
Mission – Dialogue – Proclamation

Redefining Evangelization in Christian-Muslim Interaction

von Felix Körner SJ

Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag unterbreitet einen neuen Begriffsvorschlag. Viele der gegen interreligiösen Dialog vorgebrachten Bedenken beruhen auf Missverständnissen. Der Religionsdialog wird dann etwa verwechselt mit Ökumene («wir wollen uns in Glaubensfragen einigen»), religionstheologischem Pluralismus («verschiedene Religionen sind bedeutungsgleich») oder Irenik («gesellschaftlicher Friede durch Vermeidung von Religionskontroversen»). Auch die gegen christliche Mission vorgebrachten Einwände sitzen – abgesehen von berechtigter Kritik an Fehlern der Vergangenheit – meist einem der Standardmissverständnisse auf. Diese werden hier als die veritative, transitive und isolative Mission bezeichnet (Wahrheitsbesitz, Bekehrungsaktivismus, Opfersuche). Theologisch sinnvoll ist der Dienst der Kirche nur zu fassen als umfassende Evangelisierung. Der Geist der Frohen Botschaft kann Personen prägen, aber auch Gesellschaftsordnungen – und die Kirche. Wie gehören Dialog, Mission und Verkündigung dann zusammen? »Mission« benennt den *Grund* der Evangelisierung, »Dialog« ihren *Stil* und »Verkündigung« ihre – notwendige – *Erzählung*.

Schlüsselbegriffe

- Missionsbegriff
- Interreligiöser Dialog
- Verkündigung
- Evangelisierung

Abstract

The article makes a new conceptual proposal. Many of the objections raised against interreligious dialogue are based on misunderstandings. Religious dialogue is then confused, for example, with ecumenism («we want to agree on matters of faith»), religious-theological pluralism («different religions have the same meaning»), or irenicism («social peace by avoiding religious controversy»). Equally, the objections raised against Christian missionary work – apart from justified criticism of past mistakes – are mostly misguided by one of the standard misunderstandings. These are referred to here as the veritative, transitive, and isolative understandings of mission (possession of truth, conversion activism, victim seeking). The ministry of the church can only be conceived in a theologically meaningful way as comprehensive evangelization. The spirit of the Good News can shape people, but also social systems – and the church. How then do dialogue, mission and proclamation belong together? »Mission« names the *basis* of evangelization, »dialogue« its *style*, and »proclamation« its – indispensable – *narrative*.

Keywords

- Concept of mission
- Interreligious dialogue
- Proclamation
- Evangelization

Sumario

Este artículo propone una nueva terminología. Muchas de las objeciones planteadas contra el diálogo interreligioso se basan en malentendidos. El diálogo religioso se confunde entonces con el ecumenismo («queremos ponernos de acuerdo en cuestiones de fe»), el pluralismo religioso-teológico («las diferentes religiones tienen el mismo sentido») o el irenismo («la paz social evitando las controversias religiosas»). Incluso las objeciones que se plantean contra la misión cristiana – aparte de las críticas justificadas a los errores del pasado – se basan en su mayoría en uno de los malentendidos habituales. Aquí se habla de las misiones veritativa, transitiva e isolativa (posesión de la verdad, activismo de conversión, búsqueda del sacrificio). Teológicamente, el ministerio de la iglesia sólo puede entenderse como una evangelización integral. El espíritu de la Buena Nueva puede moldear a las personas, pero también a los órdenes sociales, y a la Iglesia. ¿Cómo se conjugan entonces el diálogo, la misión y el anuncio? »Misión« nombra la *razón* de la evangelización, »diálogo« su *estilo* y »anuncio« su – necesaria – *narrativa*.

Palabras clave

- Concepto de misión
- Diálogo interreligioso
- Proclamación
- Evangelización

There are three key words designating the propagation of the Christian faith: mission, proclamation, and evangelisation. All three are part of the New Testament's vocabulary. The respective verbs used in (and for) the Gospel are »to send«: ἀποστέλλειν – »to herald«: κηρῦσσειν – and »to announce the good news«: εὐαγγελίζεσθαι. Even at that early stage these words may already have functioned almost as technical terms. That is, they designate, define and determine the spreading of the Gospel. The Kingdom of God should not be communicated in just any way. Rather, the testimony to the presence of the Risen Christ requires particular forms. However, the discourse of the Church in this field has more recently acquired a significant new concept.

In 1963, Roman Catholicism recognized a fourth key word orienting Christian relations with others, namely »dialogue.« From this point on, »dialogue« indicated a commitment to a particular activity: interreligious encounters.¹ However, »dialogue« was from the first technical usage of the word onwards understood as something more than a particular Church activity. It was meant to designate, define and determine a »form of relationship,«² an atmosphere: »the climate of dialogue is friendship, indeed service.«³ That, however, was bound to raise objections, indeed, theological doubts. If Christians have already discovered Christ, »in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,«⁴ why should they need to listen to the voices and hearts⁵ of others? Why would someone who takes seriously Jesus' command to make all nations his disciples⁶ sacrifice time and credibility by engaging in dialogue with non-Christians? To a large extent, such doubts are based on misunderstandings. We have to identify and discuss them.

First, however, the contrary objection should also be mentioned, namely: how can a loving disciple of Christ set out to convert others, while the master seems to have taught humility and harmony. Wasn't it Jesus who said that »Whoever is not against us is for us«?⁷ Is missionary activity then not really running against Christ's attitude?

Again, such objections might simply be founded in a misconception. The mission of the Church is possibly something other than what is being criticized. So, after our discussion on dialogue, the three grossest misunderstandings of mission must also be named and clarified. Finally, we must ask how evangelization, dialogue, the Church's mission and Gospel proclamation go together.⁸

1 Nostra aetate n°2 – I am profoundly grateful to David Marshall and Christian W. Troll for their helpful comments on previous versions of this article.

2 *Ecclesiam suam* n° 79. NB: I am normally not following the wording of the Encyclical's official English translation, which is sometimes distorting; but I am following its paragraph numbering, which is slightly different from other versions http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam.html, 173,2021.

3 *Ecclesiam suam* n° 87.

4 *Colossians* 2:3.

5 *Ecclesiam suam* n° 87.

6 *Matthew* 28:19.

7 *Mark* 9:40.

8 The present author has published several previous reflections on similar themes. They can be found on www.felixkoerner.de: Reizwort Dialog. Wo das christlich-muslimische Gespräch schärfer werden muß, in: *Stimmen der Zeit* 226 (2008) 535-546; Das Dialogverständnis der katholischen Kirche. Eine theologische Grundlegung, in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 101 (2017) 78-93; Der eine Christus und die vielen Geistesgegenwarten. Ein Vorschlag zur Religions-theologie, in: Guido VERGAUWEN / Andreas STEINGRUBER (ed.), *Veni, Sancte Spiritus! Theologische Beiträge zur Sendung des Geistes*. Festschrift für Barbara Hallensleben zum 60. Ge-

burtstag, Münster 2018, 602-615; Missionsbefehl und interreligiöser Dialog: Wie geht das zusammen? Zur Klärung der grundlegendsten Missverständnisse, in: Michael SIEVERNICH / Klaus VELLGUTH (ed.), *Christentum in der Neuzeit. Geschichte – Religion – Mission – Mystik*. Festschrift für Mariano Delgado, Freiburg 2020, 397-410.

1 Dialogue: three misunderstandings
1.1 The aim of Christian-Muslim dialogue is not
»ecumenism«: Islam is a different religion.

Let us begin with an example. Some Christians see Qur'anic texts such as Sūrat al-Fātiḥa (Sura 1) to be »good for dialogue.« What they mean is: the verses sound like a Psalm. So it is similar to our holy texts. Consequently, we Christians and Muslims should agree in dogmatic questions. However, the point of interreligious dialogue is different.

To see that clearly, it is helpful to distinguish between interreligious dialogue and ecumenical dialogue. When ecumenism comes to dogma, its core intuition is that in spite of difference in form, all Christians fundamentally share faith in Christ. From the beginning, Christians professed Christ in various cultures and languages. The different contexts made for different expressions.⁹ Consequently, diverse Christologies developed. Some Christological formulae sound contradictory to formulae from other contexts. One apparent contradiction is between the two dogmatic affirmations: »Christ is of one divine-human nature«; and »Christ has a divine nature and a human nature.« Such varying forms, however, were expressions of the same fundamental testimony; namely, that the all-decisive turn in history had happened in Jesus: through Christ's appearing and proclamation, his suffering and death, his resurrection and presence in the Church. Much of ecumenical dialogue starts from this and aims at finding expressions that do justice to both: the different forms and their common content. Such dialogue may proceed with the methodology of »differentiating consensus.«¹⁰ It then tries to find expressions for the different »concerns« of the various Christian confessions and denominations, seeks common formulae in order to be able to witness to Christ together, and hopes to reach visible Church unity, beyond uniformity.¹¹

There is an interesting similarity between this understanding of the purpose of intra-Christian ecumenism and the bearing of Islam towards religious pluralism. The Qur'an suggests that interreligious friction can be overcome by identifying the common ground of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In Abraham, all three should agree.¹² That, however, is not the Christian agenda in interreligious dialogue. At least official Catholic-Muslim dialogue does not aim at making of Christianity and Islam one religion. Why not? Christians profess that Christ is the definitive turning point

9 For a seminal account, see Aloys (Alois) Grillmeier's research, continued by Theresia Hainthaler. Cfr. their multi volume work: *Christ in Christian tradition*.

10 From Conflict to Communion. Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017. *Report of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity*, Leipzig and Paderborn 2013, n°123.

11 Cf. Felix KÖRNER, Was interreligiöser und ökumenischer Dialog voneinander lernen können, in: George AUGUSTIN / Markus SCHULZE (ed.), *Freude an Gott. Auf dem Weg zu einem lebendigen Glauben*. Festschrift für Kurt Kardinal Koch, Freiburg 2015, 895-906.

12 Sura 3:64f.

of all history. That is the Church's core testimony. To profess Christ's salvific presence is the foremost task of the Christian religion. The more it is visibly one, the more convincing the witness. The Islamic creed is no such profession. Islam honours Christ, but not as the key to the kingdom of God. Christians should therefore not try to form one religion combining Christianity and Islam; but Christians should strive for the unity of all Christians: as one Christian body, their testimony to Christ would be more visible, plausible, and credible.

1.2 Christian-Muslim dialogue need not start in declaring faith »equality.« Rather, interlocutors may argue about differences, believers should be tolerant, the state must refrain from deciding faith questions.

Is it better for a society if citizens think that several religions are equally true, equally good, equally valid? First of all, a country's laws or government should not decide this question. State authorities should be neither exclusivist nor pluralistic in theological questions. It is simply not for the state to take decisions on which kind of religious stance is true or profitable. Faith communities may each claim that their own conviction is uniquely true. The state must grant to them just as much legal protection as to those who think otherwise. The state has to guarantee freedom, including freedom of religion. This calls for a difficult balancing of interests; but considerations concerning the truth of various religions should not be part of the state's decision making process.

Citizens may have all sorts of convictions, also on religious issues; but they need to bear with the fact that others have other convictions. That is precisely what tolerance means; and this is where tolerance is called for: citizens, as opposed to state institutions, may well have their faith stance and decide from that perspective. They must, however, be able to live together with others in social peace. Tolerance as an attitude is not something the state can enforce. Only where lack of tolerance leads to hate speech and calls for violence must the state act to protect public peace. Within that legal framework, however, the interlocutors of interreligious dialogue may argue from their religion's point of view. They may even say they reject the other's creed. Indeed, it is perfectly admissible for participants in dialogue to try to convince an interlocutor of their own point of view. If the encounter is meant to be a real dialogue, however, those who take part ought to try at least to understand the other's view.

13 http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/april/documents/papa-francesco_20170428_egitto-conferenza-pace.html (17.2.2021). See also Felix KÖRNER, Humanität als Identität, Alterität und Authentizität. Zur Kriteriologie des Religionsdialogs bei Papst Franziskus, in: Margit ECKHOLT / Gregor ETZEL-MÜLLER / Habib EL MALLOUKI (ed.), »Kon-kurrenz«. Hermeneutische Grundlagen des christlich-muslimischen Gesprächs, Freiburg 2020, 250-268.

14 Dialogue and Mission (1984) n° 21: <https://www.dicasteryinterreligious.va/dialogue-and-mission-1984> (21.7.2022).

15 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church n° 50: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html (15.2.2021).

16 Dignitatis humanae n° 2.

17 Acts 4:12.

18 Not by chance, this is the first theme discussed in: Christian W. TROLL, Muslims Ask, Christians Answer, translated by David Marshall, Hyde Park NY 2012.

19 Cf. Ephesians 1:9f.

**1.3 The atmosphere of Muslim-Christian dialogue
need not be »eirenic.« In the courage of otherness,
all can find purification and enrichment, and strive together
for social justice.**

The textual testimony of another religious tradition often challenges believers; all the more challenging may be the interlocutors' living testimonies, questions, arguments, even their misunderstandings, and also their attempts to convince others through a fascinating appeal. While an atmosphere of mutual listening and benevolent hearing makes for a real dialogue, there is no point in hiding differences. Pope Francis once identified a helpful dialogical attitude. He spoke of the *coraggio dell'alterità*, the courage to be different – and yet to walk together with the person who is different, hoping that they may find a common direction.¹³ Ideally, they will be walking together towards social justice – and on the way, there will be much discussion of what is socially just. All the way, however, the differences that arise need not be seen as frustrating obstacles to a shared life but rather as »purification and enrichment« for all who are involved.¹⁴

Behind the aforementioned legal and theological claims is what the Catholic Social Doctrine calls the »distinction between religion and politics.«¹⁵ In other words, the Christian faith holds at the same time »that the human person has the right to religious freedom«¹⁶ and that »there is salvation in no one else« but in Christ.¹⁷ This simultaneity of liberty and challenge hinges on the insight that saving faith is an inner consent, which cannot be reached through physical force.

It is time now to identify and discuss the three most common misunderstandings of what Christian mission is about.

2 Mission: three misunderstandings
**2.1 Church's mission does not assume
that »we possess the truth.« Rather, Christians hold that
in Christ the final truth is already present,
to be discovered step by step in history.**

When Muslims hear about Christianity, one of their first questions is often why the New Testament contains more than one gospel.¹⁸ The view behind the question is that every prophet received one book of revelation from God. Just as Muḥammad received the Qur'an, so Jesus received the Gospel. So how can there be four gospels accepted by the Church as representing the message of Jesus?

It is not a book that the Christian faith regards as the revelation of God; the locus of revelation is rather: history. According to the Christian hope, all events will in the end turn out to be part of God's salvific project¹⁹ (cf. Ephesians 1:9f.). It is already accessible in the history of Christ. The task of Scripture is to bear witness to revelation, which is fulfilled in Christ. That witness can be given in different ways in different life contexts with different questions and cultural patterns; therefore, the polyphony of the New Testament does not blur the revelation of God. Looking at history from different perspectives renders it more tangible, more vivid.

From the beginning, the Church had to hold together different ways of expressing the Christian faith. However, it did not synthesize them into one definition. It rather

handled the ever new differences through a constant balancing of three authorities. They stand in salutary tension with each other: Scripture, ministry and the believers' intuition.²⁰ The challenge which the three voices pose to each other has always been at work in the Church: the interaction of Bible, bishop, and belief. It was thus clear from the outset that truth was not something that a particular Christian or a single group could possess.²¹

Christians were from early on aware that they were spreading the uniquely live-giving truth; but that the truth was in the living Christ, not in one particular concept.²² The gospel of Mark shows us how hesitant Jesus himself was against quickly uttered professions about him.²³ Just to define Jesus as Son of God or Messiah is not enough. Rather, you need to be ready to let history show you what those professions really mean. The truth of Jesus can be expressed in words; but if one wants to refer to the living Christ, no static conceptualization can capture him. If you want to express Jesus verbally, then you need formulae which are open to new discovery in the course of history. Just to say, Jesus is Christ, Messiah, may sound as if you say he is God's anointed king and that therefore he will transform the world through power and victory; but no, Jesus' way of being king is »Christ crucified«²⁴ – governing through the power of weakness.

We have already mentioned how the New Testament suggests that our profession of Christ has about it a quality of open-endedness, of not yet being fully unfolded: in him »are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.«²⁵ These treasures are present in Jesus. All puzzles and tensions will find their solution in the ultimate healing and making new of all things through Jesus; but so far, much of this still-to-be-realized reconciliation of all things is still »hidden.« Even what so far seems to make no sense will in the course of history prove to be a step on the way to that ultimate universal reconciliation in the Kingdom of God. So far, we say this in hope: joyfully anticipating that end. We are, however, neither able to predict all the details of what is to come nor to convince everybody of the truth of this vision of history.

If we see this, we can also see why the Church can at the same time hold that Christ is the fullness of God,²⁶ and that encounter with others can bring enrichment to Christians. We do not possess the truth in the sense that we know everything; we only see that Christ's Passover makes accessible both the fulfillment of all longing and the meaning of all failure.

20 That intuition is classically called *regula fidei*; cf. the modern concept of *sensus fidei fidelium*. On the three authorities (Bible, bishop, belief) cf. Henry CHADWICK, *The Early Church*, London 1993, 53.

21 Also Benedict XVI underlined that it is not we who possess truth but the other way round: http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20121114.html (17.2.2021).

22 Indeed, the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel can say, »I am the way, and the truth, and the life« (John 14:6a).

23 Mark 3:11; 8:29.

24 1 Corinthians 1:23.

25 Colossians 2:3.

26 Colossians 1:19.

2.2 Christian mission does not claim that »the missionary converts non-Christians to be Christians« but rather that it is the Spirit of God who brings about conversion; the missionary is only a witness, and also Christians are in need of conversion to a life more in tune with Christ.

One might call this misunderstanding »transitive« mission.²⁷ Missionaries may claim: »I converted dozens of non-believers.« Paul incidentally may use such language saying that it is he himself who »wins,« even »saves« people.²⁸ Either this is loose language; or indeed those missionaries might not be speaking about their fruitful work but showing us that their own hearts are not fully converted yet. In theology, we can speak normatively. We can also point to the fact that some words suggest a false view. To say that people convert people suggests something wrong. Why? Augustine said that you can only believe if you want it.²⁹ He was not claiming that faith is an arbitrary choice. He was rather reflecting the dynamic of conviction. One may be forced by external pressures to perform external acts; but interior assent requires insight. That can only be brought about by an act of understanding. The only power involved here is the gentle force of truth,³⁰ not violence.

Still, human beings have a role to play in people discovering Christ, accepting the Gospel and coming to the Church. But their role is better not described as converters. They are, rather, witnesses. They offer an aspect of truth which is not created by them (»deposition« of testimony). Those others are in turn, if they understand it, unconstrained when accepting it. The same holds true of the Church as a whole. Its life should be attractive³¹ to others, its communities should be palpably welcoming to others; but discretion is necessary: even the slightest psychological pressure to join would be abusive. On the other hand, believers will normally not describe their faith as their own achievement; and rightly so. They will often say that it was not only rational understanding but a moved heart that brought them to believe. Therefore, it is fair to say that conversion is neither achieved by the missionary nor by the church, let alone by the new believer themselves, but by the Holy Spirit.³²

This is one aspect of the »transitive« misunderstanding of mission: conversion is not achieved by people. There is also a second aspect to this misunderstanding. It is not only others that are in need of conversion. The missionaries, the witnesses themselves are in need of conversion – the Church, too, must be converted. Christians need conversion themselves.

27 KÖRNER, Missionsbefehl und interreligiöser Dialog (footnote 8).

28 1 Corinthians 9:22.

29 AUGUSTINE, in Ev Io 26.2:
»Intrare quisquam ecclesiam potest nolens, accedere ad altare potest nolens, accipere Sacramentum potest nolens: credere non potest nisi volens.«

30 Cf. Dignitatis humanae n° 1:
»suaviter simul ac fortiter – at once quietly and with power.«

31 »It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but by attraction.« Evangelii gaudium n° 14, quoting Benedict XVI.

32 Paul says already in his first letter that he has to »preach God's Gospel« (1 Thessalonians 2:9), and to »exhort and encourage« the believers; but that the one who invites (»calls«) new members is God: »we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory« (2:12).

They need to come to a more honest, profound – and in that sense, radical – evangelical life. That is why a spiritual master like Ignatius of Loyola suggests to the – already Christian – person doing the Spiritual Exercises to pray for the so-called magis: that is, to pray for deeper knowledge, fuller love and a more genuine following of Christ.³³ Now, a real encounter between a Christian and a non-Christian can be an honest search for truth and can therefore also become a *magis* moment. The other's questions and answers, the other's dedication and humility, the other's life and words will then surely have an effect also on the Christian witness. The Christian might even say: »It was not until that encounter that I understood Christ; that other person helped me become a better Christian.«

**2.3 Christian mission must not work through
»isolating faith« but rather serve a comprehensive healing:
of personal relations, cultural development,
and global reconciliation.**

Unfortunately, many people feel lonely. One may think of the growing number of elderly persons in urban surroundings, but also of ambitious youngsters. They may have difficult relations within their own family, lack friends and sense rejection by their environment. One way out for them may be to look for a new community. There are missionary movements in both Islam and Christianity who particularly address – or, attract – such loners. We are focussing on Christian communities here. They may be shaped by a kind of dualist Christianity. Their view of Islam may be markedly negative. A conversion process may then be this: the convert already dislikes Islam and is now induced to despise it. Unreconciled family relations turn into mutual hatred. What typically follows is a mental and material dependence on the new faith community as ersatz family.

What might conversion that grows more organically out of the Gospel look like? We have to acknowledge that one cannot be reconciled to all people and that not every culture leaves the social space which allows psychologically balanced and socially harmonious conversions to unfold easily; but a genuine Christian conversion also has reconciling effects on relationships. It may be an indication of real growth in faith if the convert is able to handle family tensions and other relational challenges maturely, calmly, constructively, without judgmental perfectionism. On the other hand, also the welcoming Church needs to take up the challenging and enriching impulses it receives from the newcomer.

Now, what may be observed in personal relations may also hold true of cultures. Christianity should not be identified with one particular culture. When a group of people enters the Church, they need not at the same time be inducted into »Western« civilization.

³³ Spiritual Exercises n°104.

³⁴ Evangelii nuntiandi n°20.

³⁵ Apostolicam actuositatem n°2.

³⁶ Evangelii gaudium n°176.

³⁷ That is the point of Muḥammad ibn Tufayl's (d. 1185) story of the fictitious figure Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān; cf. e. g. The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, translated by Simon Ockley, with an introduction by A. S. Fulton, London 1929.

³⁸ Acts 10:34-44.

For too long, Christian mission has collaborated with colonialism, with many regrettable results. Now we can see: all elements of people's life styles which are not outright contrary to the Gospel should live on. In light of the Gospel, cultural heritage, traditions, even myths need not come to their end but to their fulfillment. The Gospel is not identical with one cultural model or one legal system; it is not dependent on one particular philosophy and does not automatically lead to one type of social order. The Gospel is meant to inspire and in some sense transform cultures,³⁴ but it is not meant to create one uniform civilization. Where the Church has been aware of the value of cultural variety it was enriched rather than weakened.

A related point is that there is something wrong with Christian mission if it generates »isolating faith.« Christian mission is integrative in the sense of not isolating individual people, and in the sense of not reducing the effect of the spreading of the Gospel only to interior aspects of life. The Gospel is meant also to inspire and improve the structures of society, economy, and politics.³⁵

What is at play here is an integral understanding of the propagation of the Gospel. In Roman Catholic wording, this non-isolating mission is often called »evangelization«: »To evangelize is to make the kingdom of God present in our world.«³⁶

We were able to clarify the three gravest misunderstandings of »dialogue« and »mission« in light of the dynamics of evangelization. Now we can ask: what is, for Christian theology, the relation between mission, dialogue, and proclamation? It is not that sometimes Christians should preach the Gospel, and at other times they should listen to others. That would be schizophrenic. Rather, the Church always and in all it does lives to evangelize, in the comprehensive sense of making the kingdom present in our world, in the hearts of Christians and others, and even in social order.

There are three dynamics which we can specify more precisely as shaping evangelisation. First, there is »mission.« It is not a separate activity. Mission is, rather, the *reason why* the Church evangelizes: because it was commissioned, equipped with authority and sent (»missioned«) by Christ.

The second shaping dynamic of evangelisation is »dialogue.« Again, it is no separate activity. Rather, it is the *style* in which all evangelisation is to happen: ready to learn from others, open to new discoveries, in humble communication.

The third dynamic, »proclamation,« is specifically Christian. That is especially clear in Muslim-Christian encounters. Muslims often say that if you reflect profoundly or observe the order of the world well, you will come to Islam.³⁷ By contrast, the Church is sent to communicate something that needs to be told. The power of a witnessing life, the attraction of the Church, the effectiveness of the sacrament and the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit are all presupposed, but when Peter arrives at the house of Cornelius, what is needed is also evangelization by narration.³⁸ No human being can deduce from the structures of the world what the Church has to say: the Easter joy of the beginning of God's kingdom, based in the Good News that Christ is risen. It liberates people to a new capacity of love: to live in dignity and commitment to others. The Gospel cannot be discovered by simply thinking or looking. In order to be transformed by the paschal joy, people need to know it; and in order to know it, they need to be told. So, while mission is the *reason* for evangelization and dialogue is its *style*, evangelization also needs its *narration*; and that is called »proclamation.« ♦