

Christian Mission as Invitation

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Abstract

The relevance of Christian mission in the context of plurality of religions and traditions is a continuing theme for missiologists and mission practitioners. While the need to engage in mission is an unambiguous question for Christians, however, how we participate in the mission of God in multi-religious contexts remains a crucial question – many times a controversial one – particularly when neighbours from other religions become uncomfortable with the exclusive truth claims in Christianity, and when other religions too have a missionary message to propagate.

Responding to this challenge, there have been several mission models developed, articulated and practiced – such as interfaith dialogue, hospitality, and building bridges. In this paper I join these efforts to develop and articulate a model based on how mission can be approached and practiced as *invitation* to participate in the joy of the good news of Jesus Christ. 'Joy of the Gospel', as Pope Francis calls it, rather than mission limited to wrong-to-right or untruth-to-truth or darkness-to-light approaches which have done more damage to the Christian message and mission than promoting it. Invitation to participate in festivity and joy is a recurring theme in the Gospels. Focusing on his parables in Matthew 22:1-14 and Luke 15, I argue the good news needs to be shared in way that conforms to the nature of its message which is vital for effective Christian witness in multi-religious contexts.

Study Group: Interreligious Studies and Mission