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‘BECOMING TO A PEOPLE MIGHTY AND NUMEROUS’:

ACTUALISING THE VISION OF SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH BY REVISITING AND REINTRODUCING IVANIAN MODEL OF MISSION

An Analysis of the Exegetical and Hermeneutical Parallelism of Deut 26:5 Seen in Origin, Evolution and Canonical Existence of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and the Hermeneutics of the Process of Becoming Actualised through the Formulation of New Visions for Mission in India Today

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B. Th. Comprehensive Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Theology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Theology

Pune

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Bethany Ashram, Ramwadi, Pune Varughese P. M.

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DECLARATION

I Varughese P. M., Register Number 14657, student of the Faculty of Theology of Bethany VedavijnanaPeeth – an Oriental Extension Centre of Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, hereby declare that the B. Th. Comprehensive Dissertation entitled, "**BECOMING TO A PEOPLE MIGHTY AND NUMEROUS': ACTUALISING THE VISION OF SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH BY REVISITING AND REINTRODUCING IVANIAN MODEL OF MISSION; An Analysis of the Exegetical and Hermeneutical Parallelism of Deut 26:5 Seen in Origin, Evolution and Canonical Existence of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and the Hermeneutics of the Process of Becoming Actualised through the Formulation of New Visions for Mission in India Today"** is a record of the work carried out by me during the academic year 2017-2018, under the guidance of Dr. Philip Vysaneth, OIC, Professor of Bethany VedavijnanaPeeth and Dr. Thomas Karimundackal, SJ, Professor of Scripture, Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth.

I declare that this study has not been published either in part or in full anywhere else, either by me or anyone else, or has not formed the basis for the awarding of any Degree or Diploma or other titles in this Institution or other institutions of higher learning.

I further declare that the material obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged in the research work.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The term "mission" presupposes a sender. The sender sent the chosen people with an assignment. In the life of the Church, the assignment is to continue the mission of God – *Missio Dei*. The gradual development of Israel from its selection, the mission of God which was already started by creation unveiled continuously and reached its peak at incarnation. Jesus Christ during His earthly existence was the pinnacle in establishing this mission through His words and action. Later He promised the Holy Spirit to continue this mission as the leading force behind, and entrusted His disciples as the ambassadors of the mission. Gradually the mission continued through the ministry of the Church.

As the Church is moving through its 21st century of existence, it is confronted by challenges it has never known before. This changing world demands self-reflection within the Church leading it to be renewed and re-energised. It has to consider its place, identity and function, thereby giving rise to the exploration of its mission. Is the Church's missional function still possible in a world that is faced with ever increasing challenges? It seems that a world governed by modernist principles and challenged by post-modern philosophies, necessitates the need for the Church to think creatively about its mission. In this dissertation, the mission of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in the modern context is analysed by revisiting the 'Ivanian ashram Model' of mission.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The Malankara Catholic Church 'a people brought into unity in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,'[1] is an extension of the Mystery of the Incarnation and of the Kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus Christ on earth and brought about by the mission given to the Apostles (Mt 28:18--20), for proclaiming and establishing, among all peoples, the Kingdom of God. While she slowly grows to maturity, the Church longs for the accomplished Kingdom. The Church through her presence and mission continues this sanctifying ministry which Her Master initiated. The title is a phrase of the thesis taken from

[1] From a turbulent situation of uncertainties, Mar Ivanios thought of catholic communion as a solution to ward off uncertainties. To revive the Church spiritually, he himself underwent strenuous spiritual exercises and thought of a missionary society initially. But his conviction changed and paved the way in founding Bethany Ashram; an indigenous monastic order. Later some of the members along with Mar Ivanios joined Catholic Church in 1930.

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Deut 26:5; which indicates the growth of Israel expressed in the faith formula of Israel. Here the phrase is hermeneutically applied to explain the growth and canonical existence of Malankara Catholic Church by making a comparison between the development of the Israel and Malankara Catholic Church. The Subtitle deals with the strategies of the Church in executing the mission of the Church in the present situation. Here the Church formulates new vision for the mission accomplishment and executing new strategies. Today MCC has jurisdiction all over India. It is the duty of the Church to find out new strategies to execute the mission to the people entrusted. The present study revisits the 'Ivanian Ashram model' of mission and proposes the same model for doing mission in the modern context.

TASK OF THE STUDY

The task of this paper is to make sense of the 'Ivanian Ashram model' of mission and its dimensions by revisiting it in the modern context. The parallelism drawn between the growth of Israel understood from the exegetical study of the verse Deut. 26:5 with that of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church helped in understanding that the notion of 'becoming' of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church continues when it is fully involved in its mission to actualise the vision; that all may be one' (John 17:22). As Israel had undergone a period of uncertainties – 'wandering in the wilderness,' YHWH made them to come out as a people mighty and numerous. The promise given to Abraham and Sarah is fulfilled. The fact of 'historic recurrence' seen in the Growth of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church unveils the God's providence in its existence – 'being,' from a 'wandering experience' and its growth process – 'becoming' and still continues to fulfil its mission. In the areas entrusted by creating the Diocese of Gurgaon and Exarchate of Khadki, Syro-Malankara Catholic Church explores more avenues to actualise the vision through its mission. The paper discusses the characteristics of Ivanian model by revisiting it and invites Syro-Malankara Catholic Church to re-introduce it for doing mission in the modern context.

THE THESIS STATEMENT

An Exegetical and Hermeneutical Parallelism of Deut 26:5 Seen in Origin, Evolution and Canonical Existence of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and the implication of the phrase – *"Becoming to a People Mighty And Numerous"* invites the Church to Formulate New Visions for Missions by re-introducing 'Ivanian Ashram model' of mission in the Context Mission in India Today.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE THESIS

The mission of Malankara Catholic Church is founded on Jesus Christ and specially moulded by the Charism of Mar Ivanios OIC which is the reflection of Acts 1:8 ("But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth") where the spiritual revival of the self and the fellow brethren represents 'Jerusalem,' among other people who have gone from the communion represents 'Judea and Samaria,' and the other part is represented by 'the ends of the world.' This is to actualise the dream of Mar Ivanios through the Church by actualising its motto, 'That all may be one' (Jn 17:21) in witnessing Christ. That is the sole mission of the Church. Here the tool of mission is the 'Ivanian Ashram model;' the model of 'being a witness'. In modern terminology, it is known as 'silent evangelisation.'[2]

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The focus of this dissertation is to revisit Ivanian Ashram model of mission and invite Syro-Malankara Catholic Church to follow Ivanian Model for mission in India in the context where Malankara Catholic Church has got overall jurisdiction. Accordingly, greater attention is given to read and reread the mind of Mar Ivanios, his theology of mission, the models where the church did his missions, and further avenues for more missionary activities. Malankara Catholic Missions in India shall be an indigenous, intercultural, multilingual, multifarious, and all embracing one with a twofold ministry namely, revival of the Church and welfare of all the people of our country.

The church is in the process of becoming. Therefore the missionary activities should not be stagnant rather it should be more of dynamic with new methods. Rooted in Christian love and catholic principles, we also make every effort to participate in and contribute to the building of our nation through various programmes. More educational institutions, community development programmes, medical aid, literacy programmes and other social welfare projects like children's homes, old age home etc. should be flourished in the unexplored Indian Soil. To a large extent, these welfare programmes benefit the poor villagers of our country as Malankara Catholic Missions grow in India and the Church is committed to reach the people at the grassroots level by 'being a witness.'

[2] Cf. David Hyams, "Slient Evangelism" in *Christian Research Journal* vol. 29, 3 (2006), 19.

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This dissertation is done from the perspective of Oriental Theology which is an eastern way of looking at reality in the light of the Revelation. Oriental Theology as we know is biblical and patristic in its foundations. Hence, these sources are made use of to establish the principles logically. Much of the theological insights exposed in this paper are derived from Oriental Theology even in places not explicitly mentioned so.

METHODOLOGY

Using the theoretical framework of qualitative research, the arguments are substantiated with enough bibliography in a logical sequence. The hermeneutical parallelism of the key text gives the nuances of the origin, development and canonical existence of the Church. The expansion of the key phrase will give the implications of missionary activities of the church and also gives an invitation to propose new strategies for mission in India by revisiting Ivanian Ashram model of mission. The thesis covers different theological streams of the Church to draw the parallel connections and to establish logical interpretations.

PROCEDURE

The general introduction would begin with the context and the reasons for the study. In the first chapter an exegetical and hermeneutical study of Deut. 26:5 is given and the significant points of consideration give the parallelism of beginning, growth and establishment of Israel as a worshipping community with that of Syro-Malankara Catholic church. While doing the exegesis the whole chapter; Deut. 26 is taken and arrives at verse 5 by analysing the delimitation and contextual nuances. Significant points of consideration are listed and parallel elements are found out. From that the parallelism is analysed and arrived at theological conclusions.

In the second chapter, the ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ aspect of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church will be discussed from moving through the history; its origin, development and canonical existence and present context. It is a kind of literature review done by referring various literature available in open and located sources. It will present the historical reading of the evolution of the Church with special reference to its growth from 1930 to the present day.

The third chapter will deal with the discussion of the phrase ‘mighty and numerous’ by taking its abstract sense and will be discussed under various titles. The chapter will give different notions like the notion of Church, notion of rite and notion of Church *Sui iuris*. This chapter will be interdisciplinary to the extent that it would deal with various streams of theology like

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oriental monasticism, patrology, liturgy, Indian Christian theology, missiology, ecclesiology, Mariology, theological anthropology, eschatology, contextual theology, Christology, trinity, sacramentology, ecumenism, inter religious dialogue etc. and will be presented as in connection with the explanation of the term 'mighty.'

Fourth chapter will deal with the vision and mission of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and puts forth 'Ivanian Ashram model' as one of the successful model in doing mission activities of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The chapter will make clear idea of the vision of the Church as 'that all may be one' (John 17:22) and is mission as 'being witness.' The chapter will also make a thorough analysis of this model and invite Syro-Malankara Catholic Church to adopt again the very same model in the context where it is about to encounter.

The dissertation ends with general conclusion including the synopsis of the study, various theological conclusions arrived and contributions of the study. The bibliography of the sources referred is given towards the end of the study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

i). Regarding the parallelism used:

- The history of Israel is presented in the creed which is given in Deut. 26:5. It is recited by the offerer during the offering of first fruits after settled in the Promised Land. There are only some elements which show a parallelism between the development of Israel with that of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. It is limited by the following factors;
- 'Wandering in the wilderness' – The wandering experience of Israel cannot be compared with the 'concept of wandering' understood in case of Malankara Church. In this dissertation it is taken in its abstract sense. There were uncertainties experienced by the Church in its existence. These uncertainties are understood in this dissertation as 'wandering experience.' It is also expressed as 'living like aliens' as it is seen in the text (Deut. 26:5) in some other versions.
- 'He went into Egypt … and came out' – The term Egypt is in no way compared to the Mother Church from where Mat Ivanios came out. In the history of Israel, Egypt is the land of captivity and persecution. It is the land of many gods. Israelites were considered there as slaves. Male children were not allowed to grow up. Human freedom was denied. Therefore in this dissertation, the comparison is not done.
- The concept of 'Sojourn' – Oxford English Dictionary gives the meaning of Sojourn as 'a short period when a person stays in a particular place.' For Mar Ivanios living as an ardent devotee of Malankara Orthodox Church is not in a temporary basis. The problems faced by the Church at that time made the leaders of the Church to move for communion with Catholic Church. Therefore the concept of 'sojourn' point to the

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temporary nature of the problems. Mar Ivanios thought the communion as the solution. In this context, understanding the mind of Mar Ivanios is little bit difficult. The notions of ecclesiology and ecumenism were not well defined at that time as it is at present. The geographical area of India was not as it is now. The notion of 'Indian Culture' has changed.

- 'Mighty and Populous' – The phrase 'mighty and populous' is not understood in its concrete sense. In this dissertation the term 'mighty' is understood as the strength in the resources of the church and 'populous' is not taken in the literal sense.

ii). This dissertation is not primarily an evaluation of the different theories of missionary methods in order to determine which is best. It presents 'Ivanian ashram model' of mission as the suited model of mission in the present context.

iii). It should be noted that this work is basically a theological rather than a sociological study. So the evaluation of the success of mission cannot be done in an analytical way.

iv). The researcher admits the fact that the diametric affirmation of organic union and consistency is not maintained through the study right from introduction to conclusion. And also confesses the limitation in freedom of using language and its fluency and of course the writing style too.

v). Due to lack of sufficient literature on Deuteronomy, at times the researcher is compelled to go for subjective judgements.

I do hope and pray that this endeavour does justice to the thought and vision of the great personality of Mar Ivanios who is the architect of the epoch-making Reunion Movement and whose missionary endeavours rooted in monastic spirituality and self-witness brought about a spiritual wave in the Kerala church and society leading to the transformation of many lives. And it is also believed that this dissertation makes sparks of inspiration among the faithful of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church with renewed enthusiasm. As a self-examination, it enabled the researcher to become more aware of the way the ancestors upheld their mission activities in high esteem. Standing at the threshold of moving out to encounter a pluralistic arena of religion and culture by the Church, the present venture may be a ray of light to reflect about the faith deeply, to celebrate it meaningfully, and to live as a 'witness' courageously.

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CHAPTER I
'HISTORY REPEATS:' Exegetical Study of the Verse: Deut 26:5 and Drawing Parallels

1.1. Introduction

Historic recurrence is the phenomena of repeating certain events in history. In every literature, there are many examples of the same. Among the Greek and Roman writers whose works have been survived, Polybius is the most advanced theoretical exponent of historical recurrence.[3] It is not only the specialty of Greek literature, but also the specialty of other pieces of literature. In this defence paper, the first chapter deals with the historical recurrence of similar events happened in the history of Israel, and the origin, development and canonical existence of Malankara Syrian Catholic Church. In order to draw parallels, the exegetical and hermeneutical nuances of Deut. 26 are done. Deut. 26 is taken for the primary observation and from there the key text i.e. Deut 26:5 is analysed exegetically. The significance of the phrase 'becoming a nation/people mighty and numerous' is studied in an elaborative way which throws light on the thesis statement.

1.2. Deut. 26 in the Book of Deuteronomy

The book of Deuteronomy consists of three sermons or speeches delivered by Moses to the Israelites on the plains of Moab, shortly before they enter the Promised Land or before crossing the river Jordan.[4] The three speeches are:

- First Address (1:1-4:49)
- Second Address (5:1-26:19)
- Third Address (27:1-34:12)

The section including Deut. 26 appears in the concluding part of the second address of Moses. The chapters 5-11 constitute the first or the introductory section of the main address. Their purpose is to present a series of exhortations on the covenant faith of Israel, so that the exposition of the chs. 12-26 may be understood in their proper theological setting. Chs. 12-16 contain laws, commands and stipulations i.e., 'the Law book' regarding the destruction of pagan shrines (12:1-12), place of worship and its importance (12:13-28), warning against

[3] http://www.anacyclosis.org/pdf/EXCERPT-HISTORICAL-RECURRENCE-IN-WESTERN-THOUGHT-TROMPF-1979-AD.pdf accessed on 16.06.2017

[4] James Robson, "The Literary Composition of Deuteronomy." In *Interpreting Deuteronomy*, edited by David G. Firth and Philip S. Johnston, 19-59. (Norton Street: Inter-Varsity Press, 2012.) 19.

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idolatry and dispositions concerning apostasy (12:29-13:18), purity laws (14:1-21), periodic religious duties (14:22-16:17), offices and functions of Judges, priests and Levites (16:18-18:8), prohibition of child sacrifice, divination and magic (18:9-14), law concerning cities of refuge (19:1-13), law concerning witnesses (19:14-21), rules of warfare (20:1-21:14), miscellaneous laws (21:15-23:1), and humanitarian and cultic laws (23:2-25:19).

1.2.1. Preceding Context (Deut 25:1-19)

Chapter 25 of the book of Deuteronomy is the continuation of humanitarian and cultic law begun in chapter 23 (23:2-25:19).[5] It includes themes like punishment for those who enter into dispute and litigation (25: 1-4), treatment towards ox while it is treading the grain (25:4), custom of levirate marriage (25: 5-10), punishment towards immodest woman (25:11), laws regarding unjust weights and measures (25: 12-16), command to blot out the memory of Amalek (25: 17-19). In short the whole chapter speaks of laws concerning human conduct while Israelites relate with others.

1.2.2. Succeeding Context (Deut 27:1-26)

Deut. 27 deals with the ritual ceremony to be conducted at Shechem (27:1-26). Vv.1-8 speaks of plastered stones to be set up on Mount Ebal and the Deuteronomic law to be written upon them. An altar is also to be erected, evidently to be used in the ceremony to offer burnt offerings (v.6). Moses and Levitical Priests retells Israel that "this is the day that you have become the people of the Lord," (v.9) a ritual that ratifies their covenantal relationship with YHWH. They should be faithful to the Lord since Lord made Israel as His own people (v. 10).

Vv. 11-26 gives the list of twelve curses. The twelve curses are concerned with idolatry (v.15), dishonour of Father and mother (v.16), breaches of love for one's neighbour (v.17), misleading a blind person (v.18), depriving the alien, orphan and the widow (v.19), sexual irregularities (vv.20-23), bodily injuries and murder (vv.24-25), and disobedient to the law (v.26). It is very clear that all these are connected with the life of Israelites. When they began to settle and live there, they should be human to the people to whom they encounter.

[5] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomy" in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2013), 96.

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1.3. Structure of Chapter 26

In general, most of the scholars divide the chapter into 3 sections.[6]

i. Coming into the Land and Offering of First Fruits – 26: 1-11
ii. Gratitude and Generosity – 26: 12-15
iii. The Treaty Concludes – 26:16-19

1.3.1. Coming into the Land and Offering of First Fruits – 26: 1-11

The first section (verses 1–11) refers to the offering of a part of the first crops grown when the Israelites settle in the land of Canaan.[7] Then comes the worship rite and creedal formula (v.5). Two liturgical confessions are presented; the first part is Jacob's movement and second part is the afflictions faced by the people (v.5 & 6-7). The first fruits ritual (26: 1-11) celebrates the first agricultural produce of the year. When they bring the basket of produce to the priest at the central sanctuary, they have a responsive reading – the creedal formula[8] - "And you shall answer and you shall say before the Lord your God: 'my father was a wandering Aramean and he went down to Egypt, and he sojourned there, as a sojourner with a few in number; and he became there to a people, great, mighty, and numerous" (v.5). In the presentation of first fruits and during that time of worship, the participants remember all the events with gratitude like their nomadic life, showering of God's blessings in their hardships, the entrance into the land etc. The people those who had escaped Egypt and crossed the wilderness could really know the hardships and they might have told the events to the posterity.

After getting settled in the land, people are asked to take first fruits of the land and come before Lord and give it to the priest as an offering. At this time, the offerer makes the declaration, that their ancestors, especially Jacob, was "a wandering Aramean, who emigrated from Canaan and lived 'as an alien' in Egypt, was there oppressed, brought out by God with wonderful power, and finally led to this place'' (Deut 26:5). This is the history of Israel. In the beginning they were few in number. Now they are mighty and numerous.

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[6]Mann, Thomas W, *Deuteronomy*,(Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 138.

[7]Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. A. (2000). *A handbook on Deuteronomy*. New York: United Bible Societies. Page . Exported from Logos Bible Software, 3:06 PM July 6, 2017.

[8] This is mentioned as short creed by von Rad. Cited in Christensen, D. L. (2002). *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12* (Vol. 6B). Dallas: Word, Incorporated. Page. Exported from Logos Bible Software, 2:59 PM July 6, 2017.

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The historical reminiscence makes the individual about their past toiling and suffering (26:6ff). They had experienced the mighty hand of the Lord and the providence of God (26:8-9). While offering, the offerer makes prostration which may symbolise complete surrender before the Lord. Then, there should be a great celebration with others as a thanksgiving and blessings that God had showered on Israelites (26:10-11).

1.3.2. Gratitude and Generosity – 26: 12-15

This section concerns the offering of the tithes. The spirit behind the collection of the tithes is to share among the Levites, aliens, poor, widows and the orphan (26:13). The offerer gives his disposition regarding his personal life to God (26:14). The section ends with a supplication to bless the land that is given by the Lord and bless the people those who live there (26:15). It is clearly a prayer recognizing God's transcendent sovereignty and asking for God's continued blessing, a final acknowledgment that the 'land flowing with milk and honey' which is gifted from the Lord alone (Deut 26: 15).

For Deuteronomy, gratitude, like love, has a dual orientation. It is the basis for worship for allegiance to the Lord alone and it is the basis for the stewardship for equitable distribution of the bounty of the land.[9] The horizontal dimension of gratitude becomes the focus of third year tithe ritual, (Deut 26:12-15, cf. another repetition from the festival calendar - Deut 14:28-29). Here the beneficiaries are listed twice for emphasis (Deut 26:12, 13), and everyone is to eat and be full (Deut 26:12b; see 8: 10, 12).

1.3.3. The Treaty Concludes – 26:16-19

Vv. 16-19 begins with the command on observing the laws diligently to show the faithfulness to the Lord (26:16). Israel has made an agreement with God that God will be their God and they will walk in His commandments and ordinances and obey them (v.17). This was then their resolution and determination. God had given Israel occasion to say that they were his special people, his treasured possession (cf. Exodus 19:5-6), whose it was, as such, to keep all his commandments, and to whom he would be faithful to fulfil all that he had promised (vv. 18-19).

[9] Mann, Thomas W, *Deuteronomy*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 140.

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1.4. Deut 26:5 in Chapter 26

Deut. 26:5 is the faith assertion of the offerer. It is their experience from the history. The centrality of v.5 can be seen from the following division:[10]

A	You shall bring the first fruits to the central sanctuary	26:1–2
B	Presentation of first fruits to the priest with declaration	26:3–4a
X	Presentation at the altar with recitation of *Magnalia Dei*	26:4b–9
B	Presentation of first fruits to YHWH by the worshiper	26:10a
A′	You shall put it down before YHWH and rejoice	26:10b–11

In the centre of this structure (Vv.4b–9), we find the recitation - 'A wandering Aramean was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there to people, great, mighty, and numerous" (v.5)[11] The outer frame moves from the instructions to bring the first fruits to the central sanctuary (vv.1–2) to instructions regarding 'family worship' at the central sanctuary, which includes the household of the worshiper 'and the Levite and the sojourner who is in your midst' (v.11). The inner frame moves from the individual worshiper's presentation of 'the basket' containing the first fruits, which is received from his hand by the priest in charge at that time (vv.3–4a), to the presentation of the first fruits themselves to YHWH (v.10a). Both of these presentations are followed by specific prayers that the worshiper recites within that liturgical setting.

1.5. The Key Verse of the Study – Deut. 26:5

1.5.1. Exegetical Analysis

The exegetical analysis of the verse Deut. 26:5 is done by dividing it into six phrases.

וְעָנִיתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי ׀ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיְמָה וַיָּגָר שָׁם בִּמְתֵי מְעָט
וַיְהִי־שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל עָצוּם וָרָב׃

[10]Gaebelein, F. E., Kalland, E. S., Madvig, D. H., Wolf, H., Huey, F. B., Jr, & Youngblood, R. F. (1992). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel* (Vol. 3). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. Page . Exported from Logos Bible Software, 3:02 PM July 6, 2017.

[11] G. von Rad designated this as the "small historical credo," and G. E. Wright called the *Magnalia Dei* ("the mighty acts of God"). Cited in Christensen, D. L. (2002). *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12* (Vol. 6B). Dallas: Word, Incorporated. Page . Exported from Logos Bible Software, 2:59 PM July 6, 2017.

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1.5.1.1. Translation

Hebrew		English
וְעָנִיתָ	26:5a	And you shall answer
וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי ׀ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ	26:5b	and you shall say before the Lord your God
אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי	26:5c	My father was a wandering Aramean
וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיְמָה	26:5d	and he went down to Egypt
וַיָּגָר שָׁם בִּמְתֵי מְעָט	26:5e	And he sojourned there as a sojourner with a few
וַיְהִי־שָׁם לְגֹוי גָּדֹול עָצוּם וָרָב	26:5f	and he became there to a people great mighty and numerous

1.5.1.2. Phrase by Phrase

1.5.1.2.1. 26:5a – וְעָנִיתָ means 'and you shall answer'

וְעָנִיתָ is formed from the root word 'עָנָה'[12] which means 'to answer' to respond or to reply." This root occurs in most Semitic languages, although it bears many meanings. With the meaning 'to answer' that 'עָנָה' appears in Ugaritic, Akkadian, Arabic, post-biblical Hebrew, and biblical Aramaic. One of the two meanings of 'עָנָה' is "to respond," but not necessarily with a verbal response as in Gen.35:3 and Gen. 28:10ff. A nonverbal reaction is also

[12] Cf. James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible with Their Renderings in the Authoirised English Version*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1906). no. 6030.

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indicated in Deut. 20:11and Job 30:20. In Isaiah 49:8 responding is synonymously parallel to helping—i.e., it is an action (cf. Ps. 69:17; Isa. 41:17). It may also mean "to respond with words," – like a dialogue as in Gen. 18:27, the sons of Heth "answer and say" (Gen. 23:5), they are responding verbally to the implied inquiry made by Abraham (v. 4).

In the context of confessing at the time of the ritual of first fruits, the phrase 'you shall answer' means the response of the Israelite of something received as gift or blessing, or as a response of the questions asked by the priests.

1.5.1.2.2. 26:5b - וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי ׀ יְהוָה֙ אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ - **and you shall say before the Lord your God**

The word וְאָמַרְתָּ is formed from the root 'רמַאָ'[13] means "to say, speak, tell, command, answer." This verb occurs in all Semitic languages.[14] 'רמַאָ' refers to the simple act of communicating as in (Gen. 2:23) and Gen. 1:3. It is also used in communication with animals (Gen. 3:1) or, in figures of speech such as personification, inanimate objects "say" something (Judg.9:8ff.). It also gives the meaning such as "to appoint" or "to assign" (1 Kings 11:18), "mention" or "name" (Gen. 43:27), "call" (Isa. 5:20), and "promise" (2 Kings 8:19). Here the word וְאָמַרְתָּ is translated as 'and you shall say.'

לִפְנֵי comes from the noun ′פָּנִים′; pl. but always as sing. means face; used in a great variety of applications like literary and figurative; also (with prep, pref.) as a prep, (before, etc.).

The divine name YHWH - יְהוָה appears only in the Bible. God chose it as His personal name by which He related specifically to His chosen or covenant people. Its first appearance in the biblical record is Gen. 2:4.The Lord [YHWH] reveals his self as "God of your fathers …" (Exod. 3:15-17). So God explained the meaning of "I am who I am" (Exod. 3:14). He spoke to the fathers as YHWH, but the promised deliverance and, therefore, the fuller significance or experienced meaning of His name were unknown to them (Exod. 6:2-8).

אֱלֹהֶיךָ stems from the root word 'el' "god." This term was the most common general designation of deity in the ancient Near East. Thus the expression "God, the God of Israel" (Gen. 33:20) identified the specific activities of Israel's God. The name of 'el was commonly used by the Israelites to denote supernatural provision or power.

[13] Cf. Strong's Dictionary – no. 559
[14] Cf. Englishman's Concordance, 105.

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The clause of the v. 26:5 ‘And you shall answer and you shall say before the Lord your God’- ‘וְעָנִיתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי ׀ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ’ (v. 26:5a&b) in the context of Deut. 26 reveals the importance of confession. Such was the confession required of every Israelite when he presented, before the altar, the offering of first-fruits. It was, therefore, in the midst of abundance, a memorial of former destitution, and an acknowledgment of utter unworthiness, under circumstances of peculiar obligation.[15]

1.5.1.2.3. 26:5c - אֹבֵד אֲרַמִּי אָבִי - **My father was a wandering Aramean**

אֲרַמִּי is an adjective formed from the noun אֲרָם. It means Aram or Syria, and its inhabitants; also the name of a son of Shem (Gen. 10:22, 23; 1 Chro. 1:17), a grandson of Nahor (Gen. 22:21), and of an Israelite.

The word אָבַד means differently as to wander, perish, die, be lost, go astray, go to ruin, succumb, be carried off, and fail. The word occurs in all the branches of the Semitic languages including biblical Aramaic. Biblical Hebrew attests this verb at every time period and about 120 times (184).[16] Basically אָבַד represents the disappearance of someone or something. In its strongest sense the word means “to die or to cease to exist.”(cf. Lev. 26:38, Num 33:52). A somewhat different emphasis of אָבַד is “to go to ruin” or “to be ruined.” Exod. 10:7. Another nuance of the verb is “to go astray” in the sense of ‘wandering.’

“Wander Off” occurs in the OT as in Isa. 9:3, 20, the verb is used in the concrete sense, referring to animals that have run away from the herd. But it appears more often in the figurative sense: Israel is like sheep whose shepherds, have forsaken and neglected them, and who consequently are wandering aimlessly (Jer. 50:6; Ezk. 34:4, 16) or they feel that their shepherd (Yahweh) has forsaken them (Ps. 119:176).[17]

The use of אָבַד in Deut. 26:5 is significant and prefers a third meaning which is close to Akkadian ‘a fugitive Aramean.’ “This interpretation of the word does not occur elsewhere in

[15] In Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae (1653) John Wallis wrote: “The rule of using the modal verbs ‘will or shall is to express a future event without emotional overtones, one should say I shall, we shall, but you/he/she/they will; conversely, for emphasis, willfulness, or insistence, one should say I/we will, but you/he/she/they shall.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shall_and_will#Specific_uses_of_shall_or_will accessed on 15.08.2017

[16] As per Englishman’s Concordance, 456.

[17] TDOT, Vol II, 20.

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the OT; it refers specifically to the Jacob Story. The rendering 'wandering,' encompasses the entire patriarchal history and in this way emphasizes the relationship of the early Israelite tribes with the Aramean, who lived a nomadic life."[18] At the dedication of the first fruits Israel is to recognize God's rights to the land, that He is the landowner and they are the temporary tenants, by confessing "my father was a wandering Aramean" (Deut. 26:5). "Wandering" seems to suit best to contrast with the sedentary life Israel would enjoy in Canaan (v. 9).

The word אָבִי is formed from the root (אָב), "father; grandfather; forefather; ancestor." Cognates of this word occur in Ugaritic, Akkadian, Phoenician, and other Semitic languages. Biblical Hebrew attests it about 1,120[19] times and in all periods. Basically, אָב relates to the familial relationship represented by the word "father." אָב also means "grandfather" and/or "great grandfather," as in Gen. 28:13. Such progenitors on one's mother's side were called "thy mother's father" (Gen. 28:2).

This noun may be used of any one of the entire line of men from whom a given individual is descended; as in (1 Kings 19:4, Jer. 35:6, Josh. 19:47), a group with a special calling (1 Chron. 24:19), a dynasty (1 Kings 15:3), or a nation (Josh. 24:3). This noun sometimes describes the adoptive relationship, especially when it is used of the "founder of a class or station," (Gen. 4:20). The word is also applied to teachers: (2 Kings 2:12). In 2 Kings 6:21, the word is applied to the prophet Elisha and in Judg. 17:10, to a priest; this word is also a title of respect when used of "one's husband (Jer. 3:4). In Gen. 45:8, the noun is used of an "advisor."

The word אָבִי is with the suffix means 'my father.' In the context, it refers to Jacob the Patriarch and is presented as the progenitor or the ancestor. It implies the formation of Israel as the descendants of Jacob; a common father.

The clause of the v.26:5 'My father was a wandering Aramean - אֲבִי אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד' (26:5c) denotes the hardships of Jacob as a 'wanderer' (cf. Hosea 12:12) in Aram. It is to mark the nomad origins of Israel in contrast to their present state as cultivators of their own land. Jacob

[18] TDOT, Vol II, 20.
[19] Cf. Strong's Dictionary - 1

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can be called a Syrian (literally, Aramaean),[20] not only because of his own long residence in Syria with Laban (Genesis 29-31), but because he there married and had his children (cf. Hosea 12:12); and might be said accordingly to belong to that more than to any other land. Jacob fled for his life from his brother Esau, and was poor and penniless when he came to Laban. He was exposed to cold and heat, and had his wages frequently changed.

1.5.1.2.4. 26:5d - מִצְרַיְמָה וַיֵּרֶד - **and he went down to Egypt**

וַיֵּרֶד is formed from the root יָרַד means 'to go down' or 'to descend' (lit. to go downwards). Basically, this verb connotes 'movement' from a higher to a lower location as (Judg. 5:11) or to get to a city located on a lower level than the access road (1 Sam.10:8), and to denote to leave a city (1 Sam. 9:27). The journey from Palestine to Egypt is referred to as "going down" (Gen. 12:10). יָרַד is used frequently meaning "dying." One "goes down" to his grave (Gen. 3:19). "All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him …" (Ps. 22:29). יָרַד may also be used of "coming down," as in (Gen. 11:5—the first biblical occurrence). יָרַד is also used figuratively of a "descent in social position" (Deut. 28:43). At least once the word means "to go up." (Judg. 11:37). It is used 30 times in OT.

In this context, the use of word וַיֵּרֶד shows the movement of Jacob or the journey he made. He fled for his life from his brother Esau, and was poor and penniless when he came to Laban. Later he returned to Canaan. As a result of a severe drought in Canaan, Jacob and his sons moved to Egypt at the time when his son Joseph was the state official. The name of a place מִצְרַיִם means Egypt.

The Clause of v. 26:5 'מִצְרַיְמָה וַיֵּרֶד - and he went down to Egypt' (26:5d) shows the movement of Jacob and his children to Egypt. Israel in its infancy sojourned in Egypt as strangers, they served there as slaves.

1.5.1.2.5. 26:5e - וַיָּגָר שָׁם בִּמְתֵי מְעָט - **And he sojourned there as a sojourner with a few**

[20] Jacob though born in Canaan, he was a Syrian by descent, his mother Rebecca, and his grandfather Abraham, being both of Chaldea or Mesopotamia, which in Scripture is comprehended under the name of Syria. His wives and children, by their mothers' side, and his relations, were Syrians, and he himself had lived twenty years in Syria with Laban.

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The word וַיָּגָר is formed from the root 'גּוּר' means to sojourn. This verb occurs only in Northwest Semitic only as a noun. In biblical Hebrew the verb 'גּוּר' occurs 84[21] (98)[22] times.

שָׁם - the adverb of time refers to be in a place. Here it denotes an action of past.[23] בִּמְתֵי – means sojourner. The word מְעַט has different meanings like almost, brief, few, fewest, little, etc. The word appears 102 times in OT in different forms.[24] Here it is used as 'few' with the preposition which makes the meaning 'with few.'

The clause of v. 26:5 'וַיָּגָר שָׁם בִּמְתֵי מְעַט - And he sojourned there as a sojourner with a few' (v. 26:5e) refers to the condition of Jacob and his children in Egypt. It contains the nuances of all the story of Jacob and his children there in Egypt. It is confined to the descendants of Jacob, may be some people only.

1.5.1.2.6. 26:5f - וַיְהִי־שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל עָצוּם וָרָב - **and he became there to a people great mighty and numerous**

The verbal form in past tense of the root 'הָיָה' וַיְהִי־ means became.[25] It is followed by predicate noun as in Genesis 3:20, Genesis 4:2, 2 etc. Sometimes it is followed by predicate adjective Genesis 38:7; Exodus 36:13.

'לְגוֹי' stems from the root 'גּוֹי' means people or nation.[26] It appears 561 times in OT.[27] 'גּוֹי' refers to a "people or nation," as in Gen. 12:2. It also represents a group of individuals who are considered as a unit with respect to origin, language, land, jurisprudence, and government. This emphasis is in Gen. 10:5 (the first occurrence): Deut. 4:6 deals not with political and national identity but with religious Unity. It is used specifically of descendants of Abraham, as in Genesis 12:2; Genesis 17:6 etc. sometimes definitely of Israel Exodus 19:6, Exodus 33:13, Deuteronomy 4:6.

[21] Cf. Strong's Dictionary - 1481
[22] As per Englishman's Concordance, 129.
[23] Cf. Strong's Dictionary - 8033
[24] Cf. Strong's Dictionary - 4462
[25] Cf. Strong's Dictionary - 1961
[26] Cf. Strong's Dictionary - 1471
[27] William Edwy Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Hebrew Words*, Eds. Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Inc, 1996), 254.

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גָּדוֹל is an adjective which means great.[28] It is used to denote the magnitude and extent, e.g. Numbers 34:6, Genesis 15:18. It is also used to show the intensity, fear Deut. 4:34, weeping in Isaiah 38:3, power in Exodus 32:11 etc.

The word עָצוּם means great, mighty, must, strong etc.[29] For example it refers to mighty, especially of people, strong in numbers as in Genesis 18:18; Exodus 1:9 etc. It is also used to denote numerous, or countless as in Amos 5:12. It stems from the root 'רַב' means abundance or numerous.[30] It occurs 462 times in OT. It denotes quantity, size, age, number etc. It is used as many: person Exodus 5:5; Judges 8:30 etc.

The part of v. 26:5 'וַיְהִי־שָׁם לְגֹוי גָּדֹול עָצוּם וָרָב - and he became there to a people great mighty and numerous' (v. 26:5f) denotes the growth of the tribes of Israel. It shows the greatness of God in making them as a great people. The reason of the confession (v. 26:5) was to show that it was not owing to the greatness of their ancestors from where they sprung, but to the gift of God and His providence. So every sensible soul, when he brings his sacrifice frankly acknowledges the gift of God.

1.6. Some Significant Points for Consideration

To make the present study significant, following conclusions are drawn by making a parallelism between the confession presented in Deut 26:5 and the historical facts concerning Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

i. Importance of the term Aramean or Syrian in the context Malankara Syrian Catholic Church and its historical background.
ii. Significance of 'wandering' in the life of Malankara Syrian Catholic Church
iii. Life as a sojourner is explained in two stages: Coonan Cross Oath to August 19, 1930 and August 19 to Sept 20, 1930.
iv. Coming back – reunion event in Sept 20, 1930.
v. 'Becoming a Nation mighty and populous' unveils the growth of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church as a Major Archi Episcopal Church and its privileges and various strengths

[28] Cf. Strong's Dictionary - 1419
[29] Cf. Strong's Dictionary - 6099
[30] Cf. Strong's Dictionary - 7227

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vi. 'Becoming' – the special emphasis is given to Missions of Malankara Syrian Catholic Church including its strengths and opportunities to reach out frontiers

1.7. Implication and Significance

The above mentioned parallel nuances are tried to read hermeneutically in this section.

1.7.1. Wandering Aramean: Jacob with Mar Ivanios and Malankara Syrian Context

The sheer volume of material, more than 80 per cent of Genesis, devoted to the family history of Abraham. Here are explained the origins of the nation of Israel, and more particularly of the 12 tribes that made up the nation. It tells also of the basis of the claim to the land of Canaan: the Lord promised it to Abraham in a series of visions. The centre of the Jacob narrative is his sojourn in Mesopotamia, where he, his wives and concubines make virtually the entire nation of Israel. The great nation promised to Abraham and Sarah is gradually becoming a reality.

In the history of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church also we finds the parallel elements. The reunion of some members of Malankara Orthodox Church with Catholic Church was made possible only because of the effort done by Mar Ivanios. The church was following the Antiochean – West Syrian Liturgy. Thus traditionally the church becomes Syrian in liturgy and customs. The liturgy was introduced only after Coonan cross oath.[31] The Situation in the Malankara Church was so pathetic and the people were in an uncertainty. The introduction of Syrian liturgy made the faction a Syrian church. As the Hebrew patriarch Jacob became the Aramean or Syrian, gradually the Malankarite faction became Syrian in liturgy, customs and tradition. The later developments regarding administration, the power of governance etc. exercised by Antiochean See and tensions between native prelates led into a situation of uncertainty. The ambiguous communications, invalid ordinations, constant and continuous litigations between factions etc. made life of the people miserable; a kind of wandering experience. Later the decision taken by Mar Ivanios and the some monks of Bethany Ashram in Aug19-Sept20 1930, was marked in the history as the second wandering experience.

[31]Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2016), 113.

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1.7.2. Wandering Life of Israel in Egypt and Wandering Experience of Mar Ivanios

Jacob died and Joseph was there in Egypt as an official in pharaoh's palace. He was instrumental in good fortune of the country and the people. Joseph and his brothers died, and the children of Israel multiplied in the land of Egypt. They held important positions and played an important role in the political, cultural, and economic life of the country. It is not surprising that they stirred the jealousy of the native Egyptians who felt outshone by the 'foreigners.' Israel's blessing, however, became Pharaoh's problem. The new Pharaoh did not know about Joseph and his contributions. He called his council together, and they advised him to enslave these people and oppress them before they grew too powerful. Pharaoh limited the personal freedom of the Hebrews, put heavy taxes on them, and recruited their men into forced labour battalions under the supervision of harsh taskmasters. There were restrictions in child birth. Only female children were allowed to grow in order to decrease the population (Exo. 1:15-16). Then people cried out. It was heard by YHWH.

In the historical development of Malankara Church also, there was a kind of oppression; a spiritual oppression. There were many reasons which made this uncertainty. Monetary litigations, enmity between leaders, misconceptions, conspiracies, misunderstandings, greed, invalid ecclesial acts etc. clubbed together to ruin away the spirituality of Malankara Church. For the people it was a kind of spiritual oppression. People began to 'cry.' Later it is heard. The details of these incidents are given in second chapter.

1.7.3. Entering in to the Land – Reunion with Catholic Church

After the Israelites came out of Egypt, God called Moses to the top of Mt. Sinai and gave Moses the Law. The Law contained the Ten Commandments and many other rules. Moses then led God's people for many years. Because the Israelites did not obey God while they were in the wilderness, God did not lead them straight into the land He had promised them. The trip from Egypt to their new home should have taken the Israelites only days, but instead, they wandered in the desert for 40 years. All that time, God provided everything the Israelites needed (Deut. 29:5-6).

In the history of Malankara church, a kind of wilderness experience was there after 1653. The conditions were so worse and the spirituality of the church was under question. Only in twentieth century, a ray of hope touched the Malankarites. There were attempts of reunion

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happened after 1963. But it was fulfilled only in 1930. All these incidents were explained in second chapter.

1.7.4. Becoming to a People Mighty and Numerous with the Growth of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

As Israel grew as it was promised, and spread and inhabited the Promised land with the providence of YHWH, they became a nation mighty and populous. It is even a present day reality. The resources of the land are innumerably rich and YHWH continues to shower the providence to keep the promise.

Likewise in the history of Malankara Catholic Church, after 1930, it became a "fast growing" church. The strengths of the church are the resources of the church. The words 'mighty' and 'Numerous' are explained in its abstract sense. This will be discussed in the second chapter.

1.7.5. In the Process of Becoming

By selecting the tribes of Israel, God selected the whole humanity and included the human race as the inevitable part of salvation. The salvation history unveils through the process of becoming in the day today life of Israel.

Likewise the new Israel began the journey from incarnation and closely associated with the redemptive actions of Christ. It was the mission of God; *mission Dei*. It is nothing but the Trinitarian Mission. Malankara Catholic Church as an individual rite in the catholic flock tries to continue the mission of God in different ways. In the process of becoming, she is with more visions in mission and new visions are formulated for new missions when she enjoys the status of a Major Archi-Episcopal Church with all India jurisdiction. Further details are there in the fourth chapter.

1.8. Conclusion

So far the chapter discusses the exegetical nuances of the verse of chapter 26 of the book of Deuteronomy. A parallel hermeneutical study attempt of this verse is made to explain the divine providence clearly visible in the origin, evolution and canonical existence of Malankara Catholic Church. She is in the process of becoming. Becoming is an inevitable phenomena. It is the nature of the church. The mission of the church is the mission of God i.e. to witness and continue the redemptive actions of God. That is why it is said that "by nature

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church itself is missionary.[32] As the mission of the tribes of Israel to keep the commandments and obedient to YHWH, the mission of the church is not a different one. She formulates different ways and means to continue it. As it observed in the growth of the old Israel, the new Israel has the story of parallels to proclaim and profess before the sanctuary while she makes the worship. Since Malankara Catholic church is an individual rite in the catholic flock, the parallels always strengthens in the process of becoming.

[32] *Ad gentes*, 2.

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CHAPTER II

BEING AND BECOMING: Origin, Evolution and Canonical Existence of Malankara Catholic Church

2.1. Introduction

Being and becoming are the philosophical notions which explain the existence and transition of an entity. Being stage is already existing, and becoming is the process of growing and always undergoes transition. The positive transformative change is contextually analysed to establish the thesis. The old Israel is understood as the prefiguration of the church, whereas the church is reckoned as the new Israel.[33] Yahweh formed a community not as a posterior event, not after a point of creation; rather it was existing in the mind of God as an entity, a worshiping community totally obedient to Him. Thus, Israel can be considered as the miniature being of the new Israel and it was in the process of becoming. Gradually, it was highly shaped by the unveiling of the Self of Yahweh through different occasions, through different people, through different events, etc. It came to its fulfilment "when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law… (Gal 4:4):the incarnation. It was the point of time where Yahweh disseminated the seeds of the new Israel. In the course of time, it was manifested as the mystical body of Christ. But still the mission of God – *missio Dei*- continues. It is the existential necessity of the church in the process of becoming. These elements are discussed in this chapter.

2.2. A Brief Historical Note

In this section, the 'repeated history' is unveiled and hermeneutically analysed with the historical parallelism (Deut 26:5). It analyses the apostolic origin of the church in India with special reference to the origin, development and canonical status of the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church. After sometime from the origin, the church became fragmented. As the faith formulation of Deut. 26:5 which gives all historical events in the origin, growth, and development of old Israel, here in India one can easily make parallels in the origin, growth,

[33] P. Chase Sears, *Heirs of Promise: The Church as the New Israel in Romans*, (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2015), 15. He argues that Paul views the Church as the new Israel—not a replacement of Israel, but rather the continuation of Israel reconstituted in Christ. As the Son of God, Jesus is the true Israel, through whom all of God's purposes for Israel and creation are realized. Through faith in Christ, the Church becomes God's new covenant people and heirs of all his saving promises.

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and development of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. As mentioned in the first chapter, the parallel reading is explained in detail here in this chapter.

2.2.1 The Sprouting Church from the Apostolic Origin

The advent and growth of the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala is a valid living, historical tradition. The tradition traces the origin of' Christianity in Kerala to the visit of St. Thomas. He landed in 52 A.D. He preached Christianity first to the Jewish settlers in and around Cochin and then worked among the Hindus. The Apostle is believed to have founded seven and a half churches for the use of the Christian converts and ordained presbyters.[34] Amidst the multitude of controversies regarding the historicity of the St. Thomas tradition, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru observed thus: "Christianity came to India as early as the first century after Christ long before Europe turned to it and established a firm foothold in South India."[35]

The church founded by St. Thomas began to gather momentum. It traces a continuous history of the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala with certain ups and downs. The materials for the construction of' the history of this church during the early centuries of the Christian era are rather limited. History is silent about the infant church in India until it records the name of Pantaenus who is a traveller and historian from Alexandria.[36] He found in India a Gospel of St. Matthew written in Aramaic which he took back with him to Alexandria.[37] His visit to the Malankara church brings into evidence contacts between the Malankara church and the Alexandrian church.

2.2.2. Later Developments in Infant Church

The first undisputed piece of evidence on record as to the existence of a church in Kerala is found in the writings of Cosmos.[38] The Knanaya Syrian Christians were led by Knai Thomman, the Syrian merchant from the Middle East who arrived at the Malabar Coast in

[34]Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 17..

[35]Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography: Toward Freedom*, (London: Bodley Head Publishers, 1987), 273.

[36]Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 29.

[37] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 6.

[38]Cosmos was a merchant from Alexandria who had sailed in the Indian seas. Hence was called Indicoplestus or the sailor to India. See Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 30.

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345 AD.[39] He brought to Crangannore a group of four hundred Christians from Bagdad, Nineveh and Jerusalem.[40] The church founded by the Apostle was reinvigorated by groups of Christians who came from Babylon.[41]

The Church of St. Thomas in India got rooted in the socio-cultural milieu of India and developed her own ecclesial, liturgical, spiritual and administrative traditions. This was in communion with the Universal Church through her ecclesial communion with the Churches of the Middle East. Besides the Metropolitan of all India, there was also a leader of the St. Thomas Christians, a priest with the title 'Archdeacon of all India,' who played a vital role in the day-to-day administration of the Church. This Apostolic Church was in the Catholic Communion from the very early centuries. It came in contact with the Syro- Chaldean Church of the Middle East and consequently adopted the East Syrian Liturgy.[42] Again, about 825 A.D., immigration under Marwan Sabirso, a Persian merchant landed in Quilon with a large party including two bishops - Mar Sapro and Mar Proth.[43]

In the sixteenth century, this Apostolic Church came into direct relationship with the Western Church through the Portuguese missionaries. The Portuguese extended the Padroado agreement in their evangelization programme over India and wanted to bring the Indian Church of the St. Thomas Christians under this jurisdiction.[44] The Church in India which was rooted in the socio-cultural environment and which enjoyed autonomy in internal administration in communion with the Universal Church resisted the unwanted intervention of the Portuguese who brought with them the Western ecclesiastical traditions. The Portuguese missionaries, ignorant of the Oriental traditions of the Indian Church, had the conviction that anything different from the Western Church was schism and heresy. Hence they wanted to Latinise the Syrian Christians of India.[45]

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[39]C. V. Cherian, *A History of Christianity in Kerala, from the Mission of St. Thomas to the Arrival of Vasco Da Gama (A.D. 52-1498)*, (Kottayam: Kerala Historical Society, 1973), 41.

[40]C. V. Cherian, *A History of Christianity in Kerala, from the Mission of St. Thomas to the Arrival of Vasco Da Gama (A.D. 52-1498)*, (Kottayam: Kerala Historical Society, 1973), 41.

[41] C. V. Cherian, *A History of Christianity in Kerala, from the Mission of St. Thomas to the Arrival of Vasco Da Gama (A.D. 52-1498)*, (Kottayam: Kerala Historical Society, 1973), 41.

[42]A. Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 1989), 89.

[43]A. Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 1989), 91.

[44] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 29.

[45]Placid J. Podipara, *The Rise and Decline of the St. Thomas Christians*, (Kottayam: Oriental Institute for Religious Studies, 1979), 12.

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Till the arrival of the Portuguese, the Christian church in Kerala remained an independent body. It was Christian in religion, Syro-oriental in worship and Indian in culture. Until the 16th century, there were neither doctrinal nor ritual divisions among the St. Thomas Christians.[46] They had the same faith and same communion and had also the same rite, which was East Syrian. Thus, they were well placed in the social hierarchy. Then the Portuguese set their foot on the coast of Kerala. The Syrian church developed itself as an indigenous church except in matters of faith and forms of worship.

2.2.3 The Synod of Diamper

Alexis de Menezes, Archbishop of Goa from 1595 until his death in 1617, together with his Jesuit advisers, decided to bring the Kerala Christians to obedience, an obedience that they conceived as complete conformity to the Roman or 'Latin' customs. This meant separating the *Nazranies* not only from the Nestorian Catholicate of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, but also from the Chaldean Patriarchate of Babylon, and subjecting them directly to the Latin Archbishop of Goa.[47]

The most important stage of their activity was the famous Synod of Diamper (*Udayamperur*) in 1599, when the local Christians' customs were officially anathematised as heretical and their manuscripts were condemned to be either corrected or burnt.[48] The Church of St. Thomas Christians could not withstand any more the denial of her autonomy and be subjected to the Archbishop of Goa. The oppressive rule of the Portuguese *padroado* ('patronage') provoked a violent reaction on the part of the indigenous Christian community, leading then to Coonan cross oath.[49]

2.2.4. Coonan Cross Oath

In *Mattancherry*, Cochin, in 1653, when the group who rebelled against the synod and its later developments, headed by their Archdeacon, made a vow not to accept any allegiance unless to a Syrian Church. Thus, the one Church of the St. Thomas Christians was split into two. A large majority of the broken-away-group hesitated to separate from Rome and they

[46]Placid J. Podipara, *The Rise and Decline of the St. Thomas Christians*, (Kottayam: Oriental Institute for Religious Studies, 1979), 13.

[47]Placid J. Podipara, *The Rise and Decline of the St. Thomas Christians*, (Kottayam: Oriental Institute for Religious Studies, 1979), 15.

[48]Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 51.

[49]Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 60.

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remained in communion with Rome, but, under the Latin Hierarchy. This group came to be called the *Pazhayakûttukar*, while the other was known as *Puthenkûttukar*.[50]

The latter group made several attempts for reunion with Rome while safeguarding their autonomy and patrimony. Failing to re-establish communion with Rome, they happened to come in communion with the Jacobite Syrian Church of Antioch. These developments were not acts against the Apostolic See of Rome but against the Portuguese missionaries and their policy of Latinization.[51]

2.2.5. Introduction of West Syrian Liturgy

In the same year (1653), Archdeacon Thomas was ordained, by the laying on of hands of twelve priests, as the first indigenous Metropolitan of Kerala, under the name Mar Thoma I. Later, in 1665, on the arrival of Mar Grigorios Abd al-Jalil, a bishop sent by the Antiochean Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, this movement resulted in the Mar Thoma party joining the Antiochean Patriarchate and in the gradual introduction of the West Syrian liturgy, customs and script on the Malabar Coast.

2.2.6. Reunion Efforts from a Wandering People

Ever since the division and confusion in 1653, an earnest desire and endeavour to re-establish the lost unity and communion was a constant feature of the St. Thomas Christian community. Dr. Jacob Kollaparambil writes: "For more than a century from the very start of the schism, every pseudo-bishop of this group, except the one who remained in power only for a week, insistently requested the Holy See to admit him and his followers to the Catholic Church, conserving, however, his Episcopal dignity."[52]

Even after the communion with the Jacobite See of Antioch, the Malankara Prelates Mar Thomas I (+1670), Mar Thomas II (+1686), Mar Thomas III (+1688), Mar Thomas IV (+1728), Mar Thomas V (+1765), Mar Thomas VI (+1808) and Mar Thomas VII (+1815), one after the other had attempted reunion with the Holy See, but all ended up in failure.[53]

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[50]Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 19.

[51]Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 64.

[52]Jacob Kollaparambil, "Mar Dionysius the Great of Malabar for the One True Fold," *Orientalia Christaiana Periodica*, xxx, (1964), 149.

[53]Cyril Malancharuvil, The Syro-Malankara Church, (Aluva: Pontifical Institute of Theology, 1973) 102-114.

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Even after the arrival of the Metropolitan of Jerusalem, Mar Gregorious, Mar Thoma did not receive the Episcopal dignity he had desired for so long.[54] The power struggle between the *Padroado* and the *Propaganda* authorities in claiming their respective jurisdictions over the reunited faithful side-tracked the main cause of reconciliation and reunion.[55]

2.2.7. Further Divisions

Meanwhile, Mar Thoma Church was formed because of the influence of Protestant missionaries. They became the reformists. In order to outdo the reformists, Mar Divannasios approached the Patriarch of Antioch. Patriarch Peter III arrived in Malankara and in the Synod of Mulanthuruthy (1876) the Malankara Church had to accept the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch over this Church. Since then, the Malankara Church had contended that the Patriarch's authority was only in spiritual matters.

2.2.8. Attempts to Reunite the Discontented[56]

Several attempts were made to reunite the discontented, but they were only partially successful. Archbishop Garcia and the Jesuits tried in vain to bring back the discontented by force with the help of the Portuguese authorities in Cochin. Garcia was accused of bribing the local Kings to this effect. Then, at the request of Garcia, the Goan Inquisition also made a futile attempt to reunite the rebels. Since the delegates sent by the Inquisition were suspected of being partial to Garcia and the Jesuits, the mission of the Inquisition failed. Only in 1655 did Rome come to know of the deplorable events that took place in Malabar. In order to settle the problem quickly, Rome sent two Apostolic Commissaries, by two different routes, to Malabar. Accordingly, the two Apostolic Commissaries, Hyacinth of St. Vincent and Sebastiani (Joseph of St. Mary), accompanied by their companions, left Rome in February 1656, the first group via Lisbon, and the second via Syria and Iraq. Sebastiani reached Malabar on 5th February 1657.

By the constant efforts of Sebastiani, many abandoned the Archdeacon and promised obedience to Sebastiani. Sebastiani left for Rome on 7 January 1658 to submit to the Pope a report of his activities in Malabar. In the meantime, on 10th March 1658, Hyacinth reached

[54] Placid. J Podippara, "The Efforts of Reunion in Malankara church, South India," *Unitas*, 5, (1953), 7-12.

[55] Joseph, Placid. J., "The Efforts of Reunion in Malankara church, South India," *Unitas*, 5, (1953), 7-12.

[56] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 33-35.

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Cochin. Since there was a misunderstanding that Hyacinth was partial to Garcia and the Jesuits, his mission was not successful.[57]

2.2.9. A Triple Jurisdiction among the Thomas Christians

The Coonan Cross Oath and the subsequent events put the Thomas Christians under a triple jurisdiction. The Christians were divided into three groups.[58]

a) Those who remained faithful to Garcia (Padroado),
b) Those who were reluctant to obey Garcia but willing to be loyal to the Catholic Church under a legitimate Bishop appointed by the Pope, and
c) Those who adhered to Archdeacon Thomas and recognized him as Bishop.

2. 3. Another Division[59]

In 1909, the year in which Vattasseril Mar Divannasios assumed the Church administration, Patriarch Abdulla visited Malankara. The Patriarch, in a meeting of Association convened at Kottayam, insisted that all the Bishops should recognize his spiritual and temporal powers over the Malankara Church through a written agreement known as *salmusa*. Vattasseril Mar Divannasios and other leaders of the Church expressed their inability to recognize this demand. On May 31, 1911, the Patriarch excommunicated Mar Divannasios and his followers. He also consecrated two Bishops. On 30 August 1911, he convoked a Synod at Aluva and appointed Mar Koorilos as the Malankara Metropolitan. With this, the Malankara Church was divided in to two groups. The group that stood with the Antiochean Patriarch came to be known as the Patriarchal or *Bava Kashi* and the group that was with Vattasseril Mar Divannasios known as *Metran Kashi*.

2.4. A New Dawn

In this turbulent situation, Fr P.T. Geevarghese (later Archbishop Mar Ivanios) played a vital role in reinstating the position of the excommunicated Metropolitan and in regaining the self-governance of the Malankara Church.

To ward off the undue interference of Patriarch Abdulla in the administration of the temporalities of the Church, Fr P.T. Geevarghese, with the blessing of Vattasseril Mar Divannasios, contacted Abded M'siha, the Patriarch of Antioch from whom Mar Abdulla

[57] Joseph, Placid. J., "The Efforts of Reunion in Malankara church, South India," *Unitas*, 5, (1953), 11.
[58] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 75.
[59] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 76.

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took over the Patriarchal See of Antioch, and invited him to visit Malankara and to establish a Catholicate here. Accordingly, Patriarch Abded M'siha came to Malankara in 1912 and established the Malankara Catholicate. Thus, the Malankara Church in India became an autonomous Church under its head, the Catholicos. Moran Mor Baselios Paulos I (1912-1913) was enthroned as the first Catholicos, and was called to eternal rest after a short period of five months on 13 May 1913.

2.5. Litigations

After the establishment of Catholicate in Malankara, many litigations took place among the factions. They are the *Vattipanakesu*[60] and *Samudayakesu*.[61]

2.6. Condition of the Church: Still in the Wilderness

Because of this chaos and confusion, the condition of the church was pathetic. As Moolaveetil mentions; "the Jacobite Church of Malankara, after its separation from the mother church, passed through many crises. Its members went wandering in a spiritual desert, while the church itself became a fertile field for periodical quarrels and divisions. Due to conflict of opinions and undue desires for independence, many independent communities came into existence."[62]

Again, there were laments from different people in the church. Moolaveetil, in the book *The Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios,* has carefully and authoritatively synthesized all the available sources and come up with a brief description. He describes how the Jacobite Church of Malankara passed through many crises after its separation from the mother Church.[63]

Mar Ivanios wrote in his autobiography *Girideepam* about this in the same way.

> When we observed the overall state of affairs of the Malankara Syrian Church after 1050, what passed over us was a severe and unbearable mental anguish. We saw that it has become a playground of feuds, litigations, rivalries, and clashes entering upon it one after the other like the waves of the ocean. We realised that even the true Canons of the Church were being overlooked. As we pondered on these events we began to doubt if it would be easy to fulfil God's primary objective in establishing Christianity in Kerala since ancient times or to adhere to the core ideals of the Malankara Community or even to lead it from prosperity to prosperity. We grasped, further, that the present condition of the Malankara Church has sunk to such a nadir that if a couple of

[60] The literal meaning of *vattipanam* is money invested for interest (*palisakkitta panam*). For the charitable activities of the St. Thomas Christians, 3000 *puvarahan* (10,500 rupees) were deposited in the British Bank at 8% interest per year. This deposit of money is called the *vattipanam*. The litigation concerning who should receive the interest earmarked for *Puthankoottukar* is known as *Vattipanakesu*.

[61] The series of litigations that followed regarding the right of Church property, the validity of juridical succession, the excommunication by the Patriarch, the establishment of the Catholicate etc. is called as the *Samudaya* cases.

[62] Louis Moolaveetil, *The Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 1987), 15

[63] Louis Moolaveetil, *The Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 1987), 15

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> selfish people so willed, they could easily manipulate it to any amount of distortion they sought with ease. We felt that just as a sea is not without waves even for a moment, so also a Malankara Church without feuds and lawsuits and prevailed over by serene tranquillity even for a moment seemed impossible. If the members of the Community quarrel against each other, it is the Church that suffers evil and the rotten state of the Church affects the Community adversely. Would not those be obstacles to achieve true devotion of God and holiness proper to Christian life?[64]

2.6. An Urge of Revival: The 'Cry' of the People

Mar Ivanios was deeply aware of all these divisions, which were constantly afflicting the body of Christ. All his life was, therefore, aimed towards the healing of disunity in the Church. He had an intense urge to revive the church. Different thoughts passed through his mind. It was a transition period in his life.

Since he found out that the clergy is without proper education, he made them be educated. He then began to dream of a Theological College for the education of the clergy. Besides he used to take students, girls and boys from Kerala to Serampore and educate them from his own purse. His endeavour was later seen to have yielded rich benefits for the church. Yet Mar Ivanios was not satisfied. He began to question himself about the efficacy of his endeavour. He felt that something more could be and should be done. This led him into the second thought.

2.6.1. Thought of a Missionary Society

Then the second idea came to him – that of the establishment of a missionary society through which he could bring about the spiritual improvement of his community. He writes,

> … Lack of schools is not a great obstacle to evangelization. Whether or not we have the M.D. Seminary or any other college for the clergy, the propagation of the Gospel is inevitable for the glory of the name of God. Let us believe that the institutions needed by the community for its social welfare and timely progress would unfold through othermeans. … There cannot be two opinions that such a missionary society could lead the Malankara Syrian Church to greater glory in the future…[65]

It was a transition of the thought process happening in his mind. Mar Ivanios testifies in his autobiography that while he was earnestly seeking the will of God regarding the foundation of the Missionary Society, he subjected himself to rigorous discipline. He says that he felt an unseen divine force guiding his mind through the path of the thought about the Missionary

[64] Archbishop Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam: Archbishop Mar Ivaniosinte Athmakatha* (Lamp on the Hill: An Autobiography of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Malayalam. Autobiography, 5th Edt. Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2007), 78.

[65] Archbishop Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam: Archbishop Mar Ivaniosinte Athmakatha* (Lamp on the Hill: An Autobiography of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Malayalam. Autobiography, 5th Edt. Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2007), 60.

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Society. But, later he undermined different possibilities of that. Later he understood the ineffectiveness of the society in fully engaged in missionary activities. He foresawother dangers, as well, "in a Society that would be effective only if all worked together as organs of the same body, misunderstanding, unhealthy competition and egoism might creep in and thwart its intended results. If the members of the Society were to marry, their zeal for evangelization would eventually wane."[66] Later his thought moved into some other, higher direction.

2.6.2. House Built on the Rock – Bethany Ashram

Meanwhile, Fr. P. T. Geevarghese started a life of prayer and severe penance. As he says, 'many months pass by.' Later he found out that a religious congregation can only be the spark in serving and reviving the church. He himself took to *sanyâsa* (Religious Life) and founded the Order of the Imitation of Christ, also called Bethany Ashram, in the year 1919. The first Ashram was erected at *Mundanmala* of *Ranni Perunad* in Kerala. In 1925, he founded the community of the *Sanyasinis*, the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ, also called Bethany Madham. From these two religious communities winds of spiritual fervour and renaissance blew across Malankara. By a decision of the Episcopal Synod, on 30 April 1925, Moran Mor Baselios Geevarghese I was installed as Catholicos. On the following day, the Catholicos consecrated Fr P. T. Geevarghese with the name Geevarghese Mar Ivanios as the Bishop of Bethany.

The main aim of the Bethany Ashram was the inner renewal of the members of the Church. They gave prominence to prayer and asceticism. The religious under the leadership of *Abo* Geevarghese gave spiritual retreats and conducted conventions. The people, who were only accustomed to civil litigation, were now instinctively drawn to a new way of Christian life, which was more authentic and in tune with the Gospel light. Because of the influence of Bethany, there was a liturgical renewal in the parishes. They also published liturgical and other spiritual books for the community. *Abo* Geevarghese made effective plans for motivating the people to undertake charitable activities and the carry out evangelical works among the non-Christians, especially among the Dalits. The Bethany Religious Movement was an independent establishment. The parishes, which Bethany established, were neither

[66] Archbishop Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam: Archbishop Mar Ivaniosinte Athmakatha* (Lamp on the Hill: An Autobiography of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Malayalam. Autobiography, 5th Edt. Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2007), 61.

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under the Patriarch nor under the Malankara Metropolitan. Thus, they were free from civil litigation.

2.6.3. A Dream

Even after the foundation of Bethany Ashram and its growth, Mar Ivanios was not happy. The turmoil in the church was still there. As the forefathers wished to come back to the original community spirit as it was there before the faction, Mar Ivanios envisioned his ideals.

The issues such as the excommunication of Vattasseril Metropolitan (1911), the establishment of the Catholicate (1912) the Vattipanacase, etc., made them deeply sad about the fate of the Malankara Church. Mar Divannasios had a meeting with the Catholic Metropolitan of Baghdad, on his way to Mardeen to visit the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch for a compromise dialogue. It was with the objective to explore the possibility of a reunion with the Catholic Church. After reaching Kerala, he received a letter from Ephrem Rehmani, the Antiochean Syrian Catholic Patriarch. He then convened the Synod of the Church at Niranam for finalizing the future plan of action and authorized his associates to proceed with the matter. That meeting was attended by Vattasseril Mar Divannasios, Mar Baselios Geevarghese Catholicose, Geevarghese Mar Gregorios (Kundara) and Mar Ivanios of Bethany.[67]

During the synod at Parumala, Mar Ivanios was formally authorized to enter into communication with the Catholic Church for the possible reunion. He then started his correspondence with the Patriarch Ephrem Rehmani. The leadership of Mar Ivanios was very helpful for the reunion efforts. He was convinced that the Pope is the successor of Peter.

By the approval of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Synod, in 1926, Mar Ivanios forwarded a memorandum to the Holy See. Two conditions were included in it:[68]

- Preservation of their ancient rites and rituals.
- Preservation of the jurisdiction of the uniting Bishops over their own flock.

Within a short time, a reply was received for this memorandum. In this reply, along with a favourable attitude for reunion, Rome made certain inquiries about the Malankara Jacobite

[67] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 80.

[68] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 106.

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Church. In 1927, a second memorandum was sent to Rome, providing clarification on the papal enquiries. Again correspondence to the Holy See continued.

2.6.4. The Dream Comes True; Catholic Communion: Few Sojourners to Come Out

The Oriental Congregation, in its meeting in July 1930, took a final decision favouring the reunion and conveyed the message to the Apostolic Delegate. The Apostolic Delegate in turn passed on this message to Mar Ivanios through Dr. Benzigar, the Bishop of Kollam.[69] Rome accepted the conditions of the application for reunion, in its approval letter. But there were many changes which happened in Malankara. The verdict of the cases was in favour of the bishop's party; they withdrew from reunion.[70] Mar Ivanios and his followers had to face stiff opposition from the Orthodox hierarchy as well as from the people, ever since they decided to go ahead with the proposal of reunion. Under this circumstance, they decided to leave Bethany Hills (Mundanmala).[71] For one month, they lived like 'wanderers' in Vennikkulam.

The historical reunion took place on September 20, 1930 at Kollam in the presence of Dr. Maria Benzigar, the Bishop of Kollam. Along with Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, Fr. John OIC, Deacon Alexios (later Fr. Seraphion OIC) and Mr. Kilileth Chacko was also reunited on the same day as representatives of the community. This was the culmination of the fervent efforts started with Mar Thoma I, which continued for three centuries. It was the fulfilment of a long cherished dream of the acceptance of the reunion conditions by the Holy See.

2.7. 'Becoming to a People' (A Group of Faithful)

That was a small beginning. On June 11, 1932, Pope Pius XI established the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy by the Bull *Christo Pastorum Principi*. By this, the Malankara Catholic Church received legal existence in the Universal Church. Through the Bull, Pope Pius XI erected the Archi-eparchy of Trivandrum with the Eparchy of Tiruvalla as its suffragan.

Mar Ivanios was appointed as the Archbishop of Trivandrum and Mar Theophilos as the Bishop of Thiruvalla. Territorial boundaries of the dioceses were also decided. The new Bishops were given all powers, rights and privileges as per the customs and regulations of the

[69] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 107.

[70] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 107.

[71] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 108.

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Syro-Antiochean Rite. The decree also insisted on the preservation of the Antiochean rite and the traditions of the Malankara Church in its totality.

2.7.1 Milestones in the Growth of the Church

Many priests joined. Bethany fathers were engaged in building up of the church. Later Mar Severios, Mar Dioscorus, Mar Philixinos were embraced the Malankara church. With the blessing of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil founded the missionary congregation of the Daughters of Mary in 1938 at Marthandom in Kanyakumari District. Through the great zeal of these missionaries, the mission of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church spread to the southern regions of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Mar Ivanios worked relentlessly for the building up of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. Through his travels abroad (Rome and other European countries, America and Australia) he spread the message of ecclesial communion and the awareness of the mission of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in the Universal Church. After a period of 22 years of the strenuous, hectic task of organizing and administering the Syro- Malankara Catholic Church, he fell ill for more than a year. Nevertheless, His Grace consecrated Benedict Mar Gregorios as his Auxiliary on 29 January 1953. Archbishop Mar Ivanios passed away on 15 July 1953 and was entombed at St Mary's Cathedral, Trivandrum.

The Eparchy of Tiruvalla was also making strides in its growth and development under the leadership of Jacob Mar Theophilos and Joseph Mar Severios. Mar Severios was the administrator of the Eparchy until 1950 due to the ill-health of Mar Theophilos. On 5 May 1950 he was appointed as the Bishop of Tiruvalla. He was also invested with the title 'Archbishop'by the Holy See. He was called to eternal rest on 18 January 1955.

Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios was enthroned as the Metropolitan-Archbishop of Trivandrum and the Head of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church on 27 January 1955. Under the spiritual renewal, the pastoral guidance and the social commitment of Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios, the Church began to flourish in its various dimensions. The Holy See appointed Zacharias Mar Athanasios as the successor of Joseph Mar Severios. On 14 February 1958, the territorial boundaries of the Eparchy of Tiruvalla were extended to the north including the Malabar region of Kerala, the civil districts of Coimbatore and Nilgiris and Karoor Taluk in Tiruchirappally District of Tamil Nadu and districts of Mysore, Mandya, Coorg, Hasan, Chickamangalore, Shimoga and South Kanara of Karnataka State.

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From the Eparchy of Thiruvalla, the new Eparchy of Bathery was erected and appointed Very Rev. Dr Cyril Malancharuvil OIC, the Superior General of Bethany Ashram as its first Bishop. Most Rev. Isaac Mar Yoohanon was appointed Bishop of Tiruvalla to succeed Most Rev. Zacharias Mar Athanasios.

A significant development of this period is the organisation of the Syro- Malankara Catholic Faithful in India, outside the canonical territorial boundaries of the Church. From being organized as Malankara Catholic Associations, the communities of our faithful living in the Metropolitan cities of India came to be erected as personal parish communities. His Grace the Metropolitan-Archbishop Mar Gregorios was called to eternal rest on 10 October 1994 after an eventful service of 41 years. His Holiness Pope John Paul II appointed Most Rev. Cyril Mar Baselios as the successor of His Grace Benedict Mar Gregorios in November 1994. Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios was consecrated and installed Bishop of Bathery in 1995.

His Holiness Pope John Paul II erected the Eparchy of Marthandom bifurcating the Metropolitan Eparchy of Trivandrum. Most Rev. Lawrence Mar Ephraem was appointed its first Bishop. With the appointment of Rev. Dr. John Berchmans OIC on 26 December 1997 as the Co-Ordinator of the Malankara Catholic Communities in the Extra-territorial regions in India, the ecclesial life of these parish communities was coordinated. Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom was enthroned as the second Bishop of the Eparchy of Marthandom when His Excellency Lawrence Mar Ephraem was called to eternal rest.

A significant development in this period is the establishment of parishes for the faithful of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in the United States of America. The Holy Father John Paul II appointed Rt. Rev. Msgr. Isaac Thottunkal as Apostolic Visitator for the Syro-Malankarites residing in North America and Europe and the Auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum on 18 June 2001. The Holy See established the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha, bifurcating the Eparchy of Tiruvalla in 2003.The Holy See appointed Isaac Mar Cleemis the Bishop of Tiruvalla in 2003.

2.7.2. Present Status: Becoming a Great People

On 10 February 2005, a day engraved in golden letters in the history of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, His Holiness Pope John Paul II raised this Church to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church and appointed the then Metropolitan Archbishop as Major

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Archbishop of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church through the Papal Bull *Ab ipso Sancto Thoma*.

With this, the Malankara Catholic Church obtained a Synodal hierarchical structure with Major Archbishop as the "father and head" (*pater et caput*) of the Church exercising Patriarchal powers with the Synod of Bishops. In accordance with the provisions of the CCEO and the tradition of the Malankara Church, which has its roots in the Syro-Antiochene tradition, the Major Archbishop is the "Catholicos" of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, who with the Holy Episcopal Synod exercises Patriarchal powers envisaged in the CCEO.[72] In complete concordance with this tradition, the *pater et caput* of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Major Archiepiscopal Church assumed the title 'Catholicos' along with the title Major Archbishop. The Catholicos soon constituted the Holy Episcopal Synod. The first Synod of the Syro- Malankara Catholic Church was convened from 16 to 18 August 2005 at the Major Archiepiscopal Curia (Catholicate Centre), Trivandrum.

According to the decision of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro- Malankara Catholic Church, His Beatitude Moran Mor Cyril Baselios Catholicos erected the Eparchy of Mavelikara, bifurcating the Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum, on 1 January 2007. His Excellency Most Rev. Dr Joshua Mar Ignathios, the Auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum was transferred and was appointed the first Bishop of the Eparchy of Mavelikara.

On Thursday, 18 January 2007, His Beatitude Moran Mor Cyril Baselios, the first Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro- Malankara Catholic Church slept in the Lord. On the same day, His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, Bishop of Bathery, assumed the office as the Administrator of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and of the Major Archi-eparchy of Trivandrum as per CCEO c. 127. The Holy Episcopal Synod elected His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Cleemis, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Tiruvalla as the new Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro- Malankara Catholic Church and the Major Archbishop of Trivandrum.

Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI appointed Very Rev. Dr. Chacko Aerath OIC as the Apostolic Visitator for the Syro-Malankara Catholic faithful residing in the Extra-territorial Regions of the Church within India on 7 February 2007. Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis was enthroned as the Second Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic

[72] Pope Pius XII, Motu proprio, *Cleri sanctitati*, AAS 49 (1957) 430-603, c. 335

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Church and the Major Archbishop of Trivandrum on 5 March 2007 at St Mary's Cathedral, Pattom. Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos from the Eparchy of Moovattupuzha and appointed him as the Second Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archi-eparchy of Tiruvalla.

The Major Archbishop-Catholicos appointed a few priests for the pastoral care of the Syro-Malankra Catholic faithful in ETR outside India. And at present, the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church has resident priests for the pastoral care of its faithful in Muscat (2008), Kuwait (2009), Saudi Arabia (2009) and England (2009). The newly built Church in Doha (Qatar), the first Syro-Malankara Catholic parish Church in the Gulf Region, was blessed by the Major Archbishop-Catholicos on 17 April 2009. Most Rev. Abraham Mar Julios was appointed as the Bishop of Muvattupuzha on 18 January 2008.

On 25 January 2010, as per the decision of the Holy Episcopal Synod, the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta, bifurcating the Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum, and the Eparchy of Puttur, bifurcating the Eparchy of Bathery, were erected. At the request of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, on 14 July 2010, Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI erected the Apostolic Exarchate in the United States of America for the Syro-Malankarites in the USA and appointed Rev. Dr. Thomas Naickamparambil, as the first Bishop of the new Exarchate and Apostolic Visitor to Canada and Europe.

The day 26 March 2015, was engraved in golden letters in the history of the Church when His Holiness Pope Francis established the new Eparchy of St. John Chrysostom of Gurgaon and appointed Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas OIC as its first Bishop and on the same day the Holy Father established the new Exarchate of St. Ephrem of Khadki, Pune for the Syro-Malankara Catholics and appointed Most Rev. Thomas Mar Anthonios OIC as its first Bishop. By the erection of the diocese of Gurgaon, and the Exarchate in Pune, Syro-Malankara Catholic Church is entrusted with the evangelisation of all places and the proclamation of the Gospel in India.

2.8. A Synthesis by Drawing Parallels

2.8.1. Importance of the term Aramean or Syrian and nuances of 'wandering' in the context Malankara Syrian Catholic Church and its historical background.

The history of St. Thomas Christians clearly speaks of the apostolic foundation and its gradual growth to a great community. Later, it had affiliation with the Chaldean church and East Syrian Liturgy. The affinity towards a Syrian liturgy began from the early century

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itself.[73]But the invasions eventually latinised the liturgy and it became one of the reasons for revolting against missionaries. Later, because of faction, in the process of appropriating the apostolic succession, the people had contacted many places. As a result, the bishops from Antioch propagated the West Syrian liturgy including the customs of that tradition. As Kanjiramukalil affirms:

> …Latin Bishops in their zeal to eradicate the so-called Nestorian practices imposed the Latin rite, the Antiochean prelate consoled them by restoring their oriental traditions. Hence it is not surprising that the people of Malankara listened to the voice of Mar Gregorios. Thus he restored the use of fermented host in the celebration of the Holy Mass, the traditional vestments of liturgical functions and the old calendar. But gradually Mar Gregorios initiated them to Antiochean liturgy and Jacobite faith.[74]

The successors also did the same. The people wholeheartedly accepted that. The restoration culminated in the acceptance of Antiochean and rejection of Chaldean. Later *anaphoras* were introduced and slowly East Syrian liturgy was replaced with West Syrian liturgy. Whatever the case may be, the Syrian tradition was the liturgical services after the primitive local liturgical practices.

When the uncertainties arose, there was a period of 'wandering' in the wilderness of worldly affairs by the shepherds of the church. When reflected back, there were 'wandering Arameans' who made several attempts for reunion. But the problems of the latter part of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, the focus in the present study is on Mar Ivanios. Liturgically Syrian in tradition, literary speaking an 'Aramean', who always kept the sentiments regarding the church as the most sublime, placed him a condition of 'wandering in the wilderness.' The mental trauma he underwent is already explained in this chapter.

2.8.2. 'He lived there as a wanderer' is explained in two stages: Coonan Cross Oath to August 19, 1930 and August 19 to Sept 20, 1930.

The turmoil experienced by the church after the Coonan cross oath is unimaginable. Later circumstances also refer to a living like 'wanderer', where it can be explained as the inefficiency in understanding the condition of the church as Holy. As Mar Ivanios laments and writes:

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[73] A. Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 1989), 89.

[74] Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *History of the St. Thomas Christians in India*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2015), 114.

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> The acts of His Beatitude Patriarch Abdulla caused distress to the Metropolitan and the Community at large in many ways. We had also seen enough the jealousy and spite among the so-called leaders of the community. Peace and contentment were not seen in any of the churches. In short, the entire body of the Church was tom and bruised.[75]

Again he narrates the laxity of the churchmen in proclaiming the Gospel and evangelisation. As it reads:

> In spite of witnessing their zealous missionary work and their pointing out the unforgivable lethargy of our ancient Church, we did not wake up and rise up. We need to realize this as extremely shameful and culpable. It should be considered extremely unfortunate if we do not repent over it at least now. Certainly the Malankara Syrian Church is answerable to the posterity for its infidelity and the spiritual ignorance or our native land- India. Surely, we will be at a loss to point out a reason for our negligence. For, if we had worked zealously for the evangelization, the whole Indian Empire would have spiritually been enlightened long ago.[76]

The term alien is now understood as though the churchmen are the part of the church, the lack of spirituality and mission thrust is prevailing in the church. Later in Mundanmala, he understood more of the spiritual devastation in the church. To be active in keeping the missionary zeal and to continue the process of evangelisation, he dreamt of catholic communion. So he left Mundanmala on 19 August, 1930.

For one month they are like 'wandering' people. In Vennikkulam, there is a church and a school. The intention of leaving Mundanmala and mother church was to embrace catholic faith. But it doesn't happen so far. At this point of time, it was like an exilic life. Like aliens, they lived there for one month. They lived by alms collected from different parishes, from benefactors, and well-wishers to maintain the livelihood. Fr. Inchackalody describes the agony of Bethanians in a painful way.[77] Mar Ivanios explained to fellow sojourners how to face the situations ahead. The rejection from the mother church was grievous and painful. This was also an alien experience to them; a kind of wandering experience in the 'wilderness.'

2.8.3. Coming back to the Catholic Church – Reunion Event in Sept 20, 1930

The reunion happened as a miracle and an answer to the cry of the people of Malankara centuries back. It was only a small beginning. As mentioned in the exegetical analysis, 'a few

[75]Archbishop Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam: Archbishop Mar Ivaniosinte Athmakatha* (Lamp on the Hill: An Autobiography of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Malayalam. Autobiography, 5th Edt. Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2007), 59.

[76]Archbishop Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam: Archbishop Mar Ivaniosinte Athmakatha* (Lamp on the Hill: An Autobiography of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Malayalam. Autobiography, 5th Edt. Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2007), 66.

[77]Inchackalody, Thomas. *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, Vol. 1, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2006), 452.

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sojourners came out, and became a people mighty and numerous' (Deut. 26:5c). 'Becoming a Great People' unveils the growth of Malankara Syrian Catholic Church as a Major Archi Episcopal Church is mentioned in this chapter and its special privileges and various strengths as 'mighty and numerous' are discussed in the next chapter.

2.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, the sprouting church from the apostolic foundation and its gradual growth were analysed in the light of the exegetical studies mentioned in the first chapter. As God chose Israel as His people, and during their development and growth, they underwent some perishing situation. It is clearly described in the faith formula of Deut. 26:5. But by the providence of God, Israel was freed from all hardships and God made them a nation mighty and populous. In the origin, growth and present status of the church, the story was similar. The Church was wandering in a desert where the spirituality was ruined. It was almost perishing. Many people tried to calibrate the initial nature of the church as it was in the beginning. It is clearly understood that, amidst of turmoil, by the providence of God, Mar Ivanios became instrumental in leading the church into the catholic communion. A wandering Aramean, from the desert experience of turmoil and ruined spirituality experienced in the faction, leaving with a few embraced catholic communion. From there they became people mighty and numerous. The process of becoming mighty and numerous is discussed in the third chapter.

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CHAPTER III
IN THE PROCESSES OF BECOMING: Growing into a People, Mighty and Numerous

3.1. Introduction

The concept of becoming is an old thought and originated in Eastern ancient Greece with the philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus, who in the sixth century BC, said that nothing in this world is constant except change and becoming. Generally, becoming is the process or state of change and coming about in time and space. After Sept. 20 1930, Syro Malankara Catholic Church is in the process of becoming. In this chapter, the phrase 'becoming a people mighty and numerous' (Deut. 26:5f), is hermeneutically interpreted to establish the principle of becoming in the existence of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church.[78]

3.2. SECTION A - Growth of SMCC as an Individual Church - 'Becoming a People; Mighty'

In this section, the growth of SMCC as a Church *Sui iuris* is analysed in a way which throws light on the phrase - 'Becoming a People; Mighty.' In the context of the word 'mighty' (Deut 26:5f) as it is exegetically established in the first chapter, SMCC becomes mighty especially of people in numbers and resources. The notion of 'might' of the church can be understood in the observations including the notions of (i) Church, Rite, Church as *Sui iuris*, (ii) the characteristics of the church as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, (iii) the constitutive elements of the church as its Theology, Spirituality, Liturgy, and Discipline.

3.2.1. The Notion of a Church

The word 'church,' which is derived from *Kuriakos* - Κυριάκος, 'of or belonging to the Lord,' represents the Greek word Ecclesia. In the NT, *Ecclesia* - Εκκλησία, is synonymous with the Hebrew *Qahal* -קהל of the Old Testament, both words meaning simply an assembly from where the word 'Church' is formed. In NT, the word *Ecclesia*– Εκκλησία is meant as 'assembly' in the ordinary classical sense (Acts 19:32 Acts 19:39 Acts 19:41), 'whole body of the redeemed' (Eph. 5:23 Eph. 5:25 Eph. 5:27 Eph. 5:29 ; Heb. 12:23), a few Christians associated together (Rom. 16:5 ; Colo. 4:15) and all the Christians in a particular city, (Acts

[78] Syro Malankara Catholic Church here after referred as SMCC

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13:1, 1 Cori. 1:2, Acts 8:1, Rev. 2:1), the whole body of professing Christians throughout the world (1 Cori. 15:9, Gala. 1:13, Matt. 16:18), etc.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines church as "the liturgical assembly,[79] but also the local community[80] or the whole universal community of believers."[81] These three meanings are inseparable. The Church is the People that God gathers in the whole world as a 'worshipping community.' It exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all, a Eucharistic assembly. It draws its life from the word and the Body of Christ and so itself becomes Christ's Body.[82] Generally, it means convocation or an assembly of Christians. Vatican II mentions church as 'the people of God'[83] which is nurtured by a variety of offices instituted by Christ.[84]

After the reunion in Sept 20, 1930 Pope Pius XI, through the Apostolic Constitution *Christo Pastorum Principi* of June 11, 1932, established the Syro-Malankara Hierarchy for the reunited community. Thus, a new rite began to exist in the catholic flock belonging to Antiochean family as an individual church enjoying the canonical status of Archi-Episcopal Church.

3.2.2. The Notion of a Rite

The word 'rite' originates from the Latin word *ritus*.[85] Initially, it denoted a religious context. Later, it became a common usage in the ecclesiastical literature especially pontifical documents.[86] But its usage in the papal documents made confusions in history.[87] In the early church, there were many local liturgies. But 'rite' is identified with not only liturgy but also more than that. Thus, an evolution in the concept of 'rite' happened in history. In short, from a cultic context, it passes into the ecclesial liturgical context and finally to designate a juridically distinct ecclesial community.[88]Thus, rite can be defined as "a group of faithful

[79] Cf. 1 Cor 11:18; 14:19,28,34,35.
[80] Cf. 1 Cor 1:2; 16:1.
[81] Cf. 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6.
[82] CCC 751
[83] LG 9-17.
[84] LG 18.
[85]Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 12.
[86]Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 13.
[87]Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 13.
[88]Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 19.

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governed by laws and customs of their own, based on an ancient traditions, not only in regard to liturgical matters, but also in respect to the canonical order, and which group is acknowledged by the Holy See as autonomous and distinct from others."[89]

In Vatican II, many documents use it to denote liturgy.[90] It has canonical sense, too.[91] Whatever the case may be, the expression 'rite' refers to the liturgical tradition as well as its canonical significance. Generally and canonically, it is used in the ecclesiastical field as it denotes the particular churches.[92]CCEO[93] defines rite: "A rite is the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony, culture and circumstances of history of a distinct people, by which its own manner of living the faith is manifested in each Church *sui iuris*."[94]

3.2.3. The Notion of a Church Sui iuris

'*Sui iuris*' is a Latin phrase that literally means 'of one's own right.' It is used in both civil law and canon law by the Catholic Church. The term Church *sui iuris* is used in CCEO to denote the autonomous churches in the Catholic communion as "a community of the Christian faithful, which is joined together by a hierarchy according to the norm of law and which is expressly or tacitly recognized as *sui iuris* by the supreme authority of the Church."[95] The term *Sui iuris* is an innovation of the CCEO, and it denotes the relative autonomy of the Oriental Catholic Churches. This canonical term, pregnant with many juridical nuances, indicates the God-given mission of the Oriental Catholic Churches to keep up their patrimonial autonomous nature. And the autonomy of these churches is relative in the sense that it is under the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff.

Till SMCC was in the status of an Archi-Episcopal church, it had "strength of around 400,000 catholic faithful in 866 parishes and mission stations of one Metropolitan Eparchy and many Eparchies. And a good number of Malankara Catholics are settled in the United States of America and European countries."[96] SMCC originated from a church which had the juridical status of having a Holy Synod of the Catholicate which consecrates Bishops and

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[89] E. Herman, De Conceptu Ritu, 339. Cited in Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 22.

[90] Cf. *Sacrosanctum concilium* (SC)3- 'Roman rite and other Rites', differentiates rites in the celebration of liturgy (no.7,118 cf. 24,36,38,87,101 etc.), *Orientaliumecclesiarum* (OE) 6. Numerous citations are there in OE. *Lumen gentium* (LG) 7, 21.*Unitatis redintegrati*o (UR) 4.

[91] Cf. Christus Dominus (CD) 27, 38.

[92] Cf. OE 2, 3, 10. See also CIC 923,1248 § 1, 1015 § 2, 1127 §1, 1109, 214,846 § 2

[93] Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (*Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*)

[94] CCEO 28. Cf. SCICO (*Schema Codicis Iuris Canonici Orientalis*) canon 27 § 2,1°

[95] CCEO 27

[96] See SMCC Directory, 1999.

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Metropolitans, performs all the patriarchal functions and exercises patriarchal powers.[97] Mar Baselios gives a very clear and significant history of the jurisdiction of the Malankara Catholic Church and he argues that the present Malankara Catholic juridical status is insufficient and unjustifiable when the history of the *Sui iuris* church is taken into consideration.[98] Later, the argument was accepted by the Holy See.

On 10 February 2005, His Holiness Pope John Paul II raised this Church to the status of a Major Archi-Episcopal Church through the Papal Bull *Ab ipso Sancto Thoma*. With the promulgation of the new code CCEO in 1992, SMCC became a metropolitan church – church *Sui iuris* in the Catholic communion.[99]

3.2.4. The Characteristics of the Church

The Nicene Creed indicates four basic characteristics of the Church; they are also stated by CCC. The Church professes in the creed to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic.[100] These four characteristics are inseparably linked with each other.[101] These characteristics are called essential or the logical properties, that is, those without which the Church would not be the Church.

3.2.4.1. The Notion of Unity

The concept of unity is understood in Trinitarian unity. Trinity is the source of the Church.[102] Though there are three different persons, there exists substantial unity. The doctrine of mutual indwelling of the trinity is understood as "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are in one another and coexist, entirely, and perfectly in one another, so that where one is, the others are, and what one is involved in doing, the others are also involved in doing."[103] In the liturgical celebrations on the day of Pentecost reveals the Trinitarian unity in its existence.[104] The prayer affirms that Holy Trinity is with three Persons with one substance, understood by

[97] See, Mar Ivanios, The First Memorandum sent to Rome, in 1926, quoted in Cyril Malancharuvil, The Syro-Malankara Church, (Aluva: Pontifical Institute of Theology, 1973)155-156.

[98] Cyril Malancharuvil, The Syro-Malankara Church, (Aluva: Pontifical Institute of Theology, 1973)155-156.

[99] Varghese Thykkoottathil, Christological Mysteries: A Contextual Study on the Liturgy of St. James in the Syro-Malankara Church, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2011), 15.

[100] CCC 811. Cf. 750, 832, 865. Cf. LG 8.

[101] DS (Denzinger, Heinrich, and Peter Hünermann. Compendium of Creeds,Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals 43rd ed. San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2012.) 2888.

[102] CCC 813.Cf. CCC 172, 766, 797 and UR 2 § 5.

[103] Douglas Kelly. Systematic Theology Course Study Guide.41. http://www.rts.edu/site/academics/docs/syllabi/distance/old_syllabi/sys_i_kelly-moodle.pdf accessed on 20.07.2017.

[104] Ordo of First Service of Pentecost of SMCC, Sedro, 253.

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human being as three individuals in existence. It affirms the unity of Godhead and at the same time the individuality of Persons. Like that the church is one body, from different members, visible and invisible, because God is one. About being one church, St. Paul says, "There is one body, one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism…" (Eph. 4:4-6).

In the long soliloquy of the Lord Jesus with the Father, He prayed that the church may be "one" even as He and the Father are one. He said, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one just as We are one" (John 17:20-22). Lord Jesus Christ also spoke about the shepherd who knows his sheep (John 10:16). This one shepherd in the parable is the Lord, Christ (John 10:11, 14).

The church is one because she is one body and Christ is the head as St. Paul says, "Christ is head of the church" (Eph. 5:23, Colo. 1:18). So, the church is one, since the Lord Christ has one body; and we all are members of His body. As the Apostle says, "For we are members of His body, of His flesh and bones" (Eph. 5:30). The church is one because she is the bride of Christ. (Cf. John 3:28-29, Eph. 5:31, 32, 25; 2Cor. 11:2). Being the only one, the bride of the Lord Christ is represented in the Song of Songs, and about her the Bridegroom says, "My dove, my perfect one, is the only one" (Song 6:9). CCC says: "the Church is one because of her 'soul:' It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in ... who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the Church's unity."[105]Thus, unity is of the essence of the Church.[106]

Unity is asserted through profession of one faith received from the Apostles, common celebration of divine worship, especially of the sacraments, and apostolic succession through the sacrament of Holy Orders, maintaining the fraternal concord of God's family.[107] Since the church is one, what then does the word 'churches' in the Holy Bible signify? It signifies the places where the churches were established (Acts 9:31). The book of Revelation mentioned seven churches in Asia (Rev 1:11); however, all of them are members of the One Holy Universal Apostolic Church. Since SMCC is an individual church in the Catholic flock, in its individuality it is one, and member of One Church: the Catholic Church.

[105] UR 2 § 2
[106] CCC 813.
[107] CCC 815.

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3.2.4.2. The Notion of Catholicity

The word 'catholic' means 'universal,' in the sense of 'according to the totality' or 'in keeping with the whole.'[108]The church is universal, gathering all believers together in the unity of faith. Christ is given for all (John 3:16). Just as there are no distinction within the love of God, so the Church stretches out her arms to the world "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, scythian, neither slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all" (Colo. 3:11). This universal church brought together the Jews and Gentiles, as well as all nationalities, peoples, and tongues in one faith.

The Church is catholic in a double sense; first, the Church is catholic because Christ is present in it.[109] Secondly, the Church is catholic because it has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race.[110] CCC also mentions that each particular church is also catholic.[111]

Being universal, the Church held Ecumenical Councils, like Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-35), and later councils including both universal and local, formed of the leaders of the church to study and define a matter of faith, and solve certain issues regarding the church organization so that all churches might follow one doctrine. The universal church brought together all the local churches in one church embracing all, in one Creed, under uniform church laws (CIC, CCEO, and Particular Laws). This universal church brings all believers together in communion, in one faith, in the holy sacraments, and in partaking from one altar.

3.2.4.3. The Notion of Apostolicity

The Church is apostolic because its foundation is on the Apostles historically. It has followed the teaching of the Apostles without any deviation till this day. The Apostle Paul refers to this fact by saying, "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20). The Apostles delivered the teachings to the churches they established (1Cor 11:23). There are traditions which arose due to the teaching of the apostles. This is known as the 'Apostolic Tradition,' which the church received one generation after the other. India follows the tradition of St. Thomas.

[108] CCC 830.
[109] CCC 830.
[110] CCC 831.
[111] CCC 832-835.

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The ancient Church understood catholicity to mean wholeness, fullness, integrity, and 'totality.' This is the primary meaning of the Greek word *katholou* (ΚαΘολυ), catholic.[112] In addition, the Church during the apostolic era is delivered to us as an apostolic church with its trqditions. An example of this is the liturgies they celebrated, and all the prayers of the sacraments they used, like the methods of baptizing and the imposition of hands (primitive form of ordaination). They practiced these prayers and continued in the life of the Church throughout the ages. It may not be chronological, but Church in communion, the principle of succession is maintained.

3.2.4.1. The Notion of Holiness

The Church is holy because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as 'alone holy,' loved the Church as His Bride, giving Himself up for her so as to sanctify her; He joined her to Himself as His body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God.[113]

The Church is holy because the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin" (1John 1:7, Cf. Rev 1:5). Regarding our baptism, St. Paul says, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal 3:27), that is you have put on the righteousness, holiness and cleanliness of the Lord Christ." He also says, "Just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her that He might sanctify and cleanse her ..." (Eph. 5:25-27). Not only is the Church holy, but also her objective is to make us holy, i.e., to live a holy life, to be different from the world, conformed to Christ's will.

3.2.5. The Constituent elements of SMCC as a Church *Sui iuris*

Mar Anthonios states "rite is: a patrimony – *ritus est patrimonium*."[114] It stems from the word *pater,* which means father. The word patrimony is used in a juridical sense now. It is used to denote material and abstract things.[115] Here it is used in abstract things as is mentioned in the church documents.[116] It includes the following subheadings.

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[112] John Meyendorff, "The Orthodox Concept of the Church," *St. Vladimir's Quarterly* (Crestwood, New York, St. Vladimir's Press, 1962) Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 61

[113] CCC 823. Cf. LG 39; Cf. Eph 5:25-26.

[114] Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 36.

[115] Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 37.

[116] Cf. *Perfectaecaritatis* (PC) 2, 13. *Optatamtotius* (OT) 15.*Gaudiumetspes* (GS) 1, 4, 5. *Ad gentes* (AG) 26, *Nostra aetate* (NA) 4 etc.

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3.2.5.1. Spirituality

SMCC is a church with Oriental spirituality. The peculiarity of SMCC is that it has the monastic influence in its existence. The first members who reunited with the Catholic Church are from Bethany ashram.[117]As its foundation and its constitutions (Holy Rule) clearly states, when it defines its charism that "to follow Jesus Christ in his life of prayer and action, realized in Oriental monastic tradition and Indian sanyasa."[118] Thus, as a patrimony, the congregation follows Oriental spirituality coupled with Indian elements in its life. Since the Church has the monastic influence, it inherits the same spirituality.

In Eastern Christianity, worship is considered both a source and expression of theology and spirituality.[119] It is in the liturgy of the Church, in its structure and rhythm, in its ineffable and celestial beauty that the joy and peace in the Holy Spirit, the experience of the kingdom and the true manifestation of the new creation redeemed by Christ are reflected.[120] In the liturgy, the historical and the eschatological dimensions of the divine economy are joined in an in separable whole.[121] The community of worshippers spreads its arms to include all the faithful, the whole humankind and the whole creation while it bows down to worship the creator.[122] The importance of *sastanga pranama* – the prostration in our liturgy signifies that.

As other liturgies, so too with eastern liturgy, Music, colour and smell, as well as gestures and actions, are used to express the non-rational element in worship.[123] In the Eucharistic Worship, one stands face to face with God without any protecting veil. This sense of being in the presence of the Holy Trinity with the angelic hosts dominates the spiritual life of a person. [124] Spirituality is "the distinctive experience of [church's] historical religious experience. It is found interwoven in its liturgical rites, discipline, doctrine, institutions, and

[117] 20th Sept. 1930 Mar Ivanios OIC together with Mar Theophilos O.I.C. and a few members of Bethany Ashram came into the Catholic Communion. See http://www.bethanyashram.com/Founder.aspx accessed on 22.07.2017

[118] Holy rule Ch.1, No. 4

[119] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology. Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, (New York : Fordham University Press, 1983), 115 .

[120] Alexander Schmemann, *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979), 139.

[121] Nikos A. Nissiotis, "The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity for Church Life and Theology" in *The Orthodox Ethos* ed. by A. J. Philippou, (Oxford : Holy Well Press, 1964), 67.

[122] Paulos Mar Gregorios, *The Joy of Freedom: Eastern Worship and Modern Man*, (Madras: CLS, 1986), 9.

[123] Paulos Mar Gregorios, *The Joy of Freedom: Eastern Worship and Modern Man*, (Madras: CLS, 1986), 8.

[124] Paulos Mar Gregorios, *The Joy of Freedom: Eastern Worship and Modern Man*, (Madras: CLS, 1986), 12-13.

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character of its members. It is like a spiritual milieu or as personal as temperament and mentality."[125]

Being created in God's 'image and likenesses,' the human being progresses towards spiritual perfection. The aim of image is to become as much like God as possible. Man is in the process of moving from the image to likeness, which will be completed in the participation of the glory of the risen Body. Man must acquire this likeness by his own effort. The ascent of the human being to God is dependent on his relationship with other human beings, the members of the body of Christ. Spirituality is the process of Self-purification and practice of virtues, where negative and positive praxis[126] constitute the dynamism of Oriental Christian Spirituality. An intense prayer life is the 'barometer' of one's spiritual life here. Prayer is the ascent of the Spirit to God. The progress of spiritual life depends on one's union with God in prayer. Liturgical prayer has got highest value in the Eastern tradition. Unceasing prayer is a special nature of Eastern spirituality. To be more specific, the spirituality of SMCC is liturgical, ecclesial, monastic and cosmic.

3.2.5.2. Theology

Oriental Theology was born and developed in the East and in the Far East. It includes the venerable theological traditions of Alexandria, Antioch, Armenia, Persia and Constantinople. The theologies of these churches have some common features and some specific characteristics. These churches preserve with love, respect and with theological interest the teachings of the Fathers of the Church. This theological patrimony is not simply the content of the theological wealth, but also the method of theologising itself, that is proper to a church.[127]

Oriental Theology is commonly characterized by the Monotheistic Trinitarian theology, Mariological concepts, primary importance to the Sacred Scripture and Divine Tradition, importance given to apophatism, and Soteriological implications. Divinity is a mystery and remains as a mystery. He reveals Himself and at the same time remains hidden in and through the types and symbols in the Scripture and in the Nature. This self-revelation of the Godhead reaches its fullness in incarnation. So, Oriental theology can be defined as the scientific

[125] Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 42.

[126] In Christian point of view praxis is practice of the virtues, observance of the commandments, life of faith in Christ, and imitation of Christ. Therefore negative praxis means purification from sin, passions and evil thoughts, etc., and positive praxis means cultivating virtues.

[127] UR 4, 17.

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explanation of the Christian experience of the Divine Mystery of the Triune God fulfilled in Christ, and continuing in the Church based on faith.[128]

3.2.5.2.1. The characteristics of Theology

3.2.5.2.1.1. Theology is scriptural

Theology of SMCC is the fruit of meditation on the Word of God. For the theologians of the East, more important is what God has done for us, than who God is in Himself. Therefore, the basis of Eastern theology is the economy of salvation. As the Bible contains what this economy reveals, theology is primarily scriptural. In other words, theology is an interpretation of Bible.

3.2.5.2.1.2. Theology is Liturgical

'Rule of prayer is the rule of faith'. Liturgy is in fact a celebration of redemptive actions of God. Therefore, the liturgy is not simply one among many sources of theology; it is *locus theologicus*.

3.2.5.2.1.3. Theology is Doxological

Doxology is said to be the 'grammar' of theology. The doxological nature of theology is a consequence of its liturgical characteristic. Precisely for this reason, Liturgy of the Hours with its psalms and hymns, and the other liturgical texts, especially the holy Eucharist with their praise and thanksgiving, are of great importance in the Eastern Churches. Consequently, liturgy is a main source of their devotion and spirituality, rather than the popular devotions.

3.2.5.2.1.4. Theology is Symbolic

Eastern theology employs the method of symbols. Images and symbols are basic to human experience, and they are prior to philosophical categorization. The mountains as abode of God, and fire as the symbol of the Divinity, are examples of this understanding.

3.2.5.2.1.5. Theology is Iconic

Eastern theology is more akin to art than science. This leads to iconic theology. The basis of this theology is Incarnation, a spirituality of conforming oneself to Christ, and thus becoming an icon (image) of Christ. The purpose of the Eastern icon is multiple: symbolic, didactic, catechetical, kerygmatic, liturgical and aesthetic. The icons make visible what is invisible. What Scripture expresses through words, the icons express through colours. Hence, we can call it 'visual theology'.

[128] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology. Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, (New York : Fordham University Press, 1983), 119.

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3.2.5.2.1.6. Theology is Ecclesial

In the Eastern understanding, a theologian is a "person of the Church" (an ecclesial person) who shares the faith of the Church and that of the people of God. He is not 'above' other believers. One has to live faith not only *in* the Church, but also *with* the Church.

3.2.5.2.1.7. Theology is Pastoral

Theology addresses the pastoral needs of the people. In the liturgical celebrations and other concerns, Church is pastoral. Since the Church follows the Trinitarian spirituality (the spirituality of co-dwelling, indwelling and perichoretic), it always accepts other and enhances to have God experience. Through the celebrations, Church serves as a channel of Grace. It is always as a shepherd, guards its sheep carefully. By giving care, human dignity is respected and affirms that the believer is the child of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ. Pastoral vigilance helps the faithful to select between good and evil, and to choose right path. Church makes every faithful to do activities in the church so that the individual significance is affirmed by the Church.

3.2.5.2.1.8. Theology is Apophatic

God is totally and wholly another existence. He is inconceivable and beyond human comprehension. Any positive word to denote the qualities of God is in vain, but the way of negating the positive aspects will help to experience the absolute mystery of God and to comprehend it. This is the way of knowing God through unknowing. This method of experiencing God through the method of negation safeguards the transcendental and immanent nature of God and the potential of man to attain his mystical union with God.

There are traces of *Jñāna* yoga (the path of knowledge) concept used in understanding mysteries. It seems to be abstract but it is affirmation in negation. When it is said in negation, it points to something else which affirms what it is. In the theology of SMCC, it uses the models like 'creator-creature model' and light analogy. In the first model, God is understood as the creator and human beings are creatures. The existential need of human beings to seek God is the primary aim of life. Usually believers understand God through attributes. Here one cannot see any other attributes of God except 'Creator.' It is mystical consciousness. Influenced by the Gnostic philosophy, the Syriac composers have very often used 'light' as an analogy for God. Light and lamp are the symbols of Divinity. As Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12) the believer realises that he or she is called to be the light of the world. That means eternal light shines through human beings. However, human beings in his or her sinful nature hide this light. The self-realization removes this veil of darkness, and

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then the eternal light shines through him or her. This realization is also a mystical consciousness.

3.2.5.2.1.9. Theology is Eschatological

Theological knowledge is basically mystical rather than rational. Eschatology permeates the entire life of the Church: Its services, sacraments and rites, its theological and moral doctrine, its asceticism and mysticism. Eschatological thoughts are above human language and the empirical level. Emphasizing this aspect, Isaac of Nineveh opines that 'the faithful theologian teaches always the language of the world to come.'[129] The foundation of eschatology is based on the principles that human beings are created in the 'image and likeness' of God and its dignity is affirmed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ becomes the resurrection into eternal life, for those who accepted Him. Heaven and hell are different experiences of God's glory and indeed, of His love. Paradise and hell are not a reward or a punishment, but the way that one experiences the sight of Christ, depending on the condition of one's heart. In the liturgy, there are many references of 'unceasing fire' and 'undying worms,' to denote the absence of God's love in Hell.[130] At the same time, the references of Joy are also mentioned in the liturgy.[131]

In the liturgy, there are prayers which give hope of those who receive the blood and body of Christ as it is taught by Jesus Christ (John 6:51).[132] 'The faithful who died in Christ will rejoice at the second coming' is the creed that the church professes throughout the liturgy especially the office of the dead.[133] The fortunes enjoyed by the faithful are described at different occasions in the liturgy. The Church is very much hopeful in the resurrection of the dead and always prays for the dead in each liturgical celebration. Every sacramental celebration, there are prayers which give the teachings of the church of resurrection, judgement, eschaton etc.

After having said the characteristics of theology, the following section deals with streams of theology of SMCC.

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[129] Sebastian P. Brock, *The Wisdom of St. Isaac of Nineveh*, (New Jersy: Gorgias Press, 2006), 18.

[130] Cf. The Ordo of Holy Qurbono, The Anaphora of Mar Divannasios, Concluding Prayers – The prayer addressed to Jesus Christ: "O Christ our God … from the unquenchable fires and undying worms of Gehenna." 119.

[131] Cf. The Ordo of Holy Qurbono, The Anaphora of Mar Jacob, Prayer in Response to VI Intercessory Prayer: "Blot out … make us rejoice in the place where the light of your..." 41.

[132] Cf. The Ordo of Holy Qurbono, See Promiyon No. 3, 171. See also, Office of the Dead (Men), II service, *Kolo*, 126.

[133] Cf. Office of the Dead (Men), II service, Mad'roso, 129.

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3.2.5.3.2. Streams of Theology

3.2.5.3.2.1. Theology of SMCC as Trinitarian

The principles of Trinitarian theology in SMCC are found in the liturgy. The liturgical formulations are the compositions from sacred scripture, traditions and teachings of the church and the homiletics of church fathers. Always the prayers are begun with Trinitarian doxology. It is the peculiarity of the liturgy of SMCC where one can find the repetition of Trinitarian praise.[134] Each prayer in the celebration of sacraments and sacramentals ends in Trinitarian doxology.[135]

In the scripture, there is no explicit reference to the term 'Holy Trinity,' yet there are several passages that mention the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God. The liturgy uses different scriptural passages to reveal the Trinitarian theology. For example; the third blessing in the holy Eucharist: It states "May the grace and mercy of the Holy and Glorious Trinity uncreated, self-existent, eternal, worshipful and consubstantial be with you all, my brethren, forever."[136] It gives different adjectives which clearly speak Trinitarian theology. The Trinity is not created. It is a self-existing, being consubstantial in nature. The understanding of the Trinity is closely associated with the understanding of Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man, yet one Person. The entire work of salvation is unfolded in the trinity. Through the prayers, the believer understands that the Church as a people of God whose unity is derived from that of Father, Son and Spirit.[137] Through the prayers it is affirmed that Trinitarian life presented as the model and source of interpersonal relationships in the human society is the dynamics of the Christian life.

3.2.5.3.2.2. Theology of SMCC as Christological

The Churches of the Syriac tradition had to suffer a lot in order to protect their Christological positions. It is mainly through the liturgical prayers that the Syriac traditions maintained their Christology.[138]The liturgy and prayers of SMCC affirm the traditional Christology, revealing that from the very moment of the descent of the Logos in the Virgin's womb, He

[134]Glory be to the Father…From age to age… Amen.

[135] The doxology is "We will offer praise and thanksgiving to you and to your Only begotten Son and to your Holy Spirit, now and always and forever."

[136] Cf. The Ordo of Holy Qurbono, The Anaphora of Mar Jacob, Prayer in Response to VI Intercessory Prayer: "Blot out … make us rejoice in the place where the light of your..." 46.

[137] GS, 24.

[138] George Thumpanirappel, *Christ in the East Syriac Tradition: A Study of the Christology of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Common Christological Declaration of 1994*, (Satna: Ephrem Publications, 2003), 57.

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took to Himself from St. Mary's body a human body. He is the One Incarnate God, One Hypostasis, One Person with two natures, had the properties and faculties of the two natures without confusion or change and without separation or division. [139] Trinity is *one Substance* and *three Persons*. Christ is a *single Person* with *two Natures*. The divinity and humanity are united in Christ. The Christology of Eastern thought is characterized by the following elements like Christ is the Saviour of the world,[140]Christ is Emmanuel (God with us), Christ is fully God and fully Man[141] and the Church is the Body of Christ.

SMCC follows the Christology of Syrian fathers. The Syriac creeds have no equivalent to any of those Greek Christological terms, such as *hypostasis, physis, ousia*, and the like, which later caused all the misunderstanding. If the creed of faith of Aphrahat (4th century) and the creed in the Acts of Judas Thomas (2nd or 3rd century) are referred to, which represent Syriac Christology before adopting the Greek Christology.[142]However, Greek Christology began to permeate the Syriac churches through the late writings of fathers. According to the Syriac Fathers like Aphrahat and Ephrem, the whole dispensation of salvation has its source in the human body of Christ.[143]

In the liturgy of SMCC, Christological concepts are interpreted through the mysteries of incarnation and other Soteriological acts of Christ.[144] Throughout the celebration of the liturgy, different aspects of Christology are narrated and remembered, which helps the faithful to move into deeper knowledge of Christ. The images,[145] titles,[146] attributes[147], etc.,

[139] Cf. Chalcedonian formula - Two Natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the difference of the Natures being in no way removed because of the Union, but rather the properties of each Nature being preserved, and (both) concurring into One Person and One Hypostasis; not as though He were parted or divided into Two Persons, but One and the Self-same Son and Only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ. See also the *Maneetho*of Marseverios in holy Eucharist; "Swabhavaprakaram…"

[140] Its basis is the confession of Peter in Mt 16:16: 'You are Christ, Son of the living God'. The fallen humanity is saved not through any intermediary created by God, but by God Himself, becoming man.

[141] Christ is consubstantial with the Father by his divinity and is consubstantial with man in his humanity. Thus in Christ there are two consubstantialities making him true God and true man. One does not absorb the other. They are not 'mixed up'. But there is an inter-penetration between them.

[142] Patrologia Syriaca (ed. D. I. Parisot; Vol. 1; Paris: Instituti Francici Typographi, 1894) 44-45, 788; Judas Thomas, The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles (ed. W. Wright; London: 1871); Doctrine of Addai (ed. G. Howard; Chico: Scholoars, 1981). Cited in http://www.jaas.org/edocs/v12n1/AbdulMasih.pdf accessed on 26.07.2017

[143]Johnson Chittilappilly, *Mdabbranuta: The Divine Dispensation of Our Lord in the Holy Qurbana of the East Syrian Tradition*, (Kottayam: J. Chittilappilly, 1999), 107.

[144] Varghese Thykkoottathil, *Christological Mysteries: A Contextual Study on the Liturgy of St. James in the Syro-Malankara Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2011), 275.

[145] Images like true light, divine fire, lord of peace, lord of love etc. Cf. Varghese Thykkoottathil, *Christological Mysteries: A Contextual Study on the Liturgy of St. James in the Syro-Malankara Church,* (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2011), 199-209.

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seen in the liturgy help one to explore into the Christological concepts. The unity of the two natures in the one divine person of the Son of God is expressed through the hymn of *Trisagion*… "Who were crucified for us, have mercy on us." The one crucified is none other than the same holy, almighty and immortal God.

3.2.5.3.2.3. Theology of SMCC as Pneumatological

Syriac Pneumatology has the liturgical celebration as its foundation. The very title of *Ruhod' Qudišo* found throughout the liturgy, reveals a lot about the Syriac Pneumatology. Christ is the agent and fulfilment of the self-revelation of God. At the same time, the Spirit concretizes and makes present Christ in the church more concretely in the liturgy.[148] The earthly life and the whole salvific actions of Christ were always with the Spirit and even the resurrection of Christ was in the Spirit, and, after the resurrection, he became the life giving spirit (1Cor 15, 45).

The third person of the Trinity is the Spirit of Holiness or the Spirit of Sanctification. Sanctification is, thus, the principal task of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of *šawtaputho* (communion). Syriac language makes use of the same word, *šawtaputho,* to mean the communion in the Trinity, in the Eucharist, in the marriage bond and in the conjugal union. In all these, it is the Holy Spirit who works out the communion. St. Ephrem's poetic presentation about the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist is of unique significance in the Christian theology.

Narsai talks at length on the work of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic celebration. It is through the work of the Holy Spirit that the bread and wine are made the body and blood of Christ. "Body and Blood do I make the bread and wine through the brooding and operation of the Holy Spirit."[149] Narsai views that the Holy Spirit does the work of sanctification in the liturgy. He does it through the mediation of the liturgical persons like priest, and liturgical objects like bread, wine and oil.

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[146] Titles like Only begotten Son, Son of God, Spotless Lamb, High Priest of our faith, Shepherd, etc. Cf. Varghese Thykkoottathil, *Christological Mysteries: A Contextual Study on the Liturgy of St. James in the Syro-Malankara Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2011), 166-199.

[147] Attributes like Holy One, Most Pure, Strong One, Everlasting One, etc. Cf. Varghese Thykkoottathil, *Christological Mysteries: A Contextual Study on the Liturgy of St. James in the Syro-Malankara Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2011), 210.

[148] Kim Christeen, *Mission in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Indian Christian Theologies*, (Bangalore: ISPCK, 2006), 23.

[149] See Narsai, *Liturgical Homilies*, 17. Cited in Sebastian P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature and Theology*. (Aldershot: Variorum, 2001), 59.

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The theology of SMCC defines Christian life as a life based on the personal experience of the Risen Lord in the Spirit of Holiness. In terms of the Spirit of Holiness, this theology defines also the Church, the salvation and the activities of the church. In the liturgy, SMCC gives more importance to the Epiclesis, the invocation and the hovering of the Spirit. This is based on the emphasis given to the sending of the Spirit as the fruit and fulfilling of the Christ event. Christ is the icon of the Father and His image is common to the whole human nature, but, at the same time, the Spirit grants his grace to each person.[150]

The Spirit of Holiness is understood in relation with Christ, and Christ is fully understood in the Spirit of Holiness.[151] The Spirit sanctifies the faithful and the whole church to the glory of Christ. So, the Spirit is also the agent of the eschatological nature of the church. Though pneumatology is considered as a separate theological discipline, it is always understood with Christology. Christology is fully understood when it is explained in the pneumatological language. This is called the pneumatological Christology.

The Holy Spirit is understood as the Person of the Godhead who restores the original status of humans as it was before the fall. Here the sinful nature is understood and act of repentance is a need for reconciliation and redemption. The role of the Holy Spirit is very important in the celebration of the sacraments, and the life and activities of the Church. In the Eastern perspective, the Holy Spirit is not only a Gift but also a Giver. The role of God's Spirit in Creation (Gen 1:2), in the 'new creation' when Jesus was conceived in the womb of Virgin Mary (Lk 1:35) and at Pentecost as an anticipation of Parousia (Acts 2:17), are important pneumatological themes in the theology. The works of Christ and the Holy Spirit are complementary and reciprocal. Christ's work of redemption cannot be separated from the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification.[152]

3.2.5.3.2.4. Theology of SMCC as Mariological

The Mariology of the Eastern Church is based on the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, like Saint Ephrem, Saint John Damascene etc. In the early liturgical prayers, the Church believed and affirmed the intercession of Blessed Virgin Mary.[153] Almost all the Marian dogmas defined in the Church through the centuries have their basis in the prayers of the Eastern Churches. Mary is understood only in relation to Christ and Mariology in relation to

[150] Yves Congar, and Geoffrey Champan, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit,* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 29.
[151] Sebastian P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature and Theology*. (Aldershot: Variorum, 2001), 79.
[152] George W. Bethune, *The Fruit of the Spirit*, (London: J. Whetham, 1859), 45.
[153] Meyendorff J, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, New York 1983, 130.

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Christology. The East Syrian Church does not directly call Mary the mother of God; she is called 'the mother of the Son of God the Father' or 'the Mother of God the Son;' *Theotokos* - Θεοτόκος.[154] Syriac liturgy, with its classical expression *Christotokos* (*Emo d'mshiho*) to speak about Mary, has developed a distinct Mariology. In the prayers of the Church, the expression 'the mother of Jesus Christ, God and Saviour' (*Emo daloho*) is strongly emphasized. Mary is honoured as the Mother of Christ. She is important because of her participation in the mystery of Christ.

The Oriental Churches and their theology affirm the perpetual virginity and sinlessness of Mary. This belief went deep through recitation of the liturgical prayers.[155] Through the definition of the feast of *sūnoyo* by Pius XII in 1950, the faith in the Assumption of our Lady, the Church defined what the Fathers taught and what the faithful prayed in the liturgy of the hours.[156] The theological study on the Eve-Mary typology is a valuable theological contribution of the Oriental Churches.[157]

The Mariology of the Oriental churches originated and developed through the writings of the Fathers and through the liturgical prayers of the Church and remains as the basis for the Marian theology of the whole Church. Each Liturgy of the Hours begins with the *Kaumo* which ends in the Hail Mary though it was a later addition.[158] In Liturgy of the Hours, in the morning and evening prayers two sections in the *Kolo* are dedicated to Mary. The first vigil of every night prayer, except on Friday, is entirely dedicated to the veneration of Mary. Every sixth hour prayer of Malankara liturgy is in veneration of Mary. In the Weekly Cycle of the Malankara Catholic Church, Wednesday is totally dedicated to Mother Mary.

In these daily prayers, there are number of metaphors used as Marian titles like Mother of God, Ever Virgin, Second Heaven, and Second Eve, which symbolises Mary's unique place

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[154] See writings of Elias of Jerusalem (and Damascus) of the 9th century and the profession of faith of Iso-yahb, the Archbishop of Nisibis. Theotokos is a title of Mary, mother of God, used especially in Eastern Christianity.

[155] See the Hymn – Ekbo; Night Prayer, I Watch (*Awsar Slawoto: The Book of Common Prayer*), 225. There are many hymns which gives this idea.

[156] Cf. Kolo 1, Night Prayers, I Watch (*Awsar Slawoto: The Book of Common Prayer*), 501-502.

[157] Narsai, *Homily on Passion*, 48-53. Cited in Sebastian P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature and Theology*. (Aldershot: Variorum, 2001), 179.

[158] As history speaks, the phrases like ' Hail Mary, full of Grace' or 'O Most Favoured One' etc. were used by Church Fathers from 6th Century (See writings of Severus- Patriarch of Antioch, Andrew of Crete, St. John Damascene, St. Gregory the Great, etc.). Such examples hardly warrant the conclusion that the Hail Mary was at that early period used in the Church as a separate formula of devotion. Similarly a story attributing the introduction of the Hail Mary to St. Ildephonsus of Toledo must probably be regarded as apocryphal. The story, however, in this explicit form cannot be traced further back than Hermann of Laon at the beginning of the twelfth century. Cf. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07110b.htm accessed on 22.07.2017

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in the economy of salvation.[159] These are the explanations of Mariological themes that were handed over to us through tradition. Some of the symbols are:[160] Ark of Mysteries, Closed Door,[161] Chariot which Ezekiel saw,[162] Second Heaven, Thirsty Land, Gideon's fleece[163], etc. These symbols are very much connected to OT themes and, hence, prove further that Mary's role in the NT is prefigured in the OT.

Besides these there are different Marian feasts celebrated in the church to foster the devotion to Mary. They are: 1) the Feast of Annunciation on 25th March, 2) Mary's Nativity on 8th September, 3) the Assumption of Mary on 15th August, 4) Praise of the Mother of God on 26th December, 5) the entrance of Mary in the temple on 21st November, 6) the feast of Mother Mary for the sake of Seeds on 15th January and 7) the feast of the Mother Mary for the sake of the ears of corn on 15th May. There are different fasts observed as a devotion to Mary.The main difference in Mariology between the East and the West is that, in the West, Mariology is highlighted through Marian dogmas and variety of devotions. But in the East, Mariology is highlighted and developed through liturgy, for the liturgy contains all theology.

3.2.5.3.2.5. Theological Anthropology of SMCC

The basic concept of theological anthropology stems from human creation. No single biblical text has been more importance in the understanding of theological 'anthropology' than the first three chapters of Genesis, particularly Genesis 1:26-28. Here comes the concept of 'image and likeness.' The hermeneutic key to understand this is the person of Jesus Christ. He is the image and likeness of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). The mystery of man becomes clear in the mystery of the Word became flesh.[164] In reference to Jesus Christ, Christians are called to find their identity. By making distinction between image and likeness, image refers to the human nature, which cannot be lost; likeness refers to the original relation to God, which was there but lost by sin.

Image is understood as the external similarity and likeness as internal similarity of God. This creation in the image and likeness was a deliberate action of God. SMCC understands the 'image and likeness' fully expressed when human being is related with God, others and the

[159] Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 33-34; cf. Holy Transfiguration Monastery, "A Homily on the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, Mary by Jacob, Bishop of Serugh (+521)" in The True Vine Vol. 5/1, issue No. 17 (1993), p.8.

[160] Cf. Kolo 1, Night Prayers, I Watch (*Awsar Slawoto: The Book of Common Prayer*), 501-502.

[161] Church fathers used this title to explain the perpetual virginity alluded in Ez. 44:1-3.

[162] Church fathers used this title to explain the perpetual protector alluded in Ez. 1:1-28

[163] Church fathers used this title to explain the perpetual virginity alluded in Jud. 6:36-40

[164] GS.22

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cosmos. The implication of image and likeness of God is to enter into interpersonal relationship. It is the foundation of human dignity. As image and likeness of God, one is called to participate in the divine life. Of all the visible creatures, only the human being is able to know and love his creator.[165] He is the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake[166] and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his identity.[167] In Jesus, it is revealed that human beings are children of God. If God is our father, then every child is brother and sister. This Jesus Christ is also the cosmic Christ, who is present in the creation. Therefore, Christians are called to have a dialogical relationship with the cosmos, too. Being made in God's image is foundational for all human beings, male and female. Approaching the idea of 'image and likeness' with a Trinitarian understanding, it is also clear that this image, in which all humanity is created, is first and foremost relational.

3.2.5.3.2.6. Sacramentology of SMCC

There are seven sacraments in the life of the Church. The practice of counting the sacraments was adopted in the Orthodox tradition from the Roman Catholics. The more ancient and traditional practice of the Orientals is to consider everything which is in and of the Church as sacramental or mystical. In the west theological endeavours are more of rational and analytical where as in the east, it of mystical and contemplative. in sacramental celebrations, west is more of juridical and east is more of mystical.

Viewing the Church as the new and eternal life of the Kingdom of God given to man by God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, we understand that for life to exist there must be birth. The birth into the eternal life of God is the mystery of baptism.[168] Baptism is administered either by immersion, infusion or pouring water over the head of the candidate signifying that we are buried in Christ and risen in the Lord. Normally, Baptism is administered along with Chrismation[169] with Holy Myron[170] and the Eucharist in order to

[165] GS 12
[166] GS 24
[167] CCC 356
[168] Baptism is considered to be an 'ecclesial act'. Therefore, according to CCEO 683, 'Baptism must be celebrated according to the liturgical prescriptions of the Church sui iuris in which the person to be baptized is to be enrolled'.
[169] Western equivalent is Confirmation.
[170] The Holy Myron is the oil with the highest level of sanctification in the Church and in which is the grace of the Holy Spirit for the sanctifying and consecration to God of whatever it is used in anointing.

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emphasize the unity of the Sacraments of Initiation.[171] But birth is not enough for living; there must be the ongoing possibility of life: its power, energy and force. Thus, the mystery of Chrismation[172] is the gift of the power to live the life of Christ which is born in man by baptism. It is the gift of the 'all-holy and good and life-creating Spirit' to man.

The rite of Baptism in the Eastern tradition consist of renunciation of Satan and profession of faith, laying on of hands, blessing of oil[173] and water, pre-baptismal anointing, baptismal anointing[174] and recitation of the Lord's Prayer and Creed. In the present understanding, the renunciation of Satan is oriented more towards the future life rather than to the past slavery to sin of the baptized. That is, it is meant more as a preparation for future fight against evil tendencies than as an exorcism. Therefore, renunciation of Satan and profession of faith go together.[175] Evil holds no more charms for the baptised as it is affirmed by St. Paul that sin and death no longer dominate Christians (Rom. 5: 15-16). Through baptism, Christians are sealed with Grace.

Holy Eucharist is the sacrament of God's everlasting love and presence of Jesus among the people of God. Eucharistic celebration is the blend of worship, thanksgiving, reconciliation and supplication which motivates the worshipping community to lead a life of 'broken to share.' It is the eternal banquet nourishes the spiritual life of the believer. The *ordo* of Holy Eucharist is with different parts. It includes the preparatory service in secret, public service, service of the Word of God, profession of faith, anaphora,[176] etc. The holy Qurbono concludes with the prayers of thanksgiving, the final blessing and the farewell prayer. The

[171] The Eastern Churches continue to uphold the doctrine behind this unity not only in theory, but also in practice. The Eastern thinking on this is the following: Initiation is the one and the indivisible celebration of the entrance into the life of Christ and into the community that lives in Him. This entrance, initiated with the first call to the faith, reaches its culminating point in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. We are, thus, rendered fit to participate in the banquet of the kingdom.

[172] In Baptism, one is 'reborn' to a new life and is incorporated into the Church, in Chrismation is signed with the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit and with the reception of the Eucharist becomes in 'full' communion with the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. The ordinary minister of Chrismation is the priest who administers it together with Baptism. The oil used is holy Myron. Through this anointing with holy Myron, the baptized is signed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and is made witness and co-builder of the kingdom of God.

[173] The blessing of oil and water has an epicletic prayer. The baptismal water is a prefiguration of the water of the Jordan in which Jesus was baptized. The baptismal font is described as the "new womb" of spiritual birth into the family of the Church.

[174] The pre-baptismal anointing is meant as a preparatory rite of purification. The baptismal anointing is for the conferring of the Holy Spirit and is a sign of life.

[175] As the East Syrian commentator Narsai writes: 'By renunciation and profession one is made sharer in the victory of Christ who conquered Satan'. According to Theodore of Mopsuestia, while renouncing evil, the candidates should kneel down as a sign of man's fall and servitude, and while professing the faith, he stands up as a sign of one's participation in the redemptive work of Christ.

[176] The anaphora, which is consecratory, has mainly three parts: the prologue with Sanctus, the consecration with the Institution Narrative and the Epiclesis, and the prayers of Intercession. The post-anaphoral part consists of elevation, fraction, and Holy Communion.

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celebration of Eucharist is a memorial celebration which takes the worshipper from Old Testament, through the earthly life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus to the eschaton. The worshipper is made aware of sinfulness and availability of forgiveness is emphasised in the Eucharistic celebration. The worshipping community is not alone worshipping, but it is in communion with the saints; a heavenly experience is brought forth.

Eucharistic celebration is a communitarian liturgy where the celebrants and the faithful in communion of saints celebrate together. The liturgy begins with the celebrant asking intercession to the community affirms that he is not worthy in the absence of the community. So the concept of private Eucharistic celebration is not there in oriental liturgy.

For life to be truly perfect, holy and good there must also be a particular mystery about marriage and the procreation. The mystery of Christian marriage transforms human love, procreation, and family communities into realities of eternal proportion and significance. In marriage, couples are blessed by God for unending friendship and love. The fruit of their love, the begetting of their children and the life of the families will be not 'unto death' but unto 'life everlasting.' It is an invitation to a relation of unconditional love as in the relation of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-27). In the sacramental celebration, by the blessing of the crown, the bride and the bridegroom are crowned to be the king and the queen of the family. The crown is the crown of joy, of cross and of righteousness. The rings symbolises the covenant in which the couple entered which is indissoluble and unconditional. The celebration reminds the glory of 'eternal marriage chamber' (Matt. 25:9-11).

Until the final establishment of the Kingdom of God, our life remains under the attack of its demonic enemies: sin, sickness, suffering, sorrow and death. The mystery of penance[177] is the remedy for spiritual sickness. It allows us to turn again to God, to be taken back, to be forgiven and to be received once more into the life of God from which our sins have separated us. The basic thing a faithful need is heartfelt repentance. Through the sacrament, the faithful receive the remission of sins and experience the love of God. Through the penance, the removal of obstacle happens that keeps the soul away from God.

And the mystery of anointing of the sick is the remedy for the sickness which is the power of sin over the bodies, the inevitable union with suffering and death. Anointing of the sick

[177] The individual confession and absolution is the ordinary means to obtain the forgiveness of sins though general absolution is allowed in particular situations as enunciated in the Code of Canons. The rules governing the confessional seal, reservation of sins, faculty to administer the sacrament of penance, etc., are almost the same in CCEO as in the Latin Code.

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allows one to be healed; to suffer, not unto death but, once more, unto life everlasting. The healing ministry of Jesus is continued in this sacrament as that of penance. There are two services in the sacrament of anointing of the sick. The long form is used in anointing the clergy and the short form is used to anoint the laity. Anointing five senses signifies the complete cleansing of sins committed by the sick. There are prayers for complete healing which gives the health of mind and body and cures physical sickness too.

The mystery, finally, which allows the perfection of divine life to be ours in all of its fullness and power in this world, is the mystery of the Church itself and most specifically within the Church, we have the mystery of holy orders: the sacrament of priesthood, ministry, teaching and pastoral care.[178] The clergy of the church -- bishops, priests, and deacons -- exist for no other purpose than to make manifest, present and powerful in the Church the divine life of the Kingdom of God to all men while still living in this world. Holy Spirit descends upon the ordained by the imposition of the hands of the bishop which confirms him to be another Christ in ministerial priesthood. It is the sacrament of total dedication and service of the people of God.

3.2.5.3.2.7. Eschatology of SMCC

The entire history of the Church is filled with eschatological expectations, beginning with the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ and continuing until the present day. Indeed, it is because the Resurrection has taken place - because the Church lives in the time of the Resurrection - that eschatology is so fundamental to the Church. Eschatology is the encounter between God and humans in history. It deals with the personal, social and cosmic dimensions of human life here and now. It does not deal with last things but it is a vision of the future, to become, to enter into the Trinitarian communion.

Eschatology means the ultimate unity of all in Christ, which was inaugurated in the incarnation, with the death and the resurrection of Christ. It will be fulfilled in the second coming of Christ, with the glorious manifestation of the kingdom of God. This unity is gradually achieved and manifested in and through Sacramental celebrations. It is manifested in every liturgical celebration too. If the unity of all in Christ is the essence of eschatology,

[178] All Churches have three Major Orders: Diaconate, Priesthood and Episcopate. The Minor Orders vary according to the Rites. SMCC has Singer, Lectorate and Sub-diaconate.

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liturgy precisely aims at it.[179] The Eastern Liturgical texts, in general, are very rich in eschatological theology. The earthly liturgy becomes an anticipation of the heavenly liturgy. The eschatological dimension of our Christian life is emphasized in so many ways, especially in the hymns and prayers and the reading of Gospel of the Season of the Cross.

In the theology of eschaton of SMCC, the Church is the image of eternity in time. In the liturgical prayers, the Church is presented as a haven or harbour of peace.[180] Thus, it lives both in this age and in the age to come. It begins with Christ's Resurrection. This was the beginning of the end. The early Christians spoke of their living in "the last days," not because they simply got it wrong, but because they understood that the age to come had already broken through in this present age because Christ had already raised human nature into the heights of heaven by His resurrection and ascension (realised eschatology), and promised to return in glory (future eschatology).

In the New Testament parables the marriage feast and the bridal chamber belong to the eschaton and the second coming; in the life of the Church, however, this second coming can also be understood as being anticipated in Christ's presence in the Eucharist. From the second century onwards the Syriac writers use the heavenly 'bride chamber' instead of paradise imagery for the eschatological event.[181] Aphrahat also used the bride-chamber instead of Paradise.[182] In Liturgy of the Hours, when the Church recites the hymns on resurrection remind the salvific activity of Jesus, that he is the one who brings bodies to life. Christ descended to Sheol and brought life to those sleeping the sleep of death. The language and imagery of Aphrahat and Ephrem could be used to describe the eschatological impact of the descent: Jesus left there the leaven of life that is the pledge of resurrection from the dead. This leaven will ferment and fill all of Sheol.[183] The symbolic usage of haven in the Syriac

[179] Baby Varghese, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology* in *Liturgy, Worship and Society Series*, (Burlington - Vermont: Ashgate publishing company, USA, 2004), p.108.

[180] Cf. See the Night Prayers of Sunday (Season of Resurrection), I Watch, Kolo – 'Mishiha than manavatti' (*Awsar Slawoto: The Book of Common Prayer*), 87.

[181] In the Acts of Thomas (Chapter 12) Thomas prays, "When you see that true Wedding Feast and are among those who give praise there, may you be numbered with those who enter the Bridal Chamber"; cf. Sebastian Brock, "The Bridal Chamber of Light: a distinctive feature of the Syriac Liturgical tradition" Harp 18 (2005) p.181.

[182] Murray, Robert. *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, revised edition, (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2004), 255.

[183] Murray, Robert. *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, revised edition, (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2004), 257.

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tradition has different shades of meaning. Generally speaking the phrase possesses an eschatological meaning.[184]

3.2.5.3.2.8. Monasticism and SMCC

Eastern Christian monasticism developed for around a century and a half as a spontaneous religious movement, up to the time of the Council of Chalcedon, which took place in 451. At that Council, monasticism had become an acknowledged part of the life of the Christian Church, and it was specially legislated for. Egypt was the Motherland of Christian monasticism. [185] Monasticism was very popular in early Syrian and Mesopotamian Christianity, and originally all monks and nuns there were hermits. There is a gradual development from single – *ihidiyo*- lifestyle to coenobitic – *dayaroyo* - life. The stalwarts include St. Antony of Egypt, St. Basil, St. Pachomios, etc. Their ideals and formulations later helped Mar Ivanios to start a congregation in Malankara.

The monastic movement had as its goal to achieve an ideal of Christian life in community with others or in contemplative solitude. Monastic asceticism required the rejection of worldly existence (concept of *fuga mundi*) with its cares and temptations. The institution of a monastic order in Malankara became the formative elements of the Church, and transformed the life of the Church. In the tradition, the monastic calling is considered to be a personal gift of God to the individual soul for his salvation and service to the Body of Christ, the Church. The monastic vocation is the calling to personal repentance in a life dedicated solely to God. The ultimate Christian virtue of love is sought by the monk or nun primarily through prayer and fasting, and through the exercise of the Christian virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience.

In Malankara, the monks exercise some ministry in the Church such as that of priest, pastor, teacher, nurse, social worker, etc., according to the need of the church. It is included in the apostolic activities of the congregation. Mar Ivanios envisaged a Bethanian life of commonness of living space, common table, life of prayer, common manual work, life bound to a rule; Life with simplicity and characterised by ascetical practices, life rooted in evangelical values, etc. Separation from the world is only the primary step and this has to be culminated in

[184] Murray, Robert. *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, revised edition, (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2004), 258. Cf. E. R. Hambye. "The symbol of the Coming to the Harbour" OCA 197 (Rome, 1974), 404- 5.

[185] Francis Joseph Bacchus, "Eastern Monasticism before Chalcedon (A.D. 451)."*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), 5.

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the painful and continuous process of total renunciation. This renunciation is necessary to follow Jesus (Lk. 14:33). In Bethanian life, prayer and labour constitute the two-fold service to God. Prayer and work are the two wings by which the monk rises to the highest perfection. In manual labour, one becomes helper and co-operator with God, the creator and administrator of the world; one becomes an instrument of His divine providence; one helps Him to change and renew the face of the earth.

The expression *pallikalum dayarakalum* (Church and Monastery) in the Malankara Church shows the theology of the role of the religious in the life of the Church. Monastery is the prefiguration of paradise and it is presented as the heart of the Church. This monastic life of monks presented as a witness is experienced in the church nearby the monastery. The importance of Bethany in the life and existence of SMCC is already mentioned. Mar Ivanios thought that the foundation of a monastic community would be as an instrument of spiritual renewal within the Syrian Orthodox Church. In his attempt, he was very well inspired by both the Christian and Hindu monastic traditions. He lived for a while with Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore and was so much taken up with the Indian spirituality that these great ones practiced. After making the necessary arrangements to begin such an austere form of life, he resigned his professorship at Serampore and started the first Christian religious community in the Malankara Church on August 15, 1919 at Mundanmala, Perunnad- Ranni, Kerala, to which he gave the name Bethany Ashram, which is officially known as Order of the Imitation of Christ (O.I.C). Later history reveals the importance of it in the life of SMCC.

3.2.5.3. Liturgy

The liturgy of SMCC is Oriental in general and Antiochean in particular. In the theological tradition of the Oriental churches, they practiced and illustrated the theological dictum *'lexorandi, lexcredendi'*. The Oriental Theology affirms and teaches that faith and dogma come second to prayer. Prayer and, hence, the liturgy, is the celebration of the salvation history realized in Christ. These doxological prayers of the Church are found in the writings of the Fathers and in the early Church documents. So, the Oriental Theology considers the liturgy of the Church as the source of theology second to Sacred Scripture.

The 'mystery' dimension is highly emphasized in the Eastern tradition by using signs and symbols. Various means like the use of the veil, incense, prayers with expressions like 'awful' and 'fearful', numerous prayers revealing the unworthiness of the celebrant and the

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people, etc., are used to underscore the mystery dimension. The symbols include objects, places and movements. The division of the church building into four parts – sanctuary (*madbaha*), choir (*kesthrumo*) nave (*haikkala*) and portico (*mondalam*)– is an example thereof.[186]

For example of signs, the thurible has a fantastic interpretation.[187] The Gospel procession from the sanctuary to the ambo placed in the nave symbolizes Christ coming down from the heavenly Jerusalem to the earthly Jerusalem to announce his Good News. The tradition is very particular about giving symbolic meaning to the postures and gestures used in the liturgy.[188] The manner of making the Sign of the Cross is also peculiar and it comprehends the salvation history. Repetition of prayers and hymns is, in fact, a feature found in all Eastern Religions. The *Bhajans* and *Namajapas* of Indian tradition are examples thereof. Repetition of Trinitarian praise is a unique feature. Liturgy is soaked in music in the case of SMCC and music itself is considered as a symbol. The importance of community singing is very much emphasised. Even the prayers are said in a musical tone. The Eastern Churches prefer icons to statues.

Regarding Eucharist, there are more than a hundred anaphoras existing in the Antiochean rite. The Syro-Malankara anaphora has a total of 66 prayers of which 33 are fixed, symbolizing the 33 years of the life of Christ in this world. These prayers include the Institution Narrative, Epiclesis, prayers of thanksgiving, propitiation, etc., and six intercessory prayers – for the living and the dead.[189]

Facing the East in prayer has been a universal tradition of Christian liturgies. The symbolic significance of the East is based mainly on the rising sun. Christians considered it as a symbol of Christ and it is because of the Gnostic influence too.[190] The symbolism of the East is supported also by the texts in the Bible. Paradise is said to be in the East (Gen 2:8). God's

[186] The sanctuary symbolizes the heavenly Jerusalem and the nave, the earthly Jerusalem. The choir symbolizes the angels who sing the praises of God.

[187] The upper part of the thurible represents heaven, the lower part ,hell and the cup containing fire symbolizes purgatory. The three chains which support the lower part of the thurible are symbols of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the single chain of the upper part symbolizes the Triune God. Each chain has 18 rings representing the 72 (18×4) disciples and the 12 bells on the chains are the 12 apostles.

[188] For example, standing symbolizes joy, and hence, except on a few occasions, one has to stand up during the Eucharistic celebration as it recalls the joy in the Risen Lord. One has to kneel down when prayers of penitence are said as kneeling is generally interpreted as a penitential act. One sits down 'to listen', and hence, sitting posture is common during the scriptural readings (except Gospel reading) and the homily.

[189] Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, (New York: Baker Academic, 2003), 46.

[190] Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, (New York: Baker Academic, 2003), 23.

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glory comes from the East (Ezek 43:2). St. Augustine, Origen, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Clement of Alexandria and St. John Damascene have mentioned the importance of prayer turning to the East. For Christians, facing the East points to the eschatological hope. The East is symbolized as the place where the Lord will appear on the last day (Mt 24:30). Thus, facing the East during prayers symbolizes waiting for the Lord.[191]

SMCC recognises Liturgy of the Hours as the Prayer of the Church.[192] There are different ordos for the same. Besides the canonical prayers, there are special sets of prayers for feast days – *penkitho*. The liturgical year has seven seasons[193] with their peculiarities. Daily prayers are done seven times (yamas).[194] Each day of the week is dedicated for different purpose.[195] Along with this, there are feasts and fasts on different occasions. The liturgical prayers, especially those of the holy Eucharist, reveal a profound expectation of the second coming of Christ.

3.2.5.4. Canonical Discipline

Canonical discipline means the church has its power of jurisdiction, and includes the various forms of the legislative, administrative, judicial, and coercive power. The church derives the power of jurisdiction from Divine institution through the apostolic succession. Disciplinary power is proved by the very fact of its exercise; it is an organic necessity in every society whose members it guides to their end by providing them with rules of action.[196]

Historically, it can be shown that a disciplinary power has been exercised by the Church uninterruptedly, first by the Apostles and then by their successors. Each church Sui iuris has the right and duty to govern themselves according to their discipline.[197] As council teaches, it is better to have their own discipline since it is suited to the character of their faithful and

[191] Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, (New York: Baker Academic, 2003), 29.

[192] According to the Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches, the Oriental clerics and religious are to celebrate the Divine Office in accordance with the prescriptions and traditions of their Church sui iuris. It is recommended also to the lay people. As for the clerics, it is an obligatory prayer according to the Code of Canons (CCEO 377).

[193] Season of annunciation, nativity-epiphany, great lent, resurrection, pentacost, transfiguration and cross.

[194] Begin with evening prayers - ramso, then suthoro, then night prayers – lilyo, morning prayers – sapro, third hour, sixth hour and ninth hour.

[195] Sunday-resurrection, Monday & Tuesday – repentance, Wednesday – St. Mary, Thursday – All Saints, Friday – Cross, Saturday – Dead and departed.

[196] Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 43.

[197] OE 5.

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better adapted to foster the good of the souls.[198] The ecclesiastical discipline is the aggregate of laws and directions given by the Church to the faithful for their conduct both private and public and is exercised thorough the code of canons and hierarchical structure.

The first duty of a Christian is to believe; hence, dogmatic discipline (*disciplina dogmaticis*), by which the Church proposes what one should believe and so regulates the conduct that it shall not fail to assist the faith. Dogmatic discipline springs from the power of the magisterium, i.e., the teaching office. The second duty of Christians is to observe the Commandments, hence, moral discipline (*disciplina morum*).The rules to be observed in worship, especially public worship, constitute liturgical discipline for the uniformity in keeping the order and for aesthetic appeal. Liturgical discipline has been regulated by the Church and includes the rites of the Holy Sacrifice, the administration of the sacraments and of sacramentals, and other ceremonies.

The common code is part of the disciplinary patrimony of the church.[199]When SMCC was part of Orthodox Church, it followed the *nomocanon*.[200] After reunion, the church observed the sacred canons of Catholic Church. From canons 1493 and 1502 of CCEO, SMCC has three types of laws. They are Common Law (CCEO), Particular Law (CPCSMCC- Code of Particular Canons of Syro-Malankara Catholic Church) and More Particular Law.[201]

Hierarchy of SMCC is the same as that of the structure of hierarchy of Catholic tradition. The supreme head of the church is the Roman Pontiff. The Head and Father of the church is the Major Archbishop-Catholicos. There is Holy Episcopal Synod functions with various commissions. The church is divided into Arch Dioceses (archi-eparchy), Dioceses (eparchy), and Exarchates with Archbishops, Bishops or Exarches as their head, respectively. Each division functions with its pastoral councils, various commissions or departments and pious organisations. There is clear cut division of labour in each division. As the code states as its purpose – 'for the salvation of the soul,'[202] the ecclesiastical discipline exercised through

[198] UR 16.

[199] Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 44.

[200] The personal law of Syrian Christians belonging to the Jacobite Church and the Malankara Orthodox Church is contained in the Hudaya Canon which is also known as Nomocanon. Both groups admit that the Canons are contained in a work by name Hudaya compiled in Syrian language by John Bar-Hebreaus(1226-1286) who was the Catholicos of Tigris, in the 13th century.

[201] More particular laws are the laws established by particular eparchy and are binding to its members. Cf. Thomas Mar Anthonios, *The Nature of a Sui Iuris Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2015), 44.

[202] CIC 1752 - *Salusanimarumsupremalex* means the salvation of souls is the supreme law.

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different offices is meant for the salvation of souls. The power vested with the authorities in not meant for ruling but it is to serve the people of God.

3.3. SECTION B - Growth of SMCC as an Individual Church - 'Becoming a People; Numerous'

In this section, the growth of the church into a community with numerous people is analysed. As it is mentioned and read through the exegetical nuances established in the first chapter, a few, i.e., the beginning was with only five members 'became to a people; numerous.' Beginning with an archi-eparchy[203] and an eparchy, now SMCC has one Major Archi-eparchy, one Archi-eparchy, nine eparchies and two exarchates. There are sixteen bishops, more than 3.5 lakhs faithful, about 900 priests and religious brothers, 1400 religious sisters, established parishes and several missions in India and abroad.[204]

3.4. Conclusion

So far in this chapter, the becoming process of SMCC was analysed in the light of the phrase 'becoming a people mighty and numerous' (Deut. 26:5f). Various strengths are given in different forms and are explained in different headings. But, still the Church is in the process of becoming. At this juncture, one may ask what are the future nuances implied when it is spoken of as the church is in the process of becoming. In the next chapter, further process of becoming is explained by establishing missiological principles of the church. Here the mission of the church is understood as its existential act leading to the development of humanity.

[203] As per CCEO the term eparchy is synonymous with the term diocese in CIC.

[204] Varghese Thykkoottathil, *Christological Mysteries: A Contextual Study on the Liturgy of St. James in the Syro-Malankara Church*, (Pune: Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth Publications, 2011), 15.

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CHAPTER IV

THE PROCESSES OF BECOMING CONTINUES: Actualising the Vision of SMCC by Revisiting and Reintroducing 'Ivanian Model of Mission'

4.1. Introduction

Vision and mission are often considered as an essential part for the growth of an organisation. Vision provides the driving force that can get an organisation through the growing pains it will inevitably encounter. It is a basic 'shape' of the organisation's future; it expresses optimism, and hope about possibilities regarding the desired future. Here church is the organisation and desired future is the success of the mission manifesto. As far as the vision of SMCC is concerned, the vision sets out what the church wants to accomplish, and should inspire its members, and the people related. The mission typically describes what the church does to achieve its vision. The vision is often expressed as a dream or ideal whereas the mission helps to clarify and to execute the practical aspects of what the church does to accomplish it. Till the third chapter, the evolution of SMCC into a church Sui iuris enjoying the status of a major Archi-Episcopal church is explained. In this chapter, the purpose of the church is analysed in the light of its mission. Here, an attempt is made to find out the models from other culture which would rekindle the spirit in order to fulfil the vision 'that all may be one.' The action plan i.e. the mission can be executed more vigorously. Mission is always dynamic where the church formulates more mission strategies.

4.2. Vision of SMCC

The word 'mission' is derived from the Latin word *Missio* which means 'to send.' In ecclesiastical circles *missio Dei* is the term used to denote mission. It treats mission as God's mission.[205] Church believes that it is for the accomplishment of God's mission that Jesus came. Christian mission is, therefore, participation in God's mission as demonstrated in the life and ministry of Jesus. This mission of God is continuous and it is the mission of the universal Church.

Grounded in the vision Jesus shared with his disciples on the evening before his Passion, 'That They All May Be One - *Ut omnes unum sint*' (John 17:22), SMCC aims to foster unity within the body of Christ so that the love of God, proclamation of good news and the witness of Christ will be boosted in the world especially in the Indian context. Usually 'That They All

[205]Ken Gnanakan, *Kingdom Concerns* (Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 1993) 35.

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May Be One' is discussed in the context of ecumenism. But in this chapter, it is discussed as a unity of all in Christ resulted as an after effect of evangelisation praxis of SMCC.

Vision is essential to a Church. However, unlike the values, mission, and purpose, the vision is more subject to change. It is dynamic, not static. Over time, the vision must be renewed, adapted, and adjusted to the cultural context in which the Church lives. The change takes place only at the boundaries of the vision, not at its core. The core - 'That They May Be (John 17:22) - does not change. The details of the vision and the words used to convey them will change. The vision provides us with a picture of what the mission will look like when it gets realized in the community.

In the case of SMCC, after the first assembly, the church shaped it mission based on the statement 'experience to witness' and which added more colour to the core of the vision; 'That They May Be One.' Here the experience of faithful and the ministers helps the witnessing process to actualise the vision;' that all may be one.'

In the case of SMCC, the vision has the following characteristics

4.2.1. The Vision Encourages Unity

As Jesus visioned, SMCC actualises its vision by formulating the strategies for unity. In the ministry of SMCC, it is understood that the collective vision of the Church changes people's relationship to one another. In the history of SMCC, there were instances where it helped, encouraged and allowed the people to come together and work together in witnessing Christ. Together with the faithful, the Church tries to move for the actualisation of the vision.

4.2.2. The Vision Creates Energy

Visions are exciting and they energize people. They strike a spark as in the case of prophets in the Old Testament. As the prophets were energised by the vision, they supplied the fuel that lighted the fire on Israel so that they walked in God's commandments. Whenthe vision of the Church radiates with the values and mission of Jesus, it generates the energy that fuels the accomplishment of the ministry. As St. Paul affirms, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11). The energy of greatest

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missionary the world witnessed[206] is formed out of the encounter of 'the Risen Lord.'[207] There he formed his vision-oriented mission to proclaim 'the Crucified Christ' (1 Corinthians 2:1–2).The outcome of which was getting united with crucified Christ.

4.2.3. The Vision Fosters Risk Taking

A shared vision fosters risk-taking. Being a missionary is risky; it is the life of the cross. The ministry for Christ is an adventure in the existing situation of religious pluralism and cultural pluralism.

4.2.4. The Vision Enhances Leadership

Developing a vision and then living it vigorously are the essential elements of leadership. In the modern context, church has the ministry of leading the world. The Church should identify and stand for the leadership qualities of Christ. The vision enhances the leadership qualities to equip with given situations.

4.2.5. The Vision Promotes Excellence

God desires that His church minister and serve well on His behalf. A shared organizational vision promotes a standard of excellence. Now SMCC is with a mission founded on a great vision, the excellence is measured on the criteria of the actions which promote the proclamation of the good news. Now the field entrusted to SMCC is wider and the excellence is measured on the action plan executed by the church.

4.2.6. The Vision Sustains Ministry

In the history of Christianity, many have risked or given their lives for the Saviour and the spread of the gospel. The list of martyrs who lived for Christ is extensive. It is because of a mission founded on a great vision. It encouraged people to look beyond the pain of ministry and transcend the mundane. It keeps a picture in front of them and that was of Christ (Heb 12:1-2).[208]By understanding the call, still the missionaries are inspired by the vision given. It sustains their mission.

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[206]Jean-Baptiste Edart, "Saint Paul: The Greatest Missionary of All Times" in *Fides Dossier*, (Fides News Service, Rome, June 38, 2008). In this dossier by Fr. Jean Baptiste Edart provides an excellent look at the life, conversion, and mission of St. Paul the Apostle and how we was successful in his missionary spirit.

[207] Cf. Gal 1:16; 2:2; Eph 3:3

[208] "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking

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4.3 Mission of the Church

It is God's design to gather all creation under the Lordship of Christ (cf. Eph 1:10), and to bring humanity and all creation into communion. In this venture,the Church is called to manifest God's mercy to humanity, and to bring humanity to its purpose – to praise and glorify God together with all the heavenly hosts. The mission of the Church is to serve the purpose of God that all may believe and they should become one (cf. Jn 17:21-22).

The Church, embodying in its own life the mystery of salvation and the transfiguration of humanity, participates in the mission of Christ to reconcile all things to God and to one another through Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-21; Rom 8:18-25). Through its worship, which includes the stewardship of creation (*diakonia*), and proclamation (*kerygma*) the Church participates in and guides to the reality of the Kingdom of God. With the power of the Holy Spirit the Church testifies to the divine mission in which the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Mission of the Church is the mission of God; *missio Dei*. It resembles the Trinitarian mission. It is not new but it was there from the beginning.[209] It began with the creation. God accompanies the creation by being present and in relationship with created beings. From creation and redemption through incarnation God willed to unveil his mission to humanity. Jesus announced his mission in Nazareth by quoting the prophet Isaiah (Luke 4: 18-19; Cf.Iss 61:1-2) and it revealed different dimensions of His mission.

The passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus are also God's affirmation of Jesus' way of mission in the world, a way of servanthood and commitment to bring life for others. Jesus' ministry is God's mission to overcome the enemies of life and to restore life as God intended it. It continues through the Holy Spirit in action. The Church receives God's life through Word and Sacrament, is empowered by the Holy Spirit, and lives as God's sacrament of grace in the words and deeds in the world. It is the responsibility of the Church. As individuals and as a church, we are called to participate in God's mission of life locally and globally. Here the vision is accomplished through the mission and which has different action plans.

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to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God."

[209] It doesn't mean that God has a beginning rather it is in the creation point of view.

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4.4. Mission of SMCC

As it is already mentioned, the mission of SMCC is the continuation of the mission of Christ. Jesus promises to meet human beings as a living presence today in those who suffer hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, and imprisonment (Matthew 25:35–36).Jesus mission is a life-giving mission of love, bringing food for the hungry, water for the thirsty, forgiveness for sinners, care for the marginalized, good news for the poor, peace for the conflicted and war-ravaged, intervention for the outcast and oppressed, deliverance for those enslaved by evil powers, and life for the dead and dying.

By incarnation, the dignity of humanity is well accepted by the creator. He emptied himself to save humanity (Philip. 2:6-10). It is an invitation to humanity to follow his path by being a witness. Thus the manifesto of His mission (Luke 4:18-19) becomes the mission of the believer; collectively the Church. Thus each apostolic activity of different kinds becomes a platform for witnessing Christ. This paper makes a self-reflection of what extent SMCC is successful in this regard.

4.5. SMCC's Mission in Action

As an individual Church, SMCC began its missionary journey through the communion to the Catholic Church. It imbibes the spirit of mission in an indigenous way. Initial mission was shaped by the influence of a monastic culture. It is because of the monastic influence and instrumentality of Bethany ashram in the growth of mission in early periods. Mar Ivanios practiced the same pattern of mission even after communion with the Catholic Church. In this section, Ivanian model of mission is discussed in detail and the actualisation of vision of SMCC through the mission activities is explored. It is also an examination of the missions done by SMCC and formulation of contextual application of that in the given context.

4.5.1. Missiological Vision of Mar Ivanios

Missiological Vision of Mar Ivanios was guided by the Word of Lord Jesus Christ as He prayed "that all may be one" (John 17:22) and the mission of apostles "go out all over the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk16, 15). The evangelizing mission leading to oneness of humanity in Christ was one of the priorities of Mar Ivanios and all his missionary activities radiated from it. Evangelization, for Mar Ivanios has got two dimensions. They are the mission within the Church (re-evangelization) and that outside the Church - *Missio ad gentes*. He firmly believed that giving witness to the gospel is the prime

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duty of every Christian faithful. In his retreat preaching to a group of Syrian Students at Kottayam he strongly advised that everyone was chosen and sent to bear witness to Christ (Is 6, 8).[210] Moreover, realizing the role and importance of the family in the process of evangelization, he founded an order for married people and it was affiliated with Bethany Ashram as Bethany Third Order.[211] They spread the evangelisation through prayers and action among people of all walks of life.[212]

Even Four decades before the Second Vatican Council, Mar Ivanios worked for the two great visions of the council: renewal and ecumenism. Through the renewal and communion, he aimed at Church's wider missionary commitment: preaching the gospel throughout India. Mar Ivanios meditated upon the missionary character of the church through his life of prayer, meditation and the sacraments. His vocation was nurtured through different stages of life such as a deacon, priest, principal, professor, hermit and bishop. He believed that witnessing Christ is the primary duty of the church and the testimony to the faith lived and preached as the motto of its life.

4.5.2. Mission as Spirituality

Mar Ivanios developed a spirituality leading to mission on the basis of the scriptural, liturgical, ecclesiastical and spiritual traditions based on Antiochean rite. From the very life of Mar Ivanios it is understood that his missionary spirit is the spontaneous overflow of his deep spirituality. His mission was the Imitation of Christ – *Imitatio Christi* which means following Christ. He followed Christ as closely as possible through the practice of religious discipline according to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ both in his life of prayer and action and through the adoption of Indian ways of life.[213] For him there is an intimate co-relation between the mission of the Church and the spiritual life of the faithful. Since Malankara spirituality is based on liturgy, Mar Ivanios gave emphasis and care for the sacramental and liturgical life of the faithful. He started a spiritual revival in the church through prayer, abstinences and fasting. He believed that through these spiritual forces, he could restore the spiritual status of the faithful which had been lost.[214] Mar Ivanios realized that unless and until an ever burning God experience is not acquired, the missionaries might

[210] Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, *Young Syrian Students Association*, (Kottayam: MOSC Publications, 1927), 5.

[211] Abraham Padinjaremannil, "Bethany Sannadha Seva Sangam" in *Malankara Punaraikya Suvarna Jubilee souvenir 1980* (Mal). N. G. Philip (ed.), (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 1980), 37.

[212] Louis Moolaveetil, Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios, (Kottayam; Bethany Publications, 1987), 90.

[213] Louis Moolaveetil, Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios, (Kottayam; Bethany Publications, 1987), 58.

[214] Louis Moolaveetil, Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios, (Kottayam; Bethany Publications, 1987), 23.

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go after worldly pleasures and values in the course of time. He realized that the union with God is more sublime than the service of God.[215] In the nineteen centuries of Church's existence, there was not a developed monastic system except one or two small communities. Monastic life is the source of the spiritual vigour of a Church. On this he writes:

> From childhood I had a liking for sanyāsa. The source of spiritual development, both of individual and of community, is true devotion to God. Some inner force persuaded me to forming a religious community to realize this end. It was the experience I had from the Church that inspired me to this. I could smell the dirt that had accumulated underneath the Malankara Church of which we are proud of having been founded by Apostle Thomas teaching catholic faith. I consider it is an inspiration of God.[216]

The thought culminated in the foundation of a religious order; Bethany Ashram in 1919. It paved the way to a mission approach – 'Ashram model of mission.'

4.5.3. Ashram Model for Mission

There was a long preparation period before the foundation of Bethany ashram. Basically he followed the mission model proposed by Jesus Christ. As He said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This was the spirit behind the formulation of mission by Mar Ivanios. As it is mentioned earlier, he underwent continuous practice of prayer, meditation and penance. Here he adopted the mission as 'witness' in the life and it was a gradual growth culminated in the mission activities of SMCC. Still the paradigm put forward by him inspires SMCC to formulate new mission strategies..

In the following section, the dimension of 'witness' in the life of Mar Ivanios will be discussed.

4.5.3.1. Witnessing in Jerusalem

Jerusalem has been the holiest city in Judaism and the ancestral and spiritual homeland of the Jewish people since the 10th century BCE.[217] During classical antiquity, Jerusalem was

[215] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 61.
[216] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 5.
[217] Roger Friedland, and Richard D. Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem*, (California: University of California Press, 2000), 8.

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considered the centre of the world, where God resided.[218] It is the place where the temple constructed by Solomon. Jews resides there especially the priestly class; the Levites.[219]

Here 'Jerusalem' in Ivanian thought is understood as self and witnessing in Jerusalem is understood as self-witnessing after self-renewal. Here comes the importance of self-renewal practices done by Mar Ivanios. When he reflected on the situation of his church and spirituality, he writes, "I could smell the dirt that had accumulated underneath the Malankara Church…"[220]he thought of the renewal of the church primarily stressed on self-renewal. In this situation, at Serampore he underwent constant practice of prayer, meditation and penance.[221] It was a stage of strict religious discipline. Gradually a monastic vision for his mission of witnessing formed in his life.[222] Later history reveals his life as a self-witness among his fellow human beings.

4.5.3.2. Witnessing in Judea

In this section, two dimensions of his witnessing life are discussed. First one is 'witnessing' among his own people – faithful and second one is in the Church.

Judea is known as 'the land of the Jews,'[223] the Greco-Roman equivalent of Judah. As most of the Israelites returning from the captivity belonged to the tribe of Judah, they came to be called Jews and their land Judea. The limits of this district varied greatly, extending as the Jewish population increased, but in many periods with very indefinite boundaries. It means that Jews were residing there.

When the land of Judea is hermeneutically understood by Mar Ivanios, it represents his own people and his own church. Here he became a 'witness' as a teacher in the seminary, a monk, a reformer etc. He used to visit the parishes and involved in catechetical activities. Along with him, he has taken many students to Serampore for better education. As a Bethanian, he witnessed as a proactive monk. After visiting many monasteries of other religion, he imbibed the spirit of monasticism which made him a 'witness' as a monk in Bethany Ashram and its foundation. By the very foundation, he became a 'witness' among his people and at large in

[218]Scott Korb, *Life in Year One*, (New York: Riverhead books, 2010), 155.
[219]Scott Korb, *Life in Year One*, (New York: Riverhead books, 2010), 157.
[220] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 5.
[221] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 64.
[222] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 68-72.
[223223]Scott Korb, *Life in Year One*, (New York: Riverhead books, 2010), 166.

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his church. He organised conventions and started retreats in Bethany ashram at Mundanmala.[224]

4.5.3.3. Witnessing in Samaria

According to the Hebrew Bible, the Israelites captured the region known as Samaria from the Canaanites and assigned it to the Tribe of Joseph; Ephraim and Manasseh. It is the land of Samaritans and Jews have no cordial relationship with them (John 4:9). Basically they are gentiles with their own creed and temple at Mt. Gerizim. In Mar Ivanios' hermeneutical understanding, it is the place where people of other religion along with people of his own are living. He became a 'witness' there by imparting mission activities among them. Here he stood for emphasising unity among other Christian denominations and living as a Christian monk among other religions.

In this context, mission means to bear witness to Jesus Christ and his church in the midst of all. Mar Ivanios felt deeply disturbed by the divisions of the Malankara church. He believed that division is a hindrance and a scandal for preaching Christ and His gospel. His ecumenical aim was to bring all the divided St. Thomas Christians into the unity of 'one fold and one Shepherd.' The spiritual decadence of the Malankara Church inflicted a heart throbbing pain to Mar Ivanios. He writes, "When I realize the condition since the year 1872, I suffered unbearable pain."[225] He was convinced that only a spiritual renewal could bring about a renaissance and revival of the church. The love of God so compelled him to do whatever he could, even to sacrifice his life for healing the wounds in the body of Christ created by divisions. As he writes, "even if I were to be cut into thousand pieces in order to heal a small wound in the body of Christ, I feel it should be done.'[226]

Unity means "conversion of the life from division to a life of peace, joy and harmony."[227] He was so convinced of the need of Christian unity, that he made it the main theme of his speech after his consecration.[228] After reunion, Mar Ivanios believed that from the life and witness of the Malankara Catholic Church, the separated brethren should feel the unity and communion

[224] Salga Anniyil, *Punaraikyathinte Aadyakaalangal*. Ed. Tharakan Anniyil, (Trivandrum: Union Press, 1990), 60.

[225] Louis Moolaveetil, Spiritual Life of Mar Ivanios, (Kottayam; Bethany Publications, 1987), 21.

[226] Cf. Address of Mar Ivanios, First anniversary of reunion, Malankara archives, Catholicate centre, Pattom, Trivandrum.

[227] *Evangelium nuntiandi* (EN), 29, 36.

[228] Cf. Bethany Chronicles, Archives Bethany Ashram Generalate, Kottayam.

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with the Catholic Church. In fact, he tried his level best for that. Therefore SMCC should act as a mediator to bring all the separated brethren into the full communion of Churches.

The communion with the Catholic Church gave a new impetus in this vision. Mar Ivanios continued the spiritual revival of the Church through several means and measures. He was very keen in forming the future priests in line with the liturgical spirituality of the Church as they are the leaders of the worshipping community. As he was very particular to this he started minor seminaries just after communion. He started a school for lay catechists – *upadesimar* and trained them to organize missions, teaching catechism and helping the people in parish to participate in liturgy. His vision on lay ministry is an important lesson for SMCC.

4.5.3.4. Witnessing to the Ends of the Earth

Mar Ivanios visioned the evangelisation of India through the mission of SMCC. Still it is found to be very narrow. In the new areas entrusted to SMCC, it encounters different cultures, languages, religions etc. Bethanians were sent out for doing mission for the Malankarites in diaspora. By the very act of witnessing, many people embraced catholic faith. *Vijathiya* Mission (gentile ministry) – mission among others was one of his missionary activities mainly meant for the evangelization of non-Christians. Mar Ivanios was approachable to all types of people in the society. He firmly believed that the primary duty of Christianity is the spreading of the gospel through witnessing Christ.[229]

He started *Vijatiya* mission centres in various places like Tiruvalla, Thumpamon, Vennikulam and places nearby Bethany Ashram.[230] These places became 'beacons of light' and attracted many people to Christ. Mar Ivanios gave a new impetus to the missionary dimension of Malankarites, especially to preach the word to low caste people and accept them to the Church.[231]After the communion with the Catholic Church Mar Ivanios chose Trivandrum as the headquarters of the Church. This was in view of better felicitation of the mission which was to be carried out among poor, downtrodden, and marginalised people who live in the outskirts of the city and nearby villages.

[229] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 67.
[230] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 141.
[231]Chacko Narimattathil, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios Pastor and Prophet of Ecclesial Communion in the Syro-Malankara Church*. (Rome: Ph. D. Thesis, 1993), 301.

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Through the preaching of the gospel Mar Ivanios' aim was to improve the economic, religious and social conditions of many depressed class who were considered to be the low castes in the society.[232] He was not satisfied by the mere preaching of the gospel. He was helping the poor in their needs. Here one can easily understand the hermeneutical application of incarnation theology where one gives more important to human dignity.

As a result of this, hundreds of low caste people got consolation and converted to Christianity. His attempt to convert the lower class was a very bold venture when the social condition of that period is considered. He had great respect towards their religious spirit and considered them as the children of God. The motivation behind each conversion was not to increase the number of people. Conversion was not a forceful one or not because of any privileges and financial support. From the context of Kerala, mission of SMCC gradually moved out to Indian subcontinent by giving pastoral care to the faithful in Diaspora. Now the presence of SMCC is there in different parts of the world like Europe, Germany, Switzerland, and Ethiopia etc. for the pastoral care. It is the high time; SMCC should move out and reach the needy.

4.6. Nature of Ivanian Model of Mission

As it is already mentioned, the Ivanian model of mission or the Ashram model is the life of witness. Following titles reveal the important nature of this model.

4.6.1. Ivanian Model is Evangelical

Evangelical, derived from the Greek word meaning "good news," identifies the Christian message as God's good news in Jesus Christ. The New Testament uses a variety of metaphors to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ: justification, forgiveness, kingdom of God, liberation, finding the lost, sanctification, accepting the outcasts, and resurrection. This good news is the motivating power of Ashram model of mission and is continually being translated into new images and language as the mission moves out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. It is being articulated through the apostolic activities of SMCC. In the modern context, SMCC should be more enthusiastic to proclaim the word of God as being a witness. There SMCC can use a variety of metaphors in order to communicate effectively the good news. It should be done among the poor, marginalized, and oppressed peoples of the area entrusted.

[232] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 141

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4.6.2. Ivanian Model is Discipling

The church in mission is called to make disciples, baptizing and teaching them in the way of Jesus (Matthew 28:17–20). In ashram, the spiritual life creates disciples. Since the Church has the influence of ashram, it produces Disciples of Christ by the influence of monastic spirituality. In the Church, the believers are taught to pray and to study the scriptures. Now in Malankara Seminary, there is opportunity for lay men to study theology. In the Church, Disciples with leadership potential are identified and prepared to take up leadership responsibilities in the community and other church activities.

4.6.3. Ivanian Model is Contextual

The word became flesh in incarnation. Through incarnation, people experienced the saving and transforming power of God. The mission of Jesus was contextual. So the models of mission should be contextual and address the needs of the people. It is significant that the New Testament is written in Greek rather than Aramaic. It is because of the spreading of good news. So the message would get translated into that culture and context. It testifies to the power of God's mission to adapt to new people, cultures and situations. The history of the Christian church is a history of the gospel taking root in new contexts, new geographical locations. It is the mission of the Church to carry forward the Good news and give it to the cultures which are to be encountered. In the new situation, SMCC should translate the word of God suitable for the cultures to be encountered.

4.6.4. Ivanian Model is Holistic and Transforming

The mission of God is a ministry dedicated to transforming all reality and aimed at holistic growth of a spiritual person. In this all forms of evil (alienation, exploitation, oppression, destruction, and death) are to be overcome so that life may flourish within God's creation. If God's mission continues in the Church, Church should stand for holistic and transforming aspects of mission. Mar Ivanios tried a lot to make the mission as holistic and transforming. His social concerns were articulated in that way. Social institutions are established for the holistic development. Ashram itself as a spiritual centre and other centres of prayer and meditation were erected where many people gathered for spiritual renewal. In the infancy stage of Bethany Ashram, many people far and near reached Mundanmala to attend liturgical celebrations.

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This mission continued in the Church after communion. But later the spirit of transforming people is slowly diminished. Leaders of the church sometimes gave emphasis only to some activities. The ideas of institutionalism began to creep into the ideologies and presented institutions as the mission centres. More over many institutions have forgotten the real mission spirit. Now it is high time that SMCC should come back to real missionary spirit of Jesus. Jesus' ministry reflects this holistic vision as the sick are healed, lepers are cleansed, the demon-possessed are liberated, the marginalized are placed centre-stage, sinners are forgiven, the alienated are brought back etc. SMCC should stand for social justice especially in the growth and dynamics of institutions. Institutions are good instruments to proclaim good news in the modern world. Church should explore the potentialities for holistic growth and transformation.

4.6.5. Ivanian Model is Dialogical

In a world of religious pluralism, the Christian community is called to witness Jesus Christ by dialogue. Even though God is revealed in Jesus, He is unknown to some people. But God is already present in their lives and their religions, and God's wisdom and love is woven into their existence. In the Crucified Christ and Risen Christ, the fullness of God's lifesaving power is made experiential for those who have already been touched by God. People experienced the real Christian life by encountering the acts of living and witnessing which was explicated by the monks. Irrespective of caste and creed, people came to the ashram for prayer, to meet the monks, to share some moments with them etc. The monks lived by receiving alms collected from different houses. Many people contributed money to the ashram for the livelihood of the monks. Near to the ashram, there was a rest room for the pilgrims to Sabarimala.

Later the mission continued. SMCC developed relationships and entered into mutual dialogue with many people all around. Government delegated Mar Gregorios to initiate cordial dialogue between Hindus and Muslims of Poonthura in Trivandrum.[233] Now SMCC has inter-religious dialogue forum in which SMCC organises dialogue, celebrations, conferences etc. SMCC should show more vigour in this matter when it is entering into the new field.[234] Dialogue will encourage neighbours to acknowledge the power, beauty, and integrity found

[233] Earlier, on July 18, 1992, a very minor incident had resulted in a massive riot between Hindus and Muslims at Poonthura in Trivandrum.

[234] CPCSMCC, Canon 437- 441.

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in each other's faith. In the mission field, SMCC should respect others and allow them to speak for themselves in interpreting the meaning of their religious faith.

In the sacred canons, all are obliged to take special initiatives for church unity and inter religious harmony through prayers and by the act of witnessing.[235] It is the important mission area SMCC should concentrate at present.

4.6.6. Ivanian Model is Ecumenical

God's mission is, by its very nature, ecumenical and reconciling. The Church of Jesus Christ is one. There is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:5–6). The vision of Mar Ivanios is formulated from the prayer of Jesus; He prays for the unity of his disciples in order that the world might believe that God has sent him (John 17:20–22).

In the foundation of Bethany ashram and communion with Catholic Church, Mar Ivanios visioned ecumenism as one its objective. In the growth of SMCC, it is noticed that there were ecumenical discussions happened between sister churches. The particular canons of SMCC give much thrust to this point.[236] It clearly states, "the ecclesial communion movement initiated by the Servant of God Archbishop Geevarghese Mar Ivanios aims at the full communion of all the Churches of St, Thomas Christian Tradition."[237] There were many initiatives from the part of SMCC so far.[238]

Canons of SMCC clearly exhort that the particular vocation of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church is to foster unity among all Christians especially among the St. Thomas Christians and to promote religious harmony and inculturation in the multi-religious and cultural context of India.[239]The synodal commission formulates the strategies for the fulfilment of this to which SMCC should give a keen attention. All should equally participate in this venture. As it is stated, "all the members of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church have the right and

[235] PCCSMCC, Canon 442.
[236] See PCCSMCC, Canons 433-442. Title XI – Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue. Page 69-70.
[237] CPCSMCC, Canon 433.
[238] Cf. Benedict Mar Gregorios, "Ecumenical Endeavours of the Malankara Catholic Church" in Malankara Catholic Convention in North America 1991, New York, 1991, pp. 59-61; Isaac Thottunkal, *At the Service of Full Communion: A Critical Study on the Ecumenical Role of the Malankara Catholic Church*, Rome, 1997; Baselios, Moran Mor Cleemis, "Syro-Malankara Katholikka Sabhayum Ecumenisavum" *Aikyadeepam*, Vol. 39 (2008) No. 10, pp. 6-12; Panicker, Geevarghese, "Ecumenical Thoughts" *Christian Orient*, Vol. 1 (1980) IV, 214 - 216.
[239] CPCSMCC, Canon 433.

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obligation to actively involve themselves in the ecumenical apostolate. This Church relentlessly engages itself to realize the vision, "that all may be one."[240]

4.6.7. Ivanian Model is Inclusive

Ivanian Model of mission understood the mission of God embraces people of all religions, castes and all conditions of life. In God's mission, people of all ethnic groups and all social classes make up the identity of the community. God's church and God's mission honour the image of God and the dignity of humanity in all. In the mission of the Church and in the communion of the Church, the gifts and burdens of all are honoured and welcomed. There were empowerment programme for women conducted at different places, small scale industrial training, awareness programme etc. were organised by the church to serve this purpose.

The participation of women and the converts were there in the course of growth of SMCC. Lay participation in parish activities were praiseworthy. But women assistance in liturgical celebration was not there due to conservative orthodox praxis. Now SMCC tries to promote the participation of women in Church activities. Wherever we establish village mission, we should empower and equip them. The purpose of 'witness' is very clear that the wide diversity of all God's people and their gifts is to be celebrated and nurtured for the sake of establishing the Kingdom of God.

4.6.8. Ivanian Model is the Movement from Local Situations to Global Situations

The mission of God invites the Christian community to be equally committed to mission in its local and global contexts, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. This vision led Ivanian Mission and it leads the mission of SMCC. In early years, SMCC invited missionaries from congregations and Syro-Malabar and Latin dioceses. From local level it grew beyond the state of Kerala. This is a pointer to the need of cooperation and sharing of resources among churches and congregations which would culminate the shaping of successful mission paradigms in the global context.

[240] CPCSMCC, Canon 434.

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4.6.9. Ivanian Model is the Mission through Inculturation and Assimilation of Indigenous Cultures

Mar Ivanios believed that only through inculturation, the evangelization in India would be effective and Indianization was the only guarantee for Christianity to gain relevance in the Indian context. He incorporated the good elements of Indian culture to Christian life. His attempts on inculturation started with the establishment of Bethany Ashram. He named the abode of the *Sanyasis* as Ashram and the house of sisters as Madam. He adopted a purely Indian monastic life for the people in the ashram. In their habits (*Kashaya* - Saffron dress and wooden cross), prayers, life styles, and food they tried to imitate the Hindu brethren. People from different religions had cordial relations with the Ashram. Many times many Hindu brethren contributed for the livelihood of the monk. Many people contributed for the growth of the infant Church in many ways. While looking back with gratitude, and inspired by the good will of those people, now SMCC moves forward to do missions in the areas entrusted.

Since SMCC is going to encounter different cultures and traditions in North India, by making analysis of successful missions of sister churches like Bijnor mission, Ujjain mission, Indore mission etc. formulates strategies for being a witness there. There SMCC need Inculturation and assimilation of indigenous cultures and it should be reflected in mission areas too. Inculturation is as Pope John Paul second teaches, "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures."[241]

Mar Ivanios was very well aware that liturgy is a decisive means of evangelization. So he took all possible means to make the liturgy more lively and attractive. As part of this, he encouraged the translation of Syriac prayers and hymns into Malayalam.[242] He firmly believed that, by using the native language the faithful could participate actively in the liturgical celebrations. Before the second Vatican council, the liturgical cerebrations were mainly in ancient languages like Syriac, Latin etc. But decades before the council, Mar Ivanios understood the use of regional languages in liturgy and used Malayalam language for sacramental cerebrations. He took active interest in composing certain prayers on the model of Hindu *Bhajans*. Accordingly, a Hindu *Munshi* was appointed and he composed certain

[241] *Redemptoris Missio*, 37.
[242] Philip Pantholil, *Mar Ivanios Ente Smaranayil*, (Kozhencherry: New India Press, 1997), 32.

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prayers for the use of the Malankara Church.[243] To correct and verify the translations of prayers he sought the help of the great literary figures of that time. Now the context is different. SMCC should revisit the model and add more inculturated elements to witness Christ for the cause of the growth of missions. At this juncture, SMCC should not forget the fact that the mission activities are not intended to convert people and make them to join into the Church, rather conversion of hearts[244] there by human development makes possible. Conversion and proselytization are definitely not intended.

4.6.10. Ivanian Model is the Mission through Education and Social Apostolate

As a well-educated clergy, Mar Ivanios was deeply aware of the impact of education on the integral development and progress of the individuals as well as the society. He firmly believed that education can liberate the people from the bondages of evil practices, superstitious beliefs and that it would raise the community from a law standard of behaviour and culture.[245]The missionaries used education as one of the powerful tools to spread the gospel values. He made it very clear in one of his pastoral letters;

> As you all know in spite of all our problems and difficulties especially in the initial stages of our Archdiocese, we are trying our level best to establish schools for the education of the children irrespective of caste and religion. The aim of the education in our schools is to impart knowledge in Christian faith to the Christian belonging to our Church and to care for the cultural and religious dimensions of the personality formation of all the children. Following the mandate of Jesus 'go and teach all the nations' the Catholic Church has undertaken this apostolate and all of us should ever remain faithful to this great motto of our educational activities.[246]

He established many schools for the poor and downtrodden in view of their development.[247] He started schools attached to each parish and mission centres. Thus primary education was made possible for all people, especially in far remote villages and under developed areas. With his great conviction that an educated and cultured young generation might pave the way for contemplation of real mission work, he acted as a visionary of education. When SMCC establishes new institutions of education and social apostolate, the spirit of Mar Ivanios should be reflected there. Human values should be nurtured there and fostered among children which would ultimately cause social transformation.

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[243] Philip Pantholil, *Mar Ivanios Ente Smaranayil*, (Kozhencherry: New India Press, 1997), 32.

[244] Cf. PCCSMCC, Canon 416.

[245] Chacko Narimattathil, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios Pastor and Prophet of Ecclesial Communion in the Syro-Malankara Church*. (Rome: Ph. D. Thesis, 1993), 250.

[246] Chacko Narimattathil, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios Pastor and Prophet of Ecclesial Communion in the Syro-Malankara Church*. (Rome: Ph. D. Thesis, 1993), 250.

[247] Chacko Narimattathil, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios Pastor and Prophet of Ecclesial Communion in the Syro-Malankara Church*. (Rome: Ph. D. Thesis, 1993), 253.

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4.6.11. Ivanian Model Used Media, a Powerful Tool for Mission

Mar Ivanios was fully convinced of the enormous possibility of mass media for evangelization. As a man of vision, he considered that press and publications are providential instruments of social communication for the accomplishment of his mission.[248]In *Girideepam* he states that, "It is not only through preaching and writing but also through printing press many works of God could be accomplished."[249]Mar Ivanios established and named the press as Bethany Press at Thiruvalla and started an official magazine '*Bethany Masika*' and published a series of articles and books on Christian life.[250] Mar Ivanios' literary activities started in 1905 covered a period of five decades. During this time he wrote many books, periodical articles and booklets in English and Malayalam. He also knew that pictures can easily convey messages.

Now the horizon of media is so vast and as Pope mentions,

> Priests stand at the threshold of a new era: as new technologies create deeper forms of relationship across greater distances, they are called to respond pastorally by putting the media ever more effectively at the service of the Word.... Who better than a priest, as a man of God, can develop and put into practice, by his competence in current digital technology, a pastoral outreach capable of making God concretely present in today's world and presenting the religious wisdom of the past as a treasure which can inspire our efforts to live in the present with dignity while building a better future?[251]

By imbibing spirit of Ivanian model, SMCC should use the media for witnessing before the people encountered in the new context.

4.7. Revisiting Ivanian Model of Mission for New Visions

So far the model of mission; Ivanian Ashram model of 'witnessing' and its different axioms were discussed. In this section, the need of reintroduction of the model in the context of doing mission in the areas newly given to SMCC is discussed to continue 'the process of becoming.' By the erection of a new diocese at Gurgaon and an exarchate at Khadki – Pune, SMCC is in the path of continuing to fulfil its vision – 'that they all may be one,' by revisiting Ivanian Ashram model of mission as 'self-witnessing.'

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[248] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 139.
[249] Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2003), 145.
[250] Thomas Inchakalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, Vol 1, (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2006), 178.
[251] Pope Benedict XVI, *The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word*, Benedict XVI, 24 January 2010, accessed on 22.07.2017.

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4.7.1. The Context in the New Situation

Mar Ivanios had a dream, to preach the Word of God to the whole of Indian Subcontinent; it remains as an unfulfilled dream before the erection of the diocese at Gurgaon and the exarchate in Pune. There are difficulties and the challenges before SMCC in proclaiming the Gospel and being a 'witness' in the modern context.

4.7.1.1. Counter Witness of Division

At present, divided Churches is a counter witness to the Gospel Message. Division of the mystical body of Christ remained as a hindrance to her missionary proclamation. Various tensions and conflicts among different groups in the Church adversely affect our missionary witnessing and effectiveness of doing the mission.[252] If the Church is for unity and is presented as divided, it loses its credibility in proclaiming Gospel of Christ. In his last message to the faithful Mar Ivanios said, 'we should remember that diverse beliefs and sectarian thinking are the real causes which distances our non-Christian brethren from the light of the world."[253]

Indian population was not against Christ or His message but the counter-witnessing of Christians themselves prevents the spreading of the Good News. If one Christian group is bent on proselytizing the other, the joint preaching will remain only a dream. It is our common duty to preach Gospel and witness Christ.[254]By being as a 'witness' SMCC should act as mediator bringing all these separated brethren into the full communion of Churches and thus together work for the evangelization of whole Indian continent in the modern context. At this juncture, SMCC should be more of dialogical, and be local by inculturation and assimilating the values of other cultures.

4.7.1.2. Decline of Missionary Spirit and Growth of Institutions

Another problem is the decline of missionary spirit. When the present enthusiasm to do mission is compared with the early times it is found that there is a deterioration in its missionary thrust. It is because of the comfort zones. The concerned people are satisfied with what they have. The lethargy of people in reaching out is another problem. Now a days the

[252] Cf. the final Statement of the general body Meetings, CBCI (1996-2002), Delhi, 140.

[253] Geevarghese Chediath, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, (Kottayam, Bethany sisters Publications, 2003), 282.

[254]Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *Daivasasthra Padanangal* (Mal.), (Kottayam: Bethany Publications, 2001), 384.

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Church and religious congregations are more engaged to establish institutes but sometimes they take the Church away from the spirit of mission. Besides more often these institutes become profit oriented. It is high time to realise the spirit on which these institutions are established and nurture the spirit of Christian witness in them. As Mar Ivanios did, 'to be a witness' is the need of the hour; the silent evangelisation.

The Church should be conscious that all the activities of the Church whether it is spiritual or aiming at human development, should have mission orientation. We need renewed awareness about our call to evangelization.[255] The Church has a lot of opportunities and challenges for doing mission among other cultures, especially Devikulam Taluk in Tiruvalla Diocese, Coimbatore region of Muvattupuzha Diocese, Karnataka region of Bathery Diocease, some regions of Marthandam diocese, diocese of Gurgaon, and exarchate of Khadki should get special attention in her future missionary endeavour.[256]

4.7.1.3. Attitude of Government and Various Policies

There is a tension existing between religiously coloured politics and policies of the Church. The modern agenda like saffronisation and '*Ghar Vapasi*" programme etc. creates tensions. There is denial of basic human justice and civil rights to Christians for the simple reason that they embraced Christianity. The policy is that a Christian cannot have the right of reservation in any government job. The reservation in job opportunities and other benefits which are sanctioned for the Dalits are granted for Buddhist, Muslim and Sikh Dalits but this right is denied to those who become Christians.[257] Many non-Christians who wish to become Christians are reluctant to become Christians. By becoming Christians they are denied the benefits reserved to them as SC, ST or OBC. The decisions of the Kerala government regarding *Nadar* reservation is the best example of the double game played by the government. The duty of the Church is to stand with the people and to empower them to speak for their denied rights and opportunities.

[255] K. M. Vincent, "The Missionary contributions and scope of Malankara Catholic Church" in *Aikya Samiksha*, Vol. 5, 2 (Oct 2008), 89.

[256] Jose Mariadas, "Oru September Masathile Chila Veritta Chinthakal" (Mal). in *Kraisthava Kahalam* 68, 8 (Sept 2008), 10.

[257] Geevarghese Chediath, *The Malankara Catholic Church*, (Kottayam, Bethany sisters Publications, 2003), 144.

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4.7.1.4. Religious Fundamentalism

This era is affected by two great threats namely fundamentalism and terrorism. Nowadays religion is very closely associated with bloody violence and terror. Though India is a secular democratic Republic, the religious fundamentalists were against the great right granted by the constitution. The fundamentalists are engaged in many activities of destroying other religions. Violence against Christianity is increasing day by day. The attacks against the Churches and the atrocities and cruelties towards the Christians in Kandamal, Orissa are some of the examples. Here Church should become more dialogical. Formulation of strategies to gel the religious experience of Jesus and His disciples with the religious experience of the people who profess other religions will help to decrease the tensions.

Another observed fact is the fundamentalism within the church i.e., the church is not open. For example, attempts of liturgical renewal are not accepted by some of the traditionalists. Indian way of celebrating Holy Eucharist as it is celebrated in *Kurishumala* Ashram is not accepted officially. The act of inculturation and inter religious dialogue are interpreted as the phenomena of entering through back door by Hindu brethren. SMCC must cautious enough not to become cultic and conservative but to become more prophetic and charismatic.

4.7.1.5. Globalization and Consumerist Culture

Modem society is driven by the forces like Globalization and consumerism. “The wave of Globalization tends to wipe out constrains of time and space by being people closer to make a world global village.”[258] But it enables only the cream of the society to improve its standard of living and leads most of the people to utter poverty. In the consumerist society the elements of the culture are rapidly commodified. The consumer culture evaluates people not according to the dignity of human person, but in terms of what they have. Religion and morality became less important.

In this context, the Church should stand for the upliftment of society in loving and caring others especially the poor and the downtrodden. Imparting awareness is an important factor in this context. Church should be a ‘witness.’ “We cannot carry on mission of the gospel unless we are possessed by the gospel. It is out of the experience of living in a community of caring,

[258] F. Wilfred, “Church’s Commitment to the Poor in the Age of Globalisation” in *Vidyajyothi*, 62/2, 1998, 78.

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sharing and sustaining that a community of mission grows."[259]The Church should emphasize the need of a globalisation without marginalisation i.e. a globalization of solidarity.[260]By avoiding the principles of consumerist ethics brought by globalisation, the idea 'to be is to consume' can be abolished. There should be more concerns by the Church and leaders of nations to keep the moral and ethical aspects of globalization.[261]

4.7.1.6. Growing Ecological Crisis

Ecological imbalance and alarmed rate of pollution is really a crisis today. The 'garden' God created and entrusted to Human beings gradually turned into a desert. Earth should be considered as God's self-manifestation.[262] Therefore any kind of exploitation is considered unethical. Church should stand for eco-theology, Eco-spirituality and eco-ethics. Sometimes the phrase 'have dominion over' (Gen. 1:28) is misinterpreted. The meaning of the phrase is that Human beings are the custodian of all. In Indian understanding, nature is the manifestation of God. There are even mantras which praises mother earth.[263]SMCC should stand for protecting Earth; 'our common home.'[264]

4.7.1.7. Cultural Pluralism

The Indian society is also characterised by the coexistence of different cultures. Even though the culture of the dominant group seems to control the cultural ethos of the society, equally important are the cultures of the subalterns in the society. The strength of the cultures of tribal groups, marginalized sections etc. is being discovered in recent times. About 90% of the Indian society is with the population of backward groups; the so called high castes are only a small minority. Therefore to this marginalized majority that the liberating good news has to be proclaimed in the coming years.

The emergence of assertive backward groups in different parts of the country is a sign of the emerging trend of the gaining importance for their cultures also. Till now, the Church has

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[259] Thomas Naikamparambil, "Mission and Social Transformation" in Aikya Samiksha, Vol. 13, (Nalanchira: Malankara Seminary publications, 2008), 14.

[260] Cf. Address of Pope John Paul II to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, April 27, 2002.

[261] Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, 39.

[262] Samuel Rayan, "The Earth is the Lord's" in *Vidyajyothi Journal of theological Reflection*, 54 (1990) 115-116.

[263] Cf. *Samudhra Vasane Devi Stotra* – (Samudhra Vasane Devi, Parvatha Sthana Mandithe, Vishnu Pathni Namasthubhyam Pada Sparsam Kshamasva Mae – means 'salutations to the divine wife of Lord Vishnu, Who is clothed by oceans, And is adorned prettily by the mountains, Pardon me mother, for setting my foot on you).

[264] Earth is portrayed as 'our common home' by Pope francis in his encyclical '*Laudato Si*.'

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been trying to adapt itself to the dominant '*savarna*' culture of the Indian society. Cultic sacrificial practices emphasised by religion are of expensive and are promoted by high caste people. The marginalised majority cannot go for most of them. They also provide the livelihood of the priestly class that is why these practices are sustained and promoted.

The past attempts in theology, liturgy, spirituality etc. from the part of the Indian Church shows a conspicuous interest to line up with the dominant cultures and present the good news through the medium of those cultures, even though paradoxically the majority of the Indian Christians belonged to the marginalized groups. The coming years should focus on the emerging subaltern cultures of these marginalized people so that the Church may truly become the hope and pledge of their salvation.

4.7.2. Vocation of SMCC as to be a Witness

By analysing Ivanian model of mission to accomplish the vision of SMCC, it is understood that 'witnessing' is the vocation of SMCC. This vocation is articulated through the apostolic activities of the Church. The vocation to unite, to theologise, and to evangelize are the important factors of this vocation of 'witnessing.'

4.7.2.1. Vocation to Unite

The particular canon presents the 'vocation to unite' as a primary function of our Church basing itself on Mar Ivanios, the prophet of ecclesial communion.[265] This is our primary vocation as it is a precursor for any genuine evangelization as or else, "we witness a divided Christ and hinder evangelization."[266] In the context of the Malankara Churches our Church should stand as a healer or as a medicine for the wounds. Praying for unity and calling theologians and Bishops from other Churches to such a programme would do better than merely giving sermons and speeches. Moreover, we should think of the possibilities of working together in mission fields and sharing common resources, engaging in theological dialogue and promoting studios of common interest. SEERI is a classical and successful example of this kind of an ecumenical endeavour. Such resource sharing and dialogue must be carried forth in all fields of theology and pastoral managements through our institutions. Our Church should also take the lead in collaborating with these Churches on socio-political issues.

[265] CPCSMCC, Can. 16.
[266] UR, 3.

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After having said the importance of the vocation of SMCC to unite, let us reflect on some of the activities done in connection with the celebration of certain events like the anniversary of reunion. The procession, in a strict sense should be of witnessing now turned to show the pomp and power which apparently hurts religious sentiments by being provocative. SMCC should be more vigilant to avoid provocative attitudes and activities. The money that spent for this can be utilised for charity purposes.

4.7.2.2. Vocation to Theologise

Instead of the traditional way of priestly formation, SMCC now follows seminary formation which allows the clergy to theologise systematically. This led to a gradual growth in our self-understanding and theologising which is evident in every field of theology. The contribution to the field of ecclesiastical literature is also praise worthy. Use of print media and other communication media is very important. The mobile apps of prayers are available now. There should be more translations of liturgical texts into local languages. We should promote prayer sessions where Word of God should be shared along with the celebration of para-liturgical celebrations. The prayers should reflect the cry, culture and ethos of modern man.

A mature dialogue with other cultures is the need of the time. As particular canon affirms; "… to promote religious harmony and inculturation in the multi-religious context of India" is the duty of SMCC.[267]Again it stresses the importance of dialogue in fostering ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue.[268]

Even the question of inculturation cannot be dumped off if we are serious of our Indian nature. Inculturation is not to be mere cosmetic i.e. in wearing *kavi* or saffron or simply reciting some mantras rather it is adapting to a culture. It starts from learning a language, food habits, mannerisms and then applying it on to Christian faith. *Kristhu Bhakta* movements in the north Indian catholic dioceses are an example of the same. We should promote Indian Ashramas like the *Kurisumala* Ashram at Vagamon, and Indian Christian Ashram at Jaiharikal. They can be a model for the same especially when we cater to the North Indian milieu.

[267] CPCSMCC, Can. 433.
[268] CPCSMCC, Can, 437.

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Theologising through the institutions is also important.[269] SMCC is blessed with two major seminaries to give formation to the priestly candidates. St. Mary's Malankara Seminary at Trivandrum, and BVP at Pune has a pivotal role in theologizing. The contributions of both in theologising through print media are praiseworthy. These institutes must innovate new ways of worship and experiment new liturgical forms fitting to today's contingencies without losing the core of Christian faith. Some genuine attempts like the composition of songs for liturgy by Fr. Santosh OIC in Indian tune and translation of the ordo of Holy Eucharist by Fr. Lawrence OIC etc. are praiseworthy. By imbibing the spirit of inter religions and inter cultural dialogue, the attempts of Fr. Philip Vysanethu OIC in performing musical concerts in different temples were praiseworthy. The outreach programme like CTP helps the candidates to imbibe different mission strategies adopted by sister churches in India.

4.7.2.3. Vocation to Evangelise

Evangelisation is the primary vocation of the church.[270] The first Major Archiepiscopal Assembly of our Church rightly choose to deliberate on this as 'Malankara Catholic Church: the Evangelizer.[271] Evangelization has two components namely *missio ad intra* (mission within) and *missio ad extra* (mission outside).[272]

Missio ad intra denotes that Church is not just evangelizer but also it is in itself called to be evangelized. This in fact is the spirit of new evangelization, 'a call ever ancient, ever new.'[273] The establishment of *suvishesha sangham*[274]is a right step towards self-evangelization. It is a good sign that gradually many women and men along with priests and religious have come forward to become part of this team. The new periodical '*Rehio de Evangelion*' published includes the news regarding *Suvishesha sangham* and the theological reflections on the ministry of the church.

Priests should also find time for adult catechism by explaining the liturgy and the meaning of various symbolisms along with sermons. Our institutions are also destined for the works of evangelization[275] and so adequate care must be taken that our educational and other social

[269] CCEO, Can 343.
[270] CCEO, Can 584 § 1 & 2
[271] Preamble, CPCSMCC, xxiiii.
[272]Thomas Menamparambil, *Thoughts on Evangelisation*, (Mumbai: St. Paul's Publications, 1997), 12.
[273]Thomas Menamparambil, *Thoughts on Evangelisation*, (Mumbai: St. Paul's Publications, 1997), 12.
[274] Suvishesha sangam is an organisation meant for evangelising activities. It is a group comprised of priests, Men and Women. Church arranges training programme for men and women on basic notions of theology.
[275] CPCSMCC, Can 416.

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institutions do not become merely commercial institutions. Priests, as Pope Francis reminds, are not executives but pastors all the time[276]and hence whether we minister in a school or hospital, we should evangelize the children by imparting Christian values and that should be our core thrust. At the end of the day people must look at Malankara institution as value oriented and not money oriented.

Evangelization of families through the diocesan family apostolate must be revitalized. MCYM[277] many a time seems to remain like any other social organizations. Organization like Jesus Youth has shown us how it is possible for youngsters to be spiritually zealous. Along with other social activities, retreats, classes on moral issues, and on liturgy etc. Youth must be given more training to lead a life of witness.

Missio ad extra refers to the moving out by the Church to the other as a 'witness.' As particular canons states, the mission is not to convert people to Church rather it should stand for the 'conversion of hearts' to be one in Christ[278] and 'the total liberation of human person.'[279] Here comes the importance of inculturation, inter religious dialogue etc. *Bhajan mandalis*, *satsangh* as practiced by other mission dioceses. We must give free space to spontaneity and creativity in our missions.

The examples of Fr. Gabriel, OIC are praiseworthy in the field of both evangelization and inter religious dialogue. In name and form *trippadam* is Indian and Christian. The prayer sessions in *trippadam* where readings from different religions were held are an example of inter religious dialogue in action. Our Schools have a great potential to such an initiative. Coming together, sharing with others, and arranging celebrations together etc. are important. By reaching out to the needy and being of the voice of the voiceless, we are silently witnessing Christ. Social emancipation is another commitment in witnessing. *Mission ad extra* invites us to a special call; a call to be a witness.

4.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, the vision and the mission of SMCC is reflected in the light of Ivanian Ashram model of being a 'witness.' The discussion on revisiting of the same and reintroduction of its paradigms helps SMCC to do missions in the modern context is dealt

[276] Cf. Pope Francis, Address at Gregorianum, L'osservatore Romano, Nov 22, 2016. 5.
[277] Malankara Catholic Youth Movement
[278] CPCSMCC, Can, 416.
[279] CPCSMCC, Can, 417.

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with at the end of this chapter. Here the vision – ‘that they all may be one’ for doing mission as being a ‘witness’ gets more impetus for SMCC in formulating new missions in the context. The vision inspires for more missions and the mission inspires to add more nuances to the vision of SMCC.

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GENERAL CONCLUSION

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

INTRODUCTION

The importance of being a 'witness' to continue the mission of God is unveiled in this dissertation through a historical parallel reading done exegetically and hermeneutically of the origin, development and canonical existence of SMCC with that of Israel. As the mystical body of Christ, the church by nature is missionary.[280] As in the history of Israel; from a small group, they became a large group, SMCC had a 'small beginning' with five people. The exegetical implications of Deut. 26:5 helped to draw a parallel study in the development of SMCC. As a small group of people from Malankara Orthodox Church, when united with Catholic Church and canonically existing as a Church Sui iuris undermines the praxis of mission right from its very existence. It followed a model – 'Ivanian Ashram model' of mission in its infancy and successfully achieved a lot in the history of SMCC. By revisiting the model, SMCC now formulates the hermeneutics of its vision – 'that they all may be one' for the mission as 'witness' for more missions as the quasi parts of the mission for interpreting the vision.

SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY

'Mar Ivanios' Ashram model' for mission continues to be a guiding light for SMCC to be a 'witness' in the context of India. The role of Bethany ashram and its influence in reunion and mission is still an inspiring thought. The very nature of Church as missionary is articulated in this paper as being a 'witness' to the people. The exegetical study of Deut. 26:5 in the first chapter and its significance in the life of SMCC throws light on the historical development of SMCC. The importance of the model practiced by Mar Ivanios helped in establishing the missionary nature of SMCC. The later followers were involved in shaping the Church based on this model but gave more importance to social ministries. Other people think that our mission is confined only in running social institution. Though the institutions imparted the mission spirit, sometimes the fact of being a 'witness' was seemed to be somehow side-lined. Of course social institutions had a remarkable contributionin the praxis of mission by Mar Ivanios, but primary importance was always given to be 'witnessing Christ.' The paper never

[280] AG, 2.

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criticises the mission agenda of the Church after mar Ivanios, rather when it is reflected back, a change of focus is noticed. And also it doesn't mean that SMCC in praxis was fully institutionalised rather than being a witness. It may be because of the projection of spiritual objectives of mission into social, and economical upliftment of the society coupled with the growth of the Church in its structures.

Now it is high time to revisit the Ivanian model of mission to revitalise the mission activities in the present context of SMCC and the context of India. In the modern context of various challenges SMCC is invited to revisit the Ivanian model of mission.

IDENTIFICATION OF A HISTORICAL PARALLELISM

In the first chapter, the exegetical study of Deut. 26:5 is done and the significance of the phrases v. 26:5a -5f is analysed. The parallelism found in the development of Israel with the development of SMCC is presented. The similar events or the parallel development is interpreted as a phenomena of historic recurrence which throws light in understanding the historical development of SMCC.

PARALLELISM EXPLAINED IN THE CONTEXT

The verse (Deut. 26:5) presents the story of Jacob, the patriarch. The patriarchal history in nutshell given as the profession of faith during the offering of first fruits is the ritualistic reminiscence of the history of Israel. When the text presents Jacob as a wandering Aramean, and his flight to Egypt for living shows the hardships faced by him. When the group was in Egypt, they were few in number. There these people were treated as slaves. They were subjected to severe persecution and harsh treatment. By the Divine Providence, they were made free and the promise is fulfilled. They were gifted with a land and they can keep it for the life time. Their lifestyle also changed from nomadic life to settled life. In this context, during the offering of first fruits, the Israelites were insisted to recite the creedal formula, "a wandering Aramean was my father. He went down to Egypt and he sojourned there as a sojourner with a few and he became there to a people great mighty and numerous" (Deut. 26:5).

For the exegetical analysis, the verse (Deut. 26:5) is divided into parts from v. 26:5a – v. 26:5f. Each part is exegetically analysed and the meaning of each part in the context of the text is interpreted. The parallel readings are done by taking the incidents happened in the history of Israel with that of the historical development of SMCC in a hermeneutical manner.

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INTERPRETATION OF TERMINOLOGIES: A PROCESS OF 'BEING AND BECOMING'

Second chapter deals with the origin, evolution and canonical existence of SMCC is presented. Church as a being in the mind of God and the selection of Israel as His own people shows the prefiguration of Church in Old Testament. From as an existence as 'being' in the mind of God, the selection of Israel made its earthly existence as the miniature of Church whose foundation is on Jesus Christ. Selection of Israel is the beginning of the process of the 'being' in to becoming. In this process, incarnation is the critical moment[281] where the New Israel is created to continue the mission of God.

The mission of God is entrusted to disciples by Jesus reached different parts of the world through the apostles. The shadow of the cross of Christ reached 'the land of lotus' by the missionary activity of St. Thomas in the first century itself. Thus the Christians formed by St. Thomas were known as St. Thomas Christians. Gradually the church in India began to Grow and flourish. It was in the process of becoming. The coming of foreigners for trade brought forth liturgical adaptations and establishment of foreign relationship with other Churches of Apostolic origin. But the missionary activities of foreign missionaries made some uncertainties in the life of the Church led into a faction in 1653, the Church was divided into two sister churches.

One of the factions remain as it was and the other moved away and in the course of time adopted Antiochean liturgy. The former was known as *pazhayakoottukar* and the latter was known as *puthenkoottukar*. Puthenkoottukar established the relations with the Church in Antioch. Later the unwanted interventions or some other vested interest created further divisions in the community resulted in the formation of sister churches with more or less adapted liturgy. Some divided groups were influenced by protestant missionaries. Gradually many litigations were happened in between the sister churches. The fact of continuing the mission of Christ was almost seemed to be side-lined. Amassing temporal goods was the primary concern of the leaders of the church. Spirituality was diminished. There were attempts by the leaders to come back to communion. All these circumstances made an impact on some visionaries of the Church like Fr. P.T. Geevarghese later Mar Ivanios to call for a renewal.

[281] Cf. Chardin's theory of Directed evolution. Critical moments are considered as the Divine Intervention in the process of evolution causing creative transformation.

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To revive the church, Mar Ivanios founded a monastic order; Bethany ashram with the missionary zeal as 'being a witness' to continue the mission of God. The monastic influence and the thirst for communion made Him and some people to come in to communion in 1930. It was a new dawn; a church with apostolic root in its origin was identified as an individual rite in the catholic flock. It was the birth of SMCC. From infancy, SMCC began to grow and flourish under the leadership of Mar Ivanios and Bethanians. Many people from Syro-Malabar and Latin Church came with helping hands. Mar Ivanios projected 'Ashram Model' for doing Mission in the areas entrusted to SMCC.

MISSION: CONTINUATION OF THE PROCESS OF BECOMING

The missionary nature of Church is affirmed by the continuation of mission and evaluated as success or failure on the basis of its missionary activities. Since mission activities are the nature of Church, it is understood and interpreted as the process of becoming. In the life of SMCC, since Mar Ivanios used 'Ashram model' as the tool, the act of being 'witness' is considered as the processes of becoming.

IDENTIFICATION OF VISION ORIENTED MISSION

The vision of SMCC 'that all may be one' points to Christian unity. The idea is so related with ecumenism in current context. But in the life of SMCC, it has the nuance of unity as one flock though, the aspect of conversion and joining of people into the Church to form one flock is completely negated. It is rather meant of a unity in Christ brought forth by the conversion of hearts. Here the vision of this unity is put into praxis by the mission of SMCC. Here Ivanian model is understood as the paradigm for that.

VISON ACTUALISED IN THE MISSION

Mar Ivanios presented mission of SMCC by 'Ashram model' of 'self-witness' as the tool of mission activities. The success of this model is recorded with golden letters in the history of SMCC.

MISSION REVISITED FOR NEW VISIONS FOR FURTHER MISSIONS

In the context of SMCC where its canonical status as a Major Archi-Episcopal Church having the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of all India, continues the process of becoming by the mission in praxis. In order to avoid the engulfing institutionalism and declining of the missionary spirit amidst of various challenging situation, the nature of church as missionary is put in to

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praxis by revisiting and adopting the mission model put forth by Mar Ivanios. Here new visions as the attributes or supporting factors are developed to understand the vision for moving forward for putting mission into praxis.

THEOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS

The present study presents following theological conclusions;

- The exegetical study of the verse Deut. 26:5 made the platform to interpret the text of remote past for understanding the historical development of Israel.
- The concise presentation of the history of Israel contains the history in a capsule form.
- The importance of rituals and confession of faith are understood as old age practice and which helps people to experience the Divine.
- The historical incidents happened like hardships, trials, tribulations, persecutions etc. are understood as the part of Divine Plan by the people of Israel later.
- God is faithful in his promises. Human beings receive many blessings from God. To keep the reciprocity in the relationship with God and keep the covenantal fidelity, they should also be faithful in their lives. Even though human fail, God never fails.
- Retrospective reading of the events is understood as the critical moment where God intervened in the history. God is always with His people. The cry of the people will be heard and the providence of God is always Punctual.
- As it is revealed from history, though human beings had unfortunate past, they should acknowledge when fortunes obtained from God. Even in our hardships, God is with us.
- Historical recurrence is also the plan of God where God acts in the history in the same way among other community at an opportune time.
- Study of exegetical parallelism helped in understanding the providence of God in the history of SMCC.
- God's mission is continuous. It is operated through different channels and different ways.
- God's mission is continued in the Church through the self-witness of believers.
- Liturgical celebrations help us to move into historical time so that the same is experienced in to the present.
- Expressing the gratitude for all the blessings acknowledges our dimension of faith as communitarian.
- Church history reveals the intervention of God at the opportune time to save His people.
- Faith is communitarian and salvation is objective. But ascending to it is a subjective notion. Such peoples are counted along with the 'cloud of witnesses' (Heb 12:1).
- Bethanian lifestyle is the life style of 'being witness.'
- Monasticism in the Church is the power house of mission activities.
- God's mission is continued in the church through the mission activities or the apostolic activities of the church.

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- Mission has got different pedagogical style and the styles are unique to the context.
- 'Being witnesses is the greatest mission of the church.
- The mission dynamics are articulated by reading the signs of time and formulated on according to the circumstances of the context.
- Mission aims at transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment of the world.
- Mission is God's gift to every baptized person, as well as to the whole church: from the congregation, to the national church, to the worldwide communion of churches.
- The whole church participates in mission, for mission is not the prerogative of a few professionals or a few wealthy congregations and churches.
- Since mission must be contextual for the faith to be rooted in people's real life experience, every church assumes primary responsibility for mission in its immediate locality and region. However, because of the apostolicity and catholicity of the church, proximity does not mean exclusive ownership of the practice of mission.
- Mission remains God's mission; thus, individual Christians or families from different parts of the world may receive a call, from God through a sister church, to share mission responsibility with another church in a different geographical location or socio-cultural situation.
- The missional church is active in a witnessing community where witnessing is exercised as a worshipping community, nurturing community, messenger community, a serving community, a healing community etc.
- For SMCC, the given context of mission is like home and it is articulated through ecumenical programme, making dialogue with other religions and cultures, upliftment programme, ecological engagement etc.
- The understanding of mission as 'being a witness' helps in sharing in a common journey with people in their contexts, and focusing on transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment.
- Mission is the *raison d'être*[282] of the church. It flows from the nature of the church as a witnessing community, a gift of God's gracious justification for and invitation to mission.
- The vision of SMCC 'that all may be one ' is understood not simply as one church or one flock, rather all are united in Christ by practicing a virtue oriented life.
- Sharing of resources from other denomination helps to do mission in a harmonious way. Divided church cannot be a witness. It is a logical fallacy that difference in essentials will never meet a common goal.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study presents following contributions;

- It helped in the reflection of Mission of SMCC in its self-analysis and reaffirmation of mission in its respective contexts.
- The tool of Mission as 'being a witness' as Mar Ivanios did is still relevant and can be applied in the modern scenario of Mission.

[282] The most important reason or purpose for someone or something's existence.

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- The paper is an invitation to SMCC to animate the hermeneutical spiral in real mission praxis done through serious analysis of the mission contexts, practices, and theology.
- SMCC at every level is called to discern the needs for transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment. Over exaggeration of some activities does not sustain its nature forever.
- The paper reaffirms that SMCC is called to stand with the victims of injustice and violence and thus expose and denounce evil powers and situations that distort and disrupt creation and dehumanize life in society though the Ivanian life style of witnessing.
- This paper invites SMCC to take a critical look at how mission is practiced. Is mission a real praxis of faith intentionally aimed at effecting transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment in society, or is it simply practice? SMCC can examine how holistic and contextual its mission practices are done.
- This paper invites SMCC to identify new opportunities for mission and the resources and partnerships needed to address them effectively.
- It is an open ended research, explores further avenues of the model discussed.

CONCLUSION

The understanding of the mission of the church has undergone significant paradigm shifts in the experience and praxes of the members of SMCC. The narrow sense of mission as conversion is ruled out in the life of SMCC, but conversion of heart is the thrust and is intended. In the current situation of highly complex phenomenon where terrorism, paradigmatic technological innovation, an unsuitable environment, rampant consumerism, discontinuous change, religious fundamentalism and perilous ideologies confront us at every point makes mission a challenging existential question. As an individual *Sui iuris* Church, SMCC is blessed with ample resources to tackle the problems to a great extent. In this venture, what SMCC needs is the revitalisation of its missionary zeal and learn lessons from other denominations. Sharing of resources from others is an important factor to continue the mission. Learning from history of SMCC, formulate the paradigms of mission as witness based on the model practiced to actualise the vison of the church. By looking back with gratitude, and looking forward with hope the members of SMCC while offering retell the confession as ‘My father was also a wandering Aramean, and he went down to the wilderness of trials and tribulations and he sojourned there as a sojourner with a few and he came out from there and became there to a people great, mighty and numerous.’

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