FIFTH IACM MISSIOLOGICAL CONFERENCE:

MISSIO INTER GENTES: Challenges and Opportunities

Dimesse House of Spirituality, Nairobi, Kenya. 15th - 21st July, 2013.

**Being Missional Inter Gentes**

**Antony Kalliath, India**

1. **Ad Gentes to Inter Gentes**

The implied shift from *ad Gentes* to *inter Gentes* speaks of a rediscovery of the praxis of *Missio Dei* which has been always inter Gentes. [Asian Parable). The present scenario of globalization demands such a conscious and focused shift to regain the lost credibility of the Church. What we find in the globalized context is a radical shift from hierarchy to network. The present media, market, informatics and mobility bring about a new dispensation of a participative democracy in which all take part in occurrences of the world. The modern digitalized communication has deconstructed the hierarchical structures and has constructed an alternative network community through social media like Twitter, YouTube, FaceBook, Internet, SMS, Blog Mobile etc. According to one survey (2012), 67% of online adults use social networking sites.[[1]](#endnote-1)  The immense impact it is generating is unfathomable. “Arab-Spring” (uprising of people for democracy in the Arab world) is a classical episode how social media can become a veritable agency to bring about radical and revolutionary changes in the society through networking.[[2]](#endnote-2)  The new generation is netizens and a ‘mediacracy’ is on advent in the cyber world and Social media transforms the representative democracies into participatory and substantial democracies..

.A new participatory culture of dialogue, partnership and harmony is the vibe and verity of the present globalized and deterritorized context in which we witness an interplay of various religious traditions, secular movements and ideological constructs leading to new configurations, syntheses, and identities. In such a scenario Missio Dei has to be a narrative right among the people; it cannot posit itself as a meta/macro construct outside the spectrum, dictating and ruling. The competency and relevance of inter gentes precisely dawns in the present globalized and inter-cultural scenario. The orthodoxy and orthopraxis should find a new referral or metaphysics in the missio inter gentes to make Church and it’s mission convincing and credible. In today’s world leadership is credibility. Church’ mission crisis is a credibility crisis. The only way to regain the lost ground is to return to people and the fundamental option should be for the people and to be with the people as patterned in Jesus’ kingdom ministry. Church needs a new skill and art to stay put *inter gentes.* What is demanded is a new imagination to be vulnerable amidst the people and a new creativity to embody the indeterminacies and asymmetries of the present pluralistic context. The church has to be more dialogical, open, inclusive and pluralistic in its identity and missional existence.

1. **Missio-Dei Inter Gentes**

Mission of God has always been inter-gentes in the biblical tradition from the very beginning itself. The identity of the God of Israel is constructed in a covenantal egalitarianism; he is not a distant God but a God who *acts* in history. Covenantal God of his own accord subjects himself to human conditions and allows himself to be vulnerable that too among the ‘non-people’, the Israelites. This covenantal vulnerability is prolonged in the incarnational logic. The Sky God has become Mother God in the Incarnate who wills to pitch his tent amidst the people. He is Immanuel, He is God with us rather than He is a God for us. He is God of inter Gentes rather than ad Gentes. The mystery of incarnation in which the secular and the sacred became an interactive whole of reconciliation (Col 1:20), is the source and imagination for being missional *inter gentes.* Here two things come forefront: i. Divine willingness to be the part of human vulnerability; ii Sacred and Secular become coterminous.

Missiology of Inter Gentes is to be located and fostered in a God who becomes through the Jesus of Nazareth by participating in the human vulnerability and the secularity of the sacred. The core of mission inter gentes is that God became God through Cross, the ultimate symbol of human vulnerability. Biblical God who acts in history, takes on the ravages of history and works out salvation in and through the historical process, not outside the brim of history. The very brokenness thus becomes itself the means of reconciliation in the absorbing love. Jesus’ solidarity with the plight of humanity (He “emptied himself,… born in the likeness of men (Phil 2:7) (as well as the groaning of the creation in travail (Rom 8:22) speaks of a God who works out reconciliation through the very predicament (violence), and being its insider. It is the divine logic of Christian God to be positively vulnerable so that he can transmute the very vulnerability as a medium of a healing process. In Dalit tradition God become God through death (kolayil uditha deivangle). God is born in the mystery of death, the ultimate vulnerability of human existence which has to be the means for God to be missional.

There is a pneumatic core in the *missio dei inter gentes*. Jesus the Risen One is the first fruit of resurrection as St. Paul put it. He is Eschatos in whom Eschaton is fulfilled. He is now the very logos, and ethos of existence through his Spirit. The Risen Christ continues the mission of Jesus Christ inter gentes through his Spirit and will continue till the end of the world. Jesus the Risen one is the Glory of God hidden within the womb of reality as St. Paul put in his letter to (Col 1:27). The whole reality is now impregnated with the new life and new light of the Risen Christ. Thus in the mystery of Resurrection *Missio Dei inter gentes* acquires a new pneumatic gestalt and dynamic. What is argued is that Christian economy of salvation is through and through inter-gentes. Christian God is not a distant monolithic monad in his absolute aloofness. But a God who takes birth among us and dies among us and resurrects among us and remains among us as Eschatos till the Eschaton dawns. Indeed Incarnation is the mode and model of Missio Dei inter gentes. Incarnation is the vital pedagogy of Christian to be inter gentes and it is not an event happened once and for all, but a processive event which commenced from creation and sustained in the incarnation of the Son of God and prolonged through the Spirit of the Risen God till the Eschaton.

1. Mission Inter Gentes Christological

The theology of incarnation is that of absolute engagement of the Divine in the ‘occurrence of the world’ by embodying the “grief and joys” (GS #1) of the world. To deter the logic of violence Divine incarnational strategy gave public meaning to the religion in the secular space. Unlike the contemporary religious pursuits of Essenes, for Jesus religion was not a private path but an ‘experiment with love’ in the secular space, especially at the margins. It is through the crowd, civil space and the travails of the common people that he practiced the religion. In the case of Jesus religion is a spontaneous ‘happening’ in the process of encountering violence right in the society rather than conforming to the existing dogma and cultic practices. However it was at the same time, for him, a personal journey fulfilling the will of God which has vital concomitance and concordance with the claims and challenges of the secular space. It was a creative initiative of Jesus that he accentuated a radical shift from ‘private-talk’ to ‘public-walk’ in the very understanding of religion. It is indeed the prolongation of incarnation logic. To phrase differently, Jesus secularized salvation and searched the sacred in the secular. That’s to say, Christian praxis is not an option out of this world of sin and corruption but is a fundamental option for a life programme (*sadhana*) right in the very hub and web of this world embodying its brokenness and transforming it in a divinizing love.

This incarnational logic was operative right in the very inception Israelite faith. It was critical of the pagan notion of deity who could be arrested to a “sacred space” called temple or shrines. The Israelite’s faith democratized priesthood in its self-understanding of a “priestly people” and the covenant was done with the people not with priestly class. It refused to put up an image of its god in a sacred space. The long prophetic tradition in ancient Israel was fiercely critical of its temple institution and consistently advocating a religion right in the civil society through the works of justice and mercy, especially towards the people on the margin. The prophets challenged people to give a more concrete expression to the religiosity in secular affairs like how they treated the disadvantaged such as the widows and orphans, in their pursuit of justice, etc. (Isa 1:11-17, Mic 6:6-8; Jer 7:1-11; Am 2:6-8).

Jesus identifies himself with this prophetic tradition through and through in his Kingdom ministry. As a lay Israelite he refused to identify himself with the established religious class of the Sadducees and Pharisees. Jesus bought religion out into the secular space – the home, the table, the lakeshore, the boat, the sea, the marketplace, the street-corners, the vineyards, the wheat fields, the olive groves, etc. Instead of relying on the theological categories, he employed the metaphors and idioms of the mass culture, like, salt, tree, seed, light, water, leaven, sheep, earth, sky, wheat, field, to proclaim his good news. The characters who appear in his social interactions and in the parables are from the civil society like, prostitutes, the sick, the blind, the women, children, Samaritans, shepherd, etc. He employed a theological language of biological idioms, God as Father, Good Shepherd, Father of the prodigal son instead of high loaded speculative language of Pharisees and Sadducees. Thus he deconstructed the divide between the sacred and secular. In the process, he democratized God and made available and accessible the Divine in their ordinary life. Now God is worshipped in truth and spirit. This is how he made his faith public and made religion as transforming agency in the secular space. To phrase differently, the credibility of a religious faith is to be constructed and sustained primarily in the secular and the sacred is to be sought in the secular. By giving public meaning to the religious praxis Jesus gave us a new creative imagination and innovative praxis to take on violence of his contemporary society on a new plane and in a new perspective. What we find in Jesus’ religiousness is a radical shift from cult to culture entailing enormous social and political application of religious teaching. In the whole history of mankind we find two great personalities who brought public meaning to the religious teachings and practice to take on violence. Jesus transformed the forces of evil into the sources of New Life in the mystery of love. Jesus’ reign caters the divine logic of compassion, and a spirituality of hospitality. Jesus’ logic of love and forgiveness finds an innovative political praxis in Gandhiji’s path of ‘ahimsa’. Ahimsa was not a weapon to conquer the opponent but to transform the opponent through a mutual conversion. Gandhi has drawn great inspiration from the mysticism of the Cross in his political-religious sadhana of ahimsa. What is advocated is that religions and their practices must increasingly give public meaning to their core teachings as we find in the Gospel narratives.

1. **Dialogue as Mission Inter-Gentes**

Dialogue with World and its various religious and cultural tradition is an equitable corollary to do mission *inter gentes* Dialogue has become the vibe and vogue of Christian witness today. Late Pope Paul VI gave an emphatic beginning to Church’s new edifice of dialogical identity by erecting the *Secretariat for Non Christian Religions[[3]](#endnote-3)* in 1964. It was renamed more meaningfully in 1988 as *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.*  Since Second Vatican Council, dialogue with various religious traditions is positively fostered and has become an inviolable constituent both in theory and praxis.[[4]](#endnote-4) Late Pope Paul VIs D*eclaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* (1965) gave a decisive momentum to the praxis of dialogue in Christian life. Pope exhorts that all Catholics engage in “dialogue and collaboration” “with prudence and love” “to recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men [and women]” (NA # 2).

The theological advocacy of this proactive dialogue with world’s religions is discoursed on a broader spectrum of the origin and destiny of human being in the Divine Economy in the Council’s new vision. The Council degrees in the Pastoral Constitution *On the Church in the Modern World*: “all men [women] of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way”. The Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery (GS 22). Elaborating this theological positioning the Council unveils the inclusive “plan of salvation” (LG 16) by saying that all who “fears God” and “does what is right” (LG 9; Act 10:35), “all who strive to lead a good life” “all who acknowledges God the Creator” (LG # 16) and all who live by the dictates of conscience (DH #1)[[5]](#endnote-5) are included in salvific will of God. Therefore, other religions are not independent or parallel ways of salvation; they are positively incorporated into the plan of salvation. The Council sums up that all adherents of other religions are seeking “in shadows and images” the God who “gives all men [women] life and breath and all things (Acts 17:25-28) and the Saviour wills all men [women] to be saved (1Tim 2:4)” (LG 16).

The Declaration of Dialogue and Proclamation[[6]](#endnote-6) by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in 1991 shows the Churchs firm and irreversible commitment to Dialogue with Worlds Religions in her missional life. Its point of departure is the positive new awareness and a bold recognition of religious pluralism in the present world of mobility and media. “The World Day of Prayer for Peace” in Assisi, on 27 October 1986 was its backdrop. Its premise is the Evangelizing Mission as conceived in *Redemptoris Missio,* but in a broader scope of integral development, social justice, human liberation (DP #44) and culture (DP 45). It should be admitted that dialogue is visualized in the ambit of proclamation of the Gospel as mandated by the Risen Christ (DP 58). However it is not seen as a one way traffic in the praxis of dialogue. It entails openness, receptivity, and tolerance of differences (DP 47). And the fruits of dialogue are: i. “*Mutual Enrichment*” of *all* sides (DP # 9; RM # 55); ii. *Mutual interrogation* (DP 32); iii. A call to be “*Purified*” (DP #32), iv. A call to be “*Transformed*” (DP # 47); v. A call to be “*converted*”[DP # 41). There is thus a qualitative shift from *Ad Gentes* (toward the people) to *Inter-Gentes* (among the people) in the understanding of dialogue as espoused in this document. The self-understanding of the Church here is more of a pilgrim community among the pilgrims (DP 36).

It should be mentioned here that the Church is quite conscious of the ‘dangers’ of dialogue, which frustrate the basis of Christian faith if the dialogical mission is not rooted in the preambles of Christian faith. The Church reminds us that versatility and vitality of dialogue is indeed the faith in Jesus who is the “constant” of the dialogical mission. He, being the radical dialogue between the Divine and Human owing to the Incarnation, is the mandate and referent of dialogical mission. He is the “shore” from which we build bridges of dialogue in the world of religions and religious pursuits. The unicity of Jesus is to be searched in its universality which is realized through the dialogical presence of the Risen Christ through his Spirit, who is ubiquitous and universal. The Unicity of Jesus is not accomplished through exclusion but by a dialogical inclusiveness and openness. This is the New Life that the “first fruit of resurrection” witnesses. The faith in Jesus and the salvation accomplished in and through him is, then, the reason and motif of any dialogical evangelization.[[7]](#endnote-7) *Dominus Jesus* quotes the *Lumen Gentium* to drive home the theological reason of the immense hope and promise latent in the missional dialogue: “the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude, but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a participation in this one source.[[8]](#endnote-8) The Church which is the continuation of Jesus’ mission searches its unicity by being dialogical and such an identity is not the given but should be constructed through a dialogical mission (*Dominus Jesus*, ns.16, 17). This way, the Church lives up to its vocation of being *catholic* which etymologically means ‘ubiquitous’. Universality is not a virtual concept but it is Unicity achieved in ubiquity through a dialogical presence and experience of the “Fullness of Life” achieved in the person of Jesus, the Risen Lord of history and creation.

Dialogue has entered deep into the psyche and consciousness of the Church. The Catholic Church is pursuing a dialogical path assiduously and consistently. Church has to become an authentic dialogue to participate in the *Missio Dei* in the present scenario of religious pluralism. There cannot be a turning back. Dialogue is the new experience and the new challenge in Church’s mission which is ridden with surprises because the agent of Christian mission is the Spirit which blows wherever and whenever it wills according to its logic which is beyond human logistics. What is needed, while being engaged in *Missio Dei*, is a radical surrender to the rhyme and reason of the Spirit who reveals the Risen Lord in dialogue of religions.

However, idea of “Dialogue” which is a western methodology has yet to embody religious nuances. In an inter-religious meeting dialogue should become a religious praxis and celebration. This should become a religious celebration in virtue of itself. At least in Asia dialogue is means and end simultaneously and it becomes the site of permutations and fecundations of religious faith giving birth to new configurations and syntheses like Sikhism or Sufism. To phrase differently, dialogue should gear us to a harmony of religions. Then only it will lead us to realizational knowledge. I often experience dialogue with people of other religions help us to know and unveil the unknown Christ in Christianity. Dialogue should help us to new levels of Christian self understanding and a religious praxis of our own conversion rather than the other way. Conversion of ourselves will lead to the conversion of other people to Jesus Christ. Indeed it is the work of the Father to reveal the Son outside the ‘flesh and blood”! In this sense, Inter religious dialogue leading to religious harmony would be a competent and convincing praxis of mission inter gentes.

1. **Mission Inter Gentes in Civil Society**

The second valid space where mission *inter gentes* is civil society that has re-emerged forcefully over the past two or three decades. More and more people turn to civil society with a good deal of hope to address social, ethical, religious, and economic issues which state often fail to take on. The ubiquitous and multifaceted modern media plays a vital role for the increased presence of the civil society in the present times worldwide. Even though there exist many ambiguities with regard to the concept of civil society,[[9]](#endnote-9) it can be stated that civil society is a ‘secular’ and ‘public’ space which is now deluged with debates and social movements; the customary divide between ‘secular’ and ‘sacred’ does not become a deterrent in these discourses. It has become the sphere of dialogue of cultures, religions, ideologies and systems. Consensus and resolve on burning issues, be it the controversy over women wearing *burka*, or of conversion from one religion to the other, or of homosexuality, or religious celibacy, are worked out through people’s participation and wisdom. Thus its scope has today become immense and versatile. Above all, it entails, by default, a ‘public meaning’ to all ‘private’ practices on a broader milieu and thus it defends and upholds human rights and social justice, which is often denied in exclusive spaces of religions.

Mission among religions has to be increasingly envisaged and practiced in the ‘secular space’ of the civil society. Now religions are occupying the secular space; ‘sacred’ is more experienced in the ‘secular’ liberative struggles, and is more a ‘public-affair’ than a private thing. And religions have to construct their identities in the ‘secular space’ that the civil society provides, for greater credibility and appeal. Otherwise the influence of the organized religions will be weaned out from the collective unconscious.

The concept of “secular” emerged with the advent of Protestantism. The Europe was torn by religious wars in the post Reformation period. It is in this political context that “secular’ was projected as non-partisan conception; it represented a third force (*tertium quid*) to contain the conflict. Though, later, “secular” was interpreted as opposed to the “sacred”.[[10]](#endnote-10) Now the secular space is understood as a ‘public sphere’ in civil society. Sometimes civil society is itself understood as ‘public space’. It is a discursive space in which private individuals come together to discuss matters of public interest. A variety of reasons, like the separation between the state and the church, the enlightenment virtues of autonomy of reason and humanism, and the Industrial Revolution and the consequent economic prosperity, contributed to the formation of the public sphere and shaped the transactions within it. In essence, the character of the public sphere as it evolved in Europe in the 18th century was secular and democratic.

In India, however, the public sphere has a different translation. It caters the co-existence of ‘secular’ and ‘ religious’. Though religion is considered a private matter by the Indian state, the official policy of equal recognition of all religions (*sarva-dharma-samabhavana*) has only opened up more and more public space to all religions in the civil society. As a result, the public sphere is a site of religious celebration. That is to say, ‘secular’ is the space where ‘sacred’ is celebrated in a harmony of religions. In this sense, the Indian/Asian secularism is different from Western secularism in which a sharp divide exists between the state and religion. The west is also catching up the nuances of Asian secularism. For example, fall of Communism in Europe was to a great extent owing to the Church’s participation in the secular space.

 The path of *missio inter gentes* is the secular space in the civil society. It is a vibrant space whose strength is its creative pluralism that embraces various movements irrespective of religious or profane underpinnings, and promote a creative dialogue for the social and cultural transformation. Here, religions are increasingly considered as the patrimony of mankind rather than a property of an exclusive confessional group. The Bible, the Gita and the Koran are taken as positive agencies for social change and progress, and they are challenged to interact in the civil society and prove their credibility and competency being a part of the solution.

The divide between sacred and secular is, thus, very thin and diffusive in the civil society. It was always argued that secularization due to modernization contributed to the decline of the influence of religion in post-enlightenment society. But today, on the contrary, the influence of religion in the public sphere has increased and there is a worldwide resurgence of religion. A national survey conducted by the Centre for Developing Societies, New Delhi, testifies to the growing influence of religion in Indian society. According to this survey, four out of 10 people are very religious and five out of 10 are religious. That is to say that 90 per cent of the respondents claimed to be religious — performing rituals, visiting places of worship and undertaking pilgrimages. Among them, 30 per cent claimed to have become more religious during the last five years.[[11]](#endnote-11) Besides, people are losing trust in the organized religions but that does not mean, they are losing interest in religiosity. In one survey in the US, it is found that vast majority of people like to be “nondenominational Christian”[[12]](#endnote-12). Many are looking for a spirituality without religions or a religion without belonging.[[13]](#endnote-13) The civil society provides a secular space to practice as well as experience ‘sacred’ without any bondage to any religious pursuits. In this way ‘public space’ has become the temple in which all ‘gods’ are reconciled and are worshiped in the works of common good!

This new evolution of civil society resonates with Christian mission. Biblical God’s self-disclosure is always co-terminus with the historical process. He is not mere a God who is found in nature mysticism. He is to be primarily searched in the very matrix of human ‘groaning in travails’ (Rom 8:22) which is verily the ‘paschality’ of Reality. God’s revelation is not ‘outside’ but vitally in the very ‘Heart of the World’—”joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties” (GS# 1). Mission as “retelling of the story of Jesus through the stories of people” entails a rebirth of a new Church right in the text and texture of the civic space which is today vibrant with incarnational dynamics of the paschal lamb. The credibility and relevance of the Church can be accomplished only through a new missional praxis of incorporation into the peoples’ movements of environmental issues, social justice and human rights. It means a new paradigm that the mission of the church is to be reconstructed through the public meaning of the Gospel.

Jesus’ praxis and mission was carried out primarily in the secular space of the civil society, not in the corridors of power and at the altars of the temple. Jesus’ story unveiled in and through the ‘stories of people’ in the very hub of the world. Here Jesus was resonating the pedagogy of OT God. As a whole, the covenantal religiosity of the First Testament is fundamentally envisioned in the paradigm of identity formation. Through covenantal relationship, Yahweh gave rightful identity, dignity and selfhood to the Israelites who were a ‘non-people’. By reconstructing forgotten symbols, Yahweh gave a new identity and definition to Israel in the post-exilic era.

In the Gospels we find Jesus as the champion of the marginalized  *anawim* in the Palestinian society and the Roman Empire. Paul and others advocated for a veritable space for the Gentiles in the early Church. Even the book of Revelation is not short of symbols which speak of the restoration of the marginalized. Above all, it is at the margins that the early Christian community was born; it was to the powerless in the civil society that the Word of God was revealed and the very concept of salvation was worked out in and through the world. Jesus was crucified outside the gate, as a dalit!(Jn 19:20). The logic and dynamic of the Biblical revelation works through the power of the periphery (margin) versus the fallibility of the centre. Indisputably the Christian vocation is a call to be at the margins of the civil space. The margins are the space of God’s visitation. They represent darkness. “He has made darkness His abode” (Ps 17). Naturally resources of Christian mission are at the fringes especially in the Asian, African and Latin American countries.[[14]](#endnote-14)

 How must we engage in this mission? In the present era of partnership and networking, what’s more competent and convincing is a sustained and collective prophecy through people and with people rather than through ‘projects’ and ‘strategies’. It is a question of new Christian leadership ‘learning with people and living with the people’. Mission through the people and with people right in the secular space will lead to ‘rooted prophecy’ or a “participative prophecy” – in which no segment of society is excluded. Such a missional praxis will offer a greater currency and credibility to the Christian mission. Christian mission is then to be figured out in the common pilgrimage of people; church is not a donor standing outside the movement but a participant who needs first and foremost ‘conversion’ in terms a pilgrim among pilgrims. What is more at work is not mere communication of faith but appropriation and approximation of faith while in dialogue with world’s religions. Christian uniqueness should not be searched in exclusive Christological ontology but in a relational epistemology of Christic ubiquity. To sum up, a radical and proactive engagement in the Civil Society must be the new praxis and policy of Christian missio inter gentes [[15]](#endnote-15)

**Conclusion:**

Christian mission is verily inter-gentes in both its conception and praxis from the very beginning. The shift from ad gentes to inter gentes is necessitated in the global context as a radical shift has happened in the globalized context namely the hierarchy to network. The theological presupposition is the incarnational motif of Christian dispensation. The vital two spaces where Church can be missional are the present multi-religious scenario and the resurgent Civil space. Christian faith and self-understanding will be widened and deepened while doing mission inter gentes on these spectra. The credibility and competence of the Church can be regained by casting the net deep into these rewarding oceans of religious pursuits and secular movements in the civil space. Mission inter gentes is in the right direction for the church in its movement forward.

Email:antonykalliath@gmail.com

1. <http://www.pewresearch.org/data-trend/media-and-technology/social-networking-use/> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “Arab-Spring” is a media term for the revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests in Arab world. To date, rulers have been forced from in [Tunisia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunisian_revolution), [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Egyptian_revolution), [Libya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libyan_civil_war),and [Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Yemeni_revolution);civil uprisings have erupted in [Bahrain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahraini_uprising_%282011%E2%80%93present%29) and [Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_civil_war);major protests have broken out in [Algeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010%E2%80%9312_Algerian_protests),[Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Iraqi_protests),[Jordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordanian_protests_%282011%E2%80%93present%29), [Kuwait](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwaiti_protests_%282011%E2%80%93present%29),[Morocco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011%E2%80%9312_Moroccan_protests), and [Sudan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011%E2%80%9313_Sudanese_protests);and minor protests have occurred in [Mauritania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011%E2%80%9313_Mauritanian_protests),[Oman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Omani_protests), [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011%E2%80%9313_Saudi_Arabian_protests),[Djibouti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Djiboutian_protests), and [Western Sahara](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Western_Saharan_protests). The protests have shared some techniques of [civil resistance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_resistance) in sustained campaigns involving strikes, demonstrations, marches, and rallies, as well as the effective use of [social media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media) to organize, communicate, and raise awareness in the face of state attempts at repression and [Internet censorship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_censorship). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. It was renamed *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* in 1988. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. This new awareness in the Church is evident in the documents of the Second Vatican Council: *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (*Lumen Gentium*), *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*), *The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church* (*Ad Gentes*), *The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* (*Nostra Aetate*). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. II Vatican Council, *Declaration on Religious Freedom - Dignitatis Humanae* #1 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. See. Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, *Dialogue and Proclamation* (Rome:1991) [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. See, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Declaration "Dominus Jesus" On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church (Rome, 2000), n.13 . [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 62. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. See, Neera Chandhoke, *The Conceits of Civil Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003) [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Felix Wilfed, *Margins, Site of Asian Theologians* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2008), 282 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. See, K.N Panikkar, Religion in the public sphere (The Hindu, Sept. 8, 2009) [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2009/apr/10/religion-survey-shows-number-

people-claiming-no-fa/ [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. See, David Kettle, “Believing without Belonging: Cultural Change Seen in Theological Context,” International Review of Mission vol.94 no.345(October 2005). 507-523 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. See,Felix, *Margins, Site of Asian Theologians*, ix-xxii. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. See, Antony Kalliath & Francis Gonsalves, eds. *Church’s Engagement in Civil Society, A New Way of Being Christian in India Today* (Bangalore: ITA & ATC, 2009) [↑](#endnote-ref-15)