

***Redemptoris Missio* in the Development of Missiological Thought**

**Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S.
Catholic Theological Union, Chicago**

**Simposio “A dieci anni dalla *Redemptoris Missio*”
Pontificia Università Urbaniana
January 19, 2001**

Introduction

It is not given to us to be able to peer deeply into the future. As a result, we have only a dim perception of the what the consequences of events and documents will be. We may set our sights on the future with a particular agenda, but things actually unfold in a complex interaction between various factors, some of which are familiar, while others are surprising and beyond our control. Likewise, even as we attempt to influence the future in a particular way, we discover that the events and documents initiating that future carry within them elements about which we have only partial awareness. Those initiating events and documents then are able to open new insights and opportunities not imagined when we first set out.

However that future may further unfold, we can already say now, after ten years, that *Redemptoris Missio* was certainly the most important encyclical letter on mission in the twentieth century. In a century in which more important documents emerged from the Magisterium on mission than in any other, *Redemptoris Missio* clearly stands out and takes pride of place alongside the encyclical letters on mission promulgated by the current Holy Father’s illustrious predecessors.

Ten years may be too short a time to judge the long-term significance of an encyclical like *Redemptoris Missio*. Yet certain things have emerged which indicate the impact it has already had, and the further significance it may still yet enjoy. I deem it an honor and a privilege to be able to address its impact on missiological thought and some future trajectories it portends as we enter the third millennium.

This presentation will focus specifically on the influence it has had--and continues to have--on missiological thinking. It will not trace its impact on documents of the Magisterium, nor its influence in the wider field of theology. These are themes which are being taken up in other presentations in this symposium. Even within the realm of missiology it will not be possible to explore all the developments which have come about thanks to the publication of this encyclical. My remarks here will proceed as follows. First of all, I will propose that the teaching in the encyclicals often functions at two levels: they address both immediate issues--which is often the reason for their publication--and also offer insights for longer-term developments in the Church’s life. Second, I will note briefly some points of shorter-term impact--that is, in the ten years since its promulgation--of the encyclical’s teachings on missiological thought. The third and longest section of this presentation will be devoted to looking at four areas where I believe the encyclical is contributing to current missiological discussion. By proceeding in this fashion, I hope that it will be evident that the teaching of *Redemptoris Missio* has indeed helped redirect missiological thinking in the last decade, and has much to offer by way of guidance in the future.

The Impact of Encyclicals in the Immediate and Longer-Term Future

In the encyclical letters which have been issued by the Sovereign Pontiffs since the nineteenth century, certain ones have stood out especially. These have addressed pressing immediate issues, but have also had longer-term impact, perhaps reaching far beyond what their authors had imagined. In this twofold dimension which is especially prominent in certain encyclicals, one sees the capacity of the wealth of Catholic tradition to address both immediate issues, and continue to serve as a resource for greater and enduring challenges.

One can see this, for example, in Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Promulgated in 1891 to address what was then known as "the social question," this encyclical articulated a stance on the situation of workers caught between the liberal capitalism and the socialism of the time. But it also became the foundation of what is referred to Catholic Social Teaching, certainly one of the foremost jewels in the crown of the Church. The impact of its teaching can be seen in the fact that no other encyclical has in turn prompted the writing of other important encyclicals on the same question, from *Quadragesimo Anno* of Pius XI down to *Centesimus Annus* of Pope John Paul II.

A slightly different, yet similar case might be made for *Mystici Corporis*, promulgated by Pope Pius XII in 1943. This encyclical brought together some of the best ecclesiological thought which had been developing since the nineteenth century. While not addressing specific issues in the way which was the case for *Rerum Novarum*, its articulation of a vision of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ paved the way for the ecclesiological thought of the Second Vatican Council, and for the ecclesiology of *communio* begun in a special way at that Council and ever more fully developed since that time.

I would suggest that *Redemptoris Missio* has the potential for such an impact also. Of course, ten years is too short a time to delineate such influence with accuracy. But in what follows in the third part of this presentation I hope to show the outlines of where this might be going. Addressing missiological issues is always a work of a subtle kind. For the mission of the Church, while bearing an enduring message, must respond carefully and wisely to the contexts in which that message is proclaimed, and these are shifting all the time--perhaps even more quickly in the accelerated world of globalization.

The great encyclicals teach us not only once, but have the capacity to respond to new conditions which were not--and could not have been--in the purview of their authors. From them emerge readings which continue to enlighten and guide us, even under changed circumstances. It is those two readings in missiological thought--one addressing the immediate issues which prompted the encyclical, and the other addressing new or unforeseen issues still lying ahead--to which we now turn.

Issues Which *Redemptoris Missio* addresses

The reception of *Redemptoris Missio* produced a great amount of literature in missiological circles, including several collections of essays. Much of that literature was expository in nature, something which is quite understandable, given the length, the complexity, and the range of issues which the encyclical sought to address. The subtitle of the encyclical, "On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate," sums up the variety of issues which prompted the publication of the encyclical. Paragraph 2 notes what the Holy Father sees as a weakening of the energy for mission, especially the mission *ad gentes*, even as the world is more in need of it than ever. One can locate three sets of concerns which led to the writing of the encyclical.

The first has to do with a proper understanding of mission, and especially mission *ad gentes*, in the Church. This involves articulating clearly the meaning of *mission ad gentes*, as well as the implications

flowing from it: promoting and sustaining missionary motivation, fostering missionary vocations, encouraging the necessary theological reflection and exposition of mission, and addressing the fears of non-Christians about the motivation for mission which the Church has (2).¹

A second set of issues have to do with doctrinal matters: christological matters, regarding the centrality of the work of Christ in mission, and the indissoluble unity of Jesus of Nazareth and the Logos, and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only savior for all of humankind (cf. Chapter I); ecclesiological matters, such as the relation of the Church Kingdom of God, and the necessity of the Church in the plan of salvation (Chapter II); and missiological matters, such as the meaning of proclamation, dialogue, inculturation, and other dimensions of missionary activity (Chapter V).

A third set of issues might be considered contextual in nature, since they reflect the attitudes, sometimes formed on the basis of an inadequate grasp of doctrinal issues, which skew a proper understanding of mission. There is a tendency to a horizontal approach to life which leaves out the transcendent. This leads to an inadequate sense of mission (4) and opens the way to ideologies which have ended in bloodshed rather than genuine liberation (8). Such horizontalism leads also to a secularization of salvation (17), which ends up encapsulating people in their misery rather than freeing them from it. A parallel to this horizontal or excessively anthropocentric approach is the indifferentism or relativism vis-à-vis the religions of the world (38; cf. Chapter 1) and of Christianity's place within them.

Of the three sets of issues, *Redemptoris Missio* stimulated especially reflection on those dealing with matters of mission itself. A number of authors have noted the gratitude of especially *ad gentes* missionary institutes for the efforts to "confirm in their commitment those exemplary brothers and sisters dedicated to missionary activity." (2)²

The encyclical also evoked a great deal of reflection on the concept of mission itself: how the thinking on mission continues the line of thought since *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, and how it also picks up earlier themes regarding the *conversio animarum* and the *plantatio ecclesiae* as activities of mission.³ While some of the literature reflects anxiety about diluting the concept of mission articulated at the Second Vatican Council and in subsequent writing, it might be more proper to say that the retrievals of earlier twentieth century missiology might reflect efforts to integrate them into the teaching subsequent to the Council.

One issue in particular received attention. This was the return of the use of the term "missions" alongside the term "mission" which had been favored in missiology during the latter half of the twentieth century (32).⁴ Much of the interest has concentrated around the territorial or geographical conceptions of mission, particularly as these related to mission understood both in the past and with regard to what later in the encyclical is called the "new areopagus" (37).

¹Numbers in parentheses refer to paragraphs in *Redemptoris missio*.

²See for example Donal Dorr, "'Redemptoris Missio'--Reflections on the Encyclical," *The Furrow* 42(1991)339-347; Eugène La Pointe, "*Redemptoris Missio: Ses points forts*," *Kerygma* 25(1991)189-204.

³See for example Giancarlo Collet, "'Zu neuen Ufern Aufbruch?'" *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 75(1991)161-209; Horst Rzepkowski, "Neue Perspektiven und Probleme des Missionsbegriffes," *Forum Katholische Theologie* 9(1993)194-213.

⁴Eugen Nunnenmacher "'Le Missioni'--Un concetto vacillante riabilitato? Riflessioi sulla dimension geografica di un termine classico" *Euntes Docete* 44(1991)241-264; Paul Tihon, "Retour aux missions? Une lecture de L'Encyclique 'Redemptoris Missio,'" *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 114(1992)69-86.

Another point in the encyclical which was favorably received was the distinction between the three kinds of missionary situations (33): of those who have never heard the Gospel, of those who seek a deeper faith, and of those who live in cultures historically Christian but now in need of a new evangelization.

It is with these missiological considerations--about the nature of mission, especially mission *ad gentes*; the language of “mission” and “missions”; and territorial understanding of mission--that missiologists have, predictably, been most engaged. Running through these reflections are at once gratitude for the extended reflection given to mission *ad gentes*, and concern that the mission theology articulated in *Ad Gentes Divinitus* (and to some extent, in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*), was being eclipsed by the missiological thought of the earlier part of the twentieth century. I would like to suggest that some of the concerns about consistency in the use of terminology⁵ are legitimate. I would like also to suggest that, ten years on, this might be seen as a way of trying to integrate pre- and post-Conciliar missiology. The distinction between “mission” and “missions” should probably not be reduced to this kind of pre- and post-Conciliar dichotomy. It may reflect trying to deal with the theological (“mission”) and the practical (concrete, distinct “missions”) dimensions of missiology.⁶

Regarding the doctrinal issues addressed, these will no doubt be taken up in Professor Colzani’s paper. I will return to perhaps the thorniest of them--the question of religious pluralism--in the next section of this presentation. Similarly, some of the contextual issues named in the encyclical will also be addressed at that time. For it is in these areas that I believe the encyclical is offering us possibilities in the development of missiological thought not so clearly seen ten years ago when the encyclical was first published.

***Redemptoris Missio* and Current Missiological Discussion**

As was noted in the introduction, some encyclicals which set out to address the issues of their time become also resources for responding to issues which emerge much later. This can be discovered in rereading encyclicals in light of questions which emerged at a later point in time. Again, ten years may not be enough time to propose a return to *Redemptoris Missio* in this way. But there seems to me to be a compelling possibility emerging out of the encyclical as we enter the third millennium.

I would like to pursue this possibility by examining four themes that can be found in *Redemptoris Missio*. The first two are treated somewhat implicitly in the text; the last two more explicitly, but now of even greater significance than could be understood at the time of the encyclical’s publication. These four themes are: a new paradigm of mission, missionary spirituality, the concrete shape of a new areopagus, and the question of religious pluralism. Let us look at each of these in turn.

A New Paradigm of Mission

Horst Rzepkowski and Fritz Kollbrunner, among others, noted the call for the “dawning of a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest” (92).⁷ This reference to a new missionary age, when paired with the remarks at the beginning of the encyclical, seemed to point to renewed missionary efforts which would be made fruitful by a clearer understanding of the Church’s

⁵Raised especially by Collet, op. cit.

⁶It is interesting to note how these discussions continue also in evangelical Protestant circles. See the discussion in the foreword to A. Scott Moreau, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), and my review of it in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25(2001)36.

⁷Rzepkowski, op. cit.; Fritz Kollbrunner, “*Redemptoris Missio*: Die Missionszyklika am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 48(1992)131-141.

missionary mandate, a more faithful appreciation of the dogmatic elements of mission (especially the roles of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church), and an awareness of the greater need to reach those who have not heard of Christ. This is a very appropriate way to read these texts, and reflects well the intent of the encyclical.

Yet the encyclical is also full of references to how the social conditions in which the Gospel was to be preached were changing. This is especially true in Chapter IV, entitled “The Vast Horizons of the Mission *ad gentes*.” Especially paragraph 37 outlines the new worlds and social phenomena, and the cultural sectors which constitute the modern equivalents of the Areopagus. Earlier in paragraphs 30 and 32, the new challenges and frontiers created by “humanity on the move and in continual search” had been noted.

Shortly after the publication of *Redemptoris Missio*, the most comprehensive look at mission of that decade appeared from the hand of the South African missiologist, David Bosch. Entitled *Transforming Mission*,⁸ exegete and historian Bosch reviewed the missionary activity of the Church, and ended posing a “paradigm shift” in mission (a term much used in scholarly circles at that time), that is, a fundamental reordering of the concepts of missiology to meet a vastly changed situation. While many felt there was a paradigm shift in the air, Bosch’s outline of the shift of paradigm was unsatisfying. His postmodern, ecumenical paradigm looked more like what mission had become since the 1960’s than anything new. Perhaps today, ten years later, we might better be able to see what kind of shift is beginning to take place, anticipated already in *Redemptoris Missio*.

This new paradigm might be called the *Missio Dei*, that is, a view of mission which focuses upon the work of God in mission, especially in the action of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. The *Missio Dei* stresses the divine initiative and agency in mission rather than human effort. Its first major proponent was Karl Barth in the 1930’s, and was adopted as an idea by the International Missionary Council at their conference in Willingen in 1952. This direction in missiological thinking received impetus from the shattering effects of the two world wars. Parallel thinking was going on in Catholic circles, and is evident in the presentation of theological principles in the Missionary Decree *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, where mission is described as “the epiphany of God’s plan.” (par. 9) There the Trinitarian nature of God’s action in the world was elaborated.

The discussion of the *Missio Dei* in mid-century often focused upon how mission reveals God’s nature to the world, and the Church as the mediator of that revelation. What perhaps is being stressed more at the turn of the century now are three things. First of all, *Deus semper major*--God is always greater. Mission is accomplished not only in proclaiming God’s love for all humankind, but in realizing that it is God’s action which is saving the world, not ours. The wreckage of the twentieth century, already evident fifty years ago, is even more glaringly obvious now at century’s turn.

Second, God’s action in the world is profoundly Trinitarian and one of communion. The *missio Patris* is revealed in the *missio Filii* and the *missio Spiritus*. From a Catholic perspective, as *Redemptoris Missio* clearly reaffirms, mission centers on Jesus Christ. The Spirit, bound up with and not to be separated from Jesus Christ, sustains the Church in carrying forth God’s mission. An element more clear now in the *Missio Dei* than perhaps four decades ago is the role of communion in the manifestation and in the carrying out of mission--the *perichoresis* of the Trinity which is the source of *communio* in the Church.⁹

⁸(Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

⁹On *communio* ecclesiology, see Dennis Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000).

Third, the response of the missionary is first and foremost one of obedience to the *Missio Dei*, of following where God is leading us. That obedience is expressed first and foremost in the spirituality of the missionary. Whereas heroism may have been a salient characteristics of the missionary in an earlier time, now the model is closer to the *kenosis*, the self-emptying, of the Logos in the Philippians hymn (Phil 2:6-11). Initiatives and commitments to concrete projects continue to be necessary, but they are situated always in this obedience and *communio*. It is increasingly evident that the lone, heroic individual needs to be replaced by a sense of communion which mirrors the activity of the Trinity in the world. In a world fractured by interethnic conflict, where economic globalization marginalizes more and more people, where the realities of cultural pluralism make ordinarily living an increasing challenge, elements of communion become the necessary building blocks of that “civilization of love” of which John Paul II has spoken so often.

Italian theologian Fabio Gardini pointed out already several years ago how the themes of Trinity and communion are intertwined in *Redemptoris Missio*.¹⁰ Likewise, Canadian missiologist Eugène LaPointe noticed the motifs of the *Missio Dei* in the same encyclical.¹¹ In that *Redemptoris Missio*'s theology of mission rests upon that of *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, we should not be surprised about this strong Trinitarian foundation.

A few citations from the encyclical will suffice here: “The Council emphasized the Church’s ‘missionary nature,’ basing it in a dynamic way on the Trinitarian mission itself.” (1) “The Church’s universal mission is born of faith in Jesus Christ, as it is stated in our Trinitarian profession of faith....” (4) “The ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son.” (23) “It is not we who are the principal agents of the Church’s mission, but Jesus Christ and his Spirit....” (36) “Missionary activity is nothing other and nothing less than the manifestation or epiphany of God’s plan and its fulfillment in the world and in history....” (41)

When one steps back a bit from *Redemptoris Missio* and the immediate concerns which prompted its publication, one gets a reading which can help set the missionary agenda for the new millennium. A recurring theme is a new situation: “God is opening before the Church the horizon of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel.” (3) It is a humanity which appreciates but sees more clearly than ever the limits of a purely horizontalist or anthropocentric approach (Chapter I). It does not exclude what it calls “participated forms of mediation of different kinds and degrees” (5), but also has experienced the bloodshed caused by adherence to ideologies (8). The dangers of reducing the Gospel to human wisdom, the secularization of salvation (10), and anthropocentric notions of the Kingdom (17) reconfigure the landscape of mission. “Salvation consists in believing and accepting the mystery of the Father and of his love, made manifest and freely given in Jesus through the Spirit.” (12) “Salvation in Christ...is God’s self-communication: It is love which not only creates good, but also grants participation in the very life of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” (7)

The term “globalization,” so often now used to denote the world order today, was not yet in use in 1990 in theological circles in this sense. It has of course since become a commonplace. Chapters IV and V of the encyclical anticipates many of themes which have since been elaborated: the social upheaval of the times (32), the new worlds and new phenomena as well as new cultural centers (37), the poverty of the southern hemisphere and the “soulless development” of the northern hemisphere (58). Read in this fashion, *Redemptoris Missio* continues to give us guidance.

Missionary Spirituality

¹⁰Fabio Gardini, “Trinitarian Communion and Christian Mission in *Redemptoris Missio*,” *Euntes Docete* 47(1994)151-166.

¹¹LaPointe, op. cit.

Missionary spirituality becomes in this understanding of the *Missio Dei* more than a motivating impetus to mission. It is the manifestation of the activity of God in our lives. The call to holiness, incumbent upon every Christian, takes on a special place in the life of the missionary. “[T]he Church’s mission derives not only from the Lord’s mandate but also from the profound demands of God’s life within us.” (11) The missionary must indeed be “led by the Spirit” (87).

The interior side of mission must be attended to more carefully, even as the activist side was stressed in the more anthropocentric approaches:

The missionary spirituality is expressed first of all by a life of complete docility to the Spirit. It commits us to being molded from within by the Spirit, so that we may become ever more like Christ. It is not possible to bear witness to Christ without reflecting his image, which is made alive in us by grace and the power of the Spirit. (87)

“An essential characteristic of missionary spirituality is intimate communion with Christ.”(88) Pope John Paul II sees in this the importance of contemplation: His experience in Asia “confirmed me in the view that the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation. Unless the missionary is a contemplative he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way.” (90)

The pastoral intention of the Second Vatican Council was to bring about a new relationship between the Church and the world, in which the Church would be the veritable *sacramentum mundi*. In order to achieve this, a deeper engagement of the world was necessary, and has proven fruitful for mission. The encyclical affirms these developments. But it also sees that it is now time too to attend to this interior dimension. In my experience this is already evident in the motivations of the youngest generation of missionaries, born now after the Council. The best of them take the engagement with the world for granted. They seek along with it this interior, contemplative dimension.

The New Areopagus

One could spend a great deal of time exploring the richness of paragraph 37 of the encyclical, which delineates some of the new situations in which mission finds itself today. This has been a part of the encyclical which has been, on the one hand, one of the most promising for missiological reflection and, on the other hand, still needing considerable more development.

Rather than delineating new fields of endeavor, I would like to propose but one example of how a focusing on the *Missio Dei* can, in some instances, help us explore how to approach these new phenomena and new fields.

The example is taken from an area of great interest today, namely, that of peace-making and reconciliation. Because of the large number of intrastatal (and interethnic) conflicts in the last decade and a half, the challenge of peace-making and reconciliation falls more heavily on relief and development workers today. Previously it was more the work of professional conflict resolution experts. Similarly, the proliferation of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions bring ordinary people into the process of rebuilding in a way not known in the past.

Those working in such settings quickly learn that there is a profound spiritual dimension to reconciliation and forgiveness which reaches beyond the skills of conflict resolution and conflict

management. They recognize too that the arduous work in this area is highly stressful, and the burnout rate among workers is very high. Secular organizations have been turning to religiously based organizations for help in this regard. Accordingly, Caritas Internationalis set up a working group on reconciliation in 1996 to start equipping their own workers better in the technical and the spiritual dimensions of reconciliation. This working group is continuing to develop resources in this regard.

The work of reconciliation has become a form of mission, a form of the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world, in this new areopagus.¹² It becomes a way in which people experience God working among them, because the dimensions of reconciliation are so vast that it can only be the work of God. Human beings are but agents of God's forgiveness and healing in such terrible situations.

Religious Pluralism

An approach to religious pluralism which degenerates into indifferentism and relativism has rightly been a preoccupation of the Magisterium for the last decade and a half. *Redemptoris Missio* has this situation clearly also in mind (cf. 36). The publication of the encyclical prompted a long editorial in *La Civiltà Cattolica* which was largely devoted to this topic, going into more detail than does the encyclical itself.¹³ *Redemptoris Missio* was more involved in setting out the truth about Jesus Christ than in engaging directly in the intricacies of this complex theological argument.

Here is an area where the published literature would indicate that the encyclical may not have had its desired impact. The publication of the Declaration *Dominus Jesus* in 2000 would seem to indicate that is the reading also within the Magisterium (*Redemptoris Missio* is quoted numerous times in the document). There have been two theological developments which support two concerns of *Redemptoris Missio*, namely, that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation for humanity and respect for the truth present in other religious traditions.

The first is that the pluralist, theocentric approach is in itself philosophically inconsistent. The American theologian S. Mark Heim has pointed out that theocentric approaches are not really respecting of pluralism, since they assume a common quest beyond each of the traditions.¹⁴ More recently, he has worked out what he calls a theology of religious ends.¹⁵ By this he means that religions do not have the same goals (he develops a scheme of four goals). In this manner he tries to elaborate a way of showing the integrity of each of these goals, the most complete of which is the Trinitarian communion with God expressed in Christian faith. His goal is to respect the integrity of religious traditions, yet show from his perspective the greater fullness to be found in Christian faith, at once making for better dialogue and better proclamation. It is still too early to see if his claims will succeed, but it is perhaps the most important development in this discussion in some time.

A second issue voiced in *Redemptoris Missio* has to do with *parrhesia* (cf. 49), the boldness with which we confess and proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ. Much attention has been given to sensitivity in religious communication, especially intercultural and interreligious communication, a concern I deeply share. But *parrhesia* grows also out of our union with Christ, and the absolute claims he makes upon us as believers. However we come to articulate respect for other religious traditions and our faith in Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, that absolute commitment must be given the place

¹²I have explored this elsewhere in a number of publications. See for example, "Reconciliation as good news in a divided world?" in Philippa Woodridge and Carlos Pape (eds.), *Las Américas se abren al nuevo milenio* (Rome: SEDOS, 1998), 210-223.

¹³"Validità permanente della mission ai non Cristiani," *Civiltà Cattolica* 142(1991 vol. I)431-443.

¹⁴See his *Salvations. Truth and Difference in Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995).

¹⁵*The Depth of the Riches. A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

of honor. To do less than this robs commitment, and faith, of their very substance. This dimension of *parrhesia* needs further attention in missiological thought.

Conclusion

As stated at the outset, there are many paths which could be followed out in the missiological thought arising from *Redemptoris Missio*. I have tried here to touch upon two levels of those developments: on the one hand, those emerging from the direct questions the encyclical set out to address; and, on the other, how a rereading of the encyclical ten years after its publication provides us access to another level of meaning which illumines in a special way our situation at the turn of the millennium. That such a level exists, and can offer such possibilities, shows the strength of this document of the Magisterium. It gives us suggestive ideas of how to identify a new paradigm of mission which may be emerging at this time.