

TOWARD A MISSION THEOLOGY OF INCLUSION

***Evangelii Gaudium* and the Impact of Economic Liberalization in India**

In his apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis vehemently calls into question the existing capitalist “economy of exclusion and inequality.” The power of the current market economy, which operates under the auspices of “competition and survival of the fittest” results in the exclusion and marginalization of the poor. It is a financial system that enables the powerful to feed upon the poor. In response, Pope Francis calls for an economic system governed by an ethical commitment to society, especially the poor. He emphasizes the urgency of working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and promote the integral development of the poor. While rejecting monopoly of the church on interpreting social realities and proposing adequate solutions, his call for saying no to “exclusion and inequality” and solidarity with the poor challenges Christians for self-evaluation.

In this paper I will explore the impact of economic liberalization in India on the marginalized in light of *Evangelii Gaudium*.¹ While the proponents of liberalization attribute the high economic growth in the 1990s and 2000s to liberalization, its opponents blame it for increasing poverty, inequality and economic degradation. The paper will weigh both of these arguments and evaluate Pope Francis’ call for an economy of inclusion and development of the poor. It will highlight the necessity of a mission theology of inclusion being attentive to the changing socio-economic realities from an Indian perspective.

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¹ The economic liberalization is generally defined as the loosening of government regulations for opening up its economic borders to multi nationals and foreign investment. The purpose of economic liberalization in India initiated in 1991 was aimed to make the economy more market-oriented and expand the role of private and foreign investment.