

TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

NGALA KARANI JOSEPH

HOW ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF MEN IN SCCs CAN
STRENGTHEN THE FAITH OF THE FAMILY IN KENYA TODAY:

A Case Study of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish

Karen - Nairobi, Kenya.

SUPERVISOR

REV. JOSEPH G. HEALEY, M.M.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Masters
Degree in Pastoral Ministry

NAIROBI, 2017

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work achieved through my personal effort in class, reading, scientific research and reflection, based on pastoral cycle and spiral method and critical analysis.

It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Masters Degree in Pastoral Ministry.

It has never been submitted in any other College or University for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed:.....

Name of Student:.....

Date:.....

This thesis has been submitted with my examination and approval as the College Supervisor.

Signed:.....

Name of Supervisor:.....

Date:.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Catholic Diocese of Malindi (The Bishop, the Clergy, Religious and all pastoral agents), to all the Small Christian Communities of St. Joseph the Worker – Marafa Parish and Our Lady Queen of Heaven – Karen Parish. To my beloved late parents, Mzee Jacob Ngala Kadenge and Mama Esther Kadzo Birya, may the rest in peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As I come to the completion of this thesis in Masters, I hereby express my sincere thanks to the Almighty God for enabling me to reach where I am. I thank my late parents (Jacob Ngala Kadenge and Esther Kadzo Birya) for bringing me up. May they rest in peace! I also thank my brothers for their encouragement and helping my late parents to educate me.

In a very special way, I thank my Supervisor Rev. Joseph Healey for his great love, concern and commitment in accompanying me tirelessly and with a lot of patience in my Practicum process and writing this thesis. I also thank Fr. George Kocholickal, the former head of pastoral department, and the current head of the pastoral department Fr. Paul Chummar for the great support I received.

I greatly appreciate my beloved Bishop – Rt. Rev. Emanuel Barbara, OFM, Cap, for his fatherly care and understanding, for allowing me to be out of the Diocese to complete my course. I thank the Vicar General Very Rev. Fr. Albert Buijs, MHM, for his experience in SCCs and for encouraging me in my studies. I also thank the financial administrator Fr. Anthony Kitema Mwanzia for the financial support I received from the Diocese.

I thank the following who encouraged and motivated me to study; Fr. Harrison Yaa, Fr. Joseph Kenga, Fr. Armogast Mdawida, Fr. Harrison Mativo, Fr. Michael S. K. Mwambegu, Fr. Nicholas Joseph Kileo and Fr. Samuel Kenga, Fr. Ambrose Muli Kilonzo, Fr. Julius Oyoo and Fr. Lucas Ong'esa Manwa.

I thank all SCC members of Our Lady Queen of Heaven – Karen in Nairobi Archdiocese, the Parish Priest Fr. Stephen Omondi, his assistants Fr. James Maloba and Fr. Peter Kiarie, as well as Fr. Walles Ng'ang'a for their availability and assistance to me whenever I needed help.

I thank all friends and people of good. May God bless you!

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------|---|
| AG..... | Attorney General |
| AGM..... | Annual General Meeting |
| AMECEA..... | Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa |
| Cann/Can..... | Code of the Canon Law |
| Cap..... | Capuchin |
| Cf..... | Confer/Refer to |
| CJPC..... | Catholic Justice and Peace Commission |
| CMA..... | Catholic Men Association |
| Col..... | Colossians (Letter of St. Paul to) |
| 1Cor..... | First Corinthians (Letter of St. Paul to) |
| CWA..... | Catholic Women Association |
| DP..... | Deputy President |
| Ed(s)/ed..... | Editor(s) |
| Eph..... | Ephesians (Letter of St. Paul to) |
| Ex..... | Exodus |
| Fr..... | Father |
| Gal..... | Galatians (Letter of St. Paul to) |
| Gn..... | Genesis |
| Heb..... | Hebrews (Letter to the) |
| Ibid..... | Ibidem/in the aforementioned place |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Jn..... | John (The Gospel according to) |
| KCCB..... | Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops |
| LG..... | Lumen Gentium-The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church |
| Lk..... | Luke (The Gospel according to) |
| Mk..... | Mark (The Gospel according to) |
| Mt..... | Matthew (The Gospel according to) |
| MYM..... | Missionary Youth Movement |
| NGO..... | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OFM..... | Order of Franciscan Minor |
| OT..... | Optatam totius - The Decree on the Training of Priests (Vat. II) |
| PEC..... | Parish Executive Council |
| Phil..... | Philippians (Letter of St. Paul to) |
| PMC..... | Pontifical Missionary Children |
| PMU..... | Pontifical Missionary Union |
| PP..... | Parish Priest |
| PPC..... | Parish Pastoral Council (Parish Council) |
| PPI..... | Programme of Pastoral Instructions |
| Rev..... | Reverend |
| Rt..... | Right |
| Rv..... | Revelation |
| SCC(s)..... | Small Christian Community |

Sr.....Sister

St.....Saint

1Thes.....First Thessalonians

1Tim.....First Timothy

YCS.....Young Christian Students

YSCC.....Youth Small Christian Community

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Student's Declaration..... | i |
| Dedication..... | ii |
| Acknowledgement..... | iii |
| Abbreviations..... | iv |
| Contents..... | v |
| General Introduction..... | 1 |

CHAPTER ONE

| | |
|--|----|
| 1.1 Introduction..... | 4 |
| 1.2 Problem Statement..... | 4 |
| 1.3 The Objective of the Subject..... | 4 |
| 1.4 The Significance of the Study..... | 5 |
| 1.5 Research Methodology..... | 5 |
| 1.6 The Scope and Limitation of the Study..... | 6 |
| 1.7 The Genesis of Small Christian Communities within the AMECEA Region..... | 7 |
| 1.8 Challenges Experienced by SCCs within the AMECEA Region..... | 10 |
| 1.9 Men's Participation in SCCs as Way of Enhancing Growth of Faith in Families..... | 12 |
| 1.10 Conclusion..... | 15 |

CHAPTER TWO

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 16 |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 16 |
| 2.2 “Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa,” Joseph Healey, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 2012..... | 16 |
| 2.3 “Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa 26 Years On: Lights and Shadows,” in “ <i>New Strategies for a New Evangelization in Africa</i> ,” (Rodrigo Mejia, (ed.) By Patrick Ryan, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002, pp.67-72)..... | 18 |
| 2.4 “The Model of ‘Church-as-Family’: Meeting the African Challenges,” Patrick Ryan (Ed.), Nairobi: CUEA Publications, 1999..... | 19 |
| 2.4.1 ‘Some Items on African Family Ecclesiology,’ by Charles Nyamiti. (pp. 1-18)..... | 19 |
| 2.4.2 ‘Christ’s Spirit as Empowerment of the Church-as-Family,’ by Laurenti Magesa. (pp. 19-35)..... | 21 |
| 2.4.3 ‘The Church as a Family of God: A Biblical Foundation?’ by Christian Mhagama. (pp.36-45)..... | 24 |
| 2.4.4 ‘The Family in its African Socio-Cultural Context,’ by Agnes P. Zani. (pp.46-55)..... | 27 |
| 2.4.5 ‘The Small Christian Community in the Church-as-Family,’ by David Kyeyune. (pp.56-60)..... | 31 |
| 2.5 Conclusion..... | 34 |

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 A PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE ON SCCS IN OUR LADY QUEEN OF HEAVEN

| | |
|--|----|
| – KAREN PARISH..... | 35 |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 35 |
| 3.2 Insertion Experience..... | 35 |
| 3.3 General Overview of Karen Parish..... | 36 |
| 3.4 Weekly Bible Sharing – St. Lucia SCC – Karinde..... | 37 |
| 3.5 A Case Study of Men’s Participation..... | 38 |
| 3.5.1 St. Martin de Porres SCC..... | 38 |
| 3.5.2 St. Pius V SCC..... | 39 |
| 3.6 Example of SCCs without Men..... | 39 |
| 3.6.1 St. Catherine of Siena SCC..... | 39 |
| 3.6.2 St. Anne SCC – Karinde..... | 40 |
| 3.7 Social Cultural Analysis..... | 40 |
| 3.8 Geographical Set-Up and Brief History of Karen Parish..... | 42 |
| 3.9 The Ethical Factor and Cultural Diversity..... | 42 |
| 3.10 The Socio-Economic and Political Situation in Karen Parish..... | 43 |
| 3.11 The Impact of the Catholic Church in Karen..... | 45 |
| 3.12 Pastoral Assessment..... | 46 |
| 3.12.1 The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)..... | 46 |
| 3.12.2 The Pastoral Programme..... | 47 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 3.13 Faith Formation for Men..... | 49 |
| 3.14 General Assessment on Effectiveness of Men’s Active Participation in SCCs | 50 |
| 3.15 Conclusion..... | 51 |

CHAPTER FOUR

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 4.0 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION..... | 52 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 52 |
| 4.2 Men’s Participation in SCCs in the Light of Acts 2:36-47..... | 52 |
| 4.3 A Theological Synthesis in the Light of Acts 2:36-47..... | 53 |
| 4.4 Conclusion..... | 54 |

CHAPTER FIVE

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 5.0 PASTORAL RECOMMENDATION FOR MORE PARTICIPATION OF MEN IN SCCs IN MALINDI..... | 55 |
| 5.1 Introduction..... | 55 |
| 5.2 A Brief History of the Catholic Diocese of Malindi..... | 55 |
| 5.3 The Vision and Mission..... | 57 |
| 5.3.1 The Vision..... | 57 |
| 5.3.2 The Mission..... | 57 |
| 5.4 Men’s Participation in SCCs and Major Challenges in the Diocese..... | 58 |
| 5.5 Pastoral Recommendations for Men’s Participation in SCCs in Malindi Diocese..... | 63 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 5.6 Conclusion..... | 70 |
| General Conclusion..... | 71 |
| Bibliography..... | 73 |

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The ecclesiology of communion which developed from the Vatican Council's model of the Church as People of God was the force behind the African Synod image of the Church as Family of God. This image of the Church makes it easy for the understanding of the creation of Small Christian Communities as a New Model of Being Church.

Richard Currier and Francis Gram begin the first chapter of their book, 'Forming Small Christian Communities: A Personal Journey' with these words: "It is surprising how much we can learn about Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the first chapter of Genesis, the first book of the Bible."¹ There is no doubt that this statement refers to the friendship that existed between God the creator and the creatures, Adam and Eve, a community of love and caring for one another, since the writer tells us how God used to take a stroll with Adam in the garden in the evenings (cf. Gn. 3:8).

From this remote source of the first community, originated the aspect of communion which runs throughout the scriptures, showing the relationship between God and His people, the chosen race (cf. Gn. 17:1-11; Ex. 12; 20:2-11), as well as a relationship between the people themselves (cf. Gn. 4:1-16; Ex. 20:12-17).

It is believed that the very precise initiation of SCCs was by Jesus himself in the New Testament. The first instance was when he called the first four disciples and later appointing the twelve apostles as his companions (cf. Mt. 4:18-22; 10:1-4; Mk. 1:16-20; 3:13-19; Lk.6:12-16). Though this first community of Jesus and his disciples/apostles seemed to be of only men, there were also women who followed Jesus and who were counted among the disciples as well (cf. Lk.8:1-3; 23:55; 24:10).

These disciples when left behind by Jesus after his Ascension into Heaven, they came to be known as 'The Community of Disciples in Jerusalem' (Acts 1:12-26). These are the ones who followed the instructions of Jesus to wait for the Gift of the Spirit in the upper room in Jerusalem. Again, the twelve were not alone, since they were in the company of Mary the mother of Jesus and other women (Acts 1:14).

¹R. CURRIER & F. GRAM, *Forming a Small Christian Community: A Personal Journey*, 5.

After the Pentecost, the day the Gift of the Spirit descended upon the apostles, Peter led the group of the eleven, raised his voice and preached to the people (Acts 2:14ff). This provoked the listeners who asked what to do, and Peter told them ‘to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus.’ Here, the four pillars of SCCs were well stipulated, that is, ‘devoting to the teaching of the apostles, communal life, breaking of the bread and prayer’ (Acts 2:42). These have remained as foundation of SCCs up to date, since any SCC should draw its strength and devotion from the above four pillars.

Thanks be to Pope Saint John XXIII for his great move of calling the Vatican Council (1962-1965) which acknowledged the images of the Church as People of God (LG. 4), the Church as Communion (LG. 32), and the Church as Body of Christ (1Cor.12:12-27). “These images bring out the fact that the Church is a community of believers that participates in God’s love as Father, Son and Spirit.”² This is the image/model the AMECEA bishops while meeting in 1973 promoted and decided to make SCCs a new way of evangelization. However, the implementation of it was not until 1976. This was meant for the laity to participate fully and actively in church matters through participation in the SCCs.

The African Synod which was initiated by Pope Saint John Paul II between 1994 and 1995 developed the theme/image/model of the Church as Family of God. According to ‘Ecclesia in Africa,’ this model is made possible through the values and roles of each family member, just as in the SCC where each member has roles to play. The communion aspect is very strong since this is basic for African communities.

On this, Rev. Joseph Healey, a Maryknoll Missionary and a Small Christianity Community animator in Eastern Africa since 1968, has the best term for it –‘a New Way of Being Church.’ He says, “Our African SCCs are a communion of families that are often called domestic churches.”³

In this paper, the researcher is going to look specifically as to whether more participation of men in SCCs can be a way of strengthening faith in families. This research is also going to give

² R. BAAWOBR, *God’s Word for Christian Communities: Guidelines for Facilitators*, 21.

³ J. HEALEY, *Building the Church as Family of God*, 3.

special attention to the participation of men in SCCs in Our Lady of Heaven Karen parish in Nairobi Archdiocese.

In African tradition, men are regarded as heads of their families while women are regarded second class or weak beings. This is however changing very fast since women are becoming equal partners. In SCCs they take leadership roles and are very active. They talk of equity and equality in responsibilities. St. John Paul II quoting Paul VI affirms that, “If the witness of the Apostles founds the Church, the witness of women contributes greatly towards nourishing the faith of Christian communities.”⁴ Though women are taking lead in Church leadership, men should be aggressive. They should reclaim their headship, not negatively, but in a positive manner so that they act as role model to the family. Active participation of men in SCCs is therefore very vital since it will enhance, motivate and encourage all family members to participate, including their children.

In the last chapter of this paper, the researcher will share about the participation of men in SCCs in the Diocese of Malindi, the diocese of his origin. Lastly, the researcher will suggest some practical pastoral recommendations as a way forward to motivate men’s participation in SCCs. All this is aimed at strengthening the faith of the whole family. At the end of it all, Small Christian Communities must be a place where the family finds the Church, and the Church finds the family, since SCCs are places of evangelization for the benefit of the bigger community.

⁴ J. PAUL II, *Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful*, n.49.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this first chapter, the researcher will look into the problem statement, the objective of the work, the significance of the study, the methodology used, as well as the scope and limitation of the study. He will also give a general overview of the beginning of SCC in the AMECEA region. Lastly, he will share about challenges and aspect of men's participation in SCCs. This chapter will act as door to answering whether men's participation in SCCs can strengthen the faith of their families.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In life, there are two things; 'What Ought To Be' and 'What Is'. 'What Ought To Be' is what people expect. For instance, the African belief that men are heads of their families, though there has been a shift of this thinking, since women have become strong in leadership roles. If men could participate actively in SCCs, the faith of the whole family would grow. However this is not what is happening. 'What Is' is the fact that most men do not participate in SCC activities; meetings, workshops, seminars, pilgrimages, etc. This situation makes SCCs look like Women groups since women are the majority.

In this treatise, the researcher will look on whether more participation of men in SCCs can be a way of strengthening the faith of the family.

1.3 THE OBJECTIVE OF THE SUBJECT

In this study, we intend to focus on the following goals;

- a) To find out why majority of the men do not attend SCC prayer meetings and activities.
- b) To find out why some men do not allow their family members to attend SCC activities.
- c) To promote men's participation in SCC activities by reminding them of their role as parents, as well as taking leadership responsibility in SCCs.

- d) To give suggestions as recommendations and way forward to enable men participate actively in SCC activities.
- e) To work out practical ways to enable men embrace SCCs as a New Model of Church, as well as, a New Way of Being Church.

1.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Small Christian Communities are truly ‘The Church in the Neighbourhood.’ In Eastern Africa, SCCs are usually parish-based groups in urban or rural areas. These SCCs cannot be unless are formed by families. The family is comprised of parents and children. Men who were taken by tradition as heads of families, have become equals with their wives since they now share responsibilities. However, when men attend SCC activities the family is motivated.

This research which focuses on whether more participation of men in SCCs strengthens the faith of their families is significant since;

- a) It can be used as resource material for practical pastoral trainings in institutions of learning, seminaries and in religious formation houses.
- b) It can also be a useful tool for Diocesan pastoral planning, as well as parish pastoral programmes to enhance more participation of men in SCCs.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this work, we shall use the Pastoral Spiral method which is same to Pastoral Cycle. This methodology always leads to new action since it is not static but on-going. Basing on the steps of See, Judge and Act, and working on the Practicum Plan and Report, we shall be able to know what happens in SCCs about men. That is, concerning attendance (See), their sharing and participating in decision making (Judge) and doing what has been decided (Act).

We shall also use the quantitative and qualitative approaches to see approximately the number and percentage of men participating in SCC meetings, as well as how they participate in the acting part of the activities planned by SCCs.

The other method to be used will be one-on-one interview. Here, we shall ask some SCC members, men and women, as well as animators to give their opinions what they think are causes or reasons for men's minimal participation in SCCs.

1.6 THE SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope refers to where the research will take place. This study therefore is in Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Karen parish in Nairobi Archdiocese, Kenya. Though the parish has twenty (20) SCCs, only ten (10) is reflected in the Practicum of the researcher. In the final chapter, we shall focus on the participation of men in SCCs in Malindi Diocese, which is the home diocese of the researcher.

Nevertheless, there are challenges which pausing as limitations to this study. These are;

- a) Lack of general literature about men in the Church. There is a lot written about women and youth, but very little or none about men. Little has been written about Catholic Men Association (CMA), but nothing written to motivate their participation in SCC activities. Still on literature, majority men are not much interested in reading Church literature. It is easier for them to go through the daily newspapers than to read religious materials.
- b) Another limitation is the difficult in men to meet and share about their issues. Men meet easily in bars and other social areas than in SCCs.
- c) Women also talk ill about their husbands. This puts off men since they think same issues will be discussed in SCCs.
- d) In Karen parish, most SCCs were started through women initiatives, gathering after mass. This makes some men think that SCCs are women oriented.
- e) Majority leaders in SCCs today are women. This makes it difficult for men who are male-chauvinists to join, since they consider sitting down and listening to women is a sign of weakness.

The researcher has highlighted just few reasons as limitations for men's participation in SCCs. There is a lot that can be done to motivate men to come out and actively participate in SCC, something I believe can strengthen the faith of the family.

1.7 THE GENESIS OF SCCs WITHIN THE AMECEA REGION

AMECEA is an acronym for Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa. It is a service organization of the National Episcopal Conferences of the nine countries of Eastern Africa, namely; Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

The AMECEA bishops developed the SCC model of Church from the ecclesiology of communion of Vatican Council II (1962-1965), from the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church – *Lumen Gentium* of 21st Nov.1964 (13). Thanks to Pope Saint John XXIII for opening windows and allowing the Spirit of God to blow inside the Church. “The Spirit, is for the Church and for each and every believer, the principle of their union and unity in the teaching of the apostles and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayer (cf. Acts 2:42 Gk).”⁵ According to the Church, this is the new People of God, the new Pentecost.

In December 1973, the AMECEA bishops held their Plenary Assembly in Nairobi Kenya under the theme ‘Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s’. After this Assembly, the following instances led to the development of SCCs:

1974: In Tanzania, the bishop of Rulenge Diocese – Bishop Christopher Mwoleka, together with the Tanzanian National Council of the Laity recognized and had very strong suggestions on SCCs as the basic tool for evangelization.

1975: There was a Synod of bishops held in Rome on Evangelization. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* shows how SCCs were enlisted as way of apostolate.

1976: AMECEA Plenary Assembly held in Nairobi, Kenya, took SCC as a pastoral priority and effective tool for evangelization.

1978: A World Synod for Bishops held in Rome had this theme: ‘Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful’. Here, one of the themes of discussion was about SCCs.

1979: Pope Saint John Paul II wrote his Apostolic Exhortation on ‘On Catechesis in Our Time’ where in section 67 talked about ‘More pertinent and effective small communities in the parish’.

⁵ *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church - Lumen Gentium*, n. 13

1989: Pope Saint John Paul II, writing his Apostolic Exhortation on the ‘Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful’, gave SCC as true expression of ecclesial communion. He further sighted SCC as places where the lay meet and share the Word of God.

1990: In his Encyclical Letter, ‘Redemptoris Missio’, Pope Saint John Paul II noted that SCCs are a force for evangelization.

1992: The AMECEA Bishops held a Study Conference in Lusaka, Zambia, and one of the things emphasized was SCCs as centre of the life of faith and evangelization.

1994: The very first African Synod was held in Rome, and SCCs was one of the themes with twenty-nine (29) interventions. SCC was seen as working towards transforming the society.

1995: When Pope Saint John Paul II officially promulgated the ‘Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Ecclesia in Africa,’ in Nairobi Kenya, during the celebration of the African Synod, the theme of ‘Church as Family of God’ was seen achievable through SCCs.

1998: In Tanzania, emphasis of leadership from SCC representation was given priority when the Tanzania National Council for the Laity implemented its new constitution.

2000: The Jubilee Year saw Tanzania and other countries involve SCCs to carry the Jubilee Cross from SCC to SCC, as well as from home to home within a SCC.

2002: There was a Plenary Study Conference in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, by the AMECEA Bishops. In this Conference, SCC was recommended for major Seminary curriculum and houses of formation within the region.

2006 – 2007: To promote the pastoral priority of the AMECEA, Tanzania made the year 2007 as Year of SCCs.

2008: In Lusaka, Zambia, during the AMECEA Plenary Assembly, the role and mission of SCC was strongly discussed.

2009: The second African Synod was held in Rome, with the theme; ‘The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace’. SCCs were also discussed within this theme.

2011: Between 27th June and 7th July, the AMECEA Bishops held their Golden Jubilee celebrations in the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, Kenya, and one of the achievements of the celebration was the impact and effect of SCCs within the AMECEA region. The theme of this Plenary Assembly which was ‘AMECEA Family of God Celebrating a Golden Jubilee of Evangelizing in Solidarity’, vividly showed the achievement of SCCs in this region.

According to Rev. Joseph Healey, there were over 90,000 SCCs in AMECEA region during the Golden Jubilee celebration. This grew to 110,000 in 2012, 120,000 in 2013 and 160,000 SCCs by 2014. Today, (2017), Healey confirms that there are over 180,000 SCCs in the nine AMECEA countries, with Kenya alone having over 40,000 SCCs.

Sharing his experience with students and lecturers from the University of Munich and officials of Miva (Germany) on 8th March, 2015 at Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Karen parish in Nairobi, Kenya, Fr. Healey said that “the brotherly and communion aspect among African people is what makes SCCs more strong since it is natural for ‘one hand to wash the other’. He said ‘SCCs are not a programme, a project or a movement in the Church, but a way of life, a new model of Church and a new way of being Church today.’”⁶

Pope Saint John Paul II in his ‘Post-Synodal Exhortation – Ecclesia in Africa’ says “Right from the beginning, the Synod Fathers recognized that the Church as Family cannot reach her full potential as Church unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships.”⁷

Richard Baawobr, a Ghanaian Priest (now Bishop) belonging to the congregation of the White Fathers calls SCCs a ‘Pastoral Option’; while the Jesuit Bishop Emeritus Rodrigo Mejia calls SCCs ‘Church in the Neighbourhood’.

Fr. James O’Halloran terms SCCs as ‘a sense of the New Pentecost ushered in by John XXIII’. John XXIII was the Pope who masterminded the convergence of Vatican Council II, causing a total about turn of the Church from the hierarchical/clerical Church to a Church that allows the participation of the laity.

⁶ Fr. Healey sharing with author on 8th March 2015 in Karen

⁷ J. PAUL II, *The Church in Africa: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation-Ecclesia in Africa*, n.89

In the same spirit, Bishop Christopher Mwoleka of Rulenge Diocese in Tanzania says that ‘the lay are the engine of the SCC’.

In Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Karen Parish in Nairobi Archdiocese, SCCs are referred to as Jumuiyas, a short form of the Swahili ‘Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za Kikristo’. Jumuiya is derived from a congregating of a Jamii, which means, a gathering of a community. However, those from the out-station (Karinde) prefer using the Kikuyu term ‘Mwaki’ which literally means fire, since they are more of a village set-up. The Giryama word for SCC is ‘Dhome’, which means the fire place in a homestead, where all family members gather in the evening for sharing, advice and meals. This structure, however, has been disoriented nowadays since children do home-work instead of listening to the wise advices and stories from their elders.

The two very important aspects of the Jumuiya are the Bible sharing and the practical action. According to Fr. Healey, the ecclesiology of SCCs is more praxis oriented than theological. This is because with SCCs, everything starts with practical, i.e. meetings, then instructions. Even those who have never been to theology classes or those who have not gone to school gather since this demands faith and not theology.

These Jumuiyas are therefore following the pillars of the first SCC which was characterized with ‘devoting to the teaching of the apostles, the communal life, the breaking of the bread and to the prayer’ (Acts 2:42). This is vividly reflected in the social life of the first SCC members as shown in Acts 4:32-37. This social life found here is truly the African spirit. In Africa, each member cares about the other. No member can lack basic needs, hence, each member benefiting from the other. The African culture of brotherly care comes to its reality here.

1.8 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY SCCs WITHIN THE AMECEA REGION

Since the assimilation of SCC model in the Church by the AMECEA Bishops in 1973, and its implementation in 1976, there has been a very tremendous positive impact. These achievements, which Bishop Emeritus Rodrigo Mejia calls ‘Lights,’ are today seen with the laity enjoying variety of ministries – Huduma. These ministries are mainly meant for members to give service and care to one another, more especially, the needy, the less fortunate and those who are

vulnerable. Another positive effect is that, the faithful have changed from being ‘hearers’ of the Word of God to ‘participants’ in living the Word. There are many positives which are as a result of the initiation of SCCs in the Church in Eastern Africa.

The above are just but few narrated examples to show the effect of SCCs in the Church. Although there are many ‘Lights’ shown above as achievements, SCCs have also faced challenges of growth. Bishop Mejia calls these challenges, ‘Shadows.’

We shall numerate some of them since they are the cause of slow growth or even no growth at all of SCCs in some parts of the AMECEA region. These include:

- a) There is fear of the parish priest losing power, since the lay faithful have taken charge.
- b) Some Small Christian Communities are inactive.
- c) In some SCCs, there is very little or completely lack of men and youth.
- d) There are some SCCs which do not meet every week but meet once after two weeks or once after a month.
- e) The gap between the poor and the rich makes it very difficult for the rich to attend SCC prayer meetings held in the homes/houses of the poor, and vice versa.
- f) Some parish priests have no interest in SCCs to an extent that they cannot attend meetings to encourage members.
- g) Again, some parish priests are too busy that they cannot plan or organize for on-going formation programmes to enhance the SCC members’ spiritual and pastoral life.
- h) Tribalism and ethnicity has been a threat to the growth and unity of SCCs especially in Kenya after the 2007-2008 disputed Presidential election results.
- i) During the sessions, some leaders and some members preach to others instead of sharing how one as an individual has been inspired by the Word of God.
- j) The youth, are the majority of the faithful in the Church. Therefore, they need a special apostolate. Some Dioceses in Kenya have initiated them to have their own YSCCs where they can share the Word of God freely in their style of language, and do works of charity to their peers and to the community at large.
- k) In some parishes SCCs operate just like the other lay movements and sodality groups like CMA, CWA, etc.

- l) Some parish priests and Parish Pastoral Councils (PPC) chairpersons have decided to frustrate SCCs by turning them into places of collecting money for parish fundraisings.
- m) Language barrier – Some SCCs use one ethnic language because they are the majority, hence, locking out other members who do not understand that language.
- n) When SCC membership is made compulsory for getting services like baptism, burial, etc, it discourages and blocks some Christians.
- o) Some SCC meetings take place at night since majority of the members work during the day. This makes it difficult for mothers who have babies and small children to attend. Some men who are strong believers also can suspect their wives when the meetings are at night.
- p) Some SCC meetings are held on Sundays after mass. It is not bad, but the difficulty is while sharing the Word, since tradition has it that the reading is of the coming week, yet Christians are suppose to reflect about the readings and sermon of that day (Sunday).

Bishop Mejia says that, these problems are “...due, not to the nature of the SCCs but to human nature, because they are human groups, and therefore, they cannot be perfect.”⁸

We have also to realize that, SCCs are products of Vatican Council II’s ecclesiology of communion and the Church as People of God (cf. LG. 4).

As Fr. Joe Healey always puts it so well, ‘We create the path by walking on it,’ the lay faithful have to participate fully by assuming leadership responsibilities so that the Church in Eastern Africa “...becomes truly local, that is, self-ministering, self-propagating and self-supporting.”⁹

1.9 MEN’S PARTICIPATION IN SCCs AS BOOSTING GROWTH OF FAITH IN FAMILIES

In his article, ‘Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa 26 Years on: Lights and Shades,’ Bishop Rodrigo Mejia shares in one of the Shadows; “Most of the SCCs are composed of a great majority of women. Men do not seem attracted to them.”¹⁰ This is the very situation on the

⁸P. RYAN (Ed.), *New Strategies for a New Evangelization in Africa*, 70

⁹ HEALEY, JOSEPH, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of the Growth and Impact of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa as AMECEA Celebrates Its Golden Jubilee*, 6

¹⁰ P. RYAN, *Ibid.*

ground, since men will attend mass and fail to attend SCC meetings. There are many reasons why men do not attend SCC meetings, ranging from cultural to modern.

In the first instance, we shall venture why few men attend SCC activities. Trying to know why they are not interested, as pointed out by Bishop Mejia above.

Generally speaking, men have a bigger responsibility in the Church. This is because right from the beginning Jesus appointed twelve men (apostles) to be his close allies as heads of his community (Mt.10:1-4), whom he later commissioned and sent them to the whole world to preach the Good News (cf. Mt.28:19-20).

Small Christian Communities are meant for all the laity in the Church. The term laity in ecclesiastical cycles refers to men and women, as well as youth and children, people who are not ordained ministers. This means then that, SCCs involve the whole family regardless of gender and age. Gal.3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”¹¹ On this, Fr. George Lobo, a Jesuit priest says, “The Church in Vatican II recaptured the original biblical vision of the Church as the new Israel, as the spirit filled community. Even from Jesus’ time, we know that he (Christ) instituted the new Covenant in His blood by calling together a people made up of Jew and Gentile, making them one, not according to the flesh but in the spirit.”¹²

Men have multiple reasons as to why they do not participate in SCC activities. They complain of women’s domination in SCCs. This I think is because women always look at personal relationships-social activities, while men have a weakness of inclining to power and control.

As already noted above, in Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Karen parish in Nairobi Archdiocese, SCCs were initiated by women who used to meet on Sundays after Mass. This made men think that SCCs are women groups. Men also complain that, since majority women are the leaders, meetings take too long, much discussion being women oriented. According to men, this is time wasting.

¹¹ J. HEALEY, www.smallchristiancommunities.org. 214

¹² LOBO, G. V., Moral and Pastoral Questions, 95

Over 70% of the SCCs visited by the researcher during the practicum in Karen parish have very few men participating. Some SCCs have no men at all, only women attend. Men avail themselves during special occasions; when there are functions in the SCC like Mass for birthdays, patron saint's day, etc. Here men appear as organizers.

Even if men attend occasionally or they do not attend completely, they determine some decisions from home. No implementation of any decision made by women without the approval and consent from men.

In his pastoral letter on the occasion of celebrating the Archdiocesan Family Day in August 2014, the Archbishop of Nairobi Kenya, John Cardinal Njue, challenged the Catholic men by reminding them of their responsibility in the family and in the Church. Quoting the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians (3:17), the Cardinal urged men to imitate St. Joseph and be active participants in SCCs just as they do in their families.

Every family therefore should belong to a SCC, either by geographical set-up, which Bishop Mejia calls 'Church in the Neighbourhood'. It can also be by social situation and status or work situation, or even by other structures that fit the people, as is in many urban areas like Karen town.

John Paul II says, "Small Christian Communities help in formation of Christians, by providing a consciousness and an experience of ecclesial communion and mission which are more extensive and incisive."¹³ This is because the Church has always been understood as 'Mother Teacher', where children receive faith. This faith is shared best in SCCs where both parents-husband and wife participate actively. The active participation of men in SCCs definitely strengthens the faith of the whole family. Children learn through imitation. When both parents are strong in faith, children also become strong in faith. As Fr. Harrison Yaa, a Diocesan Priest from the Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa, Kenya, puts it, "A parent ordinarily shares what he/she has with the Children."¹⁴ The father of the family, together with his wife should be a good example to the Children, showing them the right way. When men become active participants in SCCs, the faith of the whole family is strengthened.

¹³J. PAUL II, *Vocation and Mission of the Faithful, Apostolic Exhortation-Christifideles Laici*, n. 61

¹⁴ H. Yaa, *Building, Strengthening and Sustaining Small Christian Communities in an Urban Set-up in Nairobi, Kenya*, 5.(Unpublished work).

1.10 CONCLUSION

In this first chapter, we have looked at the reason for this research, that is, the problem statement, the aim (objective) of this study as well as the significance of this study. This chapter has also dealt with the method to be used by the researcher to arrive at the conclusion. There is also the scope and limitation of this study. This first chapter has also dealt with the origin of SCCs within the AMECEA region and the challenges experienced. Last but not least, is the aspect of men's participation in SCCs as a boost to the faith of the family. The chapter has given a framework of the whole treatise. Men should always take that noble vocation of the family as a call to bring all family members to God through SCCs.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter on Literature Review, we shall venture into some books and articles of theologians and scholars who look into Small Christian Communities as a model of the Church and how the Church is Family of God. Some texts show how strong the notion that men are heads in their families, while others clearly show the current shift from that traditional African thinking to the modern one where women are becoming heads as well. I hope this sharing from the different texts will shed light on our topic, to enhance or motivate men from being cold and inactive to active and vibrant participators in SCCs.

2.2 “Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa,” Joseph Healey, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 2012.

Rev. Joseph Healey begins his book with the historical development of SCCs. Starting from the very first SCC in Africa, which began in 1961 in Zaire – current Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Followed by the Vatican Council II (1962-1965) ecclesiology of communion where the AMECEA Bishops developed the model of Church as people of God, to fit in their situation. Through their gigantic effort, the model of Church as Family of God of the African Synod (1994-1995) was developed.

As Healey concludes this part with the aspect of reconciliation, justice and peace working under the Lenten Campaign in Kenya, he joins it well with the second chapter where he talks about the quantitative and qualitative analysis. These involve the growth of SCCs in the AMECEA countries. Healey says, there are 110,000 SCCs in the AMECEA countries, though that was 2012. Currently, 2017 there are 180,000 SCCs. For the 50(+) years of presence of SCCs in Eastern Africa, there has been tremendous growth and change in the faith since this model makes SCCs truly a New Way of Being Church.

The role of SCCs in Church and Society is very vital. One very basic objective is building a strong Church and Society. Healey says it is in SCCs where people practice justice and peace as well as sharing in practical action. Referring to the unfortunate situation that Kenya plunged into after the General Elections of 2007-2008, he points out how the country was divided on tribal and ethnic grounds, but the CJPC had extra work to do through SCCs. “When Kenya plunged into the wave of riots and violence between December 2007 and January 2008, much of the unrest was fuelled by tribalism and negative ethnicity. This catastrophe affected thousands of SCCs too. But some communities and people rose above the crisis. Other SCCs in Kenya became effective local tribunals to mediate tribal and ethnic conflicts.”¹⁵ Since this involves action, Healey talks of ‘Evaluation of the Impact of SCC in the Church.’

According to him, SCCs have been instrumental in vocation promotion, self-reliance as well as activeness of the laity in the Church. In the fifth chapter Healey shares about the new media and SCCs in the AMECEA region. This is a challenge since people have to embrace new ways of life as well of new ways of communication. These new ways which include Google, Face book, Twitter, You Tube and Skype are to be embraced positively. Severally, Healey involved his students of theology in Tangaza University College between January 9 and March 13, 2013, on internet and website pastoral communication. On January 30, he quoted Pope Benedict talking to Seminarians in Rome in February 11, “The internet is a valuable tool for Seminarians, not only in their studies, but also in their pastoral ministries...”¹⁶ Healey also a member of the World SCC, where members meet in the Skype every Tuesday at 5.00pm. As a class, at times we talked to Alphonce Omolo who is in Germany through this Skype. In the last chapter, Healey shares about SCCs as a New Model of Church. This conclusion reveals how the theme of the book is ‘SCCs being true New Way of Being Church.’

¹⁵ J. HEALEY, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*, 68

¹⁶ *Class notes*, 5.

2.3 “Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa 26 Years On: Lights and Shadows,” in “New Strategies for a New Evangelization in Africa,” (Rodrigo Mejia, (ed.) By Patrick Ryan, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002, pp.67-72.)

Rodrigo Mejia, an experienced (Bishop Emeritus) in matters of SCCs, begins with the genesis of SCCs in the AMECEA region, that it was an idea of the Bishops meeting in 1973 and actualized in 1976, the Bishops making it a pastoral priority for the future of the Church. In this section, Mejia strictly deals with the achievements and difficulties in implementing the model of SCC. Right from the word go, he says that achievements cannot be based on quantitative but qualitative. Taking the example of Jesus having concentrated with only twelve people (apostles), he sees that numbers do not matter.

Mejia has given two matters in his writing; the achievements which he calls ‘Lights,’ and the difficulties/weaknesses which he calls ‘Shadows.’ ‘Lights’ show how Christians have become active participants in the Church, thus, bringing positive results of SCCs in pastoral work. ‘Shadows’ are the difficulties experienced in implementing the model of SCCs as pastoral priority in Eastern Africa. This shows how Church members, including Clergy and Religious perceive SCCs negative, since it gives much power to the laity. ‘Shadows’ are carried by human nature, and there should be analysis and pastoral solution to be worked to.

From the beginning, the initiation gave wrong expectations. Unlike the Latin America SCCs which originated from Christians (below), the initiative here came from the AMECEA Bishops from above. Nevertheless, the originality should not matter. In both situations, there should be on-going formation so that each party takes their role. Rodrigo concludes his work with a question on ‘Whether SCCs are still a priority for the AMECEA Bishops or not.’ He recommends that “If the Bishops still believe so, we must be aware that an affirmative response is not enough but that practical measures and concrete means have to be set up at national and diocesan level if we want this pastoral option to be something more than a nice slogan to be repeated just like a ‘responsorial psalm’ in our pastoral meetings.”¹⁷

¹⁷ R. MEJIA, (P. Ryan), *Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa 26 Years On: ‘Lights and Shades,’ in New Strategies for New Evangelization in Africa*, 71.

2.4 “The Model of ‘Church-as-Family’: Meeting the African Challenges,” Patrick Ryan (Ed.), Nairobi: CUEA Publications, 1999.

Patrick Ryan has put together the work of five (5) African theologians and scholars who share about the model of the Church-as-Family of God. Each one of them tries to verify the fact the Church has her foundation in the family through the SCC.

2.4.1 ‘Some Items on African Family Ecclesiology,’ by Charles Nyamiti. (pp. 1-18)

In discussing this, Nyamiti discusses two major issues; The Definition of “Ancestor” and The Role of Death in ancestral status.

- a) Definition of “Ancestor.” Nyamiti gives a metaphysical definition of his favorite term ‘Ancestorship,’ that “Ancestorship is a sacred kin-relationship which establishes a right or title to regular sacred communication with one’s own kin through prayer and ritual offering (oblation).”¹⁸ Nyamiti’s use of ancestor is to bring the aspect of the African family that there is always a concern and communication between the living and the living dead – ancestors. He takes God as an ancestral mystery, giving three elements showing the relevance of the ecclesiology of the African family; Trinity, Vision and interpretation and Eucharistic doxology. Secondly, Nyamiti looks at the Role of death in Ancestral Status. By virtue of his death, Christ became our ancestor. He says, “...death is regarded by the African (and by many members of other traditional or illiterate societies) as a necessary condition for earthly human beings to obtain ancestral status, but not as an essential component of ancestorship.”¹⁹ Many people believe that God is an ancestor. Humanly speaking, death becomes a necessary condition for ancestorship since it is an indispensable condition. Nyamiti says, even before Christ died, he was already our ancestor because of his divinity. This began even before the incarnation, before the Word (Logos) became flesh. He says “...through his death and resurrection Christ became our redeeming ancestor in fullness. This is because it is only then that he could exercise fully

¹⁸ C. NYAMITI, Some Items on African Family Ecclesiology, in *‘The Model of “Church-as-Family”: Meeting the African Challenge*, P. RYAN (ed.), 2.

¹⁹ Ibid. 11

his ancestral mediation through his humanity.”²⁰ Nyamiti concludes that Christ’s death was necessary for our salvation though totally different from the death of an African ancestor.

- b) On The Role of Death in Ancestral Status, Nyamiti talks about the relevance for African Family ecclesiology, by sharing about natural death and ritual death through baptism. On natural death he says people have to be related to natural (bodily) death, since it is a condition that is necessary, when he says “...for the earthly Church members who die willingly and lovingly in Christ, their natural death is a participation in Christ’s own death on the cross. As such it is a descendental or ancestor-Christian act.”²¹ In other words, it can be referred to as sacred death since it is a blessed one. , seen by others as positive. It can also be seen as having a mediatory function since one’s death can bring benefit to other Church members.

On ritual death through baptism, Nyamiti says, baptism introduces people into the Church membership and sharing in Christ’s paschal mystery by dying with him to sin and rising with him to the life of divine descendancy. Since baptism is mandatory for ecclesial membership so as to join Christian descendancy, this ritual death through baptism is a must. This, however, cannot be a necessity since it is just a participation in Christ’s divine descendancy. He concludes that these two types of deaths are essential and necessary, since this “confirms that the previous assertion in itself ancestorship is an absolute or pure positive quality and as such it can be properly applied to God in his inner life.”²² Therefore, death cannot be an essential component for ancestral status. This prompts him to conclude that Saints can be called living dead since it is only Jesus and Mary who are living in the next world. Saints will be the living only after the total liberation.

²⁰ Ibid. 13

²¹ Ibid. 16

²² Ibid. 17

2.4.2 'Christ's Spirit as Empowerment of the Church-as-Family,' by Laurenti Magesa. (pp. 19-35)

In his article, Magesa shows the effect of the Spirit in the Church which is a Family. This is the relationship of Christ to the Church. He first talks about the influence of Jesus of history, illustrating him as a normal human being for birth, simple family and normal situation of his family. He talked and preached like others using Hebrew Scripture. However, there was uniqueness in him as he approached the end while preaching. This is what led to his execution since he seemed blasphemous; against the teachings of the Jews. "This uniqueness of the historical Jesus is what constitutes his spirit, and has fundamental consequences for the Church-as-family."²³ This is what disturbed the Jewish and the Roman religious and socio-economical structure and led to his rejection and death. In his preaching, Jesus was totally against the socio-economical and political as well as the religious structures of the time. "For Jesus, God required a radically new social order where people would relate and socialize not only within, but also across class, gender and descent barriers - with equal dignity."²⁴ By showing even those of lower class would be more receptive to God's blessing and favor (cf. Mat.5:1), the higher class people were not happy. The only measure of authentic religion according to Jesus was living in solidarity without discrimination. All that he did while on earth made the Christian Community after his departure conclude that he was really God-Man. "The divinity of the Christ of faith is thus recognition of the Spirit or 'spirituality' of the Jesus of history."²⁵ Jesus' spirituality has three perspectives; viz. Mission of Church as Family, Church structure as hierarchical and Pastoral approaches.

Another question that Magesa asks and tries to answer is whether Jesus was merely a social reformer. It could not go well in the ears of the Jews and Romans when Jesus brought the Last Supper (Eucharist), where he invited them to eat his body and drink his blood in order to make them one. How could a high class Jew be one (one body) with a peasant, a pagan or a slave? What was seen as social reformation by Jesus came to be known as the theology of liberation,

²³ L. MAGESA, Christ's Spirit as Empowerment of Church-as-Family, in *'The Model of "Church-as-Family": Meeting the African Challenge'*, P. RYAN, (ed.), 20.

²⁴ Ibid. 23

²⁵ Ibid. 25

and lastly gave birth to the Social Teachings of the Church. This is “to build up the human family, of which the family called Church is symbolical, witness and conscience.”²⁶

About the Nature of Church-as-Family, Magesa refers to the genesis of this model and image of the Church which is the document of Vatican Council II’s model of Church as People of God and Body of Christ. Since all people are called to the grace of God’s salvation, this model fosters unity of the universe. Being Body of Christ the Church takes Christ as the head, and members as the Body. The Spirit of this mission should be continued. “The image of ‘family’ applied to the Church acquires Christian theological relevance and validity only when it is seen and used within the context of that mission today. As Jesus became Christ because of his liberating activity, so does the Church become Christian.”²⁷ The Church of Christ is therefore a dynamic one, an activity of love for members.

According to Magesa, the whole idea of ‘Christ’s Spirit empowering the Church-as-family’ refers to the followers of Christ doing what Christ did. Through Jesus’ word and deed, people are called to freedom, gives voice to the voiceless. It is therefore vivid that the Spirit of Jesus Christ directs towards integration of unity, that is, against segregation and discrimination. The more the Church is united, the more she becomes family of God. Magesa says that there is a difference in talking about the family in human ways and the model of Church-as-family adopted by the African Synod. He says, “Quite distinct, or really different, from the understanding of the structure of functioning of human families, the Church-as-family embraces everyone irrespective of class, gender, race or ability. This means that the Church-as-family is a universal communion in which humanity, fully common to all human beings, is the basic and most important element or measure.”²⁸ Here, the relational principle of the African family should be observed. However, Magesa laments that even the Ecclesia in Africa did not critique the issue of a patriarchal Church-as-family, which he says, it is a bit negative.

The African family is demonstrated by the communal aspect, which is clearly by Christ’s life of befriending the poor, outcasts, sinners, publican and marginalized as well as those physically and psychologically challenged. “He proclaims a new law that privileges poverty and meekness,

²⁶ Ibid. 27

²⁷ Ibid. 28

²⁸ Ibid. 29

peace and justice, forgiveness and reconciliation... He leaves us a memorial banquet that symbolizes and experiences in the sharing of food the sharing of life with each other and with God.”²⁹ The Church-as-family should be one led by the Spirit, held together by the God of love and acceptance, one that has creative variety and riches of the human people. It is that of solidarity, unity and communion, that which has no barriers.

At this juncture, Magesa talks about the ‘visible structure of the Church.’ For validity purposes, he talks about basic principles on the structure; respect for rights of individuals and groups with the larger community, respect for dignity of man or groups of persons, and preservation of the integrity and life of the community. These require a structure that will bring harmony as well as unity and justice. This will create identity among all the people, even those feeling segregated. Jesus challenges the people by saying that there should be equality and equity in order for the community of believers to reflect the Church-as-family. This is the principle of subsidiarity. In such a structure, there should be dialogue, trust and concern. This expresses solidarity leading to the Church being; one, holy, Catholic and apostolic. Magesa gives the example of the process of the Christian Initiation of Adults, the four steps as helping so much in dialogue, trust and concern. This makes one a true member of the Christian family (family of God). Lastly, Magesa talks about the ‘pastoral approaches.’ He begins by saying, “Our ‘imitation’ of Jesus must be evident in the Church’s pastoral work.”³⁰ The equivalent to the tax collectors and sinners who enjoyed Jesus’ favor are the HIV/AIDS patients, refugees, women, prostitutes, alcoholics, displaced and immigrants. It is evident that “Effective pastoral ministry to the outcasts, aiming to include them into the Church-as-family, cannot but revolve around the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity and, particularly, socialization.”³¹ Some communities are too big that there is no personal contact. Magesa says this can only take place in the most local level of the Church, which according to AMECEA this is the level of the Small Christian Community. The presence of the Christ is as a result of the practice of subsidiarity. He appeared among the people, preached, ate and stayed with them. Those in the practice of subsidiarity to be used as well as that of socialization=involvement.

²⁹ Ibid. 30

³⁰ Ibid. 33

³¹ Ibid

While subsidiarity promotes solidarity, socialization promotes training of leaders. “If leadership training in the Church emphasizes once again service, respect for the humanity of all people, simplicity in lifestyle, cooperation and sharing of resources, we might yet again be surprised by the power of Christ’s Spirit to transform the Church and the world,”³² The Spirit of Christ, the Paraclete has the responsibility of defending the lowly and bringing all into one communion.

2.4.3 ‘The Church as a Family of God: A Biblical Foundation?’ by Christian Mhagama. (pp. 36-45)

From page 36 to 45, Mhagama looks at the Church as family in the Scripture, especially in the New Testament, whether Jesus referred to the Church as family. Looking at the early Church, Mhagama has five stages to tackle his quest; (i) Whether in Jesus’ words and actions, the idea of a family of God can be traced. (ii) Whether images used by early believers correspond to the concept of a family. (iii) Whether the day-to-day life of the early Church reflected family life. (iv) Whether there are forms of spiritual life in the Church, and whether they were embraced by Church members and were also essential values of family life. (v) Hints to show what the Church in Africa should avoid and what should be embraced to live as a modern family.

First, Mhagama looks at ‘Jesus’ Intention to Found a New Family.’ Responding to the earlier question, he wants to see whether the Scripture show Jesus talking or doing anything to reflect family. He brings two instances where we can rely on; (i) The gathering of the people of Israel was a vivid sign of a family. As in Heb. 1:1, Jesus was unique, coming as God’s messenger. He did not find a Church on earth, but “...his speeches in Mk.1:14-15, and Lk.4:16-19, give the impression that he wanted to give a new orientation to the people of Israel.”³³ This, however, failed since he laments in Mt.12:27, but his wish was to gather the people together, thus making a family.

Secondly, Jesus calls himself a bridegroom in Mk.2:19-20. He uses this image to show his relationship to his believers who are his friends. However, this does not point to forming a family, but, “the image is related to family in the sense that the bridegroom will proceed to found

³² Ibid. 35

³³ C. MHAGAMA, The Church as a Family of God: A Biblical Foundation, in ‘The Model of “Church-as-Family”’, P. RYAN (ed.), 37/38.

a family with his bride.”³⁴ This is vividly shown in the epistle (2Cor.11:2; Eph.5:25-33; Rv.19:7; 21:2). (ii) The Church’s Self-Understanding as a family may not be very explicit but remote. The term Church itself connotes a family, though remotely.

The OT refers to it as “...an assembly or a gathering, a local union of people, hence bearing an element of a family.”³⁵ Mathew in the NT uses it remotely. Luke in Acts 9:31 as well as Paul in 1Cor.10:32; 1Tim.3:15 use the term to show the local community of believers. In other areas, the term refers to local groups of believers (Acts5:11; 13:11; 18:22). At some place, Paul used the term to mean a specific community or a Church in those communities (1Cor.1:1-2; 1Thes.1:1). Also in 3Jn.7 and Rv.1:4; 2:1 have the concept though remotely. The second term is ‘Body of Christ,’ which in the NT writings refers to the Christians who are unified with Christ (1Cor.12-27). As unified through baptism (1Cor.6:15; 10:10-17; Rom.8:11).

The captivity letters have much on this image of Body of Christ as believers in Christ forming one body with him as head (Eph.1:22-24; 2:16; 4:13; Col.1:18-20; 2:10). In the image of the family, people depend on each other, just as in the image of the body, where different parts also depending on each other. Another image very close to the above is ‘House of God.’ In Ex.2:1 and Nm.1:2, the House of Levi and tribe of Israel mentioned respectively, which means ‘family’. Where people assemble for prayer, ‘house of God’ (Mk.2:26; 11:17). In NT, this is the Christian Community. “It is true that Moses was trustworthy in the household of God, as a servant is, acting as a witness to the things which were yet to be revealed, but Christ is trustworthy as a Son is, over his household. And we are his household, as long as we fearlessly maintain the hope in which we glory (Heb.3:4-6).”³⁶

The image of the family can also be referred to as ‘Children of God.’ This image is much closer since Christians call God Abba Father (Gal.4:4-6; Heb.2:10; 2Cor.6:16-18). Paul for instance calls Thessalonians his children since he brought them into faith and baptism (1Thes.2:1-12). The church also understands herself as ‘Brothers and Sisters in Christ.’ The author of the Acts of Apostles used this term more frequently (Acts.1:15). “Paul used the term when referring to his

³⁴ Ibid. 38

³⁵ Ibid, 39

³⁶ Ibid. 40

co-workers (2Cor.1:1), as well as church members at large (1Cor.6:5; Rom.14:14).”³⁷ Also the general letters (1Jn.3:10-17; 1Pt.5:9) use this term. As Jesus had referred to brothers and sisters those who listened to his word, so also the NT adopted the same term to refer to those with common faith. (iii) The Church’s Model of Living as Family is the third in Mhagama’s work. He says this has three ways. First, Gathering in Private Homes. In this, Mhagama says that, after the abandonment of the temples and synagogues, believers formed these ‘house churches’ (1Cor.16:19; Rom.16:5; Phil.2; Col.4:15). People could be converted to Christianity with their entire house hold – families (Acts 2:42; 5:42; 12:12; 16:15, 31). “When church members gathered in a family household they felt themselves to be a new family, a family of Christ.”³⁸ Secondly, Mhagama talks about Sharing Meals. This is a symbol of unity and solidarity. Others however did it as ritual. Jesus himself did it severally (Mk.2:13-17; Lk.7:36-50; 19:1-10). The early Church had this as table ministry or Lord’s super where even the Christian Jews and Gentiles could share a meal at the same table (Acts 2:42-46; 11:19-30).

Thirdly, he talks about Sharing of Goods. This, according to him, was a practice among the first Church, which geared towards creating a family which is bound together. As clearly demonstrated in Acts and in Paul’s teaching, this practice was good, but not long-lived (Acts 2:42-45; 5:1-10; 2Cor.8:9). (iv) Spiritual Life in the Family of God. This is the fourth item Mhagama shares, where he says, in any family, there must be values to be practiced and followed by all members. Here are two of those models: In the first instance, he talks of Body of Christ for Unity. This was introduced by Paul in 1Cor.12 to bring unity among Christians who were divided because of the issue of spiritual gifts. This helped them to understand how the body has many parts with different roles/functions though one. As the body of Christ, Christians were to use their gifts for each others’ benefit (1Cor.12:1-27). Secondly, he discusses about Brotherly or Sisterly Correction in the Family of God, as another image used in the NT. A brother or a sister meant another believer in Christ. Brothers and sisters therefore assist, correct and forgive each other so as to enhance harmony, unity and solidarity (Mt.18:15; 22). They were even to settle their differences in a brotherly and sisterly way (1Cor.6:1-11). (v) Improving the Image of the Family of God. Mhagama finally looks at how to improve the image of the family of God. He says that people should be motivated to improve this image in their daily lives and endeavors.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid, 41

There are two aspects to be considered, here; First he talks about Respect between brothers and sisters. As Paul referred to the Church, as well as those he worked with as ‘brothers and sisters’ (Phil.4:2-3; Rom.16:1-5), so also the Church in Africa should imitate and call each other brother and sister. When asked by the AMECEA Bishops to be ‘true African and true Christian,’ we are to take that challenge positively. “A Christian community reaches Christian maturity when everyone who has been baptized is clothed in Jesus, and the relationship between the members is such that ‘there can be neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus’ (Gal.3:28).”³⁹ Secondly, No Dominating Fathers in the Family. This is clearly shown by Jesus himself when he talked about family members excluding the father figure (Mt.23:9; Mk.3:35; 10:30). Jesus wanted this new family of God to have no authoritative and dominating role since all are brothers and sisters. However, Paul calls himself “a father of the members he brought to Christian faith (1Cor.4:14-15).”⁴⁰ Paul uses this title which Jesus had banned only to assert his caring responsibility to the communities (1Thes.2:11). In fact, Paul balances it with the title of ‘mother’, who feeds (1Thes.2:7). It is a painful experience that Paul goes through to the formation of his communities (Gal.4:19), which he compares to the pain of giving birth. The Church in Africa therefore, needs a caring and a responsible father; one who provides and cares like a mother.

2.4.4 ‘The Family in its African Socio-Cultural Context,’ by Agnes P. Zani. (pp. 46-55)

In this article, Agnes Zani looks at the African family which is undergoing transformation, forcing people to have new ideologies. She cites three features that are currently seen in African families; (i) Variations of Family Types: Zani says that, due to the adaptations for survival, societies developed different types of families. Though there are different variations, she says that many families exist in composite forms. This shows that nuclear families could not exit alone. “Composite family types are established through a system of plural marriages involving multiple spouses or by various extensions of the parent-child relationship.”⁴¹ These forms of marriages are very common in Africa since they take the form of polygamy. Polygamy has been

³⁹ Ibid. 44

⁴⁰ Ibid. 45

⁴¹ A. P. ZANI, The Family in its African Socio-Cultural Context, in *‘The Model of “Church-as-Family”’: Meeting the African Challenge*, P. RYAN (ed.), 47

under siege since the introduction of monogamy, mainly by westerners, who argue that, marital rights are violated in polygamy and polyandry. “They assert that monogamy is not only the form of marriage appropriate to society, but the form that is ethically correct. Such a marriage improves the possibility of more equal, sensitive and reciprocal considerations between husband and wife. Due to this fact, many African families now aspire to monogamy, a trend encouraged by the Catholic Church.”⁴²

Despite the foreign influence, there is still existence of polygamous families, especially in the rural areas. Those in urban areas practice monogamy, though sometimes with mixed cultural life of having other women at the rural areas. There are other unions which have come up recently confuse the people since they are not found in the African traditional set-up. Polyandry for example, is very rare in the African tradition. Bigamy is also a new phenomenon and very rare. However some of these practices have not been left, but only modified to fit the current situation. “Extended family systems are common and extensively widespread in African societies. Africans value not only their immediate kin but also uncles, aunts and cousins who are viewed as being very close and important family members.”⁴³ These emphasize blood relation, other than marital ties, as most African families were patrilineal not matrilineal. Authority was to male as heads and decision makers. However, social change pressures came as a result of industrialization and urbanization.

Due to socio-economic reasons, families have redefined their socio-cultural status. Nuclear family system has therefore taken root instead, in modern African societies. This is the smallest family system, “...composed of a husband, a wife and their immediate offspring. It consists of at least two adults of the opposite sex living in a socially approved sexual relationship. It is sometimes referred to as the conjugal family because the marital bond is of primary importance.”⁴⁴ Such changes are as a result of economic constraints. The nuclear family is not completely cut-off from the extended family. In case of any challenge, the family contacts the extended members for help. Some extended families are close while others are not very close.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid. 48

⁴⁴ Ibid. 49

Zani says, members of nuclear families enjoy the marital bond. When divorce occurs, this family unit disintegrates. They have limited social life and interaction.

Many changes have occurred in family set-ups so as to adopt the current situations. “Mainly as a result of education, urbanization and loss of adherence to cultural norms, modern African societies are characterized by quasi families or single parent families. These constitute single male or female adults with their children only.”⁴⁵ In this type of family, there is lack of marital bond. So, the children lack love of one parent, either father figure or mother figure is absent. Currently in Africa, quasi families mostly are female-headed, due to either death of husband or by choice. This has taken root in the present society.

However, the society has viewed these families with suspicion, some members not approving them, while others accept them. These have made a very important feature of African family life. “With more cases of women having children out of wedlock, and through death or divorce, combinations of single parents with children marrying to form families are becoming frequent.”⁴⁶ These situations seem to be special in that, each spouse comes with his/her children from a different partner and form a family, and then get their own. These families may have some challenges due to the different background of the children. However, there are some types of families which have not been accepted fully in the African socio-cultural context, for instance, homosexual families, swingers, as well as lesbian and heterosexual families.

Again, it is foreign for marriage to be temporary and be easily dissolved. “Most African marriages and family units are entered into with the goal of making them a lifetime union. Divorce is thus to be avoided as much as possible.”⁴⁷ Always efforts are made towards keeping the family together. This is very different from the Western countries, where divorce is a daily issue, as well as remarriage, divorcing and remarriage again. It is no longer viewed as negative, since it can be far viewed as polygamy. (ii) Distinctive Features of African Families: There are features which are common in African families. Although there are changes taking place now, most African families are patriarchal. Authority comes from the male/husband. Due to

⁴⁵ Ibid. 50

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ibid. 51

urbanization however, few changes have taken place. This affects even when naming children, that, they are named after the father's lineage – after the father's relatives, except the Kikuyu.

There is also the aspect of marriage being taken seriously, and especially preparation for marriage life. One who is not on the line is looked with suspicion. Marriage celebrations are joyous activities and soon after, the whole society eagerly waits for children. African marriage without children is not regarded as marriage. Due to difficulties in life, getting many children is now regarded as outdated. "Family care for elderly is still a valued feature but again the extent of care to elderly parents is limited. It may take the form of support in buying food, paying medical bills but rarely will these elderly parents reside with their children's families in urban areas."⁴⁸ Family and relatives have currently a thin line on cooperation, except during sicknesses.

The African culture does not allow male to do domestic work, like cooking, fetching water and fetching firewood. "In certain families, some men try to help out their wives but do it secretly, and feel demoralized when found at such activities."⁴⁹ It was a family/society affair to find a wife for children. The parents could indicate which family to marry from. Because of this, "Many families have had conflicts based on 'wrong' choices of children's spouses who may come from the 'wrong' ethnic group, class, education or family background. This sometimes has led to misery in the family where those who have made such choices are cut-off and not supported."⁵⁰

There is also the challenge of early marriages which makes many women not attain education. Some marry immediately after completing education to meet the cultural need. Polygamy is still practiced in most African societies. "It is very common to find a man running two or more homes and not being heavily criticized because it is socio-culturally accepted."⁵¹ On dowry, it has been very controversial, since feminists see it as oppression while it has continued to be paid. Many children currently, unlike long ago, have communication freedom with other extended family members. Grandparents used to hear and advice their grand children. This has reduced because of social changes. It is difficult for children to be free with their parents and share some issues. This has led to blame game – parents blaming teachers and teachers blaming parents.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 52

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid. 53

⁵¹ Ibid

Media and Church also have a role in the formation of a family. Leisure time was taken differently. Men together and women together with children could form one group. “This notion of spending leisure together as a family is still something avoided even by modern African families.”⁵² (iii) Convergence within the African Family: There is some mixture of values – the traditional ones and those of Western cultures. They are neither fully traditional nor fully Western influenced. For instance, many families expect dowry to be paid. You will not find well educated family taking their daughter for circumcision.

“A monogamous married man will still keep a string of ‘wives’ or ‘mistresses’ so that he can keep the value of monogamy and polygamy at the same time.”⁵³ There is a tendency of the nuclear families not having any connection with extended families, though maintain relative contact. On integration of the different types of families, some communities accept easily while others are rigid. It appears that the extended family is rigid to traditions, than the nuclear family which changes easily. There is a lot of diversity because of background differences. The African family that looks ideal is that which embraces all aspects to make it grow towards development of all family members regardless of gender. It needs to be one that all members feel they belong, guided by love and concern for one another.

2.4.5 *‘The Small Christian Community in the Church-as-Family,’ by David Kyeyune.*

(pp. 56-60)

This is the last sharing concerning ‘The Model of “Church-as-Family”: Meeting the African Challenge’. In his sharing, Kyeyune looks at what happened after the African Synod, under which he looks at ‘Liturgy and Inculturation’ as well as ‘Genuine Small Christian Communities.’ David says that the African Synod gave the African Church a challenge of striving to become truly African and truly Christian. It was a moment of the African Church to stand tall and be exemplary. “This is the most favorable time for African local Churches to come out in a participatory manner to implement forcefully the Second Vatican Council, the subsequent

⁵² Ibid. 54

⁵³ Ibid

documents of reform, the Synods of Bishops and in a special way, the Special Synod for Africa.”⁵⁴

Here, Kyeyune looks at the aspect dealt with in African Synod, and more especially after the Synod. (i) Liturgy and Inculturation: The Liturgy according to the Latin rite was very precise and orderly hence being systematic. That was understood by only those who knew Latin. “However they are dry and poor in expression, as well as poor in conveying the intended message to ordinary Catholics.”⁵⁵ There might have been no proper introduction of inculturation in the Roman liturgy. It was Roman liturgy imposed into the African Churches since laws and rituals were of Roman religion. As a result of the above, the following emerged: First, the imposition or transplantation did not follow the rules of inculturation. Kyeyune says that “The local churches failed to incarnate the gospel into various dimensions of the culture. God’s message was not given an opportunity to purify the culture and penetrate the hearts of the people in order to renew them.”⁵⁶ This is seen clearly in the prayers of the old Sacramentals, unlike the other churches which embraced fully rites.

Secondly, dialogue between God and his people ceased, replaced by the priests being the go-between and leading the people. Communication to God became through a person. Third, Liturgy changed from a participatory event for human salvation to a rigid one performed only by the clergy. Laity became spectators since their participatory role was taken away. Fourth, fixed formulas replaced the flexibility Christians had carried along from Synagogues. Fifth, the evangelization done by European missionaries transplanted inadequate inculturation. The Latin rite was the vehicle for the above transfusion. This caused mass exodus of youth who are potential members of the Catholic Church to Pentecostal and African churches. “Moreover it is common knowledge today that a good member of Catholic elite and youth go first to the Catholic Church to attend Mass in order to fulfill an obligation. Later they go to celebrate the Lord’s Day in more comfortable surroundings.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ D. KYEYUNE, The Small Christian Community in the Church-as-Family, in *‘The Model of “Church-as-Family”’: Meeting the African Challenge*, P. RYAN (ed.), 56

⁵⁵ Ibid. 56

⁵⁶ Ibid. 57

⁵⁷ Ibid. 58

Sixth, because there has not been proper formation of Christians about liturgy, many people (Africans) have not taken the liturgy of the Word and Eucharist seriously. They have also not proclaimed Jesus within the African context. Seventh, it is clear that many African local churches have not offered an opportunity and suitable environs for people to feel the intimacy of the Lord, so as to be led to the Father and Spirit. “In short, African local churches have not yet succeeded in providing liturgical venues that serve as occasions for the participants to share mutual divine and human presence, various ministries and to empower themselves for.”⁵⁸ This is negative since Christianity teaches that God created man in his own image and likeness. God is a community of the Trinity. This is clearly the participation in the Church’s community as family. Lastly, the plan of the Church is to make Christians and bring maturity to the Church as family (cf. 1Cor. 15:28). (ii) Genuine Small Christian Communities: Severally, the Synod fathers during the sessions talked about genuine formation of Small Christian Communities as essential for genuine and authentic growth of the Church in Africa.

In order to be authentic, David advises that a Small Christian Community should have the following; First members should be formed to be instruments of evangelization and express God’s love. This will be live in Christ through the initiation Sacraments and other Sacraments. Liturgy makes the two, one in Trinity. “The purpose is to enable a Small Christian Community become an ecclesial community of the Trinity through self-evangelization.”⁵⁹ The SCC therefore should be empowered to carry out well the mission of liberating human race. Second, A forum for on-going formation of evangelization should be put in place to enable members be effective in evangelization. Third, the gathering of ecclesial communities should be empowered so that they become places where members learn to respond to God, to learn to listen to each other and reflecting the Word of God, so as to assimilate it.

Also members learn how to praise the Trinity. Fourth, the communities should discover how to profitably use the gifts given to the Church by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of all. Fifth, members should also be educated to overcome selfishness and ethnocentrism. They should also know that they are an ecclesial community of the Trinity. “Thus they gradually become a symbol of the Trinity’s dynamic presence in the World.”⁶⁰ Sixth, there should be integration of the

⁵⁸ Ibid. 59

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid. 60

African Traditional Religions with the Judaea-Christian religion. This uses the ecumenical climate and inter-religious dialogue during family life celebrations in rural and urban areas.

In order to keep the above objectives, Small Christian Communities should be formed as ecclesial gatherings of the Trinity. This should be given priority. “The Church-as-Family, with the domestic church as its dynamic cell, cannot develop its potential and respond adequately to the needs and aspirations of the people in Africa without these ecclesial organs.”⁶¹ SCCs are the means and vehicles of salvation in the Church today. There should be therefore integration of African values and attitudes with those of the gospel for a good end-result.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The above thoughts from different theologians and scholars show the importance of Small Christian Communities in the Church. What has been central in the above texts is the fact that the Church is seen as the family of God. Where there is a family, more especially in the African context, there is obviously the father and the mother, together with their children. Men have always been seen as heads of their families until recent.

Despite the fact that women have come forward to prove their ability to lead families as single parents, as well as leading SCCs, men are to be motivated to be aggressive as heads of their families, and lead their families to being active participants in SCC activities.

⁶¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 A PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE ON SCCs IN OUR LADY QUEEN OF HEAVEN – KAREN PARISH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this third chapter, the researcher will give the practical analysis of his work. This he will do through the spiral (pastoral cycle) methodology, through See, Judge and Act, as well as using the Practicum plan/Report for the insertion. Again in this chapter, we will look at the social – cultural situation, the geographical set up and brief history, the ethical factor and cultural diversity, the socio-economical and political set-up of the parish. The pastoral assessment, faith formation for men, as well as the general assessment to the effectiveness of men and active participation in SCCs will conclude this chapter. It is an intensive chapter with the very practical part of what the researcher did in the field for the required 150 hours.

3.2 INSERTION EXPERIENCE

The insertion started on Thursday 6th June 2013 at our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish (Karen) when I met the parish Priest Fr. Stephen Omondi, who handed me over to the two catechists of the parish - Peter Mwangi Waturu (Karen) and Stanslaus Kimanthi (Karinde). Catechist Peter Mwangi, the head catechist, ushered me to the programme of all the SCCs of the parish, showing me the different hours, places/venues SCC members meet for their meetings and activities. Some SCCs meet at the church compound while some meet in the homes of members. Out of the total 20 SCCs, 10 meet at the Church compound while the other 10 meet in their homes. Meeting days are also different. There are some SCCs that meet on weekdays, while some meet on Sundays at the Church compound.

Since insertion is about being with the community, experiencing the activities of the community by joining and journeying with them, I made a programme that I had to join them. As Alberto Parise puts it so well that, “Insertion means direct contact with reality in order for the researcher to affect us leading to involvement empathy and commitment.”⁶² Insertion is therefore

⁶² Cf. A. PARISE, *The Pastoral Cycle: A Pedagogy of Social Transformation, Social Ministry*, 160.

experiencing and being in really touch with the community. As a researcher, I joined the SCCs, not as a teacher, an animator or not in my religious status as a Priest, but as one of them, a member, and above all as a student since the Christians are the experts. I allowed myself to experience the reality and be one of them. It was a quite exciting experience.

3.3 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF KAREN PARISH

Our Lady of Queen of Heaven (Regina Caeli) Karen Parish belongs to Nairobi Archdiocese in Kenya. The Parish has two different set ups; the urban (town) set-up and rural (village) set-up. This is necessitated by the social status and situation of the people.

The Parish has three residential Diocesan Priests. They are;

- a) Rev. Fr. Stephen Omondi – The Parish Priest,
- b) Rev. Fr. James Maloba – Assisting Priest,
- c) Rev. Fr. Peter Kiarie – Assisting Priest.

There are two catechists;

- a) Mr. Peter Mwangi Waturu – Karen centre,
- b) Sr. Felistus (Daughters of St. Anne) – Karinde.

There are other several religious congregations of brothers and sisters who do assist at their capacities and planned time.

Karen parish has only one outstation (St. John-Karinde). The total number of SCCs in the whole parish is 20 (twenty), with Karen Centre having 17 and Karinde outstation has three (3).

There are also faith groups (devotional and associations) which are active in the parish. They are; CMA, CWA, PMC, MYM, Choir, Youth, Friends of Regina Caeli, Legion of Mary, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Society of St. Vincent de Paul and a Prayer group.

The Parish has three major committees; PPC, Development (Caritas), and Finance committee. For efficiency and effectiveness of the parish pastoral and development programmes, the above groups have their committees. Other committees include;

- a) Liturgical,
- b) CJPC committees.

Each SCC also has its officials. Much of this information will be discussed in 3.12.

3.4 WEEKLY BIBLE SHARING MEETING – ST. LUCIA SCC – KARINDE

St. Lucia SCC is one of the three SCCs found in St. John's-Karinde outstation. The other SCCs are, St. Anne and St. Theresa. Members of St. Lucia SCC meet every Friday at 4:00pm in one of the member's home.

On Friday 14th June 2013 we met in the house of the Secretary Mrs. Jane Njambi at 5:00pm, instead of 4:00pm. Members came very late. The Chairperson Mr. Peter Mburu was absent, but his vice Mr. Lawrence Ngumbi was present. He took over and coordinated the meeting well.

We followed the *LUMKO* methodology of the seven step structure, though we started with the prayer of the Holy Rosary.

a) Inviting the Lord;

We invited the Lord with a hymn, and then the prayer of the Rosary.

b) Reading the text;

The coordinator delegated two members who read the Word of God from Mk. 10:46–52. Mrs. Mwangi read first, then after a while, Mrs. Kioko also read the same text.

c) Picking out words and meditating on them;

The gospel passage was about 'The Healing of the Blind man (Bartimaeus)'. Members picked words and phrases, read them slowly, prayerfully and meditatively. Then Lawrence himself read the text the third time.

d) Letting God speak in silence;

We let God speak to us in silence by being quiet for three minutes.

e) Sharing from the heart;

We shared what we heard in our hearts. Majority members had a chance to share. Most discussed phrases were, 'call him,' 'take courage,' 'Get up,' 'he is calling you,' 'what do you want me to do for you'? 'Master, I want to see'.

f) Discussing task to do as a group;

In discussing our action plan through the See, Judge and Act, we agreed that each member becomes a disciple to bring people to Jesus, the Healer.

Then Lawrence thanked all members present, and urged them to keep the light shining.

He invited the Secretary (Jane) to read notices, and told us where we were meeting next.

Then we had a collection, accompanied by a hymn. This collection is for helping the stationary, for buying notebooks, pens, files as well as candles.

g) Spontaneous prayers and Conclusion;

We had prayers of the faithful led by Lawrence, Njambi and two more members. At the end of the prayers of the faithful, I was invited to bless the community which I did. Joyce Ndung'u led the final hymn, during which we offered each other the sign of peace.

The meeting ended at 6:15PM. There were nine (9) women who attended, and one man (Lawrence). I was the second man.

3.5 A CASE STUDY OF MEN'S PARTICIPATION

3.5.1 *St. Martin de Porres SCC*

This SCC belongs to the parish centre (Karen) and members usually meet on Wednesdays at 6:00pm, in one of the member's home.

On Wednesday 26th June, 2013 we met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kandie. We began with the Divine Mercy Rosary prayer at 6.10pm led by the host, Mrs. Kandie herself.

Then we read from 2 Thess. 2. While sharing the word, a Mr. Mungai gave a very emotional family testimony. He expressed how they (his wife and himself) had gone astray, but their son remained faithful to the Catholic Faith. At some moment, they had to come back to the Catholic Church, and up to now, they are stronger than before.

SEE part – We were informed of a member (Mr. Njagi) who is elderly and sick.

JUDGE part – We decided to hold the next Jumuiya meeting at his home, after the chair prepares the family.

ACT part – We agreed to carry something like food items for him. Some members decided to give their contribution in form of money then the coordinator to buy the items.

The attendance in this meeting was well balanced, since there were eight (8) men and eight (8) women. This participation of men here is very encouraging.

3.5.2 *St. Pius V SCC*

Members of this Christian Community meet on Wednesdays at 2:00PM, at the Parish's old rectory.

On Wednesday 5th February 2014, we met as usual. The Chairperson, Mr. Felix Ndegwa delegated Mr. Patrick Simiyu to lead the day's prayers. We had the opening hymn followed by the prayer of the Rosary.

On this day, the Gospel reading was from Mt 5:13-16, on 'Being salt of the earth, and light of the world.' Since we were seated in a cycle (the proper sitting arrangement in SCC meeting), each member had a chance to share. The base of the sharing being how salt gives flavor to food, and how light shades away darkness. Relating the reading to how our Christian life should be full of life, flavor. Also, how light should illumine our lives and keep off all darkness in us. The attendance in this SCC that day was excellent since men were ten (10), and women were also ten (10). This demonstrated how men can also be strong in SCC activities.

3.6 EXAMPLE OF SCCs WITHOUT MEN

3.6.1 *St. Catherine of Siena SCC*

St. Catherine of Siena SCC is a very vibrant community with 99% of its attendants being women. Members of this SCC (which belongs to the centre-Karen) meet on Mondays at 4:30PM in one of the member's house.

On Monday, the 20th of January 2014, meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mambo Leo. Since the husband was absent, Mrs. Mambo took the initiative of welcoming us and led the opening prayer as well as the Rosary. That day, we read from Mt. 4:12-23, 'The Call of the Four Disciples'. Mrs. Edith Migarusha Chadiva (secretary) and Mrs. Anne Ogeto shared on how Jesus began his ministry by calling the four as companions.

This meeting was attended by 18 women, and I was the only man present. This clearly shows how Women in this SCC do everything by themselves regardless of the absence of men.

3.6.2 St. Anne SCC – Karinde

St. Anne SCC is one of the three Christian communities found in St. John's - Karinde outstation. Members of this community meet on Thursdays at 4:00PM in one of the member's home.

On Thursday 6th March, 2014, members gathered in the house of Mrs. Jacinta Kago, who is also the Chairperson of this community.

We began with the opening hymn and opening prayer in Kikuyu language. The prayer of the Rosary was also in Kikuyu and Kiswahili. After the Rosary, we sung two Kikuyu songs to welcome the Word of God. The Gospel from Mt.4:1-11 was first read in Kikuyu, and then repeated in Kiswahili. The Gospel reading was about the 'Temptations of Jesus', much of the sharing was about how prayer and fasting, with our knowledge of the scriptures, can be our tool to overcoming temptations in our daily lives, just like Jesus did defeat the Satan in the desert.

The chairperson delegated three members to say the prayers of the faithful. Then we sung three Kikuyu songs before having a collection. While the treasurer verified her records with members, the Secretary called out the roll-call, read notices and made announcements, assisted by the Chairperson. The meeting was concluded with a prayer and a Marian hymn. Present in this meeting were 23 women. Again, I was the only man present. Women in this SCC, just like in the community of St. Catherine of Siena, are the majority in attendance and very active.

3.7 SOCIAL CULTURAL ANALYSIS

The opening remarks in the introduction of his book 'African Religions and Philosophy', Prof. John S. Mbiti says, "Africans are notoriously religious"⁶³. Religion brings communal and the African culture is built on communal aspect. Social life in Africa is automatic and whoever does not promote it, is cut-off from the community. If Africans and religion are one, then the culture of brotherhood is clearly demonstrated. John Paul II asserts this when he says, "...the synthesis between culture and faith is not only a demand of culture but also of faith, because a faith that does not become culture is not fully accepted, not entirely thought out, not faithfully lived."⁶⁴

⁶³ J. S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*,1

⁶⁴ J. PAUL II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, n.78

This can be related to the social life of the first community of believers found in Acts 2 and 4.

There is 'unity in diversity' here, since Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish is rich in this culture, brought by the Christian aspect. The structure of SCCs makes the Christians bonded together regardless of their cultural and ethical differences. Each member of the faithful belongs to a SCC depending on neighborhood, work or business aiming to share the same faith and our Christian values.

The Parish newsletter which is published weekly (every Sunday) has its logo reading, 'The Small Christian Communities founded on love and trust, are the foundation of our Church'. This clearly indicates how SCCs have consolidated the parishioners into one family.

Some of the cultural values that foster growth of SCCs in Karen parish include;

- a) Mixed Cultures – Members of different cultures share the richness of each culture and benefit by practicing the positive values.
- b) Inter – marriages – With mixed and diverse cultures, Christians from different nationalities and tribes get married, and create a strong union/bond in the SCCs.

Positively, SCCs have brought unity, peace and integration amongst the people. There has also been improvement on personal growth of faith.

The parish has also associations and devotional groups which lead to growth of faith for individual members, as well as the whole group. Some of the Associations include CMA, CWA, Youth, PMC, MYM and Friends of Regina Caeli. Devotional groups are Legion of Mary, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Prayer Group and Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Culture can also have negative impact, if not positively embraced. Some of the negative trends which may result from culture include; tribalism, nepotism, corruption, biasness. These can cause tension and division, which can result to disunity, disharmony and cause war. These should be avoided by all means, the only possible way being, through SCC way of life.

3.8 GEOGRAPHICAL SET-UP AND BRIEF HISTORY

Our Lady Queen of Heaven – Karen Parish is located in the Western deanery of Nairobi Archdiocese. It was started as an outstation of St. Austin Parish – (Muthangari) by the Holy Ghost Missionaries (Spiritans) in 1953, under the inspiration of Our Lady Queen of Heaven (Regina Caeli). At that time, it was a place of worship for European Catholics. The land was donated for worship but there was no permanent structure.

When Christians asked for a priest to serve them, the Archbishop asked Fr. John O’ Meara who was the Catholic Education Secretary, who used to reside at St. Austin Parish, to take care of the faithful of Karen. He used to come on weekends to celebrate the sacraments, and St. Mary’ School in Karen was used for Sunday masses.

“After Kenya’s self government in December 1963, the Church became accessible by Catholics of African origin, and in 1971, the parishes contributed to build a parish house. Since then, the Church has grown to the present Parish.”⁶⁵

The current population of the whole parish can be estimated to about 2000 parishioners. The parish centre (Karen) has five masses on Sunday and two masses at the outstation (Karinde). The parish celebrated 60 years in June 2013.

The presence of three vibrant and active Priests has tremendously increased the number of worshipers. While the capacity of the present church at the centre can be estimated at 1700 Christians, the growth of this population has prompted to starting the project of building a new modern Church with the capacity of 2000 Christians.

3.9 THE ETHICAL FACTOR AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

As already noted above, Karen Parish is cosmopolitan. It is a Parish with many ethical groups, majority being Kikuyu, Luhya and Luo. There are also Kamba, Kisii, Kalenjin and Maasai, not to mention other communities. We want to look at the negative ethnicity and the positives of cultural diversity.

⁶⁵ Cf. S. GBAKI, *The Pastoral Challenges of Marital Commitment*, 9

After the 2007-2008 disputed presidential election results, Kenya plunged into tribal clashes. This was mainly between Kikuyu verses Luo joined by Kalenjin tribes. It is now ten years since this happened and still there is tension. The dust has never settled, yet we have come to another election mood. I think we should be very cautious as Kenyans.

During that time, SCC activities could not be done the way they are done today. People from one ethnic group could not go for SCC prayer meeting in a house of a member from a different ethnic group, fearing that they could be attacked. It is clear that, though not mentioned loudly, tension has remained high amongst some communities, despite efforts by Government agents, NGOs and the CJPC assisting in teaching civic education and co-existence.

As a result of the division caused by the tribal clashes, SCC prayer meetings registered very low turn-out. There was no freedom to attending SCC meetings anywhere, thus, resulting to disunity, division and segregation. This gave birth to ethnocentrism, which according to Professor Mary Getui, “It sets in when the cultural differences are translated to imply superiority, which causes tension, bias, and prejudice. Ethnocentrism attitude emerges when the ethnic factor is used to despise, sideline or look down upon those from another ethnic background... Ethnocentrism has no concern for human rights and common good.”⁶⁶

Nevertheless, the diversity of cultures in Karen Parish as already noted in 3.7 can be used positively for building a strong and united Christian community. Negatively, this becomes an impediment to the growth of Small Christian Communities.

3.10 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN KAREN PARISH

Karen Parish as already indicated above has complex economic set-up. The diversity of people of different race and cultures brings positive growth of the economy.

Karen centre where the set-up is of urban, majority residents are the able class. There are white settlers (of European origin), Government officials, (e.g. The DP and the AG of the Republic of Kenya), politicians, current and retired civil servants reside in Karen.

⁶⁶ Cf. M. GETUI, *Ethnicity, Conflict and the nature of African States*. 44

The presence of the elite class can be noticed by the great shopping centers. The presence of the old Karen shopping center, the Nakumatt (Karen) Supermarket, the (new) Karen Hub, and a new shopping mall under construction, is an indication of growth of economy in Karen.

There is also a local market just behind the Parish house, next to Our Lady of Peace primary school. This market serves the middle class people and those working for the elite class. Noticed also are local kiosks fruits and food vendors along the road as well as at the bus stage.

On education, children of the elite go to academies and private schools for their education while those of the rest of people go to the public schools.

Housing is complicated, since those able have built or bought their mansions and estates. The Parish is also surrounded by several religious institutions and religious formation houses. St. Mary's primary school is public Catholic sponsored, and the Assumption Sisters of Nairobi are running their school 'Our Lady of Peace (Kielty Trust) primary school,' located just behind the parish church. Although this school appears private, it admits and serves children of the very local communities.

The situation is quite different in Karinde, the only outstation of the parish. The major population here is of low class people. Most of them are workers who cannot afford good housing. Most people live in mud structures, metal and semi-permanent houses. Very few people have permanent structures. The shopping center is of retail shops. There are also scattered kiosks. Their local market is small with local food vendors along the road.

The infrastructure of the place is bad. The road is in a very bad state since there is no single inch of tarmac. Few children attend academies while majority attend public schools. The parish has a school at the Church compound (Karinde), St. Francis of Assisi primary School, under the administration of the Franciscan Sisters of Assisi. This School admits all children. Within the Parish jurisdiction, there are also several public and private schools, as well as Universities.

Politically, Karen is hotbed since the population here extends to Ngong in Kajiado County, while Karen itself belongs to from Nairobi County, Langata constituency. However, Karinde area belongs to Kabete constituency which falls under Kiambu County. Since many of the political

class reside in Karen, the area faces big competition when it comes to campaign period. Development is also taking shape because of the political competition, especially between the National Government and Nairobi County Government.

3.11 THE IMPACT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN KAREN

Karen is not only Catholic populated, but there are also other faiths and denominations. The Catholic Church has been categorical in giving services for the whole community, regardless of the people's different religious affiliations.

The three primary schools closely associated with the parish, St. Mary's primary school (Karen) which is public Catholic sponsored primary school, Our Lady of Peace, Kieley Trust primary school which is for the Assumption Sisters of Nairobi, and St. Francis of Assisi primary school in Karinde which belongs to the parish, are all open to all children, not admitting only children of Catholic families but more especially the needy. These schools are over populated because they act as public, admitting all children.

There are also institutions which are not initiated or run by the parish but are run by Catholic congregations. The Salesians of Don Bosco for instance, have four centers which admit all needy people. They run the Kuinda home and school for street children, the Don Bosco Utume, the Don Bosco Technical Institute as well as the Don Bosco Youth Centre. These centers benefit not only Catholics but all who need knowledge. The Marist International University, run by the Marist Brothers admits all people. There are also other social amenities like St. Odilus hospital which is run by the Benedictine Sisters, is open to all people who need health services.

There are also opportunities for work at the parish for all who have the knowledge. Like, the current construction of the new church has employed many workers regardless of their faith. Also, this work is not offered to only Catholics.

The methodology used by SCCs is that of See, Judge and Act. In implementing their work plan and programmes, some SCCs (like St. Catherine of Siena, St. Anne – Karinde and St. Pius V) do contribute and assist families or individuals who are needy, less fortunate and vulnerable in the

society. Those assisted are not only Catholics. The parish CJPC committee organizes for annual outreach to Lang’ata Women prison. All those assisted both Catholics and non Catholics.

3.12 PASTORAL ASSESSMENT

Our Lady Queen of Heaven (Regina Caeli) – Karen is very busy parish with a bee hive of daily pastoral activities. The leadership structure of the parish helps in running the programmes, right from the top to the grass roots (SCCs). The structure is as follows;

3.12.1 The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

The Parish Pastoral Council is the umbrella committee (body) that overlooks all pastoral activities in the parish. The formation of PPC is mandated in the code of Canon Law; “If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune after he has heard the presbyteral council, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity.” (Can. 536)

The vital role of the PPC is to provide leadership, enhance pastoral activities in the parish and to provide link in the parish structures. “It is a vehicle through which the parish as a totality can participate in the saving mission of the Church by giving all the parishioners, directly or indirectly, a voice in the various activities of the parish”⁶⁷

In Karen Parish, the composition of the PPC is as follows;

- a) The Father in Charge (Parish Priest – PP)
- b) Assistant Father in Charge
- c) Elected representatives of Sub-parishes/outstations or SCCs where there are no outstations
- d) Chairmen of Parish Ecclesial Movements.

Formation of the PPC is through elections which take place at the grassroots, bringing together the representatives of either Sub-parish/outstation or SCCs and Ecclesial Movements. These

⁶⁷ G. V. Lobo, *Moral and Pastoral Questions*, 99

members of the PPC elect the Executive, i.e. Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Vice-Secretary and Treasurer.

The current Parish Executive Council of Karen parish is;

- a) Chairperson – Mr. Harley Mutisya.
- b) Vice Chairperson – Mr. Edward Muriuki.
- c) Secretary - Mrs. Pamela Olende.
- d) Vice Secretary – Mr. Michael Gakere.
- e) Treasurer - Mrs. Enid Nyanja.

The functions of the PPC are;

- a) To assist the Church's apostolic work in evangelization, sanctification, charity, social work and catechesis.
- b) To enhance communication from different levels of the Parish to the faithful and vice versa.
- c) To formulate pastoral and physical development plan for the Parish.
- d) To assist the Father in Charge in Parish administration.

According to the Pastoral Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Nairobi (2013), "The Chairman of the executive in any elected group in the Parish is the Father in Charge. His delegates are moderators."⁶⁸ It must be noted that the Small Christian Community is the foundation and base of the PPC, so is the Parish Executive Council PEC.

3.12.2 The Pastoral Programme

Karen Parish has a pastoral team of three Priests and two catechists. There are also sub-committees, which operate under the PPC and some are specifically for implementing deliberations of the PPC. These are committees of the different Associations and Devotional groups, while some are of administrative offices. All these, however, report their programmes and progresses to the PPC. These committees include;

- a) The Pastoral Committee
- b) The Finance Committee(Cann.537 & 1280)

⁶⁸ Pastoral Guidelines for the Archdiocese of Nairobi (2013), 12

- c) The Liturgical Committee
- d) The Choir Committee
- e) The CMA Committee
- f) The CWA Committee
- g) The Youth Committee
- h) The PMC (PMU) Committee
- i) The CJPC Committee
- j) Friends of Regina Caeli
- k) Sacred Heart
- l) Legion Maria
- m) Missionary Youth Movement (MYM).

The many pastoral activities found at the parish are meant to enhance faith to the faithful. Some of the activities include:-

- a) School apostolate – PPI and YCS.
- b) Celebration of sacraments in the SCCs
- c) Apostolate to the Sick and elderly
- d) Family apostolate, including Family Life and Marriage Encounter Programmes.

Practically, the above activities are implemented through lay ministries ‘Huduma.’ The lay ministers ‘Wahudumu’ become the eyes of the pastoral team which is led by the Parish Priest. That is, through the Wahudumu, the SCC leaders and the priests come to know the pastoral needs of the faithful at their homes and get to reach them.

The PP of Our Lady Queen of Heaven parish has also engaged the SCCs in a vigorous programme of monthly masses, and also celebrating the Eucharist during their Patron Saints Day. There is also a programme for faith-formation for all men through seminars at parish, church and SCC levels. SCCs also by themselves organize masses to mark members’ birthdays or anniversaries.

Small Christian Communities in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish (Karen), have proved to be proper tools of evangelization and truly New Way of Being Church, since over 70% of their

activities are pastorally oriented. “They provide ongoing formation of the laity in prayer, scripture study, life sharing and out-reach to the needs of the society.”⁶⁹ As ‘New Way of Being Church,’ SCCs are truly means of both personal and ecclesial renewal. They use the See, Judge and Act method to serve the society.

Seminars and workshops are also held at SCC level so as to reach more people as much as possible and to enable full participation of all the laity. They also organize recollections, retreats, and pilgrimages for the growth of their spiritual life.

Another great role played by the SCCs is animating Sunday liturgy (serving at mass). This is a responsibility for every SCC under a duty roster. During the Parish Family Day, SCCs were engaged in preparing for some items for presentation, both for competition and for entertainment. This was done purposely to help the growth and realization of people’s talents, especially the young people.

3.13 FAITH FORMATION FOR MEN

Men in Our Lady Queen Parish have a very vibrant group, the CMA. Under the CMA leadership, they organize activities that enhance their social and spiritual growth. Their socialization programmes are like parties, birthdays, etc. At the same time, they also have formation programmes to enhance their spiritual growth. Here, they learn about their roles and responsibilities in the Church, as well as other topical issues to help them in their daily endeavors as Christians.

On participation in the parish apostolate and formation programmes, men involve themselves in;

- a) Animating the Sunday Liturgy
- b) Seminars and workshops for spiritual growth
- c) Retreats and recollections
- d) Eucharistic celebrations – for the group and also for individual members.
- e) Pilgrimages – to Komarock, Resurrection Garden, Village of Mary (Subukia) and Namugongo shrine in Uganda.

These activities are important for the formation of the faith of all Men in the Parish, since through them, they encourage and motivate one another. Fr. James Maloba is the chaplain of the

⁶⁹ J. P. Vandenakker, *Small Christian Communities and the Parish*, xi

CMA, in accordance with Cann. 562-572. As a chaplain, Fr. Maloba coordinates their spiritual activities within the parish.

3.14 GENERAL ASSESSMENT ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEN'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SCCs

As just observed in 3.13, men are active in their CMA group. When it comes to participating in SCCs, they are very cold. As noted in 3.6, men rarely participate in SCC activities. Many of them give lame excuses to justify their laxity and absence in attending SCCs.

On Saturday the 29th of April 2017, I had the privilege to celebrate the Eucharist with St. Catherine Siena SCC, to mark their patron saint's day. Out of the 20 members who attended the celebration, there was only one man. However, during meal time, one man drove in, a husband to Mary-Anne, the Vice Secretary of this SCC. When I asked him why I had not seen for him for the two years I was a member, and why he was late for the Holy Mass, he confidently replied that he usually has a very busy schedule, and even he was from a meeting. Again he said, he does not attend the SCC meetings because he works along Mombasa road where he is always held up by traffic the very time the Small Christian Community members are meeting (at 4.30pm). I believe that he wanted to justify himself before me.

He is not the only man with such lame excuses. Fr. Maloba says, "Men need a lot of attention as well as close monitoring and a Pastor who can walk with them in order to motivate them to be active in every activity in the Church, including SCC."⁷⁰ For the whole of my practicum period to attain my 150 hours in the field, I happened to attend 26 SCC meetings and activities. The total number of women who attended was 846, while that of men was only 168. This gap speaks volumes.

Pope Paul VI says, "Today there is a very large number of baptized people who for the most part have not formally renounced their Baptism but who are entirely indifferent to it and not living in accordance with it... This is as a result of natural weakness, a profound inconsistency which we

⁷⁰ Interview with the author on Monday, 14th July, 2014 1915hrs

unfortunately bear deep within us... It also springs from Christians who live in close proximity with non-believers and constantly experience the effects of unbelief.”⁷¹ Majority men found here.

This low attendance by men enables women to be strong in leadership and become active participants in SCCs. Where men participate actively, a big difference is noticed, not only to them, but to their families. The common motto for CMA that goes, ‘Good Family, God Church; Good Church, Good Family,’ should really be practical so that men can evangelize their families through their active participation in SCCs. As St. Ireneus says that, ‘God is glorified when men are fully alive’. Men should be active participants in SCCs so that their families can be motivated and be strengthened in faith.

3.15 CONCLUSION

The above chapter has given the researcher a chance to demonstrate all that he did during his 150 hour practicum in the field. The general assessment clearly shows that men are inactive when it comes to participation in SCC activities.

The Quantitative and Qualitative aspects show a big difference. If only men could change and be active participants in SCCs, just the same way they are active in CMA and in other social activities, families could become fully beneficiaries of SCCs.

Just as Paul VI refers Small Christian Communities as “a great hope for the Universal Church,”⁷² and John Paul II referring them as “a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization, and a solid starting point for a new society based on a civilization of love,”⁷³ men should take the advantage to benefit from the faith formation programmes within parish so as to be strong in faith.

⁷¹ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 56

⁷² Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 58

⁷³ Cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 51

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this fourth chapter, the researcher will look at the theological reflection of the whole research. The first part will be about the participation of men in SCCs in the light of Acts 2:36 – 47. The second part will be on the theological synthesis in the light of Acts 2:36 – 47. The scriptures as base for SCCs in the New Testament give a clear picture of how and why men should be active participants in SCCs.

4.2 MEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SCCs IN THE LIGHT OF ACTS 2:36-47

Jesus' action of calling his first four disciples (Mk 1:16-20) and then the appointment of the twelve apostles (Mt 10:1-4), acts as basis for the participation of men in matters of faith in the Church. These are the same apostles who were instrumental in starting the community of believers, the first Christians (Acts 11:26).

The passage in Acts 2:36 – 47 gives a clear picture of men specifically being participants in the first Christian Communities. When Peter says in v.36 '...let the whole house of Israel...' means that, the whole family is considered. In this, the 'man' who in Jewish culture is head of the family (household), should take charge. In v.38, Peter tells the congregation to 'repent and be baptized'. I believe majority of those present were men. He was therefore talking direct to men about matters of their faith. Peter continues in v.39, literally mentioning even children, vividly showing how the whole family was invited for conversion. In v.44 he uses the word '...all...' meaning the whole family that is, men, women and children (father, mother and children).

These verses which indicate the first gathering of the apostles and the community, should invite men to reflect about their role and responsibility in the Church, and actively participate in SCCs in order to motivate their families. The fact that the first disciples and the apostles were men, should make men proud of witnessing their faith in SCCs.

4.3 A THEOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS IN THE LIGHT OF ACTS 2:36 – 47

In the above scriptural references, men take a centre stage as noted already in the first part of this chapter. In this second part, we shall look at the theological synthesis of these verses.

Peter leading the eleven (vv.36-41) had a very strong message to the community, that they had to ask what to do, and he invited them to repent, change their crooked ways and be baptized.

In the second part (vv.42-47), Luke gives the four pillars of SCCs, as well as the social life that SCCs should embrace.

Verse 42 has the following:

- a) ‘...devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles...’ The Catholic Church being ‘Apostolic’ has her foundation in the apostles. The apostles were teaching the word of God. This is the first pillar of SCCs since scripture is basic for all SCCs.

- b) ‘...to the communal life...’

This is unity, that all members of the SCC should have communion. It is an aspect of worship as well as social life. SCCs worship together and help one another, an aspect found in the African culture. Without communal life, SCCs cannot exist since this is what makes a community (Jumuiya). John Mbiti talks about the African communal aspect that it is automatic. “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.”⁷⁴ This is noticed again in vv.44-45; 4:32, 34-37.

- c) ‘...to the breaking of the bread...’

The first community led by the apostles had this tradition as they lived Jesus’ command in Lk.22:14-20 as well as in 1Cor. 11:2, 23 – 26. It is proper that SCCs organize for celebration of the Eucharist in their homes/houses. During the Eucharist celebration in the SCCs, sacraments like baptism can be administered. This spiritual meal strengthens the SCCs members to stay united the more.

- d) ‘...to the prayers...’

Prayer is central in the life of a Christian. As it is, prayer is our communication with God. Prayer acts as our response to God since He speaks to us through the scriptures. This is following the example of Jesus himself, who prayed before and after every public activity (Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-11; Mt 14:13-23). In the SCC, prayer is core. The common motto in

⁷⁴ J. S. MBITI, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 108

the Church that goes, ‘A family that prays together, stays together’, should be used as a slogan to challenge the faith of the whole family. The families that come together to form a SCC are bonded by prayer, hence being sons (and daughters) of God (Mt.6:9-13).

The four pillars mentioned are truly foundation to the formation and life of Small Christian Communities.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The theological reflection has clearly demonstrated how scripture gives the basic foundation of SCCs. Fr. George Lobo, a Jesuit Priest says, “The first group of Christians at Jerusalem are described as a true community. ‘With one mind they kept up their daily attendance at the temple and, breaking bread in private homes, shared their meals with unaffected joy’ (Acts 2:46). ‘The whole body of believers was united in heart and soul’ (Acts 4:32).”⁷⁵ This is what is really needed in our SCCs, being united in heart and soul.

Men have been clearly seen as the first people who formed the first Christian community. Their active participation will therefore enhance and strengthen the growth of faith in their families. The four pillars as foundation to SCCs should be strengthened to make SCCs real and truly ‘New Way of Being Church.’

In conclusion, Pope Benedict XVI shows how these pillars are united when he says, “The Church’s deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility; of proclaiming the word of God (Kerygma), celebrating the sacraments (Leitourgia), and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable.”⁷⁶

Let all men in the Church direct their efforts and energies to the promotion and growth of the faith of their families literally by being active participants in Small Christian Communities.

⁷⁵ G. V. Lobo, 95

⁷⁶ BENEDICT XVI, *Deus Est*. 29

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 PASTORAL RECOMMENDATION FOR MORE PARTICIPATION OF MEN IN SCCs IN THE MALINDI DIOCESE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this last chapter, the researcher will look at what is happening in Malindi Diocese regarding men and SCCs. This chapter will also enable the researcher to give practical suggests as recommendations and way forward to motivate men to actively participate in SCCs. All this is aimed at enhancing and boosting the faith of all family members. I trust, men will take this challenge positively and be good evangelizers to their families.

5.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF MALINDI DIOCESE

The Catholic Diocese of Malindi was created on 2nd June, 2000 by Pope John Paul II, with the nomination of Bishop Francis Baldacchino, one of the first Maltese Capuchin Missionaries who had come to Kenya in 1975. He was consecrated as the first Bishop of Malindi diocese on 2nd September 2000.

The Diocese was carved from the Northern part of the Archdiocese of Mombasa and the Southern part of the diocese of Garissa. The diocese covers the whole of Malindi (District), now the northern part of Kilifi County, Tana – Delta (District) now southern part of Tana River County and the whole of Lamu County (former Lamu District). It covers about 33,254Km² with a population of over 539,000. The seat of the diocese was put at Malindi, and the parishes then were only seven - Lamu, Malindi(Cathedral), Marafa, Mpeketoni, Tarasaa, Wema and Witu/Kipini.

The Diocese was put under the patronage of St.Francis Xavier (a Jesuit Missionary Priest) who had passed through Malindi enroute to India and Japan in 1542AD, being attracted by the pillar built by Vasco-da-Gama (a Portuguese explorer) in 1498AD.

When the pioneer Bishop (Rt. Rev. Francis Baldacchino, OFM. Cap) passed on the 9th of October 2009, the Diocese was administrated by Bishop Paul Darmanin of Garissa diocese and Bishop Martin Kivuwa Musonde (then of Machakos Diocese, now

Archbishop of Mombasa Archdiocese), before the appointment of Fr. Emanuel Barbara, OFM. Cap on 7th July 2011, and consecrated on 1st October 2011 as second Bishop of the diocese of St. Francis Xavier - Malindi.

Today, the diocese has 18 parishes distributed in three Deaneries:-

- a) Northern Deanery :- Baharini, Hindi, Hongwe, Lamu and Mpeketoni.
- b) Central Deanery :- Garsen, Tarasaa, Wema and Witu/Kipini
- c) Southern Deanery:- Cathedral (Malindi), Chakama, Gongoni, St.Francis Xavier, Langobaya, Marafa, Mere, Msabaha and Watamu. (Mida Mission is still under the administration of Watamu parish).

There has been growth of vocations as well as increase of missionary congregations working under the pastoral department as well as Caritas offices. At the time of its creation in 2000, the Diocese had only one Diocesan Priest. Today there are 15 Diocesan Priests, one Deacon and 8 Seminarians. There are 8 Missionary Congregations for Priests working in parishes and offices, and one Religious brother (Br. Franz Bischof) from the Society of St. Joseph – Mill Hill Missionaries. Women Religious Congregations working in the Diocese are 13. These Sisters do their apostolate in the parishes, in the Diocesan offices as well as in the Diocesan institutions of learning (schools and colleges).

On education, there are parishes which run ECD and primary schools. The Diocese also runs institutions which assist all children regardless of their faith.

These institutions are;

- a) Blessed Bakanja Secondary School – a mixed boarding secondary school for all.
- b) St. Francis Small Home – a home for physically challenged children.
- c) Motolese Professional School – a vocational training school for young people.
- d) Pope Francis Rescue Home – a home for abused young girls and boys.

The Diocese sponsors over 10 primary schools, which were started by the first Missionaries before and immediately after Kenya's independence. These are public but Catholic sponsored, since the church started them but the government runs them by employing teachers as well as running the curriculum.

5.3 THE VISION AND MISSION

5.3.1 *The Vision*

“The Catholic Diocese of Malindi, inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, his message/values, aspire to reach out to every person that all may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10).”⁷⁷

This vision expresses exactly what the Diocese is doing to the whole of humanity in the Diocese. No persons lack services because of faith affiliation or tribe, since the Gospel is to all humanity.

5.3.2 *The Mission*

“The Catholic Diocese of Malindi, inspired by the Gospel of Christ, seeks to evangelize all people by responding and attending to spiritual social, economic, political and cultural needs based on Catholic Social Teachings, using the principles of hope, faith, and love through collaboration with other willing stakeholders to achieve full human development in light of morality, equity, transparency, accountability, justice and truth.”⁷⁸

What this mission of the Diocese stipulates is experienced throughout the Diocese via the different departments and offices, i.e. Pastoral and Development (Caritas), where the Diocese has set broad and strategic objectives. They are;

- a) Family and Sacramental life
- b) Health
- c) Education.

Through the above objectives, the whole Diocese receives services from the pastoral agents and workers of the Diocese.

⁷⁷ CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MALINDI, *Strategic Plan* (2013 – 2019).n. 3.1

⁷⁸ Ibid. n. 3.2

5.4 MEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SCCs AND MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE DIOCESE OF MALINDI

As SCCs are 'New Way of being Church,' the diocese of Malindi empowers her laity through these SCCs. Since SCCs are vehicles of faith in families, they create conducive environment for spiritual nourishment and spiritual growth of all Christians.

Men in the Diocese are brought together under the Umbrella body of CMA, just like all women are under CWA. Both CMA and CWA fall under the Diocesan Gender office. However, all faith groups ought to participant in SCCs.

The Diocesan Pastoral structure of leadership begins with elections at the SCCs. Those elected at that level come together to form the Church council. The elected executives of the church councils form the parish pastoral council. Three executions from every parish form the deanery pastoral council, and two executive from every parish form the diocesan pastoral council which is headed by the Bishop.

The participation of men in SCCs here is therefore very vital since the basis and foundation of these committees is the SCC. Men are to take the challenge of knowing their role in the family as well as in the Church so that these committees can be strong. In Malindi Diocese, men are well represented in these committees since they are officials of their respective SCCs.

Very Rev. Fr. Albert Buijs, MHM, the Vicar General of Malindi Diocese, who is also the Diocesan Pastoral Coordinator and Parish Priest of St. Francis Xavier parish, Kisumu-Ndogo in Malindi town, strongly believes that only Small Christian Communities can bring the Gospel to the people. Commenting on participation of men to SCCs, Fr. Albert says that, "It is never uniform and static. One parish can have men who actively participate in SCCs, while in another, there can be only two or even none. There isn't one parish at one moment men attend in good numbers, say 100%, but sometimes they try."⁷⁹

Fr. Albert has adopted the LUMKO programme and his parish is the most vibrant when it comes to SCC activities. He emphasizes on the use of lay ministers 'Wahudumu.' He has set a special

⁷⁹ Interview with Fr. Albert Buijs, MHM (through phone), 30/05/2017 1120hrs

parish office headed by Sr. Margaret Obwoye MHM, to deal with Huduma (social services) to all SCC members and even those who are not Catholics receive services. Fr. Albert teaches much about the simple prayer structure found in Tumshangilie Bwana (Swahili) booklet pages 46-47. As the Diocesan Pastoral Coordinator, Fr. Albert has always been available for animation programmes in the different parishes of the Diocese.

However, challenges are inevitable. Some of the major challenges and drawbacks that hinder the active participation of men in SCCs include:-

- a) Priest unwillingness – A missionary from the Society of St. Patrick's Kieran Flynn says, "Small Christian Communities are Church-centered and they exhibit a strong count on their clergy for their development and support. But clericalism and the unwillingness to share responsibility in areas of pastoral concern has to some extent curtailed the development of SCCs in many Church parishes."⁸⁰ Places where Priests are not interested with SCCs yet the faithful depend on them to get knowledge, there is no progress and growth of faith is slow. Some men are easily discouraged by this situation.
- b) Poor Pastoral formation – There is lack of proper formation of men. Much of their activities are concentrated on CMA and may mention little or not even mention the relationship between CMA, CWA and SCCs. Programmes are left to individual groups which have no capacity. Also, there should be teachings which clearly show the difference between SCCs and associations like CMA in the Church. Some men do not attend SCC meetings because leaders are single mothers. They should also be well informed through the faith formation activities.
- c) Poor Leadership – Some SCC leaders have no skills, therefore it discourages some men. Men expect things to be done perfectly. So, in a situation where the leadership is shaky, men withdraw because they want success, not failure or shame. Some leaders are also not living a good moral life. So, they are a bad example to fellow SCC members, leading to some men disassociating themselves from these bad leaders.

⁸⁰ K. FLYNN, *Communities for the Kingdom*. 69

- d) Tribalism and Negative Ethnicity – Some SCCs have majority members from one ethnic community. Some men are integrated to the extent that they dislike any attempt of tribal inclination, either on language or in any form. These decide not to attend SCC meetings so as to avoid being annoyed or being associated with a group that appears propagating for tribalism.

- e) Negative Politics - Some men like politics, while others do not like. Sometimes those who do not like politics may feel offended when instead of sharing about the Word of God in SCCs, people bring negative politics. During this year's Lenten Campaign (2017), the Commission for Justice and Peace of the KCCB chose the title 'Peaceful and Credible Elections: Leaders of Integrity'. During the fourth week, the topic of discussion was 'Elections.' Probably if not well understood, it could cause political heat. On this, the Bishops say that, "It is important to know that we have to participate actively and exercise our (democratic) right to vote, and vote wisely."⁸¹

- f) Alcoholism – Some men are affected by drinking, so, they fear attending SCC activities since they think their behaviors can be discussed. Even their wives discourage them from attending since they (wives) feel ashamed. These men also feel ashamed by themselves. So, to avoid embarrassment from family members including their own children, they choose not to attend the meetings.

- g) Lack of interest – There is just no interested in some men attending SCCs. They may attend CMA activities but fail to attend SCC activities. They lack commitment and motivation. Fr. Albert says, 'Ni uvivu tu!' meaning, 'It is just pure laziness and lack of commitment by men not attending SCC activities.' They just do not feel interested.

- h) Poverty and Money Factor – In the rural parishes where poverty bites much, men opt to go looking for food and water instead of attending SCCs activities. Even in some urban parishes, men who are not employed may avoid SCC meetings since there are

⁸¹ *Peaceful and Credible Election: Leaders of Integrity*, (2017). 7

contributions which are done. Some leaders and priests have also made SCCs places of collecting funds. So, this may put off some men since they feel offended and ashamed if they do not have anything to contribute.

- i) Culture and Illiteracy – Some cultures have male chauvinism/patriarchal systems. So, if leadership of SCCs is of women, men may feel intimidated and degraded. They think that by being men, other will see them as weak.

Fr. Albert attributes this to lack of education. He also says that ‘men degrade women’ to an extent that they decide not to attend SCC meetings with them.

Giryama men, for instance, find it very difficult and awkward to sit down together with women and children listening to one person or listening to a woman talking. This is one of the major reasons as to why Christianity (Catholicism) has not penetrated well among the Mijikenda community. Also on culture, the Mijikenda are very superstitious. Anthony Ntang Ndichia, a Cameroonian Mill Hill Missionary points out this when he says, “In some villages in the Diocese (of Malindi) there are still strong beliefs in superstition and witchcraft. They feel witchcraft could affect their lives, business and family.”⁸² If it is discovered that a SCC member is involved or is just suspected to be practicing witchcraft, people (men) disassociate themselves, not only to the person but also from that SCC where that Witch is a member. Nobody wants to be associated with a witch or anything to do with witchcraft.

The current situation is that, Kilifi County is one of the places in Kenya where men with grey hair are associated with witchcraft, and therefore, are at risk of being murdered by the youth. This has affected apostolate since if a suspect belongs to the Church, people might look at the Church as a place where these people hide and are harbored or protected.

- j) Class factor - There is a gap between the poor and the rich. Majority of the rich people have no time to participate in SCC activities. They are too busy. Some of them even think that SCCs are for the poor who have nothing to do. Some think that it is a waste of time. Where meetings are held in houses of their tenants, they rarely attend. While the rich feel

⁸² Cf. A. N. NDICHIA, MHM, *The Role of SCCs in Mission and Evangelization in Malindi Diocese, Kenya*. Unpublished Long Essay, Tangaza College (CUEA), 2011, p. 57.

they are too high, the poor on the contrary feel inferior. These do not attend because of economic factor. When others contribute, the poor feel ashamed, and so, they opt to be absent. Women have no much problem with this since they are used, but men feel ashamed.

- k) Feminism factor - Men see women as a threat. Some women given opportunity keep-off men because of what they talk about. These may bring their topics during SCC meetings, and completely change the mood of the community. Husbands fear to join their talkative wives in SCCs just because their wives mistreat them. Some men also fear that their wives can bring home affairs to the SCCs. So the best option is not to attend.

Men are time conscious and the nature of majority women is relaxing. This is because most women are in 'chamas' women groups (merry-go-round), and are used to sharing for long. Men want to be direct to the point so that they go for other businesses. They can even bring their wives and children to the SCCs, then they leave, and come later for them when they are through.

- l) Power Competition – Some priests want SCC leadership to be submissive to them and follow only what they command, not doing what ought to be done. There should be mutual relationship between the clergy and the laity, as Fr. Lobo puts it well; “The role of the clergy is to inspire and form the laity, and lead them towards active participation in the activity of the Church. Hence it is clear that clergy and laity tend towards the same goal and are interdependent in their mission. The distinction which the Lord made between sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God entails a unifying purpose since the pastors and the other faithful are bound to each other by a mutual bond.”⁸³ Men who do not want conflict or friction with the priest, and who feel opposed to and oppressed by the ideas of the priest, opt to withdraw from attending SCC activities. Some men as well are put off when instead of holding elections in the SCCs the priest instead, either appoints or forces his team of leaders, expecting the other people to accept them as their legal leaders.

⁸³ G. V. Lobo, 96

The above challenges lead to men being few than women in SCCs in Malindi Diocese. For women, meeting is a normal way of life since they are used to meeting for socialization.

5.5 PASTORAL RECOMMENDATION FOR MEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SCCs IN MALINDI DIOCESE

The above information (5.4) reveals how men in Malindi Diocese have a weakness as regards to attendance to SCCs. It also clearly gives the reasons (challenges) as to why men do not participate in SCC activities.

The pastoral office of the Diocese led by Fr. Albert Buijs, through the Gender Desk led by Fr. Peter Karanja Kamau, attends to all men and all women (CMA and CWA) in the Diocese. Men are reached through their association of CMA, whose chaplain is Fr. Robert Maina Ribiro. He takes care of their spiritual and pastoral needs. Sharing with the CMA chaplain on Saturday 13th May, 2017 in Nairobi, he admitted that “men are not as active as they should be. If attendance to CMA is low yet this is where majority men attend, and the attendance does not reach even 50 % of the total number of men in the Diocese, then it is even worse in the SCC. He concludes that the CMA programme helps them to know their role in the Church and in the SCCs.”⁸⁴

The researcher has therefore come up with practical recommendations which can assist the Diocese to motivate men's participation in SCCs. These include;-

- a) Pastoral formation for priests and religions - Right from the formation to priesthood and religion life, the pastoral agents are encouraged to have proper formation on pastoral. The second Vatican council tells us that, “With due regard to the conditions of different countries, students should be introduced to a fuller knowledge of the Churches and ecclesial communities separated from the Holy See, so that they may be able to take part in promoting the restoration of unity between all Christians according to the decisions of the Church.”(OT. 16) On the same, the KCCB suggests that “SCCs as a Course (e.g. LUMKO Methodology) should be emphasized during priestly formation in the Major Seminaries. As future priests, the Seminarians should be more exposed to matters pertaining to the SCCs during their pastoral activities/sessions.”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Fr. Robert Maina interviewed by the author on Saturday 13.05.171030hrs

⁸⁵ KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, *Guidelines on Small Christian Communities*, 11

Again, on-going formation for priests and religious is important so as to remind them about their role. The Clergy and the religious are not the masters or bosses of SCCs, rather, as Fr. Healey always says, 'they are students,' learning from the lay who are the experts. However, their presence in the meetings motivates men.

There can be well organized workshops and seminars, as well as exchange programmes can be organized at the level of the Diocese, deanery, parish and even SCC to encourage and motivate the active participation of men to SCCs.

On the Act part (implementation) of the suggested methods of having workshops and seminars, I have the following suggestions:

(i) *WHO?* - At the Diocesan level, the Bishop, the Pastoral office and the Finance office should plan for these activities. The Clergy and religious meet annually for Commissions meeting, one week before the Holy Week. Here, the Diocese can use this advantage and get a facilitator/animator to share.

- At Deanery level, the Dean plus the Clergy and religious of that Deanery, together with the Deanery Pastoral Council (DPC) should plan for such activities.
- At Parish level, the PP together with the PPC and PEC should prepare a programme that can also be shared at the Outstation and SCC levels.
- Facilitators can be drawn from the National office, Metropolitan, Diocesan as well as from the Deanery office.
- The target at Diocesan level should be the Clergy and religious, while that of the Deanery, Parish, Outstation and SCCs are the laity, and the associations like CMA, CWA, Youth, PMC, etc.
- Again, Family apostolate should be given priority.

(ii) *WHAT?* - Topics for the Clergy and religious workshops and seminars should include;

- The Role of SCCs in the Church.
- The Role and position of Clergy and religious in SCCs.
- How to Start, Strengthen and Sustain SCCs?
- Parish Administration in general.

Topics for the Laity should include;

- Why SCCs?
- The Role of the Laity (Men and Women) in the Church.
- The Role of the Laity in the Church and SCCs.
- Leadership Qualities and Roles in the Church and SCCs.
- The Role of Parents (Christian Parenting).

There should be seminars only for men to help them know their role. Their topics are;

- Who is a Catholic Man?
- The Role of Men in building a strong Christian Family.
- The Role of Men in the Church, and in SCCs.
- Men and Church Leadership.

(iii) *WHEN?* - The annual Diocesan programme for Commissions' meeting is an advantage of the planning of formation for the Clergy and Religious. This meeting acts like the AGM and is always concluded with Mass to bless Holy Oils, a Thursday before the Holy Week.

– At the Deanery, the Dean and his council can make a programme to assist the Laity to benefit on faith matters.

- At the parish, outstation and SCC levels the different committees in collaboration with the PPC, PEC and PP should have a laid down programme to help all learn.

(iv) *WHERE?* - Diocesan meetings take place at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre (St. Francis Xavier Pastoral Centre).

- The venue for Deanery seminars can be organized and agreed upon by the Deanery team.
- The Parish and outstations can have theirs in their Churches.
- At SCC level, seminars are organized either at the Church or in the homes.

(v) *HOW?* (Finance) – The Diocesan Finance Administrator with the Bishop and the Pastoral Coordinator should see how to finance such on-going formation programmes.

- The Dean and the Clergy in the Deanery and the other leaders should plan on how to finance these seminars. Either each parish can have a stipulated amount to contribute towards the success of such programmes.

- In the parishes, outstations and SCCs, the PP, PEC and PPC as well as the various leaders from those groups should source for funds to implement those pastoral programmes. Mostly, individual members contribute towards these activities.
- b) Empowering the Laity - The Clergy and religions should empower the laity for faith formation. It is common knowledge that the Laity are the backbone of SCCs; therefore, they need to be empowered. There should be a programme for SCC members, and especially for men to know their role in SCCs. Looking at women in the Church, Fr. Harrison Yaa observes that, “Women are able to coordinate SCC activities, manage SCC affairs as well as proclaim the Good News as active and effective evangelizers within the neighbourhood.”⁸⁶ Men should take this positively and imitate the unity and determination that women have in their daily endeavor. They should implement the above proposals about seminars. As a remedy to those who do not allow their wives to attend SCC meetings, other men should invite them to see what happens in SCC meetings.
- c) Regular celebrations of the Eucharist – This is at par with the breaking of the bread in Acts 2:42. SCCs should be centers for celebrating the liturgy (Holy Mass). Borrowing a leaf from Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish (Karen) where the pastoral team had prepared a monthly programme for Holy Mass in every SCC, parishes in Malindi Diocese with inactive SCC leadership can benefit and be motivated, if the pastoral team or priests could adopt such programme. Fr. Healey says, “If ‘the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life’ then fostering Eucharistic communities at all levels – from the SCC Mass in the home to the Sunday Eucharist in the parish church – is vitally important. African relationship and community values enrich the meaning of the Eucharistic community.”⁸⁷ This Sacrament of love and unity should give men a moment of reflection about the unity and love in their families.

⁸⁶ H. YAA, *Building, Strengthening and Sustaining Small Christian Communities in Urban Set-up in Nairobi Kenya*, 60

⁸⁷ J. HEALEY, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa*, 84

- d) New Media as relevant tool for evangelization – The use of new media, social media for that matter, helps in motivating people to join SCCs. This can help SCC members to share even more widely the Word of God. “Social networking sites like Face book, Twitter, YouTube and Skype, podcasts, video clips, DVDs, special applications (called “apps”), plug-ins, blogs, email messages, cell phones (including Smart Phones), text messages, etc”⁸⁸ are new ways of communication and new ways of evangelization. These, together with Whatsapp, IMO, Skype, Newspapers, Magazines, as well as Newsletters can reach all men and help the embrace SCCs.

There is a Small Christian Communities Global Collaborative Website opened for all members worldwide www.smallchristiancommunities.org

A SCC can open just a Whatsapp page for sharing information, but also for the purpose of reminding members, especially men about day, venue and time of SCC meetings. Since most men like the internet, this therefore can promote men’s participation in SCCs. The Diocesan Newsletter which is published monthly-‘Sauti ya Jimbo’ literally meaning, ‘The Voice of the Diocese’ has been very instrumental in promotion of SCC activities. The column on ‘Bidii Za Wenzetu’ is meant for news from parishes which include reports on SCCs, CMA, CWA, Youth and PMC activities. The issue of June, 2008, Vol. 9, No. 6, was dedicated to ‘Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo’-‘Small Christian Communities.’ In it was an interview with Sr. Milka Wachera of the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary who narrated what SCCs are and their role in the Church. The Editor, Fr. Hilary Abela, OFM, Cap enumerated the roles of all leaders of SCCs. Much is needed to promote the love of SCCs, and address leadership qualities and role of men here.

Social media should be used widely therefore in order to capture the big number of men who do not attend SCC meetings to attend. The CMA of St. Francis Xavier parish, have a Whatsaap page which helps them to share information.

- e) Overcoming tribalism and negative ethnicity – Men should think beyond their tribal lines. When all men take the challenge of assuming that their tribe is the tribe of God, it will

⁸⁸ Ibid. 109

mean that they are all sons of one creator God. This will help them not to look down at others or one tribe will not look superior to another one.

- f) Promoting the Pastoral cycle- Men are always looking towards results and good results for that matter. Following the pastoral cycle methodology of See, judge and Act, all that is done in SCCs should be geared towards the Act part to enhance result, solving a problem etc. For instance, if all sharing of the Lenten campaign topics are put together and implemented, it could be a big achievement, and men could be proud.
- g) Catechists' Programmes – The Diocese should have a vigorous programme for training Catechists. The annual programme organized by the Pastoral department is for the Catechists, volunteer Catechists, leaders of Sunday services and PMU (PMC Animators) should be promoted. Since majority Catechists are men, the orientation of CMA and SCCs should be given priority. These Catechists should be commissioned to be ministers to SCCs. In the whole Diocese, there is no woman who is a trained Catechist. May be this can be checked too. The Diocesan programme can be devolved to Deanery so that many volunteer Catechists and the other animators can attend in large numbers instead of a parish sending one or two to represent. This should be an avenue to share as Catechists how best Men can be attracted to join and participate actively in SCCs.
- h) Self – Reliance activities - Men are business minded. If men are not involved in anything that can produce, they feel wasted. So, there should be activities to help their business minds to be occupied. Self reliance activities will help the SCCs especially when there is allocation of funds to every SCC; e.g. Diocesan family day etc. In Gongoni and Baharini parishes, for instance, the Christians have been involved in farming activities to off-set their debt in the Diocese. Men have been more active during this farming activity.
- i) Leadership - Good leadership right from the SCC level to the PPC level will enhance active participation of men in SCCs. As already noted above, men do not like to be associated with failure. They always like the successful story. So, the Diocesan policy on elections should have integrity clauses so that election of her leaders can pick only good

leaders, so that when they are in office, they can motivate active participation of men in SCCs.

- j) Formation of strong Youth Groups – The Youth form the largest population in the Christian community. Nevertheless, not even 50% of their population participates in SCC activities. There should be introduction of vigorous youth programmes in order to motivate them understand the meaning and purpose of SCCs and attracted to.

When the researcher was Diocesan Youth Chaplain (2000 – 2008), under the leadership of the pioneer Bishop, the late Rt. Rev. Francis Baldacchino, the famous youth programme for Class 8 leavers and Form Four leavers (‘Strong in the Faith’ and ‘Adults in the Faith’) respectively, were inaugurated. The aim was to bring together the youth and form them to mature Christians. These two seminars have remained very vital, 17 years later. Those who attend these seminars become strong members of CMA, CWA, hence, they become active SCC members in their respective parishes.

Fr. Moses Kosgei, a priest belonging to the congregation of the Contemplative of the Heart of Christ suggests the formation of Youth SCCs when he says, “there can be formation of youth SCCs, to accommodate their age-gap factor, language.”⁸⁹ When these Youth SCCs are initiated, they should be geared towards building the active community of believers, the church. There should be smooth and orderly transition from the YSCCs to the normal SCCs.

On the same, Fr. Healey says, “Due to African cultural traditions, African youth normally do not speak in public in front of adults. Youth do not, usually, normally participate in adults SCCs in Eastern Africa. So, it is crucial to form specific Youth SCCs that give young people a specific voice and role.”⁹⁰ Fr. Healey points some Parishes in Kenya where the YSCC programme is prosperous, like St. Joseph the Worker parish – Kangemi, Dandora parish and Christ the King parish – Kiberaa. It is obvious that through these YSCCs the Youth grow towards maturity in faith.

⁸⁹ Cf. M. KOSGEI, *Challenges Facing Small Christian Communities in Nakuru Diocese-Kenya*, (Unpublished) 50

⁹⁰ *NEW PEOPLE*, Vol. 149, March-April 2014, 24

There are many suggestions which can be viewed as ‘Way Forward’ to the promotion of the active participation of men in SCCs which have not been captured above. The few suggestions given here have been identified so as to assist the Diocesan Pastoral, as well as the Gender offices to formulate programmes for building strong faith among men and encouraging them to be active participants, not only to CMA but above all to SCCs, since this is the Church in the neighborhood and full participation to it makes them truly New way of being Church today.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This last chapter has described the Diocese of origin of the researcher, giving the history, the state of men in regard to their participation in SCC activities and the major challenges they face. This last part of this chapter has dealt with the pastoral recommendations as suggestions proposed by the researcher to the Diocese. As men are always assertive, they should be formed and informed so that they see the meaning of being active participation in SCCs, as they always say, ‘Good Church, Good Family; Good Family, Good Church.’

The Diocese should therefore invest in men since they easily command/convince their families, something that can easily lead to bringing the whole family to Church and then participate actively in SCCs.

Looking at the Vision and Mission of the Diocese, men should be brought aboard and take responsibility to reach great achievements. Since, “SCCs have been regarded as the family model of the Church,”⁹¹ men ought to head this family to great heights of faith of all family members.

⁹¹ H. YAA, *Building, Strengthening and Sustaining Small Christian Communities*, 59

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The African tradition has values which are still strong today, like the phenomenon that men are heads of their families. This belief is however diminishing since women are taking over the heading and running of families. This changing trend is as a result of either single life, voluntarily chosen, or when one's husband dies. Of late, women have proved to be bold in leadership than men.

For the families where both parents (father and mother) are present, there is much dependency and imitations. The children follow their parents' example and faith. Culturally, if the father does not do some things it is likely that some children will also not do.

If the dad is not active in the SCC, children will tend to follow their mother while still young, but when they grow to secondary level, they start lagging behind. They start claiming and complaining that they have a lot of work as assignment or simply they see themselves as mature and can decide what to do, including which faith to follow.

This research has shown that, families where all parents are active participants in SCCs, the whole family becomes stronger in faith. The focus in this research is to men, who in most cases are inactive. Men, like the first apostles who were men, should take charge of providing guidance on matters of faith in the families, especially active participation in SCCs. They should be salt and light to their families. Active participation of the whole family in SCCs is a great achievement to the Church.

The diocesan Pastoral plan should target men so as to capture the entire family. To make SCCs a really new way of being Church today men have to be encouraged and fully involved. One of the very practical things that can motivate men is the use of lay ministries. Fr. Resende of the Comboni Missionaries and Parish Priest of Kariobangi parish says, his parish has 72 SCCs and apostolate is possible only through the 'huduma' system. "The power of the SCCs lies in the ministries that each member is expected to take part in."⁹² This will promote the spirit of service and love to one another, hence the Church becoming truly a family of God.

⁹² *The Seed*-Vol. 26, No. 12, Dec. 2014

This is the family where all members respect and take care of each other to achieve one goal of attaining salvation. The role of men here is of paramount importance since it determines the direction of the family. If men stand firm in faith and participate actively in SCC activities, I have no doubt that all families in the Diocese will be strong in faith.

Through the intercession and protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as the logo of the Diocese reads; ‘Tunakimbilia Ulinzi Wako,’ let all men unite under the protection of Mary and build a strong Diocese through Small Christian Communities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BAAWOBR, R., God's Word for Christian Communities: Guidelines for Facilitators, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2013

CURRIER, R., – GRAM, F., Forming a Small Christian Community: A Personal Journey, Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications, 1992.

FLYNN, K., Communities for the Kingdom: A Handbook for Small Christian Community Leaders, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, Double Spearhead Nos. 181-182, 2007

HEALEY, J. G., Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 2012.

HEALEY, J. G., – HINTON, J., (eds.) Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the new Moment, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2011.

HEALEY, J. G. - SYBERTZ, D., Towards an African Narrative Theology, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1996

KATO, J. B., Awakening the Laity: Ugandan Pastoral Approach, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications Spearhead Numbers 161-163, 2003.

LOBO, G. V., Moral and Pastoral Questions, Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1985.

MAGESA, L., The Post-Conciliar Church in Africa: No Turning Back the Clock, Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2016

MBITI, J. S., African Religions and Philosophy, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd, 1969

Mejia, R., *The Church in the Neighbourhood: Meetings for the Animation of Small Christian Communities*, Nairobi: St. Paul Publications – Africa, 1993.

-----, *We are the Church: Sharing in Small Christian Communities*, Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2009

MIJOGA, H. B. P., *Preaching and the Bible in African Churches*, Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2001

PARISE, A., *Pastoral Cycle: A Pedagogy of Social Transformation*. In: *Tangaza Occasional Papers No. 23, Social Ministry 2nd Edition*, 2009.

RYAN, P., (Ed.) *New Strategies for a New Evangelization in Africa*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002

VANDENAKKER, J. P., *Small Christian Communities and the Parish: An Ecclesiological Analysis of the Northern America experience*, 1994

ARTICLE

RYAN, P. (Ed.), *The Model of “Church-as-Family”: Meeting the African Challenge*, Nairobi: The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 1999

CHURCH DOCUMENTS

THE AFRICAN BIBLE, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999.

ARCHDIOCESE OF NAIROBI, *Pastoral Guidelines (2013)*, Nairobi: A Publication of the Pastoral department

BENEDICT XVI, *God is Love (Deus Caritas Est.)*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MALINDI, Strategic Plan (2013-2019), Malindi: A Publication of the Pastoral department.

THE CODE OF THE CANON LAW, London: Collins, 1993.

FLANNERY, A., ed. Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents, Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 1975

JOHN PAUL II, The Church in Africa (Ecclesia in Africa), Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995

-----, Redemptoris Missio, Encyclical Letter – The Mission of the Church, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa,

-----, Vocation and Mission of the Laity Faithful Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994

KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, Guidelines on Small Christian Communities, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015.

-----, Lenten Campaign 2017: Peaceful Elections; Leaders of Integrity, Nairobi: A Publication of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission.

PAUL VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi: Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World, Homebush: St. Paul Publications, 1989.

POPE FRANCIS, The Joy of the Gospel, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2013

PERIODICAL PAPERS

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MALINDI, Sauti ya Jimbo, Malindi: June-2008, Vol. 9, No. 06.

COMBONI MISSIONARIES, New People, Nairobi: New People Media Press, March-April 2014 No. 149.

THE CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES, The Seed, Nairobi: Consolata Media Centre, Dec. 2014, Vol. 26, No. 14.

UNPUBLISHED WORKS

GBAKI, S., The Pastoral Challenges of Marital Commitment: A Case Study of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish in Karen – Nairobi, 2014.

KIPKOSGEI, M. K., Challenges Facing Small Christian Communities in Nakuru Diocese – Kenya: Case of Mary Mother of God Rongai Parish, 2012.

MDAWIDA, A., Comparing Two Models of the Catholic Churches SCC Model of Church and Apostolic Association Model of Church: A Case Study at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Nairobi, Kenya, 2012

NDICHIA, A. N., The Role of SCCs in Mission and Evangelization in Malindi Diocese, Kenya, 2011.

YAA, H. T., Building, Strengthening and Sustaining Small Christian Communities in an urban set-up in Nairobi, Kenya: A Case Study in Holy Trinity Catholic Parish, Kariobangi North, 2011

NGALA, J. K., Masters in Pastoral Ministry: Student Dossier, Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya.

INTERNET RESOURCES

E-Book, www.smallchristiancommunities.org

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org>

<http://www.smallchristiancommunities.org/ebooks.html>

www.smallchristiancommunities.org/ebooks/284-improving-participation-of-the-laity-in-small-christian-communities:a-pastoral-challenge-in-the-archdiocese-of-lilongwe-malawi cf. E-Book

APPENDICES

Appendix 1



Our Lady Queen of Heaven (Regina Caeli) Current Parish Church, Karen

Appendix 2



Our Lady Queen of Heaven (Regina Caeli) New Parish Church under Construction

Appendix 3



St. Anne SCC sharing the word during a prayer session

Appendix 4



Fr. Joseph Ngala with members of St. Anne SCC and visiting Students from Germany

Appendix 5



Rev. Joseph Healey (Standing) sharing with visitors from Miva, Germany

Appendix 6



St. Francis of Assisi (Baharini) Parish CMA monthly meeting