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TANGAZA COLLEGE

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

RELEVANCE OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM IN KIBERA

by

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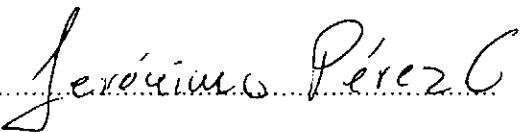
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Signed 

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Since XV Century Christians had made a lot effort to convert Africa into Christianity, but for various reasons had failed (Islamise influenced, lack of methodology on inculturation, the ambiguous an inadequate sort of trend on development, the purpose of evangelizers, and so on). Despite of that Christians have not given up their mission " spreading the Good News" to all peoples.

It has almost one hundred years that Christianity has been offered the Christian message and has been accepted by African. But here arise some questions which make us to think and oblige as to do an evaluation. Does Christian message has penetrated into African culture and has it influenced the African way of live? Is there something to be changed? or, Is there something to be implemented? How much does Christian Baptism has been relevant and which is its impact in ordinary life of people?

Through this essay I would like to carry out the answer of those questions. For that I divided this issue in four parts:

Part I) a bit of history of Kibera settlement, as well as, the analysis of social economical political and religious situation of people. Taking into account the environmental influence on the behaviour of Christians in which they live.

Part II) My concern is more on the understanding of Baptism and its relevance to Christians. To do so, I went around doing an informal interviews to my friends, to the Jumuiyas (individually and in group), and to other Christian denominations members, and even to non-Christians people.

Part III) I focus my attention on how people respond to their Christian Baptism and the great desired for building up and transforming the community. They have realised that it is only possible, by taking conscious of our responsibilities with courage.

Part IV) Personal reflection

PART I

ANALYSIS OF REALITY

Introduction.

"People are related to one another from the first moment of conception"¹. They also have to adapt to the environmental conditions². Through both relation and adaptation people fill the requirements to take part as a membership of a family and a larger society.

Considering that a "person"³ does not belong only to a family and a society but to God too⁴. It has been a complex problem to explain. But we will try to analyse both aspects, socially and religiously, in which people of Kibera live. And then, to formulate how they express their faith from such situation.

¹Africans are socialised par excellence as John S. Mbiti had told "I am because we are" in his book *African Religion and Philosophy*, Heinemann, London 1980, p. 92.

²P. Erny, The Child and His Environment in Black Africa. Translated, abridged and Adapted by G.J. Wanjohi (Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 35-40.

J. Lijembe, A. Apoko, M. Nzioki, East Africa Childhood. (Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 1-3.

³African understanding of the term "person" is Anthrop-psycho-sociological viewpoint, based on the idea of " Fullness of life". C. Nyamiti, The Incarnation Viewed from the African Understanding if the Person. CUEA, March 1990, pp. 3-24.

⁴Ibid. 1991, pp. 29-48.

A. KIBERA SLUM SETTLEMENT

I) Background.

In one way or another, human behaviour is influenced and conditioned by the environment in which one is living⁵. Taking the statistics of Nairobi we find that upto 60% of the people live in slum settlements. Where the roots of the squatter settlements are to be seen in the widespread urban poverty and to the shortage of real low cost housing.

Of the more than 70 squatter settlements in Nairobi, Kibera is one of the most populous, which covers 24% of Nairobi's land area⁶. The inhabitants of Kibera are from the neighbouring countries, i.e Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Angola, and etc. Some have arrived as immigrants or as refugees.

⁵The behaviour of the person is influenced in two ways:

1) By an over paternalism to the child. Later his attitudes are of conformity, interdependence and submission of the common will.
2) By a creative handwork and so on. His attitudes are of autonomous, free and independent.

KRECH D., CRUTCHFIELD S.R., LIVSON N., Elements of psychology (New York, Alfred A Knopf), 1969.

⁶Andrew Muigai/Kwaho, Kibera Slum Settlement. Nairobi, June 1994, p. 5.

But most of this slum area is occupied by people who came to Nairobi looking for employment or any opportunity to make ends meet. Most of these people are temporarily employed⁷.

Kibera is a conglomeration of temporary dwellings. They are living in houses which are in a very bad condition. Usually one family lives in a small mud plastered rooms without proper ventilation. Many times houses are infested with pests, mosquitoes and rodents which are health hazards and could be a cause of serious out-break of typhoid, cholera, dysentery, malaria, plagues, diseases, etc.

The alleys are very narrow with houses located each side. The land itself belongs to the Government and permission for house construction is given through local leaders. At least 90% of the houses in the area are rented. The lowest monthly rent for a room is about Ksh 350.00 (Kenya Shillings). Consequently Kibera provides shelter for the lowest paid workers and the urban poor. poor people who want to manage a profitable business even amongst the sever of Kibera.

It is noticeable that most of the children and youth are denied their rights or ignored a saving-hand that could have made them to reach that standard of life in order to enjoy the same privilege with their counterparts in other areas of Nairobi.

⁷Arturo Arreguin, Pastoral and Evangelization/Programme. Laini saba C. Church. Nairobi, 22nd april 1993, p. 3.

The behaviour of young boys and girls can easily be detected as they roam in groups of two to ten from one section to another, dressed in dirty torn and oversized rags. They look hungry, and some have undressed septic wounds and other skin diseases. Sometimes they are seen fighting each other over crumbs and other remains of rotting food picked from the dustbins or refuse disposals.

As these youth struggle to earn a living by picking up anything up that they come across as they hover around from one place to another. Therefore, they could extend their hands to stealing, a practice that ends some culprits up in jail. A close study of this situation gives us the idea that most of them come from broken families.

Many women live with their children and bring them up on their own either because the husband has died or has deserted them. It is also due to the fact they have never established a marital union. This one-parent family situation abounds. Many men are without their wives and families as they are at home in their villages. Often such men live in groups and share a room⁸.

⁸J. Ascensio and Others, Kibera Health Program. Guadalupe Parish. Nairobi, 1993.

Pauline Dean, Challenge of AIDS Project: Progress report of Kibera Slum. Guadalupe Parish, 1992.

Anyone who visits Kibera has the impression of being in a maze, as many families are very poor; lack of basic needs; **physical**: food, clothing, shelter and health care; **security**; **love**, **esteem** but specifically spiritual, mental and physical care are some of the things more demanded to have a better life.

II) **Services**

Among all the services like electricity, water, health care, transportation, the most important is "education". But having a look over Nairobi we find that most of the low income areas lack educational facilities⁹.

This is reflected in considerable low levels of education achievement, with only 14% of the population finishing high school (Kenya Consumer Organisation, 1992).

⁹Matrix Development Consultants, Nairobi Informal Settlements. For USAID/REDSO/ESA. PN-ABH-741. NAIROBI K., 1993.

Person has the right to be educated¹⁰.

Through **education** the person can be aware and be conscious of his dignity and capacity. Taking into consideration that the formation of a person has to be as a reflective of his culture traditions, customs, and forms of development. All of it leads to his own destiny in the society to which he or she belongs to¹¹.

Health is a right of human beings and shall possess it. But, most of the time In Kibera is no reachable.

Water, in Kibera is scarce and people have to fetch it from far away, and frequently using polluted water which pass on the river, or rain water which is stuck in a swamp. But the main cause of it is a bad organization and administration.

House - It is true that in the past people used to live in small huts or even caves but time has passed by and technology has increase with the purpose to give comfort to humanity. So the changes in each family, society or country are a kind of challenge to us and we shall face them. The problem is not technology but the organization of settlement and the lack of land which is not on the hands of many but on few who are the owner of it.

Transport other service very important for everybody because it is the medium which proportionate a closer

¹⁰CBK, Population and Development: Church's Concern on the Cairo Conference. NAIROBI, K. 1994, p. 5, art. 3.

CBK, On the present Situation in Our Country. NAIROBI, K. 1990.

CBK, A Call to a Challenge of Heart. NAIROBI, K. 1995.

¹¹P. Erny, "op. cit.". p. 3.

encounter with our own culture and other. Transport contributes to education and formation of the person widely and total. But unfortunately It has been manipulated and control by both private owners ad those who are in duty. Even the most ignorant can realize that transport is more according to earnings and economical profits than a service to people.

Salaries, it is a great problem to people of Kibera at different levels. A person daily work is very low and badly paid especially those who are casual, temporal or by chance workers. These people are in most cases unemployed and are seen as unprepared in any field. Technology contributes to the substitution of a person's (manual work) and is taken as a mere piece of machinery (Depersonalisation). Nowadays man does not control money but money controls him.

Food is one of the basic goods that people have the right get. But unfortunately the distribution of these basic goods of the nation and donations from abroad remain unknown.

Despite of that person has dignity and rights, many times has to adapt himself passively to any situation. But it is cause by nothing else than selfishness of those who have the power and authority (exploitation).

Nowadays people are falling down on economical systems (**capitalism**) which produce **selfishness** and provoke inequality. Few have luxury and comfort, when the majority lack it. Looking at it is easy to adduce the retrogress on the weak and unlikeness on the poor in Kibera.

But, do people of Kibera know about their rights and duties on politics ? I do not think so. Because, if we have a look at the promotion of a politician, It would cause us a shock. Regularly politician is promoted by a strong financial budgets. He is supported by different organization, monopolies, transnational and economical systems WB, IMB. The members of these organizations are the ones who manipulate people's rights. So, our country is economically and socially unbalanced. It is in favour of those who promote the leaders of the country.

Promotion of the community does not exist for person is nothing less than a mere object of economical planning. So everything is in a governmental planning programme of production., birth control, taxes and duties sponsored by International agencies which pretend to be promoters of development. The rights of people are in a plan which attempts against their fundamental integrity.

All of it is true but we cannot blame our leaders (despite that they provoke it) who are in the authority and power but we are the guilty ones for having kept silence of what is good and right for us. And I am sure that nobody would come to change this situation, for it is at our hand and interest if we want better life and to be respected as a person.

III. Religious aspects.

Religion and its practice in Kibera it is a phenomenon which is coming up like a revolutionary fervour. Probably for some people religion is a heritage from their parents. For others is a duty which must be fulfilled. For other it is a devotion which draws their attention and keeps them busy. For other it is a kind of psychological and moral help. For other it is a bridge which links them to the divine power. For others it is something that makes them to change their lives¹²

¹²research done every Saturdays and Sundays visiting families and making informal interviews on this issue.

B. A BIT OF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

The history of the Archdiocese of Nairobi goes back to the mid 1800s. Following the slogan of Archbishop Arthur Hinsly who said "He who controls education in the missions will own Africa"¹³. The first spiritans arrived and founded schools as one of their principal means of evangelization, in 1863.

In 1953, Mgr. John Joseph McCarthy took office as the first metropolitan in Kenya. He was succeeded by Archbishop Maurice Michael Otunga, later Cardinal. In 1976, C.M.M. Otunga opted for the creation of Small Christian Communities (SCC) as priority in the pastoral Education Programme¹⁴

This Pastoral Education programme has been able to reach individuals and groups at grass root level. As result people have grown spiritually, socially and economically, looking the way to be self-reliant.

¹³BYRNE T. Fr. MUKUI J., Quinquennial Report 1987-1991. Archdiocese of Nairobi, K./East Africa, 1991.

¹⁴Ibid. p. 1.

Laini-Sava is a outstation of St. Michael's parish which is situated in Western of Kibera slum. Fr. Arturo Arreguin is the priest in charge of the area. He follows the Archdiocese policy and has formed a team of surveyors. This team have visited the whole area of Kibera, in order to find out the true facts of people life situation i,e economically, educationally, healthy care, politically and religiously.

In order that the pastoral education programme and evangelization in the area could be positively carried out. Fr Arturo has organized workshops for the leaders of the SCC. The leaders are from each jumuiya. they set out for finding the goals and objectives of the parish for the programme of each year. As a result came up with a DELTA report¹⁵

Right after the workshop was done, priest and pastoral team came together and prepared an evaluation in which as a result gave the vision based on "The spirit of the lord... has anointed me. He has sent me... to proclaim the Lord's year of favour" (ST. Lk. 4:16-20).

Although they had understood that God has made a covenant with them as God did with people of Israel. So all who want to belong to this particular group have to follow is laws, (Dt. 32: 45-47) and to be faithful to it (Dt. 7: 12-26). As well as to be aware of his rights and obligations (Dt. 14: 22).

¹⁵Development Education Leadership Team Action (DELTA), ITS PURPOSE IS TO MAKE PEOPLE AWARE. a) The value of cultural heritage. b) The external influence of the environment in their concrete life situation. c) their felt need and the lack of potential resources available.

Then this covenant is specially for the unprotected people who believe in YHWH, as the true God; the creator of heaven and earth. He is the Lord of our history who is in our midst to give us protection out of His love. God always fulfils his promises and allows us to have an encounter with him, so that we may recognize him as our God. The experience of this epiphany is through the Messiah, the suffering servant, and those who recognize him as the son of God would live forever; his name Jesus Christ, The lord and God.

PART II

CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN KIBERA

Requirement for belonging to Christian Catholic church in Kibera: Norms and rules in the liturgy

In any group or society we find norms and rules for belonging to or partaking in. Catholic church in Kibera follows the rules and norms in its liturgy from the diocesan pastoral planning of the Archdiocese of Nairobi. which follows the words of John Paul II addressed towards the faithful, priest and bishops in Nairobi.

"We are a communion of faith and love, confessing Jesus Christ as the son of God, the lord of history, the redeemer of humankind and the saviour of the whole world. We are one united community, living in mystery of the church, the life of the crucified and risen christ, and therefore his praise are in our hearts an our lips. We are as it were, the extended holy family, called to build and enlarge the edifice of justice and peace and civilization of love "16.

¹⁶Ibid. T. Byrne, "op. cit.". p. 1.

To put in practice all of it, Kibera Catholic Church has been doing workshops, seminars, and etc., bringing together lay people, religious priest and sisters for the planning of evangelization, and also for the pastoral education programme.

KANAMAI-I pointed out the pastoral vision as follows 1) Liturgy specially on prayer and eucharist. 2) Compassion and love specially to the poor. 3) Adaptation to the changing need of the people. 4) Building on basis of tradition and culture of people. 5) Witnessing to christian commitment¹⁷.

The following priorities were intensively discussed with a view of building SCC : family, apostolate, leadership for self-reliance, social justice, and mission: sacramental renewal (Baptism, reconciliation and marriage), education.

¹⁷ Archdiocese of Nairobi, Quinquennial Report 1987-1991

BAPTISM:RESEARCH FORM

Now let me mention about the ways and means of this research among people of Kibera. First of all I have been trying to be a member of the Christian Community. I used the Empirical and observing methods: socio-analysis; See Judge and Act. mixed up with Act See Think, and the Co-operation, Campaign, Confrontation. The aim of these methods is to empower and motivate people to take active responsibility for transforming their own environment¹⁸.

The interviews were made in an informal way, with different approach so that may people do not be blocked at the moment of answering the questions.

The purpose to visit people at their houses, specially those who are members of the Jumuiyas, is to understand the way they participate in their gatherings. At the same time, is easy to observe their behaviour among the family. Dialogue is on their ordinary way of living. When personal or family problems arise, as a norm is not to give solution. Instead, just listen to them, it helps more.

¹⁸Arturo arreguin, Development Education Programme:DELTA Report Phase I. Kanisa la Katoliki Yesu Mfalme (Kibera) Line Saba. Nairobi 1995.

At the beginning people dislike but later they realised that it is other way to deal with problems. Problems should be shared in the Jumuiya, because that is the aim of the Jumuiya. Through the Jumuiya we should try to analyse the causes of the problems and to look for solutions together. So if it is needy a contribution, everybody should bring some money out.

STRUCTURE OF THE JUMUIYA

The Jumuiya gathers: sundays for Bible sharing; tuesdays for socio-economic problems; thursday for political problems; and saturdays for prayers (mainly rosary). I am concern on Bible sharing (sundays). Here I am a member as any other, the Coordinator is the one who organize the gatherings. He gives other people space to participate, always they try to link the problems discussed in the previous gatherings in prayer.

- 1) Entry song
- 2) Introduction: is done by the coordinator reminding the previous discussions on week days. It helps them to look outward and inward the Word of God in their life.
- 3) Moment of silence followed by a brief prayer; communal prayer (angelus)
- 4) Reading of a passage from the Bible (three times)
- 5) Echoing of sentences.
- 6) Reflection of each member (Frequently everybody)
- 7) Thanksgiving
- 8) Observations
- 9) Announcements and final prayer followed by a final song

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM UNDERSTANDING

So we have reached to the point by which we will get the answers to our doubt of the incarnation of the Gospel in the heart of people of Kibera. Through an analysis of social, economical, political and religious situation, surely we can understand much better people's faith and behaviour.

Certainly the questions I set on here are not all I used at the moment of the interviews but are the essential ones

1) What does Christianity means to you?

To a muslim person (in Kibera Slum) Christianity is a religion which seeks for God and try to hold sufferings, pains, worries, and so on of people. But this religion just pretends to do so, because it has Jesus Christ as God and not as a prophet. Jesus was not the God of Israel, He was a mere man as any one of us.

To a protestant Person (in Kibera Slum) Christianity is a religion given to them by baptism of immersion or plug once in life. They experience the forgiveness of sins through the rite of Baptism. They take the implication of baptism and commit themselves to do a kind of madame, and they try to be faithful before God and in the community.

To some Catholic People (in Kibera Slum) Christianity is a religion given to them since they were small so the meaning is to belief in God of their parents. General speaking, this statement is great, wonderful and truly. But most of them are not committed to practice trier baptism as is told at the fount to become prist, prophet and king.

To catechists, leaders and members of the Jumuiya, Christianity means to give consent or to accept the "Laws rules and norms" of Jesus Christ. To other People, Christianity is to obey God and to praise him. For other is a true religion because defend the human rights of the person, at the same time takes into account the dignity of the person. For some others is to follow Jesus lifestyle, because it is the most important for commitment, faith, hope, love, witness to other people

To other, specially voiceless people Christianity is a religion which gives them consolation, protection, comfort, hope, security and so forth.

2) What does Christianity offers you?

For the majority Christianity offers authority, power and security. It has to do with Religion beliefs from their cultures, and the understanding of the person. To that, specially men are concern with authority, power, honour, prestige, etc.. It is very well observed in leadership.

Truly speaking none of this terms are negative if we analyse them they help us to recognize our dignity. But unfortunately this terms are used by people in a negative way. for instance, I had attended some gatherings, workshops, and some seminars in an unknown way an the attitudes of the leaders are: controlling and manipulating everything in the group and in the community. They do not allow to be challenged by anybody, but everybody must obey and accept their decisions.

To voiceless people Christianity offers security, hope and stability in their lives. i.e. In Kibera everybody is insecure day and night. It is enough to walk on the main roads, along the paths or on the alleys and we find drunk people who can abuse anyone. Most of them are thieves, landlords, owners of houses and even policemen

Occasionally people say, Christianity offers me peace in my life. Specially when I am in problems or under stress. In such moments I read the bible or I go to visit my fellow christians, I talk to them all about and at the end my faith is strengthened, and I get courage to continue my activities in peace.

Some people say Christianity offers me faith. Specially when everybody participates in the celebration: adults, youth and children. It is the greatest invitation to believe in God the father of Jesus Christ and in the holy spirit as only one God.

Other people say Christianity offers me hope. Specially when everything is obscure and not clear. I used to trust in God and I serve others or help other unconditionally (It is specially among the youth answers) and I have found the real meaning of the gospel "It is much better to give than to receive" I mean no been selfish will change the world of oppression, corruption and war.

Other people say Christianity offers me love. I think that Christianity has offer me the love of God. Now I feel like a child of his, I lack anything at his side. There is nothing greatest than the love of God. This love that is creative and generative of life. It is something that we lack from our parents specially from our father when we are small. It is what I do not want to my children and of the others to lack it. Sometimes is painful to see how fathers mistreat their children, or abandon them, or are irresponsible in the needs of their children.

Other people say Christianity offers me joy. Despite that I have many worries, problems in my family or even looking around the world through T.V., magazines, News paper, and so on, God gives us moments of joy through his words and deeds; and also He has given us children as a gift and it is our joy.

In the Jumuiyas people say Christianity offer us forgiveness and dignity as sons and daughters of God. Though forgiveness we understand much better the need of true relation to God and to our brothers and sisters. But some ladies who have been constantly present in the gathering of the Jumuiya, had courage

to say, we say that we are sons and daughters of God, and so forth. But how are our attitudes, our behaviour and fraternity among us. Is not it true that we hate each other? or we do not talk to each other because of tribalism? or we ignore those who tell us the truth? I think that Christianity means more than that and offers us the opportunity to change our stone-heart by flesh one; and to purified our culture customs and traditions.

Christianity offers me the door to belonging to the community of God's children, through a baptism of repentance. In this community they make me feel at home at all times. Through baptism Jesus Christ forgives my sins and whereby I become a child of God, in other words I belong to him.

3) What does baptism mean to you?

Baptism means to be born again. It is the transferring of someone from one family to another, or from one community to other, or from one mentality to other, from one believe to other. So baptism is the requirement to be Christian and to belong to God and to the community; is the entry to Christianity; is the target or ticket to Christianity is the door or gate to Christianity.

Do you mean that without baptism one is not a son of God? Probably no because Jesus said that, those who deny him would not have salvation and will die but those who believe in him will live for ever. So, baptism is the plaque that connects us to

Christianity. Baptism brings us to believe in the name of Jesus Christ who came to forgive our sins so that we may be with God. Baptism is liberation of all the bonds which ties us to our traditions, interest, believes, etc., because we accept or not we believe in superstition, magic, spirits etc., which crush against Christianity. Therefore if we want to be Christian we must accept the laws of Jesus Christ. Or we have to compliment our believes in a Christian way and understanding.

4) Is baptism relevant in your life?

People say yes it is for two reasons:

a) It is relevant not because I chose God but because he has chosen me. He took the initiative to meet me, despite of that I was unworthy, sinner, selfish. He took me from the mud I got used to live, from my sleep, and because he has allowed me to experience his presence in all my life e.g. moments of trial, danger, difficulties, desperation, pain and suffering.

b) It is relevant because leads us to the same believe and the same eagerness of longing for God, living together as a family, helping each other, understanding and accepting others as they are.

Other people say baptism is relevant in my life because it is the only thing that bonds me to my fellowship Christians. Brings me back to the community which I lost coming out from my family (clan) and village by force of economical circumstances

and basic needs. So, wherever I go as a christian I find a community which welcomes me and makes me feel at home.

Some say, baptism is relevant in my life because through it I understand that I am not alone or I am not the only son of God but everybody is. In extended way we all are brothers, and sisters and even those who are not baptised are sons and daughters of God, to whom we are called to live with and to witness the love and mercy of God.

5) Do you think that Christian baptism brought something new to your traditional believe or religion?

The majority agree and accept that christianity had brought something new to their tradition but they cannot explain with precise terms. But more than something new it is just the distinction of terms.

we believe in the supreme being who is the creator, the giver of life (God made). This same supreme being in Christianity is called God the father.

We believe in the ancestors who are the spirit power (man-made) but in Christianity is Jesus Christ. And we believe also in spirits who are saints and in Christianity is called Holy Spirit.

We use this terminology in a hierarchical way to experience God's presence whereas in Christianity all the attributes are united with the sense of unity, community, solidarity of three persons in one God which is called Holy Trinity.

Others say the newness of Christianity to our traditional beliefs and religion are the attributes of Holiness, Grace, eternal life, consecration, Holy Spirit, sanctification, the sense of sonship and his relation to his father, Holy family.

6) But what does each term mean for you?

Holiness: We believe in the supreme being, Sonship and his relationship to his father. We believe in extended family where nobody is orphaned but everyone plays a role in it. Here we find security and do our communal life for political discussions, tribunal, sports and games. The important events in and around the community are well known by each member. Religion we have our shrine which is the focus of communal religious worship, sacrifice and festivities.

Sacrifices and festivities it is what a person has thus to eliminate all traces of superstitious and magic from his traditional understanding of participation and cosmo-biology he has to take into account and over stress the importance of the community at the expense of his individuality and rights. Because personal dignity is supposed to be achieved through vital contact or communication with fellow human beings, the supernatural and cosmos, to which the individual is seen as radically open.

Family in Christian term is nuclear family where there is father, mother and children. Here the parents provide children with everything and train the children to be autonomous and self reliant, and to believe by faith hope and charity.

We believe in human relations which make us to recognize our dignity and values, our capacity and of the others, as well as our limitations. We help each other without demanding immediate reward or remuneration. We use to share our ideas through dialogue and conversation because it is a cherished value in our relations.

Human relations in Christian terms are in two levels.

a) Divine Relations: between man (J. Christ) and God which is understood through the closeness between God the father and Jesus the son. So Jesus is the link, the bridge, the way to whom we are sure that through Him we can talk to the Father without fear, shame, and etc.. He is the only one who can fill our loneliness and cure our illness and comfort our sufferings and pains.

b) human relations: between man to man. it is more interpersonal relationship over stressing the individuality of the person and leaving aside even the community and sometimes even the family sense.

We believe in the sacredness of life and to be fertile for us is very important because it's the only way our name will be extended and will never be forgotten generation after generation.

This sacredness of life in Christian sense is eternal life, or to live forever because God has created us not to die but to live and to have life in abundance. We believe in hospital specially if a foreigner come to our home can not leave without being rested or been eating. The visitor shall feel at home. Hospitality in Christian sense is charity and it is demanded because to welcomes everybody is not easy but it regards to those who are abandoned and poor, as well as to those who are in need.

We believe in religion and all our morality are based on religion. There are strict moral principles and determined code of conduct. Moral sanctions are mainly religious sanctions. These sanctions from religious are truly effective. Customs laid down the code of law which established the nature of right doing. Customs established penalties and taboos against malefactors.. It was more practical than philosophical or theological.

Religion in Christian sense is more philosophical or theological and full of abstract concepts. Specially in worshipping by the celebration of mass, prayers, interceptions, rosary, and all the devotional practice, rules and norms to worship God, dogmas etc.

We believe in the authority of the elders. It is very natural to respect an elder and to admire them in their age. The reasons to believe in them is they are teachers and guiders of the young. They give protection to the young and the one who listen to them is like one who consults an oracle.

The oracle is believed to give the infallible truth and whatever they say is true and by their behaviour show to the young his faithfulness to his words. On them relayed the repository of communal wisdom and they consider the leaders of the community.

Authority of the elders in Christian sense is through priests they are the ones who teach us and guide us towards the principles of Jesus in the gospel. The priest is the bridge between man and God during the celebration. The priest has to be witness to the faithful and especially to the non-christians.

We believe in solidarity the basis of it is in terms of responsibility. So when a child or a non initiate is considered immature therefore not responsible. Responsibility is linked with the community and magic religious forces is one of the reasons where responsibility is often recorded as sacred. In christianity solidarity is understood as to be with other or feel sorry of other or help each other or work hand in hand for a better future.

7) Now what do you think about the
norms and rules to become a Christian?

In each group or society we find rules and norms to be followed. Therefore what do you think about the rules and norms to become a christian in catholic church and how do you see or interpret them?

People think that the rules and norms to become a christian in catholic church are: to be faithful to the teaching of the church, to change life-style, to be committed in social, political, economical, and religious matters for a better life of the community, to be witness of our faith; belief; customs and practising the values of the gospel.

People interpretation of the rules and norms are as followed. They help us to should be involve in prayers, practices, activities,etc. They are the support of the believers and invitation to unbelievers. It means that all members of the community are invited to give good examples and encouragement to these who are unbelievers during the journey to become christians.

They help us to learn how to pray. It means that we need each other to grow in this field through bible sharing, sharing experience of faith. It has been proved by many that it enrich the community. They encourage to give witness of our faith. It means that everybody has to take part in the different activities of the parish, and Jumuiya with presence and participation in the celebration of the community.

They show us how to love our neighbours. it means that each one of us is encouraged to be open to the inspiration and action of God's spirit in their lives; to discern the movements of the Holy Spirit in God's words; in the example of others, in events, in difficulties, and burdens with love.

They provoke in us an expectant spirit. It means that the promises of God will be fulfilled, and we will be one in christ having new life and belonging only to him. The spirit of christ urges us on towards integral liberation and transformation for all; in the context of community.

PART III

CHRISTIAN RESPOND TO THEIR CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

To belonging to somebody else, family, clan, society, state, ore religion is a reality. This sense of belonging to is possible only through our intimate relationship with others, Though there are laws and norms to be observed, and to do so. We are sure they help us to grow and to live in harmony

In kibera the relationships between boys and girls are fairly poor. Because,traditional customs, taboos and beliefs still having strong influence on their behaviour, i.e."the preparation for initiation is not done and chosen by boys and girls but by parents ". Of course, it has its repercussion on people attitudes and behaviour among the family, youth and a large society. Although, nowadays is easy to notice how young people behave and which kind of attitudes perform in family and society

Not forgetting that the physical, psychological, spiritual and intellectual growth depends on the environmental state in which the person lives. Thereby the behaviour of the person depends on his/her idiosincracy world. Encompassing an overwhelming variety of " egocentric ", " moral behaviour ", "right and obligations " and " dignity or worth " needs, by which the person acquires an honourable or respectable condition and deserves esteem from his or her fellow human beings.

CHRISTIANITY IN KIBERA SLUM.

We have seen how people think about their baptism. Now let me show how is the response of people to God by the awareness of their responsibilities as baptized.

In Archdiocese of Nairobi there is a movement called DELTA (the Development of the Educational Leadership in Teams Actions, It started in 1973).

DELTA movement, "Development office of Kenya" and "cooperation in the catholic church", has been developed every year until it reaches the time to be introduce in Laini Saba Catholic Church by the priest in charge Fr. A. Arreguin.

P.Priest of Laini Saba Catholic church (Kibera Slum) together with the leaders of the Jumuiyas have tried to do a social analysis, in order to point out the needs of people physically, psychologically, spiritually and educationally. To carry out with it, they looked upon a goal "to create awareness in christian communities and other people the need for self reliance in all aspect of life" in social, economical, political, religious and educational.

This development educational programme was based on basic human needs i.e water,shelter, food, education, communication, etc. and using the Asia method (Act, look at, think). This

programme stress very much the importance of relationship within the family and in community life.

Flash or sketch and plays were used for corollary the teaching, so that people may get the message. The purpose of the plays is to help the person to think and contribute or share his ideas and thought in order to enrich the group.

Let us analyse the process of a session in DELTA group structure:

1. Prayer
2. Dynamic to know each other
3. Sketch - needs of the person represented in a sketch
4. Groups division for reflection on the sketch
(see, judge, act)
5. Reports of each group (feedback)
6. What we can do, how we can improve our lives what we have and whom should do it.
7. Mass celebration

This is a summary of inputs given by the facilitators and participant's, during DELTA training programme. As a result they handed over a "report". Surely, Through this activity they had experienced what does baptism means ant its implication.

The reports are very important, because they show us the reality of people . So, let me present very briefly some of them on the need of relationship within the family or community and its importance.

The purpose of the reports are a help for a person to deepen, in knowledge and awareness of his/her situation.

Report on relationships:

We shall have good relationships
in our family or group because through them we can;

- *know and educate each other
- *help each other to understand the word of God
- *enrich each other through ideas and thoughts
- *be a good example to others
- *grow spiritually and physically
- *know how to be a good leader

Report on unity:

Through a play on broken family, people thought over the need of unity. As a christians and as good followers of our ancestors, they said, no-body is and orphan. They also said, From now on, if someone is in need we have to think on it and to do something, so that he/she may overtake the problem. Then the advantage of unity help us to:

- *to plan our daily work
- *to love our family
- *to give time to our family
- *to be open between husband and wife in what we do
- *to have very good relationship

Report on lack of cooperation:

People's reflection on this point was very significative, because, it made them to speak out one the biggest problem in the different groups.

They say, Lack of cooperation brings:

- *lack of respect (Anger)
- *tribalism (Jealousy)
- *greed (Selfishness)
- *racialism (Hatefulness)
- *lack of unity (Poverty)
- *backbiting (Unpleasant)
- *lose of faith (Unfaithfulness)
- *competition (Unrest)

Report on trust building: this can be achieved only by:

- *the understanding of each other and other people problems
- *the unity of the family
- *love, listening each other
- *ignoring our differences

Another important report was on Survey for generative themes:

the facilitator made them to reflect on the differences between "traditional" and "psycho" method survey

Traditional

Psycho-method

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1) Researchers decide on what to research. | No decision. |
| 2) They prepare question. | The team listens what people have. |
| 3) They carry interviews. | Not notice on the research. |
| 4) They are reporters. | No reporting. |

All those who were involve in DELTA suggested to make a kind of survey on problems faced by Kibera insecurity. so each person took part in the research going to the market, hotels bars, protestant churches and non-christian religions.

Report on the reality of Kibera:

They emphasised on the problems of development, i.e. fighting on poverty illiteracy, hanger, diseases, and so forth.

They were given to read "Progress of People" (Encyclical) to compeer with their report. As a result they carried out the following elements to be done:

Loving one another

Helping each other

To follow traditions which help us to grow in harmony.

To be human

To avoid tribalism

And, as a church, to preach the Gospel all over the world.

Looking on the framework above people were encouraged, motivated and empowered to take their own decisions. People also were involved in different activities which lift their mind up to liberation and not suppression. At the same time being open in dialogue to the wider society.

When people look at inward and outward of themselves, they seek to do something and to be somebody in life and history. Which will be achieved by grass root awareness, encouraging the participation of all. Because, it will lead to coordinate action rooted in SCC

To stress this point it is necessary that the church leaders should work together with the laity leaders and to DO WITH and NOT FOR the people. Using all the various means available, in just way. Following the example of Bishop of Tanzania C. Mwoleka of Rulege Diocese. He implemented the project of SCC by involving himself in them, sharing everything of the community until he managed to change this communities from SCC to INTEGRATED CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES.

It has been proved that when African wholly accepts christianity, he feels it as integral liberation; having the knowledge and conscious to overtake the negative aspects of the spiritualist vision (evil spirit and witchcraft). Christ came to be seen as the saviour who opens new horizons for hope and joy to humanity.

To become into a new culture is very positive. Of course, if it creates an osmosis between our concepts of life, and the insight that everything is sacred. It opens the gate by accepting God's message that places his tent among us even within us and in the world "THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH AND CAME AMONG US"..

PART IV

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Introduction

African theologians claim to Christianity to "become African before it can influence Africans"¹⁹. But Western theologians say "What is needed is a theology of incarnation with African concepts and not just an adaptation"²⁰.

Large number of people request for the change of regular religions practice to a new personal and communal life. But their request is through a conversion in the spiritual and not merely ecclesiastical sense.

¹⁹Nowadays, Africa reality is influenced by a rapid changes at all levels. In special way they are experiencing Christian life-style. They long for an Original Africa Liturgy. Which is, they say, for us all a matter of hope and confidence. AAS. Pan-African conference of Theologians, Statement of the Accra Meeting. AFER Vol. 20, 1978, pp. 176-182.

²⁰Our task is to became incarnate ourselves.. A, Shorter, Theology in a Multi-Cultural Church. AFER Vol.20, 1978, p. 168.

Church Facing problems

The big problems that catholic church face at first still upto now. It derives from this large number of people who wish, desire or wonder whether experience christianity lifestyle and the lack of priest, ministries and catechists to cope with them adequately.

Everybody in his life has experienced many changes as well as experienced a type of exodus or a kind of rebirth or leaving the old man for a new one or leaving his old testament to his new testament which is christ.

This achievement has been fulfilled by a sort of catechism that is mix up of both traditional religion and christian teaching i.e. their own idea of God and out of this traditional beliefs the catechist must be very skilful in this area so that he may draw up the picture of God the father of Jesus christ in the Holy Spirit²¹.

This kind of catechists is seemed very spontaneous, in a way very superficial, but practically is the most suitable for evangelization. This approach requires of time, practice and knowledge of both traditional and christian religion²²

²¹Kakuba-Kapia, Complementary of infant and Adult Baptism. AFER Vol. 30, 1988, pp. 313-315.

²²Bayo Obijole, Infant Baptism: a Critical Review. AFER Vol.30, 1988, pp. 299-311

At times I heard that this should be done by local people and not by a foreigner. But, it is understood that, if christian baptism requires a change (madame) to become a christian, I am sure that to know another culture and to take part in it, in order to feel that sense of belonging to or to participate in. It is necessary and indispensable to experience that childhood in a new culture. Henceforth we can understand a new mentality.

Therefore, christianity can learn the African way of praying, a sense of trust, abandoned and spontaneity in its relationship with God, prayed to with all of ones body and not just confronted with the mind. As a matter of fact, Africans can learn from christianity, other values which can help the person's dignity to be lifted up as a real son or daughter of God.²³

Line-saba Catholic Church in Kibera slum the Christian number has been increasing over the last five years. Really, it is amazing of it, because on Sundays the chapel is packed. There are an over activities such as: choir practice, work-shops and seminars, justice and peace commissions, DELTA, pro-life jumuiyas, legion of Mary and so on, are seen everywhere. What surprises more is the springing up of vocations for priesthood and sisterhood.

²³In almost all peoples of the world, life and the universe seem to evok a feeling of awe which has a twofold aspects: 1) Externalization an the form of a rational reflection an human life. 2) And External celebration which manifests the religious aspect of the person.
laurenti Magea, Young People and Liturgy. AFER Vol. 17, 1975 pp. 206-212.

Having done the research on baptism and participating in DELTA organization seminar in Laini Saba church (Kibera slum) there are two factor which have to be studied in order to have a global view about the problems of people. One factor, it is not specifically religious but social and psychological pressure because from here conversion can arise. It is what baptism requires.

Whenever, I believe that the greatest obstacles to sound missionary work arise later. For the hard work to widespread practical identification with "conversion work" is a mistake; nevertheless, conversion is the great initial factor out of which the new church grows. This a challenge for those who want to be witnessed of their Christian baptism

Certainly catechumenate leads to conversion and becomes part and parcel of the process of initiation. It is not just a preparation to be baptized but to know a communal style of life in which the catechumen wish or desire to belong to or take part in it.

Catechumenate is the time when the person has the opportunity to search for the truth and grasp what baptism means, and thus to have a real encounter with God the Father of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The quality of conversion can vary largely on the vigour of the church's subsequent life

This is what also makes it difficult to an African. For one thing, Africa societies on the integrated expression of systems of thought and genuine christianization is bound to disrupt much of their pattern of life as the ultimate beliefs and standards of conduct change. Another thing, where tribal cohesion has affected a mass conversion.

Participating in DELTA organization it is well noticed because the majority of the leaders are from one or two tribes but no more. The advantage is that maybe through the witness and commitment, others may follow because we have to remember that socially favourable situation may produce many conversions. But generally when conversion is led by the chiefs as a result we find a sort of "tribal church".

Certainly and without doubt the Christian community is growing, but it would be a very sad mistake for us to be complacent about it. For all of it seems to be superficial, in fact Christianity and Christian convictions are only skin deep. Many so-called Christians have no hesitation in going to a witch doctor or to a fetish priest when it is considered expedient.

The church has not taken a positive stand on freedom against the methodology, used for evangelization, seems also that Catholic church missionaries came ill-prepared by modern standards and fail in the same mistake of the past, they picked out only what seems to be strange, superstitious weird, abhorrent, obscene, weak and intolerable, describing Africans as lower intelligent without any sense of religion.

So, anyone coming from outside, he may doubt that technology, medicine, new techniques in mission and education, and to insert in government, commerce and communication can be the way of evangelization of people and inculturation of the Gospel into African Cultures as a sign of liberation. But anyone who sees christianity from inside will not think like that. Because God generally use fallible and human means, our vessel of clay, to communicate the treasure of his grace.

In special way I am sure that missionary conversion requires both outward and inward aspects. In other words we need to be taught by somebody else and we have to accept that teaching but not in a passive way but with an active participation. I mean we should search for the truth till we find it. This is the strongest desire for many Africans "to know the truth"²⁴.

In places like Kibera where there are a variety of religious people, they are ever confused especially young men and women at home, where the father belong to another denomination, the mother is a catholic and brothers and sisters sometimes indifferent to religious life-style and have friends within different believes and behaviours. So who has the truth.

Whatsoever, Young people question the usefulness of Christianity bringing out the precedent wave of crime in Kibera. They argue that the church does not appear to be fulfilling her

²⁴A Bellagamba, Mission of the Church its Understanding and Strategies. CHIEA Vol. 5, 1989, pp. 3-24.

prophetic mission, for she has no influence on Kibera politics, social, economics and moral life. The gospel has not become part of the lives of people because the model of the church is institutional and is wrong too²⁵.

For sure, youth's statement is valid. Because it is a sign of inconformity against the behaviour of all the leaders of the Church now in the past now in the present. It is the sign of God's presence in their hearts, the strong desire in them that is longing for God.

From there it is easy to grasp the sense of belonging and their relationship with the Supreme Being and the spiritual worldfather in their lives. From whom they have a wholesome code of morality by which they govern the affairs of daily life. And it is a sign that they know to praise and worship God the Father of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit

²⁵AMECEA secretariate, Theme: Youth on the Threshold of the year 200. CHIEA Vol. 5, 1989, pp. 87-94.

SUGGESTION

There are some people who wish or desire or maybe see the need to go backwards. Maybe upto Lavigerie time who instituted a catechumenate of four years divide in four periods, for preparation or education on our christian baptism²⁶.

Nowadays, this lapse of time is not appropriate. especially because the rapid changes that cultures are experiencing: passing from nomadism to sedentarism; from primitive and sedimentary method to a modern and technological method; from traditional initiation to a christian initiation; from oral transmission of true, wisdom, sacredness, and so on to an internal reflective and contemplative experience of true, wisdom, sacredness etc.

I don't deny that four years could be the ideal but we have to open our eyes and read the signs of the time. People's motives are very varied for becoming a christian.

Some of them come in order to obtain a christian name, now and then, they feel in an inferior status; some because children are in a christian school and they don't want to be different; others because they have been disturbed by protestants or other religion from a rival tribe: these are many basically non-religious and quite accidental reasons for being enroled in the catechumenate.

²⁶Adrian Hastings, Church and Nission in Modern Africa (London, Berns & Oates), 1967, pp. 102-134.

then, the catechumens need a very good and very well prepare catechists. Who might be able to teach and guide the catechumens. Knowing that nowadays the catechism does not consist to memorizing some formulas but to live and to generate that life. Henceforth baptism is the open door to the kingdom of God so that may have eternal life (RCIA3), it is not enough to imitate or repeat but experience and live this nice formula.

Another problem is language. In this field the church has made and put a lot of effort but there is too much to be done yet. The new African church wants to express herself on a solemn occasion. In a solemn but dynamic way, here come across this customarily way of doing through dances and drum-beating. From here they get the inspiration in almost everything and respond at once.

Another element that help people to meditate is through art matters for less than vocal ones. People participated very much. But how much is used to meditate or reflect a passage of the Gospel through local art.

Other elements are symbols which are linked with people's life such as; water, bread etc but in a celebration and after whereon this symbols not even in an imaginary language. Myths and language of traditional religion have become irrelevant to people who are growing up out of this context²⁷.

²⁷Oliver A Onwubiko, African Thought, Religion and Culture (Nigeria, Snaap Press Ltd.), 1991, Chps 1-2-3.

TO BE BORN IN OTHER CULTURE

To become a member in other culture, society, group, or family is not easy, i.e. the procreation of a child is required the "consent" of the parties (acceptance), and to opt for life of a third person, as well as, the "intimate relationship"²⁸ between the child and the mother at first moment of existence.

So to be born in other culture is needed the "consent or acceptance and relationship" of the members of the community. Then the adaptation will be done in a progressive way. It has been proved by different disciplines that the more a Child is apart of his cultural order from his natural order. the more recognized is by the society.

Therefore the sense of belonging to other culture is through principles rules and norms which determine the way of living of the person and help us to know how to behave in the community in which we live. hence the person must rupture with all that induce to selfishness sense. In exchange for seeking the good of the community or society in which He or she finds guarantees, privileges, honour and responsibility It is what African understand as "Dignity"²⁹.

²⁸Adrian Hastings, Christian Marriage in Africa London, Hollen Street) 1973, p. 65.

²⁹R.J. Njeroge and G.A. Bennaars, Philosophy abd Education in Africa (Nairobi, Trnsafrica) 1987, p.

But to have an encounter with other culture is necessary to experience, both death of one's own culture and the rebirth into a new one, with all he/her customs, traditions, ideas etc.. But it is the most difficult step to be done, to give up one's own ideas, thoughts, believes, and so on³⁰.

Other element that can help is the similarities of one own culture no by compering but by implementation and enrichment of one's own culture. It implies to spouse ones own self being open to a new mentality. This is another way to be born in a new world Allowing other to show me the way

Theological Sense of Belonging Relationship in OT

In the O.T. and N.T. we can see how God prepares humanity to have an encounter between him and humankind. It requires an intimate relationship God-mankind through which mankind would experience the sense of belonging to and to be a property of his.

³⁰Benezet Bujo, African Christian Morality (Nairobi, St. Paul Publications-Africa) 1990, p. 18.

So in the OT we find both the book of the covenant³¹ and the sanctuary law³² is where the law was deposited. Moses is recognized as a teacher and proclaim what God has promulgate for his people, and the book of the covenant which constitutes law (Torah which originally meant teaching) and is known as The Book of teaching.

In the book of covenant stress the ideal that it is God who takes the initiative "I Yahweh and your God " (Ex.20;2) It is not mankind who longs for God but it is God who manifests himself to mankind.

What mankind has to do is to worship him. To worship God mankind has instituted the sabbath day and it has to be sanctified (to set it apart, to avoid doing the work of the weekday on it). From here Divine-human encounter derives and is God's to regulate as the theophany with its explicit rules (Ex.19;10-15; 20-29) and not statutes of duties are permitted in Yahweh's sanctuary.

In Sanctuary Law was taken as supersedes for the sacrifices which have a humanitarian and social security aspect, sacrifice as animal is to be consumed on an altar. Here alters are to be built according to divine specification, and it is God who designs the site of the alter, must make it a place where his

³¹Richard J. Clifford, "Exodus" In NJBC Ed. by R.E Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer, R.M. O'Carm (Great Britain, Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), p.44.

³²Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomy" Ibid. p. 94

name and his presence is (Deuteronomy view name is taken as divine presence Ex.3:12,14). That Yahweh has put his name there signifies ownership and perhaps also intend to discourage materialistic ideas about divine presence (1Kgs 8:27-30).

One of the characteristics of the law is to protect the yahwistic cult from the contamination of the canaanites ritual. It is necessary to elect a specific place chosen by God and to worship him in it or a dwelling for the name of yahweh where God manifest himself to mankind. It is Solomon who built the temple of yahweh which shall be the place of prayer. (1Kgs 9: 1-9). Solomon who has obeyed God is blessed. Anyone who obeys has the capacity of listening and the one who listens to others comes close to him (Ex. 23:22) but the one who is a rebel is separated, keeps distance, is far away (Ex. 23:21).

Theological sense of belonging, relationship in NT.

In the OT. the sense of belonging to God is understood through the intimate relationship between man and God. In the NT. the sense of belonging to God is required an "intimate relationship" between man (Jesus) to man, and man to God. It is Jesus, who set the guideline on norms and rules to relate to God. "Love one another and God with all your being".

Love is not merely poetry, strictly speaking, but it is a reality and the core of christianity. Nevertheless love now begins with a dream and now it seems to be "Love at first sight". It is the fulfilment of our desire too.

We have ideas about love formed by our thinking, habits, experiences and desires. Otherwise, how would we know immediately on seen a person that we can engage. For some people fit into that pattern, others do not. But God's mentality is distinct from mankind. In God's plan of salvation "Mary was, is, and will be, for she is the one whom God love before she was a creature, she is even picture as being with Him not only at creation but before creation"³³ (Gen. 3:14-15).

When God willed to become man, he had to decide on the time of his becoming; the country in which he would be born; the city in which he would be raised; the people he would be with; the race political economical religious system which would surround him; the language he would speak; the psychological attitudes which he would come in contact with, as Lord of History and the Servioeur of the world; and lastly, the woman in whom to be incarnate³⁴.

³³Alberic Stacpoole, Mary's Place in the Christian Dialogue (England, St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1982) p. 98.

³⁴J. McHugh, The Mother of Jesus In the NT (London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975) pp. 379-387.

He was born of a woman whom he chose before he was born. She was called by God, in whom our Lord was born not just of her flesh but by her "consent". Before taking into himself a human nature, he consulted with the woman, he beg if she would give him a man³⁵.

Recalling Gn.2:21-23 we shall say that if Eve was born from a man in ecstasy; Jesus would be born in a woman in ecstasy of "prayer" and love of God and in fullness of freedom. Then God never does anything without exceeding preparation and the consent of mankind.

It is very interesting how LK presents us God's salvific plan, in his own way of thinking, by the contemplation of Jesus of Nazareth (Jesus of History). Lk's interpretation on Jesus of Nazareth is a "Journey with haste". To make us understand it, LK makes an introduction presenting Mary's visitation to her kinswoman.

To me it is God's visitation to humanity in the person of Jesus, and Elizabeth personalized the whole humanity, and the gathering is the encounter of God to humankind. This encounter is a sign of vitalism and fullness of life, happiness, rejoice of man and woman, this encounter has a great significance for it is the way to praise God actively in life.

³⁵Ivone Gevara, Maria Clara, Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor (Great Britain, Burns & Oates, 1989) pp. 20-24.

As soon as Elizabeth saw Mary, the child in her womb leapt (Gen. 25:22), LK means that John recognized his Lord Jesus (My Lord - Jn's Gospel puts in the mouth of Thomas Jn.20:28) and rejoices. On the other hand Elizabeth's greetings to Mary is praised for her "believe" and "trust" in the "fidelity of God". (To me it is the response of humanity to God's presence).

The birth of Jesus took place after Joseph and Mary's journey from Galilee to Judea where they found there was no inn but a manger only. Here LK interpretation is to present Jesus as the Davidic Messiah whom will bring peace, joy, salvation, grace, food, etc.

To me the birth of Jesus means weakness loveliness, limitation hopelessness, but sinless. Taking the Human condition in a humility way Ph.2:6-11: 1 Sam 16:1-13 and as a servioir and shepherd of humanity.

For LK. salvation means restoration to wholeness, rescue from sins and alienation from God (dependence). It is Jesus whom is in the midst of sinners, breaking the barrier which separates man from God and nurtures human community, he is the real presence of God.

To me salvation is Jesus whom liberates mankind from the paws of evil and preserves us in that intimate relationship with God His Father).

This Jesus came in a particular time, place and culture. He grew up and was brought up by the help of Mary and Joseph, relatives and people from different communities where he was inn.

Jesus since his infancy knew his mission (LK 2:46-52) but it was not his hour yet (Jn 2;4:Mk 1;24). When his hour came (Mk 1;15). He allows to be led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to prepare himself with prayers (LK 3:21-22) and ends with prayers (LK. 22:46).

Prayer is one of the Lukan Themes, for healing (LK. 5:16); selecting the twelve apostles (LK 6:12); before his passion (LK. 9:18); before Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit To go to Galilee (LK 4:14) before his teaching (Lk 6:20); etc. To me Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit. To enter in God's mentality and to know His will and to fulfil it. Prayer is the proper mean to relate to God.

Jesus' ministry in LK is described as a christological catechism for his church. LK uses his prodivity to situate about Jesus' story (when Paul does in cities in cultural, economical, political, social and religious application in centres of an area). (LK. 4:31-44) puts in the mouth of Jesus as "his words", in order to teach the community and through his words cleanses on a sabbath day, which shows that Jesus is the Holy one of God

To me Jesus' ministry is to proclaim the reign of God to be, here, now at hand, a time for forgiveness, grace and salvation

for the lost, the downtrodden free, and the burdened of the earth.

Jesus mission is stressed in Lk (4:42-44) When Jesus goes to Galilee with special attention in v.43 about the kingdom of God. Lk description defines the term God's rule and as a norm means the conquest of evil for all men and women, for outcast and poor, for lame, blind, etc that rule and norm is reflected by the preaching and the mighty deeds of Jesus the holy one of God, God's son, God's anointed (to me Jesus' mission is to give mankind back the sense of belonging to God.

Seeing the need of a madame in life and been baptized trusting in the name of the father the son and Holy Spirit. through which everybody will be saved (MT.28:19-20). The call of Jesus is the proposal to belong to the kingdom of God's life-style. He chose twelve who are the intimate representatives and as symbols of the reconstruction of Israel. They are the ones who will continue spreading and proclaiming the kingdom of God. "Unity" is one of Jesus sign but what a sign of unity from diversity, not uniformity. And even to the one who betrayed him, Jesus offers a deep intimacy.

Ecclesiological sense of belonging relationship.

The verb Haghal is denominative from gahal, assembly. The greek term (ekklesia) which leads to the early christian use, specially by Paul. Now if we return from the apostolic age into the synoptics and the time of Jesus we shall find an account of the events which prepare the way to belong to christianity. Certainly it was not easy to deal with.

First of all, John's baptism should be analyzed so that we can understand much better the significance and implication at personal and communal level. The Apostolic Kerigma attached great importance to it (Acts 1:21-22;10:37;13:24-25) as well as all the evangelists do the same, stressing John's activity. (MT. 3:1-12;Mk.1:1-18;LK 3:1-20;JN 1:6-8;15:19-36).

The central point of this tradition is the account of Jesus' Baptism. This is the most authentic historical fact. It is obvious that when the Church, the visible manifestation of the spirit foreshadows baptism in the spirit and the father's designation of the son, points towards the adoption of the baptized as sons.

John's Gospel presents, the scenes of Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, Baptism as the nature of dogmatic elaboration based on symbols words and deeds. He specified that Jesus did not baptize but only his disciples (Jn 4:2).

This remark fits in well with the stress John lays on the Paschal character of the gift of the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:39;16:7;20:22).

By the side of the "narrative" text which provide us with the fact of various Baptisms, we must place the "dogmatic" passages which concentrates on the meaning of baptism. Nowhere does the NT give us a treatise on baptism. And yet, from the beginning, christian thought about the right of their initiation.

Christian living constantly made Jesus' follower think back to the mysterious act which lay at the foundation of their new condition, finding expressions the most literary forms-exhortations, instructions, scriptural arguments hymns and symbols of faith.

Paul keeps on returning to baptism 1 Cor. 1:13-17 and to be against sin which set us out of the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-11;10:1-5). Baptism demands "Justice" 1 Cor. 6:11 and recourse the history of Israel emphasizes the fact that baptism bears no resemblance to a magic rite which could dispense the christian from a constant struggle towards conversion, or immersion in water (Rom.6). The subject of divine adoption comes from Gal. 3:26 to 4:7 as a dogmatic argument, which is given to christians in the act of baptism.

In Eph. (4:1-16) we find the exhortation to live in "unity" as the foundation's one Lord, one faith, one baptism. The interlock of this three terms is significant because it is the one Jesus Christ who confers the one baptism, unlike all the Jewish baptism upto that of John; so, too, the profession of faith in christ is the essential element of the rite.

In Hebrews we find the christian initiation as adherence to christ (Heb. 1:12;14;22;23), as rebirth (1:3,23), as childhood (1:14;2:2) as faith (1:5,7,9;2:7-8).

The greek fathers speak quite naturally of the water of the Jordan and of the whole world becoming spirit-bearing because of their contact with the body of christ at his own baptism.

The church is visible in virtue of her public act, and her basic visibility as a organized society derives from the administration of three sacraments;baptism, confirmation and orders. This three structural sacraments give grace but this an interior gift; their contribution to the visibility of the church depends on the sacramental ceremonies themselves and on the activities in which the individual engages as a result.

To take part in such actions of the church the person must belong to the church, must form part of that great sacrament of christ in the world. He must be able to make a bodily protestation of faith which constitutes part of the visible structure of the church and of the church. It is destined to

signify not simply personal faith but the faith of the church and as a consequence the divine decree of salvation here and now active through the humanity of christ and through the official act of the church.

C O N C L U S I O N

Thanks to this research I had done. It is possible to recognize that, people's faith and act are in union with the universe, both visible and invisible, of the living and the death, of family and ethnic tribe, and nation. It is in the warmth of this vending solidarity that the seed of the precepts and counsels of the Gospel will germinate.

It would be possible if it is taken away the Western theological disputes, the greco-latin complexity and the byzantine ambiguity by taking the risk on our shoulders of a social unity and psychological integrity, educational awareness and religious challenges in order to grow in harmony.

There are certain elements which lead to live in harmony: the institution of extended family (christian sense); collective solidarity; participation and sharing the word of God.

People's plea is always in the sphere of evangelization; to deplore from the stand-point of view of more effort for equitable fraternity that at the moment we are passing through. It is not the time to think in a racist way. Not only local church but universally one, not being black or white but hand in hand, not uniformity or conformity but diverse and active. We all are in the same ecosystem which God has made for us to live.

God has sent the Word (Jesus Christ) to be incarnated into the world. The Word brought to us the Good News with a message that is characterised by love, trust, forgiveness and faith in God. These are the requirements to be son and daughters of God. Jesus Christ fulfilled it showing us the way of being man divinized by God. So it is Christ who became man in order to make man God (divinization of humanity), and not other way round.

therefore, Baptism can only be relevant if the person has an intimate relationship with Christ. The purpose of "Baptism" it is not to be the door, gate, bridge, etc. to Catholic Church, but to god's Kingdom. God's Kingdom is manifested to everybody in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the theophny of God to whole humanity. And only those who receive, believe, trust, love, long for him will enter into the Kingdom of God.

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