

TANGAZA COLLEGE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

COSMAS ATSOU MESSIGAN, S.V.D.

**LACK OF REAL COMMUNICATION AS SOURCE OF
CONFLICT BETWEEN *EWE* TWINS' RITES OF TOGO
AND CHRISTIANITY**

Moderator

MS ESTHER KAMWERU

A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirement for Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

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DEDICATION

To

my Father, Mother, Brothers, Sisters, Friends and all who know me. My parents have given me life and much more. My friends and those who know me have given me friendship and much more. I seek hereby to honor them by passing on to others some portion of what they have passed on to me combined with some portion of what I have done with their investment in me.

EPIGRAPH

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God – not because of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph 2, 8-9)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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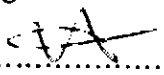
My gratitude goes also to Dominic Kpeiku (University of Cape coast, Ghana) who brought his suggestions and corrections. I don't forget Fr Miroslaw Wolodko, svd who sent me a required book for this work. I am also grateful to Fr. Dieter Eduard Skweres, svd who helped with his document.

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Finally, I thank all my confreres in CFC Nairobi who helped me to complete this Long Essay. May you all be blessed for ever.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay (thesis) is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed:.....

Name of Student: COSMAS ATSOU MESSIGAN, S.V.D.

Date:.....10 January 2005.....

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed:.....

Name of Supervisor: Ms ESTHER KAMWERU

Date:.....10 January 2005.....

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the Study

There is an *Ewe* proverb saying: “*Agobaya mefoanu dzro o, dzogbeyae doa nufo na ago*” meaning that the fan-palm or ‘*borassus flabellifer*’ does not make noise alone in the desert, if not because of the disturbance of the wind. In other words, there is no effect without cause.

The encounter of the gospel with the tradition is never a simple fact: it often brings conflict. This is the case of Christianity and the *Ewe* twin’s rites in Togo. Since the introduction of the gospel by the missionaries in Togo, there was a kind of division in twins’ families due to the refusal of the tradition (rituals) vis-à-vis Christianity.

Some researches relate that there was no proper dialogue between the first Missionaries and the participants of twins’ rites converted into the Church. This lack of dialogue or communication became source of conflicts between African tradition and Christianity.

2. Statement of the Problem

It becomes very difficult for the new converts to completely depart from their cultural beliefs and norms and to fully adopt the newfound religion that the Missionaries brought to our shores some three centuries ago. The indigenous African converts to Christianity had faced many constraints and in some cases had to leave the family house to settle in the then newly created communities called “Salem” that still

exist in some Togolese and Ghanaian towns across our western borders. Life in these communities was nothing but a pure denial of one's own cultural norms.

Our concern in this research is to find out the indigenous African's concept about the twins' rite that was one of the numerous religious conflicts between the early Missionaries and African converts. Why should the newfound religion deprive their converts from going through the age-old ritual whenever they are blessed with this exceptional gift of having given birth to two children instead of one? Was this not only a question of inter-cultural communication?

The *Ewe* believe that twins are 'children of the gods' and whenever they are born and the parents and the children do not go through the proper rituals, a calamity will befall them: either the children may suffer ill health or the parents will become talkative.

3. Objectives

This study attempts to:

- ❖ discover the importance of the twin's rite in Eweland.
- ❖ find out how the early missionaries view these rites.
- ❖ explain the cultural and religious myth about the birth of twins.
- ❖ analyse how the early Church saw these rites.

It is hoped that this study will throw more light on some of our African cultural practices that the early Missionaries met and gave some derogatory names as fetish, ancestral worship and *voodoo*. To this effect, we would like to bring to the fore the twins'

rite among the Ewes of southern Togo not forgetting our brothers and sisters across the eastern and western borders.

4. Hypotheses

In this study, we proposed two hypotheses to arrive at a solution towards the religious conflict of the early Missionaries' perception about most of our indigenous African rituals.

- Since the African's life is intrinsically immersed in religion from cradle to the grave, there may be the need for rituals at any stage of his or her life.
- The birth of two children in a pregnancy was a mystery to the indigenous African therefore there would be a need to treat it with special reverence and much care.

In this regard, we will explore the twins' rite to the people of *Eweland* and try our best to bring out its cultural and spiritual importance to the family and the larger community.

5. Synopsis

The organization of this study will take the following form:

First of all, in chapter one of this Long Essay, we will see the rites of passage of the twins.

Chapter two will deal with primary evangelisation in Togo.

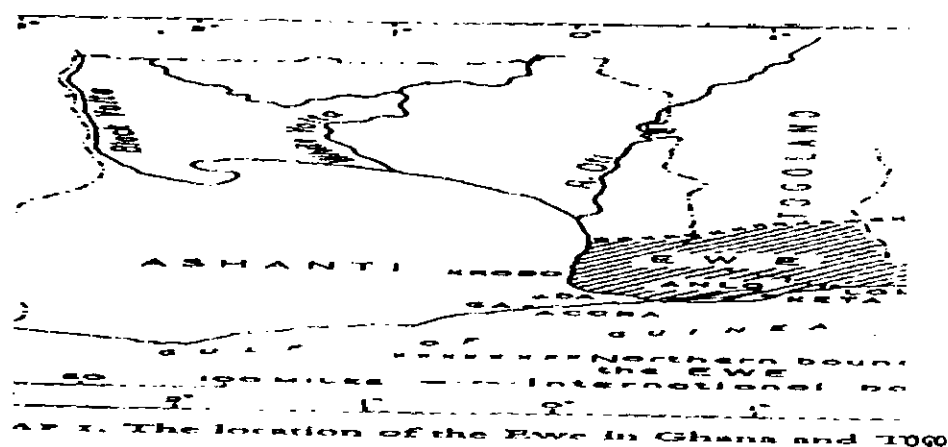
Chapter three will examine the problem of inert-cultural communication.

Lastly, the fourth chapter will raise some pastoral recommendations. The conclusion will underline some suggestions to some ways of approaching the missionary work without neglecting its cultural aspect and tools of communication.

6. Geographical Location of the Ewe

In general, the *Ewe* are located geographically around "River Volta on the West and Mono River on the East. The land stretches from the Gulf of Guinea to about lat 7° 50" north in the East and lat 7° 20" north in the West".¹

The area covers the Southeastern part of Ghana, part of Togo, Benin and Nigeria. The *Ewe* are popular in Togo and one can find them in the Coastal Region. All the oral traditions gave *Adja* people (root the *Ewe*) as originated in Oyo (Nigeria).² The map below illustrates this geographical location.



¹ C. ABOTCHIE, *Social Tradition in the Traditional Eweland of Ghana, Relevance for Modern Crime Revelation*, Accra 1989, 1.

² C. RIVIERE, *Anthropologie religieuse des Ewe du Togo* (translated from French to English), Paris 1960,

CHAPTER 1

THE RITE OF PASSAGE OF *EWE* TWINS

1. Introduction

The notion of twins draws our attention to the birth of people out of one single pregnancy. Twins are “two offspring produced at a single birth”³ according to the Dictionary of Anthropology. Henry Pratt Fairchild in the Dictionary of Sociology, defines twins in three different ways in regard to their zygotes: in the first place, “twins, dizygotic are two individuals born at the same time and derived from two distinct ova. They may be like or of unlike sex;”⁴ and they are often considered as ordinary twins. In the second place, identical twins are “monozygotic twins who are never precisely alike in all respects”⁵. Thirdly, “twins, monozygotic are two individuals, always of the same sex, born at the same time but derived from one ovum through division of the zygote or the embryo.”⁶

1.1 General Concept of twins

The simple fact that there is a birth of two people from a single pregnancy creates a spirit of miracle. For them it is something that is beyond human conception therefore it is welcome as divine gift. This concept of twins is not the same in the whole Africa or even in the same country. It differs from one culture to another. While some people as the *Ewe* consider the twins, as a great sign of fortune, peace and a privilege,

³ C. WINICK, *Dictionary of Anthropology*, New Jersey 1996, 551.

⁴ H.P. FAIRCHILD, *Dictionary of Sociology*, New Jersey 1966, 325.

⁵ H.P. FAIRCHILD, *Dictionary of Sociology*, 325.

⁶ H.P. FAIRCHILD, *Dictionary of Sociology*, 325.

others see them as a misfortune. Twins bring a spirit of fear in some cultures. In order to prevent the whole culture from the misfortune, there are some ceremonies performed in the context of *Ewe* rites. But at the same time, twins are considered as a source of divine power and they are revered. Mbiti shares the same view when he declared: "Other societies greet the birth of twins with great joy and satisfaction, as a sign of rich fertility."⁷ Considering twins as a special gift from God, *Ewe* people have some rites as thanksgiving to God for his free gift and more blessing in the family in particular and for others in general. That is why people always pay reverence to them asking for their prayers and blessings. Sometimes people turn to the twins whenever there is trouble in the area as dry season, brutal death, and epidemics...for they are considered as "the children of God and haven" (*Tilo*) in Central Africa.

1.2 Twins in *Ewe* Culture

The *Ewe* have a good view of the twins. Twins are highly considered in the society and are worshiped because of their mysterious birth from a single pregnancy. The *Ewe* perform some rites for the parents and for the twins in particular. This conception comes from the idea that twins originated from monkeys and so they have something in common. This is the belief of some people according to Hubert Hugo "some people take this as a proof that they (twins) originated from monkeys."⁸ For the *Ewe*, the twins have the same vital spirit as the monkeys.

⁷ J.S.MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Nairobi 1969, 117.

⁸ H. HUGO, *The Krobo-Tradition Social and Religious Life of West African People*, Switzerland 1993, 156.

2. The Rites of Passage of Ewe Twins.

2.1 Definition

Rites are a means of communication between the human world and divine the world in Africa. In all ritual behaviors, there are two important aspects, which concern the “saying” and the “doing”. Rituals affect the whole social and cultural behavior of each individual: Rituals “are performed to cure illness, increase fertility, defeat enemies, change people’s social status, remove impurity, and reveal the future.”⁹ In the words of Aylward Shorter, rites of passage “concern an individual, or group of individuals, passing from one stage of life to another stage of life, or from one status to another. The ritual helps the individual to accept the claims of society in the new state. The individual can express his conflicts and tensions through the ritual, and resolve them.”¹⁰

2.2 Initiation rites or taking the children outdoors (*Videto or vihedego*)

A few days before the initiation, the celebrants of the rituals are invited. It means people are aware of the initiation. Thus relatives and friends come on that day. In the first place, the eldest of the house or the family welcomes the “*traditional-priest*” by pouring libation. The whole initiation is not presided by the eldest but rather by the “*traditional-priest*” who knocks four times at the door where the children are secluded as a reminder of the four corners of the world. After entering the room, s/he holds twins’ hands, then other two senior twins carry the twins. The celebrant proceeds with the prayer of invocation: s/he invokes the gods, the sun and the moon, the seas and the

⁹ B.C.RAY, *African Religions*, New Jersey 1976, 78.

¹⁰ A. SHORTER, *African Culture and the Christian Church*, London 1975, 123.

gods of mountains, hills and forests. The ceremony is done by pouring libation in order to welcome the twins and at the same time to associate them with the natural forces. With a calabash full of palm-wine, the celebrant implores the blessing of the ancestors as the protectors of the family against evildoers. This is a belief in *Ewe* culture that the newborn is the reincarnation (*djoto*) of an ancestor. Consequently the diviner has to find the ancestors the twins incarnated. He does this through a ceremony and prayer. The ancestors are considered the guardian angels of the newborns. After all this, the celebrant invites the parents together with the children and some authorized relatives to wash their hands with special herbs called "*kpoti*" dipped in water. These people are the only ones who can preside over the invocation of the twins in the whole life. As rituals, some symbolic elements play an important role in the life of the *Ewe*. There they are used during the ceremony: beans, maize, palm oil, water, drinks, money, and cloth.

In order to insert the twins into their new world, they are led outdoors as a part of initiation which is common in *Ewe* culture. The ritual is always done early in the morning of the chose day which is must be probably a rest-day called "*Apetsigbe*"¹¹. The celebrant leads them outdoors (*videto*) and "throws water onto the roof of their house. Two of their relatives, who also are twins, carry them underneath in such a way that the "grass-roof water" flows down upon them each time (*tsideta*)".¹² The ceremony is done three times¹³ by pronouncing some words¹⁴.

¹¹ Apetsigbe is holidays in the Eweland, on these days nobody has right to work in farm.

¹² A. VIGNIDAH, *Long Essay on Inculturation of the Rites of Passage among the Ewe of Togo Case Study: Twins, pastoral Quest*, Tangaza 2002, 22.

¹³ Three times are very significant and symbolic in the Ewe tradition. It is a way of confirming a reality.

¹⁴ Words: these stand for some prayers expressed during particular moments of the rituals. According to Zinssou, the words are the *soul* of the rites, because they have an inward force and role on the children's destiny. So the words are well used. For instance, during the "*tsideta*", such words are used: "our water

The idea of water as a symbol of blessing is applied to the ceremony of *tsideta*. The twins are later on taken around the house and then to the crossroads as sign of spiritual protection as being exposed to anything, with words of prayer. It is necessary to notice here the importance of the power of the words for whatever is said at this particular moment has an effect in people's lives. That is why only the initiated of good reputation can lead such a ceremony.

2.3 The naming ceremony (*nkonana*)

As in any human society, the *Ewe* don't escape the naming of the twins. Every name in *Ewe* culture is significant and expresses the deeper nature of that person. Names in the case of the twins follow the law of hierarchy that is why it is very important and primordial to recognize the first-born among them.

As soon as twins are born, the first thing is to consult the diviner (*Bokono/huno*) in order to name them according to their origin and destiny. This consultation cannot be done by anybody but only the relatives who together with the parents have a great responsibility to keep the names till the day of baptism. In obedience to hierarchical law in the *Ewe* tradition, the first-born is the younger one. Therefore, the second-born is automatically the elder. In the social life of the *Ewe*, often it is the elder brother who sends the young one for service. Thus, this law is applied to the twins at their birth that the elder sends the younger one from their mother's womb to discover the world before

for taking our baths and for drinking, for washing our things and for cooking our meals, see, here it is. May you grow in good health and be wealthy. You, desired children! You are loved by your mother but hated by your stepmother! You are loved by your father but hated by his friends! It is not because one desires to have twins that s/he gets! It is you *Atsu*, it is you *Etse* (*Atsufe, Akuele, Akoko, Daminiene*). The one who quarrels or gets often annoyed does not. Only *Mawu* (God) gives them freely. So to you I give homage.

him. This is nothing strange among the *Ewe* in regard to their respect of eldership. In most cases, their lives depend on the goodness or badness of the environment. If it is good for the first-born, the deliverance of the second one follows easily and both enjoy this world. Nevertheless, if the environment does not please the first-born, the second one will be a still-born and after a while, the first-born too has to pass away. Or in other case, both of them will not survive for long (this is a presupposition and does not often happen).

On one hand, the males are usually named: *Atsu* and *Else* (as the case of the author of this research: *Cosmas Atsou Messigan*) or *Akoete'* and *Akoete* or *Ata* and *Atakuma* (as often among the *Ewe* of Ghana: neighboring country of Togo, but it is borrowed from the *Akan* of Ghana: *Atta* (*Penin*) and *Attakuma* (*Kakra*). On the other hand the females are named: *Atsufe* and *Akoele* or *Akoko* and *Akoele*. "The names are given according to their rank and there is a belief that the first-born children, even if there are of the opposite sex share some characteristics in common with the second born. This, they say, cannot be explained, because it depends on the law of nature"¹⁵. At this particular point of the rituals, the children, their parents and few relatives that can stand before the twins' altar /shrine (*tsinufe* or *venavize*) to offer sacrifice go through the washing¹⁶ ceremony. After revealing the names, by the main celebrant, the floor is open

¹⁵ A. VIGNIDAH, *Long Essay on: Inculturation of the Rites of Passage among the Ewe of Togo Case Study: Twins, pastoral Quest*, 23.

¹⁶ The washing ceremony consists of washing the twin children from a water-pot made for them with some herbs accompanied with some words of prayer during the rites. This water-pot ought not to be dry as long as the children are alive. It is symbolically the "source of their living water". They drink from time to time from it and even wash their faces with it. The parents and the authorized relatives can also do the same. This rite is a sign of power and authority given to the twins.

for celebration for the rest of the day. As usual, relatives, friends come with food and drinks to share with all. This reveals a deeper sense of communion, togetherness around the meal having in mind the sense of belonging to one community, one tribe, and one culture.

At the end of all, the traditional-priest chooses another day for the installation of their altar. The proposal of this day is in regard to the financial capacity of the family meaning when they can gather the entire requirement for the ceremony. We are reminded here that it is from the installation is the last stage of the full initiation of the twins' rites making them members of the entire community of the twins.

2.4 Installation of the altar/shrine (*tsinufe/venavize*).

As we said above, the installation of the altar is the last stage of the initiation rites of twins. It means all the other stages were accomplished successfully. As usual, some relatives, friends and main celebrant who is the traditional-priest or priestess are invited by the family. There are some requirements the family must be able to provide. When they are ready, they call upon the guests for the ceremony. Some of the necessary elements are: *kpoti* (herb used for purification and strength, this herb is not only used at twins ceremony but at many *Ewe* rituals; *ataku* (another type of herb which gives power; *yoti* (for softness). These are the most important herbs, but apart from them other different herbs or seeds may be included as a sign of fertility. Before the elevation of the altar, all the herbs and seeds are buried at the foot of the altar.

Testimonies have exclaimed that anyone who is not allowed but dares to take anything from that altar becomes perpetual thief or simply loses his or her mind. Anyone who is taken to the altar and prayed over satisfied or healed.

In African tradition in general, words have important place at any ceremony. In this ceremony, some words of prayer accompany the whole ritual in form of prayer for health, wisdom, strength, knowledge, ability and protection...After elevating the altar, the diviner places two pots of water on the altar with some herbs as a sign of blessing from God and at the same time to all people asking for their prayers. From time to time, the twins drink from the pot not only for thirst but also as renewal of their divine blessing. There are always some coins at the altar as symbol of fortune. In *Ewe* mentality, the twins are the providers of money for the whole family. Palm oil never lacks at the altar, its purpose is to soften, to massage and to cure. One may find also some bottles of two types of drinks: one soft drink calling upon gods or ancestors' blessing and another strong drink for their vengeance upon all kinds of enemies to the family. All this happens in a good atmosphere of celebration and jubilation. The family also offers two white hens and cocks. When the ritual is over, the family offers a meal out these hens and cocks to all invited guests and to the celebrant. At end, the celebrant has the responsibility of initiating the family and with the twins to the use of the altar that should never be neglected. This will lead us to some rules or taboos to be observed.

3. Observations or taboos (*eko*)

Etymologically, *eko* in *Ewe* means “neck”. It is something which is forbidden, it keeps once remind all moral observations to follow. Thus *eko* becomes habitual behavior in the society helping people for doing ‘good and for avoiding evil’. The Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary, defines “taboo” as a ban or prohibition on

something that is regarded for religious or other reasons as not to be done, touched, used etc. Therefore, in *Ewe* tradition, *eko* is a juridical power that keeps bound the relationship between the living and the gods/ancestors and finally with the Supreme God called in *Ewe* "*Mawu*". The *Ewe* respect their taboos, they make them strong vis-à-vis other people and at the same time keep bonds among people of the same clan. The taboos in *Ewe* tradition are source of blessing. Nevertheless, the disobedience of the social observations can bring calamities or misfortunes to those concern, even to the whole clan or the entire village. That is why taboos or observations become a part of daily, social life.

In line with twins' rites, the parents are highly recommended to keep peace within the family. For being peacemakers will be a source of blessing not to them only but to the entire clan. Thus they must not fight each other but try under any circumstances to solve any problem smoothly. By doing this, they do not only look for blessings upon them but educate the entire family the sense of dialogue and communication. Hence, the parents are not supposed to have different bedrooms but live and do many things together as much as possible. Coming against these observations will necessarily bring misfortune to the family. Some of the observations concern their food, gift, and farm. Moreover, whoever donates anything to one must necessarily donate to the second one. Otherwise, whenever they fight over it, it will cause misfortune on the donor. Simply, no one approach the twins with discrimination. In this line, the twins often wear similar clothes; it is a common sign among the *Ewe* to recognize them quickly. The respect of these taboos has its origin in the myth that there

is a link between the twins and monkeys. For the same reason the twins are forbidden to eat monkey or to kill it. The transgression of this taboo often makes the twins fools.

At every harvest, the family has a responsibility to offer the first fruit at the altar as a thanksgiving sacrifice to God for more blessings on their activities, before the whole family can eat the new harvest. In regard to this, the altar has to be kept well and offered sacrifice from time to time.

By respecting the taboos, the *Ewe* have intend to create and maintain the ecological harmony in the world as a sign of acknowledging the divine hand in all creation, hence the twins. It also maintains the harmony between the living and the dead on one hand and keeps the unity and the communion within a community. The philosophy behind all this is to show the interdependence between all creatures as their aim to bless the creator "*Mawu*". In this perspective, we can also agree with Mbiti that the rites are sort of indelible scar that identifies, unites and incorporates the individual with the rest of the his or her community both the living and the dead: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am".¹⁷

After all, the *Ewe* ask themselves: what is behind this particular rite of the twins? Where and how did it originate? Is it a reality or mythology?

¹⁷ J. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 117.

4. Reality or mythology?

“A myth is an account of the deeds of a god or of a supernatural being”¹⁸. According to Nicolas Corte, “Myth is thus a representation of reality, which though fantastic, claims to be accurate”.¹⁹

In every culture, myths help people to understand some aspects of daily life. This is out of curiosity to comprehend our human and social behavior. But the limitation of scientific and logical proof, leads us to create the myth trying to balance our present and past life. E.A.A.Adegbola found a “simple” definition of myth: “Defined simply, myth is prehistoric culture’s attempt at answering the most perplexing questions posed by the supernatural and natural in creation.”²⁰ Whenever we question the rites of twins, it brings us back to other rites in *Ewe* culture such as birth, death, marriage...Therefore the question of the origin of the twins’ rites can easily draw our attention to the origin of human beings which no one can prove but explain it by myths in many cultures, hence the Holy Scripture. The *Ewe* also found a way of explaining their tradition in terms of rituals based on some myths in order to communicate such a reality that is above them.

In the case of twins’ rites, the main idea we got from some interviews and research made among the *Ewe* (as the case of the writer) is about the story between a hunter and monkeys.

Once upon a time, there was a man who went hunting. While he was coming back home, he came upon monkeys performing a rite of their new born. What is

¹⁸ E.A.A. ADEGBOLA, *Traditional Religion in West Africa*, Nairobi, 1983, 367.

¹⁹ N. CORTE, *The origins of Man*, New York 1961, 11.

²⁰ E.A.A. ADEGBOLA, *Traditional Religion in West Africa*, Nairobi, 1983, 367.

surprising is to know 'How did the hunter know that they were performing the rite of passage?'. In *Ewe* culture, it is not just anybody who can be a hunter but rather the initiated one to be able to understand the language of the animals. As this hunter did not get anything on that day, he took that opportunity to shoot a monkey. When he reached home, he realised that his own son (twin) was injured in a brutal car accident and had been taken to hospital. It was only later on that this hunter understood that he was shooting his own son instead of the monkey. That is why it is strictly forbidden to the twin's family to kill or to eat monkey.

5. Role of the rites in African Traditional Religions.

According to Dictionary Oxford, rites are religious or other solemn ceremony: marriage/funeral rites, initiation rites (e.g. those performed when a new member joins a secret society). Do we really need rites which unfold in more or less obligatory fashion and make use of antiquated gestures and movements? We came to realise that not only the most spiritual aspect takes place in the most corporeal, not only in *Ewe* or African culture but in human life. Therefore, the interconnection between the action of the living God (*Mawu*) and the human action, our belief is assertions on the reality of the rituals. Is not in the same line Aylward Shorter affirmed that: " In Africa such symbols are usually joined to symbolic action, known to anthropologists as 'ritual'. Everywhere, human beings have a fundamental need to dramatize or celebrate their experiences or

expectations through symbolic actions.”²¹In African cultures, there are multiplicities of symbols taken from nature that are used to carry conventional social/religious meaning within specific culture. Some could even say that religions of Africa are whole systems of symbols. These symbols are very central to African life because they are the chief vehicles of communication within the group and with the divine. They unfold deeper meaning. A child may only be able to understand a superficial lesson from a symbol, while an elder may delve deeper into its richer ramifications or meanings and draw lessons that could have major social implications at a given time.

Rituals are part of the ordinary life in African traditional society in general. They are characterised by a series of symbols, enhance experience of life and the sacred. That is why it is very important to penetrate the symbolical language of people to be able to communicate properly with them. It is in this perspective that one must understand the deeper meaning of twins’ rites before appreciating them. For it is a part of the celebration of the whole life rather than just pass through life in a series of events recorded chronologically in community memoirs, through rituals and other symbols, life is celebrated.²²

Rituals are a way of humanizing and celebrating and socialising natural events in daily life and in the life cycle. “Fr J.Goetz, SJ has coined the word “cosmobiology” for these rituals to express the idea of a continuity between human life and the rhythms of nature”²³. This is made very clear by rites of passage which celebrate the ordinary pattern of growing up and being socialised and elevate the experience both for the

²¹ A. SHORTER, *African Culture and the Christian Church*, 122.

²² G. KOCHOLICKALL, “Class notes” Introduction to the Sacramentology, Tangaza 2004.

²³ A. Shorter, *African Culture and the Christian Church*, 122.

community and the individual. "African life was viewed in ontological stages to which one ascended through rites of passage, thus increasing in ontological values/power or what is otherwise called vital force. The rituals are seen to effect this ascendancy which is of primary importance in African life"²⁴. Rituals are highly important in African society, as much as in *Ewe* culture; they are "the key to understanding of the essential constitution of human societies."²⁵ Ritual, according to Claude Levi-Straus, is "favoured game"²⁶. It is a game, in which the participants each play a role and get satisfaction from it by bringing harmony and not competition.

6. Conclusion

In general, a closer look at our human behaviour confirms that what is most spiritual takes place in what is most corporeal through the mediation of the visible created objects and rites²⁷. Thus, the rituals of the rites of passage demonstrate once more the symbolic order of our existence. Natural foundation becomes necessary for religion: "Christianity in Africa, or, in any part of the world for that matter, needs the natural foundation in the traditional religions of those lands if it is to survive, so to be accepted, to grow and to become indigenous Christianity".²⁸

²⁴ G. KOCHOLICKALL, "Class notes" Introduction to the Sacramentology, Tangaza 2004.

²⁵ M. WILSON, *Nyakayusa Ritual and Symbolism*, *American Anthropologist*, Vol 56, no 2 1954, 241.

²⁶ It is favoured because it is not like a competitive sport in which one side wins.

²⁷ G. KOCHOLICKALL, "Class notes" Introduction to the Sacramentology, Tangaza 2004.

²⁸ E.A.A. ADEGBOLA, *Traditional Religion in West Africa*, 367

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

1. Introduction

Everybody is called to the missionary task. Therefore, whenever anybody wants to be a good missionary agent, the Bible is a reliable source for him or her. For this reason, missionary agents have responsibility to know the development of missionary history.

2. Brief history of the concept of Mission

According to the etymology of the word, mission, *Mittere* is a Latin verb pointing out two realities:

First, someone who has authority is sent the descending of one, two or more people towards a specific place or situation with a determined aim.

Second, a duty to be performed is entrusted in a person whom the sender trusts. The word “mission” does not say anything by itself. It may operate in different dimensions of life, for instance socio-cultural, religious or spiritual. One can therefore speak of various categories of mission as secret mission (military or diplomatic area) and the Church.

The concept of Mission includes other elements that the etymological definition does not include. First, it is the nature and character of the duty to be performed that is given by the sender to the person or people being sent. One has to consider the receiver and the overall aim of this mission and eventually the way and the style of such a

mission. The concept of mission is richer than its etymology and does not only concern sending as such, but the person who is sent has a duty to perform where he or she is sent. It is precisely in this environment that the concept of Christian Mission was developed.

2.1 Mission in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, mission is seen in the context of revelation. It is the election and the sending of chosen ones by the Lord **JHWH** towards others with a special message. Those who receive the message are the people of God and at the same time some among them are special. "In general terms, mission involves the sending of a representative of a deity for the purpose of presenting a message or performing a task".²⁵ It so happens that the one who is sent goes beyond the boundaries of the people of God to carry the message to the "Nations" or sometimes to individuals. "The Prophets and other charismatic leaders of Israel especially recognised that they were sent by God with a specific purpose in mind. With a few exceptions, their mission was directed toward Israel"²⁹. These boundaries may not necessarily be geographic but could be of religious or social cultural nature. (Ez 3, 13-14), (Is 6, 8), (Is 9, 20), (Jr 1,7), (Jr 26,15). "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to the rebels who have rebelled against me. They and their ancestors have been in revolt against me up to the present day. Because they are stubborn and obstinate children, I am sending you to them, to say, 'Lord Yahweh says this' (Ez 2, 3-4).

²⁵ C STWILMULLER, *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Minnesota 1996, 630.

²⁹ C. STWILMUELLER, *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 631.

The mission of the prophets remains very close to the word of God for its proclamation. Before being sent to Mission, the prophet has a personal encounter with the Lord, who transforms and appoints him/her to be his messenger, the carrier of his Word. The mission is to make sure the message reaches the receiver. "Ezekiel is sent to a set, a nation, a house of rebels. This will be the essential characteristic of his hearers. The rebellion against the prophets is in fact against Yahweh himself".³⁰

The God of the Old Testament is not only the God of Israel, He is universal God for all the nations and for the world. "Significant for mission is Israel's understanding that it serves as a witness to the nations. In and through the chosen people others see and hear about the divine saving activity".³¹

2.2 Mission in the New Testament

The mission in the New Testament is expressed by various words: "*Apostello*" and "*Pempo*"; especially in the Gospel of Saint John, where the emphasis is first on the one sent and second, on his/her presence among the people to whom he/she is sent. He or she is an authorised messenger. From here the word messenger *Apostle* means "sent" *per excellence*, and the verb *Pempo* refers mainly to the person who sends. "Jesus said to them again "Peace be with you. As the father sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20,21). The two verbs show only the act of being sent but not the content or the character of the mission that is being entrusted to somebody.

³⁰ E. V. OOSTROM, *The Message of the Prophets II*, Nairobi 1996, 12.

³¹ C. STWHLMUELLER, *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 632.

Mission in the New Testament is essentially announcing the Word of God (Mt 3,1), (Lk 3,3; Lk 9,2). Mission then could be proclaiming and preaching the Word of God (Act 13,5; announcing that Jesus is the Son of God (Act 9,20); In the New Testament, Mission in the first place refers us to the “authorized sending of Jesus Himself”. The biblical definition of mission given by Arthur F.Glasser, is in line of the New Testament vision: “carrying the Gospel across cultural boundaries to those who owe no allegiance to Jesus Christ, and encouraging them to accept Him as Lord and Saviour and become responsible members of His church, working, as the Holy Spirit lead, at both evangelism and justice, at making God’s will done on earth as it is done in heaven.”³² In the second place, Mission concerns the sending of the twelve and other disciples to be witnesses of Christ and of His Gospel to the end of the world (Act 1,8). This witness becomes a great challenge for every Christian.

2.3 Mission in the Post-Apostolic Period up to Modern Period

According to the Church Fathers, before the IV Century, the mission of the Church was fulfilled by the Apostles. St. Augustine, without sharing the same vision, recognised that the Apostles have done something great but the Mission still continued after them, as the Gospel is not yet to be known by some people. St. Patrick, Columbano; St. Boniface in the VII-VIII centuries; St. Cyril and Methodio in the IX century brought a new awareness of the missionary Church in the VI century.

When Theologians from the VIII century like Bonaventura and St. Thomas wrote about Mission, they did not understand it as an activity. They referred firstly to

³² A. GLASSER, *Contemporary Theologies of Mission*, Michigan 1983, 26.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit, secondly to the authority given by the Pope in the name of Christ to preach the Good News.

In 1622, Pope Gregory XV founded *The Propaganda Fide*. The word Mission meant a type of categories of ecclesiastical activity that was carried out in a specific geographical territory i.e. territories of mission; mission countries. It was the responsibility of *The Propaganda Fide* to take care of these territories without ordinary, local clergy or diocese. Other missionary hierarchies were created like Apostolic Vicar or Apostolic Prefecture. And all these territories were considered as mission.

In the XIX century, Catholic and Protestant missionaries began to be concerned about other aspects of the mission. Thus Mission also meant the activity of establishing the Church among non-Christian territories; "*Plantatio Ecclesiae*". It was not only announcing explicitly the Good News but there were other activities like education and charitable works to be considered. Therefore the ecclesial activity became more important than the mission itself. It is in this perspective that mission was called a *transitory activity* which will disappear with the foundation of the local churches in the whole world. In another context, Mission means an extraordinary pastoral activity of the Church among faithful Catholics. That is why we can also speak of popular missions or missions to the people.

3. The Concept of Mission in the Magisterium

3.1 Mission in AD Gentes (AG)

The document *Ad Gentes* (1964) is the document *per excellence* of the Second Vatican Council. Mission is in relation to the geographical and juridical conception along with the theory of *plantatio ecclesiae*. “It is the duty of their successors to carry on this work so that the word of God should be glorified, and the kingdom of God proclaimed and renewed throughout the whole world” (AG 1). We can see how the Church and its missionary activity have their origin in the Mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit (AG 2) and it is the continuation of the Mission of Christ in various ways and circumstances (AG 5). One has to say that the favourite expression of *Ad Gentes* is not “mission” but “missionary activity”. We can then understand it both as synonymous of mission and as the whole duty of the Church (AG 9). “One can say that all the salvific activity of the Church has to do with being sent and sending, a fact which AG 1-5 calls *missio Ecclesiae*”³³.

3.2 Mission in Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN)

In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) one does not speak of missions in the traditional and technical sense of the word but the concept is not absent. One uses the word “: Evangelization” to express the essence of missions or the fundamental dimension of the whole Mission of the Church. The word Mission is rather used in reference to Jesus and in reference to the church (EN 6,14,15). Frequently in the document, Mission is understood as evangelization, and in other places the two words are used in a combined

³³ S. KAROTEMPREL, *Following Christ in Mission*, Nairobi 1995, 24.

word e.g. the evangelizing mission (EN 75). The two words express the essential dimension of Mission in unity and in the diversity of tasks as services of the Church (EN 66).

3.3 Mission in *Redemptoris Missio* (RM)

Redemptoris Missio (1990) re-launches the concept of missions as an urgent and necessary activity of the Church, and at the same time enriches the concept. “The intension of *Redemptoris missio* is to re-emphasise clearly and unequivocally the command of the Risen Lord make disciples of all nations”³⁴. “Missions” in plural are not very frequently used, but the traditional and classical meaning is always present in the document, especially the geographical dimension of Mission. The privileged expression is *Mission Ad Gentes*, and other times “Mission in specific sense”. Elsewhere, missionary activity is mentioned (RM 2-3; 7; 21; 31-34; 37). One of the main contributions of *Redemptoris Missio* is the awareness of the new situation and reality in the present world. It has an influence in the changing Image of Mission and of *Mission Ad Gentes*. Mission is not only in “far away lands” or an isolated territories or in Mission territories in traditional sense, it is also in the big cities.

There is also a new category of *Ad Gentes* what is called *modern areopagus*. The first of this is the world of communication (RM37). Moreover, Mission is not only in reference to people as such but also to some human situations. e.g. sickness, (AIDS), education, starvation, poverty, women rights, refugees, justice and peace. These should become the privileged people for mission and then they will in turn become messengers of the Gospel values. Another very important new element in the renewal of the concept

³⁴ S. KAROTEMPREL, *Following in Mission*, 27.

of Mission is the inter-religious dialogue, which should be understood in the relation to the *Mission Ad Gentes* which came out of the frame of the traditional concept of Mission. e.g. from the pure juridical and geographical concepts pointing out the new horizons of missions of social-cultural and religious characters. So, *Mission Ad Gentes* is not less important, and neither has it disappeared. Its horizons were enlarged.

4. History of Primary Evangelisation in Togo³⁵

The systematic evangelisation of Togo started on 28th August 1892 when the first Missionaries of the Society of Divine Word (SVD) arrived in Togo. *The Holy See* assigned that portion to them as *Apostolic Prefecture* called: "Togoland". Five years later, the Servant Sisters of Holy Spirit arrived in Togo. St Arnold Janssen founded both Congregations. In 1918, September 10th, all SVD Missionaries and the Sisters left Togo as one of the consequences of the First World War. From 1892-1918, seventy-six Priests, thirty-three Brothers and fifty-one Sisters left the foundation of the Church in Togo. Before they left Togoland, there were more than twenty-two thousand Catholics, more than one thousand five married couples, twelve main parishes with one hundred and eighty out-stations. People could also count two hundred schools with two hundred and twenty-eight Togolese teachers.

When the First Missionaries arrived in Togoland, they could only count fifty Catholics. Therefore the task was what one can call today "*Primarily Evangelisation*". Let us see their methods of work.

³⁵ Dieter Eduard Skweres, SVD, *Et Vetera, Les methods d'evangelisation des premiers missionnaires SVD au Togo*, Lome 1993.

4.1 Foundation of Parishes

The Missionaries were guided by three criteria: *avoid conflicts, choose the important areas and spread systematically the stations.*

4.1.1 Avoiding Conflicts

In order to avoid unnecessary conflicts, the First Missionaries did not settle in the Protestants or Islamic areas. Rather, they focused on where to build strong Catholic Communities. For that reason they did not settle in Aneho where the Methodists were already but rather in Lome which was less important than Aneho which was the area of the Colonial Government. When the Protestants started coming to Lome the First Missionaries also moved to Aneho but firstly in Adjido.

In 1913, the first Missionaries settled in Aledjo in the North. Why did they not go to Bafilo, Sokode or Tchamba? It was in order to avoid conflicts with the Muslims present there with their influences. The method of avoiding conflict was not motivated by fear but by prudence. In fact when the Colonial Government wanted the Apostolic Prefect to divide the country into Catholic and Protestant Zones, he did not give up declaring that his *Apostolic Prefecture* concerned the whole country. The principle was clear but the methods had to adapt to the concrete realities in the field.

4.1.2 The choice of important areas for parishes

In 1892, Lome was less important than Aneho but the promises of Lome let them foresee the future. It was the favorite area for the ships... the center of the

railways and the three main roads leading to Ancho, Atakpame and Kpalime. Many people were building in Lome. Today Lome is the capital city of Togo.

Atakpame the second most important city was linked to Lome by road and railway but it was also the great junction with the north. Many strangers visited the area and could share missionary task of the Catholic Church had achieved. In Atakpame many commercial centers were already established in 1897 as a sign of development. Later on, the railways reached Kpalime. Aledjo was chosen because according to the Colonial Government plan; the road leading to the north must pass by. The SVD Missionaries did not forget their founder's idea while building the mission stations: 1) Start where there is an important number of people in order to touch many of them though you are few, 2) Your best choice should be the marketing places for the same purpose, 3) Place the missionary stations at the centre of activities in order to reach the out-stations easily.

4.1.3 Spreading the parishes

The Missionaries could see clearly at that time that they must establish their solid base of the presence at the coastland before basing inside of the country. For the coastland was the centre of all activities: commerce, administration, health, communication...thus they founded from 1892-1900 the parishes of Adjido, Togoville, Agbodrafo and Ancho. The out-station Baguida was serving as a link between the main stations. From the bases the missionaries were trying to explore the other parts of the country. For instance, already on 16th February 1893 (six months after their arrival), The Apostolic Prefect and another Brother made a trip of three weeks leading them to

Kpalime and Kpandu (presently in Ghana). In 1896 two priests settled in Atakpame. Two years later together with another priest, the Apostolic Prefect made a long trip from Adjido via Atakpame to Tchamba, Sokode, Bassar, Kabou and Bafilo. They could not reach Mango as intentionally planned for they fell sick on the way. All these trips were made by foot and they were difficult and very long. But in all, the Missionaries took those opportunities to discover places and make their best choices for their mission.

In the second period of their plan from 1900-1912, the Missionaries founded first of all the parish of Atakpame with twenty-seven out-stations and the one of Kpalime with eighteen out-stations. From Kpalime, they established parishes in Kpandu, Gbin-Bla and Ho (all presently in Ghana). In order to link Kpalime to Lome, they founded the stations of Asahoun and Agou. The link between Kpalime and Atakpame was Adeta while Tscvie served between Lome and Atakpame.

The third part of their programme began in 1913 with the foundation of Aledjo. For a long time they were not allowed by the Colonial Government to explore that part of the country. But when they had access to the northern part of the country, the First World War became a handicap of all their plans.

4.2 Creation of Schools

Many catholic schools created by the First Missionaries had the aim of human, intellectual and professional formation of the youth and the development of the country. But at the same time, the Missionaries considered them as places of announcing the Gospel and Christian Education. For this reason, they quickly developed school apostolate in Togo.

Already on 28th of August 1892, the foundation day of the Mission in Togo, the Mayor of Lome, Octaviano Olympio, met Fr. Schafer, the Apostolic Prefect and asked him to open a school. When on 29 August 1892, the two priests went to Amoutive in Lome, they taught already some children *the sign of cross*. They took that opportunity to invite them to come back the following day at 8 o'clock. On 30th of August, five children were there and it was the beginning of the first Catholic school in Togo. One day later, they were nine students and after one month, their number was 25. In year 1894, there were two hundred students in Lome. Among them sixty were in boarding school.

Before the First World War, the official statistics were 198 primary schools, one secondary school, seven Kinderguard, one professional school and an Institute of Teachers formation (*Lehrerseminar*). The number of the students was eight thousand and the Togolese Teachers were two hundred and twenty eight. Unfortunately this good initiative could not go further due to the World War.

5. Conflict between Faith and Culture.

“The relation between Faith and Cultures has been an old and recurring question in the Church. It cropped up the very moment she, being conscious of her missionary call and task, started to intentionally cross the boundary of the land of her birth. From the beginning itself the Church perceived, too, that this question gripped the very core

of her *raison d'être*.”³⁶This happened to the Church in the Jerusalem Council according to the record in Acts 15. The Church on her side, did not choose only to confront the question but also came out with some solution: “ One Faith is to be expressed in many cultural identities.”³⁷Different people can see Jesus in different perspectives. Some times they confuse Him with the cultural, radical or national aspirations, which is normal. In the course of the history, the Church could not have lived up to the height, depth and breath of the solution evolved by the early Church. When it happened to Jesus to ask the question to his disciples: “Who do men say that I am?” (Mk 8, 27). The answer given by Peter namely, “Jesus, the Son of the living God”, came from the Holy Spirit. That is why Jacob Kavunkal and F. Hrangkhuma declared that: “To this Truth then accepted, they made a further decisive commitment now in the Jerusalem Council: this Jesus of Nazareth is the savior of all peoples and cultures because his saving action takes place in history in which he affirms their separate identities and helps them realize in the same way he affirmed and fulfilled the aspirations and destiny of Israel as a distinct people.”³⁸

6. Conclusion

Christianity brought in Togo, was not seen first of all as bad thing but the whole issue concerns the way the First Missionaries dealt with people. Their contact especially their intellectual formation created a distance between those who were formed and the

³⁶ J. KAVUKAL - F. HRANGKHUMA eds., *Christ and Cultures*, Bombay 1994, 47.

³⁷ J. KAVUKAL - F. HRANGKHUMA, eds., *Christ and Cultures*, 47.

³⁸ J. KAVUKAL - F. HRANGKHUMA, *Christ and Cultures*, 48.

rest of the society. Their minds were influenced already by the Christianity from Europe, therefore European mentality. It was difficult for people to accept the Gospel as the salvific News for all people.

CHAPTER 3

PROBLEMS OF INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

1. Introduction

Whenever we take communication for granted, there must be problems. "Communication happens largely unconsciously, like the shining of the sun, or the plumbing system in our home, or the circulation of the blood in our body".³⁹ Communications is an unavoidable problem for the simple fact of the presence of human beings. Communication therefore is a continuous process whenever and wherever people gather in verbal and non-verbal way. "To live is to communicate. Everything we say and do, every mannerism, every facial expression, the way we sit and stand, the way we dress, everything about us that is interpretable by others communicates something."⁴⁰ From one society to another, the communicator must possess the communications tools in order to deliver effectively the real message of the Gospel. Some of these tools must necessarily involve the cultural aspect of the communication. The real problem is how to communicate the effective message of the Gospel from one culture to another? This chapter will help us to focus on how to be effective from an inter-cultural point of view. Neglecting this aspect can cause inter-cultural conflict.

³⁹ C.H. KRAFT, Preface to the first Edition of *Communication Theory for Christians Witness*, New York 1991, vii.

⁴⁰ C.F. KRAFT, Preface to the first Edition of *Communication Theory for Christians Witness*, vii.

2. Different types of communication

As the percentage of literacy is low in rural Togo, *folk* or *traditional* media still remain the best and most popular communication channels. There are also other forms of mass media such as the printed word, radio, films and television but only have limited success. Apart from the oral communication, radio is used more and more in the villages. In rural areas, the most popular medium is still the traditional performing arts with their cultural symbols. Films too play some important roles when it comes to a matter of religious themes drawing people's attention to a special message. Films can be more successful for the fact that it comes once in a while in the villages and different types social classes are more interesting in the *news* as recreation.

Many pastors or religious leaders are more convinced that one of the most effective means of getting the message of Christ across is to bear personal witness to it by our own lives in its quality and character. " Furthermore we continue to place high premium on our traditional African ways and means of bringing home truths about life and its meaning to learners. These include the use of story-telling, music, drums, symbolic language, proverbs, rituals. These stools still do exist in our African society, especially in the rural sectors and remain relevant and powerful."⁴¹ Due to the low rate of literacy and economical disadvantage in most of the parts of our society, these living and symbolical mediums of personal contact or *face-to-face communication* remain strongly powerful and extremely important for the life of the *small Christian communities*. They are helpful to people in deepening faith and Christian life. At the

⁴¹ M. PHILLIPART, ed., *The African Church in the Communication Era*, "The Ninth Plenary Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, Lome, 1990", Nairobi 1992, 15.

Final Communiqué issued by the Ninth Plenary Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, Lome, Togo, 22-29 July 1990, there was a focus on oral communication. The Episcopal Conferences declared “our interaction and deliberations at this Assembly have further confirmed our faith in oral preaching, person-to-person witness, catechetical instructions and the traditional methods of education as valid means of transmitting the message of the Gospel to others.”⁴² We may not also forget that the Church always shows interest in theatre for by its origin had connection with manifestations of religion. This medium can be maintained today in our Church where the youth is more involved to communicate easily the word of God. The Church has an important regard vis-à-vis the mass media as vehicles both for entertainment, and instruction and the people of God as both communicators and recipients. This traditional means are concerned by all age groups and by both sexes. But above all, due to the social and economical situations of African countries, the traditional methods are readily available and need only small budgets.

3. Effects of communication

When we accept the Gospel or the Good News, we also have a duty and full responsibility to communicate it. It means the Gospel we received had an effect in our life and which could not have happened without being communicated. The idea of evangelisation is a process of the continuity of the work done by Jesus and his

⁴² M. PHILLIPART, ed., *The African Church in the Communication Era*, “Final Communiqué issued by the Ninth Plenary Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, Lome, Togo, 22-29 July 1990”, 141-142.

followers. This is a result of the effect God self-communication to the whole world. In seriously accepting the Holy Father's call to a new Evangelisation, we must keep in mind that Evangelisation is not a matter of choice but rather a divine command by Jesus Christ: " And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, am with you always to the close of the age" (Mt 28,18-20). How can we carry on this mission of Christ without communicating? The real effect of communication will depend on our way of preaching the Good News in the course of evangelisation.

The mass media are a source of knowledge. They touch the lives of people and can bring them spiritual growth depending on communicator himself and taking into account that positive images produce positive character and vice versa. Our daily lives in the light of the Gospel can have an impact on the people we live with. These positive aspects of our life can be propagated by the means of communication. Jesus himself used the parables to communicate his message of salvation. In addition, Jesus communicated a great message of humility by washing the feet of his disciples. If evangelisation is at the heart of the Church's mission, we must remember that communication is at the heart of evangelisation.

It is therefore necessary to involve both the communicator and the receivers of the message of Good News communicated so that we can effectively pass on to others

the *Myterium Fidei* (the mystery of faith). As St Paul says: “Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ” (Rm10, 17).

God’s intention is to communicate his divine love to people so that they can live in filial relationship with Him as their Father. “Men cannot fully realize their destiny without fraternal communication based on the understanding that they are members of the one family of God’s children. We, therefore, hold that the only authentic basis of human relationships and communication is this recognition of universal human brotherhood and solidarity flowing from men’s recognition of God as their common Father. This awareness promotes life, mutual concern, respect, justice, peace, cooperation and service”.⁴³ There is no doubt that the media, and specifically the modern mass media, are having tremendous influence on individuals and the community. At times there are modification, shaping of the cultural and moral habits of people from the communication media constantly and imperceptibly.

4. Communication and Evangelisation

The word communication can be traced to the Latin *communis* meaning “common”. This orientates our minds to something in common (*aliquid commune habere*) communicated between the sender and the receiver.

Evangelisation is an encounter of a people with the message of salvation from the love of God that Jesus proclaimed and left to his followers (Mt 22,34-40; Jn 3, 16-17; Jn 15, 9-17). In order to bring the Good News to people, communication becomes a

⁴³ M. PHILLIPART, ed., *The African Church in the Communication Era*, “Guidelines for a Plan for the Development of Christian Communications in Eastern Africa”, 58.

real means for all: communication is at the core of Evangelisation. Church must develop a close dialogue between the media and the Good News. The Gospel cannot neglect the current progress of the mass media so that by using them well, there will be total integration between communication and evangelisation.

It is obvious that through the rite of the *Ewe* twins which brings together the entire family, friends or the whole village, there is a strong meaning of togetherness, communion, community...which is the fundamental goal of the Good News or God's family. Any missionary who comes to such a community may make profit of this togetherness to integrate him into their life. By doing so, he becomes a member of that community by appreciating their values. Therefore, he will be able to communicate the real message of salvation through all communication channels. " We are happy and proud to discover in the African traditional way of life a great insistence of the values of communal solidarity. These values can be observed in many of our customs: the extended family, the sense of hospitality, communal rites, symbolic rituals and drama which strengthen community relations and systems of verbal communication helping to create a consensus. There existed in the past a great emphasis on constant communication within the "total community"- the living with the dead through prayers, offerings and rites, as well as the living among themselves. We realize that these values are precious treasures that need to be preserved and adapted to the more complicated condition today. Christianity here in Africa assumes and integrates these values and all

efforts must be made so that the modern means of social communication will help to perpetuate and enhance them".⁴⁴

Is it not through communication that God relates himself to his creature and sent his only Son to save humanity? The *Word* is essentially about communication. In the prologue of John we read, "And the *Word became flesh and lived among us*, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (John 1,14). The *Word* as the *Good News* is the Father's communication to humanity, a Word that lives among us so that we have an opportunity to respond. That is why communication is very necessary for mission. For mission is born of the Trinitarian God. "God-in-communion," who takes the initiative and communicates himself to us so that we may come to know him, enter in relationship with him, and live as his children and as the messengers of his love. The mission of the church then is the continuation of the process of God's own communication with us, the way and the process, which lead to the communion of the *Kingdom of God*. The model of communication in the Church is the Incarnate Word.

5. Problems of inter-cultural communication

When Jesus said to his Apostles: "Go and make disciples of all nations", it implies the bringing of the Gospel into contact of a multiplicity of languages, life styles, and ways of thinking and believing. Even if the Good News is the same all the time, cultures are never the same. And Jesus never said to go and homonogize the whole

⁴⁴ M. PHILLIPART, ed., *The African Church in the Communication Era*, "Two Decades into the Era of Communications", 19.

world by eliminating some cultures. It is rather unity in diversity. But can this occur easily? Therefore the communication of the Gospel in the whole world becomes a great challenge facing different cultures.

The communication dimension represents a challenging call for integrity as we engage in dialogue. Jesus could foresee the real problem of intercultural communication when he prayed: "May they all be one. Father may they be one in us as you are in me and I in you...may they be so completely one that the world will realize it was you who sent me" (John 17, 21-23). It is difficult to pretend that the tendency in human beings to reject change when confronted with new things is baseless. Whenever missionaries go to a new environment, there can be a very serious disorientation. They are obliged to speak in a cautious manner to avoid hurting others. Is it not in this line of Inter-cultural Communication that James P. Spradley & David W. McCurdy said: " For the various majority in the society, conformity results from the internationalisation of values...They provide security and contribute to a sense of personal social identity. For this reason, individuals in every society clings tenaciously to the values they have acquired, and feel threatened when confronted with others who live according to different occasion of what is desirable"?⁴⁵ " Subjugation occurs when the old ways give way to new ways. When Christianity was introduced, it brought together two new cultures, the western and Jewish. New songs, liturgy, dress codes, food, leadership and accountability styles were introduced"⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ J.P. SPRADLEY - D.W. MCCURDY, *Conformity and Conflict, reading in Cultural Anthropology*, Boston 1977, 5.

⁴⁶ L. BRENNAN, CSB P. RODDY OSF, *Living Inter-cultural*, Nairobi 2003, 17.

Furthermore, we notice the same idea in the early Church, when Jews wanted to impose their religious practices on the new Gentile converts, because they were so convinced with the superiority of their religious observances. This problem had to be resolved by the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

The main problem again during the journey of the proclamation of the Good News was the relationship between gentile Christians and the oldest Jewish converts who still held on tenaciously to the traditions of the Mosaic Law. "Should the new converts follow these laws? Did they belong to the nucleus of Christianity? Here, for the first time, we come across the problem of inculturation of Christianity, one which today are still struggling with."⁴⁷ "The relationship of the faith to the variety of cultures was to prove one of the most difficult and troublesome features of the Church's life, from the days of the apostles down to the present...When Christians (or Catholics) of a particular background migrate to an area of different language and culture, to what extent may they continue practicing their faith in their own cultural style, or must they modify their beliefs and practices to conform to the culture of the area to which they have come? This is the problem of cultural integration...If faith is to express itself within these cultures, this "inculturation" will involve the Christian commitment to justice and liberation of the poor."⁴⁸

Inter-cultural Communication is a real problem for the Church. Placing the communication dimensions within the context of dialogue helps us cast on the missionary task that we face today. The dialogues with people indicate in what way the

⁴⁷ A. MAGNANTE, "Notes on Pauline Literature", Tangaza College 2004, 18.

⁴⁸ J.P. FITZPATRICK, S.J., *One Church Many Cultures*, Sheed & Ward 1987, 8-9.

dimensions can be truly missionary. “Nevertheless, an understanding of culture, cultural differences, and intercultural communication may explain many of the problems which have occurred in history and make it possible to avoid the recurrence of these problems in the present and future.”⁴⁹

The missionary imitating the God-Man must be a blend of cultures. Being so, he can form in himself a multicultural personality. In order to absorb the lifestyles and values of some cultures and to become a new person whose identity resembles neither his native nor his adopted culture, one should be humble. It is obvious that one of these problems of inter-cultural communication is how to form the multicultural personality enabling missionaries to note some weak point of different cultural models, but at the same time, it allows them to accentuate their common elements. Therefore the first problem is to learn a new language: “It shows clearly how being humble in inter-cultural human language interacting can be critical to success, for one can learn language only by being dependent on others. An individual who cannot admit his mistakes and refuses to be corrected, will never attain fluency in foreign language. Repetitions back and forth, corrections and asking questions require a lot of humility. One must bear in mind that learning a foreign language is only one of the main components in the process of acquiring another culture”.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ J.P. FITZPATRICK, S.J., *One Church Many Cultures*, 50.

⁵⁰ J.J. PAWLIK, SVD, *VERBUM Svd, The Role of the 21st Century Missionary*, Fasciculus 4, vol 43, Germany 2002, 396.

6. Effective communication and the *Ewe* twin's rite

The problem of effective communication is closely linked to the process of signification of the core of the message of evangelisation among the *Ewe* in regard to the rite of the twins. In fact this is not so different from the above points concerning the problem of Inter-cultural Communication. One thing we should keep in mind is that it will be very difficult for one to completely change the roots of a culture in order to communicate the message of the Gospel. In other words, Christ does not ask disciples to change a culture for the sake of the Good News. Another reality is that, however are the cultures and the rites of the twins, the message of the Gospel has only one purpose: the salvation of all (“*That they may be one*”). Nevertheless, evangelisation is brought into the *Ewe* culture by different peoples, with different cultures, mentalities, behaviors and social backgrounds. That is why the whole message *that missionaries communicate must be effective in order to have impact on the Ewe culture*. But how can any communication be effective?

Effective communication is always audience-oriented meaning the communicator must first of all know his audience. In our case, the missionaries should not neglect completely the rite of the twins among the *Ewe*. Thus they must try to observe and understand the deeper meaning of the rituals surrounding it. It is only from this point that they can communicate their message correcting neither what is nor necessary for their salvation. For instance, the Missionaries can simply be present at the rituals and being part of them, thus they can easily dialogue with them. The idea of togetherness, sharing meals among the *Ewe* is already a strong point of communion on

which missionaries could take advantage of. Kraft noted: "In this area, as in all other areas of communication, we are dealing with what is perceived, no matter what other factors may be involved. That is, we are dealing with the receiver's reality, no matter what the objective reality might be. The communicator's strategy should, therefore, be to discover and deal with whatever the receptor perceives to be important and is willing to discuss, regardless of what the communicator believes to be that person's basic need...Felt needs are the touchstones from which life changes can be accomplished".⁵¹ Missionaries must try to build trust between them and the Ewe. By doing this, they must not go beyond their range of "tolerance": "Communicators often discover that many of their best messages haven't fallen on deaf ears because the members of their audience have refused to grant them permission to be heard".⁵²

When the Goods News communicators know their audience (contact with the rite, familiarity with the rituals, friendly cooperation with the Ewe), their expressions and conversations must be meaningful to the people. Communication makes sense if it conveys a meaning. The media must present items of information to foster social debate and orientate or influence opinions and actions. But how could missionaries use words to inform and to influence people for instance in a homily, teaching, conference, catechesis? They need to be appropriate, accurate, vivid and clear in their relationship with the audience. They also need to be more and more aware of the symbolic meaning they might have. Symbols used in the performance of the rite could serve as based elements for the missionaries to reflect upon in the process of inculturation for "every

⁵¹ C.H. KRAFT, *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*, 69.

⁵² C.H. KRAFT, *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*, 73.

group of people establishes mutually shared 'signs' and 'symbols' for effective communication"⁵³. Therefore, missionaries should search for intention and cooperation of the audience for the message of salvation to make sense.

The communicators of the Gospel must take into consideration the integrity of their audience. It is a belief that development will take place where Christian service and Christian message are effectively communicated. "Christian communicators can be especially effective in the field of:

- [] the life of the society and the community
- [] education
- [] nutrition, and
- [] medicine".

7. Conclusion

In general, effective communication relies also on the attitude of the missionaries vis-à-vis the whole culture and in particular the rites of twins. But if they are inclined to look upon the *Ewe* as inhuman, abnormal, impossible, then the effective communication with the *Ewe* is out of question. What is obvious is the study of the culture that can be a guideline for their missionary activity: "The study of the culture, therefore, becomes imperative. In this way, men and women can seek to learn, first of all, what people do; they can then try to penetrate to a knowledge of why they do it, to an insight into the ideas, the values of interests that lie behind the behavior, the meaning

⁵³ J. KAVUKAL - F. HRANGKHUMA eds., *Christ and Cultures*, 32.

it has for the actors. Finally, they may arrive at some appreciation of the way others feel...In this way, the framework for communication is created.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ J.P. Fitzpatrick, S.J., *One Church Many Cultures*, 37.

CHAPTER 4

PASTORAL RECOMMENDATION

1. Introduction

This chapter looks at the nature of evangelisation by looking at the actual situation of teaching in the pastoral ministry of the Church and the place of the Church in the world. This approach will enable us to avoid abstract discussions that might lead us away from problems and challenges faced by the Church and pastoral ministry in the varied conditions of human society as in the case of Togo.

2. Rites and Christian faith

Rites are essential to any religion for they are the social human beings' manifestation at different stages of life. Rites are a process of initiation of every person at different levels of his/her growth. They integrate the individual into a group of people. They offer each person his/her identity and give a sense of belonging to the community of believers. Whenever there is a performance of rites among any group of people, it is obvious that there is a transition from one stage to another. It is in this context that we can talk about the twins' rites as the focus of our reflection. Christianity does not remain different in this process. If we go back to the history of the Church, we notice that pagan Israel could not live in quiet possession of its worship. The prophets provoked ritual crises (cf Amos 5, 21-27; Hos 6, 6; Is 1, 10-20; Jer 7, 1-29; Mic 6, 6-8;

Ps 51, 18-19, etc). These prophets affirmed that Israel could live its worship only by engaging in “works” prompted by faith as a response to the commitment of God to Israel. Jesus endorsed the criticism of cultic formalism (Hos 6,6 quoted in Mat 21, 13; 12, 7; Is 29, 13 quoted in Mk 7, 6-7). However his criticism was not a rejection of ritual celebrations. On Sabbath, he regularly went to synagogue; he respected the law; he visited the temple during major feasts. Hence it is clear that while Jesus knew that God does not need our sacrifices, he also saw their function of increasing our piety toward Him. Rites are very important for Christian maturity. In the Catholic Church for instance, they talk about rites in terms of the seven sacraments. But nobody could go through all seven although there are three which are fundamental for initiation whereby they are called: “*sacraments of initiation*”. These rites in any religious Confession are performed as rituals.

We can then ask ourselves whether Christ instituted all the sacraments himself? Did he institute them with all rituals? Or are the rituals pure Christian? By trying to answer these questions, we find that all these rituals are borrowed from different cultures and are integrated in the Church. As the church was not founded from nowhere but rather originated from people coming from different cultures, some of their social or traditional rites become Christian rites. Hence, there is a big link between the rites and Christian faith. If it is true that the rites are part of culture, it is difficult to separate culture and Christian faith. We only carry these rituals as our own way of controlling the world somehow. Through the rituals, we express out faith spiritually and bodily. Aylward Shorter saw that “it is natural therefore for literary or verbal symbolism to

overflow into symbolic action, thus linking symbols to real life. Rituals stand as a bridge between verbal symbols and man's daily activity, and participates in both...Ritual reinserts man into reality, and helps him restore order to society".⁵⁵

3. The values of rites and their relevance.

One can recognise the values of a rite only when he is interested in it. For it is only after entering the twins' rites, then one can see whether there are some values in them or not. The values and goals of the *Ewe* culture permeate the various aspects of it and at the same time give it its "oneness". The motivation force of action of the *Ewe* twins come necessarily from the values of their culture which control and stimulate their behaviour and activity. The values therefore are the key to their character, structure and direction. "The values of a culture come from the world-view of the particular culture. The culture of a society influences its members to perceive the "real world" in terms of cultural models through which the members that culture interpret it".⁵⁶

In the case of the twins' rites or of the *Ewe* people in general, some of their values at any ritual are their sense of *togetherness, belonging, communion, and community, sharing* which are placed in the same context of the Gospel. These are some characteristics the missionaries could take into consideration, work on them in order to proclaim the Good News.

The oral tradition is still relevant (the case of twin's rites) as the means of communication of the *Ewe*. It is through this means that the interpersonal

⁵⁵ A. SHORTER, *African Culture and Christian Church*, 123.

⁵⁶ J. KAVUNKAL - F. HRANGKIIUMA, *Christ and Cultures*, 15.

communication too is reinforced. Even in the Church the oral tradition was in the beginning of God's revelation in the New Testament.

In *Ewe* tradition, sacrifice has an important place for it is through it the ancestors purify and transform the life of the living. It is the time of communion among the living and at the same time with the dead, a passage from the visible to invisible. Rites are the help for them to cure the illness, to increase fertility, to remove impurity and to reveal the future. During the rituals, there is a washing of hands with herb called *kpotima*. This washing of hands is not anything strange but a simple symbol of purification. Furthermore, this herb can remove easily dust from the body and protect it from any contamination.

Apetsigbe as we said before, is a day of many rituals. On this day people are not allowed to go work in the farm. Anyone who is caught up by transgressing this rule pays expensively to the whole community. For *Apetsigbe* is the day of rest of all as the Sabbath in Jewish tradition or Sunday in Christianity. It gives opportunity to the whole community to seat down and evaluate their life. It is often the time the elders pass on the tradition to the young. This is strongly relevant nowadays among the *Ewe* giving a value to *eko* (forbidden) as a guarantee of stability and unity of the culture. Whenever the *Ewe* people offer the first harvest to God, they pay reverence to God and acknowledge his presence in their life. This is kept in the tradition and even inculturated in the Church as people bring their first fruits to be blessed.

Finally, the idea of no fight among the twins' parents gives room for peace, understanding, stability and unity in the family and in the community. Missionaries

should be aware of these aspects of the culture and use them as means of communion as God's plan while he was creating the world: "That all must be one".

4. Missionary challenges

Observing what was going on during the colonial system in the Church and seeing the Church working hand in hand with the colonizers, did not help much the process of Evangelisation in the *Ewe* area. The superiority complex of Christianity over *Ewe* beliefs brought no success in the Church. The *Ewe* people were very open to the first missionaries though they were somehow forced by the famous motto: "*saving of the souls*". The *Ewe* people remained close to their culture. Some of them who were converted lived split lives. There was a kind of syncretism in their beliefs. In the presence of the priest, they behaved as Christians but in his absence they simply went back to their former beliefs. The first missionaries forgot that the *Ewe* people had a different culture from them. Throughout our reflection, one could notice that there was no proper dialogue. As Reilly Collins Michael says: "Christianity has not been indigenous".⁵⁷ For the first missionaries, the *Ewe* people had no God and they has brought God to them, forgetting the visible reality lived by Africans in relationship with their God "*Mawu*". "The African soul which is very religious, is constantly in dialogue with things invisible. When touched by the supernatural, or the mysterious, its sensibility allows it to vibrate the strings of a harp".⁵⁸

⁵⁷ R.C. MICHAEL, *Spirituality for Mission*, New York 1978, 199.

⁵⁸ N.C.EGBULEM, *The Power of Africentric Celebrations, Inspirationns from the Zairrean Liturgy*, New York 1996, 21.

Evangelisation in Africa in general and in Togo in particular gave room to an opposition between African myth and the Gospel preached as by Europeans. The missionaries, as propagandists of the one true faith and collaborators of colonial administrative officialdom, destroyed the local cultures and contributed to 'anthropological poverty' and 'cultural death'. "After the conversion of Constantine, the Church inherited the imperialist perception of the Roman Empire, which regarded his own culture as the only civilized one and everything else as 'barbaric', but assimilable."⁵⁹ It is clear that the primarily Evangelisation was imperial. At this imperial level, the evangelisers did not tolerate any other forms of religion. This attitude brought the difference between *Christinising* and *Conversion*. Once again, the missionaries were to defend the doctrine of the Church stimulating that '*no salvation outside the church*'. Preaching the sacraments was only available in the Church. "To put in present-day terms: conversion was 'above' culture...In addition the missionaries that were sent to Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries knew next to nothing about mission in earlier centuries. The doctrine of 'no salvation outside the church' legitimized an expansionist mission practice"⁶⁰.

4.1 Challenges in justice, peace and integrity

Another area of the missionary challenge is working for justice, peace and integrity of creation which requires attentiveness, faithfulness and commitment to the injustice taking place around us. Old Testament prophets such as Amos or Jeremiah also experienced failure when they denounced injustice and proclaimed the Good News.

⁵⁹ F. WUSEN, SMA, Sedos Bulletin 2004, "Mission and Multiculturalism Communication Between Europeans and Africans", Vol.36, No.3/4 – March-April, Rome 2004, 66.

⁶⁰ F. WUSEN, SMA, *Mission and Multiculturalism Communication Between Europeans and Africans*, 67.

Although they felt abandoned, and no one seemed to pay attention to them, they remained faithful to God and to their mission. For they themselves were changed by what they heard and what they proclaimed. If missionaries allowed themselves to be touched by God's Word and their mission, their lives as well as the lives of others will be changed. They do not need to concern themselves with the idea of winning or loosing in the mission field, but rather with the Kingdom of God and its values. In the struggle for justice, we know that "the gospel of Jesus makes the non negotiable demand that we work for justice and peace in the world, but does not demand that we win. We will not always know what political strategy is the best, but we do know that God cares about all victims, that Jesus stands in the midst of brokenness, and that we are being faithful to the gospel where we stand there too."⁶¹

When missionaries are able to commit their lives to work for justice, to make peace, and to protect the integrity of creation, they can come to an ever-deepening realisation that the world is not merely a temporary stop on the way to paradise. The homily that Jesus gave at Nazareth at the beginning of his public ministry stressed a commitment to change the situations of suffering which he encountered. According to Luke's gospel account, Jesus cited the words of prophet Isaiah:

"The Sprit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4, 18-19).

⁶¹ R. ROLHEISER, *The Holy Longing*, London 1998, 188.

4.2 Suggested attitudes of a Missionary of 21st century

The missionary of the 21st century must be aware of the fact he may be misunderstood while carrying out the missionary call. There are many causes for this: he is cut off from the safety of his native culture, religious community and familiar religious devotions; there is no support of loved ones; he is very often lonely. The missionary of the future is to be the Good News to the people he has been sent to and not a mere agent of evangelisation. He belongs to the world's intellectual elite, knows several languages, and is highly qualified in various fields. His uniqueness is based in the fact that he is a spiritual person, of profound faith and focused on transcendence. Whenever a missionary gives witness to the gospel, must be ready to face any misunderstanding, rejection or desertion.

Nowadays, a missionary must have a type of personality helping him to understand that many of his old behaviours and habits have been very automatic and thoughtless. He can only realise this through a better and deeper understanding of new cultures. Any individual who wants to form a multi-cultural personality must see a new culture as a place of self-purification and fulfillment. The personality of a missionary can be described as follows: " It is to be a person of strong self-awareness, for a missionary while entering a new culture with openness and self-knowledge, must at the same time be deeply rooted in the culture of his birth".⁶² The missionary of today must be open to dialogue helping to enter a new culture and humility helps to free him from prejudices and stereotypes. Becoming aware of his own weaknesses and able to overcome them is the first step in the formation of a multi-cultural personality.

⁶² W. E. PRINZ, "*Missionary Spirituality and Prayer*", *Verbum SVD* 31 (1990), 288.

“Evangelizing communication has a special relationship to culture. With his long standing interest in culture (*cf. also Gaudium et Spes Nos. 53-62*) Pope John Paul II has underlined this an audience with people working in this field and supported by the Italian Bishops’ Conference on November 9, 2002. He reminded them that “communicate creates culture and culture is transmitted by through communication. But what culture...can be created by communication which is not centered on the dignity of the person, the ability to help deal with the great questions of human life, the duty to serve with honesty the common good, and attention to the problems of a just and peaceful coexistence? Persons are needed in this field who, with the genius of faith, can interpret modern cultural needs, committing themselves to approaching the communications are not as a time of alienation and confusion, but as valuable time for the quest for truth and for developing communication between persons and peoples”.⁶³

5. Final Recommendation

Before concluding this research work, we want to leave our readers with some pastoral recommendations which can probably help the pastors in *Eweland* today to be more effective. This must draw the pastors’ attention to Jesus as liberator of all so that the *Ewe* people too can accept him as their savior and by doing so they can forgo some of their rites, which don’t go along with Christianity. Christology must be translated into their understanding of the Church and mission. Jesus the prophet calls all missionaries or pastors to take the side of the poor and the marginalised, and Jesus the

⁶³ F. -J. EILERS, svd, *Communication in Ministry and Mission: An Introduction to Pastoral Evangelizing Communication*, Manila 2003, 172.

servant calls them to seek justice through self-giving service and dialogue rather than neglecting and condemning. "The essence of Christian mission is now increasingly seen as a process of dialogue. This dialogue is not a pedagogical tool, but an attitude, a way of being with people to whom people are sent. It is prophetic dialogue because it calls for critical involvement in societal process. Genuine dialogue is undertaken in an attitude of openness and a search for mutual enrichment, a greater truth. Pastors should always keep in mind that the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman serves as a paradigm of genuine dialogue"⁶⁴ (cf. Jn 4). In this sense, the perennial concern for *ad gentes* missionariness is: freedom of conscience, opposing ethnocentrism while promoting life-giving cultural values, seeking to build economic and social solidarity, and promoting religious tolerance. The effective communication dimension represents a challenging call for integrity as we engage in dialogue. This dialogue can only be a success if the preachers of the Gospel themselves within their various congregations are faith-filled, inter-cultural, fraternal and welcoming. The inter-cultural dimension as we said in the previous chapter should be taken into consideration then worked on for the success of the missionary task.

In the same perspective, we may not forget the remarks of Joseph P. Fitzpatrick: "In the intervening centuries, Europe had lost the sense of cultural differences which had guided the Church at the time of Paul and at the time of Cyril and Methodius. Europe had also grown in on itself, and Catholicism had become so inculturated in the society of Western Europe that European missionaries had lost any capacity to distinguish the elements of Catholic belief and practice from the patterns from the

⁶⁴ J.J. PAWLIK, SVD, *The Role of the 21st Century Missionary*, 480.

European culture which they had come to permeate. The early missionaries for Portugal imposed their language on the people of India, had them adopt Portuguese names, and made them follow Latin and western style in their practice of faith.”⁶⁵

It is becoming obvious that the cultural aspect of evangelisation must not be forgetful. If it is true that the Christianity brought to Togo did not have its roots in Germany but rather in Jewish tradition, then missionaries must make efforts to communicate the message of the Gospel in the people’s language. This surely is not going to be easy because those who carry the Gospel along also come from different cultures. There cannot be a fruitful meeting with another culture without humbleness. Good relations with other people are only possible when both sides have something to offer each other. The pastoral action of the Church is always conditioned by the cultural context in which it is developed. Therefore there is need to know, understand and to interpret the cultural situation, the changes and the tendencies and the challenges that these pose for the Christian mission in different countries or regions. “A missionary who cannot transcend the barriers of his own culture that interprets independence on others as a sign of weakness, will remain on the level of Reich’s symbolic-analyst and will never be able to come closer to people who are willing to help the type of person who is humble enough to ask for help”.⁶⁶ We can say that there is no room for neglecting cultural aspect in our missionary task today. In this perspective, it will be difficult to talk about cultural distancing and pastoral routine. In this sense, our recommendations go to some pastoral agents who tend to undervalue cultural aspects and factors. Without

⁶⁵ J.P. FITZPATRICK, *One Church Many Cultures*, 65.

⁶⁶ J.J. PAWLIK, SVD, *The Role of the 21st Century Missionary*, 396.

seeking to understand the dynamism ‘underlying’ the ‘transformations and tendencies’, they continue to be engaged in the traditional pastoral practices without even a minimum effort at an analysis and evaluation. A genuine cultural dialogue does not take place. Pastoral activity carries on without evolving a project, programs and evaluation, following the routine traditional rules. Catechesis in such situation maintains its habitual style with typical doctrinal and systematic characteristics.⁶⁷

In the homeland of Baal and in the territory of Jezebel, Elijah received help from the widow of Zarephath of Sidon. Jesus used the story to help open the minds of people in the synagogue of Nazareth (Lk 4, 25-26). Likewise, on the frontier of culture missionary should come to recognize the world’s peoples, learn from them and benefit from the diversity of gifts which have been given to them by the God of all. In this in this perspective that the Society Divine Word Missionaries declare in their Primary Missionary Commitment that “Our call to mission is a call to prophetic dialogue with people of different cultures so as to learn from them and share in the diversity of gifts given by the God of life. We also recognize that all cultures need redemption from elements of sin and death. As witnesses to God’s Reign, we promote a life-giving encounter between the Gospel and the particular cultural and multicultural milieus. Our prophetic dialogue with people of other cultures requires a continual personal conversion, a dying to ethnocentrism and racism and passing over to a more catholic spirit of appreciation of the other other’s cultural identity. The pain and joy of learning a new language and of entering into a new culture of the people of whom we work allows us a small share in the dying and rising of Christ. We acknowledge that our life in

⁶⁷ Fr W. D’SOUZA “Class notes” New Challenges for Today’s Catechesis, Tangaza College 2004.

international/intercultural communities is sometimes marred by misunderstanding and prejudice, and so we commit ourselves anew to witness to God's inclusive love in our own relations with each other".⁶⁸

6. Conclusion

Finally, during the Ninth Plenary Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar on Evangelisation in Africa through communication media in Lome, Togo, 22-29 July 1990, it was declared that: "The Episcopal Conferences should consider the problem of training of the pastoral agents and people of God in the area of media as a priority. This should embrace the training of the consumers to be critical receivers, training of the communicators, training of professionals employed in the structures of the Church and others"⁶⁹

⁶⁸*In Dialogue with the Word Nr. 1, Documents of the XV General Chapter SVD*, Rome 2000, 34-35.

⁶⁹ M. PHILLIPART, *The African Church in the Communication Era*, "The Ninth Plenary Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, Lome, 1990", 135.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The Church's evangelising mission is derived from, rooted in, and molded after the dialogic character of the inner mission of the Triune God. In the Trinity, the Father communicates his abundant life and love to the Son in the Holy Spirit. This communication is continued in creation through the Word, and in history where the Spirit is preparing "seeds of the word" for the Gospel. In the fullness of time, in the redemptive incarnation, that communication finds its fulfillment in the same Word who in his ministry, life, death and resurrection, proclaimed and manifests this divine love.

To continue the same ministry, "till the end of time", the Son through the Spirit sends the Church, as the Father sent Him the Son (cf. Jn 28, 19-20). The Church, therefore, conscious of being the agent of God's mission enters into dialogue with the world and its cultures and religions. But did the Church really enter into dialogue with the cultures?

We could notice that throughout our reflection, the focus was on the real lack of communication between the first missionaries and the *Ewe* culture. This leads to a conflict between them and the Church. Therefore, it is an appeal to the missionaries and pastoral agents to cultivate effective communication in the cultural dimension for the proclamation of the Gospel. If the Word is incarnated in the world, it has to be incarnated in cultures: "culture is not something a man has, but what he is; it is at the centre of human life affecting it totally, conferring on it its specificity and shaping its world view".⁷⁰ The effectiveness of the real communication (with all its tools) must

⁷⁰ J. KAVUNKAL - F. HRANGKIIUMA eds., *Christ and Cultures*, 56.

seriously and highly consider its aspect of audience that is the culture. Is it not in this perspective Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, S.J. wrote: "Since communication is the conveyance of meaning from one person to another, it is clear how important is an understanding of the culture. For the sum total of "meanings" in the experience of people could be called their culture. If things mean something different to another people than they mean to me, how can I bridge the cultural gap in order to make clear to them what is in my mind? This question becomes critical in the matter of religious communication. "Go teach all nations" involves telling an unbeliever what the life and word of Jesus means. Without an insight into the unbeliever's culture, this becomes difficult, if impossible"?⁷¹

The missionary of our century must be aware of the fact that he may be understood while carrying on the missionary call. The missionary's chief objective is to become Good News, especially to people who do not know Jesus Christ, regardless of their homeland and living conditions. It is good for local Churches to be strong. However, the missionaries are still necessary, because they are the witnesses of the universality of the Church. A missionary with a multi-cultural personality becomes the Good News, the hope of the new creation and the witness of the kingdom of God among people.

Finally, we are convinced that evangelisation is at the heart of God or Church's mission, and then communication becomes the core of evangelisation. It is this communication, which should involve both the communicator of the message and the receivers of the message that we are able to pass on to others as the mystery of salvation.

⁷¹ J.P. FITZPATRICK, S.J., *One Church Many Cultures*, 31.

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Appendix 2: INTERVIEWS

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APETI Family (Gbatope, Togo) January 2003.

DOMELEVO Family (Accra, Ghana) March 2000.

GABLA Family (Gbatope, Togo) January 2003.

KAVEGE Family (Gbatope, Togo) May 2002.

KOUDAYA Family (Lome, Togo) April June 2002

MESSIGAN Family, (Gbatope, Togo), May 2002.

QUAINOO Family (Mpraeso, Ghana) May 2003.

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Guidelines for Reading and Assessing the Long Essay

While reading and assessing a Long Essay, you are requested to follow these guidelines.

1. Content

This includes an assessment of the quality of

- a. The scientific soundness of information, statements and Christian Doctrine.
- b. The logic of the argumentation and development of ideas.
- c. The appeal of the thesis.
- d. The conclusions drawn.

(This should have a weighting of 32 marks)

2. Research

This includes an evaluation of

- a. The range of reading and the current nature of the reading
- b. The depth of the research.
- c. The understanding of the research and its appropriateness
- d. The way in which the sources were used.

(This should have a weighting of 16 marks)

3. Presentation

This includes an evaluation of

- a. The standard of English – sentence structure, paragraphing etc.
- b. The format of presentation – Headings, Table of Contents
- c. The use of footnotes and correct presentation of bibliography.

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4. Creativity

This includes an evaluation of

- a. Personalised integration of material
- b. Reflection
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Note that the total available mark is 80

Tim Redmond
Director of the Theology Programme