to participate in this life of communion. The Kingdom of God which Jesus established and in which the Church plays an active role is the earthly participation in the communion of the divine life or union with God. From this union the *light of Christ* shines out revealing God’s love to the whole world. Jesus reveals the Father to the world first and foremost by glorifying him. The Fourth Gospel emphasizes the glorification of God the Father in the person of Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 12:23, 28; 17:1, 4). Thus, it emphasizes establishing the glory of God on earth, for which the Church is servant and builder. For the Fourth Gospel, the Church is

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<sup>34</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Bevens and Gros, *Evangelization and Religious Freedom*, 35-36.

<sup>36</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 6.

<sup>37</sup> Paul VI, *LG*, 2.

called to glorify God by being united to Him. This union with God is revelatory and missionary in its nature. It reveals God's self to the world.

To sum up, the analysis of *AG* shows that the doctrinal teaching brings a new ecclesiological understanding which places mission at the heart of the Church, while the practical teaching elaborates the traditional approach of mission. Though Vatican II did not invent a new theology, the council moved the Church forward by renewing herself as a missionary Church in view of the mission of the Trinity. The final goal, “*union with God*,” from which the Church shines has not fully developed its roots in the decree. This gave way to the traditional approach to be in place. The missionary activity of the Church, in the decree, is explained in its “go out and proclaim,” concept (Mt 28: 19; Mk 16:15; Jn 20:21). There is no question that the teachings of Vatican II have played a great role in renewing the Church and through it bring light into the modern world. This will be done by looking at *Redemptoris Missio*, for it was written to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of *AG* and to re-boost its objectives.

#### *Redemptoris Missio*: its Missionary Objectives

##### **Context of *Redemptoris Missio***

*Redemptoris Missio*, The Mission of Christ the Redeemer, is an encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II issued on December 7, 1990. As the given title projects, it is a missionary view encyclical issued from the Pope's teaching office. Marcello Zago observes that this missionary magisterium by John Paul II marks the sixth papal missionary encyclical issued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; all these documents promote the Church's mandate to the non-Christians while each

exhibits uniqueness based on the historical context.<sup>38</sup> However, *Redemptoris Missio* (*RM*) heavily relies on the innovations of Vatican II, and mainly picks up from *Ad Gentes* and elaborates and contextualizes it.<sup>39</sup> This piece of work aims to unpack how *RM* inherits *AG* and the new insight it teaches.

The context of *Redemptoris Missio* could better be framed by the phenomenon threatening the human situation that the councilors of Vatican II had foreseen. Reading the signs of the times, the Second Vatican Council authors categorized the threatening sectors as “Some Problems of Special Urgency,” “particularly urgent needs characterizing the present age, needs which go to the roots of the human race.”<sup>40</sup> Twenty-five years having passed since Vatican II, the Pope was experiencing the threats foreseen at the time of the Council. He finds it a practical duty to scrutinize the matter and to offer the sole answer, Christ the Redeemer:

The Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions men ask about this present life and the life to come and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Marcello Zago, “Commentary on *Redemptoris Missio*.” In *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation*, edited by William R. Burrows (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1993), 59.

<sup>39</sup> Zago, “Commentary on *Redemptoris Missio*,” 62-63.

<sup>40</sup> Paul VI, *Second Vatican Council: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes* (December 7, 1965), 46, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html).

<sup>41</sup> Paul VI, *GS*, 4.

This passage articulates what the document wants to address. The council authors observe the crisis of the “perennial questions” for which they were felt to evangelize and re-evangelize urgently. Zago notices that the Pope’s encyclical is mainly enlightened by the innovation of the council to address the contemporary challenges. He follows and implements the teaching of the council to bring Christ into every corner of the world: “He takes a careful look at the situation of humanity in relation to the faith and its transmission through evangelization.”<sup>42</sup>

Reading the signs of the times, the Pope feels the urgency to bring the light of the Gospel into every square. He reads that the modern age has created a new “Areopagus” (Acts 17:16-21). This modern age “Areopagus” mainly refers to the complexity arising in the developing and developed countries, and their city centers, where the mission *Ad Gentes* has to be directed.<sup>43</sup> Despite the great successes, the world of the modern age seems to him “to have lost its sense of ultimate realities and of existence itself.”<sup>44</sup> Another central context of the document aims to reawaken *AG*’s objectives by correcting misinterpretations and doctrinal flaws caused by misunderstanding.<sup>45</sup> The encyclical aims to bring the light of the Gospel into these spheres primarily through “interior renewal of faith and Christian life.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Zago, “Commentary on *Redemptoris Missio*,” 57.

<sup>43</sup> John Paul II, “Encyclical Letter on the Permanent Validity of the Church’s Missionary Mandate: *Redemptoris Missio*” (December 7, 1990), 37. In *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation* edited by William R. Burrows (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1993), 25.

<sup>44</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Zago, “Commentary on *Redemptoris Missio*,” 57-58.

<sup>46</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 2.

## Doctrinal and Pastoral Objectives

The objectives that the encyclical addresses could be seen in two major points: having the Church introspective look and the humankind's situation in the modern age. The encyclical understands that the shocking growth of the population of those who 'never heard of Christ' is a specific sign of the failure of Christians to live their faith or a sign of loss of faith (internal cause).<sup>47</sup> These are pointed out in the practical and doctrinal expressions of believers. At the practical level, the missionary thrust set forth by *AG* has faded. The document aims to bring about the renewal of faith which for the Church's mission foundation is faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the encyclical aims at encountering the modern age's atheism through the Church's renewal of faith.

At the doctrinal level, the document unpacks theologically erroneous tendencies in Christology, ecclesiology, and missiology:

There are ideas about salvation and mission which can be called "anthropocentric" in the reductive sense of the word, inasmuch as they are focused on man's earthly needs. In this view, the Kingdom tends to become something completely human and secularized; what counts are programs and struggles for a liberation which is socio-economic, political and even cultural, but within a horizon that is closed to the transcendent.<sup>49</sup>

This text addresses intrinsically connected doctrines. When one is misunderstood, it brings harm to all. The centrality of Christ cannot be questioned. The Kingdom of God cannot exist and be conceived without Christ. "Before all else," the Kingdom is, "a person with the face and name of Jesus of Nazareth, the image of the invisible God."<sup>50</sup> As *Lumen Gentium* states, "The Church, or,

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<sup>47</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 2.

<sup>48</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 4.

<sup>49</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 17.

<sup>50</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 18.

in other words, the Kingdom of Christ now present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God in the world.”<sup>51</sup> In her and through her, the Kingdom of God on earth continues to grow, which never allows separation from the presence of Christ. However, it is necessary to search for the cause of the tendency.

The tendency to reduce the Church’s mission to the betterment of the world might be found in the lack of presenting the Church in its primary identity. She is the dwelling of the Holy Trinity.<sup>52</sup> From her, the glory of God shines to humankind. The Church is the community of the resurrected and perpetuates the glory of God on earth of which “she is the seed, sign and instrument.”<sup>53</sup> The “Eschatological salvation begins” here on earth in her and through her.<sup>54</sup> In this way, the Church, in glorifying God, assists the human race to realize God’s face. Bringing this primary image of the Church into the forefront of the mission concept would replace expressions that leads to a reduced view about the Church. Hence, her mission cannot be “replaced by interreligious dialogue,” reduced to horizontal liberation, nor can conversion be seen as infringing on men’s freedom.<sup>55</sup> This practical and doctrinal crisis holds the core position that the encyclical seeks for renewal and correction.

The situation of humans impacted and surrounded by the modern secular phenomenon is the other external factor which the encyclical addresses, and consequently, forms a new missionary vision. In addition to the traditional missionary outreach view of *Ad Gentes*, the

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<sup>51</sup> Paul VI, *LG*, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Paul VI, *LG*, 4.

<sup>53</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 18.

<sup>54</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 18.

<sup>55</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 4.

document identifies vital sectors which are “to be illuminated by the light of the Gospel.” These are called in the modern age “Areopagus:” “world of communication,” humanitarian and environmental commitments, “scientific research,” “international relations,” and “Areopagus of culture.”<sup>56</sup> These are also identified as offering efficient means for evangelization, as new and vital areas of mission, and as a favorable opportunity for directly involved faithful to bear witness to the Gospel.

### **Refreshing Missionary Vision**

To bring the human race into an encounter with God is the sole mission that defines the mandate of the Church. However, the situation and circumstances of receivers determine the service of the Church.<sup>57</sup> Despite recognizing the variety of ministries and “Some Problems of Specific Urgency,” the Council authors opted to handle the missionary decree in its traditional objectives. *Redemptoris Missio* brings a new missionary vision by looking at the various ministries and urgent needs in a missionary concern. The encyclical identifies three distinctive but integrated missionary categories: 1) those who have never heard of the Gospel, legitimizing *Ad Gentes*; 2) the practicing faithful, in need of pastoral care; and 3) those who lost their faith and no more consider themselves as members of the Church, who require “new evangelization” or “re-evangelization.”<sup>58</sup> Though they are distinctive according to the mode of receivers, they are not components with set limits. They are also interdependent activities, which “influence, stimulate, and assist” each other.<sup>59</sup> Reading the signs of the modern age and recognizing the new

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<sup>56</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 35.

<sup>57</sup> Paul VI, *AG*, 6.

<sup>58</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 33.

<sup>59</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 34.

demands for missionary activity to bring the light of the Gospel, and together with the holistic approach of evangelization to every sector of humankind, the document introduces an update in the objectives of mission sectors.

Beyond the global missionary outreach, there is also a fresh look at the mission from a Biblical perspective. The Pope's way of reaching out is articulated in light of the spirit of St. Paul. The zeal, ardor, and moral responsibility (duty) of St. Paul shine in the Pope's work (cf. 1 Cor 9:16), and on behalf of the whole Church, he repeats the moral duty of St. Paul.<sup>60</sup> The Pope not only relies on the texts of St. Paul to teach the Church, but he personally follows the footsteps of Paul in reaching the non-Christians.<sup>61</sup> For him, mission is an impulsion which the Holy Spirit prompts from within. The Pope hears a voice of the Holy Spirit coming from within rather than a commissioning mandate (cf. Mt 28:18-20) coming from above. For him, the initiative comes from one's experience of 'union with God.' But, for the Pope, there is something more to the union.

The document expounds on the Gospel writers' "missionary mandate" treatise. On the one hand, all the evangelists agree on the missionary mandate to go and make disciples of all nations.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, each evangelist makes a distinction on how this is to be carried out depending on the circumstances, which shows "pluralism within the fundamental unity of the

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<sup>60</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 1.

<sup>61</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 1.

<sup>62</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 22.



same mission.”<sup>63</sup> Attention should be made to the particular emphasis in the document on how John the evangelist wants the mandate to be carried out:

The ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son. The disciples are to live in unity with one another, remaining in the Father and the Son, so that the world may know and believe (cf. Jn 17:21-23). This is a very important missionary text. It makes us understand that we are missionaries above all because of *what we are* as a Church whose innermost life is unity in love, even before we become missionaries *in word or deed*.<sup>64</sup>

This quote explains *LG* 1 in which *AG* is rooted. It becomes clear that *AG* has made its focus on being “missionaries *in word or deed*” based on the synoptic mandate. However, the revelatory character of ‘*union with God*’ laid out in *LG* 1, which is a glimpse to the Johannine approach of carrying out the mandate, has not made its way to *AG*.

The official teaching of the Catholic Church on mission shows both fresh insight and a traditional approach. Vatican II has broken new ground by articulating the mission of the Church in view of the mission of the Trinity. In that way, the mission concept became the definition of the Church’s nature. The ‘go and make disciples of all nations’ missionary commission, on which all es agree, has been an inspiring text. Based on these inspiring texts, the mission *ad extra* has continued to dominate the missionary activity of the Church. However, as the survey of *Redemptoris Missio* shows, each evangelist has his way of carrying out the missionary commission. While the synoptics’ method could be placed under the *ad extra* mission, the Johannine Gospel tends to focus on an *ad intra* mission.

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<sup>63</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 23.

<sup>64</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 23.

## Chapter 2

### Composition of the Text and Historical Development of the Johannine Community

#### Authorship and Date

Traditionally, John son of Zebedee or John the evangelist is considered the author of the Gospel known as the Gospel of John.<sup>65</sup> This is based on the assumption that John, the son of Zebedee, and “the other disciple / the beloved disciple” whom the Gospel acknowledges as its author are one person. However, close critical analysis may challenge that assumption.<sup>66</sup> For example Brown posits five stages in the composition of Johannine text; 1) the existence of a body of traditional material pertaining to the words and works of Jesus; 2) the development of this material in a Johannine style perhaps through oral preaching and teaching; 3) the organization of this material into a gospel; 4) the possibility of several editions of this gospel in the lifetime of the evangelist; 5) a final reduction of the gospel by someone other than the evangelist.<sup>67</sup>

Yet the Gospel, so-called “according to John,” is the only Gospel which clearly refers to its author while at the same time remaining ambiguous. The book itself makes an apparent claim that it was written by an eyewitness who has been an important companion throughout the

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<sup>65</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction and Commentary on Chapters 1-4*, Vol. I, Trans. by Kevin Smyth (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 77-91.

<sup>66</sup> Moody D. Smith, *John: Proclamation Commentaries* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1976), 61.

<sup>67</sup> Raymond E. Brown, “The Gospel According to John I-XII,” *The Anchor Bible*: vol. 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), xxxiv-xxxix.

ministerial journey of Jesus (cf. 21:7, 20-24). While this final chapter of the Gospel is widely considered among biblical scholars as an addendum, it makes its claim of authorship by referring to John 13:23 and John 19:25-27, 35. In doing this, the appendix opts to refer to the disciple as a beloved disciple and distances itself from referring to the texts that address the disciple as “the other disciple” (18:15, 16; 20:3, 4, 8, 10). John 20:2 reconciles these two descriptions of the disciple. The text adds the description “the one whom Jesus loved” to the nickname “the other disciple” (cf. 20:2). This reconciling text is a ground for Francis J. Moloney to conclude that both the titles and descriptions refer to “the same figure.”<sup>68</sup> Despite the detailed description of its author, the Gospel has never stated his name.

The Gospel’s appendix offers one incident which brings together the sons of Zebedee (v. 2) and the disciple whom Jesus loved (v. 7). At an event, Jesus appeared to his closest disciples, among them the sons of Zebedee (v.2). The beloved disciple (v.7) recognized Jesus and brought him to the attention of Peter. Nevertheless, it does not indicate that it is one of the Sons of Zebedee who recognized the Lord. Smith reasons that the “identification has been made by readers on the basis of the process of elimination among the twelve. The absence of any mention of John by name in the Gospel has been taken as an indication of modesty and as evidence for Johannine authorship.”<sup>69</sup> For Moloney, the ascription of authorship to John, son of Zebedee, has to do with apologetics. Moloney sees the probability that Irenaeus attributed the Gospel to an important apostolic figure, John the son of Zebedee, to rescue the books from the gnostics and promote its authenticity among the orthodox believers.<sup>70</sup> Many attempts have been carried out to

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<sup>68</sup> Francis J. Moloney, “John.” In *The Paulist Biblical Commentary*, edited by Jose Enrique and et al (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2018), 1105.

<sup>69</sup> Smith, *John*, 61.

<sup>70</sup> Moloney, “John.” In *The Paulist Biblical Commentary*, 1105.

answer the question of authorship. However, the scholarship of identifying the author - whether he is a historical person or a spiritual figure, whether the author is a different person from the leader of the community, whether he is an insider disciple or outsider (outside the apostles) - has ever broadened its horizons. Though the question of authorship remains unsettled, the Gospel remains authentically apostolic and conveys a well-articulated theology of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Johannine scholars depend on various features of the Gospel to estimate the date of composition. Based on the past expulsion from the synagogue, the self-definition, consolidation, and the high Christology, Raymond E. Brown estimates the Gospel was written around C.E. 90.<sup>71</sup> J. Louis Martyn extends the date further. He relies on the connection of John's texts (9:22 and 16:2) and *Birkath ha-Minim* to date the composition of the Gospel ca. C.E. 100.<sup>72</sup> Thus, one

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<sup>71</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in the New Testament Times* (New York: Paulist, 1979), 23; Brown hypothesized that the seven groups recognized in the Gospel (see below) set the timeframe in which the Gospel got its definitive (final) form. Thus, the direct internal strife the community experienced was not addressed. However, the Epistles were written ca. 100 C.E. to help resolve the internal conflict; Brown called this 'after the Gospel period' (p. 39). Concerning the relationship of the author(s) of the Gospel and the Epistles, Brown has the view that they all belong to the same 'Johannine School.' (p. 96). 'Johannine School' is presented in the Johannine literature. Each contributor of Johannine literature (Gospel and Epistles) addresses him/her-self in the first person 'we' to refer to their adherence to the Beloved Disciple's tradition (pp. 101-103). And the writer claims that his position is a shared position with the Johannine School against the secessionist (p. 108).

<sup>72</sup> Martyn hypothesized a connection between *Birkath ha-Minim* (benediction against heretics) and John's Gospel, 9:22 and 16:2. He believed that *Birkath ha-Minim* was instituted by Gamaliel II (strong and decisive leadership personality), who was in the office of the Jamnia Academy from about 80 C.E. to about 115 C.E. For Martyn, the decree, *Birkath ha-Minim*, was issued to qualify worship in synagogues including the intention of addressing the Christian Jews. Thus, he concludes that the Gospel of John was composed having in mind to confront the decree from Jamnia Academy sometime before the beginning of the second century; J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 60-62; footnote no. 69 & 75.

may safely start by considering the date of composition from 90– 100 as one delves into the world of scholarship about Johannine composition.

#### Emergence of the Johannine Community: History, Purpose, and Mission

I have chosen the work of Oscar Cullman, *The Johannine Circle*, and Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, as a bedrock for my research. The divergence from and convergence to one another enriches my study. Regarding their divergence, on the one hand, Brown sees the Gospel as a correction and re-interpretation of the synoptics, while Cullmann sees it as an advancement of the synoptics. Brown holds that the author of the Gospel differs from the one who has authority over the community, while the author and the leader are one for Cullmann. On the one hand, such divergence brings a different lens of reading and knowing the Gospel of John. On the other hand, both scholars agree on the vital things of the Gospel. Both of them value the historicity in the mind of the author. They both realize and emphasize the internal connection of worship and mission in the Gospel.<sup>73</sup> Such convergence from different angles demonstrates the vitality of the themes of the Gospel. A brief overview of their work will help us grasp the history, purpose, and mission of the Gospel according to these Johannine scholars.

#### ***The Johannine Circle* by Oscar Cullmann**

Concerning the historical emergence of Johannine followers, Cullmann explains it by categorizing members into a non-Christian and Christian environment. Concerning the non-Christian environment of the Johannine circle, Cullmann acknowledges the difficulty of drawing a clear line. Still, he recognizes a milieu of high mobility among Judea, Palestine, Syria, and

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<sup>73</sup> Oscar Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, Trans. by John Bowden (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1975), 16.

Greece.<sup>74</sup> The societal crossover among these areas and the influence they exert upon each other leads one to hold a heterogeneous and thus syncretistic movement or group of affiliations from which the Johannine circle got members attracted by its teaching. Thus, Cullmann concludes “that the milieu of the Gospel is to be seen as a Judaism influenced by syncretism in the area of Palestine and Syria,” “the home ground of the Johannine circle.”<sup>75</sup> In addition, it is significant to notice that Cullmann questioned the popular scholarly view of the affiliation of Johannine concepts with Gnosticism. He holds that the Gospel might have contributed a source to gnostic literature because the gnostic literature appears later in time. Otherwise, they might not have known each other.<sup>76</sup> This excludes any gnostic (members or concepts) roots in the Johannine community.

For the Johannine emergence in the Christian environment, Cullmann begins by referring to passages from the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>77</sup> He recognizes a Johannine thread of concepts and interest in the early Christians (Acts 6:1; 7; 8:4,14,40; 9:32ff; 11:19, 22).<sup>78</sup> In these texts of Acts, he recognizes a group of Hellenist Christians who sprang up at the very beginning of Christianity which might have had a distinctive concept of Judaism before their conversion. The Hellenists

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<sup>74</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 23-24.

<sup>75</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 38.

<sup>76</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 36.

<sup>77</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 14; Cullmann understands that Luke wrote the two-volume work (the Gospel and Acts) in a chronological perspective. The first volume is concerned with the words and deeds of the historical Jesus, while the second is an activity accomplished by the disciples of Jesus. In other words, Luke uses a historical frame to convey his theology (Lk 1:1-4). Brown’s approach to the Gospel of John is quite different. For him, John relies on the specific historical event of Jesus to make his theological point, but it is not necessarily chronological. In other words, John uses historical events to supply the work he framed theologically (Jn 20:30-31). See Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 26; footnote no. 34.

<sup>78</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 39-43.

were not only persecuted for their offensive concept of the temple, unlike their Jewish Christians who were allowed to remain in Jerusalem, but the confirmation of the Hellenists' missionary fruits by Jerusalem Christians also shows that the Hellenists' preaching was mistrusted.<sup>79</sup>

In addition to the anti-temple concept shared between Hellenists and the Johannine Circle, Cullmann recognizes a common interest in a mission in Samaria, "the starting point of all Christian mission."<sup>80</sup> For Cullmann, Samaria is primarily evangelized by Hellenists, and the Gospel of John shows a prominent Samaritan influence, though hetero-Judaism is not lacking.<sup>81</sup> The community, formed in this way in the Transjordan area, continued to exist in unity but distinctive from the main church, protecting itself from being syncretized until the second century.<sup>82</sup> In the second century, the community could not survive an internal conflict, which led some to join the mainstream Christianity while the rest joined groups later deemed heretics.<sup>83</sup> In such a context of the community, the evangelist wrote his Gospel in a way that the active presence of Christ among them is vividly convincing.

The evangelist wrote the Gospel, according to Cullmann's argument, and framed it in the life of the incarnate Jesus to prove that Christ is present and at work after his resurrection, as in his earthly life. He proved this by nuancing specific events from the life of the historical Jesus.<sup>84</sup> Building upon this argument, Cullmann claims that the evangelist consciously sought/tried to

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<sup>79</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 42.

<sup>80</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 47.

<sup>81</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 50.

<sup>82</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 58-59.

<sup>83</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 60-62.

<sup>84</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 14.

advance from the tradition that underlies the synoptic Gospels and the synoptics' teaching.<sup>85</sup> The primary reliance on the historical Jesus is meant to convince the community that it is willed and founded by Jesus.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, the frame of the incarnate Jesus is a prefiguration that the community must embrace the act of worshipping Jesus and be committed to mission simultaneously (Jn 4:23, 35, 38; 10:16; 12:32).<sup>87</sup> Jesus expects worship from those who encounter him, so bringing people to believe in Jesus and to worship him is the evangelist's project.

### ***The Community of the Beloved Disciple* by Raymond E. Brown**

Brown holds that the Johannine community originates from within the Jewish context. The distinctiveness of the converts to Christianity is expressed in their concept of the pre-existence of Jesus (1:15, 30) and in the titles the first followers attributed to Jesus immediately.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, Brown holds that the titles the disciples attributed to Jesus and most of the miracles in the first half of the Gospel of John indicate that the synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John had the same source material, but the Johannine community departed from it by making its own interpretation.<sup>89</sup> For Brown, this is the first group to form the Johannine community emerging

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<sup>85</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 13.

<sup>86</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 15.

<sup>87</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 16.

<sup>88</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 26; the first disciples who followed Jesus recognized him as one with special status. The first two who came from John the Baptist recognized Jesus as 'Rabbi' (1:38), Simon Peter recognized him as 'Messiah' (1:41), and Philip witnessed about Jesus as one who was foretold by Moses and the Prophets (he adds that he is 'Jesus son of Joseph') (1:45). Nathanael described him as 'Rabbi,' 'Son of God,' and 'King of Israel' (1:49).

<sup>89</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 27-29.



from the Jewish background, i.e., the story reflected in the synoptic Gospels, while a second group is noticed in John 4.

Brown recognizes in John 4:4-42 a second large group joining the Johannine community. The impact of this new group on the Johannine community is noticed in the Christological confession (4:42), which is unique and higher.<sup>90</sup> This change introduced by the second group fostered hostility from the synagogue leaders. Consequently, the Gospel of John started to be concerned about the rejection of Jesus by “the Jews.”<sup>91</sup> The joining of the second group (probably predominantly Samaritans) and the shift of topic – realized in identifying a specific threat to the community - marks the internal consolidation of the Johannine community. Brown expounds on the milieu of the consolidation from its polemics.

Brown recognizes seven groups, including the Johannine community, in John’s Gospel. Three groups are non-believers<sup>92</sup> while the other three groups are Christians but do not align with Johannine thinking.<sup>93</sup> I am interested here in the non-Christian groups (the Jews, the world, and followers of John the Baptist), for they tell us more about the history of the Johannine community right after its formation.

Brown discusses a group the community of John attacks: the adherents of John the Baptist. The particular set of negations in John (1:9, 15, 30, 19-24; 3:28, 29, 30; 10:41) portrays that there were adherents of John the Baptist who did not follow Jesus (1:35-37). Such negations

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<sup>90</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 37, 45-47.

<sup>91</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 37.

<sup>92</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 62.

<sup>93</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 71.

hint at the contest between former followers of John the Baptist, who became followers of Jesus, and those who did not follow Jesus but valued and followed John the Baptist.<sup>94</sup>

After the joining of the second group to the Johannine community (Chap. 4), the evangelist identifies “the Jews” as a threat to his community (Chaps. 5-12). Brown is aware that the author uses the phrase “the Jews” vaguely. On the one hand, the author uses the phrase in a positive sense (for instance: ‘salvation comes from the Jews,’ cf. 4:33). On the other hand, he uses it in a negative sense to designate those who are in favor of the synagogue. Those who reject the synagogue were denied their Jewish hereditary title.<sup>95</sup> In Chaps. 14-17 the polemic language shifted to “the world.”<sup>96</sup> Like the usage of the phrase “the Jews,” “the world” is also used in both positive (3:16-17) and negative senses. In the negative sense (7:7; 15:18-19), the Johannine community has encountered new unbelievers, the Gentiles. Thus, Brown believes that “the world” is a collective noun for the unbelieving Jew and Gentiles.<sup>97</sup> Both of these groups tell something about the historical trajectory of the Johannine community, namely that the Johannine community started within a Jewish environment and moved towards a Gentile or non-Jewish community.

#### Summary remarks

Cullmann and Brown help readers see that the Gospel of John provides a history and theology of a distinctive community – the Johannine community. Both scholars approach the Gospel with different historical assumptions. Consequently, they framed the Gospel differently

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<sup>94</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 69.

<sup>95</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 43.

<sup>96</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 63

<sup>97</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 63; footnote no. 112.

and with varying approaches to mission. After reading the material of the scholars, one may find him/herself at a crossroads in choosing which missionary track to follow. The missionary model I offer below will prove a unitive feature. In addition, both scholars agree on the existential eschatology emphasized by the evangelist. This will also serve as a pillar to support the missionary model I propose. Before presenting my own model, having a brief look at Cullmann's and Brown's missionary views will provide helpful background.

### **Mission View according to Cullmann and Brown**

Analyzing the missionary concept of the evangelist is not the direct object of either scholar in these selected works. However, one could deduce their view of the missionary concept of the evangelist from the given works. Cullmann understands that for the evangelist "the historical Jesus and the Christ present in the community are one."<sup>98</sup> Now it is a moral responsibility of the community to continue and live imitating the incarnate Lord. For this, the evangelist presents a Jesus concerned with mission and worship. For instance, Cullmann sees that in many of his encounters, Jesus raises this concern of mission and worship. Through the conversion of worshipping the Father in spirit and truth, the Samaritan woman is to be heralded among her people and lead them to worship Jesus (cf. 4:23, 28). Thus, the community is set to go, for the fields are ripe for harvesting (4:35). The community has to have a deep concern about those not yet believing, the other sheep (cf. 10:16). In imitating Jesus' way of mission and worship, to die like a grain of wheat to bear much fruit (12:24), the community is to carry out its mission in a self-sacrificial way (12:24).<sup>99</sup> However, it falls short of showing one the currents of mission; how this is to be carried out. Brown's approach indicates/implies a different way.

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<sup>98</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 26.

<sup>99</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 16.

Brown's missionary vision of the Gospel could be deduced from his analysis of the consolidation and self-defense of the community. (See above, Brown's identification of seven groups in the Gospel.) In this context, Brown unveils that both an ethical command and a realized eschatology are emphasized by the evangelist (see below pp. 37-40). I want to build upon this missionary approach of Brown to offer a missionary concept for the whole Gospel. In proposing the model below, first, I will depend on these scholars' approach to the Gospel and then offer the model I am arguing here.

### Model for the Missionary Concept of John's Gospel

Johannine scholars, among them Raymond E. Brown, divide the Gospel into two major parts with a shorter introduction and conclusion; the Prologue (1:1-18), Part One: the Book of the Signs (1:19– 12:50), Part Two: the Book of Glory (13:1 – 20:31), and the Epilogue (21:1-25).<sup>100</sup> In order to discover a lens by which one could see the missionary current in the whole Gospel, first, I will treat the two books of the Gospel separately. Then I will search for a common denominator.

#### **Individual Missions in the Book of Signs**

For Cullmann, the model for interpreting the gospel, according to which the Gospel was shaped, is the incarnate Jesus executing his divine plan using specific events. In other words, the specific event is a divine plan ordained by God to reveal his Godness. The main focus is on the historical event, which soon is transferred to a theological level and reveals Jesus' Godhead,

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<sup>100</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *New Testament Reading Guide: The Gospel of St. John and the Johannine Epistles* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1960), 10-11. For a different way of categorizing while holding the final form of the Gospel, read Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1998), 23. Moloney ends by having the Conclusion (20:30-31) as a fourth part, but he does not consider the epilogue as part of the Book.

creating faith in the individual.<sup>101</sup> There is no question about Jesus using specific events to reveal his divinity and persuade unbelievers to worship him. However, the terminology “a historical event” seems too broad and does not show the trajectory of the aftermath. “A historical event” treats the story as a whole, but there are multiple interactions and things that happen within a single story, e.g., with the Samaritan woman and her townspeople. In order to understand the transformation that happens within the person and the trajectory of the mission after meeting Jesus, one has to look at the person. Cullmann also admits the narrator’s limitation in narrating an event:

We do not always have a very specific conception of the scene as a whole. Some aspects are described with a surprising amount of detail, whereas others are completely ignored, so that the narrator as a whole remains vague. It is as though a spotlight illuminated just one part of a picture with great brilliance, while the rest of it remained in shadow.<sup>102</sup>

Cullmann continues by explaining that the narrator is interested in finding how the event contributed to the encounter between Jesus and the individual person. Through him/her, Jesus initiates a lesson to give a discourse to the surrounding audience. From this, it seems the focus should be on the person encountering Jesus rather than the event. Here, the question arises of how one can set a model for the Gospel of John.

In the Book of Signs, Jesus finds a natural phenomenon, which indicates a search for fulfilment, to get the attention of his hearers. Based on that, he pedagogically unveils that he is the true fulfilment. The purpose here is to show the current of mission. For this reason, I will focus on the Chapters or passages that involve direct personal encounter with Jesus; i.e., John 1:35-42, 43-51 and Chapters 3, 4, 5, 9, and 11. In these selected passages and Chapters one notices the individuals’ internal motion.

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<sup>101</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 28.

<sup>102</sup> Cullmann, *The Johannine Circle*, 29.

The diagram below shows three components of the missionary current: encounter, mission node, and mission setting. ‘Mission node’ refers to the moment of encounter that implies a revelation and/or recognition of Jesus as the Anointed One. From this moment of revelation and recognition the individual(s) goes forth to spread the good news. The immediate witness of the individuals who came to encounter Jesus is a specific setting. A ‘specific setting’ means that the relationship between the missionary and the audience can be described in terms of certain social or kinship features, i.e., siblings, friends, social, political, and religious bonds/relationships. Moreover, the evangelist carefully selects Jesus’ historical event from various earthly human conditions, and sends heralds of his good news. The Book of Signs gives these variables of human conditions: students (Jn 1:35-42) and working men (Jn 1:43-51; 21:3), rejoicing (Jn 2) and mourning (Jn 11), working class (Jn 4) and upper class (Jn 3), socially and religiously marginalized (Jn 4) and recognized (Jn 3), with a contracted disease (Jn 5) and unfortunate by birth (Jn 9). These tell not only about the specific setting the individuals returned to (their habitual setting) to carry out their mission, but also proves the pervasiveness of Jesus’ mission through and in all human conditions. The diagram shows how the mission is happening in a specific setting through what I call an ‘*in-ward*’ mission.

The phrase ‘*in-ward*’ is not uncommon among Johannine Scholars to address the Gospel’s concept of mission and the missionary method. For example, Christopher W. Skinner, in his work *Love One Another*, indicates that the phrase was used to describe the non-interest of the Johannine community in the love of neighbors (outside the circle). However, I am not

arguing that this *'in-ward'* mission is not concerned about outsiders. The whole purpose of the paper is to show that John's Gospel method of mission to the world is an *'in-ward'* method.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Christopher W. Skinner, "Love One Another: The Johannine Love Command in the Farewell Discourse." In *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John*, edited by Christopher W. Skinner and Sherri Brown, 25–42 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 26.

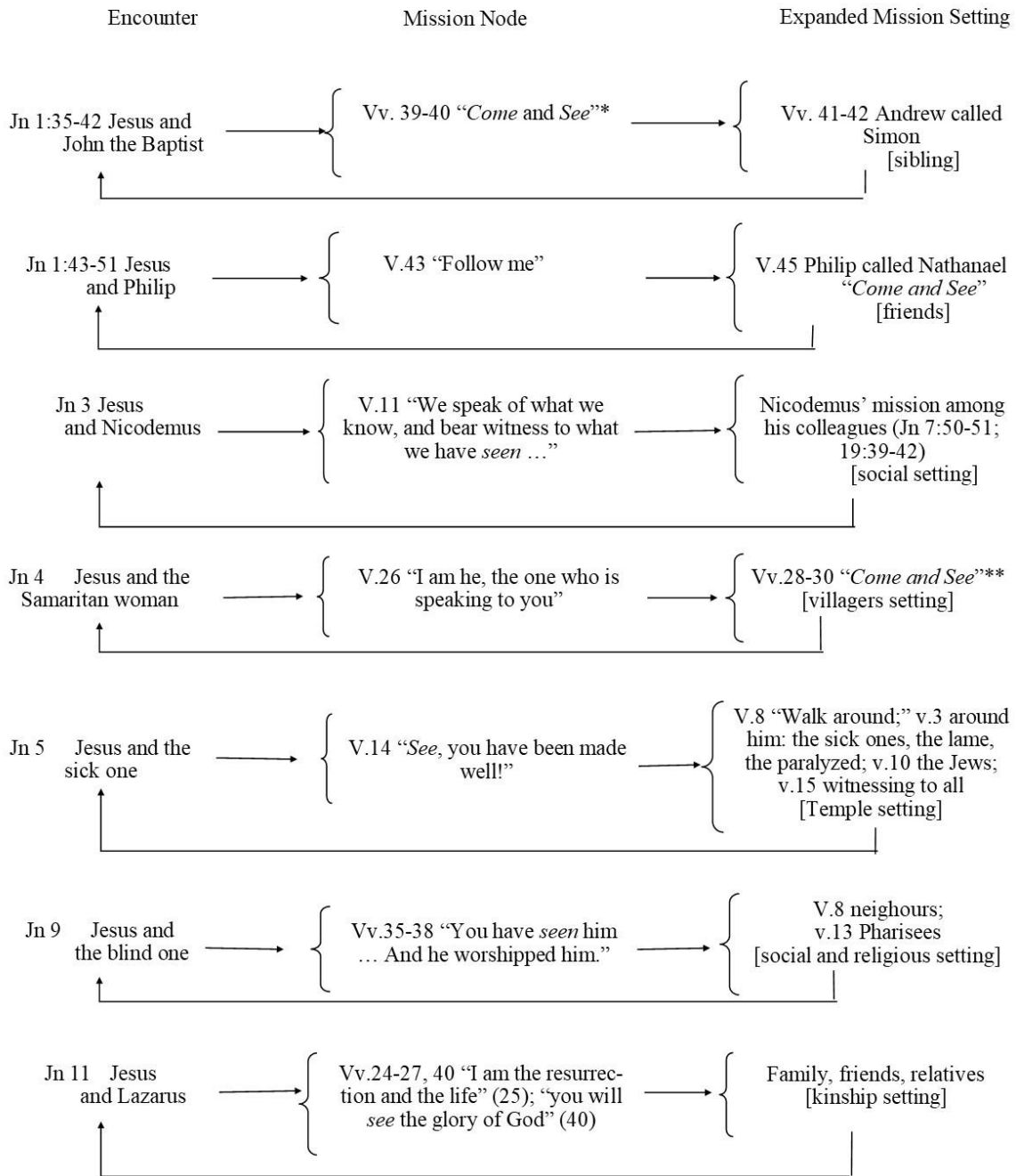


Figure 1. The figure shows the trajectory of mission. \* In the diagram Italics are used to indicate emphasis.  
 \*\* The cases of Nathanael and the Samaritan men seems to devalue the witness of Philip and the Samaritan Woman (Jn 1:46; 4:42), respectively. However, upon closer reading it enhances their witness. The role of a missionary is to lead one to encounter Jesus. These later audiences come to meet Jesus after hearing about him from the former ones.



The diagram shows those who encounter Jesus enter into a new relationship with Jesus and among one another that entails a mission. The current or trajectory and setting of each is determined. It begins with the encounter with Jesus and is carried out in a specific social, religious, or political setting.

Recognizing Jesus as the Anointed One is pervasively implied in the encounter with Jesus and the missionaries' witness. The implication can be extracted from the "Come and See" invitation. The verb "see" is the common theme in every row of the diagram. It addresses the recognition of Jesus' Godhead at a literal and metaphorical level. This double meaning is fully developed and understood in John 9. To see is to acknowledge the tangible works of Jesus and, through it, to be elevated to the spiritual level. Its Christological content is understood in the judgment it brings (cf. 9:39). In addition, Toan Do rightly argues that the evangelist's repeated use of "come and see" (1:39, 46; 4:29; 11:34) noticeably implies its Christological purpose.<sup>104</sup> Though one could not expect a fully recognized Christological confession from the invitees, the fact that they continued to follow Jesus is an indication that Christological confession is a process of incarnating rather than being limited in space and time. Thus Do continues, arguing that it is for the purpose of enfleshing their Christological confession that the evangelist's theme shifted to an ethical or love command in the second half of the Gospel, the Book of Glory.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Toan Do, "The Johannine Request to 'Come and See' and an Ethic of Love." In *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John*, edited by Christopher W. Skinner and Sherri Brown, 25–42 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 179. Do holds that John 11:34 "come and see" has Christological implications. However, the invitation of this text is from the people to Jesus, and it is about being convinced regarding the fact of this earthly thing, while all the other uses of "come and see" have revelation as their central goal.

<sup>105</sup> Do, "The Johannine Request to 'Come and See' and an Ethic of Love," 191.

## **Community Mission in the Book of Glory**

“Love one another” is a missionary ethic that undergirds the Book of Glory (13-20). The purpose of the ethical command the evangelist promotes in the Book of Glory (13:34-35) could better be understood in a missionary context. This command is found stressed in both the Gospel and the Epistles. According to scholars, the Epistles were written to address the internal division in the Johannine community. One could ask what the Gospel’s ethical command, “Love one another,” addresses. This ethical command could better be understood within the context of the Gospel as the community’s self-defense from outsiders. According to Brown, in John 14 – 17 the author upgraded the phrase – “the Jews” to “the world” to address the multiple groups of opponents/unbelievers. The appearance of the ethical command in such a context implies its contribution to the author’s polemics. In other words, the community could shame the unbelievers or win them over to belief by loving one another and letting God's glory shine in their life. I understand this as a kernel of the mission of the Gospel in the second part of the Gospel (13 – 20). Now, it is worth looking at the text itself, 13:34-35.

In John 13:34-35, the new commandment of loving one another, two major characteristics stood out. First, the vitality of the command is emphasized by its repetition. Jesus boosts the vitality of the command by repeating it three times. Second is the chain that gives flesh to ethics and its universal character. This second point needs to be expounded to see the chain's nature. The love of Jesus for the disciples is the root of the new commandment: “Just as I have loved you” (34). Jesus’ love for his disciples is expressed in the washing of the feet (cf. 13:5) though not limited to that. The disciples are to imitate Jesus’ way of loving them – “love one another.” It is important to be aware that this command is being given after Judas the betrayer went out from among them. Once Judas received the bread, Satan entered Judas’ heart,

and he immediately went out (cf. 13:27, 30). At this point, the division in the name of Jesus is imminent. The persecution, humiliation, and rejection of followers of Jesus are imminent. The disciples are to overcome all these by being strengthened in loving one another. It is the only means by which they remain united among themselves and in Jesus. We need not approach the text in such a pessimistic mode. An optimistic message is also present in the text.

The joy of being loved by Jesus is expressed in loving one another. “If you know these things [the way and nature of how Jesus loves], you are blessed if you do them” (13:17). The ethic is a means of incarnating and living in the joy of love/belonging to Jesus. Jesus is imparting in them an awareness that the power of loving one another in strengthening and living the joy has a cosmic effect: “By this everyone will know you that you are my disciples” (13:35). In loving one another, no one is excluded, but “*everyone*” is implied. Christopher W. Skinner sees this universal implication in loving one another; he writes,

By imitating the manner in which he has demonstrated his own love toward them—what I have termed sacrificial self-giving—the disciples will be a light to all humanity. Their outward displays of love will have potentially universal implications, causing all to take notice. This is the first indication in the Farewell Discourse that the implications of such love extend beyond the insider group of the Twelve.<sup>106</sup>

#### Missionary impact of realized eschatology

Realized eschatology is another dimension of “love one another.” Johannine theology emphasizes realized eschatology, while the synoptic Gospels are futuristic. The synoptic account foretells about the imminent and sudden arrival of the final judgment. It is not known when it will happen, but believers are provided with signs to help them discern the arrival of the final

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<sup>106</sup> Christopher W. Skinner, “Love One Another: The Johannine Love Command in the Farewell Discourse.” In *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John*, edited by Christopher W. Skinner and Sherri Brown, 25–42 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 33.

judgment: the rise of false prophets (cf. Mt 24:10-14) and the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Lk 21:20-24, 28, 36). Thus, believers are to stay awake (cf. Mk 13:32-37), and receive eternal life at the final judgment (cf. Mk 10:30; Mt 19:28; Lk 6:35). However, John's Gospel recounts things the other way round. Whoever believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father and sent by the Father for the salvation of men and women has eternal life here and now; eternal life is not deferred to the end of time (cf. Jn 5:24). Brown has unveiled John's approach for his own study purpose.

Brown's distinctive hypothesis regarding the eschatology of the Johannine Gospel helps one recognize a special method of the Johannine mission. In attempting to imagine the conflicting ground within the Johannine community, Brown identifies the eschatological concept of the Gospel as one of the main ones.<sup>107</sup> Brown nuanced the overemphasis on realized eschatology in John's Gospel.<sup>108</sup> Consequently, he hypothesized that such overemphasis might have led the Johannine secessionists to misinterpretation.<sup>109</sup> Brown is trying to find a rationale for the secessionists from within the Gospel itself. He is trying to read what the words of the evangelist's meant as received in the minds of the secessionists. However, my aim here is to read the mind of the evangelist based on the context. One could see what the author of the Gospel is promoting by overemphasizing a realized eschatology.

Knowing from what history the author is writing his theology gives the rationale for emphasizing realized eschatology. The persecutions the Johannine community suffered showed that it was a community forced into a corner. According to Brown, it separated itself from the

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<sup>107</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 135-138.

<sup>108</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 50.

<sup>109</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 135-138.

synoptic church, favoring interpreting the source tradition differently. This can be noticed in identifying outside enemies. The evangelist is addressing polemics and investing the community with ethics of fraternal love. Consequently, according to the evangelist, realized eschatology serves two purposes. One is to bring confidence and consolation to the persecuted community (Jn 14:27). Brown himself commented, “Obviously, such theology would be reassuring in the face of persecution and execution ....”<sup>110</sup> Thus, the community is no more an orphan and lacks nothing (Jn 14:18). Second, it is a way of living and incarnating the divine sonship here and now. In this way, realized eschatology can be seen as a corollary of the ethical command (love one another) or vice versa. In other words, realized eschatology has a missionary character in the mind of the evangelist.

The mission understood in the gospel of John as an inward and ethical method has worship as its source and climax. Johannine scholars show that worship is a pervasive concern in the Gospel. Dorothy Lee has explored the Fourth Gospel in three dimensions of Jesus’ worship. First, “Jesus the true place of worship:”<sup>111</sup> the incarnation of the body of Christ, replaces all the Old Testament symbolisms that serve as a medium to worship the Father (cf. 2:16-17; 4:20, 23-24; 5-10). Second, “Jesus as Object of worship:”<sup>112</sup> the authority of Jesus over his own life (cf. 10:17-18), authority over life and death (cf. 11:25-26), over nature (cf. 5:8; 9:5-6), and over all flesh (cf. 17:2) qualifies Jesus to receive worship. Converts who recognize such qualities in Jesus honor him with the honor given to the Father (cf. 5:23, 38; 9:5; 20:19-23). Third, Jesus’ prayer to

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<sup>110</sup> Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 51.

<sup>111</sup> Dorothy A. Lee, *Hallowed in Truth and Love: Spirituality in the Johannine Literature* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 62.

<sup>112</sup> Lee, *Hallowed in Truth and Love*, 70.

his Father qualifies him as the true worshiper.<sup>113</sup> This hermeneutical work of Lee expounds the evangelist's presentation of Jesus. While affirming the work of Lee, John Paul Heil's reader response approach to the gospel unveils the pervasiveness of worship in a different but complementary way.

A reader response approach to the Fourth Gospel verifies contemporary Christian praxis. Christian liturgical celebration and ethical praxis flow from the daily encounter with the sacred text. Heil's reader response approach unveils this truth. He illustrates the pervasive worship theme in the Fourth Gospel by categorizing it into three. First, "confessional worship," a profession expressed by individuals like Nathanael and Thomas, and in the communal act – "we observed his glory ..." (1:14).<sup>114</sup> Second, "sacramental worship," where baptism (3:3-5) and the eucharist (6:51-58) are the primary sacraments stressed in the gospel.<sup>115</sup> Third, "ethical worship" is realized on the attitude and manner of believers. It is observed by keeping the new commandment of loving one another (13:34; 15:12).<sup>116</sup> By unveiling these three dimensions of worship, Heil demonstrates the legacy of the Fourth Gospel to contemporary Christians. Both scholars, Lee and Heil, expound on the pervasive worship theme in the Gospel. However, there is less recognition of how this worship comes to happen and the purpose it imparts. In the Fourth Gospel, worship could not be understood fully separate from mission.

Worship and mission are given in the gospel inseparably, and they function reciprocally. The diagram above shows the worship of the individuals who first encounter Jesus, the mission

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<sup>113</sup> Lee, *Hallowed in Truth and Love*, 75.

<sup>114</sup> John Paul Heil, *The Gospel of John: Worship for Divine Life Eternal* (The Lutterworth Press, James Clarke & Co Ltd, 2015), 1-2, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1p5f1s4.4>.

<sup>115</sup> Heil, *The Gospel of John*, 2.

<sup>116</sup> Heil, *The Gospel of John*, 2.

afterward, and the culmination of their mission. This enlightens Heil's confessional worship dimension. Heil recognizes individuals like Nathanael (1:49), the man born blind (9:38), Martha (11:17), Mary (11:32), and Thomas (19:28) worshipping Jesus.<sup>117</sup> However, this is not the end of the story. These individual worshippers lead others to worship too. In addition, ethical worship makes its story complete by enlightening others to believe (13:35; 15:16). The intrinsic unity of worship and mission is the source for the concept and method of the mission of the gospel. Thus, the ground is set to propose a model.

### Friendship Model

The new relationship I outline in the diagram and the ethical command is best summarized in a friendship concept. This is in two senses; on the one hand, we note the friendship individuals create with Jesus in the first encounter, though it is something set in process. On the other hand, the individuals who meet Jesus go back to their habitual settings where they have friends. In this habitual setting, they share the experience of the encounter. Jesus gives this new friendship relationship its highest form in the Book of Glory.

Jesus himself describes the new relationship created during the encounter. John 15:12-17 makes clear that the model that could describe the Johannine community is a friendship model. In this, Jesus begins (v.12) and ends (v.17) by stating the missionary ethics while giving details of what they entail (vv.13-16). The missionary activity is to be carried out in a spirit of friendship. That is, first, in sacrificial self-gift (v.13); second, to remain to the end in that self-gift (v.14); and third, to give full access to one's heart (v.15). One notices that worship undergirds the new relationship of friendship. The disciples are to worship with him, in him and through

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<sup>117</sup> Heil, *The Gospel of John*, 1-2.

him by feeding themselves (cf. 6:69-70), and express it in their ethical worship of self-sacrifice which bears fruit.

The attempt to study the historical development of Johannine Gospel has given a glimpse of the missionary concept of the evangelist, John. This has been enriched by selecting scholars who approached the Gospel differently. Cullmann frames the Gospel theologically while Brown frames it historically. These perspectives have enriched our understanding of the evangelist's work. Both scholars have enlightened me to reflect on the mind of the evangelist in the given historical context. The individual encounters in the Book of Signs and the ethical command in the Book of Glory meet in a common denominator which I call a 'friendship model.' John 17, the high priestly prayer, will be analyzed to show the intrinsic unity of mission and worship, and the inward and ethical method of the gospel. Friendship is the key tie for these nature and method.



## Chapter 3

### ***Ad Intra Friendship Mission and Worship of John 17:1-26***

#### Framing the Setting of John 17

The second part of John's Gospel, the Book of Glory, holds two major narrative sections. The farewell discourse's (13-17) new scene is set by 13:1, "Now before the festival of the Passover . . .," and the narration of the passion, death, and resurrection (18-20) scene is set by 18:1, "After Jesus had spoken these words . . ." John 17 is sandwiched between these two major sections as a climax of the farewell discourse and a transition to the passion narrative. The evangelist has been preparing the specific event of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus in a unique theological view. From the very beginning of his gospel, he depicted the cross where Jesus was to be crucified as a place/event of exaltation (cf. 3:14; 8:28; 12:32). Jesus, too, alludes to his hour from the very beginning (cf. 2:4). The miracle that takes place at the wedding at Cana is an anticipation of the divine manifestation that takes place at the definitive "hour."<sup>118</sup> Now is the hour to see that happen.

John portrays a Jesus exalted and enthroned on his cross (cf. 19:14, 19). He characterizes Jesus as a hero. Though Judas, the betrayer, led the Roman soldiers, temple officers, and the Pharisees to the garden of the meeting (cf. 18:1), it was Jesus himself who came forward and revealed that he was the one they were looking for (cf. 18:2-8).<sup>119</sup> Regarding the use of a sword

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<sup>118</sup> Heil, *The Gospel of John*, 30.

<sup>119</sup> In the synoptic Gospels, Judas helps the persecutors to identify Jesus by the gesture of a kiss (cf. Mk 14:45; Mt 26:49; Lk 22:47). In John's Gospel, Judas remains muted at Jesus' self-revelation, "I am he." Then, they all stepped back and fell down, which is an ironic gesture of worship (cf. Jn 18:6).

by the disciple to protect Jesus from being harmed, Jesus responds quite differently here than in the other three canonical gospels: “Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?” (18:11). Here Jesus speaks referring to himself, i.e. his readiness to drink the cup while, in the synoptic Gospels, Jesus is concerned about the practice of the apostles.<sup>120</sup> In addition, Jesus carries his cross all the way to Calvary by himself.<sup>121</sup> In doing this, the evangelist “lets Jesus’ glory shine directly through the degrading case brought against him, his road of suffering and his death on the cross.”<sup>122</sup>

The disciples are to imitate Jesus’ way of glorification. Jesus glorified the Father in his person (cf. 10:18) in fulfilling the mission given to him by being obedient (cf. 4:34; 6:38), and establishing the Kingdom visible in the disciples (cf. 17:4, 6). One could not overlook the reference made by Jesus while amidst the turmoil. Jesus responds to Annas by referring him to his disciples regarding his teaching (cf. 18:21). This could better be understood by looking at the farewell discourse.

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<sup>120</sup> In referring to the practice of the apostles, Jesus warns the apostles to allow God’s plan to be fulfilled, and that such kind of usage of a sword is condemned (Mk 14:49; Mt 26:52; Lk 22:51).

<sup>121</sup> On Jesus’ way to Calvary, the synoptic Gospels include a text about a man named Simon of Cyrene who was compelled by the persecutors of Jesus to carry the Cross (Mk 15:21; Mt 27:32; Lk 23:26). In contrast to the Gospel of John, these texts imply that Jesus’ energy is drained, and is unable to carry his own Cross; Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word: Meditations on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, Vol. 4* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2021), 469.

<sup>122</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John: Commentary on Chapters 13-21*, Vol. 3 Trans. by David Smith and G. A. Kon (New York City, NY: Crossroad, 1982), 218.

John 13-17, according to Johannine scholars, is often described as the most important moment with his inner circle, his disciples. Despite the repetitive style of the text, the vastness and depth of the themes of the discourse are witnessed in the varying approaches of scholars. From a missionary perspective, John 13-17 could better be summarized in three broad themes: Jesus' encouragement to the disciples, the disciples' participation in the life and mission of Jesus, and the mission commission.

The evangelist introduces Jesus' discourse realizing that his time had occurred. Jesus encourages the disciples in view of the imminent turmoil of his passion and the future persecution the disciples will have to face. In encouraging the disciples, Jesus starts with the greatest challenge to the disciples. "Little children, ... where I am going, you cannot come" (13:33). Jesus uses *τεκνία*, "little children," for the first time in addressing his disciples.<sup>123</sup> It is a metaphorical expression implying his love for them, their weakness, and their dependence on him. Jesus has already verbally and practically expressed his love. However, this time he wants to address their human fragility in the face of the upcoming shock. It is a painful but inescapable reality that the disciples will betray him. Despite their failure, they are loved for they are his children. They are children incapable of understanding and staying on and completing the way with him. Therefore, as children, they have to wait for the moment ordained by God to receive the Paraclete so that they can follow him wherever he leads them (cf. 13:36). The passion moment is beyond their human comprehension, and they cannot follow him. Thus, Jesus continues giving them ways to overcome their human limitations.

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<sup>123</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 3, 52.

Jesus explained his departure in a more consoling and profitable way (14: 2-14). He sees his passion as a passage to his Father where he will prepare a “house” and come again to take them with him (cf. 14:3-4). The disciples are expected to have faith (1-14) and love (15-24).<sup>124</sup> In this way, they are to ‘not let their hearts be troubled’ (v. 1). Nothing is more consoling for the disciples than having a home, a dwelling place, and being with him and the Father. Furthermore, Jesus assures them of his mastery over the ruler of this world, saying, “he has no power over me” (14:30). John’s Jesus does not shiver as he faces the passion. Instead, the passion is an exaltation, an expression of his unconditional love for his Father, and the passage to be accomplished for the disciples’ goal and thus for the whole cosmos.

Another major address in the farewell discourse is regarding the post-resurrection life of the disciples. This address could be comprehended in the persecution and participation themes. The disciples are to overcome the persecution they face (cf. 16:1-4) by remaining or abiding in him (Jn 15). The way to abide in him is through loving one another (cf. 15:12-27). Moreover, remaining with Jesus is a way of participating in his salvific mission. The disciples were cleansed at the foot washing and were made participators in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (13:6-11).<sup>125</sup> They are (after the resurrection) to take up an active participation for which they are chosen to go and bear fruit (cf. 15:16). Regarding this missionary character of the disciples, Gorman explains that it is “a centripetal activity that becomes centrifugal” in effect. Gorman goes on to say,

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<sup>124</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 3, 58.

<sup>125</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Abide and Go: Missional Theosis in the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 88.

Love for “one another” is not meant to *exclude* love of others but to *overflow* to others and even to be deliberately directed at others outside the community; otherwise the communal life and love of the disciples would not bear witness to the Gospel’s central claim that God loves the *world* and wants *all* to be drawn into that love.<sup>126</sup>

The disciples are to let shine the glory of being Christ’s believers by abiding in him, expressed in loving one another. Jesus commissioned them to go forward and let the glory they receive from him shine.

The commission of the Fourth Gospel has an *ad intra* mission as its immediate focus. The descriptive verbs “go and bear fruit” are guiding ones in orienting the mission praxis in its given context. The farewell discourse does not provide the manner in which the disciples should complete their mission. The intended fulfillment of the appointment could better be understood from the fruit it bears. The disciples are to bear two sequential fruits. Following the example of their friend, Jesus, the disciples are to live a self-sacrificial love among themselves through which God’s glory shines (Jn 15:12-13; 13:34) – *ad intra*. Finally, the glory of God that shines in their lives will inspire faith in the Gentiles (cf. Jn 13:35). Jesus clearly states that the world will hate them (cf. 15:18) and they will be persecuted (cf. 16:2). However, there is no other ethical command rather than the *centripetal* one, to use Gorman’s term.

John’s Gospel commissions “to go” is distinct from the synoptic Gospels’ commission. Matthew 28:19 gives a very detailed execution of the commission. The elements of the execution of the commission are: the Gentiles are the subject, the rubric for performance of the sacrament of baptism is given, and the making of disciples is the stated fruit of the commission. Similarly, Mark 3:13-15 commissions the apostles with identified subjects and fruits of their mission. However, John 15:16 corresponds with an introspective concept of the synoptic Gospels.

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<sup>126</sup> Gorman, *Abide and Go*, 95.

Matthew 18:15 describes reconciliation with one's brother. Matthew 19:21 requires renunciation of the world in order to follow Jesus. Luke 10:37 advises disciples to be compassionate to one's neighbor. In these texts, the emphasis lies in looking introspectively which also applies to the disciples of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel looking inwardly at themselves as a body unit. The distinctive missionary commission of the Fourth Gospel is given in its developed form in John 17.

The third category of the farewell discourse is the commission for a mission. The central theme of John 17 concerning the disciples is that the disciples are to perpetuate the mission of Jesus in the world. Wes Howard-Brook comments that Jesus' concern for the unity of the disciples, unity that comes from Jesus, is not instrumental but an essential one that qualifies their mission. "The life of the Johannine community is its most powerful witness to the world, that which has the capacity to bring the world to the faith and knowledge that *are* eternal life (17:3, 8)."<sup>127</sup> This is the way of shining the glory and accomplishing the mission. Moreover, the setting of the prayer adds an essential qualification to the mission of the disciples.

The uniqueness of John 17 is that it implies a liturgical worship setting: Jesus "looked up to heaven and said ..." (17:1). Most Johannine scholars agree to describe it as a "high-priestly prayer." However, the *Sitz im Leben* of the prayer is not specified by many scholars. The prayer contains two anticipatory elements which could better be reconciled in the eternal priesthood of Christ (cf. Heb 7:25). Though Jesus states that he has full authority over all flesh to give eternal life (cf. 17:2), he remains interceding with his Father on behalf of his disciples. He sets a model for the believing community. Schnackenberg, being aware of possible counter-argument, states

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<sup>127</sup> Wes Howard-Brook, *Becoming Children of God: John's Gospel and Radical Discipleship* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 368.

the *Sitz im Leben* of the prayer is to be in connection with the community's Eucharistic celebration (Jn 6:51c–58):

Among the links with the section on the Eucharist (6:51c-58) are the formula with *ὑπέρ* in 17:19 (cf. 6:51c), the formulae used to indicate oneness (cf. 17:21ff with 6:56), and the idea of handing on life (cf. 17:2 with 6:57). The style and form of the prayer, the dominant idea of glorification and the special petition for sanctification (vv. 17-19) give Jn 17 a certain liturgical flavor which could hardly have occurred in any context other than the celebration of the Eucharist in a Christian community.<sup>128</sup>

Schnackenberg recognizes formula, idea, and style to determine the *Sitz im Leben* of the prayer within the believing community. In addition, Schnackenberg finds connections of language and ideas between John 17 and the prayer in the *Didache* IX-X.<sup>129</sup> The findings of Schnackenberg provide a linear tradition of Christian practice, which hints at the liturgical *Sitz im Leben* of John 17. Brown agrees with Schnackenberg in finding connections of the prayer with the early Church's Eucharistic prayer found in the *Didache* IX-X.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, such implication leads one to consider the possibility of using liturgical worship tradition as an aim and means of mission within the Johannine community.

According to the Gospel of John, worship is understood in a broader sense. This broad understanding is unveiled by Heil as liturgical and ethical worship.<sup>131</sup> Such understanding of a believing community (Johannine) sandwiched between Paul's 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 and the

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<sup>128</sup> Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 3, 200.

<sup>129</sup> Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 3, 200.

<sup>130</sup> Raymond E. Brown, "The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI," *The Anchor Bible*: vol. 29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & company, Inc., 1970), 746.

<sup>131</sup> Heil, *The Gospel John*, 1-3.

*Didache*'s chapters IX-X,<sup>132</sup> the liturgical tradition helps one to appreciate the distinctive way of the Johannine worship (at least in the broader sense) and mission coexistence. Therefore, John 17 is the appropriate text for examining the mutuality of the worship concept and the missionary act.

#### *Ad Intra* Friendship Mission and Worship of John 17

### **John 17:1-8: Completion of Mission and Jesus' Glory**

Jesus opens the prayer by claiming his position as God. Jesus turns his face towards the Father and asks to be glorified with the glory he had before creation (cf. 17:1, 5). This prayer affirms the opening words of the evangelist that the Word was not only with God but was God (1:1). According to Heil, the opening text of the Gospel (1:1-2) presents Jesus to the audience as a worthy object of worship and the true revealer of the God to be worshipped.<sup>133</sup> However, Jesus was reluctant to claim authority, except for the authority that was received from his Father (cf. Jn 5:19), through which he glorifies the Father. Thus, though Jesus did not need to pray he did it as the true revealer of the Father to reveal the Father's glory to the world. Brown illustrates two important elements of the usage of *doxa* (glory), that "it is a *visible* manifestation of His majesty in *acts of power*."<sup>134</sup> In his earthly life and ministry, Jesus revealed the Father's glory in his person and in his words and deeds.

The justification Jesus offers in claiming glory from the Father is the completion of the mission given to him by his Father (v. 4). Jesus summarizes the work he accomplished (vv.6-8), and referring to his believing followers says, "Now they know that *everything* [Italic added for

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<sup>132</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books that did not Make it into the New Testament* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 215.

<sup>133</sup> Heil, *The Gospel of John*, 7.

<sup>134</sup> Brown, "The Gospel According to John I-XII," 503.



emphasis] you have given me is from you” (v. 7). These believing fellows are the “proof of his claim that he has brought to perfection the task the Father gave him (cf. vv. 6-8; v. 4), but the climactic moment for the revelation of the glory of the Father, through which the Son will be glorified, lies in the near future.”<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, Jesus’ speaking regarding his mission as complete: *τελειώσας*, “having completed” (v. 4), and the disciples *νυν ἔγνωκαν ὅτι πάντα ὅσα δέδωκας μοι*, “have known everything you have given me” (v. 7), might create wonder. Looking at the original text clarifies what is happening. *Τελειώσας*, the aorist participle, indicates that Jesus is seeing the situation as a whole and that he is saying this shortly before his passion (v. 4). By this time, Jesus has given what the disciples need in order to believe; thus, says of them that they know, *ἔγνωκαν*, Jesus is the Son of God (v. 7). Using the perfect verb, *ἔγνωκαν*, Jesus indicates that the disciples have entered into the divine mystery and that they will not go astray. Anticipating their denial, Jesus had already pointed out to them that they could not follow him in the passion moment. They were also told that they would not understand everything, until receiving the Paraclete.

Jesus’ recalling of his earthly ministry (v. 4) in entering into the space of God “from which he had never been released”<sup>136</sup> brings liturgical theology to the front. In the liturgy, worshippers enter into the divine realm and perpetuate the salvific acts of Jesus by recalling them. C. H. Dodd comments on the recalling of John 17: “The prayer gathers up much of what has been said, both in the Book of Signs and in the Farewell Discourse, and presupposes everywhere the total picture of Christ and his work with which the reader should by this time be

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<sup>135</sup> Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 461.

<sup>136</sup> Schnackenberg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 3, 170.

amply acquainted. Almost every verse contains echoes.”<sup>137</sup> For Dodd, almost every verse of the prayer is liturgical in character. The believing community is to do likewise, to perpetuate the salvific acts of Jesus by recalling his ministry. They are able to do this for they have received “eternal life” (v. 3). Through the reception of “eternal life,” the believers enter into intimacy with God. They know him as the “only true God” (v. 3); and the intimacy of knowing each other describes the unique relationship<sup>138</sup> called friendship in which the mission is to be carried out.

### **John 17:9-19: Unity in and through Friendship**

In John 17:9-19, Jesus prays for oneness among the disciples for the missionary purpose. The oneness of the disciples is emphasized when it is viewed in the situation surrounding it. Moloney divides this section (17:9-19) into three internal sections: the situation the disciples are in, i.e., “the world” (9-11a); that the disciples are entrusted to the holy Father to be protected (11b-16); and the holy Father is to extend his holiness to the disciples to be able to perpetuate the holiness of Jesus (17-19).<sup>139</sup> The three of them are sequentially connected. The main frame here is the situation, i.e., their being in the world. Section 17:9-19 is interested in the disciples’ goodness as a believing entity (The purpose of it is mainly given in 17:20-26). The Father is to protect them from the evil one, who continues to have dominion in the world. In this context, “the world” is an expression describing those who choose to remain in the darkness and hate the

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<sup>137</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 417.

<sup>138</sup> Howard-Brook, *Becoming Children of God*, 360.

<sup>139</sup> Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 465-466.

light (cf. 8:12).<sup>140</sup> However, Jesus has defeated the evil. The disciples are to perpetuate the victory of Jesus through their oneness.

The theme of unity here is oriented to the horizontal dimension. This horizontal unity reflects the vertical unity Jesus gave them (cf. 15:15; 17:2-3). The intimate friendship the disciples established with God is to be imitated in the horizontal dimension. V. 11b is a guiding one here: ἵνα ᾧσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς, “so that they may be one, just as we are.” The disciples are already made one (17:8). The present subjunctive ᾧσιν, “they may be,” indicates that they may remain in that unity.<sup>141</sup> The adjective ἕν, “one,” describes the nature of their unity. In the first place, they are ἕν as opposed to many; they are not to be segregated individuals, but through their mystical union with God, they are one (cf. Jn 11:51-52). Second, they are to be ἕν in all their ethical manners. The oneness in ethics is an expression of their oneness in God. Thus, it implies that they are to be ἕν in mind and will. Third, to be ἕν is an excluding action. The disciples are separated and made one entity in God’s name. They are different from the rest of the world. Regarding their unity, Morris reflects that their unity is not mere unity of witness but more profound, i.e., unity of heart and mind and will.<sup>142</sup> Therefore, the Father is to protect them from evil so that they may remain united among themselves.

The disciples are not to be naïve on their part. The oneness in which they become new sets them into a mutual responsibility. Jesus made them his friends by sharing with them his

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<sup>140</sup> Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 188-190.

<sup>141</sup> Leo Morris, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), 727.

<sup>142</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 728.

secrets (cf. 15:15). When this friendship with Jesus is translated into community life, it “means that believers, as true friends, speak the truth with each other in order to maintain the integrity of their relationship.”<sup>143</sup> Moreover, this friendship is not merely functional but also a way to embrace their new identity in Jesus Christ. In their friendship, they are to love one another to the extent of laying down one’s life for a friend (cf. Jn 15:12-13). The primordial model of this is Jesus himself. He died for their sake and as a friend. The disciples are to imitate the way of Jesus as they continue to be protected by the Father.

The unity of the disciples and the way of their friendship is to reveal God’s glory to the human race. The disciples are not only in the world but sent into it to perpetuate the mission initiated by the Father through Jesus (v. 8). Thus, the prayer of protection is extended to the commission they have received. Lindras comments that Jesus’ “prayer for the protection of the disciples is a matter of personal interest to himself, for they are now the guardians of the revelation which he has received, and which it was his mission to make known.”<sup>144</sup> The treasure of revelation is upon the shoulders of the disciples. The conversion of the unbelieving and the salvation of the generations to come is on their shoulders. However, it is not to be done solely by human effort. The disciples are made holy for this purpose.

The disciples are set apart in order to carry out the divine mission. This was rooted in their decision to accept the light and follow Jesus renouncing to remain in the darkness (cf. 8:12). The expression “not of the world” (cf. 17:14) describes their landmark *metanoia*. For this purpose, they are “sanctified” (ἀγίασον) (v. 17) and “sent” (ἀπέστειλα) (v. 18) to act in the person

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<sup>143</sup> Koester, *The Word of Life*, 199.

<sup>144</sup> Barnabas Lindras, *The Gospel of John* (Marshall, London: Morgan & Scott, 1972), 525.

of Christ. The aorist imperative active verb *ἀγιάσον* (from the root verb *ἀγιάζω*), when used in the biblical context, means, in the first place, to set aside something for a holy or religious purpose. Second, it means to “include in the inner circle of what is holy,” to incorporate by consecration (or vice versa), to sanctify. In these senses, the Father is to set aside the disciples and incorporate them into his holiness, through which they become active participants in his mission. Moreover, the aorist imperative active could better be understood that now they are entering into a new state though the disciples have been in *metanoia*, or a process of conversion. Their new state involves acting in the person of Christ. Therefore, Jesus appeals to the Father with a command expressing urgency and fulfillment.

The learning process is over; now, it is the time to take over. Time to be *ἀπέστειλα*. *Ἀπέστειλα* (from the root word *ἀποστέλλω*) means to send someone away or out as an emissary. Remarkably important here is the sending indicates, and is understood in relation to, the person or place someone is sent to. Thus, *εἰς τόν κόσμον*, “into the world,” describes the whole situation the disciples are in. Therefore, Jesus is leaving them behind “in the world” to take up his work. The same verbs, *ἀγιάζω* and *ἀποστέλλω*, in which Jesus was sanctified and sent by the Father (cf. Jn 10:36), confirm the disciples’ mission in the person of Christ.

### **John 17:20-26: *Ad Extra* Mission through *Ad Intra***

The Johannine community’s universal mission is well-marked in this last section of John 17. The theme of unity (v. 11b) which is “an essential element determining the quality of its mission in the world,”<sup>145</sup> is raised once again (v. 21c). It is mentioned in this section with an expanded scope. “So that the world may believe that you have sent me” (v. 21c). The new

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<sup>145</sup> Howard-Brook, *Becoming Children of God*, 368.

clause, “the world may believe . . .,” attached to the community’s unity, opens the universal horizon of the community. The conjunction *ἵνα*, “so that,” expresses the purpose or goal to be accomplished by the community. Thus, it shows the whole purpose of the Johannine community’s abiding and remaining united in divine love. It provides that the inward mission by way of their oneness and loving one another is by no means self-interest. Verse 21 connects the *ad intra* praxis of the Johannine community with its *ad extra* duty. Moreover, the unity in question transcends all human unity, for it is based on divine love. “May they all also be in us” (v. 21b). Though it is a spiritual unity, its outward expression is indispensable. It is a unity diffusing God’s glory that leads the world to faith.<sup>146</sup>

The *δοξα*, “glory,” which has been recurrent in the Gospel, has taken a missionary dimension here. Jesus passes the glory he received from the Father to the disciples. This glory is the source and the secret of their unity (v. 22). Thomas L. Brodie comments, “As the incarnation is the finale of the prologue, so is the idea of unity the finale of Chap. 17. It is the down-to-earth realization of God but more so. It is the incarnation of the incarnation. The Word, which became flesh, is to become community.”<sup>147</sup> It is this realized eschatology that will make the mission to “the world” efficacious. Though fullness of the glory is to be revealed in heaven, the Johannine believers are to reflect it in their unity in this world. The emphatic expression that the disciples are to be “completely/perfectly one” is a call for the Johannine believers to deepen their participation in the divine life so that the world may believe (v. 23).

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<sup>146</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 736.

<sup>147</sup> Thomas L Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 516.

According to John 17, the mission to the world is to be accomplished through glorification and friendship. The mission to the world, the glorification and the friendship are the spinning ones of this text. Lee illustrates that John 17 is a prayer of “glorification which encapsulates the purpose and mission of the Son.”<sup>148</sup> As the true worshipper, Jesus glorified the Father by being obedient in accomplishing the mission entrusted to him (22, 24), and even obedient to death on the cross. Furthermore, Lee illustrates that John 17 is an act of prayer that attracts an audience to enter into friendship with Jesus and with him to glorify the Father.<sup>149</sup>

The unique character of Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20-26 is that Jesus is mainly concerned about “the world.” Though he is surrounded and his disciples occupy the table, he creates a space for those who have no part in the unity but have yet to believe. Those who believe belong to Jesus in a special way, i.e., that they are active participants in the divine life and have eternal life. Nevertheless, “the world,” the human world that refused to believe, also belongs to Jesus. It is his own creation though it does not accept him as its creator and redeemer (cf. Jn 1:10). Jesus cannot reject his own creation although the creature persists in its estrangement. For this reason, the Father gave his only Son for the world once and for all (cf. Jn 3:16-17). In John 17, Jesus establishes the perpetual act of mercy and invitation by sending the disciples into the world. For this purpose, the disciples have received the Father’s word (v. 14), kept “the word” (v. 6), and are sanctified in the word (v. 17). “The world” has this treasure for its salvation.

To conclude, John 17 presents Jesus’ concerns for mission and worship as inseparable. The Father has glorified the Son by giving him authority over all flesh (v. 2), and the Son has

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<sup>148</sup> Lee, *Hallowed in Truth and Love*, 75.

<sup>149</sup> Lee, *Hallowed in Truth and Love*, 77.

glorified the Father by establishing a believing missionary community. Through and in Jesus, the Johannine community has entered into friendship with God. In and through this friendship, the community is to abide and remain united in love for the salvation of “the world.” The world is called to conversion through the glory of God dwelling in the Johannine community.

Consequently, reading the Johannine Gospel, contemporary Christians cannot help reflecting the mission and worship of John in their liturgical celebration. The liturgy, through which the mystery of redemption is achieved, “is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.”<sup>150</sup> Moreover, the “oneness” of the Christian community is realized in the liturgy,<sup>151</sup> and indeed, “God is perfectly glorified, and men are sanctified”<sup>152</sup> in celebrating the sacraments.

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<sup>150</sup> Paul VI, *Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), 2, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html).

<sup>151</sup> Paul VI, *SC*, 10.

<sup>152</sup> Paul VI, *SC*, 7.



## Chapter 4

### **The Reflection of Missionary Features of John’s Gospel in the *Ser’ate***

#### ***Qeddasie* of the Ge’ez Rite Divine Liturgy**

The *Ser’ate Qeddasie* of the Ge’ez rite divine liturgy incorporates missionary action as an integral element of the worship. This missionary act addresses the faithful, catechumens, and unbelievers. Furthermore, the rite helps believers to worship on behalf of the whole world and for the salvation of the world. This chapter examines the co-existence of mission and worship in the *Ser’ate Qeddasie*, which makes the Ge’ez rite a reflection of Johannine mission, especially the *ad intra* friendship model outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis.

#### Ge’ez Rite, an Eastern Church Rite

The Ge’ez rite is an Eastern Church liturgical rite that originated from the Alexandrian (Coptic) rite. Literally, Ge’ez means contemplation, solitude of conscience. In referring to a people, it means an assumed or migrated people. People who have changed place, and possess freedom. The Ge’ez language is the language of the assumed or the freed people. It was the spoken language of Ethiopia/Eritrea. The Ge’ez speaking people are also called Habesha (people), and the land they live in is Habesha land.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, the term Ge’ez is also employed to describe the liturgy of the people. Scholars used to write about the local church liturgy by naming it as the “Ethiopian rite” (or “Ge’ez rite” though not common). Since Eritrea became an independent country in 1991, the phrase “Ethiopian rite/liturgy” might not be inclusive now. In addition, the rite is observed equally by Catholic and Orthodox Christians. Therefore, the phrase

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<sup>153</sup> Ghebregzie Adhanom, *Geez-Tigrigna Dictionary* (Asmara, Eritrea: Franciscana Printing Press, 2010), 610.

“Ge’ez rite” will be used to address the liturgical rite of the Catholic and Orthodox Christians of both countries.

Christianity was prominent in the land of Ethiopia and Eritrea since the beginning of Christianity. When and how the gospel message was introduced is not clearly known. What is certainly known is there were traces of Christian elements before the solemn introduction.<sup>154</sup> The history of Christianity among the Habesha people was solemnly introduced by St. Frumentius shortly after the Nicaean Council.<sup>155</sup> Frumentius, a merchant of the Red Sea coast, was kidnapped by the people of that land and taken to the king. Out of his cheeriness and kindness, he created good friendship among the king’s household. Frumentius observed Judaism and Christian elements in the people’s life, and it was a favorable ground for him to preach Christianity. “After preaching Christianity in Ethiopia for several years, [he] betook himself to Alexandria to request from the Archbishop there to send a bishop to the Christians of that nation.”<sup>156</sup> St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (ca 328 –373 C.E.) could not think of an appropriate person to carry out the desired mission other than Frumentius. Thus, he educated him and appointed him as the first bishop of the Habesha people, and probably equipped him with clergy personnel and religious materials. In this way, Frumentius marked a historical introduction of Christianity which was practiced according to the Alexandrian (Coptic) rite.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Ayala Takla-Haymanot, *The Ethiopian Church and Its Christological Doctrine*, 1981 Revised English edition (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Graphic Printers 1982), 30.

<sup>155</sup> Many local historians vary in dating the exact year of Frumentius’s consecration as the Bishop of Ethiopia or Axum. They vary from the year 328 C.E. to the early part of the 340s C.E.

<sup>156</sup> Takla-Haymanot, *The Ethiopian Church and Its Christological Doctrine*, 30.

<sup>157</sup> Habtemichael Kidane, *Origin and Development of the Ge’ez Divine Liturgy* (Asmara, Eritrea: Franciscana Printing Press, 2005), 84-87. For traces of Christianity before Frumentius,

The Divine Liturgy originated from Alexandria, but underwent a significant change at the hands of the Habesha people. Habtemichael Kidane explains the historical development of the Ge'ez Divine Liturgy in four stages.<sup>158</sup> I argue that it is within this historical development that the missionary features of the Ge'ez rite got their unique character. Thus, a brief note of the four stages helps understand the discussion that will follow in this chapter. The first stage was from fourth – fifth century C.E. Christianity, introduced officially by Frumentius, and practiced in its original Greek language. In the fourth century Greek was the lingua franca and language of worship in the Axumite kingdom. Though Greek, Ge'ez, and Sabeian languages were the spoken and documentary languages, Greek was the main language of trading, diplomacy, and worship. The Ge'ez, more than the other ones, was the popular language, almost everywhere spoken by the people.

The coming of new missionaries, who are known as the Nine Saints,<sup>159</sup> marked the second stage, sixth century C.E. and afterward [12th century]. Frumentius was Syrian by birth

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read Mario Alexis Portella, *Ethiopian and Eritrean Monasticism: The Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of Two Nations* (Brendan Pringle Editor, 2015), 7-12.

<sup>158</sup> Kidane, *Origin and Development of the Ge'ez Divine Liturgy*, 72-78.

<sup>159</sup> The second wave of evangelization in the Axumite kingdom was done by the so-called “the Nine Saints,” or “the Nine Roman Saints.” They were from the different localities, but Takla-Haymanot identifies them as Syrians in origin. Identifying them as Romans by the local church could either mean that they belonged to the Roman Empire, or even the faith they professed. The local Orthodox church venerates them as saints though no known canonical beatification procedure exists. They are: 1) Abba (Za Mikael) Aregawi from a Roman royal family, 2) Abba Garima or Yisshaq from a Byzantine family, 3) Abba Pantalewon from a Byzantine family, 4) Abba Liqanos from Questenia - Constantinople, 5) Abba Yemata from Cosiat, 6) Abba sahma from Antioch, 7) Abba Guba from Cilicia in Asia Minor, 8) Abba Afze from Edessa or Asia, and 9) Abba Alef, from Caesarea. Besides witnessing the Gospel through the holiness of life, evangelization, founding monasteries, and translating the Holy Scripture into

and education, but he was “incardinated” in the Alexandrian rite because the land was under the jurisdiction of Alexandria. He accomplished the first missionary work according to that rite. A second missionary wave in the sixth century was done by Syrian monks, the Nine Saints, who had no direct contact with Alexandria (though some of them passed by Alexandria), unlike Frumentius. It could be assumed that they brought with them worship rites either from Syria or rites with Eastern tradition into the area of their mission. The use of the vernacular language, Ge’ez, the establishment of monasteries, and the spread of Christianity to the countryside describes this period of development.

The third stage was in the 13th century C.E. A renewed and integrated Coptic rite was enforced for a second time. During this time in history, the Coptic Church managed to put the Ge’ez rite church under its full control. Thus, the Coptic rite overturned the previous practice. Even the translation of literature to Ge’ez was made to be from the Arabic spoken in Egypt. The fourth stage was from the 14th – 15th century C.E. The Ge’ez rite monks went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and encountered many rites, manners, and prayers that they might have brought with them to enrich their Ge’ez rite. The Ge’ez rite monks were not only transients but were residents in many important centers. In Jerusalem, monks were participating in many liturgical feast day celebrations of many rites where they could borrow interesting prayers. In Sinai, many Ge’ez rite monks were residing in a monastery holding monks of many nationalities. In Egypt, the Ge’ez rite monks founded a monastery to assist pilgrims as a place of rest. In Cyprus, the Ge’ez rite monks founded a monastery under their own administration. During the same period, there were Greeks, Egyptians, Armenians, Nestorians, and Romans alongside. I believe in all

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Ge’ez are some of their significant contributions; read: Takla-Haymanot, *The Ethiopian Church and Its Christological Doctrine*, 42-43.

these, not only were the Ge'ez rite monks borrowing from their neighbors, but they were presumably practicing distinctive elements of rite from the homeland church. The historical study of Kidane shows the ups and downs the rite had gone through, at least interpolations and changing of place and manners, if not subtraction. What is undoubtedly stable throughout the historical development was the hierarchical position of the Alexandrian Church over the Ge'ez rite church even though there were gaps of being present in person.

Egypt, the mother Church, governed and ruled the Ge'ez rite church until 1929 when the Orthodox Church of the Ge'ez rite became autocephalous. Kidane illustrates that the founders or mother church were responsible for ensuring liturgical celebrations in the newly founded church were in unity with the mother church:

For by fourth century, authorities of the church were watching over to assure a unitive divine liturgy in the whole church. It was obligatory that the newly founded church should follow the rite of the founder/mother church. Thus, if there was variation, it could not be a considerable one. In other words, there could be no significant difference between the founder and the founding church regarding Divine Liturgy. The founder/mother church insistently reminds the newly founded church to imitate her regarding the Divine Liturgy.<sup>160</sup> (my translation).

For this reason, the nascent church in the Axumite kingdom was obliged to follow the Coptic rite strictly. Then the question is, how did the mission territory of the Alexandrian rite church manage to be a distinctive rite called Ge'ez rite? Kidane sees the probability of introducing new features in the original rite during the second wave of evangelization, i.e., with the coming of the Nine Saints.<sup>161</sup> The Nine Saints founded monasteries which were places of innovations of liturgical worship over the existing Coptic rite. With the coming of these nine missionaries, an attempt to use the language of the people was most probable. Until the fifth century, i.e., before

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<sup>160</sup> Kidane, *Origin and Development*, 85-86.

<sup>161</sup> Kidane, *Origin and Development*, 97.

the coming of the Nine Saints, Christianity was limited to the king's household and the coast and ports of the Red Sea regions. However, after the fifth century Christianity started to spread to rural areas.

The power decline of the Axumite kingdom could be seen as the major factor in the shift of liturgical language from Greek to Ge'ez. At this time, the Red Sea coast was controlled by other powers, and Axum was cut off from the rest of the world.<sup>162</sup> Thus, it could be said that the Greek language had lost its importance in the land of the Habesha people. Therefore, though Egypt continued to have legal authority over the Ge'ez rite church, the language barrier was the main umbrella that gave way for the Ge'ez rite church to diverge from the mother church.

The missionary feature of the Ge'ez rite Divine Liturgy, which I argue reflects John's Gospel mission concept, took its shape in some way in this history. I say "in some way," for missionary orientation in the liturgy is an Eastern Churches' theological orientation that applies to the Coptic rite.

The Liturgy in Orthodox<sup>163</sup> Missiology according to James J. Stamoolis

In a missionary approach, Eastern Churches (Catholics and Orthodox alike) could better be understood as inward missionary Churches. This is a Christian practice that flowing from a distinctive theology. Stamoolis explains that there has been a distinctive theological framework ever since the beginning of Christianity that shaped the East and the West differently but

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<sup>162</sup> Kidane, *Origin and Development*, 109-112.

<sup>163</sup> Orthodox and Catholic Churches of the East are considered here as one body for they share a common oriental Christian tradition and theology. In Stamoolis' terms, the Eastern Rite Roman Catholic Churches are called Uniate Churches though he did not offer a theological distinction from the Orthodox Churches; See Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, (Eugene, OR: Reprinted by Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1986), 131 & 139.

complementarily. Stamoolis refers to Saints Irenaeus, Athanasius, and Chrysostom as the line of thought that shaped the East, while Saints Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas shaped the West. Thus, the two Churches hold distinctive theologies of anthropology, soteriology and methodology.<sup>164</sup> Though the purpose of all Christian theology leads to union with God, he explains that the difference in schools of thought led to perceiving the ‘union with God’ differently. On the one hand, Western understanding of “union with God” is shaped by the understanding of redemption, salvation, and justification with an emphasis leading to futuristic reward. On the other hand, the alternative term for “union with God” in the East is *theosis*. This is seen in the East “as a more comprehensive event than redemption.” The mercy of God is not limited to one’s conscious involvement in the victory Jesus won for him/her. One has to do what he/she could do to cooperate with his/her salvation, but the mercy of God is beyond that. The patristic teaching that by becoming man, Jesus Christ deified man summarizes the concept of the East.<sup>165</sup> Hence, Stamoolis argues that the Eastern missionary orientation has to be viewed from such a distinctive theological frame.

Stamoolis maintains that the systematic theology of mission has not been accomplished by Orthodox theologians. Though this implies a lack of mission work in “missionary land,” as the Western Church understands it, the missionary concept and living the missionary spirit is not lacking in the Eastern Churches.<sup>166</sup> He observes that there was already differences of theological frame in the patristic era. This distinctive missionary consciousness can be noticed in Orthodox Church forms of survival in past eras of Christian persecution. John Meyendorff, in the foreword

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<sup>164</sup> James J. Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 6-9.

<sup>165</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 9-10.

<sup>166</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 49.

to Stamoolis' book, explains how the life and faith of the Christian community express the very nature of Christian witness:

A church can be “witnessing” and therefore preaching through its prayer, through its sense of being “different” from the surrounding society, and through its celebration of the Kingdom of God, present, by anticipation, in the liturgy. The way the Orthodox have succeeded in experiencing their worship as communion with the Risen Body of Christ, and in using it as a powerful educational tool, is probably the most distinctive trait of Eastern Christianity, in contrast to the Western tendency of identifying mission with activism and organization.<sup>167</sup>

In his book, Stamoolis unveils this missionary witness in the liturgy.

In Chapter XI of his book, Stamoolis expounds that the chief feature of the Orthodox Church is its liturgical orientation. Mission in the context of liturgical worship (Holy Mass) is one typical example of its unique liturgical, theological orientation. The sermon serves as the best teaching ministry. Its position in the liturgy of catechumens serves as a means to educate the unbaptized, and prepares believers to proceed to communion.<sup>168</sup> Preserving the ancient practice of the patriarchal churches, scriptural readings, lectionary, especially for the Lenten and Easter seasons, are of the instructional character in view of the newly baptized.<sup>169</sup> Moreover, scriptural verses, allusions, materials, and elements are abundant in the liturgical celebration. He sees the missionary elements in liturgy, such as prayers for catechumens, which indicate the ancient church's practice when adult baptism was a “prevailing custom.”<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, xi-xii.

<sup>168</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 89.

<sup>169</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 89.

<sup>170</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 91.



Limiting oneself to finding the missionary elements does not do justice to the Orthodox liturgy. Thus, Stamoolis sees the entire liturgy as a motivating force for mission. The Orthodox Church is a Eucharistic Church. In celebrating the Eucharist, the church enters into full communion with God. In this communion, the church shines God's glory on earth and lives its divine calling. Though communion is limited to insiders, the glory shines from it, and makes the liturgical worship as a whole an evident form of witness and mission.<sup>171</sup> The story of the conversion of Prince Vladimir at hearing the representatives' report from visiting St. Sophia in Constantinople is a famous example.<sup>172</sup>

Furthermore, an inclusive understanding of liturgical worship is a key element of the Orthodox liturgical theology. The church performs liturgy on behalf of the world: "The sacrament is not for the world to partake of, but it is for the salvation of the world."<sup>173</sup> The work of Stamoolis provides a holistic understanding of the Eastern Churches' missionary orientation in the liturgy. His recognition of the oriental Churches' mission in their liturgy rather than in an active proclamation is convincing evidence for an inward concept of mission. Such orientation and the way the mission is carried out are the key for seeing the reflection of John's Gospel in the Ge'ez rite liturgy. His work on the missionary character of the "Liturgy of the Word"<sup>174</sup> and regarding catechumens will be a guide to examine the Ge'ez rite.

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<sup>171</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 92-95.

<sup>172</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 55.

<sup>173</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 97.

<sup>174</sup> "Liturgy of the Word" is the first part of the Holy Mass used in the Latin Rite tradition. In Ge'ez rite, "*Ser'ate Qeddasie*" is the phrase to which it corresponds. However, they differ considerably. To keep the awareness of the distinction, *Ser'ate Qeddasie* will be used in this paper instead of "Liturgy of the Word."

## Missionary Features in the *Ser'ate Qeddasie* of the Ge'ez Rite

The liturgical development of the Ge'ez rite could be evidently observed in the *Ser'ate Qeddasie*. *Ser'ate Qeddasie* is the first part of the Divine Liturgy which includes “the Preparation of the Celebrant and the Altar, the Preparation of the Gifts followed by the processional entry of the Gifts, the Offertory, and the Liturgy of the Word”<sup>175</sup> sequentially. In his research whether “the Ethiopian Pre-Anaphora maintain[s] the Egyptian Preparation Service?,” Kidane comments that the Ge'ez rite has gone far from the original Coptic rite.

However, we can be sure that Ethiopian Scholars and Foreigners, in their studies on the Ethiopian liturgy, agree admitting that the present Ethiopian *Sere'ata Qeddase* or Ordinary of the Mass, (Pre-Anaphora) is far from maintaining the simplicity of the counterpart Coptic pre-anaphora, from which it is derived almost totally. In fact, if we compare the present-day “Ordo Communis” of the two Churches, we easily become conscious that the Ethiopian rite is enriched, and as in some case, it is also holder of archaic forms that used to belong to the Coptic Church. The difference created between these two Churches' liturgies is not only because the *Sere'ata Qeddase* brings elements from other liturgical families, [...], but because some elements or usages whose origin is the Coptic Liturgy, are differently applied or they are more developed coming over here.<sup>176</sup>

This observation of Kidane is evident in the role that in receiving the Coptic rite the local church has changed the prayers' place, aim, and the person to whom the prayer was assigned.<sup>177</sup> For instance, *Ahadu ab Qeddus* – “The Holy Father is distinct [one],” *Zewetu gize barekot* – “This is the time of blessing,” and *Mimatan* – “how wondrous” are the prayers in the original rite, but

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<sup>175</sup> Kidane, “Does the Ethiopian Pre-Anaphora Maintain the Egyptian Preparatory Service? Towards a study of the *Sere'ata Qeddase*,” *Proceedings of the “First International Conference on Ethiopic Texts”* ed. Daniel Assefa & Hiruy Abdu (Addis Ababa: CFRRC Press, 2016), 76.

<sup>176</sup> Kidane, *Does the Ethiopian Pre-Anaphora*, 79.

<sup>177</sup> Kidane, *Does the Ethiopian Pre-Anaphora*, 76.

took a different form in the Ge'ez rite. These findings of Kidane are enhanced by the composition of new prayers by the Ge'ez rite church.

The unique creativity of the local church is observed in composing new prayers using “Matsehafa Kidan,” *Testamentum Domini*, as a main source. *Testamentum Domini* (Testament of the Lord) has high esteem in the Ge'ez rite church. According to the tradition of this church, the teaching of *Testamentum Domini* was given by Our Lord Himself during the period between his resurrection and ascension. It contains various prayers, rubrics and admonitions of Christian practice. The text was translated at its early stage to Ge'ez from Greek (or probably from Syriac). The text witnesses to an indirect Syrian influence.<sup>178</sup> Recognizing the insertion of new prayers in the Divine Liturgy after the arrival of the “Matsehafa Kidan,” Kidane offers a broader assessment:

These elements (liturgical prayers and admonition) have been adapted to the Ethiopian Liturgy throughout the Ethiopian Liturgical origin and development. The elements of the *Testamentum Domini* that are employed in the *Qeddase* came surely not through the Coptic channel, but directly from this book. The elements of the *Qeddase* that are taken from the *Testamentum Domini* are not found in the Coptic Church.<sup>179</sup>

The findings of Kidane do not only tell the privilege of the local church over the original rite, but their content and exhortations exhibit missionary features. To support this finding, I present typical missionary features of the current *Ser'ate Qeddasie* text. This is an attempt to understand the current text and the mystery believers celebrate in the Divine Liturgy. There is no aim or attempt to do textual comparison.

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<sup>178</sup> Kidane, *Does the Ethiopian Pre-Anaphora*, 93-94.

<sup>179</sup> Kidane, *Does the Ethiopian Pre-Anaphora*, 94.

## Exhortations

The titles of the texts in focus are listed here, and are given in full text in the Appendix for easy access. An English version of the Ge'ez rite missal is used; however, titles are supplemented with a heading from the Ge'ez language version. Titles are taken from the first word or phrase of the text: 1) “Hallelujah! Anyone enters,” *Hallelujah! Emebo B’esi*; 2) “Every one that loves not,” *Kulu Ze’eyafeqro*; 3) “O my brethren,” *O Ahawye*; 4) “Full and great,” *Mel’a We’abye*; 5) “Halleluia! Arise and hearken,” *Qumu We’atamu*; 6) “With his wet hand,” *Bertub ediehu*; 7) Dialogue for proclamation; 8) Fraternal dialogue.

Following the solemn opening of the liturgy by the presider, Mimatán, is the exhortation to the faithful recited by themselves, the *Hallelujah! Emebo B’esi*, “Hallelujah! If there be anyone.” The exhortation warns on three significant points: listening to the Scriptures, reception of Communion, and relationship with the believing community. If anyone falls short on these, that one is to be set apart from the believing community.<sup>180</sup> The exhortation awakens believers that they enter into divine participation. Believers are now in a sacred place and time. This is at the beginning of the liturgy, reminding the faithful regarding their divine participation by addressing the central parts that constitute the Divine Liturgy, the Word of God and the Eucharist. Scriptures and sacraments are inseparable and indispensable divine elements that create a Christian identity. In listening to the scriptures, one is admonished to enter into a personal encounter with Christ in and through the sacraments.

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<sup>180</sup> ሲኖዶስ ኦርቶዶክስ ኤርትራ፡ መጽሐፈቅዳሴ፡ ግዕዝ ምስ ምልክቱን ትግርኛን (ኣስመራ፡ ቤት ማሕተም ፍራንቸስካና፡ 1993)፡ 12. [Eritrean Orthodox Synodos, *Missal, Ge’ez with its signs and Tigrigna* (Asmara: Franciscana Press, 1993), 12.]/Marcos Daoud, trans., *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church* (Published in 1959, & Re-edited March 22, 2006), no. 3a, 19.

In receiving the sacrament(s) one becomes what he/she receives. He/she is incorporated into the body of Christ, visible in the believing community. Thus, one is built into the “ecclesial body.”<sup>181</sup> Therefore, the consequence of not partaking in these two liturgical sessions has a *de facto* effect of being spiritually separated from the ecclesial body. The recitation of this exhortation at the setting where catechumens and non-believers participate is an invitation to eagerly desire to be part of the ecclesial body eagerly. It is a valuable and general admonition enhanced and expanded during the actual moment of Scriptural reading and the Eucharist.

Such exhortation is found accompanying each scriptural reading. The liturgy consists of four readings. Each reading has a prayer by the priest, an exhortation by the deacon (reader), a reading, and a response prayer of the faithful. First, to read from the letters of Paul, the reader exhorts the assembly saying, “Anyone who does not love our lord Jesus Christ, and does not believe that he was born from the Virgin Mary” is to be condemned. To this admonition to profess the faith or at least believers to check their faith, the official missal commentary, *Andemta*, illustrates by saying that no one is to do or speak what God detests until the time of the coming of the Lord. *Andemta* urges hearers to believe “for to wait until his [Christ’s] coming is good for nothing.”<sup>182</sup>

Second, after reading the second reading from the Catholic Epistles, the reader concludes by admonishing: “O my brethren,” (*O Ahawye*). In this admonition the reader invites hearers to

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<sup>181</sup> Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, Minnesota: Pueblo, 2001), 132.

<sup>182</sup> ከፍለገሪም ወልደኪዳን፡ መጽሐፈ ቅዳሴ፡ ከቀድሞ አባቶች ሲወርድ ሲቀረድ የመጣው ንባብና ትርጓሜው (አዲስ አበባ፣ 1988 ግእዝ)፡ ቁ 11፡ 75 ። [Kefle-Garima Walda-Kidan, *Andemta-Commentary*, “Book of the Missal, Text and Interpretation as it has been Interpreted and Transmitted by the Ancient Fathers,” *Text [in Ge’ez] and Commentary [in Amharic] of the Pre-Anaphora and 14 Anaphora* (Addis Ababa, 1995/96 A.D.), no. 11, 75.

love and treasure the word of God in their hearts. He does this by making the people aware of the fading nature of this passing world. *Andemta* follows a similar style in elaborating on it. It uses a “city” that contradicts God’s desire as a metaphor. A city is not to be loved neither the honors nor the beauties in it. All flesh, and gold and diamond, honors of the flesh, are not to be loved. All fades away, and gold and diamond bring poison to the soul.<sup>183</sup>

Third, after reading from the Acts of the Apostles, the reader concludes by giving thanks for the richness of the word of God in the church and the richness of new believers coming into the church on hearing it. *Andemta* illustrates, “if there are more teachers, the teaching of the Lord is proclaimed everywhere; consequently, the number of converts to the faith increases.”<sup>184</sup> Such a thanksgiving implies to the hearers that ‘if those who heard this turned from their former ways, believed in the word, and saved, you too are to follow their example.’

Fourth, the deacon proclaims to the assembly to “arise and hearken,” *Qumu We’atmu*, for the Gospel proclamation. To “arise” applies both literally and metaphorically. The assembly is to remain standing to give special reverence to the Gospel, for it is the word of life, and Jesus is speaking. However, it is not just about reverence. It is said while the faithful are already standing. Thus, “to arise” is a metaphor for awareness, attentiveness, and readiness to accept the word of life. This is explicitly enhanced by the verb attached to it - “hearken.” The faithful are to revere and attentively listen to the Gospel.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, nos. 26-27, 77-78.

<sup>184</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 40, 79.

<sup>185</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, nos. 46-47, 90. The Gospel is also revered by incensing and kissing it by everyone in the liturgy.

## Evangelical Gestures of the *Ser'ate Qeddasie*

The evangelical gestures symbolize the whole salvific act of Jesus, i.e., from his entrance into the public ministry to his definitive act on the cross. “Evangelical gestures” refers to the structure of the church building, the position of the celebrants (assembly), the liturgical movements, and interactions. Liturgical worship as a memorial of the salvific act is a sacred moment in which a divine encounter between God and his people culminates in receiving the Communion. Emmanuel Fritsch, in his article *The Moment of Consecration in the Ge'ez Church: Part I*, analyzes the common belief among the Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox priests “that the Eucharistic change takes place at the beginning of the service, as the celebrant sings the [“Only the Father is holy,”] *Ahadu ...*”<sup>186</sup> He finds out that the prayer, *Ahadu*, functions more as a *sacramentalia* (blessing). However, studying the historical development before and after the prayer, and more importantly, the high reverence and spirituality developed in the prayer, *Ahadu*, Fritsch sees where the belief comes from. Thus, he thinks that “it is difficult to avoid the question about the miracle.”<sup>187</sup>

There is no wonder such thought has arisen in the Ge'ez rite followers. The “spirit” of the actual moment of consecration is set since the beginning of the *Ser'ate Qeddasie*. As commonly understood, the moment of consecration imitates Jesus' Last Supper symbolizing his definitive self-gift on the Cross at Calvary, the *Verba Christi* of the institution narrative and the epiclesis-

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<sup>186</sup> Emmanuel Fritsch, “The moment of Consecration in the Ge'ez Church: Part I, A Late phase in the Development of the Initial Rites of the Ge'ez Eucharistic Service,” *Let us be Attentive! Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy, Presov (Slovakia), 9-14 July 2018*, ed. Harald Buchinger, et al. (Munster: Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2020), 57.

<sup>187</sup> Emmanuel Fritsch, “The Moment of Consecration in the Ge'ez Church: Part I,” 66.

the invocation of the Holy Spirit. The Ge'ez rite liturgy inspires believers to have a comprehensive spirituality regarding the consecration. Though it holds the common understanding, it is not limited to that. In the liturgy, the Ge'ez rite followers celebrate the entire salvific acts of Jesus: his public ministry, his passion, death, and resurrection. As I categorize them, the liturgical evangelical gestures verify the comprehensive celebration of the life of Jesus Christ.

i. Structure of the Church and position of the faithful: though the physical outer structure of a church (according to Eastern tradition) is made either circular, or rectangular - symbolizing the burial of our Lord, or in the symbol of the Ark of Noah each contains three internal sections.<sup>188</sup> The Holy of Holies (*Mekdes*) symbolizes heaven. It is located on the innermost or east side of the main church. The altar is stationed in it. The Holy (*Kedest*) is next to the Holy of Holies. Readings and distribution of Holy Communion were held in this section. "In the ancient, those who are to receive communion were staying here."<sup>189</sup> The third section is *Qenie Mahliet*. It holds the western section of the main church. Hymns of the Liturgy of the Hours are solemnly held in this section. It is the place of the faithful and represents the pilgrim church. Moreover, it is attributed to represent the cosmos. Thus, in the ancient church, it was the place of the catechumens. Stamoolis speaks of the church praying on behalf of the whole world, that the liturgical celebration of the Church is not exclusive but inclusive. The Church exists and prays

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<sup>188</sup> ኪዳነ ዩብዮ: ሥርዓተ ትእዛዛቲሁ ለቅዳሴ (Brainerd, Minnesota: Bang Printing, 2019), 20-22. [Kidane Yebiyo, *The Disciplinary Commands of the Divine Liturgy* (Brainerd, Minnesota: Bang Printing, 2019), 20-22.]

<sup>189</sup> Yebiyo, *The Disciplinary Commands of the Divine Liturgy*, 22.



for the salvation of the entire world.<sup>190</sup> This inclusive consciousness of the Church is supplemented with the position of the presider and the faithful praying facing the east.

The presider, presiding in the name of Christ, is the one who leads the people and opens for them the gate of heaven. This act symbolizes the act of Christ. Christ died for the whole world (cf. 1:29; 11:51; 3:16-17). The whole world is in the mind and faith and prayers of the liturgically assembled church. The presider leads the universe as he faces to the east. The facing to east also symbolizes a call to conversion.<sup>191</sup> Moreover, the presider's facing to the east has a cosmic signification. The facing to the east symbolizes encountering the risen Christ, the true Sun. Representing the whole world, the presider (and the faithful with him) faces to the east to meet Christ coming on His throne. Such symbolic order in the external structure of the church and the assembly, and the internal consciousness of the believers finds its root in the high-priestly prayer of Jesus. While Jesus was praying for the disciples to the Father, he created a space for the world in his prayer (cf. Jn 17:21). Jesus' prayer, in John 17, is an inclusively well-ordered worship prayer.

ii. Procession from Bethlehem to the Altar: While processing from Bethlehem (where the deacons bake the bread and prepare the wine for communion), an altar server rings the small bell (*qale awadi*). This represents "the preaching of the apostles after the ascension inviting those who are separated from sin to come in and share his body and blood."<sup>192</sup> The carrying of bread and wine needs to be noticed here. The procession carrying these elements symbolizes the

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<sup>190</sup> Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today*, 97.

<sup>191</sup> Yebiyo, *The Disciplinary Commands of the Divine Liturgy*, 29.

<sup>192</sup> Yebiyo, *The Disciplinary Commands of the Divine Liturgy*, 17.

entrance of Jesus from Transjordan (Galilee) to Jerusalem to accomplish his definitive salvific act.<sup>193</sup>

iii. Circling the Altar at the entrance (Circumambulation): In reaching the Holy of Holies, three circling around the altar are held. After the first rotation, the presider takes the bread and touches it “with his wet hand,” *Bertub edeahu*, to symbolize the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist.<sup>194</sup> The assistant priest receives the host in a folded cloth (*Mahfed*) and accomplishes the second rotation.<sup>195</sup> Receiving the host, the presider puts the host on a paten, a symbol of the Cross of our Lord, makes the third circling, an assistant deacon carrying candlelight (taper) before him and the main deacon holding the wine following him. Placing the host on the paten signifies the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In the three rotations, the presider and his assistant priest mark three locations in the handing over of the host between them. The locations mark that Jesus was taken to Ananias, Caiaphas, and Pilate.<sup>196</sup>

At the entrance, the deacon carrying the wine goes around the altar three times. The rotation symbolizes, according to *Andemta*, Jesus’ travel from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized, his return to the desert, and his travel everywhere, proclaiming the Kingdom of God for three years and three months. In completing this, he went to Jerusalem to be crucified. The carrying of the wine signifies that during the crucifixion, angels received the blood of Jesus that flowing from the cross in a chalice and sprinkled it over the entire world.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 31, 45.

<sup>194</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 15, 43.

<sup>195</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 25, 45.

<sup>196</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 31, 45.

<sup>197</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 32, 45.

iv. Circling the Altar during Incensing Rite: During the rite of incensing, the assistant deacon, the presider, and the main deacon made three rotations. The assistant deacon carrying the taper leads the presider, and the main deacon carrying the cross and the word of God, Letters of Paul, follows the presider. *Andemta* explains that the assistant deacon represents John the Baptist. To show that the Baptist came before Jesus and announced the coming of the light, the assistant deacon leads the presider (“the Christ”) carrying a light. The main deacon carrying the cross and St. Paul’s letters represents Stephen, the deacon. Stephen was the first martyr to follow Jesus in his passion. Thus, the main deacon follows the presider.<sup>198</sup> Though *Andemta* does not explain the carrying of Paul’s letters, it hints that it signifies that Stephen was a martyr during the time of the apostles, and first from the apostles.

v. Readings in the direction of the cardinals: Scriptures are read facing the four cardinal directions: Gospels facing to the east, Pauline letters to the west, Catholic Epistles to the north, and Acts of the Apostles to the south. Altogether they symbolize the four rivers flowing from Eden to the whole world to make it green and fruitful.<sup>199</sup> These four books lead man from sin to repentance and to fruitful conversion that leads to fruitful glory. Moreover, reading to four directions signifies the four Gospels and the four cardinal directions.<sup>200</sup> They are a message of salvation to the whole world.

In the processing to proclaim the gospel, the assistant deacon holding the taper, the presider carrying and raising the Gospel high, and the deacon carrying the cross makes one

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<sup>198</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 59, 68.

<sup>199</sup> One river flows out from Eden, and divides itself into four rivers - Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates (cf. Gen. 2:10-14).

<sup>200</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 55, 91.

rotation around the altar and process out to the “Holy” to proclaim the gospel. *Andemta* explains that at this moment, seven (7) rotations are completed. [See iii & iv above]. This signifies the rotation of Joshua around the wall of Jericho, and its destruction. Similarly, the priest goes around the altar seven times to destroy the sin of his people.<sup>201</sup> This indicates that the evangelization that has been going on since the beginning of the liturgy has led individuals to conversion and their hearts are ready to receive the good news. It marks the climax of the evangelical purpose.

vi. Dialogue in (for) proclaiming the Gospel: The presider hands over the gospel to the assistant priest, representing Peter, saying this is the one which leads to heaven when it is proclaimed. The assistant priest saying, “His kingdom and His righteousness which he delivered to me: I deliver to you,” hands it over to the deacon, representing Stephen, who holds the book open to the presider to proclaim. Peter received the gospel from Jesus and proclaimed it. Stephen is the first fruit of the proclamation. He witnessed by his word, passion, and seeing Christ on His throne. The deacon receiving the gospel says, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” *Andemta* stresses the urgency to repent using an allegory “the time, child, to be delivered has reached.”<sup>202</sup> It urges for conversion for the kingdom of heaven is to be delivered soon, at the proclamation itself.

### **Prayers of Disposition**

Prayers recited by the priest precede the four readings. These prayers narrate that God is a giver of wisdom and willed to reveal himself to humankind out of his gratuitousness. This

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<sup>201</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 43, 89.

<sup>202</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, no. 53, 91.

narration focuses on the revelation given to the Apostles (including Paul) and the disciples. Then, it asks God to govern the worshipping assembly by his presence, cleanse their hearts, sanctify their souls, and forgive their offenses.<sup>203</sup> So that the word of God proclaimed may be understood: “O Good [O Generous], vouchsafe us a mind without distraction and a pure understanding that departs not from Thee, that we may both discern and comprehend how great is thy holy teaching which is now read to us out of him ....”<sup>204</sup> The prayer before the proclamation of the Gospel is a precise, central, and biblical form of these prayers:

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, who did say to Thy holy disciples and Thy pure apostles, “Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which you see, yet, and have not seen them; and have desired to hear the things which you hear, yet, have not heard them; but you, blessed are your eyes that have seen and your ears that have heard.”

Do Thou make us also like them ready to hear and to do the word of Thy holy Gospel through the prayers of the saints.<sup>205</sup>

The verbs “to hear and to do” are recurrent verbs in the exhortations and prayers accompanying the readings. The audience is urged to receive the divine revelation graciously, to incarnate the received word by transferring it into action.

### **Verifying Relationship**

The Ge’ez rite Divine Liturgy exhibits a relationship model which Emmanuel Fritsch phrased as “The *Orate Fratres* Dialogue” in his work *Concelebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the Ethiopian Tradition*.” Fritsch recognizes a recurrent internal dialogue among those in the

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<sup>203</sup> Daoud, nos. 140-141, 31.

<sup>204</sup> Daoud, no. 134, 30.

<sup>205</sup> Daoud, nos. 179-180, 34.

sacrament of orders present in the Eucharistic liturgy.<sup>206</sup> This significant ritual is found in two places. First, right before the solemn hymn of the *Ahadu*, a highly regarded prayer. The presider overlaps his hands, places them over the hands of the assistant priest, and asks for his prayer. He asks his “father and brother priests” to pray for him and for the sake of the sacrifice he offers. In communicating with the assistant priest, the presider communicates (asks) to all those in the sacrament of orders. The plural form, “father and brother priests,” makes this clear. This ritual interaction aims to ensure that “they are united in faith and ethics.”<sup>207</sup> Moreover, the content of this prayer is repeated during the rite of incensing. The priest, as he sees each concelebrant to incense, asks for his prayer; “I pray you, my father priests [priest], to remember me in your holy prayers.”

Scripture requires horizontal unity as a prerequisite for worship. In his analysis of the relations between sacraments and ethics, Chauvet mentions two scriptural texts, Hosea 6:6 and Romans 12:1.<sup>208</sup> These are outstanding texts in revealing that worship and sacrifice are not to add something to God. They are totally to edify human beings. For this edification to happen, believers must meet the horizontal and vertical conditions. For God to be “present” among those who assemble in His name (cf. Mt 18:20), ethical and doctrinal agreement is required. “The *Orate Fratres*” is the symbol of the ethical and theological (doctrinal) unity in mind and will and heart that should embrace in the dailiness of life; as Chauvet explains,

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<sup>206</sup> Emmanuel Fritsch, “Concelebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy in the Ethiopian Tradition,” *Studies on the Liturgies of the Christian East: Selected Papers of the Third International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy, Volos, May 26-30, 2010*, ed. Steven Hawkes-Teeple, et al. (Paris: Peeters, 2013), 17-21.

<sup>207</sup> Walda-Kidan, *Andemta*, nos. 47-48, 48.

<sup>208</sup> Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 59-61.

Without the liturgy, ethics can be most generous but is in danger of losing its Christian identity of response to the prior commitment to God. Without ethics, sacramental practice is bound to become ossified and to verge on magic. It is the sacrament that gives ethics the power to become a “spiritual sacrifice”; it is ethics that gives the sacrament the means of “very-fying” its fruitfulness.<sup>209</sup>

In their fraternal prayer, the priests symbolize their identity of oneness from which their ethical love receives its expression. The liturgical celebration has an evangelical effect when the participants are deified. The sacramental and ethical relation expressed in the liturgy, which has to continue throughout the dailiness of life, resolves the crisis between life and faith the Church is worried about.<sup>210</sup>

To sum up, the Ge’ez rite liturgy incorporates mission in its worship context. Stamoolis has broadly examined the liturgy of the Eastern Churches as a motivation, means, and aim for mission. This orientation has been proved in the Ge’ez rite through the missionary features: the exhortations, evangelical gestures, prayer of disposition, and relational verification. The representations and symbolizations in these missionary features are essential, for they focus on the divine mission of Jesus and the mission handed over to the Church. The co-existence and the mutual nourishment of mission and worship in the liturgy, and their methods make the Ge’ez rite a reflection of the Fourth Gospel. The synthesis will help us to see the connection of the missionary concept between the Fourth Gospel and the Ge’ez rite liturgy that I have developed in the chapters.

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<sup>209</sup> Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 65.

<sup>210</sup> Paul VI, *GS*, 43.

## Synthesis

The Second Vatican Council renewed the Christian life's praxis with a new theological approach. The renewal in the ecclesiological self-awareness casts a new light on its missionary nature. That "the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race."<sup>211</sup> The essence here is the Church being a sacrament through her "union with God." In addition, this cast light by *LG* enabled *AG* to articulate the mission of the Church as an extension of the mission of the Trinity. However, this missionary articulation in *AG* based on synoptic texts favored the continuation of the traditional *ad extra* mission in the mind of the Council's authors. Consequently, the self-awareness regarding union with God has not had much impact on the missionary life of the Church.

The encyclical letter *RM* attempts to renew the missionary approach by bringing the Church's union with God to the forefront. Affirming that there is distinctive missionary inspiration in the Gospel writers, the Pope stresses the priority of the Fourth Gospel's inspiration. For John, it is by loving one another that believers are to remain in the Father and the Son so that the world may know and believe (17:21-23). The Pope comments that "we [believers] are missionaries above all because of *what we are* as a church whose innermost life is unity in love, even before we become missionaries in word and deed."<sup>212</sup> This identity expressed in the life of believers as a lamp set upon a lampstand (cf. Mt 5:14-16) is the missionary concept of the Fourth Gospel. In other words, it is an inward mission that the contemporary church is looking for in the "spirit" of re-evangelization.

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<sup>211</sup> Paul VI, *LG*, 1.

<sup>212</sup> John Paul II, *RM*, 23.



I argued in this thesis that the Gospel of John lays out a missionary method that the Catholic Church is longing for as a way of self-renewal and through which it can re-evangelize the world. I pointed out that the Ge'ez rite divine liturgy is one of the best examples of Christian praxis according to John's Gospel. This argument is demonstrated in four major points. 1- The missionary concept of the Fourth Gospel is primarily a mission to be carried out within the believing (Johannine) community (inward mission). 2- The inward mission is carried out in the spirit of friendship, friendship that comes from being united in Christ Jesus. 3- For the Fourth Gospel, when there is worship, there is mission; when there is mission, there is worship. Here, worship is understood in a comprehensive sense. It includes the lifestyle of believers (ethical worship), and the liturgical worship. 4- The inward, friendship, and worship-mission logic and method of the Gospel are reflected in the Ge'ez rite divine liturgy. These are the major findings from the historical (Chapter Two) and theological (Chapter Three) study of the Gospel.

The study of the emergence and life of the Johannine community (in Chapter Two) casts light on the understanding of the Gospel's mission concept. Cullmann understands the Johannine circle as emerging from two environments: one, from the Transjordan area, a non-Christian and syncretistic background who are attracted by the Johannine teaching; second, Hellenists with anti-temple attitudes emerged from a Christian environment. Hellenist missionaries performed a successful mission in Samaria. During the mission of Samaria, the two streams from different backgrounds formed a consolidated circle. According to Cullmann, the evangelist framed the Gospel in the historical life of the incarnate Jesus to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is present within the community as before, and that the community is willed and founded by Jesus. Consequently, the community must dedicate itself to mission and worship initiated by Jesus.

According to Brown, the Johannine community originated from within the Jewish context. The pre-existence of Jesus (1:15, 30) and the titles the first disciples hold about Jesus demonstrate the Jewish linkage. In addition, the material of the Book of Signs shows the common source, which John deliberately chose to present differently. A second large group joined the Johannine community from Samaria (4:4-42). The high Christological confession of the townsmen that Jesus is the “savior of the world” (4:42) fostered hostility from the synagogue leaders. Brown recognizes seven groups (among them the Johannine community) in the era the Johannine community emerged and consolidated. The three non-Christian groups (the adherents of John the Baptist, the Jews, and “the world”) are the ones the evangelist identifies as a threat to his community. These identified threats to the Johannine community not only help reveal the geographical trajectory or spread of the Johannine community but also explain how Johannine theology is shaped to combat them.

Though Cullmann and Brown disagree on how the Johannine community emerged, they agree on the challenges the community faced and the theological approach the evangelist took to respond to the situation and protect the faith of his community.

The one-on-one encounter with Jesus in the Book of Signs shows the current of mission: encounter with Jesus, recognizing Jesus’ Godness (worship), mission work/witness, and bringing others to Jesus. Jesus reveals himself to those individuals who encountered him, and in seeing/recognizing him the individuals go into their natural environment and witness. Many are led to Jesus through that witness, as elaborated using the diagram. Moreover, the destination of the mission of those who are sent out shows that Jesus reached out to all human conditions and statuses by finding a missionary from within them. This inward method of mission of the Book of Signs is continued and enhanced through the ethical or love command in the Book of Glory.

The ethical command to love one another (13:34-35) has a threefold purpose in the Gospel: it is an expression of being united with Jesus, to incarnate Jesus in the life of the individual and the community, and that the world may see them and convert. In addition, the ethical command is to live in the “spirit” of realized eschatology, to let their joy in the Lord shine within them and to the world. Finally, the faith in Jesus Christ and its love command is to be lived according to the model Jesus laid out, i.e., the friendship model (15:12-17). This friendship entails unity with Jesus and the believing community, remaining in unity, and living one’s life as a sacrificial self-gift.

The mission-worship way of the Gospel is remarkably laid out in John 17. Jesus turned his face to his heavenly Father and prayed to be glorified with the glory he had before the world existed (vv. 1, 5). Jesus refers to his pre-existing glory which makes him an object of worship. In addition, Johannine scholars Schnackenberg and Brown argue that the *Sitz im Leben* resembles the eucharistic setting of the Gospel (6: 51c-58), and the eucharistic prayer of the early Christian praxis. The disciples are to dedicate themselves to the life of worship which is the source and expression of their unity. Through this unity, the disciples are to reveal God’s glory to the human race. They are “sanctified” and “sent” to perpetuate the glory of God so that the world may believe. Such *ad intra* mission of the community is oriented to bear fruit in the *ad extra*. The Gospel’s concept and method of mission is inseparable from worship. Mission and worship nourish each other reciprocally.

The Fourth Gospel gives us a “body” of believing community as a lamp set upon a lampstand (cf. Mt 5:14-16). The whole purpose of the mission within the community is to keep the lamp flaming so that the world may believe. *LG* articulates this concept of the Fourth Gospel. In explaining the Church as a sacrament or sign, *LG* identifies the Church as a body of a lamp. In

his book *The Sacraments*, Chauvet conceptualizes the “body” as “what is most spiritual always takes place in the most corporal.”<sup>213</sup> In the mediation of the body, believers experience the encounter with God. Therefore, the Church is, according to John’s Gospel, a body that shines the glory of God to the world prior to a word of proclamation being pronounced out to the unbelievers. Thus, the main thing for the evangelist is to keep the lamp flaming. The Ge’ez rite divine liturgy reflects this Johannine concept of mission. The reflection which has been argued in this paper is not based on textual correspondence but on the mission’s concept, method, and purpose.

Unveiling the co-existence and mutuality of mission and worship in the Gospel, a reflection of it in the contemporary Christian community is noticed. The Ge’ez rite divine liturgy incorporates missionary action as an integral element of the worship. The exploration of the liturgical elements of the rite - the exhortations, the evangelical gestures, the dialogue at the gospel proclamation, and the fraternal prayer - demonstrate the missionary element. These missionary elements of the rite address the catechumens, the unbelieving, and the ethics of believers. This kind of liturgical celebration is a reader’s response to the Johannine Gospel. The obscurity of the identification of the beloved disciple is a rich gap that invites a believer to place him/herself in that gap<sup>214</sup> and follow Christ in worship and mission.

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<sup>213</sup> Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, xii & 65.

<sup>214</sup> Julian L. Haas, *John’s Gospel of Communion* (Media House, 2018), 55

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## Appendix

[Reference: Daoud, Marcos, translator. *The Liturgy of the Ethiopian Church*. Published in 1959,  
& Re-edited March 22, 2006.]

1) “Halleluia! Anyone enters,”/ *Halleluia! Emebo B’esi*

Hallelujah! If there be anyone of the faithful who has entered the church at the time of qidase and has not heard the holy Scriptures, and has not waited until they finish the prayer of the qidase, and has not received the holy communion, let him be driven out of the church if he has violated the law of God and disdained to stand before the heavenly King, the King of body and spirit. This the Apostles have taught us in their canons. (Daoud, no. 3a, 19).

2) “Every one that loves not,”/ *Kulu Ze’eyafeqro*

Every one that loves not our Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and believes not in his birth from holy Mary, of twofold virginity, the ark of the Holy Spirit, until His coming again, let him be anathema as Paul said. (Daoud, no. 136, 30).

3) “O my brethren,”/ *O Ahawye*

O my brethren, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. The world passes away and the lust thereof, for all is passing. (Daoud, no. 142, 31).

4) “Full and great,”/ *Mel’a We’abye*

Full and great and exalted is the word of God, and it has increased in the holy church, and many are they that believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory, unto endless ages. Amen. (Daoud, no. 149, 32).

5) “Halleluia! Arise and hearken,”/ *Qumu We’atmu*

Halleluia! Arise and hearken to the holy gospel, the message of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (Daoud, no. 189, 35).

6) “With his wet hand,”/ *Bertub ediehu*

[Rubric -]: Then the priest shall take the host with his wet hand, and passing his hand over and upon it, shall say: [Prayer -] I sought Thy face; Thy face, O Lord, will I seek, hide not Thy face from me; put not Thy servant away in anger: Thou hast been my help: leave me not, neither forsake me, God of my salvation. (Daoud, no. 9, 19).

7) Dialogue for proclamation

Presider: Behold the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven. Assistant Priest: His kingdom and His righteousness which he delivered to me: I deliver to you. Deacon: Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Daoud, no. 193, 35).

8) Fraternal dialogue

Presider: My fathers and my brothers, pray for me and for this sacrifice. Assistant Priest: May God hear you in all that you have asked and accept your sacrifice and offering like the sacrifice of Melchisedec and Aaron and Zacharias, the priests of the church of the firstborn. (Marcos, nos. 22 & 23, 21). [During rite of incensing; rubric-] Then, the celebrant shall cense all the priests individually, while saying: [prayer] I pray you, my father priests, to remember me in your holy prayers. They all respond: May God accept your sacrifice, smell the savour of you incense, and keep your priesthood in righteousness, as He accepted the sacrifice of Melchisedec, the incense of Aaron and Zacharias, who were in the church of the first-born. (Daoud, no. 124, 29).

## **Vita**

Brother Surafiel Bdeho lives a consecrated life, living the evangelical councils according to the way of life set by St. Francis of Assisi in the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin. Brother received a Bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology from Philosophico-Theology Institute (Asmara-Eritrea), affiliated to "Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana" (2014). He served and ministered to refugees in Sudan as a missionary (2016-2018). Currently, he is on track to receive the degree of Master of Arts in Theology from St. Mary's University, San Antonio - Texas (2023).

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