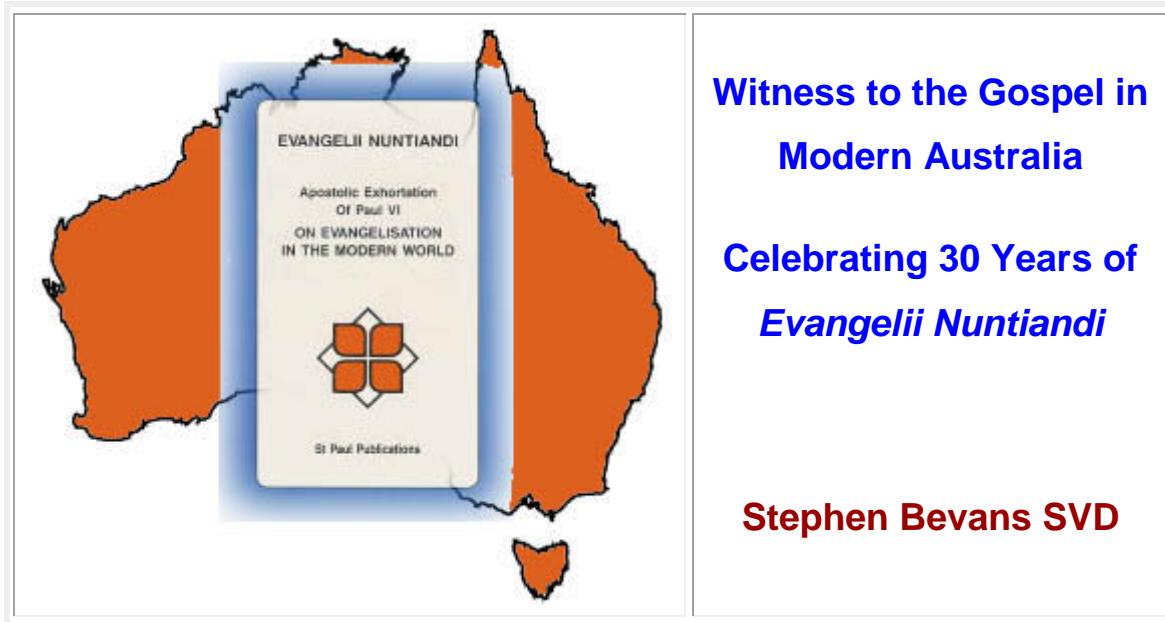


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Abstract

Paul VI's 1975 prophetic document on Evangelization—*Evangelii Nuntiandi*—is celebrated as a genuine religious classic that represents a breakthrough in mission theology for the modern world and Church. The author notes two critical omissions, namely the roles of women and interfaith dialogue in evangelization. Thirty years later, mission theology also needs to focus on the importance of reconciliation, the ecology and migrants/refugees. Stephen Bevans' presentation develops these ideas as he celebrates the achievements of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and introduces contemporary challenges to the task of witnessing to the Gospel in modern Australia.* (Editor)

Introduction

The purpose of our gathering here today, as we all know, is to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Paul VI's great Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, promulgated on December 8, 1975, ten years to the day of the closing of the Second Vatican Council and just a little more than a year after the 1974 Synod of Bishops on the theme of evangelization in the modern world. The first thing I want to say is that this is *truly* a document worth celebrating. I

remember when I first read it. I was a missionary in the Philippines , teaching theology in a diocesan seminary in northern Luzon, and I was amazed not only by the *content* of the document—about which we’ll talk about in this presentation—but also by the *tone*! This was not a dry, boring document. There was a real passion in the pope’s words, an elegance and an eloquence in the document’s phrasing. And it is a document that has endured the test of time. Arnolf Camps, the great Dutch missiologist, has called it “the Magna Charta of mission theology and mission,” and Cardinal Lucas Moreira Neves, reflecting on the document on its twenty-fifth anniversary, spoke of it as Paul VI’s “Pastoral Testament” to the church, as a “summary and synthesis” of his entire pontificate. The website for the Catholic Charismatic renewal in Melbourne speaks of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* as a “watershed document,” and Fr. Gerard Kelly, President of the Sion Community of Evangelization in Britain says that it “stands out as the most influential and significant document” on evangelization of our times.[1]

So the thirtieth anniversary of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is an event well worth celebrating! But real celebration is not just recalling the past with rose-colored glasses. Any celebration worth its salt, it seems to me, needs to do two things. First of all, of course, it does need to look backwards, to remember. But second—and perhaps more importantly—it needs to ask what relevance the event one is celebrating has for one’s life in today’s often very changed circumstances and into the future. Celebration is *always* about memory; but it is also about meaning and hope.

It is this two-fold movement, therefore, of back to the past and forward to the present and future that will structure my two presentations with you today—in fact, it is this two-fold movement that the title of this national conference points to: While we remember the thirtieth anniversary of this amazing document, we look to the present and the future to reflect as well on how we might witness to the gospel in Australia today, and in the foreseeable future.

This morning, then, as we begin our celebration, I would like to take you back thirty years to *Evangelii Nuntiandi* itself, to look at the context in which it was written, to summarize briefly what it said, to name and reflect on some of its most significant points, and to offer a very brief critique. Then, this afternoon, building on that remembrance, I would like to offer a few reflections on several areas or aspects of mission that were ignored or that have emerged in the three decades since the Apostolic Exhortation was issued. What I’d like to suggest—but only

suggest because I am clearly an outsider here in Australia—is that these topics might be topics that relevant for Australians as you witness to the gospel in Australia today, and into the future. But perhaps my respondents can help with this in a more concrete way.

I. “*Evangelii Nuntiandi*”: Context, Content, Critique

A. Context: A Breakthrough in Mission Theology

I’ve already mentioned that *Evangelii Nuntiandi* was issued on the tenth anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council, but the occasion was also the anniversary of the promulgation of Vatican II’s document on Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes*. The church’s mission was certainly a major concern at the Council, and its importance was stressed in many of its documents (e.g. LG 1, 5, DV 7, SC 6, GS 3, AA 2, NA 2). Indeed, the document on mission stated that the church was “missionary by its very nature” (AG 2). But the Council also made some major strides in understanding mission in very different ways than the church had previously. Although cautious, the document on the church (LG 5) intimated that the aim of mission was not the *church* itself, but the Reign of God. Several documents spoke of the church as a *sacrament*, the *universal* sacrament of salvation, as both a *sign* and an *instrument* of God’s saving presence in the world (e.g. LG 1, 9, 48, SC 5, 26; AG 1, 5, 21; GS 42, 43, 45, 92). The Council’s document on non-Christian religions echoed the document on the church in admitting that salvation was possible for those who have not come to explicit faith in Christ and who have not accepted Baptism (LG 9, 16, NA 2), and this conviction was also present in the documents on mission and on the church in the modern world (AG 9, GS 22).



While this new emphasis on mission was a genuine step forward, the de-centering of the church in general and the recognition of the presence of grace and salvation *outside* the church moved the understanding of mission in the church into a major crisis. So much of the motive of mission in what Robert Schreiter has characterized as the “Period of Certainty”^[2] during the great

missionary movement in the century before the Council depended on Christians' belief that "outside the church there was no salvation." In the time before Vatican II, women and men were willing to sacrifice their comfort and even their lives to "save the poor heathen," and now they were being told that there was really no urgent need, that "the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers every person of being associated with [the] paschal mystery" (GS 22).

This "Period of Missionary Crisis"[3] also coincided with the collapse of the era of colonialism as one colonized nation after another achieved independence and reclaimed their cultural identities. In the colonial period, another strong missionary motive was to bring "civilization" to people who were lower on the developmental or evolutionary level than western Europeans, North Americans or Australians and New Zealanders. Such an attitude often (but not always!) went hand in hand with a disparagement of local culture, local identity and local language. But from around the end of World War II—and even earlier in India—indigenous peoples the world over began to realize that much of mission activity went hand in hand with colonial expansion, and that missionaries as well as colonial governments were responsible for the collapse of so many local cultures and identities. In the 1960s these nationalist and ethnic movements came to a head.

In 1968, the World Council of Churches meeting in Uppsala, under the leadership of Dutch theologian Johannes Hoekendijk, ridiculed the church itself, insisting that it should be the *world*, not the church, that sets the agenda of mission. The church merely gets in God's way.[4] Catholics Ivan Illich and Ronan Hoffman in the late 1960s called for the withdrawal of all missionaries from mission lands so that local churches could take up their own responsibility for mission; Protestants such as John Gatu of Kenya and Emerito Nacpil of the Philippines proposed a missionary moratorium in 1971. All over the world missionary vocations were languishing, and, in the Catholic Church, women and men were leaving the religious life and priesthood in droves.[5] Mission was, indeed, found itself in a moment of crisis.

But from this apparent death, mission was to emerge in the mid-1970s with new vigor, and experienced what Robert Schreiter has dubbed a "new birth." [6] In 1974 the Evangelical churches reacted against what they considered a betrayal of the missionary movement by mainline Protestantism and the World Council of Churches and held an important and

foundational meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland . The World Council of Churches, at its General Assembly the following year in Nairobi, Kenya , moderated their own approach somewhat and began a renewed commitment to the church's missionary nature.[7] On the Catholic side, new ways of thinking about mission were being developed in Latin America with the rise of Liberation Theology, and this in turn was sparking new ways of doing theology that were taking history and human culture seriously as genuine theological sources.

It was in this context of grave crisis and hopeful signs of rebirth that Pope Paul VI announced that the Synod of Bishops for 1974 would take up the theme "Evangelization in the Modern World." British missiologist and long-time Indonesian missionary John Prior describes the Synod's politically charged atmosphere as not unlike the Council itself.[8] In the discussions about the nature of evangelization there seemed to be a more traditionalist side, articulated by Synod special secretary Domenico Grasso, who wanted to interpret evangelization more along the lines of Vatican II's document on mission a decade earlier (Grasso had been on the drafting commission of that document). On the other hand, the other special secretary—the brilliant Indian theologian D. S. Amalorpavadass—attempted to propose an interpretation that took into account many of the important movements in Asia and other parts of the Third World. His ideas revolved around a greater role for the local church and the emergence of the theology of liberation. According to Prior, Amalorpavadass authored "a coherent, comprehensive, contextual theology of mission, drawing in both the bold new ventures of the majority and the questions of the cautionary minority,"[9] but his contributions, for all practical purposes, were ignored by the persons responsible for the official draft that was to come before the bishops in the synod's final days. Amalorpavadass, when he realized this, had his own version duplicated and distributed among the bishops, who, when comparing it to the official draft, refused to approve it when it came to the final vote. It was four days before the closing of the Synod, and there was no time to write and then discuss another draft.

It was then, as Cardinal Moreira Neves recalls, that Cardinal Karol Wojtyla suggested that "the Synod's recommendations be entrusted to the Pope so that he could transform them into the Synod's final document." [10] The result, of course, was *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

Prior points out that Paul VI's document actually incorporated much of what was in Amalorpavadass' draft, and so it is a document that is much broader in scope than the document rejected by the bishops at the Synod.[11] Both Amalorpavadass' emphasis on liberation—the word is used here for the first time in an official Roman document—and on the importance of the local church—called the “individual church” in the document—is clearly in evidence. Spanish missiologist Eloy Bueno points out that previous drafts of the Synod document spoke of the multi-layered meaning of the word “evangelization,” but tended to interpret it along the lines of Vatican II's understanding of mission as “preaching the gospel and planting the Church among peoples who do not yet believe in Christ” (AG 6).[12] The Synod had rejected this idea for a definition of the work of evangelization that was “from everywhere to everywhere” (in the felicitous phrase of Michael Nazir-Ali,[13] that give a major place to authentic Christian witness, that included commitment to development and liberation, and that was open to the truth of other religious ways. In writing the Apostolic Exhortation, Paul VI had retained this more “complex and dynamic” (EN 17) understanding, and so gave official sanction to a new a truly exciting understanding of the church's evangelizing mission.

As we move into the second part of this presentation, we will see how powerful a vision Paul VI constructed. If John Prior is to be believed (and I see no reason why he should not be), much of the power of this vision comes from the pope's careful listening to the bishops of the Third World. This wonderful exercise of the pope's ministry of “care for all the churches” (*cura omnium ecclesiarum*) is certainly a model as well of the exercise of papal magisterium, and certainly accounts for the fact, as Arnulf Camps put it, “even today” the document “is still the Magna Charta of mission theology and of mission.”[14]

B. Content: A “Prophetic” Document[15]



The structure of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is fairly straightforward. It has an introduction and a conclusion and seven chapters. In the brief introduction (par. 1 - 5), the pope sets the context for the document as being a meditation on evangelization ten years after the close of the

Council, a year after the close of the 1974 Synod of Bishops, and at the close of the 1975 Holy Year. The pope is very clear that evangelization is something central not only to his own pontificate, but to the very identity of the church. Despite all the questions of mission in his own day, the pope is clear: “. . . the presentation of the Gospel message is not an optional contribution for the Church. It is the duty incumbent on her by the command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved” (5).

I must admit that Chapter I, entitled “From Christ the Evangelizer to the Evangelizing Church,” is my favorite chapter in the entire document. In the quotation from the introduction above, the pope gives a reason for mission that, to be honest, I’ve never really cared for—that we do mission because Jesus *commanded* it. In Chapter I, however, the pope really develops a different reason, one that is built into the very dynamic of the church itself. In the opening paragraph of the chapter (6) the pope speaks of Jesus’ mission of preaching, serving and witnessing to the Kingdom or Reign of God. Jesus did this with every fiber of his being—“by words and deeds, by signs and miracles, and more especially by his death, by his Resurrection and by the sending of the Spirit of Truth” (11).

Jesus called for “a total interior renewal,” “a radical conversion, a profound change of mind and heart,” (10), and those who were able to respond recognized that they, too, were called to share in Jesus’ life and continue his work—they were to be “a community which is in its turn evangelizing” (12). This is why the church must be “missionary by its very nature,” as Vatican II put it (AG 2)—not simply because Jesus *commanded* it, but because Christians *share in Jesus’ life and vision*. “Evangelization,” therefore, “is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ’s sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of his death and glorious resurrection” (14).

Evangelization is something that the church *does* and that the church *receives*, and the pope puts special emphasis on the latter. “The Church is an evangelizer”—yes!—“but she begins by being evangelized herself” (15). This is important, because the pope is making the case that evangelization is something that makes up the very *life* of the church. As he will point out later on in the document, evangelization takes place not only when the church witnesses and preaches

to non-believers; it happens when the church celebrates the sacraments and witnesses and preaches to itself (see 42-43, 47).

Chapters II and III discuss the meaning of evangelization in general (Chapter II) and in particular (Chapter III). The pope begins Chapter II by warning against any reductionistic definition of evangelization “which attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism” (17). Evangelization, in other words, cannot be reduced to proclamation, to catechetical instruction, or to working for human liberation. Rather, “for the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new” (18). Evangelization, in other words, is something that is all-encompassing, and the pope points out here—in an extremely important passage—that evangelization is about a profound dialogue with culture, “always taking the person as one’s starting point and always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God” (20).

Such comprehensive evangelization, says the pope, begins with witness. This is something that the pope will come back to later in the document, but he speaks of it here as “already a silent proclamation of the Good News” and as “the initial act of evangelization” (21). But “silent proclamation” is not enough. Eventually, Christians need to give “a reason for the hope” that they incarnate in their witness. And so, in a famous sentence, the pope insists that “there is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed” (22). Should those to whom the gospel is proclaimed accept it in faith, evangelization continues through incorporation into the church, through catechesis and mystagogy. And the process only reaches its end when “the person who has been evangelized goes one to evangelize others”—for “it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself / herself to the Kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his / her turn” (24).

The *process* of evangelization is complex, says the pope, but so is its *content*. Chapter III lays out this content, beginning with its “foundation, center and . . . summit,” the person of Jesus Christ, whose message points beyond this world and this time. “But,” insists the pope,



“evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of human beings’ concrete life, both personal and social” (29). What the pope is getting at here is that, inextricably bound up with the eschatological and the spiritual, the gospel also contains a message about the here and now—about justice, peace and liberation. Here is where the pope spends a rather long time emphasizing on the one hand the *material* dimension of salvation as including justice and liberation from any and all oppression, and the *spiritual* dimension which necessarily includes a truly spiritual conversion. In any case, says the pope in another famous passage, no liberation that is worthy of the gospel can include violence of any kind. This is true because the church “knows that violence always provokes violence and irresistibly engenders new forms of oppression and enslavement which are often harder to bear than those from which they claimed to bring freedom” (25). This may very well be an echo of the seminal phrase of Paolo Freire, who notes with sadness that often the oppressed have so internalized their oppression that, once liberated, they in turn become oppressors of others.[16]

Having, in the fine tradition of medieval theologizing, reflected on the “*quid sit*” or the nature and content of evangelization, the pope turns in Chapter IV to the “*quomodo sit*” or to the *how*, the *methods* of evangelizing. The first method the pope singles out is that of the authentic witness of life. Here the pope quotes himself in what—because of its place here in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*—has become one of Paul VI’s most often-quoted phrases: “Modern men and women listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (41).[17] The pope will return to the importance of authentic witness one more time in the Apostolic Exhortation (76), making this theme one of the most important in the document, I believe. In many ways it echoes an important phrase from the 1971 Synod of Bishops where, in the context of preaching about justice in the world, the bishops insist that those who *preach* about justice should be just themselves: “. . . everyone who speaks about justice must first be just in their eyes.”[18]

But evangelization is also carried out by effective preaching (42), by the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word at Eucharist and on other occasions together with a homily (43), through the catechizing of children (44), the utilization of the media (45) and the celebration of the sacraments (47). Paragraph 48 reflects on a topic which, to my knowledge, has not ever found its way as such into an official document of the Magisterium, and that is the role of “popular piety”

(the term the pope prefers to popular “religiosity”). With the reforms of the Liturgy after Vatican II and the critique of Liberation Theology that popular devotions—for instance to the suffering Christ, the *Santo Niño*, or to the many titles of the Virgin Mary—tended to maintain the status quo of oppression and injustice, popular piety was rather discouraged. What Liberation Theology had been discovering in the mid-1970s, however, was that it was both a rich way of expressing people’s faith and, in many cases, a way of actually resisting oppression. In emphasizing popular piety, the pope was also recognizing that evangelization is carried out not only in “official” channels, but also through ordinary people—many of my Latino friends speak this way of their grandmothers—handing on the faith through devotions to the rosary, the Blessed Virgin, or the saints.

In Chapter V the pope speaks of the “Beneficiaries of Evangelization”—in other words the women and men to whom the Good News is addressed. He speaks first of all of those who have not yet heard the gospel (51), then those who, although baptized Christians “who live quite outside Christian life” (52, 56). Evangelization is also addressed to those who already believe and practice the faith, but who constantly need that faith to be deepened (54). Finally, the church needs to address those who refuse to believe (atheists) or who are indifferent to belief (those caught up in secularism—which the pope says is something quite different from *secularization*, which is basically a positive phenomenon) (56).

To my mind, this chapter is not as organized as well as it could be. The pope seems to go back and forth between addressees who are non-practicing and non-believers, and interspersed between these he speaks of the evangelization of those who *already* believe. In between this he speaks with some elegance about the importance and goodness of non-Christian religions, saying that “the Church respects and esteems these . . . because they are the living expression of the soul of vast groups of people,” “are all impregnated with innumerable ‘seeds of the Word’ and can constitute a true ‘preparation for the gospel’” (53). But the pope is also very clear that despite the goodness found in these religions, Christians are still bound to proclaim to them the riches found only in Jesus Christ. Indeed, these people have a *right* to hear the truth of the gospel.

At the end of this, to my mind, rather confused chapter, the pope speaks at length about the importance and the limits of basic ecclesial communities (58). All over the world, particularly in

Latin America, these small communities were having a tremendous influence at the time on the church, and many missiologists and theologians were predicting that such small face-to-face communities would be the future of the church. The pope is basically positive about them, but he seems to be opposed to any small community expression that cuts itself off from the wider church, or which opposes the church's hierarchical structure. "The difference is already notable: the communities which by their spirit of opposition cut themselves off from the Church, and whose unity they wound, can well be called *communautés de base* (I am not sure why the pope uses the French!), but in this case it is a strictly sociological name" (58). They could never be called *ecclesial* communities. The pope then lays out seven conditions for such communities to truly be considered expressions of the *church*.

Chapter VI is entitled "The Workers for Evangelization" and speaks about the various people who are charged with the ministry of evangelization in the church: the pope, bishops, priests and deacons, religious, the laity, the family, and youth. Three things are noteworthy in this chapter, however, over and above these concerns.

First, the pope speaks of the *entire* church as having the "mission of evangelizing" (59) before he speaks of individual ministries of evangelization within the church. This is very much in keeping with the spirit of Vatican II's ecclesiology, which speaks first of the People of God before it speaks of the hierarchical structure of the church.



Secondly, in paragraphs 61 to 65 the pope speaks passionately of the relationship between the universal church and "individual" churches. Both are necessary. Speaking of the "individual" churches, the pope gets into the issue of what we call today "inculturation," and stresses the importance of "assimilating the essence of the Gospel message and of transposing it, without the slightest betrayal of its essential truth, into the language that these particular people understand, then of proclaiming it in this language" (63). Obviously the pope's understanding is very much along the lines of what theologians call the "translation model,"^[19] and he is quite cautious about all of this. But his ideas are important

here, and at the time certainly gave a strong impetus to the budding movement of contextual theology. Remember, this was the pope who said in Uganda six years earlier: “You may, and you must, have an African Christianity.”[20]

Third, Paragraph 73 is a long and sensitive reflection on the importance of lay ministry within the church. The laity is certainly living out their vocation when they live an authentic Christian life within their daily lives and their various professions. But, says the pope, “one cannot . . . neglect or forget the other dimension: the laity can also feel themselves called, or be called, to work with their pastors, in the service of the ecclesial community” It is important, I think, that the pope uses the expression “*with* their pastors,” and, later, “*side-by-side* with the ordained ministries.” There is a call for genuine collaboration between lay and ordained. The pope also speaks about the importance of adequate training for laity.

The final chapter (VII) speaks both about the Holy Spirit’s role in evangelization and the spirituality that evangelizers need. Paragraph 75 contains the often-quoted statement that “the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization.” Paragraph 76 reprises the theme of authentic witness of life as a *sine qua non* of evangelization—“The witness of life has become more than ever an essential condition for real effectiveness in preaching.” The world will only believe us if they see in us a proof of the transformation that we preach. The chapter continues by reflecting on the importance of unity among Christians (77), dedication to the truth, particularly in scholarship, and the necessity of being people of love. The final paragraph reflects at some length on the challenge that evangelization is simply about the imposition of an opinion, and therefore a violation of religious liberty. The pope, however, is adamant in saying that evangelization is no opposition. However, Christians must be fervent in witnessing to and preaching the gospel because they are convinced that every human being has a right to know the fullness of the truth.

The Apostolic Exhortation ends with a reference to Mary, “Star of Evangelization.”

C. Critique

As a conclusion to this first presentation and as a bit of anticipation of what I’ll reflect on this afternoon, I’d like to present briefly some elements of critique of this overwhelmingly

wonderful, groundbreaking document on evangelization. As I say, this will be brief, and I will basically focus on several topics that were not really treated in the document. There are two topics that are missing in the Apostolic Exhortation that *should* have been included in 1975. In addition, there are three topics which were not present in the document mostly because their importance for mission has only emerged in the last thirty years.

What is amazing in 1975 is that there is really no specific mention of *women* in the document. Women are certainly mentioned in an implicit way in the document—they are obviously among the first disciples, they are included among religious, laity, family and youth—but the document for all that remains male-centered in its basic perspective.



Among Protestant missionaries in the twentieth century, women outnumbered men two to one, writes mission historian Dana Robert.^[21] And while this probably was not the case for Catholics, women had a tremendous part to play in missionary work especially as teachers, nurses and physicians. We also have to take into account the thousands of religious women who worked as missionaries at home^[22]—not to mention the countless lay women in the “sending countries” as well. This is also not to mention the pivotal role of women in the “mission countries” who evangelized their husbands, relatives and families—such was the case, says Rodney Stark, in the early church,^[23] and, I believe, such was the case in every age.

So not to single out women specifically in the document as important contributors to evangelization is, to my mind, a grave oversight. I will say more about women’s specific role in evangelization this afternoon.

While, as I have said, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* represents a real effort of Pope Paul VI to listen to the concerns of the leaders from the Third Church at the 1974 Synod, John Prior notes with some dismay that the concern for interreligious dialogue “disappeared entirely”^[24] from the final version of the document. One must certainly commend the Pope for his treatment of other

religions in paragraph 53, but the omission of dialogue—which was quite a current concern in 1975, especially in Asia—is certainly an error. Again, I’ll take up this topic in this afternoon’s talk, particularly in terms of the basic attitude of all witnessing to the in today’s world.

The lack of the presence of women in the document, along with the failure to acknowledge the importance of dialogue as an integral part of mission were, to my mind, glaring omissions in 1975. But, as I have said above, there are three more topics that are not mentioned but which have emerged with some force in the three decades since *Evangelii Nuntiandi*’s publication that need recognition in a critique of the document today.

The first of these is the theme or topic of *reconciliation*. In 1975 this theme was just beginning to have special relevance for mission, but in the last thirty years—particularly in the last decade—reconciliation has emerged as a major theme in the practice and reflection on evangelization. In a world of almost overwhelming violence and freshly discovered scarred memories, the Good News today must include a prophetic witness to the fact that reconciliation, the possibility for a new start, is a real grace which God offers the world in Christ and through the ministry of the church.^[25]

Second, although the ecological movement was certainly a vital one in 1975, it was not clear then that concerns about the integrity of creation would be identified as having such close ties to the work of evangelization. In the intervening years, however, this has become more and more clear, and today it is simply understood that commitment to ecological concerns and eco-justice is a constitutive part of our Christian witness in today’s world. This is something that needs to be reflected on more deeply, and, as far as I can tell from my reading, is an important aspect of evangelization and mission today in this Australian context.^[26]

Finally, although there is one mention of migrants in the document (21), the veritable explosion of migrants and refugees in the last several decades warrant, it seems to me, a special reflection on the church’s mission *among* migrants, and the evangelizing mission of migrants themselves. Again, I think that this theme will find real resonance in the Australian context today.

D. Conclusion to Part I

As I say, I mention these five topics that were *not* present in Paul VI's Magna Charta document on evangelization as a kind of prelude to what I will reflect on this afternoon. We are celebrating thirty years of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by recalling its richness and by reflecting on its implications for our own task of evangelization today. Paul VI gives us a ton of things to think about in his 1975 document: evangelization as “the grace and vocation proper to the church, her deepest identity” (14); evangelization as a rich and complex process that includes a number of important elements, such as witness, proclamation, inculturation and commitment to liberation; evangelization as first and foremost being the witness of an authentic life; evangelization as first and foremost being the work of the Holy Spirit—these are only a few. But no document is perfect, and *this* document is thirty years old—and so we need to move forward by reflecting more deeply on ideas and themes that will help us witness to the gospel more authentically today. This is what I hope we can do in this afternoon's presentation.

II. Witnessing to the Gospel Today: 1975 to 2005

A. Introduction to Part II



This morning we began our celebration of thirty years of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by looking to the past: *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is a breakthrough document, still valid today as the Magna Charta of evangelization,^[27] but somewhat flawed both in itself and because, as any document, it is a product of its times. This afternoon, building on my critique this morning, I'd like to lead you in a reflection on those five themes that I suggested that *Evangelii Nuntiandi* neglected or was not aware of at its writing in 1975. My hope is that these five themes will lay a foundation for further reflection on the second aspect of our theme for celebration today—to see how we might witness more authentically to the gospel in modern day Australia. As I've mentioned before, as a foreigner I cannot tell you how you might witness to the gospel today in your country and in your culture. But I do hope as a missiologist I might be able to stimulate your thinking somewhat, and as someone who comes from a similar western, affluent, and secularized (but not as secularized as Australia), I think things I will suggest might be taken *analogously* as relevant in the Australian context.

So let's begin our reflections with the importance of the role of women in evangelization, and then move on to reflecting on the role of dialogue—not just interreligious dialogue but dialogue as the basic understanding of evangelization itself. After that let's focus our attention on the connection between evangelization and reconciliation, on the integrity of creation as a constitutive element of evangelization today, and on the importance of the strangers among us—migrants and refugees—as “beneficiaries” of evangelization on the one hand, and as agents of evangelization on the other. Much of what I say will be about evangelization in general; much else of what I say will relate *particularly* to evangelization in a modern (or postmodern), affluent, secularized culture like that of my own United States or your own culture here in Australia .

B. Women and Evangelization

I want to begin this first reflection by sharing with you something that happened to me last May and early June this year. Along with a number of other scholars from around the world, I was invited to a meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland to do some preliminary planning for a major meeting on mission that will take place in 2010—the centenary of the World Mission Conference in Edinburgh of 1910, one of the most important events in mission history in the twentieth century, and a gathering out of which emerged the World Council of Churches in 1948. I was invited to give a short presentation on what I saw were some of the most burning issues in mission today on the opening evening of the meeting, and I shared with the group several of the themes that I will reflect on this afternoon.

I did not, however, emphasize the role of women in mission, even though I did mention the theme in the conclusion of the talk as one of the important issues—like mission spirituality and ecumenism—that might have been mentioned as well. Actually, I thought that the theme of women in mission, while a terribly important topic, had been pretty well treated in the last several years, and had certainly influenced my own thinking about mission—so I thought it had been pretty well covered. Other issues were really more important.

In retrospect, I believe I made a mistake, and the women present were very quick to point this out. First of all, one of the women in the group pointed out, the meeting—even in 2005—was still

dominated by men. There were twenty of us invited to the meeting, and only four were women. Worse yet, two of the women were there because *men* who had originally been invited had not been able to come. The commission was a very international and multicultural one, but we had not succeeded—quite unintentionally but in fact—in getting a good gender balance.

My point is that even if we men *think* things are OK in this regard, we have to be very aware that usually, still, they are not. Paul VI wrote in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* paragraph 15 that “the Church is an evangelizer, but it begins by being evangelized itself.” I think the church today *still* needs to be evangelized by its members who are women. How can the church truly witness—particularly in countries like my own and yours—to a gospel of inclusion, justice, equality and wholeness if it does not reflect its very message in its community life.

Evangelization is a witness to the person of Jesus—this is at the heart of evangelization, Paul VI says (27)—and if we look at Jesus we see how he himself was surrounded and supported by women, how he used the activity and stories of women to image the nature of God (Lk 13:20-21; Lk 15:8-10; Lk 18:1-8),^[28] and how, at least on one occasion, he was even corrected by a woman (Mk 7:24-30). Our gospel witness to Jesus is not just a witness to the truths that he is our savior and that he is the Son of God, the face of God’s ever-present Spirit concretized in the world. More important, I believe, is a witness in *our* lives to the life he lived, by our own imitation of his kindness, openness and inclusive behavior.



We need to witness to the equality of all people by the quality of life within the church. As Paul VI wrote, “it is therefore primarily by its conduct and by its life that the Church will evangelize the world . . .” (41) because if modern women and men listen to teachers at all, they listen to them because they are witnesses (41). So we need to work to make the church where women’s voices can be heard, even though this might make us suspect by the men in the church who hold the power. Certainly, as we all know, there are certain things that the Magisterium of the church has judged that it cannot do with regard to women in the church, but this does not mean that,

even within these boundaries, women cannot have *much* more to say in the church. There would be no reason, for instance, that women could not be at the highest levels of parish, diocesan or Vatican decision making. There would be no reason why women—more than just a token few—might not be invited to participate at events like Bishops’ Synods. There is no intrinsic reason why women can’t become cardinals and participate in the election of pope. These steps and certainly many others would, to my mind, go a long way to speak about the radical equality that Jesus witnessed to by his own life, and would be one way that the church can engage in evangelization *ad intra*, allowing the Good News to challenge and transform itself so that it can truly witness to the gospel in today’s world. And the irony is that women really do have an overwhelming presence in the church. How many people have I heard talking about being evangelized first by their grandmothers! And they say that in the United States there are some 30,000 lay ecclesial ministers in training, 80% of which are women!

But there is also the evangelization *ad extra* or beyond the church in the world. There is no doubt that women throughout the world—and here in Australia !—need to hear the story of Jesus as God’s love and mercy incarnate in the world. It is common knowledge that women are among the world’s least educated people, that they are victims of injustice and violence—especially spousal violence—and that they are among the world’s poorest. Just to mention a few well-known but still shocking statistics: Women comprise only one third of the world’s paid labor force, but do two thirds of the world’s work; they early one tenth of the world’s income and own one one hundredth of the world’s property; two thirds of the world’s illiterate persons are women; one woman is beaten every fifteen seconds; one woman is raped every three to six minutes; thirty-seven percent of women of every race, class and educational background are physically abused during pregnancy.[29] Addressing these blatant injustices is without doubt an essential component of the church’s mission today. Many of these abuses are not just in Third World or traditional “mission” countries; they are right in our own countries of the United States and Australia . In any case, as Marilyn Ann Martone, the Vatican delegate to the UN Commission on the Status of Women said in no uncertain terms in a report in March of 2004: “My delegation is convinced that the road to ensure swift progress in achieving full respect for women and their identity involves more than simply the condemnation of discrimination and injustices, necessary

though this may be. Such respect must first and foremost be achieved through an effective and intelligent campaign for the promotion of women, involving all sectors of human society.”[30]

If we can be a church that witnesses in its own life and structures to the dignity and equality of all women and men, with a “preferential option for women,” and if we work for that dignity and equality both at home and abroad, we will be continuing Jesus’ work of evangelization in a way that is particularly relevant in today’s modern and postmodern world.

C. Dialogue and Evangelization



Evangelii Nuntiandi may have ignored or simply forgotten about the theme of interreligious dialogue, but, like all important truths, dialogue is not a theme for reflection nor a practice of evangelization that will just go away. It seems to me that if we take seriously what the pope says in paragraph 53, there is no way that we can *avoid* dialogue with these religions. Since we must treat

them with “respect and esteem,” the only way to speak of “the riches of the mystery of Christ” is to get to know those who practice other religious ways, get to know their beliefs, become their friends, work with them for common causes, learn from their deep spiritual traditions.

Concretely, in places like the United States and Australia (and New Zealand and Europe for that matter) Christians today are rubbing elbows with women and men of other faiths every day. And so we are not talking about religions of people in exotic settings thousands of miles away. We are talking about learning to live with other human beings, and in a way in which we can fulfill our identity as Christians of witnessing to our faith. Even more concretely, with the current ascendancy of Islam in the world, and with the often negative attitudes and simplistic stereotypes (terrorists, intolerant) that uninformed Christians often have, getting to know Muslims and Islam should be a real priority for Christians everywhere, but especially in places of tension like Nigeria, the UK, the United States, and possibly Australia.

In any case, nine years after *Evangelii Nuntiandi* was published, the Vatican's Secretariat for Non-Christians (now called the Pontifical Council for Dialogue!) issued these words: "Dialogue is . . . the norm and necessary manner of every form of Christian mission, as well as of every aspect of it, whether one speaks of simple presence and witness, service or direct proclamation. Any sense of mission not permeated by such a dialogical spirit would go against the demands of true humanity and against the teachings of the Gospel."^[31] What I see important about this passage is that, while it does affirm dialogue with other faiths as something essential to the church's evangelizing mission, it goes beyond it to speak of dialogue as the basic *attitude* that Christians should have as they live a life of evangelical witness.

What this means, I think, is that we need to get away from any idea that evangelization is simply bold pronouncements about Jesus' Lordship or the superiority of Christian life and Christian values and enter into a way of being human and Christian that is open to others, respectful of other religions and cultures, and ready to learn and profit from ways that are different and maybe even a bit threatening.

To this basic attitude of dialogue, however, I would add that our dialogue needs also to be prophetic. In other words, the Vatican in 1984 is not, nor am I here today, advocating a kind of spineless, namby-pamby kind of Christianity, where tolerance is the only thing we are called to practice. No. Evangelization needs to be carried out in *prophetic dialogue*. It needs to be open and sensitive, ready to learn and bend and change. But, as *Evangelii Nuntiandi* points out, people have the right to know the truth (53), and to hear the truth proclaimed clearly and unambiguously. I think this is true in our daily lives, when people ask us why we do or do not do certain things, or have this or that value. We must tell them clearly the "reason for our hope" (1Pet 3:15). At the same time, when we are confronted with situations of untruth or injustice, we must also speak out prophetically. Certainly, we should be gentle; we should try to understand all the circumstances, many of which in issues of injustice are incredibly complex. But we must still speak the truth clearly and lovingly (Eph 4:15).

Evangelization in "prophetic dialogue" is how my congregation of the Society of the Divine Word describes the way that we Divine Word Missionaries should do mission. Perhaps an even more powerful way of putting this is in the words of two great missiological thinkers, the South

African David Bosch and the Japanese American Kosuke Koyama. Bosch speaks about how mission must be done in “bold humility”—bold because we *do* know something, the riches of God in Christ, but humble because “we only know in part.”^[32] Koyama speaks of the need to be converted from doing mission with a “crusading mind” to doing it with a “crucified mind.”^[33]

Evangelizing in this way demands a deep spirituality, I believe, and will demand a lot of discipline. How do we be authentic while, as Alice Walker says, having hearts that are so open that the wind blows through them?^[34] But I think this is essential for evangelization today. After all, our mission is the mission of God, and this is the way God works for our salvation in this world. Evangelical theologian Brian D. McClaren puts it in a wonderfully engaging way in his little novel / philosophical dialogue *A New Kind of Christian*. One of his main characters, Neo, says it like this:

“Actually, if there’s one thing I wish I could tell every Christian about evangelism . . . it would be about [conversation]. I would say to stop counting conversion, because our whole approach to conversion is so, I don’t know, mechanistic and consumeristic and individualistic and controlling. Instead, I’d encourage us to count conversations, because conversation implies a real relationship, and if we make our goal to establish relationships and engage in authentic conversations, I know that conversions will happen. But if we keep trying to convert people, we’ll simply drive them away. They’re sick of our sales pitches and our formulas.”^[35]

D. Reconciliation and Evangelization

Five years ago, at the turn of the millennium, we came to the end of what Isaiah Berlin had called “the most terrible of centuries,”^[36] but so far it does not look like this century will be any better. What we have witnessed on September 11, 2001 in Washington and New York City, the bombings in Bali and Istanbul, Madrid and London, the disastrous war in Iraq, the continuing tensions between Israel and Palestine, the still-smoldering violence in Northern Ireland and in the Great Lakes region of Africa and in the Province of Darfur in the Sudan, the



unspeakable tragedy of HIV/AIDS, the realizations of cultural and human oppression among North American Native Peoples, Australian Aborigines, New Zealand Maoris and Latin American Indigenous Peoples. Add to this the wounds caused by spousal abuse and alienation of parents and children, brothers and sisters from one another, together with the wounds inflicted by and within the church by clergy to innocent children, and by the church in general to women, divorced women and men, and gays and lesbians—what we have is a pretty grim picture!

It is within this situation of excruciating pain and virtual hopelessness that missiologists like Robert Schreiter have suggested that there is a way out, and that a message of hope and reconciliation might be a privileged way in our troubled times to witness to and proclaim the gospel's good news. Evangelization today, in other words, might be able to take shape as a practice and a proclamation that God is indeed at work in our world, reconciling women and men to one another, offering a new vision for a new start, calling human beings to healing and new life. This is a bold message, one that no doubt will seem like foolishness to many, but one that points to the center of what faith in a crucified God can mean.

I think that the first way that the church can be an agent of God's reconciliation in today's world is—again in the spirit of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*—be itself a model of reconciliation. I believe we have to work to be communities that first of all *acknowledge* how much damage and hurt we have caused in the past—the late Pope John Paul II led the way in this by his various apologies to Jews, to women and to Native Peoples for the tragic mistakes of the past. Our leaders at all levels have to echo and imitate this. We have to acknowledge our own complicity in so much suffering and damage. I am reminded here of the journey of one of my Australian doctoral students, Gerard Goldman, who struggled very personally in his doctoral dissertation with his own abuse of an aboriginal boy named Ian (he had slapped him one day), and of the abusive behavior of aboriginals by one of his forebears in the nineteenth century.

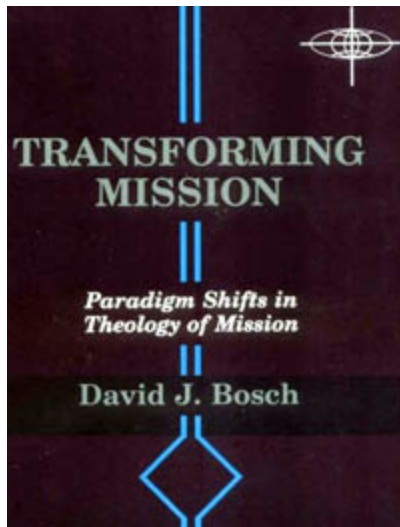
Secondly, our church communities—parishes, retreat centers, monasteries, for example—need to provide Schreiter calls “spaces of safety and hospitality” where victims—and sometimes even perpetrators—can feel accepted, listened to, cared for, to be accepted as they journey to healing and forgiveness.^[37] Our church communities have to provide space and opportunities for victims of violence and injustice to tell their stories, to tell the truth, to share their struggles with

their anger, grief and pain. Oftentimes we need just to listen to their stories and anger in patience, knowing that even though we are not personally *guilty*, we as a people are *responsible*.

Schreiter insists—wisely, I think—that those who engage in the ministry of reconciliation in the church need to foster a *spirituality* rather than a *strategy*. In other words, there are no three-step or ten-step plans for people to enter for healing, there is no set formula. First and foremost, says Schreiter, those who work for reconciliation need to realize that reconciliation is always God’s work. God’s grace stirs the heart of the victims, calling the victims to a new place, calling perpetrators to insight into the horror of their actions. Reconciliation is neither going back to the way things were before the tragedy of violence or abuse, nor is it just “moving on,” forgetting the past. Violence and victimhood have changed people for ever, and reconciliation calls people *through* grief and rage and remorse to a life that can only be described in the biblical phrase of “new creation.” Those who work for reconciliation have to be attentive to these stirrings in people’s hearts, and need to allow them to express their grief and anger and rage as they struggle to open to God’s grace. Central to the ministry of reconciliation in all of this is the sensitive telling of the story of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection that moves through death and despair to new life and hope.[38] So often this story has been abused by church people as a way to maintain the status quo in an abusive relationship, but it needs to be told as a story that does not sanction violence, but rather channels the violence committed toward new strength and new life.

Reconciliation is messy business, but it is a business that Christians must commit themselves to if they are to witness to and proclaim God’s Good News in our modern world. The church needs to be present and engaged in all today’s situations of atrocity and violence, whether this violence takes place in Rwanda , New York, Banda Ache, or in Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane or Sydney. Not everyone will be able to be present in places far from home, but every local church community can be engaged in some way in the ministry of reconciliation. Woundedness and pain is all around us, but the Good News is that so also is God’s healing and grace. To witness to this is to witness to the gospel in today’s world.

E. Ecology and Evangelization



As I mentioned at the end of this morning's talk, concern for the integrity of creation was not something unknown in 1975 when *Evangelii Nuntiandi* was published, nor was it a topic on which theology had not reflected. What had not been very clearly established at the time, however, was the strong connection between ecological concerns and their place in the evangelizing mission of the church. In fact, ecology and mission found no place at all as late as 1991 when David Bosch published what might be considered the twentieth century's most important work on mission theology, *Transforming Mission*,^[39] and there

has not been a lot of missiological reflection on the issue since. But I believe that the connection between ecological commitment and the church's mission is an issue of growing importance. It is one that intersects strongly with the concerns of otherwise non-religious people, and one that has deep resonances in the Christian biblical tradition.

An article in the June 17, 2005 issue of *National Catholic Reporter* traced the development of teachings on ecology in the writings of Pope John Paul II. While the pope's "first steps were small,"^[40] the pope rather consistently spoke about ecological issues during the first decade of his papacy. Then, on New Year's Day 1990, in his annual message for the World Day of Peace, the pope issued a statement that would mark a redoubled commitment to what he recognized as an "ecological conversion" taking place all over the world.^[41] "Even men and women without any particular religious conviction," he wrote,

but with an acute sense of their responsibilities for the common good, recognize their obligation to contribute to the restoration of a healthy environment. All the more should men and women who believe in God the Creator, and who are thus convinced that there is a well-defined unity and order in the world, feel called to address the problem. Christians, in particular, realize that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith. As a result, they are conscious of a vast field of ecumenical and interreligious cooperation opening up before them.^[42]

Although the pope makes no *explicit* connection between the care of creation and the church's mission of evangelization, there is no doubt that such a connection can easily be made, particularly in the light of the interrelationship between environmental destruction and forms of social injustice. If, as the 1971 Synod of Bishops said, working for justice is a constitutive part of the church's mission,^[43] commitment to the integrity of creation must likewise be constitutive. *Explicit* connection is made, however, in John Paul's mission encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (albeit quite briefly) when the pope speaks about "safeguarding the created world" as one of the new areas ("new forms of the Aereopagus") in which mission needs to be carried out today, and "which need to be illuminated by the light of the Gospel."^[44]

In one of the few texts of mission theology to treat the connection between ecology and mission, Andrew Kirk underlines, as does the pope, the close interrelationship between the care of creation with issues of social justice and human rights, issues concerning war and peace, and the evangelization of cultures.^[45] Often, ecological destruction takes place in poorer parts of a city or in poor nations, and such destruction often serves to benefit the rich. The droughts and famines created by these situations often give way to violence and war. Often too, the way a culture understands nature or the human person will influence the attitudes of people toward it. In our contemporary western culture of individualism and consumerism, for example, it doesn't matter whether nature is abused as long as we are comfortable—and as long as nature *somewhere else* is abused and we can't see it! Kirk believes strongly—as do I—that the church in our day must make the commitment to the integrity of all creation one of its priorities. He quotes a World Council of Churches' document which says that "mission in Christ's way must extend to God's creation. Because the earth is the Lord's, the responsibility of the church towards the earth is a crucial part of the church's mission."^[46]

How might we engage in ecological commitment as Christian evangelizers? Once more, in a first reflection, I want to have recourse to Paul VI's seminal insight that an evangelizing church must first be evangelized, and that it must *be* in witness what it proclaims and does in the world. What this means in terms of ecology is that Christians themselves are called to be women and men who are dedicated to a simplified lifestyle, to recycling material when possible, to living and eating in a way that is ecological sound. As a document from the World Council of Churches says so wonderfully regarding Christian witness, "people will always believe their eyes

first”!^[47] As parish communities or religious communities as well, we can witness to our commitment to safeguard creation by the kind of buildings we build, the grounds we plant, the kind of celebrations we have, the kind of prayers we say. In turn, our community can also form us as families and individuals to be more conscious of our own stewardship.

Our witness to the gospel *ad extra*, to the world, would take shape by the kinds of ecological causes we embrace and our political stance on particular issues. As I mentioned previously—and as the Pope John Paul mentioned in his 1990 message—we also have an opportunity to engage in action with people of other Christian faiths, of other religious traditions, and with people of no particular religious commitment. Our presence can be a real opportunity to witness wordlessly and, when appropriate, in words, to our faith in our Creator God who calls us to share in God’s mission of continuing to create, guide, heal and protect God’s world.

Evangelii Nuntiandi could not have foreseen this aspect of evangelization, but it is becoming clear and clearer to us today, and I believe it has particular relevance in my society of the United States, and your society of Australia. To quote McClaren’s character Neo once more: “Learning to live as caretakers of creation and friends to our fellow creatures must be at the core of a new kind of Christianity.”^[48]

F. Migration and Evangelization

“One of the most pervasive features of the contemporary world,” writes Professor Hugo Graeme of the University of Adelaide, “. . . is greater human mobility.”^[49] Graeme cites a United Nations report done in 1998 that estimates that in 1990, 120 million people were living outside their country of birth, this not counting the many times more who were in other countries temporarily, traveling, working or studying. Robert Schreier cites an even more recent statistic to the effect that, today, one person in thirty-five in today’s world (and one in every twelve in Europe!) lives in a country other than the one in which she or he was born.^[50] A 1996 U.N. report stated that out of 184 countries surveyed, “136 indicated that international migration was an important policy element.”^[51] Add to this the fact that the world contains, in some estimates, fifty million refugees or internally displaced people and we begin to see that the question of

migration—forced or unforced—is one of the burning issues in the world today, and one that affects Europe, North America, New Zealand and Australia in particularly significant ways.

The situation of the world’s migrants and refugees also represents, said Pope John Paul II in 2003, “a vast field for the new evangelization to which the whole Church is called.”^[52] This was not so evident in 1975 when *Evangelii Nuntiandi* was written, but it was already mentioned among the new phenomena that were transforming the world and the church’s mission in John Paul II’s *Redemptoris Missio*.^[53] Especially in countries like the United States and Australia , the



church’s pastoral presence among migrants and refugees needs to be one of the major commitments of the church’s evangelizing mission today. We used to be the “sending countries” in world mission; now the world has come to us!

I would like to suggest that the church’s mission among migrants is twofold. On the one hand, the church’s mission is *to* migrants—that is, migrants should be the *objects* of the church’s pastoral care. On the other hand, however, the church’s mission is *of* migrants—that is, the migrants in our midst are the *subjects* of mission. They both call the local church to new ways of being church, and they themselves need to be active *within* the church, serving the church within and outside of their own communities, and serving the wider world as well. Let me briefly elaborate on these two aspects of migration and evangelization.

First, the church is called to minister *to* migrants. As the final document issued by the Fifth World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees says, “the Church cannot remain indifferent in the way of the present plight of migrants and refugees. She wants to share their joys and grief, be with them where they are, and be with them in their search for a better and safer life, worthy of being children of God.”^[54] The motive for this love and concern, of course, is that migrants are God’s creatures, made in God’s image, and so possessing the full panoply of human dignity and human rights. In addition, Scripture is a rich source of motivation for the care

of migrants and strangers (e.g. Ex 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:33-34; Dt 10:17-19; 24:17-18; 27:19). But perhaps the most sublime motivation is found in Scripture's insight that coming to the aid of the stranger and the migrant is somehow touching the person of God as such. We see this in Abraham's encounter with the three strangers at the oaks of Mamre (Gen 18:1-15), perhaps most memorably depicted in Rublev's famous icon of the Trinity. We see it again in Jesus' parable in Matthew 25, where Jesus identifies himself with the very least of humanity. We see it in the Christian tradition with the famous story of Martin of Tours and beggar on the road, and in Benedict's dictum "venit hospes, venit Christus"—when the guest arrives, Christ arrives. Again, we see the identification of Christ / God in several pieces of contemporary art: in a statue of the "migrant Christ" outside a parish church in El Paso, TX in the US, in Robert Lentz's icon "Christ of Maryknoll," in a poster for a conference on migration and theology in which I participated last year, and in a cartoon drawn of an African priest pointing to Rwanda on the map and saying "This is my body."

What can the church do? First and foremost, I believe, we can *welcome* the migrants among us and practice hospitality. Of all the literature I have read about migration and evangelization, offering hospitality and welcome stands out as the most important task of the church. It is certainly part of the witness of the local church—witnessing the love of Christ to migrants who are Christians and those who are not. Whether we host migrants in our own homes, help them get settled in the community, welcome them into our liturgical celebrations by giving them a part or giving them space and time in our parishes for their own liturgies, this kind of openness to the other and the stranger is central to our evangelizing ministry to migrants.

Second, this hospitality needs to be connected with a strong sense of solidarity with migrants, treating them justly ourselves and working in any way we can to ensure their just treatment in the wider society. Local action needs to be coupled with official church action, like participation in lobbying groups for migrants' rights, or, like the U.S. Bishops, issuing statements that call the church and the country to recognize migrant people's dignity and human rights.

Third, there is the ministry of education—no doubt the key to the future for migrants, especially the youth. The great resources of the church for education need to be at the disposal of migrants,

whether this be education in language, in negotiating the local culture, getting training for new employment skills, or long-term primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Fourth, there is the opportunity to practice various kinds of interreligious dialogue, for, as the statement quoted above says, interreligious dialogue is “not an option, but an obligation inherent in the church’s mission in migration.”^[55] This might entail, for most Christians, just getting to know people of other faiths, perhaps listening to their religious convictions, treating them with respect, sharing their own Christian faith. Or it might take place by joining together with people of other faiths in acts of solidarity for justice and equal treatment by the law.

Fifthly—and this is for Christian migrants—there is the missionary, cross-cultural activity of sacramental pastoral care. If there are no sacraments, especially the Eucharist, in the migrants’ local languages, if there is no one who can act as confessor, who knows their baptismal and wedding customs, no one who understands their popular devotions, there is great possibility that their faith will wither and die. So it is important that people from the local church equip themselves to cross over into these other cultures, or that the local church ensure that pastoral agents from the migrants’ home countries be available for their pastoral needs.

Sixthly and finally, the local church to which migrants have come needs to be an advocate for change, economic growth and liberation in the countries *from which* the migrants have come. It is not enough to be welcoming and to work for the integration of migrants in their new society. The church must find ways to put pressure on the countries of origin, and often their own countries who create the inhuman conditions from which people have to flee, to provide fairer work practices, more just compensation for labor, abolition of the weapons’ trade, and more equitable trade between rich and poor nations. Connecting with groups like Bread for the World, Oxfam, Amnesty International and Pax Christi might be ways for local Christians to work in this way.

Evangelization in our contemporary world—particularly in nations like my own country and here in Australia—involves ministering to what Spanish speaking theologians have called the “Cristos migrantes” of the world, accompanying them on what is often a “via crucis” in foreign and often hostile lands. But these “migrant Christs” are not only the *objects* of evangelization; they are also

its *subjects*. Migrants—the others in our midst—call us to be even more conformed to Christ as his church. And they themselves must be able to act as evangelizers as well.

The final statement I have quoted several times already in this section insists at one point that “no one, be they migrants, refugees or members of the local population should be looked upon as a ‘stranger,’ but rather as a ‘gift.’”^[56] A first mission *of* migrants, therefore, of migrants is to offer their own giftedness to the community in which they have come to live. This will be, at times, a real prophetic activity on the part of migrants, since often a local church will not want to be shaken in its cultural complacency, and often shares the racism and xenophobia with the population at large. But it is the duty of the local church to receive these gifts, and of the migrants coming into that church to keep on offering them. In this way migrants are constantly calling the church to its own catholicity. As one prominent philosopher of migration has put it, migrants have the task in the church of making it a “school of interculturality.”^[57]

In addition, migrants call the church to recognize its provisional, pilgrim nature. They are people on the move, with no real home as they try to adjust to a new culture and a new country. They are on the margins of society, with little political power. In many ways, this is how the church should be—weak and vulnerable like its Lord, evangelizing now with the power of the State, but the power of God’s word, with the authenticity of the truth. Migrants are an image of what the church should be in its deepest identity. Furthermore, migrants help the church recognize even more clearly the nature of the God of Jesus Christ, to whom it gives witness in today’s church. Migrants who are at risk, who are crossing borders, who are vulnerable point to a God who is in Godself a God who risks, who calls us forward, who calls us beyond our comfort zones into deeper insight and new life.

But migrants not only call the church to itself and to a renewed integrity in evangelization. They themselves *are* the church, and so should be welcomed as ministers in the church. Many of them have already been active in their own local churches, and can give expert service both among their own people and in the church at large in their new land. The local church also needs to call and equip women and men for ministry—again, both among people of their own culture and in the wider church, and also, like the wider church, within the world.

As I have said above, ministry *among* migrants—to them and with them—is one of the great challenges for evangelization today, particularly, I would suggest, in my own country and in today’s Australia .

Conclusion

We’ve come together today to celebrate a great document—to recall what it said and to see how its spirit might point us toward the present and the future, so that we can speak with real depth to the topic of witnessing to the gospel in modern Australia. One of the great things about *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is that even though it is thirty years old, it can still challenge us today. It certainly has its flaws, and it doesn’t cover every concern that we have in 2005. It is still, however, what American theologian David Tracy has called a “classic,” and not a mere “period piece.”^[58] *Evangelii Nuntiandi* has always inspired me with its simplicity and depth; I hope my reflections with you as we celebrate its meaning in the contemporary Australian context has inspired you today as well.

^[1]Arnulf Camps, “Mission to Other Religions” (Excerpts from a presentation to the OFM General Chapter in 1991) <http://www.ciofsorg/per/1996/lc96en22.htm>; Cardinal Lucas Moreira Neves, “‘Evangelii Nuntiandi’: Paul VI’s Pastoral Testament to the Church,” http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=3477; Melbourne School of Evangelisation, “Evangelisation and the Catholic Church,” <http://www.ccr.org.au/soeevang.html>; “The President Speaks,” <http://www.sioncommunity.org.uk/president.html>.

^[2]Robert J. Schreiter, “Changes in Roman Catholic Attitudes toward Proselytism and Mission,” in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, eds., *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 114-116.

^[3]*Ibid.*, 120-122.

^[4]See Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 290-291.

^[5]*Ibid.*, 251.

^[6]Schreiter, 122-123.

^[7]Bevans and Schroeder, 307-308.

^[8]For what follows, see John Mansford Prior, “Mission for the Twenty-First Century in Asia: Two Sketches, Three Flash-Backs and an Enigma,” in Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, eds., *Mission for the 21st Century* (Chicago: CCGM Publications, 2001), 81-84.

^[9]Prior, 81.

^[10]Moreira Neves, 1.

^[11]Prior, 83.

^[12]Eloy Bueno, *La Iglesia en la Encrucijada de la Misión* (Estella, Spain: Editorial Verbo Divino, 1999), 146.

^[13]Michael Nazir-Ali, *From Everywhere to Everywhere: A World View of Christian Mission* (London: Collins, 1990).

^[14]Camps, 2.

^[15]Moreira Neves, 2. The cardinal writes: “The simple compositional structure of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* shows the dimensions of a document that, not to use a fashionable term but one that seems right to me, I would not hesitate to call *prophetic*—a harbinger of new times, of a new evangelization.”

^[16]Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury, 1970), 29-30.

^[17]The original context of the quotation is an address to members of the Council of the Laity, October 2, 1974. See *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 66 (1974): 568.

^[18]1971 Synod of Bishops, “Justice in the World,” in David J. O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 295.

^[19]E.g. Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985); Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

^[20]Paul VI, “Closing Discourse to All-Africa Symposium,” quoted in Aylward Shorter, *African Christian Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1975), 20.

^[21]Dana L. Robert, Preface, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers: Missionary Women in the Twentieth Century*, Dana L. Robert, ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), xi.

^[22]This statement is interpolated from Angelyn Dries, “American Catholic ‘Woman’s Work for Woman’ in the Twentieth Century,” in Robert, ed., 130. In a lecture to celebrate the

twenty-fifth anniversary of Catholic Theological Union in 1993, Richard McBrien pointed out that, in the Catholic Church, 80% of ministry is done by women.

^[23]See Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 95-128.

^[24]Prior, 83.

^[25]The missiologist who has perhaps reflected on reconciliation the most in the last several years is Robert J. Schreiter. See, for example, Robert J. Schreiter, "Mission as a Model of Reconciliation," *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 52 (1996): 243-250.

^[26]See Bevans and Schroeder, 375-378. See Also Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).

^[27]Camps, 1.

^[28]On these parables, especially Lk 18:1-8, see Barbara Reid, *Choosing the Better Part? Women in the Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 169-194.

^[29]The source of these statistics is my colleague Barbara Reid, some of them are from the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

^[30]Holy See's Address on Status of Women. ZENIT News Agency. [Http://www.zenit.org/](http://www.zenit.org/). March 8, 2004.

^[31]Secretariat for Non-Christians, "The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission," 29, quoted in U.S. Bishops, *To the Ends of the Earth* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1986), paragraph 40.

^[32]David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 489.

^[33]Kosuke Koyama, "What Makes a Missionary? Toward Crucified Mind Not Crusading Mind," In Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, eds., *Mission Trends No. 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 117-132.

^[34]Alice Walker, "A Wind through the Heart: A Conversation with Alice Walker and Sharon Salzberg on Loving Kindness in a Painful World," *Shambhala Sun* (January, 1997): 1-5.

www.shambhalasun.com/Archives/Features/1997/Jan97/Alice%20Walker.htm.

^[35]Brian D. McClaren, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 108-109.

^[36]Quoted in Robert J. Schreiter, “Mission for the Twenty-first Century: A Catholic Perspective,” in Bevens and Schroeder, eds., 34.

^[37]*Ibid.*, 184.

^[38]*Ibid.*, 178-180.

^[39]See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*. This omission was pointed out almost ten years later by Andrew Kirk in *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1999), 2, 164-183.

^[40]Jeff Severns Guntzel, “John Paul II’s Ecological Legacy,” *National Catholic Reporter* (June 17, 2005): 9a.

^[41]*Ibid.*

^[42]John Paul II, Message for World Day of Peace, 1990, paragraph 15.
www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf/_ip-ii_mes-19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace_en.html.

^[43]1971 Synod of Bishops, in O’Brien and Shannon, eds., 289.

^[44]John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, 37. Hereafter: RM.

^[45]Kirk, 167.

^[46]*Ibid.*, quoting R. Wilson Frederick, *The San Antonio Report: Your Will Be Done, Mission in Christ’s Way* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), 54.

^[47]World Conference on Mission and Evangelization, “Mission in Christ’s Way, Your Will Be Done” (San Antonio, TX, 1989), 22, in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevens, eds., *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 1: Basic Statements 1974-1991* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 78.

^[48]McClaren, 119.

^[49]Hugo Graeme, “Key Issues in International Migration Today: Trends,” in *Migration at the Threshold of the Third Millennium: IV World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees* (Vatican City: Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, 1998), 31.

^[50]Robert J. Schreiter, “The Changed Context of Mission Forty Years after the Council,” *Verbum SVD*, 46, 1 (2005): 80.

^[51]*Ibid.*

^[52]John Paul II, “Address of Pope John Paul II,” *People on the Move*, XXXV, 93 (December, 2003): 9. This volume contains the Proceedings of the fifth World Congress for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees.

^[53]RM 37.

^[54]Final Document, Part I, 3, *People on the Move*, XXXV: 360. The version I cite is slightly different from the English translation. I have translated the Italian “lì dove essi sono” (see *Ibid.*: 374) as “being with them where they are” rather than “there where they are.”

^[55]*Ibid.*: Part II, Dialogues, 2: 368.

^[56]*Ibid.*: Part II, Pastoral Care, 9: 365.

^[57]Raoul Fournet-Betancourt, “La inmigración en contexto de globalización como diálogo intercultural,” in Gioacchino Campese and Pietro Ciallella, eds., *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003), 39.

^[58]David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 98-153.



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