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**Christianity as THE WAY – An Alternate Model of Evangelization**

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Abstract

The dialectics between culture and religion in the context of evangelization has always proven to be a difficult and delicate matter. This issue has serious significance in the context of India because evangelization is often misunderstood as denationalization and alienation from one's own culture – an allegation rooted in the colonial presentation of Christianity. There have been several attempts in India in both Catholic and Protestant traditions to promote evangelization without producing cultural alienation.

This paper presents the North Gujarat mission paradigm, a recent attempt in the Catholic tradition towards evangelization of culture, advocated by Manuel Diaz Garriz, a Spanish missionary, who proposes that members of any religious community in India can become followers of Christ without losing their socio-cultural traditions and identity. This mission paradigm, presented as 'Christian by Faith and Indian/Hindu by Culture,' is a contemporary version of the models proposed by Robert de Nobili, Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya, etc. The baptized disciples of Jesus who have accepted this way understand themselves as '**Followers of the Way of Christ**'- '*Isupanthis*' (not 'Christians'), an ecclesial identity that is rooted in the Biblical tradition and in the '*Bhakti*' (devotional) traditions of India.

This model represents a pioneering and creative approach as it offers significant ecclesiological, Christological and missionary perspectives for India. This paper for 'Interreligious Studies and Mission' complements and interacts with H. L. Richard's paper on R.C Das who also contributed to current debates and discussions in missiology on culture and religion.