



Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants

Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church

Bishop Sebastian Vadakel, MST (Chairman)
Fr. Shaji Abraham Kochupurayil, MCBS (Secretary)

Archbishop Mathew Moolakkattu, OSB (Member)
Bishop Mathew Arackal (Member)

REPORT OF THE MISSION CONSULTATION AT SANDESH BHAVEN, THALASSERY ON 19 & 20 MAY, 2016

The Syro-Malabar Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants in collaboration with ASSM, under the leadership and in the presence of the Major Archbishop, organized a Consultation on *Ad Gentes* Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church on 19 & 20 May, 2016 at Sandesh Bhavan, Thalassery. There were 170 participants: of whom 140 were Archbishops, Bishops and delegates from the Archeparchy of Thalassery, and the eparchies of Belthangady, Bhadravathy, Mananthavady, Mandya and Thamarassery; and 30 were missionary delegates from Mission Eparchies, Eparchies for Migrants, Mission Regions, Major Superiors and their councilors for Mission from the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Major Seminary Rectors or their delegates and directors/leaders or representatives from Lay Missionary Associations and Movements. His Beatitude Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, Abp. Mar George Njaralakatt, Abp. Mar George Valiyamattam, Bp. Mar Sebastian Vadakel, Bp. Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil, Bp. Mar Lawrence Mukkuzhy, Bp. Mar Joseph Arumachadath, Bp. Mar Antony Kariyil, Bp. Mar Joseph Pandarassery, and Bp. Mar John Vadakel were present on the occasion. V. Rev. Frs. Joseph Mattam (Belthangady), George Changanamthundam (Mananthavady), Benny Pengiparambil CMI (Mandya), Francis Mechirakath (Thalassery), and Fr. Abraham Kavilpurayidam (Thamarassery), and George Allumpurathu (Bhadravathi) were the eparchial coordinators. The coordinators had been instructed in a previous meeting held on 30 March, 2016 to prepare the participants from their own eparchies for the Consultation. Accordingly most of the eparchies held meetings beforehand and prepared the participants well for the Mission Consultation.

Context: Fifty years after the promulgation of the Vatican II document - *Ad Gentes*, eleven years after the promulgation of the Mission Policy of the Syro-Malabar Church, three years after the celebration of the Mission Year – 2012.

Objectives: (1) Mission animation; (2) Encouraging the evangelizing efforts of our missionaries; and (3) Internal assessment of 'Mission *Ad Gentes*' of the Syro-Malabar Church and planning for the future.

Title – Syro-Malabar Church 50 Years after *Ad Gentes* of Vat II: A Consultation on *Ad Gentes* Mission Today.



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INAUGURAL SESSION

The participants arrived at Sandesh Bhavan at 5 pm on 19 May, 2016. After the registration and tea, the inaugural session started at 6 pm. The prayer was led by the delegates from the Eparchy of Belthangady. His Grace Mar George Njaralakatt welcomed the gathering. His Grace spoke also of the great relevance of the Consultation in the present Indian and global contexts of the Mission of the Church. The welcome address was followed by an exposition of the dynamics of the Consultation by His Excellency Mar Sebastian Vadakel, chairman of the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants: He explained the context for the arrangement of the Consultation as well as the main events of the Consultation. The Consultation has four Sessions: (1) the Inaugural Session, where the Major Archbishop, the Father and Head of the Church, gives orientation on the Mission Consultation, then (ii) three Inputs Session – on *ad gentes* in India, Syro-Malabar *ad gentes* Mission and the social, political, cultural and religious scenario of the Mission in India, (iii) the Sharing Session by missionaries and representatives from Mission Eparchies, Mission Regions, Religious missionaries and representatives from Eparchies of the Region, and (iv) the Concluding Session, with general interaction and planning and the Message of the Major Archbishop.

The Major Archbishop lighted the lamp together with other bishops, priests, religious and lay missionary representatives. In his inaugural and the concluding addresses, the Major Archbishop spoke of the need of the time to make the whole Church missionary. The Consultation is organized with the intention and planning of becoming a missionary Church in all respects. Mission is the work of God carried out by the Church. The call of the Church is to continue to the mission of Christ. 'I am a mission than I have a mission'. The Church supports different charisms and missionary efforts of its members, even when they are not always directly supportive and ecclesial. All charisms are important in the Church. Though certain missionary activities are done individually, and some others as community/congregations, all the missionary activities should be carried out as one Church. The talents and charisms of the apostles were different. The Church greatly acknowledges the commendable service done by her children to the different individual Churches in India, to society and the world at large. Church is seen by the Holy Father as family of families. The whole Church should support the missionary movements from all corners. We need to feel one with the missionaries. We need to live with people and the people of the place should accept us through our life-witness. Inculturation is a felt need of the time. Vocation is received and not promoted. The Laity has a great role in the missionary endeavors of the Church. The Church encourages the laity to visit, own and stay in the missions as missionaries/evangelizers.

The Inaugural Session was followed by Input Sessions. First input session was on 19th and the second and third input sessions were on 20th.



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INPUT SESSIONS

The First Input Session was given by Rev. Dr. Davis Varayilan CMI, rector of Samanvaya, Bhopal at 6.45 pm to 7.15 pm on 19th May. The topic of the session was “Challenges of *Ad Gentes* Mission in India: From the Perspective of Vatican II & Post-Vatican II Documents”.

The Second Input Session was given by Rev. Dr. Devamitra, from the eparchy of Sagar, at 9.00 am, on 20 May. He spoke on the theme: “50 Years of Syro-Malabar *Ad Gentes* Mission: Syro-Malabar Mission Eparchies & Mission Regions: Appreciation and Introspection.”

The Third Input Session was given by Mr. George Kallivayalil, Associate Editor & Chief of Bureau at Deepika Daily, New Delhi, at 10.00 am on 20 May. He spoke for 30 minutes on the theme “Openness of the Church to the Secular Reality: The Prospects and Challenges to Evangelization”.

The presentation of each topic was for 30 minutes and the participants were then given 15 minutes for interaction. The input and interactive sessions were moderated by Bp. Mar Remigiose Inchananiyil, Bp. Mar Lawrence Mukkuzhy and Bp. Mar Antony Kariyil CMI.

Encounter with Missionaries and Missions: There was an informal session at 9.15 pm on 19th May with the Missionaries from Mission eparchies, mission regions and Institutes of Consecrated and Apostolic Life to introduce themselves and their ministries. There was also a mission documentation prepared and presented by IMPACT, MST fathers to explain the various ministries the Syro-Malabar Church is involved in. The encounter with the missionaries, the sharings about their missions and the mission documentation really enkindled the missionary spirit of the participants.

SHARING SESSIONS

Theme of the sharing session was: “*Ad Gentes* Mission of the Syro-Malabar Church yesterday, today and tomorrow: Attitudes, Approaches and Prospects”. The representatives were requested to share on, ‘how their ministry is effective in the field of evangelization?’, ‘how it becomes evangelization?’, etc. The sharing started at 10.45 am on 20 May. Each representative was given 4-5 minutes to speak on their evangelizing mission. There were four groups of sharing of missionaries: (1) Representatives from Mission Eparchies and Mission Regions; (2) Representatives from Various Ministries/Associations of Evangelization; (3) Representatives from Institutes of Consecrated Life and (4) Representatives from Eparchies within the Proper Territory.



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(1) Representatives from Mission Eparchies and Mission Regions

1. Fr. Siljo Ponthokkan – Adilabad
2. Fr. Jimmy Painunkal – Bijnor
3. Fr. Siby Kochalunkal CST – Faridabad, Punjab-Rajasthan
4. Fr. Jose Panthalanickal CMI – Jagdalpur
5. Fr. Jose Cheriampanatt MST – Sangli Region, Kalyan Diocese
6. Fr. Mathew Kalathoor CMI – Rajkot
7. Fr. Siljo Kidangan – Sagar
8. Fr. Antony Panchinkal – Satna
9. Fr. George Chakkungal – Ujjain
10. Fr. Mathew Kizhakkearanjaniyil – Goa Region
11. Fr. Francis Eluvathingal – Santhom Mission, India
12. Mr. Adv. PT Chacko – Ahmedabad

(2) Representatives from Syro-Malabar Ministries, Associations and Institutes of Evangelization

13. Fr. Joby Poochukandathil – State Director, CML
14. Adv. Mr. Jose Vithayathil – Secretary, Laity Commission
15. Sr. Maris Stella CHF – Home Mission
16. Fr. Felix CMI – Mentally Challenged, TVM
17. Fr. George Kuttickal MCBS – FBA, Ministry for the Beggars
18. Mr. Jose Olickal – Fiat Mission
19. Mrs. Cicily Baby – Matruvedi
20. Sr. Suma Jose SD – NGO, Legal Aid, Prison Ministry
21. Sr. Ancy SH – Office-Secretary, ASSM
22. Fr. Joby Maprakavil MST – Internet Mission
23. Fr. Kurian Kochottonnil MST – Village Ministry, Delhi
24. Fr. Francis Thonippara CMI – Major Seminary
25. Mr. Devasia Kongola – AKCC
26. Sri. Cyriac Palamthattel, St. Vicent De Paul
27. Mr. Shijo Nilackapally – SMYM

(3) Representatives from Institutes of Consecrated Life

28. Fr. Thomas Karingadan OFM Cap. – Social Outreaching Ministry
29. Sr. Jainy FCC – Eunuchs and Marginalized
30. Fr. Binoy Puthiyadath VC – Preaching Ministry



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(4) Representatives from Eparchies within the Proper Territory

- 31. Msgr. Abraham Ponatt – Thalassery
- 32. Dr. Chacko Kalamparambil – Tamarassery
- 33. Fr. Manoj Kakkonal – Mananthavady
- 34. Fr. Joseph Mattam – Belthangady
- 35. Fr. Job Kunnumpuram – Bhadravathy
- 36. Fr. Mathew Koikara – Mandya

The Major Archbishop gave a message at 12.10 pm, anticipated his message of the Concluding Session. In his message, the Major Archbishop appreciated the efforts taken by the Commission for Evangelization and Pastoral Care of the Migrants and ASSM under the leadership of Bp. Mar Sebastian Vadakel and Bp. Mar Raphael Thattil. The Major Archbishop thanked the participants and the organizers for the meaningful and well organized Consultation. He also appreciated the various missionary endeavors of the Church in which the participants are actively involved in. He exhorted everyone to feel one with the missionaries. The missionaries and those responsible for various missions were asked to revive their mission with a Christ-orientation. The Church is made vibrant when the missionary activities are duly promoted. Prayer for missions should be intensified. Vocations to missions should be promoted more and more. The Church should go to the ordinary people and live with them and become more relevant in the contemporary times. All faithful should remain united in the Church. Everyone was exhorted to earnestly continue their missionary efforts, depending on our Lord. The people should welcome us through our life-witness. Pope Francis instructs the religious sisters to go out to the people. Inculturation is a felt need of the time. The role of the laity in the missionary vocation of the Church is very vital. The laity associations of the Mother Church, like Mathruvedi, CML, CLC, etc. should enkindle their missionary dimension and support the mission in the best way possible. The Church encourages the laity to visit, stay and work in the missions as missionaries/evangelizers.

The Major Archbishop concluded his message with a Blessing at 1 PM requesting the participants to continue the sharing session in the afternoon.

After the Lunch break, the participants continued the sharing session at 1.45 pm. The sharing continued till 3.30. Then there was the concluding session, moderated by Bp. Mar Sebastian Vadakel. Rev. Fr. Jose Cheriampanatt MST presented a report of the Consultation for further interaction and planning. The participants added a few more suggestions and observations to be included in the report. His Grace Mar George Njaralakatt gave the concluding message at 4.15 pm. He urged the missionaries, both outside and inside Kerala, to take up the mission more responsibly and in an ecclesial spirit. He also thanked all the participants and organizers of the Consultation for the fruitful



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and energizing endeavour. Rev. Sr. Francelet SD, the office-secretary of the Commission for Evangelization, proposed vote of thanks at 4.50 pm. The Consultation ended at 5 pm with a short prayer and blessing by His Grace Mar George Njaralakatt.

The Syro-Malabar Church-Fifty Years after ‘*Ad Gentes*’ of Vatican II: Introspection and Proposals for its Mission Tomorrow

The Consultation reviewed the mission *ad gentes* call of the Universal Church from its major missionary teachings from Vatican II till today, introspected the formal mission *ad gentes* initiatives of the Syro-Malabar Church of the past fifty years, and creatively and critically appraised the emerging religio-theological and socio-political scenarios and trends both within and outside the Church, and made the following observations and proposals in view of revitalizing the mission *ad gentes* of the Syro-Malabar Church for the future.

I. Review of 50 years of the Mission *Ad Gentes* Initiatives of the Syro-Malabar Church

1. The mission we carry out on earth is the continuation of the mission of Trinity in Christ for the salvation of the whole of humanity. The Church, the abiding presence of Christ on earth, continues this mission through word and deed.
2. The SMC both within and outside the proper territory of the Church has really made a difference through its presence and activities in the missionary enterprise of the Universal Church and in the mission of the Indian Church in particular.
3. The SMC is always earnest to revive missionary spirit towards home mission and universal mission as well. It is committed to rejuvenate its home mission so that it may continue to live the two millennia old patrimony of faith faithfully, remain exemplary witnesses of the Gospel and keep on being a resource for *ad gentes* missionary undertakings. The SMC is earnest to revive its commitment to universal mission, for it is called to respond to the missionary command of the Lord realizing that the limits of the mission is simply the ends of the earth.
4. Many of the SM missionary involvements and initiatives had been made under the leadership and collaboration of various Institutes of consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life of both men and women. They gathered personnel and material resources, established numerous mission stations/centers, ran institutions and programmes in view of evangelization of the territories entrusted to their care.



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5. The lay missionary movements like CML, Jesus Youth, Fiat mission and similar organizations continue to add momentum to the SM missionary enterprises.
6. Along with the pastoral care of migrants, the eparchies of Kalyan and Faridabad as well as all the SM mission eparchies outside the *territorium proprium* of the SM Church in India are primarily focused on mission *ad gentes* and they make use of direct and indirect ways of preaching the Gospel involving in various Apostolates.
7. We are happy to observe that all our mission Eparchies have a good number of Eparchial Clergy to take care of their mission stations.

II. Challenges to SM *Ad Gentes* initiatives today

1. Even though SMC has significantly established Christian presence in various parts of mission territories entrusted to her through various Christian institutions and apostolates, SM mission Eparchies do not have many SM communities of believers from the missions. This seems to be the major weakness of our missions.
2. Disturbances from Communal forces and the existing of anti-conversion bill in some of the states is a discouraging factor in adding new members to the community.
3. Some theological thoughts discouraged the conversion through baptism also contributed to the non-building up of the indigenous SM Christian communities.
4. The continued limits to the jurisdiction of the SMC is another disappointing obstacle in catering the pastoral needs of the migrants and for the evangelization activities outside the given territories
5. Restricting and discouraging of priestly and religious vocations from the Mother Church to the mission has weakened the missionary activities.
6. Failure to understand the language and the cultural genius of the places of mission and the disinterest to familiarize with these realities have affected the quality of our endours.
7. At present the mission provinces of the SM religious congregations have more houses in the Latin Dioceses. This still remain a great lose in the SM mission Eparchies. At times the attitude of the eparchies being not sensitive to the needs of the mission provinces seems to be the reason for this situation.



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8. Decrease in external financial support has also negatively affected the acceleration of our growth, especially in starting of new centres and in the running of the existing centers especially the boardings.
9. The SM missions are compelled to focus on income generating ministries for sustenance which has resulted in the assimilation of both human and material resources for the establishment of institutions.
10. The tendencies to reduce our social action programmes to the level of NGOs have distorted our evangelization focus and the ecclesial dimension of mission.

III. Proposals for Rejuvenating the SM Mission *Ad Gentes*

1. Understand the specificity of mission *ad gentes* among other missiological variants like evangelization, pastoral work, new evangelization, etc. and enhance the permanent urgency of mission *ad gentes*, as *Redemptoris Missio* puts (RM 14).
2. SM mission eparchies and mission provinces of religious should focus their attention on the majority of non-Christians in all their activities both religious and secular.
3. Spreading of the Word of God directly and indirectly must be our priority. Every activity should be oriented towards this primary purpose.
4. Evangelization through art and architecture is a great possibility today.
5. Imbibing the genius of the Indian Spirituality and culture, the SM missionaries should strive for an experiential communication of the gospel message, in addition to the works of mercy, social action and interreligious dialogue.
6. Continuous renewal programmes for the missionaries to imbibe the spirit of new evangelization for new ardour and methods of doing mission so that they do not lose focus of evangelization while involving in various apostolic activities of secular nature.
7. Strive for an inclusive approach to mission by exploring more frontier missions through legal aids, commitment to social justice, gender equality, human rights and reviving our commitment to the marginalized and the sensitivity to the poor.
8. Develop an attitude of dialogue in all areas of undertakings, with dialogue among cultures, religions, world views, etc... and explore contemplative and experiential elements of mission



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through Ashram life, monastic life and popular Christian movements. There should be a dialogue within the Church and outside the Church.

9. We need to present other religions positively to promote our evangelizing efforts. Our mission works shall not hinder the common policies of the nation.
10. Explore the possibilities of media apostolate by sharing resources and products among various missions/eparchies and by making use of the 'new media' through social networking sites for the circulation of insightful items for evangelization.
11. Cultivate healthy working relations among the Mission Eparchies and the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in their respective territories. The Eparchies may support and encourage the institutes within their territories to live their prophetic vocation meaningfully and to become spiritual power houses of the eparchies.
12. Missionary life in the history of the Church is the fruit of monasticism and mysticism. More collaboration and mutual support between eparchies and institutes of consecrated life is essential for the effectiveness of the mission.
13. The ecclesial dimension of the mission is to be stressed more and more in the Syro-Malabar Church.
14. Avoid any kind of commercialism that can creep into our ministries. The simple, humble and down to earth life style of Bl. Mother Teresa of Kolkata can touch the lives of many.
15. In all our undertakings, importance shall be given to the sanctity of life and the witness of the love and compassion of our Lord, so that we may always walk the talk as the ambassadors of Christ.
16. A change of attitude towards Mission must take place among the bishops and priests in Kerala.

IV. Some Concrete Recommendations and Suggestions to the Mother Church in Kerala

1. To start a training center for the missionary formation of the laity so that they may enter into more secular fields with a missionary spirit.
2. To start mission homes in Kerala for all mission Eparches and mission provinces, and to have initiation and orientation of the new candidates to priesthood and religious life in Kerala itself for a period of time before they are sent to actual mission eparchies and mission provinces.



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3. Every eparchy in Kerala should have at least one mission house to support and promote missions and missionaries.
4. Formation and ordination of men to the permanent diaconate with proper missionary training.
5. To have a prayer group of parents of priests and consecrated people in every parish. This shall be a link between the mission and the parish community in Kerala. They can support missions spiritually and materially. They can also animate mission vocations and occasional mission visits.
6. Gradually to develop this prayer group to a community where the parents of priests and consecrated people shall live together, especially during their old age. This is especially relevant as the only son becoming a priest is very common now-a-days.
7. Occasional mission visits of all, especially of youth, must be encouraged and organized possibly animated by CML, Jesus Youth and SMYM. There should be mission possibility open to everybody in the Church.
8. Every Eparchy and parish must gladly welcome ASSM to their communities to conduct mission animation as well as fund raising program, encouraging all to sponsor a seminarian, formees and mission projects. Every parish should have a box kept for mission support in the Church and there should have a mission support group active in every parish. The families should be encouraged, motivated and guided to support the missions.
9. Awareness must be given effectively to make “Celebrating Kerala SMC to a missionary Mother Church”. Adopt simplicity in celebrations, buildings and expressions.
10. Shelter home for women and drug addicts are important areas of mission in Kerala.
11. Vocations to Latin Church and Latin Congregations without a region or province in SMC must be considered with proper discernment and discretion.
12. Mission animation books and booklets like *kadukumani*, *kuju missionary* etc...must be given proper popularity and parish priests must encourage every family to have one of them at home. It is also important to have a page left in all Eparchial popular magazines (*Satyadeepam*, *Deepanalam*, *Katholica Sabha*, *Sathya Darshana Mala*, etc...) with missionary sharing.
13. Media programs must be produced especially to give focus and attention to the works of mercy.
14. Arrange mission *sangams* in the parishes with the participation of the younger generation with mission sharing by the experienced missionaries.



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15. Co-ordinate and channelize various pious organizations, movements and pieties of missionary nature at Major archiepiscopal level, so that different charisms and gifts shall be made available for the *ad gentes* mission.
16. Promote the mission-mother Church relations by improving the mutual involvements between the mission diocese and the sponsoring diocese by the participation of the sponsoring diocese in the major events of the mission diocese and vice versa.
17. Encourage the interested diocesan priests in Kerala to work for a few years in the mission, after essential orientation and vice versa.
18. Special attention, from the point of view of evangelization, should be given to the cases of mixed marriages.
19. Church should take special attention to get the provisions of the Government.
20. Church should be more open and supportive to facilitate sacraments and other necessity of human life like cemetery, school, etc. for the mentally challenged and those at the peripheries.
21. Home Mission has a great role to play, like teaching, forming, renewing and sanctifying the families through accompaniment, counseling, etc. according to the mind of the Church.

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