

PREFACE

Vatican II was a ground-breaking experience for the Catholic Church affecting every aspect of its life and mission. In fact the Council left no part of the world unaffected, either directly or indirectly in so far as the Council's greatest achievement was that it changed the course of the church's relation to the world and all human beings with their religions and cultures. In this sense the church's service/mission to the world was at the core of the conciliar reflections. This book evolved from an International Symposium held at the Yarra Theological Union of the University of Divinity, Melbourne, Australia on the occasion of the fiftieth year of the promulgation of the Conciliar Decree on Mission *Ad Gentes*.

Thirteen papers were presented at the symposium focusing on the contemporary issues on mission, as they exist in different parts of the world. In this sense the book offers a window to the world mission theology by writers who not only belong to the social and cultural diversities but are dealing with these issues in their mission theory and practice. Each of the papers had an assigned respondent at the symposium, to stimulate discussion and exchange there. The chapters that we have in the book are the refined versions of the papers modified in the light of the responses at the symposium.

A project of this magnitude engages the time and toil as well as the wisdom of many. We owe an immense gratitude to the paper writers themselves as well as to all the respondents. We acknowledge the whole-hearted support and encouragement received from the Yarra Theological Union including its physical facilities. Equally, we recognize the Society of the Divine Word, without whose assistance the symposium and the publication of the book would not have materialized. Special thanks to Fr. Henry Adler, the Congregational Leader of the Society in Australia, for his vision, inspiration and support all the way through.

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The Editors