

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The understanding of Christian mission within the fields of theology and missiology has undergone significant development in recent decades. In earlier times, approaches to mission were often focused primarily on expanding territorial boundaries, promoting conversion, and establishing churches and religious institutions. These missionary activities were frequently connected with colonial contexts and were strongly concerned with strengthening and preserving ecclesiastical structures and institutional influence. Although such models played an important role in the historical growth of Christianity, they also revealed certain theological and ethical limitations, particularly in their limited sensitivity toward local cultures and their inadequate respect for human dignity.¹

However, contemporary theology has moved toward a more holistic and relational understanding of mission, which is most clearly articulated in the concept of *Missio Dei*. Within this perspective, mission is understood as God's own salvific action in human history, rather than an activity that originates merely from the initiatives of the Church. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, "The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary, since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit."² This statement affirms the Trinitarian foundation of mission and emphasizes that the Church does not possess a mission of its own; rather, it is called to participate in the ongoing mission of God in the world.

For further clarification, the insight of David J. Bosch is especially significant. He explains that mission is no longer viewed merely as an activity carried out by the Church, but rather as "an attribute of God," into which the Church is invited to participate. This renewed understanding places mission within the broader horizon of God's salvific presence in human

¹ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 370 – 372.

² Vatican Council II, *Ad Gentes* (1965), No. 2.

history, recognizing that God is already at work within cultures, societies, and the struggles of humanity.³

Therefore, mission is not based solely on human initiatives, nor is it imposed upon the world from outside. Rather, it is discerned within concrete historical and social realities. Reflecting on the nature of mission, the Second Vatican Council emphasizes this discerning attitude when it calls the Church to “scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel.”⁴ Such an approach highlights listening, dialogue, and contextual sensitivity as essential missionary attitudes. In this way, mission becomes less about control, certainty, and efficiency, and more about accompaniment, openness, and faithful responsiveness to the presence of God, especially in contexts marked by suffering, poverty, and marginalization.⁵

Christian mission is progressively understood as a process that begins with encounter, which stands at the center of contemporary missiological reflection. Encounter implies openness to others, attentive listening to the concrete realities of human life, and a willingness to be affected and transformed by what is encountered. Rather than beginning with predetermined objectives or inflexible strategies, mission emerges from genuine human experiences, relationships, and shared realities. This relational dimension affirms the dignity of every human person and demonstrates respect for cultural, religious, and social differences, emphasizing presence over performance and relationship over results.⁶

Encounter becomes the ground from which compassion arises. In the biblical context, particularly in the New Testament, the Greek verb *splagchnizomai* (“to be moved in one’s innermost being”) is frequently used to express the compassionate character of Jesus. This term denotes a profound and deeply intuitive response that goes beyond mere emotion and leads directly to action. Compassion, therefore, is not simply a feeling of pity but a transformative movement of the heart that responds actively to human suffering. In the narrative of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the verb appears in the *aorist* passive form *esplagchnisthe* (“he was moved with compassion”). The passive form suggests that such compassion is not entirely self-

³ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

⁴ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), No. 4.

⁵ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), pp. 28–35.

⁶ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), pp. 3–8.

generated, but rather received as an inner movement that becomes the starting point for concrete and transformative action.⁷

As the modern theologian Gustavo Gutierrez observes, true compassion involves “Entering into the suffering of the other and assuming responsibility for that suffering.”⁸ Compassion, therefore, bridges the gap between seeing suffering and responding to it, transforming awareness into commitment and solidarity. It moves beyond observation toward participation in the reality of the suffering person. In this sense, compassion becomes not only an emotional response but also an ethical and spiritual commitment that shapes the nature of Christian mission itself.

Christian mission, in its deepest meaning, takes the form of a responsive praxis that attentively engages concrete situations marked by suffering, vulnerability, and injustice. Missionary action is therefore contextual, discerning, and ethically grounded, responding to real human needs rather than merely to institutional priorities or abstract ideals. As Pope Francis expresses, “An evangelizing community gets involved by words and deeds in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others.”⁹ This understanding challenges purely institutional and programmatic approaches to mission and instead proposes a dynamic and incarnational praxis rooted in love, solidarity, compassion, and proximity. Such a vision of mission calls the Church not merely to preach from a distance, but to walk alongside humanity, especially those who suffer, and to become a visible sign of God’s merciful presence in the world.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:25–37) stands as one of the most compelling biblical narratives for understanding mission as compassionate encounter and responsibility. In this parable, Jesus radically redefines the concept of “neighbour” by breaking down the boundaries that were traditionally determined by religious affiliation, ethnic identity, and social proximity. The Samaritan reveals the true meaning of neighbourliness through his response to the wounded man. The narrative unfolds through a clear sequence of actions: he

⁷ Francois Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), pp. 61–62.

⁸ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), pp. 115–117.

⁹ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), No. 24.

sees the wounded man, is moved with compassion, draws near, and acts concretely to restore the man's life and dignity. This movement from perception to action reveals compassion as the driving force of authentic discipleship and missionary engagement.¹⁰

The action of the Good Samaritan is neither planned nor mandated by religious law or institutional authority. Rather, his response emerges unexpectedly from an encounter with a suffering human person along the roadside. In contrast to the priest and the Levite, who were closely associated with religious duties and ritual obligations, the Samaritan crosses boundaries of ethnicity, religion, and social hostility.¹¹ He embodies a compassion that transcends legal obligations and social conventions. In this way, the Samaritan becomes a missionary paradigm in which mission is not primarily defined by intention, official status, or institutional planning, but by merciful responsiveness to suffering and fidelity to compassion. The parable therefore reveals that authentic mission is measured not by success, expansion, or visibility, but by concrete care for the vulnerable and wounded encountered along the journey of life. It presents a new understanding of neighbourliness as a form of missionary praxis grounded in compassion and solidarity.¹²

The Order of the Ministers of the Infirm tradition offers a distinctive and powerful expression of compassionate and merciful mission rooted in the charism and spirituality of Saint Camillus de Lellis. At the center of Camillian spirituality lies the conviction that service to the sick and vulnerable is a privileged encounter with Christ himself. Saint Camillus exhorted his followers to serve the sick "With that affection which a loving mother has for her only sick child."¹³ For the Camillians, therefore, the sick person is not merely a recipient of care, but a sacred presence who calls forth reverence, compassion, and self-giving love. Camillian spirituality emphasizes *caritas* (charity) lived concretely in service to those who suffer physically, psychologically, and socially.¹⁴

¹⁰ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), pp. 172–175.

¹¹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 428–430.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 401–402.

¹³ Saint Camillus de Lellis, *Writings*, cited in Piero Sannazzaro, *Saint Camillus de Lellis: His Life and His Work*, (Rome: Edizioni Camilliane, 1987), p. 112.

¹⁴ Giorgio Cosmacini, *Charity and Medicine: The Origins of the Camillian Tradition* (Rome: Edizioni Camilliane, 2005), p. 45.

Moreover, the Camillian missionary spirit is deeply incarnational and relational. It does not separate evangelization from concrete service, but integrates the proclamation of the Gospel with healing presence, attentive listening to the oppressed, and compassionate accompaniment. In this perspective, mission is not reduced to preaching alone, but becomes a living witness of God's mercy through acts of care, solidarity, and healing. The Camillian approach thus reflects the missionary model of the Good Samaritan, where compassion becomes the foundation of service and the path through which the Gospel is embodied in the realities of human suffering.¹⁵

The advent of the Camillian Mission in Indonesia can be understood as a seed first envisioned and initiated by Luigi Galvani, an Italian-born Camillian missionary to Asia whose missionary journey became a profound witness to encounter and compassionate praxis. His missionary vocation was shaped less by institutional planning and more by concrete encounters with the suffering of the sick, the poor, and the marginalized. Through these encounters, he discerned his missionary calling in fidelity to the charism and spirituality of the Order of the Ministers of the Sick. The Camillian Mission in Indonesia therefore developed within a deeply contextual framework, formed by local realities and sustained not merely through structures and institutions, but through relationships, compassionate presence, and service to those who suffer.

This study offers an original theological and missiological contribution by proposing the Parable of the Good Samaritan as a foundational missionary paradigm and by interpreting it in dialogue with the lived missionary experience of Luigi Galvani, the first Camillian missionary in Indonesia. By moving from biblical narrative to historical and pastoral praxis, the study presents mission as an embodied response to human suffering, grounded in compassionate encounter rather than merely institutional planning. Through an integrated reading of Scripture, Camillian spirituality, and concrete missionary action, this research enriches missiological reflection on health ministry and offers a renewed framework for understanding the identity and mission of the Camillians presence in Indonesia. In this way, the entire study coherently unfolds the central theme expressed in its title: **“FROM ENCOUNTER TO MISSION: LUIGI GALVANI AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE CAMILLIAN MISSION IN INDONESIA IN LIGHT OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.”**

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 46.

1.2 Research Problem and Questions

There is a clear gap between institutional or planned mission and contextual, responsive mission rooted in real human suffering. The Parable of the Good Samaritan is rarely interpreted as a missionary figure in missiology, and theological reflection on the mission of Luigi Galvani remains limited, especially from a biblical-theological perspective. These gaps highlight the need for an integrated reading of Scripture, Camillian spirituality, and missionary praxis.

1. How can the Parable of the Good Samaritan be understood as a model of missionary compassion?
2. In what ways does the mission of Luigi Galvani in Indonesia embody the Good Samaritan paradigm?
3. How does this interpretation contribute to contemporary missiology and Camillian health ministry in Indonesia?
4. How did the missionary work of Luigi Galvani contribute to the formation of the Camillian identity in Indonesia?

1.3 Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative theological and missiological approach that seeks to understand mission not through empirical measurement but through critical interpretation and theological reflection. It uses interviews, interpretative hermeneutical, and historical-thematic analysis to examine texts and traditions within their historical, biblical, and ecclesial contexts. The primary sources include biblical texts, Church and magisterial documents, Camillian writings and archival materials, personal chronical writings and relevant theological and missiological literature. These sources are analysed through a hermeneutical reading and thematic synthesis, allowing key theological and mission in dialogue with Scripture and Camillian spirituality.

1.3.1 General Objectives

The general objectives of this study are to deepen the theological and missiological understanding of Christian mission by integrating the biblical paradigm of the Good Samaritan

with the lived missionary praxis of the Camillian tradition, particularly in the context of health ministry and care for the vulnerable. It also seeks to bridge the gap between institutional mission models and contextual, compassion-driven mission, offering a holistic framework that connects Scripture, spirituality, and concrete missionary action in situations of human suffering.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

Specifically, this study aims to develop a theological and missiological interpretation of Good Samaritan as missionary figure, to analyse Luigi Galvani's mission in Indonesia as an expression of compassionate encounter with suffering, and to contribute to a renewed understanding of Camillian mission and health ministry within contemporary missiological reflection.

1.4 Organization and Structure of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters, each contributing to the overall theological and missiological argument of the research.

Chapter I introduces the study by presenting the background of the research, the problem statement, research questions, objectives, methodology, and the research objectives of the study.

Chapter II, *The Good Samaritan as a Missionary Paradigm*, develops a biblical and theological interpretation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, highlighting the figure as a model of mission grounded in compassionate encounter, boundary-crossing love, and concrete action.

Chapter III, *Luigi Galvani and the Emergence of the Camillian Mission in Indonesia*, examines the historical context, missionary vision, and praxis of Luigi Galvani, situates mission within Camillian spirituality and the Indonesian context.

Chapter IV, *From Encounter to Mission: Applying the Good Samaritan Paradigm in Luigi Galvani's Work in Indonesia*, brings the biblical paradigm of the Parable of the Good Samaritan into dialogue with Galvani's missionary experience, offering a comparative qualitative analysis that reveals convergences between Scripture, Camillian spirituality, and lived mission.

Chapter V, *Conclusion*, summarizes the main findings of the study by highlighting their theological and missiological contributions, as well as the implications for contemporary mission and suggestions for further research.