Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION
1. Introduction

The Empirical philosopher John Locke and the Indian thinkers like Prabhakara and Bhartauhari spoke ornamentally how communication becomes meaningful. Locke says that language is ciphered ideas, which the listener deciphers to form the original idea of the person who ciphers ideas into language. From this forms the basic notion of communication, which has subsequently evolved into many theories as well as techniques in communication. Later, the search for meaning has turned into what is popularly known as ‘linguistic philosophy’ with the early Wittgenstein and his book ‘Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus’, that became responsible for a group of thinkers known as ‘the Vienna Circle’ and a movement in philosophy called ‘Logical Positivism.’ Though Wittgenstein disowns and negates his early theories of the Tractatus to become a ‘later Wittgenstein’ through his book ‘Philosophical Investigations’, Linguistic Philosophy and Linguistic analysis continued flourishing.

In short, meaning, language, reality and communication techniques as well as strategies had evolved much and had come a long way from that of John Locke.

The effort in this study is to enquire into the communication techniques and its varied aspects adapted as well as used by the Catholic Church to spread the good news of gospels in Kerala Society. Furthermore, it enquires into the influence in this effort of the Church from the divine master Christ Himself, through His sermons and particularly, the Beatitudes. Thus, it may be possible to demonstrate the direct influence of Jesus and His methodology of communication on the communication techniques adopted by the Church in Kerala.

Hence the study, the role of Holy Bible in Catholic Church’s Communication Techniques in Kerala society with special reference to the Beatitudes is
an attempt to find out how the sacred messages in the Sermon on the Mount, which is originally the Decalogue itself that Jesus is interpreting, are practiced, lived and implemented through the Church in Kerala society by its varied forms of ministries, missions and apostolates.

The Beatitudes delivered through the Sermon on the Mount comprise an integral message of human liberation, justice and peaceful co-existence. Those messages of peace, justice, liberty, meekness, thirst for righteousness, mercy etc are most significant in this era of globalization and economic depression as Pope Benedict XVI pointed out in his encyclical which gained much popularity:

“God’s love calls us to move beyond the limited and the ephemeral; it gives us the courage to continue seeking and working for the benefit of all, even if this cannot be achieved immediately… Development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer…”¹

Accordingly, true development and progress is possible only through Truth and Charity.

It is only in Charity illuminated by the light of reason and faith, people can pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value.²

The Catholic Church in Kerala society is rich in many aspects. This resourceful and dynamic Church in Kerala has been communicating to this culture and society through myriad forms of charitable services and life giving activities for more than 2000 years. Now the question is, was it very successful? What could have been the difficulties?

The Sermon on the Mount portrays a detailed word picture of a perfect society. It is an ideal society of peace, justice and truth which shall be a prototype of the Kingdom of Heaven. We know that Almighty had been there from the very beginning of humanity to liberate man from slavery and oppression. This is evident from the story of exodus onwards³. From the Father,
it got stimulated and enriched in the Son, where a new age of integral liberation has dawned. The mission statement of Jesus clarifies this:

“the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me, to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour”

The Nazareth manifesto teaches us that Christ’s mission in this world involved mainly three things: 1) the proclamation of Good News to the poor in particular, 2) liberation to the socially oppressed, 3) giving not only physical sight but also spiritual sight i.e., physical as well as spiritual salvation.

Messiahs’ mission was to bring liberation, well being and fullness to the whole humanity. And now His message, like never in the past, has to be applied to the contemporary society with all its complexity and variety. The prophetic, messianic and free understanding of the concept of social justice and liberation which Messiah envisioned 2000 years ago is relevant in this era of globalization and future as well. It is the duty of the Church to continue its mission as visualized and commanded by the Messiah. This is very particular in a fast growing globalized village where the gap between the have’s and have-nots increases day by day. There are certain responsibilities for the real followers of Messiah, as visualized in the Bible:

“The responsibility of letting the oppressed go free and breaking every yoke, sharing bread with the hungry, bringing the homeless poor into the religious people’s houses, giving shelter to the poor, covering the naked”.

Of course, one may immediately raise an objection to this way of thinking by stating, ‘why should the Church’s mission be one of world’s liberation and change?’ Such a question can be answered in a simple way that it was the will of Messiah to empty Himself for the liberation and emancipation of the world. Ivan Illich the famous theologian emphasizes three basic concepts of a new social Gospel or the involvement of the Church in society:
“The Church must not lose sight of at least three vital things, namely human dignity, human solidarity and struggle for justice”.6

By no human law, the personal dignity and liberty of man can be aptly safeguarded as that of the Gospel which has been entrusted to the Church. Christians who take an active part in the present day socio-economic development and the fight for justice and charity should be convinced that they are expected to make a significant contribution to the prosperity of mankind, by virtue of their commitment to their Lord. Karl Barth, the noted theologian insists that:

“The incarnation has been an expression of the secularity of the Gospel. It means that God has made Himself known to the world in the every day events of secular life.”7

The essential content of Christianity is contained in the spirit of Christ which leads unto death and life, thereby offering freedom to all. Those who comprehended only the human side of Messiah recognized Him as a man who had a special concern for the poor, foodless, unbalanced, marginalized, oppressed and handicapped. Jesus’ feedback to the everyday life situation has been proactive and instant. Consequently, the Church too is supposed to act likewise, based upon the contextual and surrounding context and realities. But does the Church actively take part in this process of wiping out evilness as ‘something beautiful for God’ and humanity?8.

1.1. Specific Significance

Thus it is significant to sort out the social realities, particularly the socio-religious-cultural realities in Kerala and the response of the Catholic Church towards them. The Church is supposed to respond to the realities of the day to day life of Kerala society through the communication techniques which are manifested mainly through pastoral activities and ministries. Thus, a critical evaluation and assessment of the disseminated message of the Church through its ministries and activities is relevant. The Church disseminates and exposes herself mainly through her communication system.
In order to evaluate and find out the effectiveness and drawbacks of the communication techniques of the Catholic Church in Kerala, we should discuss in detail the core ministries and activities in the Church. It is through these arms that the Church fulfills her mission in fidelity to the Gospel and in relevance to the contemporary society. Accordingly, reforms and renewal in the communication techniques and activities are very significant.

The research topic has particular significance from certain other perspectives too. The Catholic Church concluded the Pauline year in 2009 which was launched in the year 2008. As a continuation of this, on the eve of the one hundred and fiftieth death anniversary of Saint John Maria Vianney, the heavenly patron of parish priests, Pope Benedict XVI announced and inaugurated a special year for priests from June 19, 2009 to 2010. Both of these celebrations were intended for revamping the Catholic Church. The Pauline year celebrations were meant to spread the good news or the gospel message with more spirit since St. Paul was an advocate and ardent preacher of the message of the risen Lord. As a consequence of this Pauline year, there has been a restoration in the activities of the Church, giving more emphasis to The Bible, Biblical reflection and its study throughout the year. This strategy and technique of rejuvenation and revamping is to be continued in the Church emphasizing the aspect of sanctification of the priestly community. The motto of the priestly year is ‘Priests’ sanctity is Church’s sanctity’. Thus, both these events concentrate on the sanctification and gospel commitment.

Furthermore, the Kerala Society and its politics brings more challenges to the Church. The chief political challenge had been from the former State Government, led by the communist regime. Basically, the communists with their epistemology of separation and different theories of contradiction and conflict, and materialistic ontology had been opposed to the Church. But later, it was accused that, they had softened their attitudes for getting votes. They also found the principles of ‘liberation theology’ trying to make a theory that Marx is a continuation of Christ, attempting to bring home the point that Marx begins from where Christ has stopped, helping them more. But of late, the relations became
strained again as the new communist leadership started interfering and making public opinions criticizing the Church. One of the areas in which the communists interferes is education apart from many other areas.

Again, the communication techniques of the Church confront threats through factors such as worldliness, consumerism, lavishness, luxuriousness etc. There are elements of scandal, indignity and anti witness from the part of the Church. Needless to say that, this is against the true spirit of the Beatitudes. Moreover, as the Catholic Church of Kerala celebrates the mission year in 2011-12, it is relevant to sort out the factors that are real challenges to the true mission and evangelization. An inquiry into all these contemporary factors carries significance.

2. Scope of the Study

2.1. Interdisciplinary analysis

This topic comprises and interweaves different disciplines such as Philosophy, Sociology, Theology, Socio-religion, Communication and Media studies. Religious communication (Religion and Communication) of the Catholic Church in Kerala society and its modus operandi through certain medium (media studies) will be closely analyzed on the background of the Gospel and Beatitudes (Philosophy and Theology) to understand the social practices in Kerala (sociological dimension) in its correct way. The researcher tries to bring out the remedial measures to be adopted by the Catholic Church in Kerala to maximize its effectiveness of the communication techniques or mode of the message dissemination. Or in other words, to sort out the measures to empower, strengthen and revitalize the channels of communication.

Religious thinking, religious practices and religious institutions were at the very centre of all the societies. In established societies, religion is one of the important institutional structures making up the total social system. It is concerned with a ‘beyond’, to use the phrase of the Italian sociologist Vilfredo Pareto, ‘transcends experience’. Emile Durkheim, the French Sociologist,
proposed that religion was the source of all higher culture whereas according to Karl Marx, it was the ‘opium’. Religion has been accused of being a stubborn obstacle, retarding progress and promoting fanaticism, intolerance, ignorance, superstition. The debate regarding Christian migration to Konkan religion is a relevant example. It has been accused by some that the Christian migration to Malabar religion had largely destroyed the cultural heritage of that particular religion, wiping out its folklore, indigenous culture, tradition etc.

Richard Dawkins’ ‘God delusion’ comes forward with severe criticism against religion, questioning even its relevance. According to him religion is incapable of filling the gaps in the society. But one can’t delimit the importance of religion since it represents a set of human activities and complex social forms of considerable significance. Furthermore, religious institutions and its activities have been imparting tremendous development to humanity and Kerala Society by making roads, buildings, infrastructures such as schools, hospitals and other development be mental activities. Thus, both spiritual and secular development was its main concern. Hence they are not contradictory but complementary.

The sociological analysis of any religion will reveal a lot of questions related to the society comprising positive and negative, reactive and proactive. It will also embrace different areas related to sociology, anthropology, culture etc. The meritorious and tremendous achievements of the Catholic Church in Kerala Society include the immense and gigantic ministries and pastoral activities. Contribution of religion to particular societies and cultures has to be closely examined always for the development of any society.

2. 2. Transcendental reference

It is religion that supplies men with ‘something that transcends experience’ or it is a ‘transcendental reference’. It is said that religion is needed as a result of three fundamental characteristics of human existence. First, men live in conditions of uncertainty. That means events of safety and welfare is beyond his prediction. Secondly, his capacity to control and affect the conditions
of his life is inherently limited. He at times confronts the real situation of powerlessness. Thirdly, men live in a society and a society is an orderly allocation of functions, facilities and rewards. Thus, religion helps men to adjust to the three brute facts of contingency, powerlessness, and scarcity. All these are ‘breaking points’ or ‘breaking beyond’ our experience as Max Weber points out. Religion answers all these problems.\textsuperscript{15} But Richard Dawkins’ hypothesis stands against these. According to him non-religious means would fill the gap or would help one to reach the beyond.\textsuperscript{16}

There is no inaccuracy in stating that communication revolutions such as cinema, radio, television, computer, internet etc have a lot of implication on religion. All these revolutions can be used for both constructive as well as destructive purposes. The role of any religion is such that any sort of human communication systems, with or without any devices, must be transcended and purified so that it should be a means and development of human perfection. The social communication encyclical of the Church reveal this very much. They had been setting guidelines and norms for systems of communication as and when the Church felt necessary.\textsuperscript{17}

Carsian R. Ageria defines religion as the “fundamental intentionality of the human consciousness towards the sacred”. Thus, religion is simply the overt expression of man’s longing towards the transcendental, manifested in different forms given the existential situations and knowledge system of that society.

\textbf{2. 3. Secular relevance of the Church}

It is said that without a supreme power, man neither knows which way to go nor even understands who he is.\textsuperscript{18} Man cannot bring about his own progress unaided, because by himself he cannot establish an authentic humanism.\textsuperscript{19} God gives us the strength to fight and suffer for love of the common good, because he is our greatest hope. Thus a Christian humanism that enkindles charity and takes its lead from truth is a must. The Church in Kerala society is supposed to build this humanism through its communication techniques.
The traditional Christian virtues such as faith, hope, charity as well as its day to day practices have not substantially changed in our society as compared to those in the West. The Catholic attitude towards abortion, homosexuality, pre-marital sex, etc has not been challenged seriously and one can’t predict an easy erosion of these age old customs and values in Kerala Society. One could give these aspects as excellent examples for the “Indianisation of Christianity” as a very natural phenomenon.

Socio - religious thinkers and theologians have debated and discussed these points. The Indian Theological Association in its 20th annual meeting during April 2003 elaborately discussed the different aspects of society and church.

“Reflecting on the Gospels in the context of our languages, cultures, religions, socio-economic and political life situations of our people is a need of the hour’.20

Even if there are no great threats to the core teachings of the Catholic Church in our context there are a few scandals and cases of counter witnessing that has tarnished the image of the Church. Thus, certain attempts of introspective analysis of the activities and rethinking of the communication techniques are very essential.

2.4. Encounter between the Gospel and socio - culture

We need to affirm an important fact that the Church and its further communication techniques of pastoral activities and ministries of varied ways in the Kerala Society is the result of a historical encounter between the Gospel and the socio-culture of our country in particular periods. Christian message, charitable activities and apostolic endeavors of the Church throughout the ages were the result of such an encounter. In other words, from a communication parlance, we can state that Christ is encoded by the Church based upon the socio-cultural needs of the society and decoded through channels such as educational institutions, hospitals, pastoral departments and other such activities.
There is no doubt that the Church of St. Thomas Christians in Kerala have witnessed the Christian faith and preserved the socio-cultural customs and practices of their ancestors. In our society their activities and services are highly commendable with all the differences of opinion and controversies. Needless to say that, missionary activities and their contribution to the Kerala society are golden chapters in its history.

But the question we put forward is this: were these disseminated messages truly based on the biblical values and Beatitudinal spirit? Could the Church in Kerala eliminate the noise factors that existed throughout the process of communication? Could they trace out the different noise factors and thereby maximize the effectiveness of the ministry? To put forward explicitly, let us think about a particular point: Could the Church in Kerala till now identify the struggles of the oppressed, marginalized and especially the dalit Catholics and lead them to the mainstream society with a prophetic role?

While speaking about the encounter we can clearly state that the inculturation process of Christian missionaries and priests is an example of true gospel spirit whereby they could adopt to good socio-cultural practices.21 They could adopt some practices of Hindus which is the Vedic Indian way, and made them part of their own religion. One can notice that selfish motives, petty interests of their own religion, ego-centrism etc. disappeared without any difficulty for a higher purpose and motive. Studying the Indian languages such as Sanskrit, Tamil and Malayalam; adopting Indian customs and practices; learning Indian Philosophy and Sanskrit scripts; discourse, debates and encounters with local Vedic tradition and above all reformulation, redesigning and paradigm shift of the Gospel based upon the local needs were certain peculiar characteristics of missionaries. They upheld the spirit of other religions such as Vedic Hinduism and respected them.22

The Christian ashram itself is a great witness of Biblical spirituality and true Christianity. It was a way of life, a holistic approach as per the rich patrimony and cultural heritage of India. Many Christian monks like Bede Griffiths, Swami Abhishiktananda, Sara Grant and others23 contributed
substantially to the development of our society in different ways. Christian ashrams are strong centers of inter religious dialogue, harmony, mutual respect, peace related activities and other such principles of Beatitudes. They took the spirit of Beatitudes and involved themselves in the struggles of people and identified themselves with the poor and the marginalized.

Articulation of the principles of beatitudes and Christian Theology is seen throughout the works and deeds of great Theologians such as Dr. Sebastian Kappan, Dr. George Soares Prabhu, Dr. M. M. Thomas etc. They were trying and struggling through a movement of liberation to eliminate and wipe out the root causes of oppression, poverty, social evils, and mournful things which are the real spirits of beatitude itself.

2.5. Effectiveness of social media communication

Catholic journals such as Bible Basyam, Indian Theological Studies, Jeevadhara, Janadeepam, Journal of Dharma, Third Millennium, and Vidya Jyothi are to be commended especially for their role in highlighting significant issues of oppression, poverty, injustice, marginalization etc. They have been providing a forum of discussion and debates with freedom and creativity throughout the decades. An elaborate analysis of these journals and periodicals reveals the greatest truth that for more than a quarter century or above, they have been repeatedly discussing and reflecting upon the themes of poverty, discrimination on the basis of caste and gender, problems of dalits, ecological crisis, dialogue and mutual harmony etc. Great intellectuals and think tanks comprising Theologians and Church leaders huddled under these umbrellas and fought to eradicate all evils under the spirit of Charity.

One can’t deny the fact that it was the Gospels and the Beatitude that prompted and motivated these religious leaders to dedicate themselves and disseminate the messages of humanism. But here the researcher make inquiries how does these journals, magazines, print medium, social dramas and other communication techniques of the Church in Kerala society is effective and successful?
3. Limitations of the study

3.1. The proper subject under discussion is a macro type discourse and thus it is closely observed and evaluated in a micro level within the context of the local Church of Kanjirapally as a questionnaire study.

3.2. The effectiveness of the encoded messages by the faithful cannot be evaluated perfectly. They are not measurable outwardly though there are certain feedback systems in certain activities. It is very personal and the Gospel centered living of the believer may not be measured with any outward or objective criteria. Hence its dimensions and myriad means cannot be perfectly measured with any human devices and even if such an endeavor is carried out, it will be misleading.

3.3. Though certain communication techniques are enlisted and put forward as a questionnaire for evaluation, they themselves are incalculable and countless. For example, the minutest non verbal communication through the dress code of the priests and nuns is not discussed here whereby they are important messages. Precisely speaking, it is needless to tell that the dress code of the followers of Mother Teresa of Calcutta would arouse the tender thought of Mother Teresa and her wonderful activities in an ordinary citizen. Such myriad signs and symbols of Christian communication techniques are not included in the study, though some of them are included in the questionnaire survey.

3.4. Though this study deals with the Catholic Church’s Communication techniques in the Kerala society, they are confined mainly to the Syro Malabar Church in Kerala for more clarity and precision. Even then, almost all the activities and ministries of the Church are somewhat same and the techniques are applicable to the whole Church in Kerala society.

4. Research design

4.1. The problem

The problems which led to the discussion of the particular research can be categorized into two: general and particular.
4.1.1. General problems

To a great extent, the effectiveness of the ministries to spread the Kingdom of God depends on the understanding of the true spirit of the gospel and the socio-cultural living conditions of the people in the particular area. The Beatitudes in The Holy Bible contain great elements of socio-cultural realities or it explains and interprets the social nomenclature of the people. The Beatitudes act as a problem solver in men’s different social, political, economic, cultural and religious life realities. Thus, the integral growth and comprehensive development of the individual, society and culture depends to a large extent on the true dissemination of Gospel values and principles through different channels. We term these dissemination channels of the Catholic Church as communication techniques which have wide political, social, cultural, pastoral, spiritual implications. Through the myriad disseminated channels of the Church such as departments, services, institutions and various spiritual activities, the Church is to build peace, justice, equality, righteousness, mercy, fraternity etc.

However, one cannot deny the truth that there exists blocks which hinder the perfection of all these. Certain internal or external forces, which can be termed in communication parlance as ‘noise’, distort the real beauty and perfection. To give witness to the Christ event in its perfection, the Church must maintain gospel values and stick on to the true spirit of Beatitudes. Liberation from sin, injustice, cruel situations and related evils can be eradicated by following the Beatitude principles. Thus, in order to become the ‘light of the world’ and ‘salt of the earth’, the Church must transform herself. Her communication management style and dissemination must be revitalized by removing all the noise factors. Religious values and principles are encoded and decoded in diverse contexts such as social work, charitable activities, hospital ministries, educational services etc. But if these activities are scandalous and are against Christian Charity and humanity how can the Church be a real witness? Thus, these sectors must be purified and spiritualized every day with spiritual principles and gospel values.
4.1.2. Particular problems

Lot of new problems and constraints emerge in the Kerala society. All these get reflected in the Catholic Church too, with different dimensions and intensity. It is a fact that these developments and polarization in the socio-political realms in the history of Kerala had led to serious debates and discussions in the Church circle. Tensions reached its zenith during the days of parliamentary elections of 2009 and also issues concerning self financing colleges. This led the Church to unite together irrespective of the regional differences and form a consensus in different issues on one hand. But on the other hand, it led to the difference of opinion among the faithful, with regard to the policies of the Catholic Church which in turn led to severe criticism. Perhaps it helped her to replenish herself with more rejuvenation and revamping.

The long and constant confrontations between the Catholic Church and Marxist party in Kerala and further consequences in the field of education and related sectors; tug of war between the political leaders and spiritual leaders; allegations and criticisms against the spiritual figures of the Church from the political sector; controversial issues of Abhya case; the tensions emerged from ‘Amen’, the autobiography of a catholic ex-nun Dr. Sr. Jesme; issues related with the adoption of a girl by Dr. John Tattumkal, the Bishop of Cochin; dismissal of Malayalam professor Dr. T.J. Joseph from the Catholic run Newman college Thodupuzha on behalf of the controversial question paper etc had revealed that a re-thinking in the communication technique is essential in the Church in Kerala within the biblical background.

4.2. Specific objectives

4.2.1. To make an in-depth analysis of the communication techniques and management systems of the Catholic Church in Kerala society.
4.2.2. To analyze the impacts of the communications techniques of the Catholic Church in different strata’s of Kerlaa society with special emphasis on the local Church of Kanjirapally.

4.2.3. To examine the drawbacks, failures and misdeeds of the Church in Kerala with regard to its communication activities and it’s after effects.

4.2.4. To examine the practical application of the themes and principles of Beatitudes by the Catholic Church in Kerala to find out what contributions and substantial changes it had made in the socio-economic regions as well as the intellectual and cultural life in Kerala.

4.2.5. To find out whether there are any Biblical principles based upon the true spirit of Beatitude which had played a prominent role in shaping the society of Kerala, especially the believers of the local church of Kanjirapally.

4.3. Major variables

The major variables of this research can be classified as: The Holy Bible, the Catholic Church, Communication techniques, Kerala Society and the Beatitudes. Each of these is explained briefly and operationally under broad heads.

4.3.1. The Holy Bible

One of the most researched ‘text’ in man’s history is the Bible and it requires no explanations but from the present research angle, certain clarifications are relevant. There are inestimable versions and interpretations for it. The Bible we refer here is, new Revised Standard Version published by the Theological Publications India (TPI) ²⁶ which is a commonly accepted one. The versions and wordings of the Bible change from one to another. But the context or the ‘sitz im laben’ of original language and culture such as Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac are very important in understanding even a word in the Bible.
Thus, the version which is more true to the original must be taken for analysis and interpretation.

4.3.2. The Catholic Church

This term precisely means the Roman Catholic Church headed by the Roman Pontiff at Vatican. The Church is the continuation and extension of the ministry of Messiah. He selected ‘the twelve’ to continue His ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. This is evident from the gospel itself:

“and when day came He called His disciples and chose twelve of them whom He also named apostles”

St. Peter was appointed as the leader of the group and after Masters’ death and resurrection the apostolicity had succeeded through the Roman Pontiffs.

Tradition says that Christianity was introduced in India by St. Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles in A.D. 52. The Indian Church of the Christians of St. Thomas is not distinct from that of the Syro Malabar Church. The designation Syro Malabar came into the ecclesiastical use after the middle of the 19th century.

In a wider perspective, the Catholic Church in Kerala refers to Syro Malankara, Latin and Syro Malabar Churches. But in this study the term Catholic Church, refers to the Syro Malabar Church only for precision and concrete analysis.

4.3.3. The Communication techniques

The lexical meaning of the term technique is, particular way of doing something, especially something requiring special skills. In a wider perspective we can term it as communication management. However, it is not limited to the usual communication thoughts such as media, journalism, public relation, marketing ideas etc. On the other hand, it comprises the whole inward and outward activities and programmes whereby the Church decodes the message of the Kingdom of God and her divine master. Thus, while we refer to the communication techniques one may have to think about the whole activities of the church including intra personal communications, such as prayer and spiritual
aspects which are not disseminated publicly, but are manifested outwardly in some other means.

4.3.4. The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes, from the sermon on the mount as per St. Mathew’s version\(^{30}\) and at the level place as per the Lukan interpretation,\(^{31}\) is very central to the Gospel. They can be termed as the gist of the Bible. In a sense, they are the opening statements or introduction to the great principles of Gospel which are to be followed soon after. Great life principles of ‘salt and earth’,\(^{32}\) ‘love of enemies’\(^{33}\), ‘true treasures’\(^{34}\), ‘judging others’\(^{35}\), the ‘golden rule’\(^{36}\) etc are followed by it.

Thus, it serves as a guideline for true Christian living. It is a signpost of the activities of Church. A Catholic who follows and lives these principles in his personal life would be a real witness to Christ. Thus it is a real guideline to the Church, which tries to realise the Kingdom of God on earth.

4.3.5. The Kerala Society

The term Kerala society is self explanatory. This study is solely based on the context of Kerala and not on any other western context. It is to be noted that there are lot of distinctions in different aspects with the Eastern Church as that of the Western Church. The communication techniques of the Church must be based on the culture, customs, tradition and socio-political aspects of that particular region. Thus, Kerala culture and our societal way of living, thinking, attitude etc are important aspects of consideration in this research study.

Though the Catholics in Kerala Society are a minority, they are very affluent in the socio-economic sector of Kerala. Furthermore, lot of tensions exists between the government (the left especially) and Church on behalf of the minority rights especially in the education sector.
4.4. The Hypothesis

4.4.1. There should be a paradigm shift in the leadership and the management techniques of the Catholic Church in Kerala Society and a new mode of communication strategy is needed.

4.4.2. Catholic Church should be audacious enough to fight prophetically against the issues of violations of constitutional rights, wearing down of the traditional values and morals and must uphold its rights and duties of pastoral exhortations through pastoral letters and encyclicals.

4.4.3. Unless and until the Catholic Church in Kerala adopts new communication techniques and management style other than the routine mode decoding and encoding, it will be outdated and irrelevant.

4.4.4. Even if the deep rooted role of The Holy Bible and Beatitude in the communication techniques of the Church is immeasurable with definite norms and standard, they are highly influential and are reflected in the activities and expressions of the faithful in different ways.

4.4.5. Though there are communication styles and techniques in the Church through social media, its management is very poor and incapable of tackling the crucial issues which the Catholic Church faces today. Thus, modern tactics and plans for empowering the Church’s communication and media sector media is a must.

4.4.6. There should be new communication techniques in the Church’s myriad ministerial activities.

5. The Methodology

5.1. Field of Study and Pilot Study

The study is confined to the Kerala Society in general. But particular attention is given to the local Church of Kanjirapally, which encompasses three
districts of Pathanamthitta, Kottayam and Idukki. The proper questionnaire survey is conducted among the faithful of these districts only.

The Pilot Study, which is termed as the Eparchial survey and the lineamenta discussion and assembly, from where the researcher has been inspired for this research was conducted in these three districts too. The differences to be noted are the time gap, leadership changes of those who conducted the pilot study, attitudinal change of the particular respondents etc.

Further more, the distributed areas of the questionnaire survey of the research for data collection is somewhat similar as that of the Pilot Study. Those working in the religious institutions, serving in the head quarters of the diocese, the leaders of different organizations etc are the respondents of this research. Though some leaders and people might have changed, the circumstances, areas, way of functioning, beneficiaries and mode of operation etc. might have not changed very much.

5.2. Tools of data collection

5.2.1. Primary data

There are six tools used for data collection. They are:

5.2.1.1. Revisited lineamenta survey

5.2.1.2. Revisited eparchial survey

5.2.1.3. Proper questionnaire survey conducted in the three districts such as Idukki, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam as a case study.

5.2.1.4. The interview schedule among the public relation officers and communication strategist of the local Church of Kanjirapally.

5.2.1.5. The documentary schedule from the archives of the Church of Kanjirapally.
5.2.1.6. The observation schedule by closely monitoring the different activities and ministries of the local Church of Kanjirapally whereby the researcher is a part of that ministry and hence an introspective and intrapersonal analysis too.

5.2.2. Secondary Data

The Second Vatican Council was a revamping and rejuvenation process in the Church. It accelerated the local Churches to conduct discussions and debates regarding the activities and services of the Church and suggestions were sorted out. Certain documents of this type are important for this study.

Another important Secondary source the researcher depends on is the International Laity Conference conducted during August 12-15, 2009, at mount St. Thomas whereby 350 delegates of the Syro Malabar Catholic Church from all over the world had attended. The central theme of the assembly was ‘Church 2030’. Lot of concrete suggestions and brainstorming concepts were evolved about the future Church in this assembly. All those suggestions from the group discussions and paper presentations have turned out to be splendid communication techniques in the future, so that the Church may shine forth as a true witness of the Gospel.

Furthermore, the international conferences, discussions, reports, seminars, paper presentations about the activities of the Church by important theologians, Church documents, Holy Bible etc served as good secondary sources.

5.2.3. Revisiting Lineamenta and Eparchial Evaluation Surveys

The Eparchy of Kanjirapally was erected on 1977. It celebrated its silver jubilee in 2002 with a spirit of rejuvenation and introspection. As part of revamping and reawakening during jubilee year, the eparchy conducted introspective discussions, surveys and eparchial assembly. The whole members of the eparchy consisting of priests, sisters, brothers and laity in one way or other participated in these introspective analysis processes. It paved way for
intense discussions and disputes with regard to the different activities and services of the departments, dealings of priests and sisters, expectation of the laity from the Church of Kanjirapally, the matters to be altered with immediate action, etc. The reports, suggestions and critical recommendations from different forums were an eye opener.

It was a deep process of self study, interpersonal analysis and rethinking. The researcher was part of all these processes, especially with regard to the Lineamenta preparation and archival process. Furthermore, it very aptly goes in tune with the particular dissertation namely, “communication techniques of the Church in Kerala Society’. Hence, it is incorporated as a very relevant and noteworthy case study of reference for the research.

Together with this revisiting of the questionnaire, fresh questionnaire survey has been conducted for very authentic, genuine and credible result. Thus, this particular microscopic analysis of the communication techniques of the Catholic Church of Kanjirapally serves as a solid information for proving our hypothesis in different ways.

The microscopic analysis was set in motion and achieved mainly through two ways:

a) the eparchial assembly

b) the questionnaire survey.

The researcher has formulated fresh questions and conducted fresh surveys after rediscovering and revisiting the questions, questionnaires, studies, results and evaluation of those two major events in the history of the local Church of Kanjirapally, keeping in mind the particular hypothesis of the research.

Thus, in an elaborate sense we can term these two silver jubilee rejuvenation events of the Church of Kanjirapally as a pilot study. In the strict sense Pilot Surveys are those surveys conducted for the purpose of a prior study so as to have smooth functioning and hindrance eradication. Eradication of all hurdles on the path of the research through effective and pinpointed questions,
additions and omissions of questions etc. will facilitate us with good academic output and rich contribution.

Thus lineamenta, eparchial assembly discussions and questionnaire surveys are explained in detail for proving our hypothesis and analytical study.

5.2.4. Lineamenta Survey and Eparchial Assembly

Eparchial assemblies can be termed as a special synod conducted on special occasions as per the declaration of the eparchial head, the Bishop. There are provisions for conducting eparchial assemblies as and when necessary as per the canons of the Eastern Churches. 37

Based upon these, the head of the eparchy of Kanjirapally, Dr. Mar Mathew Arackal, officially declared to convene an assembly through proper ways especially by announcing it through the official bulletin of the diocese of Kanjirapally after due consultation with the curia members and other consultative bodies. 38 After the official announcement and declaration of the eparchial synod, a committee was specially assigned by His Excellency with immediate effect for the smooth functioning of the synod.

One important committee among them was Lineamenta committee. It is a solid study based upon The Holy Bible and teachings of the Catholic Church. After long discussions and sittings the Lineamenta was drafted and redrafted prior to its official publication. The drafting committee was a forum of theologians and Bible experts.

The Lineamenta consisted of fifteen chapters. 39 Each chapter began with the theological and biblical interpretation of the particular ministry and service. It was proceeded with contextual analysis and evaluations based upon the eparchy. Thus there were detailed questionnaires based upon these studies. It is to be noted that all these questionnaires are related in one way or the other, directly or indirectly, with the communication activities and management of the Eparchy of Kanjirapally. They too have reference to The Holy Bible and Theology. Or in other words, theological explanations and interpretations originate through the confrontation between The Holy Bible and society or Bible
and culture. Thus these questionnaires are perfectly in tune with the Bible and communication techniques of the Church of Kanjirapally as tested, evaluated or checked under that background.

Later on, this lineamenta was distributed among the whole faithful through different parishes, which later on distributed these to the Basic Christian Communities (BCC) in the parish. Any message can easily reach from the parish to each and every family member through the Church’s networks.

Basic Christian Communities were summoned together as per the prior schedule by the authorities and Bishop through the eparchial bulletin. The lineamenta text and questions were studied and discussed in detail among these BCC’s and suggestions were collected. These recommendations reflect the real inner feelings of the faithful. Those questionnaires have been given as appendix since they are enormous. The results of the questionnaire in itself are large and beyond our space limit and therefore have not been listed. But relevant points are referred to whenever it is necessary.

5.2.5. Eparchial Evaluation Survey

As we mentioned earlier, jubilee celebrations have been celebrated very meaningfully by conducting introspective analysis and in-depth evaluation. The eparchial evaluation survey, conducted by the eminent research scholar and socio scientist of Janna Deepam Vidyapeeth Pune, Prof. Dr. Paul Parathazam was very commendable. They contain serious revelations of self correction for the Church of Kanjirapally.

It was done very systematically following proper scientific research methodology. The total number of respondent’s were 2884. The profiles of the respondents consisted of three groups of Laity (2108), Priests and seminarians (0265), and Sisters (0511).

The respondents were selected with random sampling from different parishes. There were explanations and clarifications by trained teams. The opinions of the respondents were devoid of any outside interferences or prior
thinking. It was out of their own consciousness and the opinion is devoid of any interference since there were no group interactions at all.

There were separate questionnaires for three categories of respondents such as laity, sisters and priests-religious brothers. The questionnaires were prepared by Dr. Paul Parathazam under the supervision of Pastoral Animation Department. It was in the form of a printed booklet. Therefore it was easy for every one for filling up, processing, filing and retrieving the document.

5. 2. 5.1. Survey among Sisters

As mentioned earlier 511 Sisters from different congregations such as C.M.C., F.C.C., S.A.B.S. and S.H. participated in it. These sisters were very familiar regarding to the activities of the Church or to say, the communication techniques of the Church of Kanjirapally. Therefore the respondent’s answers and suggestions have been very relevant and not at all out of context.

There were 230 questions consisting of 20 categories. The last category was about personal details. The proper survey questions had been formulated based on these 20 categories and 230 questions.

5. 2.5.2 Laity Survey

The process and procedures for conducting this survey among 2801 respondents are same as that of the others. It consists of 19 categories comprising of 197 questions and one full page special section for additions and suggestions.

These questions are all most comprehensive, touching all the aspects of the communication techniques of the Church of Kanjirapally as well as the Catholic Church of Kerala Society.

5.2.5.3. Survey among Priests, Brothers and Religious

There were 22 categories and 200 questions all together. The questions and categories were some what same as the other two sections. They are relevant too in a very special way since their effectiveness in the ministry had to be
evaluated for maximum output mainly because they are the communication agents or opinion leaders.

5.3. The Proper Questionnaire Survey

This survey is conducted among the people of the local Church of Kanjirapally which is distributed in the three districts of Idukki, Pathanamthitta, and Kottayam. It is a part of the Catholic Church in Kerala and findings from such a micro analysis will certainly lead us to the general assumptions and evaluations in a macro level. The selection criterion for this particular area is justified by the fact that it is the field of experience of the researcher.

The Catholic Church of Kerala consists of five Arch Eparchies and under these there are 13 Eparchies altogether. Besides these, there are hundreds of religious congregations for both men and women. They have their own communication techniques through which they constantly interact with the faithful. The style, mode and way of dissemination of the communication of the Catholic Church are similar, since they are networked and coordinated under an umbrella of Kerala Catholic Bishops Council and Syro Malabar Eparchial Synod. The KCBC, Syro Malabar Synod or Latin Synod consists of different commissions and committees each working under a chairman and two or more co-chairman’s, most of them Bishops. There will be a secretary for this particular commission who normally is a priest or lay man. For example, the different ministries such as social service, labour union, jail ministry, saradhi-ministry for drivers, etc comes under the commission of justice, peace and development.42

Thus there is a network and coordination for all the communication techniques of the Church. The infrastructure, network, systematic flow of information from upward to downward and vice versa, convention of opinion leaders of the Catholic Church etc. are highly appreciable. Because of this we find similarities irrespective of demographic and geographic differences. The change may be with regard to the mode of operation. Most of them work
efficiently as per the schedule too. This is very evident in the liturgical celebrations in the Church. They move around the liturgical calendar prepared annually by the Commission for Liturgy.

The techniques of the Church’s communication flow from the upward-downward and vice versa level were mentioned in a detailed way in order to highlight that any sample analysis and study of the technique of a particular diocese will bring one closer to the technique of the Catholic Church as a whole. The differences of rites such as Syro Malabar, Syro Malankara and Latin, had in no way blocked us from a detailed analytical study of the activity of the Catholic Church since all the techniques carries the same nature. There may be certain preferences and priorities with regard to the ministry of a particular region or geography within the same jurisdiction. For example, the developmental strategy of the Latin diocese of Kollam may be quite different from that of the Syro Malabar eparchy of Kottayam because of the presence of Catholic fisher men in the former. Also the pastoral care and ministerial need of the fisher men of the Kollam diocese is different from the pastoral care of the Catholic farmers in the Church of Kanjirapally.

Though there are differences due to particular culture, life style and geography, the organizational structure, the mission-vision-action of the apostolate, the infrastructures, disseminated messages through circulars, encyclicals or other printed materials, the communication techniques etc are one and the same.

Thus, in this study the communication technique of the Catholic Church in Kerala society is analyzed and evaluated in the light of the techniques of the local Church of Kanjirapally which consists of three districts.

6. Conclusion

“Outside holy scripture, books have the ‘power of a thousand scorpions and should be kept out of the hands of the citizenry’

Forge, a senior priest in one of the novels of Umberto Eco comments like wise. The famous Italian novelist wrote this about a 13th century Franciscan
Abbey even before the Guttenberg era. The Friars in the Ashram believed that evil power existed in books and literature. There were no other print or visual medium of communication such as newspaper, telegraph, radio, television, mobile or other media gadgets at that time and thus we can assume that there existed a belief that media had contained evil elements in it and that it must be kept outside the public. Of course, we can logically state that it was a less advanced era or in a Church parlance, a pre-Vatican era and orthodox beliefs and customs existed, especially in the abbeys and ashrams.

But then what is the situation now? Are contemporary religious institutions and religious leaders aware of the great impact of media or channels of communication upon the people and society? Does religion tactically exploit and implement communication techniques, public relation activity and proper dissemination of Gospel principles with less noise factor, so as to have maximum feedback?

Eco’s imaginary tale with regard to the negligence of books by the abbey may be relevant in today’s context. What the researcher tries to analyze here is not that whether the Catholic Church is afraid of books, periodicals, radio, television and computers. But the major problem in this study is whether the Catholic Church in Kerala, which is so vibrant and dynamic, strategically as well as spiritually makes use of different communication channels and media technologies to spread the good news to the society. Furthermore, the researcher tries to analyze whether these communication techniques go in tune with the true spirit of Bible, especially the principles of Beatitudes. This is very relevant in Kerala context both politically and socially whereby constant tensions exist with the government and the Catholic Church with regard to issues such as minority rights, pastoral letters, self financing college etc.
NOTES

2. Ibid; p.9
5. Isaiah 58:6-8, Ibid.
6. **David K. Dr.**, ‘*The Biblical basis for the Church’s role in society,*’ as quoted in “*Ministries in the Church in India*”, Dr. Amalopavadas (ed), C.B.C.I. Publication, New Delhi, 1972, p.254.
7. **David K. Dr.**, Ibid., p. 255.
12. Ibid., p.2.
16. **Dawkins Richard**, Ibid., p.110


23. **Bede Griffiths** (17.12.1906 – 13.5.1993), also known as Swami Dayananda, was a British-born Benedictine monk who lived in ashrams in South India. His contributions to inculturation are very great. 

*Abhishiktananda* (1910-1973) was the name taken by the French Benedictine monk Henri le Saux, whose religious experience in India led him to become a bridge between Hindu and Christian spirituality. Born on August 30, 1910, he became a Benedictine novice in 1930. He left France for India in the summer of 1948. He became immersed in the atmosphere of India, in particular the Hindu perspective of Advaita. He founded an ashram and religious community, Shantivanam in 1950 and became Swami Abhishiktananda. He died on December 7, 1973.

24. Ref. [www.catholicsbooksreview.org](http://www.catholicsbooksreview.org)2003.sores. **George Soares-Prabhu** is an Indian Biblical scholar and theologian who died in 1995. The theme of liberation for the poor and the oppressed is a key concept in Soares Prabhu's work. The oppressed in the Old Testament are the materially needy, the socially oppressed or the spiritually low. The experience of God as one who liberates dominates in his major scholarly theological works. Ref. [Drmm thomas blogspot.Com](http://Drmm thomas blogspot.Com): **Dr. M.M. Thomas**, born on May 15, 1916 at Kozhencherry, (1916–1996) was a renowned
Indian Christian theologian, social thinker, activist and former Governor of Nagaland. He also served as the Chairperson of the Central Committee of World Council of Churches (1968–1975). Published a number of books, chaired a number of meetings of the WCC he left his foot prints in the history of World Ecumenical movement

25. Ref. www.jeevadhara.org. Jeevadhara is a socio-religious magazine published from Kottayam. It was started in 1971 which brought together all most all the leading theologians in India. Third Millennium, Journal of Dharma and Vidya Jyothi are related publications that contains deep theological insights.

26. Ref. www.tpi-bangalore.org. TPI is non-profitable charitable society started in 1969. They were preoccupied with the necessity of providing professors and students with adequate material in the field of intellectual formation. It publishes mainly research oriented and academic works.


32. St. Mathew 5.13-16.


35. St. Mathew 7:1-5.


40. For a detailed study, all those 20 categories are listed in the appendix. The number of questions under each section is also given in brackets.
41. Different categories and questions under laity survey are given in detail for clarity and further critical analysis.