

## The Evolution of the Theological Vision in Sinhala Catholic Poetry

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There have been several research works completed on Sinhala Catholic Hymns. However, an extensive research has not yet been done on Sinhala Catholic Poetry. The main purpose of this research is to fill this lacuna. Historically four periods can be identified in relation to the theological vision and the evolution of Sinhala Catholic Poetry. Firstly, the erudite Buddhist bard Alagiyavanna Mukaveti's *KustantinuHatana* (The Campaign of Don Constantine) during the Portuguese era, secondly the poetic contribution of the Goan missionary, Fr. Jacome Gonsalvez during the Dutch period, thirdly the poetries written by Fr. Mercelline Jayakody in the Post Vatican II Council era (1962-65) and finally the creations of Sinhala Catholic poetry writers mainly the laity in modern era (1965 – 2017).

When examining the poetic creations of these four periods, the researcher was able to identify a paradigm shift in their theological content. The poetries written in Pre - Vatican Council era are influenced by the conservative scholastic theology while most of the creations of Post Vatican Council era are inspired by the insights of contextual or liberation theology. Hence, this paradigm shift can simply be explained as a shift from traditional scholastic theology to liberation theology.

As for methodology of this research I intend to employ source criticism and the historical criticism. The use of comparative method will help to identify the paradigm shift in the theological content of the poetries examined. In delimiting the research topic, I have selected only the poetry books which have been published exempting the poems published in newspapers and magazines.

**Keywords:** Catholic Sinhala Poems, Post – Vatican Poetry, Theological Content, Alagiyavanna Mukaveti, Jacome Gonsalvez, Mercelline Jayakody.

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