

After Emmaus

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Biblical Models
for the New Evangelization

Marcel Dumais



LITURGICAL PRESS
Collegeville, Minnesota

www.litpress.org

Cover design by Stefan Killen Design.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dumais, Marcel, 1936–

After Emmaus : biblical models for the new evangelization /

Marcel Dumais.

pages cm

ISBN 978-0-8146-3761-6 — ISBN 978-0-8146-3786-9 (ebook)

1. Evangelistic work—Catholic Church. I. Title.

BX2347.4.D86 2014

266'.2—dc23

2014008294

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Introduction

The question of a “new evangelization” is at the heart of the current concerns of the Catholic Church. This raises a first question, what does it mean to attach the adjective “new” to the noun “evangelization?” After all, in the life of the church since the Second Vatican Council, evangelization has been presented as constituting the essential mission of the church. This is what we read particularly in the two major pontifical texts on mission published since the council: Paul VI’s apostolic exhortation on evangelization in the modern world, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), and John Paul II’s encyclical on the missionary mandate, *Redemptoris Missio* (1990).¹

At the moment when the Vatican announced and began preparations for a synod of the universal church on the theme of “the new evangelization,” which took place in October 2012, there appeared the apostolic exhortation of the preceding synod of the church, which had taken place in October 2008 on the theme of “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church.”² The title of that exhortation underlines the strong link between the Bible and evangelization. The third part of the document bears the title *Verbum pro Mundo* (The Word for the World).

Bible and evangelization—this subject has been a personal concern of mine for the past forty years, ever since the time I spent preparing my doctoral dissertation on the missionary discourses in the Acts of the Apostles, which was published under the title *Le langage de l'évangélisation* (The Language of Evangelization).³ Since that time, courses, research projects, publications, conferences, and retreats in different parts of the

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world have brought me back to this theme from various points of view.⁴ The current situation of the church, and especially the convocation of a Synod on the new evangelization, call me to take up once again the question of the Bible and mission from a new perspective. It is my intention to contribute to reflection on this question and to the initiatives called for by the contemporary situation.

The new evangelization is an “opportunity,” or more properly a “grace,” for the church. It is necessary because the church cannot be satisfied with structural reforms of the institution or with reflection on and public statements about moral questions. It must first of all focus on what is strictly speaking “theological,” on what constitutes the purpose of its existence and its mission, that is, the question of Jesus Christ and of the God of Jesus Christ, the question of faith, hope, and love. In concentrating on these questions, the new evangelization comes back to what is most profound in human beings: their reason for living, that which gives them the possibility of living their humanity in its fullness.

In order to be faithful to our mission today, we must continually return to the New Testament and adapt the essential content of the witness of Jesus and the apostles to our own times. A survey of the biblical material reveals that Jesus and the apostles used various approaches in bearing witness, depending on the context and the times; these approaches are models for us and serve as fundamental reference points.

The present work is intended to be an accessible reference for all disciples of Jesus Christ who are deeply concerned with the present situation of the Christian faith and the future of the mission of Jesus Christ in our world. It is meant to be a serious work, based on sound research, but with a minimum of technical apparatus. In the presentation of certain Scripture passages, references will provide an opportunity to undertake more extensive analysis of texts and delve into the reasoning process that leads to the proposed interpretations. My wish is

to open some directions for a personal reading of the Scriptures from the point of view of evangelization. The biblical models chosen do not pretend to be exhaustive. Even the presentation of each model is not exhaustive.

The first chapter will raise the question of the new evangelization and its purpose. We will attempt to clarify how the new situation of Christianity in our Western secularized world pushes us to transform our traditional ways of defining the content, the agents, and the approaches to evangelization. The five following chapters will treat biblical models that we can consider as our first points of reference for the task of evangelization today. More precisely, two chapters will be dedicated to the work of evangelization carried out by the apostles, and the other three chapters will look at the evangelizing that Jesus did. The source text for the first two chapters will be the Acts of the Apostles, which is the book of the mission of the first witnesses commissioned by Jesus. Obviously, the gospels will be our reference point for the mission of Jesus.

If there is something original in this project, it is perhaps the way of looking at the biblical texts presenting the mission of Jesus and the apostles. These texts not only provide the content of evangelization, but they also serve as models of how to approach the task of evangelizing, models that the disciples of Jesus are called to take as their inspiration for their mission in the world, or rather, in the worlds we live in today. This approach to the texts of the Bible may be surprising at first. We have become used to considering the Bible from the perspective of the content of our faith (truths to believe, precepts to observe), but very little from the point of view of models of evangelization and of faith. The narrative approach to the biblical texts teaches us to look at the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles for what they were first of all, stories about events.

The biblical models are called to be realized in all cultural and social contexts. The present work is written in the view of evangelization in the secularized world that is mine.

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I would add a note regarding my writing style. I want to enter into a dialogue with readers who are personally interested in the new evangelization. The presentation of each biblical model will include or be followed by reflections, and sometimes with questions that are intended to invite the reader to pursue his or her own reflection on the relevance and on the ways of using that model in his or her own context.

Why a New Evangelization?

On September 21, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI established a Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization.¹ Shortly thereafter he announced that the next Synod of Bishops, scheduled for October 2012, would treat “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith.” The *Lineamenta* for this synod appeared in February 2011; this document served as an instrument of consultation directed to the bishops in order to prepare what is called the *Instrumentum Laboris*—the working document that the participants at the synod were to have at hand.

The expression “new evangelization,” however, is not new. Since the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI had spoken frequently in his discourses and homilies about the need of a new evangelization for the church. In the apostolic letter in which he created the new Pontifical Council, the pope said that the evangelizing mission of the church today “has been particularly challenged by an abandonment of the faith—a phenomenon progressively more manifest in societies and cultures that for centuries seemed to be permeated by the Gospel.”² An example of this abandonment of the faith is found in the European Parliament’s refusal to recognize in its charter the “Christian roots of Europe,” an affirmation requested by the Vatican and certain European countries. On a larger scale, it is more and more difficult to define the West—i.e., the countries

of Western Europe and North America—as Christian countries. These countries, which were evangelized long ago, are in need of a “new evangelization,” that is, a new proclamation of Jesus Christ and of the Gospel.³

The consciousness of a need for a new evangelization emerged gradually in the church long before the arrival of Pope Benedict. The Second Vatican Council treated as one of its central themes the question of the relationship between the church and the contemporary world, and this gave birth to the beautiful document *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World). In addition, the conciliar decree *Ad Gentes* (On the Mission Activity of the Church) recognized that profound transformations in our societies can call for a new kind of missionary activity (*Ad Gentes* 6). In 1975 Pope Paul VI published a magnificent apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World), in which he wrote that evangelization is even more necessary “as a result of the frequent situations of dechristianization in our day; it also proves equally necessary for innumerable people who have been baptized but who live quite outside Christian life, for simple people who have a certain faith but an imperfect knowledge of the foundations of that faith, for intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children, and for many others” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 52). Thinking of those who have distanced themselves from the church, he added, “the Church’s evangelizing action . . . must constantly seek the proper means and language for presenting, or re-presenting, to them God’s revelation and faith in Jesus Christ” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 56).⁴ The church consists of those who believe in Jesus Christ. In other words, those who have been evangelized must in their turn become evangelizers in their human environment.

Pope John Paul II is credited with creating the expression “new evangelization,” which he used in a homily preached in Poland in 1979.⁵ He used this expression again on many occasions

thereafter, and in 2001, in his apostolic letter, *Novo millennio ineunte* (At the Beginning of the New Millennium), he proposed it as the mission for the church in the third millennium of its history. We might mention in particular the formula he used at Port-au-Prince, Haiti, at the opening session of the plenary assembly of CELAM (the Latin American Episcopal Conference): “a commitment . . . to a new evangelization. New in its ardor, in its methods, in its expression.” Later on John Paul II would come back several times to these three dimensions of the novelty of this evangelization. From 1985 onwards, Pope John Paul, and later Benedict XVI, would clearly apply the expression “new evangelization” to the situation of a dechristianized Europe.⁶

If the concept of new evangelization has its roots in the dechristianizing of many Western countries, the synod of the universal church in October 2012 treated the situation of the church not only in Europe or North America. The discussions considered the diverse ways in which the project could be applied to different continents. For example, Pope Benedict XVI, in the post-synodal exhortation *Africae Munus*, which he presented during his voyage to Benin on November 19, 2011, incorporated a section on “The New Evangelization.” He presented it as “an urgent task for Christians in Africa because they too need to reawaken their enthusiasm for being members of the Church. Guided by the Spirit of the risen Lord, they are called to live the Good News as individuals, in their families and in society, and to proclaim it with fresh zeal to persons near and far, using the new methods that divine Providence has placed at our disposal for its spread.”⁷

However, the present work is concerned primarily with the evangelization of the secularized West. Thus we will be reflecting on the use of biblical models of mission for the situation of the church in secularized settings. I remain convinced, nonetheless, that the biblical models presented are fundamental for evangelization in every region of the world and in any situation of the church.

In the apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini*, which appeared on September 30, 2010, following the Synod of Bishops on The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church, Pope Benedict writes:

Our own time, then, must be increasingly marked by a new hearing of God's word and a new evangelization. Recovering the centrality of the divine word in the Christian life leads us to appreciate anew the deepest meaning of the forceful appeal of Pope John Paul II: to pursue the *missio ad gentes* and vigorously to embark upon the new evangelization, especially in those nations where the Gospel has been forgotten or meets with indifference as a result of widespread secularity. (*Verbum Domini* 122)

In addition, we have to say, in the present circumstances, that the situation of a growing majority of people in the West is not unlike that of people in the Southern Hemisphere: they have not even heard a proclamation of the Gospel! In both cases, what we are often dealing with is a mission *ad gentes*, a first evangelization! The principal difference between the two worlds resides rather in the attitude people have toward religion: while the people of the Southern Hemisphere remain largely "religious," those of the North are powerfully marked by what is called "secularization."

The New Evangelization in a Secularized World

In fact we have passed from a religious world into a secularized world. Already in 1988, in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Christifideles laici* (The Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful), Pope John Paul II spoke of the "urgency" of a new evangelization involving the laity, and he indicated why this is so: "the phenomenon of de-Christianization . . . strikes long-standing Christian people and . . . continually calls for a re-evangelization" (*Christifideles laici* 4).

It is widely acknowledged that the society and culture of the countries of Western Europe and North America have become increasingly secularized. Pope Benedict XVI often spoke of this reality in his addresses. I cite an extract from one of his discourses that will allow us to clarify the meaning of secularization. Speaking to a group of German bishops on November 10, 2006, he stated that the Federal Republic of Germany “shares the western world’s situation of a culture characterized by secularization, in which God tends more and more to disappear from the public consciousness.”⁸ In his public addresses, Benedict XVI often juxtaposed the terms “secularization” and “eclipse of the sense of God.”⁹

The principal reason for the dechristianizing of the Western world is the secularization of our societies. This reality is complex in its causes and in its components. For our purposes, I would first of all say the following: a secularized world is a world whose culture and society are no longer religious . . . that is to say no longer Christian and that seems to be the case for a growing number of Western countries. For example, we can safely say that in France and Quebec people are no longer living in a Catholic society and culture.

A secularized society is a society that is not open to the transcendent, to God. It is a society where the option for the transcendent, for God, becomes a question of choice.¹⁰ Religion is pushed into the sphere of private choices. Thus, why believe in God? Why choose, in particular, to believe in Jesus Christ? This choice is not self-evident among the broad range of beliefs currently presented to us.

One of the characteristics of a secular society, in effect, is pluralism. A number of factors lead to secularity. It is not simply a result of the development of the consumer society. First of all, it is caused by advances in the sciences and in technology, by the flow of information through the media, and by the fact that pluralism has taken root. There is a plurality of views concerning the world, society, and religion. This in turn leads to leaving

freedom of choice to individuals. To become a Christian is a choice, a personal option. It is no longer an integral component of belonging to a particular society or a particular nation.

Thus, in Quebec, Catholicism has gradually become a minority religion under the effects of pluralism, even if a good number of people marked by secularism still continue to have their children baptized because they have some vague belief in God and the Catholic Church is their convenient point of reference.

To illustrate the steady social decline of the “Catholic” character of a certain number of societies in the West, I cite the case of France and will present the results of a very important recent study published in 2007.¹¹ Here are some statistics from this inquiry: only one out of two French citizens (51 percent) identify themselves as “Catholic” (in 1994, 67 percent did); only 52 percent of those who declare that they are Catholic consider the existence of God “certain” or “probable”; and a minority of those Catholics (18 percent) believe in a “personal God with whom they can have a relationship,”¹² a belief that is at the heart of the Christian faith. Nonetheless, if there are fewer and fewer “cradle Catholics,” there is a significant number of “adult converts.” In 2006 there were approximately 10,000 catechumens, most of them between the ages of 25 and 40.

More recently, a poll taken in January 2011 revealed that 34 percent of French citizens say that they are “atheists” and 36 percent claim to be believers. Of the remaining 30 percent, 22 percent of those polled “do not know if they believe in God but do pose the question,” while 8 percent “do not know, and do not even pose the question.”¹³ This poll reveals, however, that 5 percent of those who “affirm that they do not practice any religion, do nonetheless believe in God” and that 34 percent of those answering the survey “call themselves Catholics, but admit that they do not believe in God.”¹⁴ The boundaries between believers and nonbelievers are, therefore, not so clear.

These polls are revealing, but they should be viewed with some reservations, for the terms used, such as “atheist,” are

not defined. Danièle Hervieu-Léger, a preeminent sociologist of religions, has come to the conclusion that the various recent surveys reveal the triumph of “indifferentism” more than atheism. By that she understands an indifference vis-à-vis doctrines and religious practices, reflecting a society that lives within an inner worldly horizon that emphasizes self-construction and individualism. People live as if God did not exist. If someone is a believer and religious, it is by choice.

If we want to understand how, in the course of history, we gradually arrived in a secularized world, the best account by far is the superb recent work of Charles Taylor, entitled *A Secular Age*.¹⁵ In the introduction to this extraordinary tome Taylor offers three meanings of secularity and favors the third one that “would focus on the conditions of belief”: the passage “from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace. In this meaning . . . at least many milieux in the United States are secularized, and I would argue that the United States as a whole is. Clear contrast cases today would be the majority of Muslim societies.”¹⁶

I would introduce here a concept that Charles Taylor does not use, but that is widespread in Europe and especially in France: the notion of *laïcité* (“laicism”). *Laïcité* is the separation of roles and powers of the church from those of the state. There is a positive sense of the term when this separation of church and state is seen with an attitude of mutual respect, and even support, for the role and objectives of the other, together with recognition of religious liberty. This seems to be the case, for example, in the United States, in Canada, and in several European countries. We have seen above, however, that secularized society and culture do not include openness to the transcendent, to God.

According to several authors, the United States is in some ways an exception with regard to secularization, for the religious

dimension is still an integral part of the society and culture of the majority of its citizens. Surveys similar to those cited above contrast significantly with the statistics in France: 90 percent of Americans say they believe in God; 70 percent of them say that they pray or are members of a religious community.¹⁷ According to another study, 92 percent of Americans believe in God and more than a third go to church at least once a week.¹⁸ In an address delivered to the cardinals during the consistory of February 2012, then-Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York, said: “New York—without denying its dramatic evidence of graphic secularism—is also a very religious city.”¹⁹ In Canada, Quebec is the most secularized society.²⁰

Nonetheless, we should note the following: if there is less and less interest for what is “religious” (the religions) in our societies, there is a variety of expressions of a quest for the “spiritual.” Many of our contemporaries who have abandoned all forms of religious practice feel a “void” and they have a desire to put a spiritual dimension back into their lives. We will discuss this phenomenon in the third chapter.

We should also make a distinction between “secularity” and “secularism.” Secularism is the option, on the part of individuals or groups, to deny the existence of the transcendent (God). The secular mentality does not as such exclude the existence of the transcendent, but the transcendent does not enter into their parameters to explain the world.

In a secularized world, what is at stake in the mission of evangelization is in the realm of theology rather than morality. In other words, it is concerned with the question of faith. It is in this perspective that the reflections on the different biblical models presented in the following chapters are developed.

The Church of the Future: Smaller Numbers?

Is the church called to be a minority in our world? At one point in the gospels, Jesus speaks of his disciples as “a little

flock” with the mission of being “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (Matt 5:13-16).

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in his book *The Salt of the Earth*, which appeared in 1997, raised this question. Here are some extracts from his reflections:

I had foreseen then [in 1970] . . . that the Church would become small, that one day she would become a Church comprising a minority of society and that she could then no longer continue with the large institutions and organizations that she has but would have to organize herself on a more modest scale. . . . The Church has to adjust herself gradually to a minority position, to another position in society.²¹

It would be misguided, indeed, presumptuous, to design now a more or less finished model of the Church of tomorrow, which, more clearly than today, will be a Church of a minority.²²

Precisely an age in which Christianity is quantitatively reduced can bring this more conscious Christianity to a new vitality. In this sense it is indeed true that we are standing before a new kind of Christian era.²³

The Church must be aware of her quite specific mission: to be the world’s escape from itself into the light of God and to keep open this possibility so that the air we breathe can penetrate the world.²⁴

Will there be smaller numbers in the church of tomorrow? Certainly in the sense that more and more often people will be identified as “Christian” (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant) not by virtue of being born into a family belonging to the Christian tradition, but by personally choosing to follow Jesus Christ and to be involved in the church. We must however beware of wanting to be a “church of the elite.” Conversion to Jesus Christ and to the Gospel is always imperfect, always in need of renewal. The expressions of faith by people of very modest learning and

those more learned should all be able to find their place in a rich diversity. We should remain modest in our projections of what the church of the future will be. God, working through the Spirit, will always be the most important agent, the master of the mission.

The growth of secularization in the social and cultural environment that has formed me has gradually made me want to concentrate on what is essential in my life of faith. I would make Pope Benedict's observation during the visit of the German bishops mentioned above my own: "Secularization is a 'providential challenge for the Church.'" I would add: is it not also, for us practicing Christians, an opportunity to center ourselves—or to re-center ourselves—on what constitutes the heart of our faith, and consequently, the heart of our mission?

Evangelization: The Responsibility of All Disciples

A superficial reading of the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles can give the impression that communicating the Gospel and awakening faith is the ministry that Jesus gave to the apostles he chose, and therefore, in our own context, to their successors, those who govern the church: bishops, priests, and some lay people who have been specially designated for this mission.

It is not so. All Christians are called to be witnesses, that is, missionaries in the world in which they live, witnesses of God, witnesses of the life given in Jesus Christ. The mission is not a ministry reserved to a few. All believers in Jesus Christ are called to be missionaries; each and every believer, in his or her own way, is called to bear witness to Jesus Christ and the rich and full life that is given in him.

With this perspective, let us look once again at the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. First of all, the gospels offer us three points of reference:

1. During his earthly life, Jesus chose, among his disciples, twelve apostles and sent them on mission (Luke 9:1-6).

In the Gospel of Luke we read in the following chapter that Jesus “appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit,” and he gave them a missionary mandate (Luke 10:1). These seventy-two disciples were likely all those he had assembled up to that point or at least all those who were disposed to commit themselves seriously to follow him. Thus Jesus sent all his disciples on mission.

2. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus addresses his first great discourse to all his disciples (5:1). After having proclaimed the Beatitudes, which is a message of happiness for all humanity, he addresses his disciples explicitly and speaks to them of their mission in the world: to be “salt of the earth” and “light of the world.” And he goes on to say that it is by the witness of their “good works” that they will be salt and light for the world (Matt 5:13-14). This invitation to be salt that gives flavor to life and light that illuminates the night is addressed to all Christians today. It is to his disciples of today that Jesus says “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . .” (Matt 28:19).
3. The Gospel of Luke recounts the apparition of Jesus to the eleven gathered with the disciples who remained faithful to him (Luke 24:36).²⁵ Thus Jesus gives to all his disciples the mission to be witnesses and he promises to send the Spirit for this mission that he entrusts to them (Luke 24:46-49).

As for the Acts of the Apostles, the book dedicated to the mission, Luke reports the coming of the Spirit on the disciples so that they may be his witnesses, his missionaries. The account of Pentecost in chapter two begins with this phrase. “When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together.” The text goes on to say that “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” The “all” represents the eleven apostles gathered in the upper room, “together with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers,” or even the

crowd of “about one hundred and twenty believers” mentioned in Acts 1:15.

The book of Acts also mentions that this presence of the Spirit of Pentecost makes witnesses of other disciples: for example, Stephen (Acts 6:10), Philip (Acts 8:30), Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2-4). Very early in the life of the church, the first Christian community is shaken by the imprisonment of Peter and John. After their liberation, all the members gather and feel the need to pray to God. They make the following petition: “enable your servants to proclaim your word with all boldness” (Acts 4:29). Then they experience a new Pentecost. “As they prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31). Throughout the Acts of the Apostles the same expression is used to characterize the way in which the first Christians spoke about Jesus—they testify “boldly.”²⁶

The model of the first church in the Acts of the Apostles communicates a clear teaching, which is that all those who become Christians receive the Spirit of Pentecost in order to bear witness to Jesus Christ and to the Gospel in the world. To be Christian is to be a witness, to be a missionary.²⁷ Let us add this testimony of Paul who writes to his Christian community: “Since, then, we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, ‘I believed, therefore I spoke’ we too believe and therefore speak” (2 Cor 4:13).

An observation about making it happen: retrieving a missionary spirit, the kind of fundamental evangelizing that Jesus wanted, entails consequences for the church, and first of all for the life of ecclesial communities. Parishes have to become missionary, which means that those responsible for them need to prepare parishioners to become missionaries within their own environment by bearing witness to their family members, to people in the communities where they live and work, to all those who have not yet been touched by the Gospel and who constitute the majority in our secularized societies.

An Evangelization Centered on Jesus Christ

Remember another event that we were invited to enter into along with the Synod on New Evangelization: a “Year of Faith,” proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI on October 11, 2011.²⁸ It began with the opening of the Synod on New Evangelization, precisely on October 11, 2012, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and ended on November 24, 2013, the feast of Christ the King. This Year of Faith, which is offered to all the faithful, is intended first of all to help Catholics come to a deeper understanding of “the foundation of the Christian faith,” which is, in Pope Benedict’s words, “the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”²⁹

The pope points out that

The Year of Faith is intended to contribute to a renewed conversion to the Lord Jesus and to the rediscovery of the faith, so that all members of the church may be credible and joyful witnesses of the risen Lord in the world of today, capable of leading many people to the “door of faith.” This “door” opens wide to manifest Jesus Christ, present in our midst “always . . . until the end of the age” (Matt 28:20). Jesus Christ shows us how the art of living is learned by an intense relationship with Him.

Through his love, Jesus Christ attracts to himself the people of every generation; in every age he convokes the church, entrusting her with the proclamation of the Gospel by a mandate that is ever new. Today, too, there is a need for stronger ecclesial commitment to new evangelization in order to rediscover the joy of believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith.³⁰

To sum up, all Christians are called to contribute to evangelization, that is, to bear witness to Jesus Christ in their milieu. What does it mean concretely for us, in our local church, to say that all disciples of the Lord are called to be missionaries, to witness to Jesus Christ in their environment? Is the time ripe

for this idea? What means can we use in order to invite and help all Christians to be missionaries in their milieu? Do we need to modify our pastoral approach in order to accomplish this task?

The purpose of the following chapters is to examine how Jesus and the apostles were evangelizing witnesses in their milieu—and how to use their approaches in the world today—taking as our guide writings of the New Testament, and more specifically, the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. We will refer occasionally to the letters that Paul addressed to his Christian communities, that is, to those already converted. Although the Pauline texts more properly concern catechesis or theological instruction, they do contain occasional reminders of his evangelizing mission to them.³¹

An evangelization centered on Jesus Christ does not necessarily imply a direct proclamation—far from it. It is interesting to examine the different biblical models of evangelization. In the chapters of this work, we are going to look at four great biblical models of mission. The four biblical models, the four approaches to evangelization that are presented and are intended to inspire us, are the following: (1) the kerygmatic model, (2) the model used at Athens, (3) the evangelical model of humanism, and (4) the model used in the story of Emmaus. The first two have the apostles as protagonists; in the last two models, Jesus is the agent of evangelization. These four models are to be taken as complementary in order to grasp the various dimensions of our mission of evangelization.³²

Within the unity of a same objective, a same goal, there is room for various paths, indicated by the people we are addressing and by the person I am. There are different ways inspired by Jesus and the apostles to live one common mission. My presentations and reflections are driven by two questions that I would like a Christian reader to keep in mind in the course of reading this work. What does it mean for me to be a witness of God and of Jesus Christ in my milieu? How can the mission of Jesus and the apostles be a model for me in my own mission of bearing witness in the milieu where I live?