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**MISSION AS DIALOGUE AND ENCOUNTER: THE BASIS FOR THE MILL
HILL MISSIONARIES' ATTITUDES IN EVANGELIZING THE HUMAN
PERSON.**

CASE STUDY: CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BUNGOMA.

Supervisor

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**A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Bachelor of Arts in Theology**

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DEDICATION

To all the Christians of the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma, and all the Mill Hill Missionaries both living and the dead who worked in Bungoma Diocese, Kenya.

I also dedicate this work firstly, to my mother Rose Nade Wanjala and my late father Humphrey Mugele Wanjala for through them, the seed of faith was nurtured in me.

Secondly, to my entire family members especially my eldest brother Andrew Wanjala, relatives and friends.

EPIGRAPH

Courageous dialogue does not make headlines, but quietly helps the world to live much better than we imagine [...] and ‘between selfish indifference and violent protests there is always another possible option: that of dialogue. Dialogue between generations, dialogue among our people, for we are that people; readiness to give and receive, while remaining open to the truth’.

(POPE FRANCIS, *FRATELLI TUTTI*, 198-199)

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It is with great joy to thank my supervisor, Rev. Fr. Innocent Maganya Halerimana for his continuous and effective supervision. Indeed he has labored in giving insights to ensure that the paper is well written.

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work accomplished through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Theology. It has never been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and duly acknowledged in the footnotes and bibliography respectively.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
ABTR	Abaluhya Traditional Religions
AG	<i>Ad Gentes</i>
AMECEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa
AT	<i>Africae Terrarum</i>
ATR	African Traditional Religions
C	Article of our Constitution in Constitutions and Directives of St. Joseph's Missionary Society of Mill Hill and Statues for Lay Associates
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CDBGM	Catholic Diocese of Bungoma
CEP	Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples
Cf.	<i>confer</i> ; compare
CIC	<i>Cordex Iurex Canonici</i>
Cor	Second Letter of St. Paul to Corinthians
CWME	Commission for World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches
DM	Dialogue and Mission
DP	Dialogue and Proclamation
ed(s).	Edited by
Eg.	<i>Exempli gratia</i> ; For example
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
ES	<i>Ecclesiam Suam</i>
Etc.	Excetera, and more
Et al	<i>alii – other persons</i>
f/ff.	and the following page (s)
FABC	Federation of Asian Bishop's Conferences
Fr.	Father
FT	<i>Fratelli Tutti</i>
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
i.e.	<i>id est</i> – that is
Ibid.	<i>Ibidem</i> (the same source as above)
Is	Book of prophet Isaiah
Jn	Gospel of John
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
Lk	Gospel of Luke
ME	Mission and Evangelism
MEP	Mission Experience Programme
MHM	Mill Hill Missionaries
Mt	Gospel of Mathew
NA	<i>Nostra Aetate</i>
Op.cit.	<i>Opus Citate</i> (the source already used)
PCID	Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults
RM	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i>
SCCs	Small Christian Communities
SECAM	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
trans.	Translated by, translator
WCC	World Council of Churches

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The pioneer missionaries in Western Kenya were the Mill Hill Missionaries, amongst whom from the start there was a big presence of Dutchmen. In 1894 they were entrusted with the Vicariate of the Upper Nile. In which, as well as territories in Uganda, the West of Kenya was included. In 1903 they opened a mission in Kisumu among the Luo, followed a year later by a Station in Mumias among the Luhya. In the following years there was a constant expansion of missionary work among those tribes, while mission stations were also opened among the Gusii.¹

This quote triggered a number of questions in me: How was the first encounter of the pioneer Mill Hill Missionaries with the local people? Were the local people especially those in the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma either receptive or not to their invitation; and Why? Above all, how was the Mill Hill Missionaries' attitudes towards the local people and their culture, and amongst themselves as missionaries in the work of evangelization and human promotion? This research will therefore explore the dialogue and encounter between the Mill Hill Missionaries and the local people. It will further investigate the goals, styles and means of evangelization, and their influence on the lives of the local people and the missionary character and spirituality of the Mill Hill Missionaries. The Mill Hill Missionaries have always been in dialogue with the culture of the people.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, accentuates the urgency for the Church to be in solidarity with the whole of human family and read the signs of times in the midst of the diverse and constant flux of science and technology, "culture and the ways of thinking"² in her work of evangelization in the modern world. This indeed is a call of any missionary in a given mission territory to ask oneself: What is going on here? Why I am here, and for whom am I in this

¹ A. DE JONG, "The Violent Road to Independence in Kenya", in *Mission and Politics in Eastern Africa: Dutch Missionaries and African Nationalism in Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi 1945-1965*, 51.

² Cf. *GS*, 1-10.

particular mission placement? How do I respond to this particular situation, and what missionary attitudes do I need to develop in this context as I encounter these people daily? Indeed this is a call for a missionary to be open to dialogue and surrender to the promptings of the Holy Spirit for effectiveness of the missionary tasks entrusted to him. This implies that dialogue is an integral part to missionary evangelization on the account that

The same Spirit is at work in the people being evangelized as well as the evangelizers; and we acknowledge that there is a two-way exchange of gifts, between missionaries and the people among whom they work. Dialogue conveys the impression that mission is not just a matter of *doing things for* the people. It is first of all a matter of *being with people, of listening and sharing* with them.³

Additionally, in the opening address for the 18th Chapter of St. Joseph's Missionary Society, Fr. Anthony Chantry, the General Superior of the Mill Hill Missionaries affirmed the need for dialogue in mission by saying:

We will begin our journey together by listening attentively to one another and the concerns of the Members and Associates. We shall conclude with statements and recommendations born of consensus, and choose leadership that will empower our society in its mission of loving service over the next five years. So the quality of the dialogue that will take place during the journey will determine the quality of the outcomes of this Chapter. In his pre-conclave speech Pope Francis said: "Dialogue is born from a respectful attitude toward the other person, from a conviction that the other person has something good to say. It supposes that we can make room in our heart for their point of view, their opinion and their proposals." May this characterize our deliberations in revisioning the mission and identity of our Society in evangelization (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 33)⁴.

The research will be tackled in four chapters: Chapter one will deal with the Preliminaries, the background information of the problem and the overview of the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma including the geographical location of the diocese; the people and tribes which make up this ecclesiastical jurisdiction, principally the Luhya

³ D. DORR, *Mission in today's World*, 16.

⁴ Mill Hill Missionaries Chapter 2015 Documents, 11.

tribe, and the organization of the diocese. Chapter two will concentrate on the conception of Mission as Dialogue and Encounter and its relevance to the holistic evangelization of the peoples. Chapter three will aim at the Mill Hill Missionaries' Attitudes in the Evangelization of Human Person in Bungoma Diocese. Here, the paper will analyze the Society's missionary tasks and motivation as presented to the public by first tracing the genesis and charism of the society, the Mill Hill Missionaries in Western Kenya and as well as the means of evangelization and their impact on the faith of the local people. Consequently, the research will examine the challenges faced by the missionaries in their work of evangelizing the people of the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma.

Finally, chapter four will sum up the research with the Recommendations and General conclusion. Firstly, on the specific missionary attitudes and spirituality of the Mill Hill Missionaries in evangelization of the people; and secondly, on the general missionary attitudes, i.e. how a missionary need to nurture and use these very attitudes in mission.

CHAPTER ONE

Preliminaries

1.1 Introduction

For the efficiency of this work, we shall begin chapter one by first defining the major terms which shall frequently surface in this research work; followed by the general presentation of the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma including the geographical location of the diocese and the organization of the diocese. Thereafter we shall present the people, tribes and language that forms the CDBGM in view of their socio-historical and cultural background. The rationale of the work, the objectives, the basic questions, research methodology and the scope and limitation of the study shall end this chapter.

1.2 The Definition of Key Terms

1.2.1 Mission

According to Rogers Glenn, the term Mission is derived from the Latin phrase “*Missio Dei*” which literally means “the sending of God”.⁵ Hence, mission can be referred to as all God’s interventions in the world for the salvation of humankind, including all that He mandated to the Church in its missionary task.⁶ According to *Ad Gentes*, Mission is “special undertakings in which preachers of the Gospel, sent by the Church, and going into the whole world, carry out the work of preaching the Gospel and implanting the Church among people who do not yet believe in Christ.” (AG, 6). In short, it designates evangelizing work in the localities where the Gospel has never been preached.

For the purpose of this paper, we shall adopt the definition of mission by Van Engens.

Mission is the people of God intentionally crossing barriers from church to nonchurch, faith to nonfaith, to proclaim by word and deed the coming of the

⁵C.f. R. GLENN, *A Basic Introduction to Mission and Missiology*, 18.

⁶ *Ibid*, 18.

kingdom of God in Jesus Christ; this is achieved by means of the church's participation in God's mission of reconciling people to God, to themselves, to each other, and to the world, and gathering them into the church through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit with a view to the transformation of the world as a sign of the coming of the kingdom in Jesus Christ (1996:26-27).⁷

This definition is in line with the mission of the Mill Hill Missionaries which has its source and foundation in the Trinity: the Father sends the Son and the Spirit, and through the Son in the Spirit God brings forth creation (cf. *AG*, 2).

1.2.2 Dialogue and Encounter

Dialogue and encounter refers to the first meeting or coming across between the early protagonists of the Good News of Jesus Christ with the local people in their diverse cultures in the work of evangelization. We shall first give an elaborate definition of dialogue and thereafter that of encounter.

1.2.2.1 Dialogue

Etymologically, the term dialogue stems from the Greek διάλογος (*dialogos*, conversation); its roots are διά (*dia*: through) and λόγος (*logos*: speech, reason). The first extant author who uses the term is Plato, in whose works it is closely associated with the art of dialectic.⁸ Latin took over the word as *dialogus*.⁹ So dialogue literally means a “conversation through word between two or more persons, or an exchange of ideas and opinions”.¹⁰

The word “dialogue” expresses an important reality being cultivated by the Church in Vatican II. In fact without dialogue evangelization experiences turbulence or even standstill because there is no openness and mutuality between the evangelizer and the

⁷ Ibid. 19.

⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialogue#Etymology> (Accessed on 15th September, 2021).

⁹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialogue#Etymology> (Accessed on 15th September, 2021).

¹⁰ Cf. MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY: *Online Version*.

evangelized, and as well as the promotion of the dignity of the human person. The document on *Dialogue and Proclamation* defines the concept of dialogue in three ways.

Firstly, at the purely human level, it means reciprocal communication leading to a common goal, or at a deeper level, interpersonal communion. Secondly, dialogue is an attitude of respect and friendship which permeates or should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the church. This is indeed ‘the spirit of dialogue.’ Thirdly, in a context of religious pluralism, dialogue means ‘all the positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment, in obedience to truth and respect for freedom. It includes both witness and the exploration of respective religious convictions (*Dialogue and Proclamation*, 9).

The paper will limit the concept of dialogue to the relationship between and amongst the Mill Hill Missionaries with the local people of the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma in reference to the missionary tasks they carried out since the erection of the diocese until the exit of the last Mill Hill Missionary in 2015.

1.2.2.2 Encounter

Literally the term encounter as a verb refers “to meet (someone) without expecting or intending to”.¹¹ As a noun, it means “a meeting that is not planned or expected or a brief experience with another person”¹². From the two definitions, the encounter is therefore, a chance meeting, a face-to-face interaction or an experience with another person that invites a significant response or change.

1.2.3 Missionaries

These are “faithful religious or lay persons who are devoted to the propagation of the Christian faith among non-Christian peoples or in places of markedly declining Christian faith.”¹³ Christ provided the mandate for missionary activity when He

¹¹ MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY, Op.cit.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Cf. C. LOCHENG, *Missiology: Introduction to the Roots of the Great commission*, 15.

commanded His disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples (cf. Mt 28:19 & Lk 24:47). From the very beginning, engagement in mission has been seen to be fundamental to the identity of Christian community. For instance, St. Paul and the other Apostles furnished the model for evangelization and for the establishment core communities that would then take on the task of proclaiming the Gospel in their immediate environs.

According to *Ad Gentes* missionaries “are assigned with a special vocation who, being endowed with a suitable natural temperament, and being fit as regards talent and other qualities, have been trained to undertake mission work, and sent by legitimate authority, they go out with faith and obedience to those who are far from Christ.”¹⁴ Therefore, a missionary bears witness to Christ (the Missionary) by his or her way of life in a particular social context. To understand the charism and kind of Mill Hill Missionaries that were operative in the mission territories, we shall adopt Donald Dorr’s distinction of the two categories of missionaries.

First, Those who focus primarily on the building up of the church both as a community and in its institutional aspects. For instance, through forming and nourishing Small Christians communities or training leaders for church activities.¹⁵ Second, Those who are primarily concerned not about the church but about certain key Christian values – living these values, giving witness to them, and promoting them in the society. This kind of missionaries may, for instance be devoting their time and energy to building up a primary health care system, or literacy work, or to the promotion of human rights, or to working for liberation, or reconciliation.¹⁶

1.2.4 Evangelization:

Evangelization in Hebrew word ‘*basar*’ means ‘bringing the good news’. And in Greek is ‘*Euangelion*’, meaning ‘to preach the good news with authority and power’. Pope

¹⁴ Cf. AG, 23 & 24.

¹⁵ We shall equate the first category to primary evangelizers which is in line with the mission and identity of the Mill Hill Missionaries of pioneering work in building the local church.

¹⁶ D. DORR, *Mission in today’s world*, 194-195ff.

Pius VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* defines evangelization as “to bring the Good News into all areas of humanity, and through its impact, to transform that humanity from within, making it new.” (cf. *EN*, 18). Evangelizing mission should bring a total change, a fullness of life both for individual person and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, their ways of life i.e. the cultures, and the actual milieu in which they live.¹⁷ The change is that of Christian witness to the gospel; that of going forth and proclaiming the gospel in the community as one is sent at the end of a Eucharistic celebration. For that reason, “the person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others” (cf. *EN*, 24) in a mutual and complementary relationship.

Vatican II Council expounds on the meaning of evangelization in three different ways. Firstly, “Evangelization is missionary preaching or primary proclamation/kerygma.”¹⁸ Secondly, “Evangelization as the ministry of the word including; missionary preaching, catechesis, homiletics and theological research.”¹⁹ Finally, “Evangelization is the entire missionary activity of the church among people who don’t know yet the Gospel.”²⁰

In line with the vision of the founder, the Mill Hill Missionaries based their missionary endeavors on the first and final definition by bringing the Good News of Jesus to the poor, to the people “most abandoned and poorest in the means of grace”.²¹ So in evangelization, Mill Hill Missionaries’ preference is “for pioneering work: to open up new fields, to respond boldly to fresh needs and face unfamiliar challenges.”²²

1.2.5 Human Person

¹⁷ Cf. *EN*, 18-20.

¹⁸ Cf. *AG*, 6 & 26.

¹⁹ Cf. *LG*, 35.

²⁰ Cf. *AG*, 6 & 23.

²¹ CONSTITUTIONS AND DIRECTIVES OF ST. JOSEPH’S MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF MILL HILL AND STATUTES FOR LAY ASSOCIATES, Article of our Constitution 6.

²² *Ibid.* C7.

According to the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World a human person is a unity of body and soul (cf. *GS*, 14). So there is no division in the human person, and humanity may never despise the bodily life and is obliged to embrace the goodness of the material body as God's creation and treat it with honor since on the last day, this material body will be raised by God (cf. *GS*, 14). This inseparable unity of the human person's spiritual and material reality invites a missionary or Church towards human promotion by being involved in various activities of social-spiritual development so as to relieve human suffering and to restore humanity to wholeness.²³ This includes the struggle against evils of poverty, being in solidarity with the needy, promotion of educational and medical centers at the service of people, and defense of human rights, dignity and works of justice and peace. For the sake of this research work, human person or peoples will be used interchangeably since they correlate to each other.

1.3 The Overview of the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma

The diocese of Bungoma, whose episcopal seat is located in Bungoma town, marked by the presence of Christ the King Cathedral. It is within the two major County Governments of Bungoma and Busia respectively in the Western Province of Kenya. It covers a territorial area of 4,540 km² with a population of 704,532 Catholics (46.2% of 1,524,850 total) based on 2018 statistics.²⁴

The diocese shares both the ecclesiastical and political boundaries with the Catholic dioceses of: Tororo in Eastern Uganda, Kisumu metropolitan Archdiocese, Kakamega and Kitale diocese respectively.

1.3.1 The Catholic Diocese of Bungoma

²³ Cf. Is 61:1-2; Lk 4:18; Mt 8:17 & Jn 10:10.

²⁴ <http://www.gcatholic.org/dioceses/diocese/bung0.htm>, (accessed on 29th October, 2021).

Bungoma diocese is in the Ecclesiastical province of Kisumu following the Roman (Latin) Rite and depends on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.²⁵ It was established on 27th April, 1987 as Diocese of Bungoma /Bungomaën(sis) (*Latin*) from Diocese of Kakamega.²⁶ Thereafter, it was entrusted to Bishop Longinus Atundo as the first ordinary of the diocese. He was consecrated by Cardinal Temko, the Prefect of the Papal Department for the Evangelization of the Peoples on 28th June, 1987. Bishop Atundo reigned until 15th November, 1996; focusing on building diocesan pastoral structures on the Small Christian Communities, endowing them with as many pastoral tasks and rights as possible.²⁷ He was later succeeded by Norman King'oo Wambua who was consecrated as the Bishop of Bungoma diocese in 1998.06.27; and since then he been the shepherd of the diocese until 2018.06.23 when he was transferred as the Bishop to the Catholic diocese of Machakos where he currently reigns as the shepherd of the diocese. Since 23th June 2018 until recently before the appointment of the new bishop and his consecration, the diocese was *sede vacante* and under the apostolic administration of the Bishop of Kakamega, Rt. Rev. Bishop Joseph Obanyi Sagwe. Currently, the third bishop of the CDBGM is Rt. Rev. Mark Kadima who was consecrated and installed on 19th February, 2022 in Bungoma town.

Moreover, the diocese is structured into four deaneries with their respective parishes, totaling to 43 as follows:²⁸ First, **Nangina Deanery**: Mary mother of the Lake Magombe; St. Nicholas Port Victoria; St. Cajetan Sirimba; St. Cecilia Dairo; Canadian

²⁵ <http://www.gcatholic.org/dioceses/diocese/bung0.htm>, (accessed on 29th October, 2021).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Cf. J. BAUR, *The Catholic Church in Kenya: A Centenary History*, 128-129.

²⁸ A. DIENYA, WhatsApp conversation with the author.

Martyrs Nangina²⁹; St. Peter Bulama; St. John Butunyi; St. Joseph Butula; Bumutiru and Bukhuyi parishes.

Second, **Amkura Deanery**: St. Stephen Lwanya; St. Mary's Mundika; Bulanda parish; Ugandan Martyrs Busia; St. Mary Kisoko; Kwang'amor parish; St. Rosa of Lima Amkura; Chakol; Chelelemuk and Kocholia parishes.

Third, **Kibabii Deanery**: St. Therese of the child Jesus Kabula; Christ the King Cathedral Bungoma, St. Mary Magdalene Kimatunyi; St. Mary Mother of God Kimwanga; Myanga; St. Mary's Kibabii; St. Paul Kanduyi; St. Stephen Sikusi; Sirisia Parish; Cheptais; St. Barnabas; St. Longinus Kongoli and St. Benedetta Samoya.

Fourth, **Misikhu Deanery**: St. Cecilia Misikhu; St. Leo Kimilili; St. Peter Ndal; Naitiri; St. Paul Kibuk; St. Therese of the Child Jesus Kaptalelio; St. Boniface Chebukaka; St. Marsella Maliki and Holy Trinity Webuye.

Nevertheless, the Catholic diocese of Bungoma comprise of Christians; majority who are Catholics, and those of the other faiths and religions especially the protestants such as Anglicans, Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. Muslims, Legio Maria, and African traditional religion especially the religious sects which worship Luhya tradition God (*'Wele Khakaba'*) while at the same time using portions of the Bible to teach their converts are prevalent in the diocese. For instance, Dini ya Msambwa which was founded by Elijah Masinde in 1948, worship the Bukusu god of Mt. Elgon, and they

²⁹ It is the oldest parish in the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma established in 1927. The first Mill Hill priests in Nangina Parish were: Fr. Coenen and Fr. Kuhn. Nangina is the mother parish of my home parish, St. Cecilia Dairo which was made an independent parish in 1992 under the reign of Fr. Martin Rijk, MHM as the parish priest. The parish was handed over to the diocese in May 2015 as Fr. Martin left for retirement in his home country, the Netherlands (Holland). Cf. Also BURGMAN, H., "A New Place in Luhyialand: Nangina", in *The Way Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*, 108-111.

also practice traditional arts referred to by some as witchcraft.³⁰ According to the locals, this movement originally arose as part of an anti-colonial resistance.

1.3.2 The People, Tribes, Clans and Language³¹

The major tribes that occupy the diocese of Bungoma are the Abaluyia (Luhya)³² with its 20 culturally and linguistically related sub-tribes, and the Iteso³³ occupying the Sub-counties of Teso North and Teso South in Busia County with a population of about 578, 000 Iteso according to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.³⁴ The Luhya tribe is further divided socially into several clans; speaking and sharing the same culture. Leadership at this level is based on the seniority in terms of age, and it is a taboo for one to marry within the same clan because they are of the same ancestral family. Dutch anthropologist Jan de Wolf reiterates on the concept of clan which is vital among the people of Bungoma by the definition of a clan as “a social unit which consists of all the patrilineal descendants of a common ancestor who do not marry each other.”³⁵ For example, the researcher is a male (*Omukhumachi*) from *Abakhumachi* clan, and if he was to marry he could not marry a female (*Nakhumachi*) from the same clan.

³⁰ Cf. P.B. WANAKUTA, *Drumming up Dialogue*, 122ff.

³¹ In our discussion under this section, we shall briefly mention of the Iteso tribe and mainly focus on the Abaluhya tribe throughout this research work for the feasibility of our study. In most cases, the research will be referring to the relationship between the Mill Hill Missionaries and the Abaluhya tribe (inclusive of the subtribes) living within the CDBGM.

³² *Luhya* refers to both the 20 Luhya Clans with their collectively and respective languages. There are 20 (and by other accounts, 21, when the Suba are included) clans that make up the Luhya. Each has a distinct dialect. The word *Luhya* or *Luyia* in some of the dialects means "the north", and *Abaluhya* (*Abaluyia*) thus means "people from the north". Other translations are "those of the same hearth." So, when we talk of *Omuluyia* it refers to the Person, *Abaluyia* are the People, *Oluluyia* the Language and *Ebuluyia* the Country or geographical location. The same approach applies to the sub-tribes and clans.

³³ *Iteso* refers to the People and *Ateso* is the spoken Language. Prior to the missionary evangelization, the Iteso believed in an omnipotent god called *Akuj*, and a god of calamity called *Edeke*, and also life afterlife with the view that , “the body is separated from its spirit (*'eparair'*), which leaves to live in the bush. Ideally, the spirit will move further and further into the bush, but discontent spirits may return to bother the living, demanding offerings of food and drink. Exhuming the bodies after a few years is meant to 'cool' them, and make them more amenable to the living.” (Cf. *"Oduk: The Story of the Iteso Conqueror"* in Google Arts & Culture, retrieved on 28th October, 2021). The traditional economic activities for *Iteso* is farming and herding and their staple food is finger millet (*Akuma*) and sorghum.

³⁴ <https://www.knbs.or.ke/2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census-volume-iv-distribution-of-population-by-socio-economic> characteristics, (accessed on 29th October, 2021).

³⁵ Cf. P.B. WANAKUTA, *Drumming up Dialogue*, 10.

1.3.2.1 The Socio-historical and Cultural Background of the Luhyaland:

The Luhyaland of the Western Province of Kenya is predominantly occupied by the Abaluhya (Luyia) people, and is the second largest tribe in Kenya with a number of 6,823,842 people according to the 2019 national census, accounting for about 14.34% of Kenya's total population.³⁶

1.3.2.1.1 The Sub-Tribes

The Abaluhya have no single language, but rather, there are several mutually understood dialects that are principally Bantu. Perhaps the most identifying linguistic feature of the various Luhya dialects is the use of the prefix '*aba- or ava-*', meaning '*of*' or '*belonging to.*' For example, *Abamaragoli or Avamaragoli* means '*people of logoli* ', or *Abasamia (people of Samia)*.³⁷

Therefore, the nineteen subtribes of the Luhya people are: Bukusu; Wang'a headed by chief Muhanga, and later on Mumia; Bukhayo; Marach; Samia (they were headed by chief Kadima, an enemy of Christian community during the reign of Bishop Stam); Bunyala (those living in Budalangi District, near Lake Victoria); Busonga or Abaluhya-Luo (Suba); Marama; Kisa; Bunyore; Maragoli, and they lived under chief Muyima; Tiriki; Idakho; Isukha; Butso; Bunyala (those living in Kakamega County); Batura who are closely related to Masaba or Gisu of Uganda; Kabras and Tachoni.³⁸ We shall

³⁶The Free Encyclopedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luhya_people (accessed on 22nd October, 2021).

³⁷ This is the Luhya sub-tribe which the researcher belongs to. Samia people are subsistent farmers and fishermen; found both in Kenya and Uganda along the shores of Lake Victoria in Busia County and Busia District of Eastern Uganda respectively. They used to live as one before the political boundaries demarcation by the British colonialist. So Samia of Uganda are known as Abasamia-bakwe belonging to the Catholic Diocese of Jinja, Uganda. It is worth noting that Abasamia socio-cultural practices and the spirit of communion is still compact in the sense that annually, there is social activities (cultural dances, sports, music, etc) are organized by the political leaders of both sides to strengthen our bond of unity. In matters of bereavement, weddings, etc. The researcher have seen relatives crisscrossing the borders to partake either in joy or anguish of others to cement the communion and participatory spirit.

³⁸ Cf. F. GROOT, *STAM of Mumias*, 150 - 172.

briefly highlight the Abaluhya subtribes living within the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma by mentioning a few of their respective clans.³⁹

First, the **Bukusu** speak Olubukusu and occupy Bungoma and Mount Elgon districts in Bungoma County. Bukusu clans include the Bamutilu, Baechalo and Bakhisa, etc.⁴⁰ Second, the **Samia** speak Olusamia and occupy Southern Region of Samia District in Busia County, Kenya. The clans of the Samia include the Abatabona, Abadongo, Abakhulo and Abakhumachi, etc. Third, the **Khayo** speak Olukhayo and occupy Nambale District and Matayos Division of Busia County, Kenya. Khayo clans include the Abaguuri, Abasota and Abakhabi. Fourth, the **Marachi**⁴¹ speak Olumarachi and occupy Butula District in Busia County. Marachi clans include Abafofoyo and Abamuchama among others. Fifth, the **Nyala**⁴² speak Lunyala and occupy Budalangi District on the shore of Lake Victoria. Their clans include Abakhala and Abakhoone among others. Finally, the **Tachoni** speak Lutachoni and occupy Lugari, Bungoma and Malava districts. Tachoni clans include Abachambai, Abamarakalu, Abasang'alo, etc.

³⁹ Cf. The Free Encyclopedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luhya_people (accessed on 22nd October, 2021).

⁴⁰ For a complete list of Bukusu Cf. Shadrack Amakoye Bulimo, *Luyia Nation: Origins, Clans and Taboos* ISBN 978-14669-7837-9.

⁴¹ The name Marachi was given further impetus by the war-like lifestyle of the descendants of Ng'ono who ruthlessly fought off the Luo expansion of the Jok Omollo a Nilotic group that sought to control the Nzoia and Sio Rivers in the area and the fishing grounds around the gulf of Erukala and Ebusijo-modern day Port Victoria in Bunyala Sub-county and Sio Port in Samia Sub-county respectively.

⁴² Culturally, Abanyala had their annual social-cultural and religious festival known as '*Tingilidi*' in honour of their ancestral spirits ('*Emisambwa*') of Sumba (male) and Nakhabuka (female). According to the locals especially Mr. Olobo, the chief drummer of Sumba Oracles: "The festival entailed dancing, boat racing, wrestling, sacrifices and feasting and used to be held on Sumba Island, and people would come from long distances to attend. Interestingly, there were ethical restrictions during the Sumba festival. For example immorality of any kind and fighting with weapons was punishable by natural death unless purified by a special sacrifice (a lamb). Also very heavy fines were imposed. The food and beer required at the festival was collected from all over Bunyala, as a matter of custom. No one could refuse to contribute and if he did it was believed that there would be no rain, hence nobody wanted to be blamed for a communal calamity. So about 2 months before the festival the organizers went round Bunyala beating their drum and collecting the grain and chickens for the festival." (Cf. SUMBA AND NAKHABUKA: <https://gonjaunion.blogspot.com/2017/05/sumba-and-nakhabuka.html> (accessed on 10th January, 2022).

The interaction of Christianity and Sumba religious festival shall be discussed in chapter three on the Mill Hill Missionaries attitudes' towards the Inculturation of ABTR.

1.3.2.1.2 Luhya Culture

Abaluhya culture is comparable to most Bantu cultural practices ranging from marriage and naming systems, initiation rites, concept of death, religious and economic activities.

1.3.2.1.2.1 Marriage System

Culturally, they practiced polygamous and arranged marriages⁴³ where the parents of a boy would approach the parents of a girl to ask for her hand in marriage. If the girl agreed, negotiations for dowry would begin. Typically, this would be 12 cattle and similar numbers of sheep or goats, to be paid by the groom's parents to the bride's family. Once the dowry was delivered, the girl was fetched by the groom's sisters to begin her new life as a wife. However, eloping were and are still common. Young men would elope with willing girls, with negotiations for a dowry to be conducted later. In such cases, the young man would also pay a fine to the parents of the girl. In rare cases abductions were normal, but the young man had to pay a fine. As polygamy was allowed, a middle-age man would typically have two to three wives.

When a man got very old and handed over the running of his homestead to his sons, the sons would sometimes find a young woman for the old man to marry. Such girls were normally those who could not find men to marry them, usually because they had children out of wedlock. Wife inheritance was and is also practiced. A widow would normally be inherited by her husband's brother or cousin. In some cases, the eldest son would inherit his father's widows (though not his very own mother). The first-born son of the first wife was usually the main heir to his father, even if he happened to be younger than his half-brothers from his father's other wives. Daughters had no

⁴³ Ibid. This description is based on the above mentioned source and the personal experience of the researcher's culture.

permanent position Luhya children in Luhya families as they would eventually become other men's wives. They did not inherit property unlike in the contemporary situation where Kenyan Law allows them to be heiress; and they were excluded from decision-making meetings within the family.

1.3.2.1.2.2 Naming System

The system emphasizes on the need to be in communion with the entire cosmos and was ritualistic. So, children were named after clan's ancestors, after their grandparents, after events, or the weather. The paternal grandparents take precedence, so that the first-born son or daughter are usually named after their paternal or maternal grandfather ('Kuka') or grandmother ('Kukhu') in the Samia sub-tribe of Abaluhya. Children are as well named Subsequent children may be named after significant events, such as weather, seasons, socio-political situation, etc. For instance Wafula, is given to a boy born during the rainy season (*ifula*). Wanjala or Wekesa given to one born during famine (*injala*) and locust invention (*Etsike*) respectively.

1.3.2.1.2.3 Initiation Rites

The Luhya subtribes of Bukusu, Marama and Samia practice male circumcision; and it is a significant period of training for adult responsibilities for the youth who are later incorporated into the community. For instance during circumcision ceremony, boys who are to be initiated are excluded from the rest of the community and are taken into the '*Jandoni*' or '*Etsichimi*' (i.e. the forest) where they are taught secrets of the community and matters concerning the entire human life. After this preparation period, they are then secluded from the '*Jandoni*' into the outside world by carrying out circumcision rituals. The rituals are carried out by the specialists ('*ngariba*'),

'Tsinyimba'); they educate the boys and as well carry out circumcision rites (*'Okhukheba'*, *'Okhuimba'*) or *'Kupasha tohara'* in Kiswahili.

The ceremony is highly valued and all members of the community take part in it. The families, friends and relatives gather at the venue of *'Okhuimba'* (*'kupasha tohara'*) with gifts and valuables which they will hand to those circumcised as a sign of appreciation and encouragement. The fact that members gather at the venue is a sign of participation and wholeness. However, those who have been initiated (*'kupasha tohara'*) are then incorporated and integrated fully as members of the community and are entitled to enjoy the privileges of the community. They are also signed some duties or responsibilities like being warriors for the good of the entire community. These activities rotate around the aspect of communion and participation in becoming one with the community.

1.3.2.1.2.4 Concept of Death

Traditionally, the concept of death was seen as a transition into new life with the ancestors, and was marked by a great celebration at the home of the deceased, with mourning lasting up to forty days. If the deceased was a wealthy or influential man, a big tree would be uprooted and the deceased would be buried there. There were *'Tsing'anyo'* i.e. post burial rituals like *'Okhubekwa lifwiri'* (shaving of hair), *'Khumwanzo'*⁴⁴ and planting of a tree called *Omudodo*, *Omukhuyu* or *omukumu*.⁴⁵ Currently, mourning takes less time (about one week) and the celebrations are held at

⁴⁴ This happened when a husband died in the family and left a wife; at night she was to walk naked to and from her house to the main gate several times.

⁴⁵ This was an indigenous and a sacred tree used for worship and sacrifices and it is found along most Luhya migration paths it could only be planted by a righteous lady mostly a virgin or a very old lady. These tree are still in existence among the AbaSamia subtribe.

the time of burial. "Obukoko" and "Lisabo" (death anniversary) are post-burial ceremonies held to complete mourning rites.

1.3.2.1.2.5 Religious Activities

Traditionally, Abaluhya practiced offering sacrifices to God whom they call *Were Khakaba* or *Nyasaye/Naasaye* through ancestral spirits (*'Emisambwa'*) as effective intermediaries. Animal sacrifices were traditionally practiced. So, names given to God by the traditional Abaluhya of Bungoma diocese depicts their understanding of who God really is. For instance, according to the Bukusu, the world was created by *Wele Khakaba* (God the creator). He created Heaven alone without assistance of anyone. Then he miraculously created his two assistants, *Wele Omuyeti* or *Omwoyo Mtakatifu* (the Holy Spirit) and *Wele Murumwa* (the Messenger). Heaven, the dwelling place of God and His assistants is said to have been always bright. Additionally, Creation and nature among the Luhya presupposes an existence of a Being who is superior and calls these things into being. Just like many other religions, Luhya as a religious community "believes in one God whom they call *wele khakaba (God the giver)*"⁴⁶ and he is a sole creator. When Christianity was re-introduced to the Luhya in the early 1900s by Christian missionaries from Europe and America, the Luhya peoples took the name of their traditional god, *Were Khakaba/Nyasae*, and gave that name to the Christian God. There was great fear of the "*Abalosi*" or "*Avaloji*" (witches) and "*Babini*" (wizards). These were "night-runners" who prowled in the nude running from one house to another

⁴⁶ Cf. P.B. WANAKUTA, *Drumming Up Dialogue*, 10. Still on the concept of God as the Giver or Benefactor (*'Khakaba'*), the indigenous Abaluhya involved God as the supreme in all their deliberations as the sole giver of life and all things that exist. For instance, a Luhya elder would pray saying, "*Naasaye Khusaba umbekho nomukhono mulala, natse ndavukula nemikhono ch'yombi*", meaning 'God, give me with one hand and I will take with both hands.' Giving with one hand indicated that the giver was superior to the one being given. Whereas taking by both hands showed that the taker was inferior to the giver.

casting spells. Religion and morality goes hand in hand, and so evil was banished and good was upheld in the traditional Abaluhya religious and moral spheres.

1.3.2.1.2.6 Economic Activities

The Luhya subtribes living within Bungoma diocese do fishing and crop farming especially cattle, chicken, grains and sugarcane either in small or large scale. Chicken (*Ingokho*) is a delicacy among the Luhya people and in most of the homesteads, the locals raise them either for subsistence or commercial purposes. It is interesting to note that music, commercial activities, food and cultural drinks for both the Abaluhya and Iteso are unifying endeavors. For instance, in both tribes, cultural drink of the Iteso people is '*ajon*', and of Luhya is '*busaa* and *kwetee*' a fermented brew made from dried finger millet or maize and is commonly consumed in local ceremonies, social gatherings and important events. It can be consumed in a calabash (*Esikwada*), *Ebuka*), or a communal pot (*Endamu*) where participants sip the drink from long tubes (*Oluchekhe*) as they share as a sign of communion participation.

1.4 Rationale of the Work

The Mill Hill Missionaries Chapter 2015 reaffirmed the mission and identity of the Society by articulating that,

“Caught up in the love of the Father who sent the Son to bring the Good News to all people, responding to Jesus’ invitation to follow him, and filled with hope and joy of the Holy Spirit, we, Mill Hill Missionaries strive to incarnate the Kingdom of God among the poor, the oppressed and those in greatest need whom we are privileged to love and serve” (Chapter 2010, 9).⁴⁷

The key phrase that caught the researcher’s attention is “strive to incarnate” in view of how did the early missionaries immerse themselves in the context they were⁴⁸, in

⁴⁷ Mill Hill Missionaries Chapter 2015 Documents, 13.

⁴⁸ The context here refers particularly to the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma. Just like Christ the missionary who incarnated himself to the particular social and cultural situations of the people among whom he lived

developing the local church bearing in mind that they were in a totally new culture. This requires positive missionary attitudes in encountering others in mission for the gospel to be relevant to the people. In other words, it implies that evangelization must be contextual taking into account various situations of the people and missionary activities should in the same line respond to specific needs of the people since each and every mission territory is unique in its own way.

1.5 Objectives of the Work

1. To examine the Mill Hill Missionaries' attitudes in their response to the spiritual and material needs of the people in the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma.
2. To emphasize on the relevance of dialogue and encounter in mission and the holistic evangelization of the people.
3. To evaluate the influence of the Mill Hill Missionaries' attitudes on the lives of the local people and the missionary identity and spirituality of the Mill Hill Missionaries.
4. To explore the challenges faced by the Mill Hill Missionaries in evangelizing the people of Bungoma Diocese.

1.6 Basic Questions

Mission as defined earlier is the people of God intentionally crossing barriers to encounter others in bringing the good news as missionary disciples. This leads us to the following basic questions:

1. How was the first encounter of the pioneer Mill Hill Missionaries with the local people?

and worked with, so a missionary too should endeavor to imitate the master Jesus Christ who is the basis of our missionary activities.

2. How is dialogue and encounter in mission a basis for missionary attitudes in the evangelization of the people?

3. What was the missionary task and missionary motivation of the Mill Hill Missionaries presented in public with reference to the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma?

1.7 Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the means used by the researcher for data collection. The researcher will incorporate both the primary and secondary sources. The researcher is from the CDBGM and belongs to the Mill Hill Missionaries in this sense personal observation and experience will be of an added value. This is based on the researcher's interaction with a few individuals who were familiar with the MHMs within the diocese and as well as the researcher's experience called Mission Experience Programme.

Literature review shall entail the available writings both from books and internet about the Mill Hill Missionaries in Kenya particularly in Western Kenya⁴⁹, and also on the people and tribes that make up the diocese. However, few individuals who interacted with the missionaries are still living, and also not many books are written about the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma and the Mill Hill Missionaries' involvement in the evangelization of her people.

1.8 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The research is specifically focused on the universal relevance of dialogue and encounter in evangelizing mission, and how it was the basis for the Mill Hill Missionaries' attitudes in the evangelizing the human person especially the Luhya community within the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma, coupled with the challenges

⁴⁹ Some of the written books about Mill Hill Missionaries in this region are: *The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya* by Hans Burgman and *The Hagiography: Stam of Mumias* by Frans Groot.

encountered in their missionary activities. The research is limited to the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma which is situated within the major counties of Busia and Bungoma in the Western Province of Kenya.

1.9 Conclusion

The main focus of this chapter has been the definition of key terms followed by the general presentation of the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma with the emphasis on the organization of the diocese and her people mainly the Abaluhya with their respective subtribes and clans, socio-historical and cultural practices. We also highlighted the rationale of the work, the research objectives and basic questions, research methodology, scope and limitation of the study. This preamble therefore, has laid the foundation for the subsequent chapter which focuses on understanding the conception of mission as dialogue and encounter and its relevance to the holistic evangelization of the peoples.

CHAPTER TWO

Mission as Dialogue and Encounter and its Relevance to the Holistic

Evangelization of the Peoples

2.1 Introduction

Mission, dialogue, encounter and evangelization do not work in isolation but rather in communion and poses a question, “How do I, or do we respond to this situation?” “How relevant can I be as a missionary and a theologian in a given mission territory, or rather a social situation I find myself in?” This is an invitation to enter into dialogue as we encounter the pertinent problems affecting either the people or a community here and now in mission placement, thus becoming the basis for the missionaries’ attitudes in evangelization. As a result, this chapter will examine the conception of Mission as Dialogue and Encounter and its relevance to the holistic evangelization of the peoples. This will be done by first elaborating on the philosophical, biblical and theological foundations of Mission as Dialogue and Encounter in the following sub-topics: The dialogic philosophies of Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber and biblical understanding of mission as dialogue and encounter. Thereafter, the integral elements of dialogue and encounter in evangelization with emphasis on Mission as dialogue, dialogue and encounter, evangelization and dialogue. The chapter will sum up with the discussion on the relationship between mission, dialogue, encounter and evangelization; followed by the relevance of mission as dialogue and encounter to the holistic evangelization of the peoples and a conclusion.

2.2 The Dialogic Philosophies of Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber in understanding the conception of Mission as Dialogue and Encounter

Naturally human beings have desire for interaction and mutual enrichment in one way or the other. For instance, the world has become a global village as people desire to

travel intercontinentally, and the means of communication as well have greatly improved. However, some people are forced to travel or migrate due to the situation they found themselves in such as upheavals brought about by pandemic like Covid-19, famine or natural disasters, political tensions or wars and internal conflicts, unemployment, etc. All these forces a number of people to relocate or rather displaced, increasing contact between people of different races and religious background, thus calling us to engage in dialogue and encounter by enhancing social responsibility for each other. This is what Lévinas' dialogic account of the face-to-face encounter affirms, and it bears many similarities to Martin Buber's "I and Thou" relation. The mission aspect is that of building bridges and not walls with the other, or as per our definition of mission, it is the intentional crossing of barriers of division to proclaim the Kingdom of God by word and deed, reconciling people to God, to themselves, to each other and to the world, aiming at transforming and healing the world.

2.2.1 Emmanuel Levinas: The Epiphany of the Face

Emmanuel Levinas was a French philosopher of Lithuanian Jewish ancestry who was born on 12th January 1906 and died on 25th December 1995. He is known for his work within Jewish philosophy, existentialism, and phenomenology, focusing on the relationship of ethics to metaphysics and ontology.

Emmanuel Lévinas' the face-to-face relation (French: rapport de face à face) is a concept on human sociality. It means that, ethically, people are responsible to one-another in the face-to-face encounter. This implies that I see the Other with eyes of compassionate love. A love that compels us to see and reveal Christ in the Other.⁵⁰ Specifically, Lévinas says that the human face "orders and ordains us".⁵¹ It calls the

⁵⁰ Cf. 2 Cor 5:14.

⁵¹ C.f. E. LÉVINAS, *Ethics and Infinity*, 95-119.

subject into “giving and serving” the Other.⁵² In addition, Lévinas argues that the encounter of the Other through the face reveals a certain poverty which forbids a reduction to Sameness and, simultaneously, installs a responsibility for the Other in the Self. In the context of mission, this implies that both the evangelizer and the evangelized sets a ground for dialogue and mutual enrichment, and not in a dichotomy of *beati possidentes*, i.e. “the haves” standing over against the spiritual “have nots” (*the massa damnata*).

Nonetheless, in the face-to-face encounter, Levinas calls us to be socially conscious of the other in a given situation, especially the other “in its nudity and defenselessness, which signifies ‘Do not kill me’”⁵³ or “Can you be the face of God to the weakest of the society?” For Levinas, to be human is to be responsible for the Other, which means to show empathy, imagine how other people might experience our words and actions if we put ourselves in other people’s shoes. The defenseless other are people such as the poor widow we meet in mission outreach, orphans, those in cry for social justice, the prisoners of war, immigrants or any stranger.

2.2.2 Martin Buber⁵⁴: I – THOU Relationship

The major difference between Buber's account of I and Thou relationship, and the ethics of the face-to-face encounter is the application of Lévinas' asymmetry towards the other.

For Buber, ethical relation meant a "symmetrical co-presence," while Lévinas, on the other hand, considers the relation with the other as something inherently

⁵² Ibid., 95-119.

⁵³ Cf. The Free Encyclopedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face-to-face_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face-to-face_(philosophy)) (Accessed on 13th January, 2022).

⁵⁴ Martin Buber (1878-1965) was an Austrian-born Jewish philosopher and translator. He participated in the Zionist movement and advocated a settlement with the Palestinian people of Israel. In his powerful book *I and Thou* (1923), Buber point out that our relation to others is considered as twofold: The *I-it* relation prevails between subjects and objects of thought and action; the *I-Thou* relation, on the other hand, obtains in an encounter between subjects that exceed the range of the Cartesian subject-object relation which leads one to the realization of God’s Image in the Other, thus relating to each as subjects, and of the same dignity.

asymmetrical: the others as they appear, the face, gives itself priority to the self, its first demand even before I react to it, love it or kill it, is: "thou shalt not kill me". Such a demand for Lévinas is prior to any reaction or any assertion of freedom by a subject. The face of the other in this sense looms above the other person and traces "where God passes." God (the infinite other) here refers to the God of which one cannot refuse to believe in its history that is the God who appears in traditional belief and of scripture and not some conceptual God of philosophy.⁵⁵

Therefore, Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue as I and Thou relationship, emphasizes the fact that we should avoid reducing human beings to objects or means of attaining our end, but rather the encounter should transcend from I-It relation to I-Thou relation thus paving the way for dialogue and encounter in a heart-to-heart, mind-to-mind and will-to-will enrichment of each other, and above all drawing each other to the Supreme Thou who is God; the source and summit of our missionary tasks (i.e. *Missio Dei*). This implies a movement of God's love towards his people through the incarnation of his Son. God therefore takes initiative to enter into dialogue with human history to fulfill his redemptive mission.

Nevertheless, Martin Buber was influenced by Emmanuel Levinas who defines a human person as the being who faces the "other" in mutual relationship and not in a distance, separated or detached relationship from each other. Just like Christ who humbled himself in order to share in our humanity, a missionary should be rooted in the context of mission, and be more empathetic to the cry of the other whose presence depicts the expression of "Can you listen to me! Can we dialogue?" This notion is reiterated in Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, where the authors in creating a distinction between "I-It and I-Thou" relationship argues that

An "I-It" relation *experiences* a detached thing, fixed in space and time, while an "I-Thou" relation *participates* in the dynamic, living process of an "other". Buber characterizes "I-Thou" relations as "dialogical" and "I-It" relations as "monological." In his 1929 essay "Dialogue," Buber explains that monologue is not just a turning away from the other but also a turning back on oneself

⁵⁵ The Free Encyclopedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face-to-face_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face-to-face_(philosophy)), Op.cit.

(*Rückbiegung*). To perceive the other as an It is to take them as a classified and hence predictable and manipulable object that exists only as a part of one's own experiences. In contrast, in an "I-Thou" relation both participants exist as polarities of relation, whose center lies in the between (*Zwischen*).⁵⁶

2.3 The Biblical Understanding of Mission as Dialogue and Encounter

Mission in the sacred scriptures is rooted in the mystery of Incarnation, and depicts the notion of dialogical encounter of God with his people throughout the history of salvation. From Genesis to Revelation, God has been in constant engagement with human race through his prophets in the Old Testament and in his own Son Jesus Christ in the New Testament and thereafter through the apostles and other ministers of the Church empowered by the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the Church is an instrument of God's mission and each and every individual missionary participates in the sending mission of God. This Trinitarian aspect of mission is clearly reaffirmed in the Mill Hill Missionaries' 19th General Chapter Prayer as follows:

God our Father, you sent your Son into the world that through him all people might have life and have it in abundance. Since its foundation, you have filled our society with your spirit and inspired Mill Hill Missionaries to go into the world to share the Good News and to invite people to the fullness of life in Christ. Pour out the abundance of your spirit upon us as we prepare for our General Chapter. Renew in us the charism of Herbert Vaughan: to go out to those in greatest need of God's grace. May we discern your guiding hand leading us and inspiring us to commit ourselves ever more fully to the mission of the Blessed Trinity, who lives and reigns forever. Amen.⁵⁷

2.3.1 Mission as Dialogue and Encounter in the Old Testament

Dialogue in the Bible is evident in the relational way. The living Biblical God in the Old Testament enters into dialogue with the human person by both speaking and listening. For instance, in Genesis 3:8-14ff, God initiates dialogue by asking questions and waiting for answers, "Where are you?" He seeks his fallen creature (Adam and

⁵⁶[https://iep.utm.edu/Buber, Martin | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(utm.edu\)](https://iep.utm.edu/Buber, Martin | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (utm.edu)) (Accessed on 15th January, 2022).

⁵⁷MHM 19th General Chapter Prayer, 2022.

Eve) by addressing questions to them in a gracious self-disclosure. The dialogical self-disclosure of God is still evident in Old Testament texts such as Job 38:3 where God encounters Job and says to him: “Gird up your loins like a man” and “I will question you, and you shall declare to me” (Job 40:7). Similarly, God’s address to the Israel through the prophets is that of mutuality and full of questions. He calls for reconciliation by saying “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool. If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land.”⁵⁸ We can argue that by the very fact that God acts in human history and follows his creation with love, reveals the dynamism of mission as dialogue and encounter between the Creator and the created, the Infinite and finite, since He is constantly interested in His people.

2.3.2 Mission as Dialogue and Encounter in the New Testament

The dialogical movement of God encountering his people is vividly expressed in the person of Christ, “*the Word who was with the Father from the beginning, became flesh and made his dwelling among us*” (John 1:1-14). This dialogical moment is widely elaborated in Jesus’ public ministry, and in the works of his disciples and apostles more so in the Pauline *dialegomai*⁵⁹ which begins with the account of his conversion on the road to Damascus (cf. Acts 9:4, 5; 22:10). In the Synoptic gospels, we meet the boy Jesus at the age of 12 years sitting in the temple among teachers and asking them questions (cf. Luke 2:46), and throughout his public ministry he engages in various conversations with individuals like the Samaritan woman (cf. John 4:1-42), the blind

⁵⁸ Isaiah 1:18-19.

⁵⁹ This is a Greek verb which means to “converse” or “discuss”. We see Jesus after Ascension is interested in Saul of Tarsus, to change and become his apostle. The encounter between Jesus Christ and reformed Saul becomes the fundamental in Pauline mission to the ends of the earth (Acts 15:36-28:31). Therefore, we shall use the verb “*dialegomai*” to describe Pauline method of evangelization. To understand the verb better, kindly refer to the definition of dialogue in chapter one of this research paper.

Bartimeus (cf. Luke 18:35-43; Mark 10:46-52), Nicodemus (cf. John 3:1-21) and the crowds. He always cultivated a rapport with his hearers dialogically by either asking questions or using contextual parables to trigger their minds and conscience. This approach became the foundation for Jesus to announce the Reign of God by inviting all his listeners to believe in him as the one sent by the Father (cf. John 3:31-36a). We shall elaborate further three main discourses, i.e. the programmatic discourse of Jesus' Mission, Jesus and the Samaritans and Pauline 'Dialegomai'.

2.3.2.1 The Programmatic Discourse of Jesus' Mission (Luke 4:18-19)

This marks the beginning of Christian mission of evangelizing the people. Jesus commences his public ministry by affirming that the Reign of God is at the center of his life and mission.⁶⁰ For that reason Jesus declares his mission by saying: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord"* (Luke 4:18-19). This is the doorway of Jesus meeting and dialoging with people. It points out his concern of the other and urgency of mission for him is to go out in order to meet people and announce the Good News to the poor, the marginalized⁶¹ that the Reign of God is near.

Indeed, Jesus reads the signs of times by addressing the dehumanizing socio-economic structures within his context. In Jesus, the self-revelation of God as Love reaches its fullness (1 John 4:8), and the Father, by sending his Son, gives everything in order to accomplish the salvation of men and women. Jesus thus fulfils the revelation and carries

⁶⁰ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 358.

⁶¹ They can also be referred to as the poorest of the poor, those at fringes of the society such as the widows, orphans, lepers, homeless, refugees, slum dwellers like in Shauri Moyo, Kibera and Mukuru kwa Ruben, etc. They are all *"the least in the means of God's grace"* in the words of Herbert Cardinal Vaughan, the founder of Mill Hill Missionaries. All these people need a meaningful encounter in evangelization process, thus leading to a holistic transformation of their situation.

out the Father's salvific project fully by announcing the Good News of the Reign of God and as well as sending his disciples to the whole world to announce the very Good News (Mark 16:15). In being God, Christ is a missionary *per excellence*, in the midst of human history rooted in the mystery of the Incarnation⁶² and his Paschal mystery.

2.3.2.2 Jesus and the Samaritans

The dialogical encounter of Jesus and the Samaritans in his redemptive mission is accounted in the discourses of the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42), the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), the Samaritan leper (Luke 17:11-19) and the blind Bartimeus (Luke 18:35-43; Mark 10:46-52). All of them reveals the intentionality of the key figures crossing the barriers, or rather taking risks to meet the other. For instance, the Good Samaritan perhaps asked himself, "What will happen to him? To this wounded man in the ditch if I do not help him?" As a result, he went against the prevailing hostilities between the Samaritans and the Jews, and became a good neighbor to the wounded, broken man. Can you imagine being helped by the person you detest, an enemy? Indeed this is an authentic transformational encounter, of healing both the broken relationship and physical wounds. The mission of the Good Samaritan was to save life, to bring joy; and by doing this he became a true missionary. His actions are in total contrast with those of the Levite and the priest who were self-centered and they only thought of themselves: "What will happen to me?" in terms of the Jewish ritualistic customs of purity.

In addition, Jesus's healing of the grateful Samaritan leper and Bartimeus is dialectical in the sense that, Jesus goes beyond the negative perception of the Jews towards the Samaritan through compassionate listening and forgiveness. Jesus freely mingles with the grateful leper, the blind Bartimeus and the Samaritan women, and they all end up

⁶² Cf. G. BUONO, *Missiology: Theology and Praxis*, 91-93.

being messengers of the Good News of Jesus Christ.⁶³ For instance, the gospel of John describes that the Samaritan woman left her water jar and went into town saying, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be Messiah?” (John 4:29).

In the three discourses, we realized that healing came due to pre-existing faith, just like saying effective evangelization is the result of mutual co-existence between the missionary and the missioned since God’s grace proceeds in each and every situation. On the contrary, the crowds and even Jesus’ very own disciples seem indignant and want to perpetuate oppression, physical suffering and death; but Jesus is devoted to the mission of his Father by bringing light and healing all traces of sin and division. He reaffirms the universality of salvation and evangelization which “is not reserved to the Jews, but to all those who see that they are cured. It is no longer a matter of belonging to a religion, but of listening to the words of salvation and becoming aware of them.”⁶⁴

2.3.2.3 Pauline ‘Dialegomai’ (Acts 15:36-28:31)

“Dialogue is a conversion in which each party is serious in his approach both to the subject and to the other person, and desires to listen and learn as well as to speak and instruct.”⁶⁵ In Pauline missionary journeys, this is evident in the sense that he uses the dialectic method in listening, instructing and persuading all those whom he encountered to have a deeper understanding of his subject matter, i.e. Jesus Christ. For Paul, dialogue was part of his proclamation and became the basis of all his missionary tasks as the apostle of both the Jews and the Gentiles. He creates an equilibrium in his preaching to the Jews and to the gentiles, by using both his Jewish and Hellenistic roots

⁶³ This experience is what *Evangelii Nuntiandi* calls the touchstone of evangelization where the evangelized becomes the evangelizer. (cf. *EN*, 24).

⁶⁴ Cf. A. MAGNANTE, *Mission Perspective in Luke and Acts*, 56.

⁶⁵ Cf. The National Evangelical Anglican Congress held at Keele in 1967, 83. In Gerald H. ANDERSON & Thomas F. STRANSKY, eds., *Mission Trends No. 5: Faith Meets Faith*, 159.

to proclaim the gospel. For instance, Paul in Athens (Acts 17:16-34) although faced with challenges of adapting to masses of non-Jewish believers; endeavors to inculturate the gospel of Jesus Christ in the already existing Athenian religious practices, “To an Unknown God”, by delivering his sermon to Greek philosophers among others.

Notably, there are mixed reaction from his hearers: Some of them scoff him, some put him off, and the encouraging aspect is that some believe in what he is preaching (Acts 17:32-34).⁶⁶ In short, Paul inculcates some degree of dialogue in his missionary encounter and preaching to Christians and non-Christians, to Jews and gentiles, to crowds and individuals, both on formal and informal settings.

2.4 Integral Elements of Mission as Dialogue and Encounter in Evangelization

Mission as dialogue and encounter in evangelization points to the notion of mutual exchange, of a constant learning and listening to and from each other in the evangelizing mission of the church between missionaries themselves and with the local people in their very own socio-cultural and religious contexts. It is the creation of a correlation between theological reflections from the side of a missionary to the practical integration of them with the reality of the ground. In other words we can say, it is a way of making God known in the person of Jesus Christ in each and every human situation.

Pope Francis in the Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, affirms the notion of dialogical encounter in mission and how it shapes our attitudes in evangelization by saying: “Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and to find common ground: all these things are summed up in the one word “dialogue””(FT,198). He continues saying that if we really want to be effective missionaries, and ‘to encounter and help one another, we have to dialogue’” (FT, 198).

⁶⁶ A. MAGNANTE. Op.cit., 104.

In the subsequent sections, we shall discuss the integral elements which constitutes the concept of mission as dialogue and encounter in evangelization.

2.4.1 Mission as Dialogue

Dialogue is an integral part of mission, and they are not isolated entities but rather intertwined aspects. In fostering dialogue as an integral part of the evangelizing mission of the church, Pope Paul VI set up in 1964 the Secretariat for Non-Christians currently known as Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID). Therefore, in its Plenary Assembly of 1984, the secretariat issued a document entitled “The attitude of the Church towards the followers of other religions (DM, 3): Reflections and orientations on dialogue and mission.”⁶⁷ The document states that the evangelizing mission of the church is a “single but complex and articulated reality”, and it highlights the principles of the same mission as presence and witness; commitment to social development and human liberation; liturgical life, prayer and contemplation; interreligious dialogue; and proclamation and catechesis.⁶⁸

In 1991, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) and PCID issued the document, *Dialogue and Proclamation* which affirms that the “spirit of dialogue” in mission is an “attitude of respect and friendship, which permeates or should permeate all (the) activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the church” (DP, 9). In the similar way, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) at its plenary meetings held at Grottaferrata in 1975 and in Lagos 1987⁶⁹, called for the pastoral attention of the Church to reflect on her attitudes towards the

⁶⁷ Dialogue and Proclamation, 2.

⁶⁸ Cf. Dialogue and Proclamation, “The attitude of the Church towards the followers of other religions (Reflection and orientations on dialogue and mission)” AAS, 76 (1984), 816-828; also *Bulletin Secretariatus pro non Christianis*, 56 (1984/2) n. 13.

⁶⁹ Cf. F. ARINZE & M.I. FITZGERALD, ‘Pastoral attention on African Traditional Religion (ATR)’. In T. OKURE – P.V. THIEL, et al, 32 *Articles Evaluating Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*, 47-51.

African Traditional Religions (ATR) and cultures in the light of the Gospel.⁷⁰ This paved the way for dialogue in mission between African ancient heritage (values and beliefs) which are embodied in the African's worldview and the effort to inculcate them with Christian faith. Courses in ATR and African studies were as well encouraged to be taught in the seminaries, ecclesiastical institutes and religious houses of formation.

Therefore, mission as dialogue implies the broader understanding of mission from a corrective form of the

one-sided notion of mission which people took for granted in the past to emphasize entirely on the great work done by the missionaries and the great gift brought by them, with little attention paid to the recipients of the gift; to a more balanced approach of mutual enrichment, of being with the people, of listening and sharing with them rather than of doing things for the people.⁷¹

2.4.2 Dialogue and Encounter

Dialogue and encounter in this work emphasizes both an attitude or spirit of dialogue and its distinctive elements in the missionary tasks of evangelization. Missionaries are called to dialogue as they encounter people who are different from themselves, by proclaiming in their daily lives, in Word and Sacrament, that the Kingdom of God, present in all cultures, has been revealed in a unique way in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed the encounter became ethically meaningful and demanding in the sense that missionaries have to first open up and draft their missionary strategies in attending to the spiritual and material well-being of those whom they announce the joyful tidings. In other words, dialogue and encounter is the bridge between the missionary and the other in celebrating the differences and uniqueness; paving the way

⁷⁰ Pope Paul VI in *Africae Terrarum* encouraged the bishops, priests and religious to cultivate dialogue and encounter between Christianity with the ancient tradition of Africa (cf. *AT*, 24). He also affirmed that the Church due respect the moral and religious values of African tradition as “seeds of the gospel” in spreading of the gospel message and the establishment of the new Christian communities. (cf. *AT*, 14).

⁷¹ D. DORR, *Mission in today's World*, 16.

for the implantation of the seed of faith to the local people whom we meet in our missionary endeavors, leading to a holistic transformation.

2.4.3 Evangelization and Dialogue

Dialogue as an integral element of evangelization means “all positive and constructive interpersonal and interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment (DM, 3), in obedience to truth and respect for freedom. It includes both witness and the exploration of respective religious convictions” (DP, 9) and the free invitation of others to become the disciples of Jesus in every missionary encounter, thus paving the way for one to cross the boundaries, meet the other and be evangelized.

Nevertheless, dialogue in evangelization calls for an open-ended encounter with other faiths and individuals. The document on *Dialogue and Proclamation* summarized the principal forms of dialogue in six main categories. The first one is dialogue of life; where people endeavor to live in an open and neighborly spirit by sharing their joys and sorrows, their human concerns and struggles. The second form is dialogue of action in which Christians and others collaborate for an integral human growth and development of peoples. The third one is dialogue of theological exchange, and involves experts who seek to deeply understand the meaning of their respective religious heritage and appreciate each other’s spiritual values.

The fourth is dialogue of religious experience, where persons rooted in their very own religious traditions, share their spiritual richness with others on matters pertaining to prayer and contemplation, faith and avenues of searching for the Absolute Being or God. Dialogue of culture as the fifth form deals with the various ways in which culture and religion are interconnected. The final form is the interreligious dialogue where

believers evaluate their own faith in the light of the culture in which they live.⁷² In short, the process promotes the purification and inculcation of faith which we shall discuss later on in chapter three when assessing the interaction of Christian faith and Abaluhya traditional values and religions.

2.4.4 The Relationship between Mission, Dialogue, Encounter and Evangelization

There is a close relationship between mission, dialogue, encounter and evangelization. This is clearly illustrated by Pope Francis' video clip of his prayer intention for October 2021. He calls everyone to pray that all Christians might be missionary disciples and be available for mission in openness to the demands of the Church's evangelizing mission. For he said:

“Jesus asks us all, and you as well, to be missionary disciples. Are you ready? Work, meeting other people, our daily duties, and the chance events of each day”: These are the opportunities we have to allow ourselves to be “guided by the Holy Spirit,” “And your testimony of life will inspire admiration, and admiration inspires others to ask themselves, ‘How is it possible for this person to be this way?’ ‘What is the source of the love with which this person treats everyone —the kindness and good humor?’” “Brothers and sisters, let us pray that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavor of the Gospel. Let us remember that the mission is not proselytism; the mission is based on an encounter between people, on the testimony of men and women who say, ‘I know Jesus, and I’d like you to know Him too.’”⁷³

From this Papal message, we can deduce a chain of interconnectedness of the integral elements of mission as dialogue and encounter in evangelization. They all flows from the way one is ready to respond to the demands of the Gospel in the mundane events of our daily lives by encountering other people.

Personally I believe that other people easily take notice when our every action is motivated by Christ who is the missionary *per excellance*, and so I should ask myself, “what are proper ways and attitudes of communicating the Good News of Christ in this

⁷² Cf. *Dialogue and Proclamation*, 42-46.

⁷³ <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-09/pope-francis-october-prayer-intention-missionary-disciples.html> (accessed on 20th October, 2021).

socio-cultural context?” This requires an open heart to engage in dialogue understanding that saving grace preceded before me and they too have something I ought to learn from them for effective evangelization. Furthermore, mission and dialogue in evangelization manifests themselves in a meeting (an encounter) of hearts rather than of minds. In understanding the correlation of these four elements (i.e. mission, dialogue, encounter and evangelization), David Bosch highlights the following ways.⁷⁴

First, Acceptance of the coexistence of different faiths and to do so not grudgingly but willingly. This occurs in light of multifaith situation (religious pluralism). Indeed we cannot dialogue with or rather witness to people if we have resentful attitudes towards their presence or the views they hold together. Mission is dialogical, and dialogue paves the way for evangelization which is not a one-way track, but a mutual one.

Second, dialogue presupposes our personal commitment to the gospel. This implies that we become aware of the presence of the other, the neighbor for it to be concrete. World Council of Churches in its *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies* affirms this by saying: “Dialogue means witnessing to our deepest convictions, whilst listening to those of our neighbors” (WCC 1979: 16).⁷⁵

Third, dialogue in mission connotes a sense of openness to the saving grace. This implies that “we are not moving into void, that we go expecting to meet the God who has preceded us and has been preparing people within the context of their own cultures and convictions.”⁷⁶ God has already removed the barriers; His spirit is constantly at work in ways that pass human understanding (cf. ME 43).⁷⁷ Missionaries do not have God

⁷⁴ These ideas are paraphrased from David J. Bosch’s book *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 483-489. They also include traces of my personal insights.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 484.

⁷⁶ Cf. E.J. SHARPE, “New Directions in the Theology of Mission”, 15f.

⁷⁷ D.J. BOSCH, Op.cit.

in their pocket, and do not just “take him” to the others; but rather he accompanies us and also comes towards us. ‘We are not the “haves”, the *beati possidentes*, standing over against spiritual “have nots”, the *massa damnata*. We are all recipients of the same mercy, sharing in the same mystery. We thus approach every other faith and its adherents reverently, taking off our shoes, as the place we are approaching is holy (Max Warren, in Cragg 1959:9f).’”⁷⁸

Fourth, both dialogue and mission should be conducted only in an attitude of humility. This implies that one becomes vulnerable and so weak to be crucified as a witness of the gospel in our encounter with other faiths and cultures. This is based on the fact that Christian faith is a religion of grace, freely received and centered on the cross which to some extent judges the Christian too. Humility creates a room for mutual learning and fulfilment.

Fifth, both dialogue and mission ought to recognize that religions are worlds in themselves, with their own axes and structures; they face in different directions and ask fundamentally different questions. This implies that the evangelizer should respond differently in each and every social-cultural or religious encounter since they are all unique in their own ways. For instance, Christian gospel should relate contextually to different to ATR than it does to either Islamic or Hindu worldviews.

Sixth, dialogue is neither a substitute nor a subterfuge for mission (cf. Scherer 1987:162). They are neither to be viewed as identical nor as irrevocably opposed to each other. Mission, dialogue, encounter and evangelization goes hand in hand, and it is ridiculous for one to say that “for dialogue and encounter to be “in”, mission has to be “out”, and that commitment to dialogue and encounter is incompatible with commitment to evangelism.”⁷⁹ This was reiterated by San Antonio CWME Meeting

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 487.

when they affirmed that “witness does not preclude dialogue but invites it, and that dialogue does not preclude witness but extends and deepens it.”⁸⁰

Finally, the relationship between mission, dialogue, encounter and evangelization is quite outstanding in the sense that there is neither a dichotomy amongst them nor one way street. They faithfully goes hand in hand with respect to each other and open mindedness in listening to our deepest convictions⁸¹ as missionaries while listening to those of whom we encounter in our missionary tasks of evangelizing the people.

2.5 The Relevance of Mission as Dialogue and Encounter to the Holistic Evangelization of the Peoples

Dialogue and encounter in the missionary work of evangelization as we have seen requires taking risks, in order to break down the barriers of division, of insensitivity and of indifference in a movement towards building bridges of mutual understanding, mutual support and concern. In doing this, the missionary task of evangelization becomes significant to the lives of the people within the context of mission.

2.5.1 Principle of Solidarity

Mission as dialogue and encounter in evangelization promotes concrete commitment to the service of humankind and all forms of activities for spiritual nourishment, social development and for the struggle against poverty and the structures which produce it. The missionary in dialoging with the locals, he will be to know and address their psycho-spiritual, social needs by critical evaluation of the situation and finding the appropriate means to respond to them in the spirit of solidarity and mutual support. According to Mzee Lucas Barasa, missionaries promoted communal dialogue and charity where, *“The elders or local leadership always sat together with the priest in*

⁸⁰ Cf. WCC, *The San Antonio Report*, 32.

⁸¹ Cf. *RM*, 56.

*deliberating where the need is, and once the resolution was arrived at, the missionaries would come with their fundis, and the locals were asked to source the raw materials like bamboos, roofing sticks and posts; and in mudding of the schools”.*⁸²

Pope Francis as well in *Fratelli Tutti*, argues that a true spirit of dialogue nurtures in us the attitude of building together and a movement from “selfish indifference and violent protest” (*FT*, 199) to being cooperators in “the pursuits of the common good” (*FT*, 202).

2.5.2 Fraternity in Decision Making Process and Apostolate

The spirit of dialogue in the interaction between missionaries and the people within their cultural spheres or even in a parochial setup enhances communitarianism and familiness in a complementary and a dedicated spirit of service in all pastoral strategies of the Church. The missionaries amongst themselves as a team and the missioned feel as one, coupled with a sense of belonging to the very mission station, and with a common mission of evangelizing together as a family of God. Therefore all the mission outreach programs, deliberations such as meetings, parish or diocesan planning and organization, or just the entire parish structures are to be rooted in a fraternal spirit of collegiality, synodality and co-responsibility echoing the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Vatican II Council⁸³ encouraged the participatory spirit in matters of decision making and apostolate. The same was echoed in the promulgation of the 1983 Code of Canon Law⁸⁴ where the local churches are called to nurture participation, dialogue and encounter between bishops, clergies and the laity. Indeed this is the same attitude that Pope Francis in the promulgation of the Synodal Year 2021-2023 calls upon the clergy, laity and religious to denote a particular style that qualifies the life and mission of the

⁸² L. BARASA, Telephone conversation and audio recording with the author.

⁸³Cf. *GS, LG, NA* and *ES* (34-68). They point out that the spirit of dialogue is the new attitude and method in doing theology and Church praxis.

⁸⁴ Cf. CIC 495-501.

Church, in a decentralized and descending or grassroots approach, “expressing her nature as the people of God journeying together and gathering assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel.”⁸⁵ Summarily, mission as dialogue and encounter in shaping fraternity in the holistic evangelization of the peoples must be expressed in the Church’s ordinary way of living and working.

2.6 Conclusion

Mission is constituted by the simple presence and living witness of the Christian life (cf. *EN*, 21), and in the spirit of dialogue which must inform every aspect of the evangelizing mission of the church. The evangelizer in all his or her activities is called upon to cultivate this very spirit of dialogue “without which no evangelizing activity whatever can be either sincere or credible.”⁸⁶ Consequently, we have discussed in detail how mission is dialogue and encounter and its relevance in the holistic evangelization of the peoples. This was done by the exploration of the related topics of the dialogical philosophies of Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Burber, biblical understanding of mission as dialogue and encounter from both Old Testament and New Testament, and the integral elements of mission as dialogue and encounter, where we tackled mission as dialogue, dialogue and encounter, evangelization and dialogue. We also examined how dialogue and encounter is a doorway to understanding the mission of the Church and their correlation to evangelization. This was followed by the relevance of mission as dialogue and encounter to the holistic evangelization of the peoples. This has been done for the better understanding of our subject matter.

Conclusively and in the spirit of African communitarianism where individuals talk and eat or just take sips of the local brew called “*busaa* or *ajon*” together from a communal

⁸⁵Cf. Quoted from ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CUBAO, *Synod 2021-2023: What is Synodality?*

⁸⁶ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 360.

pot; Church missionaries should not fear to dialogue but enhance it in all their encounters by establishing “the necessary structures of getting together, of dialogue and planning [...] welcoming the gifts and charisms of each one, in order to put them at the service of an updated and clear-sighted plan of pastoral action.”⁸⁷ The following chapter will deal with the Mill Hill Missionaries’ attitudes in the evangelization of the people of Bungoma Diocese.

⁸⁷ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 88.

CHAPTER THREE

The Mill Hill Missionaries' Attitudes in Evangelizing the Human Person in Bungoma Diocese

3.1 Introduction

Attitudes according to Merriam-Webster dictionary is “the bodily state of readiness to respond in a characteristic way to a stimulus such as an object, concept, or situation.”⁸⁸

This implies that attitudes are both mental (thinking) and emotional (feelings) and they call for one's readiness; and in our case the missionaries' readiness and willingness in the spirit of dialogue, to respond in a characteristic way to the pastoral situation at hand. So this chapter will examine how the Mill Hill Missionaries responded to the missionary task of evangelizing the people of the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma. This chapter answers the question of the Mill Hill Missionaries attitudes in relation to what they did by first discussing the background informing of the Genesis and Charism of MHM, followed by MHM in Western Kenya, the Society's missionary task and motivation as presented in the public which will deal with the means of evangelization and the challenges encountered by the missionaries.

3.2 The Genesis of the Mill Hill Missionaries

The St. Joseph's Missionary Society (Mill Hill Missionaries) was founded in 1866 by the Archbishop of Westminster, Herbert Cardinal Vaughan for foreign missions⁸⁹ and it was the only British Catholic mission society. The motif behind the formation of Mill Hill Missionaries was that the Catholic Church in Britain during 19th Century was poorer, weak and in great need of clergy. However, Britain was by then the center of

⁸⁸MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONAR, Op.cit.

⁸⁹ Cf. R. O'NEIL, *Cardinal Herbert VAUGHAN*, 105ff.

global empire, and Cardinal Herbert Vaughan's thoughts began to turn outward, towards the great populations of the unevangelized people in the territories overseas.⁹⁰ According to the sources on the life, work and mission of Herbert Cardin Vaughan⁹¹, it is said that he was a man of vision, deep faith and action, powerfully aware of the urgency of mission; and had a great zeal to spread the Gospel to foreign missions⁹² and thus it resulted in the establishment of St. Joseph's Missionary College in Mill Hill, London for the purpose of training missionary priests and brothers ready to be sent to British conquered territories more so in Africa and Asia for evangelization.

Mill Hill Missionary Society is therefore an "apostolic fellowship of people from different continents and races, united by faith"⁹³ and by solemn commitment to go wherever we are sent.⁹⁴ At the moment, MHM continues to love and serve in Europe, Americas and with more missions concentrated in Africa and Asia.

3.3 The Charism of the Mill Hill Missionaries

Pertaining to the charism of the Society, "the Mill Hill Missionaries choose to be present most of all among the poor, and wherever human society is fractured."⁹⁵ Jesus' life and mission was to bring the Good News of the Kingdom of God, and so the MHM's founder asked the members to go where the need is greatest, to the poorest of the poor, the abandoned especially to "*those least in the means of grace.*"⁹⁶ As a consequence, some of the prioritized missionary activities stipulated in the Constitution and 2015 General Chapter are: Primary evangelization, interfaith dialogue, Justice Peace and integrity of creation (JPIC), mission animation, conflict resolution and

⁹⁰ Cf. R. MANO, *Mill Hill Missionaries: St. Joseph's Missionary Society*, 4.

⁹¹ Cf. R. O'NEIL, *VAUGHAN: His Life, Work & Mission*, 20-40.

⁹² Constitutions and Directives of Mill Hill Missionaries, Prologue, vii-viii.

⁹³ Cf. R. MANO, *Op.cit.*, 2.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Cf. <http://pcjuganda.org/member-institutes/founding-members/mill-hill/> (accessed on 10th January, 2022).

⁹⁶ Constitutions and Directives of Mill Hill Missionaries, Prologue, viii.

reconciliation, formation and reverse mission where members are currently sent to West for the pastoral care of migrant communities.⁹⁷ Following in the footsteps of Herbert Cardinal Vaughan, who was convinced that the spirit and practice of evangelical poverty and simple lifestyle is the foundation of the apostolic life; the MHM reach out to those fractured by the society motivated by our motto, “*Amare et Servire*” which is to love and to serve.⁹⁸

3.4 The Mill Hill Missionaries in Western Kenya

The Mill Hill Missionaries arrived in East Africa in 1895 and over the last 155 years they have been involved in the building of the local Church. Hans Burgman highlights on the arrival of the pioneer Mill Hill fathers in East Africa by saying:

On his very first safari to Uganda in 1895, Bishop Hanlon, to whom the Apostolic Vicariate of the Upper Nile had been entrusted, passed through Western Kenya with his four companions. But it was only in 1902 that some of his priests could go to reconnoitre the country between Busia and Naivasha. The following year plots were bought; and from 1903 on working mission stations were definitively established: Kisumu - Ojolla for the Luo, Mumias - Kakamega for the Luhya.⁹⁹

Geographically, Western Kenya in 1894 stretched all the way from Kampala to Naivasha, and formed one unit with Uganda and Northern Tanzania, joined by Lake Nyanza (Victoria). With the advent of the Europeans, the Tanzanian lakeside came under German rule; whereas the rest remained under British control. Buganda was the first place with a British presence in the region, thus Western Kenya, inclusive of Rift Valley was then administrated from Kampala. The Ecclesiastical borders were drawn correspondingly by both Catholics and Anglicans. The political borders were modified in 1902, upon the railway reaching Kisumu. However, the ecclesiastical borders for

⁹⁷ Cf. CHAPTER DOCUMENTS 2015, 14-15.

⁹⁸ Cf. R. MANO, *Mill Hill Missionaries: St. Joseph's Missionary Society*, 46.

⁹⁹ H. BURGMAN, “White men come with news from God”, in *The Way Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*, 7-30. Cf. Also BAUR, J., *The Catholic Church in Kenya*, 97.

both churches remained unchanged until 1925.¹⁰⁰ Western Kenya therefore constituted a frontier region of Uganda during the first thirty years, and the MHM build up a lively Luo-Luyha-Gusii Church (i.e. Bungoma, Kakamega, Kisumu and Kisii Dioceses), and was the largest Catholic community in Kenya until the Independence days.¹⁰¹

3.4.1 Western Kenya under Kenyan Bishops:

Mill Hill Missionaries in their charism focus in the establishment of the local church and the formation of their respective native clergies through creation of seminaries and other centers of both religious and lay formation. Consequently, it is worthwhile to trace the developmental stages of how the Catholic diocese of Bungoma came into existence under her local ordinary from the larger Western Kenya.

Bishop Jan De Reeper (1964-1976) was the last Mill Hill Missionary bishop of Kisumu. During his reign, he renewed the church community in the spirit of Vatican II through introduction of parish councils, by stressing the Catholic Family Movement and improved Sunday services without priests.¹⁰² Additionally, he was first among the Bishops of Kenya to introduce new church structures: Priest's Council, Parish Councils and Diocesan Pastoral Council. As a preparation to handover the Diocese to the local ordinary, he chose his priest Philip Sulumeti as Auxiliary Bishop, and on 9 December 1976, he handed over the reins to Bishop Sulumeti, who was then 39 years.¹⁰³

The diocese of Kisumu was under Bishop Sulumeti and his local clergy inherited from Mill Hill fathers was large and densely populated, leading to subdivision and formation of new dioceses. A first adjustment was made in 1976: Nandi District was handed over to Eldoret Diocese where it naturally belonged. Narok became part of Ngong Prefecture

¹⁰⁰ Cf. J. BAUR, *The Catholic Church in Kenya*, 97.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 125.

in 1959 and Kericho part of Nakuru Diocese in 1968.¹⁰⁴ Accordingly, the major division between Luoland and Luhyialand took place. Kisumu was the mother diocese with its bishop (Sulumeti Philip) residing in Kakamega in Luhyialand. So the question was raised as to why should the Luo not have their own bishop residing in their “capital” Kisumu? This was the big debate at that time, henceforth, in 1978 Fr. Zachaeus Okoth was made Bishop of the Diocese of Kisumu (reduced to Luoland), whereas Bishop Sulumeti remained Bishop of Luhyialand, in the new diocese of kakamega. Nevertheless, in 1987 the districts of Bungoma and Busia were detached from Kakamega diocese to form the Diocese of Bungoma under Bishop Longinus Atundo.¹⁰⁵

3.4.2 Mumias the Brewing Pot for New Missions in Luhyialand

Mumias mission was pivotal in the evangelization of the people of the Catholic diocese of Bungoma. According to Mzee Lucas Barasa, “In October 1903, Rt. Rev. Bishop Henry Hanlop, MHM and Rev.Fr. Van der Kallen came up to Mumias from Nsambya in Uganda to look for the site to start new missions in Kavirondo Vicariate (Upper Nile Vicariate). The following year in October, Rev. Fr. Van der Berg came up to Mumias to repair the place for the first resident priest; and in 1905 a small house was built for the priest.”¹⁰⁶ In the same year, Mumias Catholic Mission was opened by Fr. Van der Kallen who became a resident priest. In the subsequent years, St. Peters Claver Mumias mission became the center for evangelization and spreading up of new missions in the CDBGM and the entire Western Kenya.

From Mumias mission, the first ever parish (Nangina) in the entire CDBGM from the slopes of Mount Elgon to the shores of Lake Victoria was established in 1926. This

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 126.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 126 - 129.

¹⁰⁶ L. BARASA, “The Missionary Evangelization in Bungoma Diocese”, personal notes.

Samia mission territory also included a group of the Teso tribe which speaks Nilotic language, majority of them living in Uganda. Resultantly, there was the opening of the mission of their own, Amukura Parish¹⁰⁷ in 1933 by Fr. Coenen. Nangina was the central catechumenate of Samia mission territory, so other missions which were under it includes: Port Victoria (1930), Dabanni (Uganda Samia), Chakol, Mundika (1951) and Butula (1937)¹⁰⁸ among others.

In the years 1913-1918; under the rein of Chief Sudi¹⁰⁹ of Babukusu, Mgr. Brandsma and Fr. Stam, established a catechumenate resulting in the opening of the Kibabii Church (1956) with a sleeping room for a visiting priest.¹¹⁰ In short, St. Peter's Claver Mumias Catholic Mission was regarded as the point of arrival and of departure for the Mill Hill Missionaries in their missionary task of evangelization.

3.5 The Society's Missionary Task and Motivation as Presented in the Public

This section will explore the aspects of the missionary activities and motivation which were operative in the Mill Hill Missionaries' understanding of the missionary evangelization of the people, i.e. how they presented themselves to the public.

3.5.1 Missionary Task

St. Joseph's Missionary Society's missionary charge as discussed under the charism of the Society was to evangelize the 'heathens' outside Europe in view of "developing the native Churches and the relationship of missions to civilization".¹¹¹ For this reason, MHM in their missionary task of evangelization had to come up with the means that

¹⁰⁷ The home parish of the first African Bishop of Kakamega Diocese, Bishop Emeritus Philip Sulumeti.

¹⁰⁸ J. AYIERI, "Mill Hill Missionaries in Bungoma Diocese", personal notes and audio recording.

¹⁰⁹ The father of the first Kenyan Bishop, the late Maurice Cardinal Otunga (1923-2003).

¹¹⁰ J. AYIERI, Op.cit.

¹¹¹ Cf. L. NEMER, *Anglican and Roman Catholic Attitudes on Missions: An Historical Study of Two English Missionary Societies in the late Nineteenth Century (1865-1885)*, 121ff.

promoted the holistic progress of human person in their daily encounter with the locals as we shall deliberate in the subsequent segment.

3.5.2 Public Motivation¹¹²

This is the driving force behind the way Mill Hill Missionaries readily responded to the pastoral circumstances within their mission territories in the CDBGM.

3.5.2.1 Means of Evangelization

The Mill Hill Missionaries witnessed and lived their missionary task through a self-motivated and relevant informative, formative and transformative means in the establishment of the CDBGM in the spirit of Vatican II Council.¹¹³ This was done through means of Catechesis and sustainable local ecclesia leadership as explained earlier on Western Kenya under local bishops, inculturation and empowerment of peoples, thus contributing significantly to the universal evangelizing mission of the church.

3.5.2.1.1 Lay Apostolate

The lay apostolate played a major role in the growth of Catholic faith at the beginning of Christianity in the entire diocese of Bungoma. The team introduced the pioneer missionaries to various locations of the diocese and more especially after the establishment of Mumias Mission in 1904. The Good News of Christianity started reaching the AbaSamia in general¹¹⁴ immediately after the persecution of Christians in

¹¹² For a detailed discussion on the Mill Hill Missionaries' public motivation kindly cf. L. NEMER, *Anglican and Roman Catholic Attitudes on Missions: An Historical Study of Two English Missionary Societies in the late Nineteenth Century (1865-1885)*, 142-160.

¹¹³ Cf. C. MAWAJA, "50 Years of AD Gentes in Africa", 7-34.

¹¹⁴ This is in reference to all the parishes within the Busia County comprising of all the Abaluhya subtribes and Iteso, that traces their origin from Nangina Mission which was the central catechumenate founded in 1926 from Mumia Mission which is situated in the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega.

Uganda by the Kabaka. For instance, the lay apostolate team in Dahiyo Parish that helped the missionaries in an attitude of the universal collaborative mission are:

Luka Mukheto, a Muburi by clan and he tirelessly taught catechism in Rumbiye; Thomas Omaso, Dismas Ombongo, Aroni Okumu who worked in Iganga Parish (Uganda), Petro Obiriko who served as the sacristan, Joseph Ayieri, the first Christian to lead Sunday Ibada on the site proposed to be Dahiyo parish by then, Kornel Achoka (late) served as a messenger and the Alter server among others, and all the activities were being carried out under shades organized by Small Christian Communities.¹¹⁵

Other ministries that encouraged lay participation in the spirit of dialogue are: Youth Ministry, Liturgical department, Church choir, Catechists, Legion of Mary, Synod Committee, Association of Catholic Teachers, Family Life Programme, Young Christian Students (YCS) in schools, and Women Movement.¹¹⁶

3.5.2.1.2 Inculturation

Inculturation by its very nature is “the ongoing dialogue between culture or cultures and religious faith.”¹¹⁷ In the context of this paper, it is majorly the intimate and transformative encounter between Catholicism and Abaluhya traditional customs and religion “through the integration of the authentic’ Abaluhya ‘cultural values in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures” (RM, 52; cf. GS, 58).¹¹⁸ In short, inculturation is the evangelization of the culture of the people who receive the Gospel, and its effect on the life of the Church that takes root within that given culture.¹¹⁹

Pope John Paul II in his address to Mozambican Bishops on 23 September 1982, strongly emphasized on the need for inculturation of Christian faith, in order for

¹¹⁵ST. CECILIA CATHOLIC PARISH DAHIYO, “Dedication of the Parish”, 1-3.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹¹⁷ Cf. A. SHORTER, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation*, 11.

¹¹⁸ Cf. A.A.R. CROLLIUS, “Inculturation”, 110-119.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Catholicism in Africa to survive. Thus he said, “You must evangelize African culture itself, so that little by little, one may come to recognize a free African culture, just as this was done in the early Christian centuries, by Saint Cyprian and Saint Augustine.”¹²⁰ In short, the Holy Father is saying that inculturation is a gradual and a dialogical interaction between Church or missionaries and cultures.

3.5.2.1.2.1 Elements of Inculturation among the Abaluhya

This section point out the possibilities and limitations of inculturation between Catholicism and Abaluhya socio-cultural and religious practices and customs. Thus, Pope Pius XII in *Evangelii Praecones* (1951) on promoting Catholic mission, affirmed the need for missionaries to promote and respect the existing customs in their mission territories saying that: “Let not the Gospel, on being introduced into any new land, destroy or extinguish whatever its people possess, that is naturally good, just or beautiful.”¹²¹ Some of the elements of inculturation we shall highlight are; Nakhabuka and Sumba festivals, Rites of Passage and Naming system, Communal brew and meal, worship of *Wele Khakaba* and his dwelling place (*Namwima*)¹²², death and widow inheritance, and indigenous language, music and art.

To begin with **Nakhabuka and Sumba festivals**: This socio-cultural event brought diverse people together to celebrate their communitarian spirit. Early Missionaries at the initial stage thought that the participating in Sumba and Nakhabuka was evil and forbade Christians from attending the festival or contributing to it. Later they found that there was nothing wrong, and Father Biesset, MHM “baptized” Saint Sumba as

¹²⁰ Cf. T. OKURE – P.V. THIEL, et al, 32 *Articles Evaluating Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*, Preface x.

¹²¹ Ibid., 3

¹²² This is the sacred shrine where the traditionalists especially the Bukusu subtribe believed it was the dwelling place of their god (*Wele khakaba*’or *Naasaye*). It was later adopted by missionaries in sowing the seed of catholic faith among the locals.

“Joseph” and “Saint Nakhabuka” as Mary, and allowed their adherents to attend the festivals. This as well is described by Mzee Lucas Barasa who says that, “Sumba was the husband of Nakhabuka, and the tradition entailed wrestling or tag of war (“*Okhwesana omukoye*”) of men to men and women alike. If someone won, the other was given a “*zawadi*” (gift) from family and friends.”¹²³ Upon the realization of their beauty and their unifying significance to the Abanyala and the entire Samia territory, the missionaries stated encouraging the locals to participate in them.

Secondly, **Blessing of communal meal and brew**: From personal observation and interaction with the elders, I realized that most missionaries tried to incarnate themselves by familiarizing with the local customs and food. For example, during death anniversary (*Eng’anyo*) some missionaries could bless the communal meal and brew and partake in it. For instance, Fr. Kuhn in Nangina parish was considered as a son of Abakhulo clan and of Ngira family, and whenever the community prepared ‘*Enyama ya banaluhya (Ekumba)*’, i.e. a special community meat prepared to be eaten only within the clan members as a binding force. Fr. Kuhn was always invited or elders would take a piece of meat to him as the son of the soil.¹²⁴

Thirdly, **Rites of Passage and naming system**: Among the Abaluhya, names are of significant meaning as explained earlier, and are incorporated into the rites of passage which begins with birth, circumcision, marriage, death and hereafter or ancestral worship. Children were named after significant individuals or ancestors who had gone before them to create the communion of both the living and the dead. Consequently, when Mill Hill Missionaries “at the time of baptism renamed each person with the name of a Christian saint to be their guide and inspiration, the people understood those names

¹²³ L. BARASA, “The Missionary Evangelization in Bungoma Diocese”, personal notes.

¹²⁴ J.AYIERI, Op.cit.

in terms of a reincarnation of the Christian ancestors.”¹²⁵ To clear the doubt, missionaries had to correlate the Abaluhya naming system and circumcision process with the RCIA in catechesis and reception of adults into Christian community in their catechumenate centers. The completing burial rites (“*Tsing’anyo*”) was as well replaced with “*Makumbusho*” i.e. the Christian death anniversary. The concept of ancestors as mediators formed as well the basis for the interaction of ABTR and Christianity in understanding of communion of saints and incarnation of Christ as the proto-ancestor i.e. the First born (“*Mwana Wamberi*”) who mediates between us and God.

However, there are other cultural practices such as widow inheritance and indecent burial rituals which were against the Christian values and human dignity which had to be evangelized amicably although with initial resistance from the adherents. Lucas Barasa says that, “*In some Luhya clans when someone died outside home he should not pass through the main gate, he should be carried and pass through the other part called ‘Sibanga’. When a husband died in the family and left a wife, she should go ‘Khumwanzo’ i.e. at night she walks naked to and from her house to the main gate several times. After three days, all the family members should cut off their hair (‘Okhubekwa lifwiri’)*”.¹²⁶ All these rituals were dehumanizing and shameful, and the missionaries had to encourage communities to shun them and know God through dialogue with the elders and RCIA.

Fourthly, **Worship of ‘*Were Khakaba*’ and ‘*Namwiwa*’**: In chapter one we mentioned that the AbaLuhya particularly the Bukusu subtribe believed that the world was created by *Wele Khakaba* (God the creator) and has two assistants, *Wele Omuyeti* or *Omwoyo*

¹²⁵ Cf. M.C. KIRWEN, *The Missionary and the Diviner, A Note from the Author*, xiii.

¹²⁶ L. BARASA, *Op.cit.*

Mtakatifu (the Holy Spirit) and *Wele Murumwa* (the Messenger). His dwelling place in the community is called '*Namwiwa*' comprising of three unified stones.¹²⁷

The coming of missionaries in the early 19th century and their inland missions of evangelization made them come in contact with the indigenous ABTR. Their interactions and encounters with ABTR and practices raised questions to them in finding the proper approach in bringing the new concept of Christianity. According to Mzee John Omari Wekesa, who is a Christian and a Catholic convert explains how the '*Namwima*' was a key figure when it came to the primary evangelization of the AbaBukusu subtribe. He points out that the missionaries encounter with the '*Namwima*' shrine was discovery for them; they had not encountered this in any other indigenous religions.¹²⁸ This is because of the magic and the deep similarities they drew from its values and reverence. Consequently, '*Namwima*' became an element of inculturation or rather a means for the evangelization among the AbaBukusu as follows:

The '*Namwima*' had three stones and each represented a Bukusu god whom they believed in a feature which describes them as a Henotheistic religion since they had One True God but also other gods and intermediaries ('*Emitsambwa*'). The stone at the center represented their One True God who was the creator and was called '*Muumbi*' or '*Mulongi*' (the molder). The other two stones at the shrine entrance represented '*Wele Omurumwa*' who was the spokesperson of God the creator and '*Wele Omuyeti*' who was a helper to the people by giving them the gift of discernment between what is good or evil, and do it in accordance to what is taught to them by '*Muumbi*' and '*Wele*

¹²⁷ This sacred place of worship for the Bukusu had a basic structure that all the other "*Namwima*" in the people's home would have. It was a small grass thatched- house like which resembled many of the traditional grass-thatched huts in Luhyaland. It had three stones; two of the stones stood on the right and the left of the entrance of the small shrine and one of the stone at the center of the hut.

¹²⁸ J.O. WEKESA, "Interaction between Bukusu Traditional Religion and Catholicism", personal notes.

Omurumwa’ respectively¹²⁹. Resultantly, the early Christian missionaries saw these as a great revelation in teaching of the ‘Holy Trinity’ made of the three divine persons, concretely manifested in the AbaBukusu indigenous religion. The reality of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit was made manifest among the Bukusu concept of ‘*Namwima*’ and the entire Abaluhya understanding of ‘*Were Omulongi*’ (God the Creator). The missionaries indeed recognized of the unity among the persons of ‘*Namwima*’, and it was worthwhile for the dialogue and encounter in bridging the Catholic teaching on the Holy Trinity (cf. CCC, 253) and the very worship of ‘*Were Khakaba*’ and ‘*Namwiwa*’.

Finally, **Indigenous language, music and art**: Learning and promotion of the local language and culture was and is highly emphasized in the missionary engagement of the MHM with the local people. Missionary priests and brothers were expected to give priority to learning those languages, music and art resulting in gradual preparation of catechisms in the context of the people. Translation of the Bible, liturgical, hymns¹³⁰ and catechetical books in ‘*Oluluhya*’ helped the Christian communities to know what was happening and to participate actively thus affirming what Nelson Mandela once said, “*When you speak to people in a foreign language you speak to their mind, but when you speak in their own native language, you speak to their hearts.*”

Father Stam really appreciated the Abaluhya culture and religion through his anthropological study of the community, and in 1920 he published an article entitled *The Bantu Kavirondo of Mumias District*.¹³¹ This effectively boosted his Inculturation

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Vatican II Council especially in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, encouraged the incorporation of traditional music and musical instruments in Church liturgies in order to promote singing and communion with and by the people. From my observation, I realized that whenever liturgical songs such as Gloria (*‘Oluyari lube khuNaasaye Baba...’*), offertory or thanksgiving are sung in ‘*Oluluhya*’, the congregation is always vibrant since the songs speaks to their hearts.

¹³¹ Cf. F. GROOT, *STAM of Mumias* 150 - 172.

of the Good News of Jesus Christ to the people he loved and desired to serve. WERE Gideon as well affirms Fr. Stam's contribution to the knowledge of Abaluhya by writing:

Fr. Stam was quick to notice the significant point that despite the fact that Abaluhya offered sacrifices to ancestral spirits, they did not actually worship such spirits. Having noted, among other things their, belief in the existence of good and evil spirits (of death relatives) and the prevalent practice of appeasing them with sacrifices, he concluded authoritatively: "Thus at first sight the Bahanga (the Abaluhya of Wanga) seem to be ancestor worshippers. In reality however, they adore the One God, the Creator and life-giver. If sickness breaks out and continues, the native dedicates a white chicken to God. In time of sowing and harvesting, he sacrifices a white chicken to God, because he is convinced that all life and all fertility proceed from God alone."¹³²

Indeed language is a doorway for any missionary to enter into a particular culture. Fr. Stam learnt the local culture and language, making him to dialectically enter into anthropological lives of Abaluhya, and he was able to distinguish between the worship of ancestral spirits (which was not practised by Abaluhya) and the Abaluhya practise of offering sacrifices to God through ancestral spirits as effective intermediaries.

3.5.2.1.3 Developmental Projects

Social commitment for the socio-economic and spiritual well-being of the Christian community is paramount; and the magisterial teachings throughout the ages especially on the Social Doctrine of the Church and in *Gaudium et Spes*, has encouraged ministers, clergy and laity alike to participate in socio-economic and spiritual development to enhance the dignity of human person thus making the Kingdom God a present reality. Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio*, strongly affirms that peace reigns when there is a holistic development which promotes the good of every human person and thus he calls Development as the new name for Peace¹³³. For instance, under the leadership of

¹³² G.S. WERE, *Essays on African Religion in Western Kenya*, 5.

¹³³ Cf. *Populorum Progressio*, 76 & 77.

Bishop Gorgonius Brandsma (1924-1935) and Bishop Nicholas Stam (1936-1946), major developments took place. For example, in 1926 Bishop Brandsma had the following programmes. Firstly, extending evangelization to new regions, and secondly, complementing the work of the missionary priests with sisters and brothers and an indigenous clergy; and finally, emphasizing education in accordance with the new government policy. These pastoral programs boosted the spread of Catholicism in Western Kenya.

3.5.2.1.4 Education and Health Facilities

As the first missionaries established centers for catechism instruction, the schools were as well developed in the early days. According to Lucas Barasa, Catholic schools were vibrant until 1967 when the Government ownership of schools came into existence. In the CDBGM, there are a number of catholic sponsored schools which offers integral education as in the view of the pioneer missionaries. For instance, School community within Dahiyo parish since the commencement of the parish serves as SCCs where students particularly Catholic, as well as teachers and parents meet with a united common purpose and interest in sharing the Word of God and liturgical activities within the Church. In addition, there was formation of association of Catholic teachers in 1996 with the blessing of Fr. Martin, witnessed by then Diocesan Education Secretary Rev. Fr. John Ogola. The aims and objectives was “to help Catholic teachers become more committed to their intellectual, professional, academic, physical, social and spiritual responsibilities.”¹³⁴ Currently, this association is still operative and the staff meet frequently to deliberate on matters of education within the parish and the entire diocese.

¹³⁴ ST. CECILIA CATHOLIC PARISH DAHIYO, “Dedication of the Parish”, 8.

In 1912, Fr. Brandsma came back and opened a school for the sons of chiefs, and at the end of 1913 the first four Wanga were baptized, and a year later, catechumenates was opened among the Bukusu. Chiefs and people opposed teaching of religion in school even though they sent their children (including a few girls) to school. The agreement was that the boarding fee was free, but chiefs had to supply the food. The school therefore, gave the mission a good reputation among the people, hence becoming a means to evangelization and conversion.

Moreover, Health facilities were established within the mission set up to cater for psycho-physical wellbeing of the local community at a reduced costs. For example, Holy Family Mission Hospital – Nangina and St. Jude Health Centre – Sirimba. The facilities have chaplaincy who visits, listens, talks and shares the Word of God with the patients in helping them overcome their issues and heal faster. A number of patients have affirmed this enriching dialogical encounter, alluding to the fact that there is a relationship between spiritual, mental and physical healing which is in line of our definition human person as a unity of body, soul and mind.

3.5.2.1.5 ‘*Vikanda vya Echisala*’ (Small Christian Communities)

Evangelization works through ordinary experiences and relationships which “are to be found ideally in the family, through the mutual influence of marriage partners or of parents and their children”.¹³⁵ Thus, Small Christian Communities (Jumuiya Ndogo Ndogo za KiKristu) are compartments of committed Christians working together in the spirit of dialogue and at the service of the universal Church and the world. They cultivate interpersonal relationship as a family journeying together in the spirit of good neighborliness in their ordinary lives, thus making evangelization effective by being

¹³⁵ Cf. A. SHORTER, *Evangelization and Culture*, 143.

self-propagating. In Nangina Parish, SCCs in the words of Joseph Ayieri “started like ‘Enono’ i.e. clans to ‘Evikanda vye Kanisa’ (Church Communities).”¹³⁶

In Dahiyo Parish, Fr. Martin Rijk, MHM promoted the formation of Small Christian Communities in strengthening the church and encouragement of the lay participation in the universal mission of the Church. Funds were raised through SCCs as well as the organization of the Eucharistic celebrations. For example, at the onset of the parish, five SCCs known as Group Tano were formed namely; St. Martin Bwanga, St. Gorretti Bude, St. Peter Nanjekho, St. Joseph Buduta and St. Kizito Ojibo.¹³⁷ Currently, the parish and those other parishes within the diocese have a numerous number of SCCs where Christians share the Word of God together, have communion and witness together their faith by sharing with one another, and in service for one another within their concrete situations. This as well was the vision of the late Bishop Atundo in formulation of diocesan structures based on Small Christian Communities.

3.5.2.1.6 ‘Baraza la Wazee’ (Council of Leaders)

A number of missionary priests could go for home visitation (safaris), and they could sit and dialogue with the elders or the clan members on matters Christian faith and the social concerns of the community such as education. This aimed at creating a rapport in getting to know both the local people and the priest better. Mzee Joseph Ayieri affirms this dialogical approach by saying: “Fr. Nicholas Konings, MHM in Nangina parish used to visit the elders in the area, especially his late grandfather (Mukheto) sitting together, eating together and sharing about the local culture, and ending his chats with a few words about the Word of God and Jesus Christ. If they desired to know

¹³⁶ J.AYIERI, Op.cit.

¹³⁷ ST. CECILIA CATHOLIC PARISH DAHIYO, “Dedication of the Parish”, 4.

more, they were to give him a boy who would be instructed to deliver the whole message to them. The boys were instructed for three years in the mission stations and later on returned to their homes as catechists”¹³⁸. This is how he ended up becoming a pioneer catechist and one of the lay minister in the parish.

3.6 The Challenges Encountered by the Missionaries

Mill Hill Missionaries in evangelizing the people of CDBGM encountered a number of challenges. In this section, we shall highlight some of these challenges as they faced them in their daily life in missions.

3.6.1 Pastoral Challenges

These entails living conditions where pioneer missionaries had to stay in grass thatched houses at the initial stages, and also strong tension between cultural practices and faith. For instance, in 1962 and 1981 respectively, Fr. Konings in Nangina parish started Charismatic movement and attempted the Ecumenical dialogue with other Christian faiths particularly the Anglicans. He could invite Anglican priests to preach on a Sunday to the gathered congregation. In the words of Mzee Joseph Ayieri: “A number of people were resistant to the charismatic movement which in their eyes tried to destroy the beautiful elements of *‘utamaduni ya’* (culture of) AbaSamia. Inviting an Anglican priest to preach on a Sunday did not mean well to some people so few opted out.”¹³⁹

3.6.2 Health and Floods

Health issues is one of the struggle that pioneer missionaries had to battle with. This included tropical diseases such as Malaria, Small pox and Spanish flue. Some even

¹³⁸ J.AYIERI, Op.cit.

¹³⁹ J. AYIERI, Op.cit.

succumbed to death due poor health conditions as a result of unfavorable climate and diseases. Hans Burgman narrates two incidents where diseases scourged a number of locals and missionaries by saying that there was a continuous concatenation of diseases in the years 1917-1920 killing thousands of people and shutting down of some missions.¹⁴⁰

Floods in Samia-Bunyala missions caused a havoc to the lives of the people, and inability for mission outreach, famine and deaths. Hans Burgman still gives account of this horrific natural catastrophe by saying: “The weather appears to have conspired for the destruction of the land. Never was it worse than at the end of 1917. Incessant thundersome wrecked buildings and houses, and brought floods that put much of Bunyala, Rwabwa and Bukhayo under water, sometimes five feet deep. Inevitably the wicked weather brought savage famine in its wake.”¹⁴¹ Therefore, missionaries working in this region (i.e. Port Victoria, Magombe, Sirimba and Dahiyo parishes) had to always find ways of supporting their parishioners in an outbreak of floods.

3.6.3 Transportation

Missionaries had to travel long distances with impassable terrains, rivers and swamps with crocodiles, and bad roads in their mission outreach. For example, Fr. Stam visited frequently most of mission territories entrusted to him under the vast Mumias parish.¹⁴² The pastoral safaris provided ample opportunity for the missionaries to teach and give spiritual nourishment to the sheepfold. However, the means of transportation in reaching out to people was hectic by then, and some had to trek or use boats across the rivers or swamps as in the case of Samia – Bunyala mission territories just to be with

¹⁴⁰ Cf. H. BURGMAN, *Op.cit.*, 98.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Cf. F. GROOT, *STAM of Mumias*, 174 - 183.

their people. Frans Groot recounts missionaries' struggles in CDBGM by narrating that of Fr. Nicholas Stam as follows:

He toured by motorcycle and sometimes by bicycle or on foot took too much out of him [...] In August he travelled to Samia where on a bad stretch of road he was thrown off his motorcycle. There was no one to help him and he was hard put to it to drag his motorcycle back onto the road. He managed to reach the outstation of Nangoma where Christians had to help him get off his motorcycle, for he was afflicted with an attack of rheumatism in his back. The next day Christians carried their missionary to the church where he managed to hear confessions and say Mass. The pain got worse and he was carried on a stretcher to Nangina, the central catechumenate of the area.¹⁴³

3.6.4 Rebellious Spirit from the local leadership and neighborhood

Although most of the Mill Hill Missionaries endeavored to promote ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, and even enjoyed a cordial relationship with a number of political leaders as in the words of Joseph Ayieri "*Abatuki, Abaami nende Abapadri bakhoreranga sa alala*",¹⁴⁴ i.e. the government leaders and the priests they used to work together. There are some other MHMs who encountered challenges working with particular leaders, chiefs and other faiths. For example, the early Swahili and Arab traders for Western Kenya made Mumias their center giving to the Luhya Capital a distinctive Islamic character. This became a warning sign of the difficulties of Christian evangelization of the Luhyialand. The mission ended up being deserted, but a year later reopened by episcopal order although there was still stiff resistance from the Muslims and a cold acceptance by the local population hindered its progress.¹⁴⁵

Nonetheless, the Catholic Church in Luhyialand had a critical time after the First World War. Muslims, Protestants and the chiefs especially Kadima¹⁴⁶ of Samia, Bukusu and

¹⁴³ Ibid., 236-237.

¹⁴⁴ J. AYIERI, Op.cit.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. H. BURGMAN, Op.cit., 98-99.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 108.

Bunyala, all seemed determined to have the Catholic faith suppressed, and Christian converts were forced to return to paganism. The Chiefs gave the pretext to close all catechumenates, and they were surrounded by police officers, and catechists were either expelled, killed or imprisoned between the years 1919-1921.¹⁴⁷ Fortunately, later in 1921 the situation improved upon chief of North Bunyala contracting the plague, asked Fr. Stam for baptism and died a Catholic.¹⁴⁸

3.6.5 Borderline conflicts and Struggle for Independence

The land clashes in Mt. Elgon, i.e. the *Sabaot Land Defense Forces* and volatile dictatorship of Field Marshal Iddi Amin Dada from the neighboring Uganda created tension and insecurity within the area. Fr. Martin Rijk, MHM who worked in the area narrated how all the parish structures were destroyed by rebel groups, killing, displacing and maiming and abduction of innocent parishioners. Additionally, the political crisis of fight for liberation of African countries from colonialists and Independence of Kenya from the year 1935 onwards created a political antagonism and anti-missionary or even anti-Christian. As a result, the missionaries in the words of Han Burgman, “had a foot in both camps of the White administration and African aspirations for independence.”¹⁴⁹ However, “most missionaries were deeply disturbed by the ubiquitous colour bar”¹⁵⁰ which created a division and tension within the Christian community thus hindering the spirit of dialogue and mutual co-existence.

3.6.6 Language Barrier

Language is the essential tool for communication between or amongst missionaries and the locals, it bonds them together in love and identity. Mill Hill Missionaries wherever

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 98-99.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 100. Also Cf. F. GROOT, *STAM of Mumias*, 168-169.

¹⁴⁹ H. BURGMAN, *Op.cit.*, 220.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

they are sent are encouraged to learn what is positive in the local cultures and language. During a period of immersion into the community, missionaries found it challenging to converse and relate with the locals due to unfamiliar language bearing in mind they came from a totally different cultural context.

3.7 Conclusion

Whaling argued that, “to understand others it is necessary in some degree to see the world through *their* eyes, in the light of *their* questions as they emerged in their history” (Whaling 1986, 29).¹⁵¹ The statement implies that a missionary only realizes his real missionary identity in the way he relates and sees the present mission situation of the people. In line with this chapter, it denotes the Mill Hill Missionaries’ attitudes in their response to and through concrete eyes of the circumstances that surrounded the people of the CDBGM in their missionary task of evangelization.

In conclusion, our discussion of this chapter focused on the attitudes of Mill Hill Missionaries in the evangelization of the people of CDBGM by first tracing the genesis and charism of the MHMs, followed by the entry of them in Western Kenya and their work of evangelization. This was tackled in line with their missionary tasks and motivation as presented in the community especially the means of evangelization and the challenges encountered by the missionaries. We shall now move to chapter four which will focus on the recommendations/personal reflections on the specific missionary attitudes and spirituality in view of the way Mill Hill Missionaries evangelized the Catholic Diocese of Bungoma.

¹⁵¹ Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 383.

CHAPTER FOUR

Recommendations and General Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the missionary endeavors of the Mill Hill Missionaries by discussing the fundamental attitudes an individual missionary need to possess in the evangelization of the peoples; or in other words, being a bridge-builder between himself, other people and communities.¹⁵² As a response, we shall recommend on both the general and the specific missionary attitudes and spirituality the Mill Hill Missionaries or any other missionary need to cultivate in living and working with the people in mission. The general conclusion will sum up the entire research work.

4.1 Specific Missionary Attitudes and Spirituality

This refers to those recommendations that may only be applicable to the Mill Hill Missionaries, personally being included in relation to their missionary activities for the period they worked in the Catholic diocese of Bungoma.

4.1.1 Nurturing the Universal Collaborative Spirit in Mission

It is highly recommended for missionaries to cultivate the spirit of openness to work with others, for this is crucial in the evangelization of the people, and no missionary is an island to oneself. God needed humanity to cooperate with his grace for the redemptive mission by becoming flesh and dwelling among us. St. Paul as an example realized that to be effective in mission, he needed collaborators like Timothy, Luke and Titus. Additionally, Nehemiah in the Old Testament becomes the model upon which we can emulate the attitude of collaboration. How? Having worked in the imperial court of Babylon, hears the cries of his people in Jerusalem, and undertakes to lead the people to rebuild their country. He applies the managerial knowledge, skills and experience he has accumulated in Babylon, and succeeds to mobilize his people by saying “Come let

¹⁵² Cf. L. MAGESA, *Rethinking Mission: Evangelization in Africa in a New Era*, 148-149.

us rebuild together the walls...” (Nehemiah 2:7b) for the reconstruction of Jerusalem.¹⁵³

Indeed working together (“*Okhorera alala*” in my dialect) makes missionary activities enriching and less burdensome due to delegation and mutual co-existence.

According to Lucas Barasa, “*The missionaries cultivated team spirit ‘nende enomanoma alala eihus’ya*”¹⁵⁴ i.e. and they fostered constructive dialogue. Therefore, missionaries are collaborators in *Missio Dei* and they should encourage more communion participation bearing in mind that evangelization is the fruit of dialogue which is the result of journeying together as a family, in a constructive way rather than being destructive, being inclusive in drafting mission outreach programs rather than being exclusive.

Eucharistic celebration as well is a symbolic representation of universal collaborative mission in the way the celebrant and congregants relate. It is dialogical and so missionaries too should cultivate dialogical movements within the Christian communities and their pastoral team, and in the way they celebrate liturgies, bearing in mind that mission is dialogue and encounter. Borrowing from Jesse Mugambi, we can say that mission in the spirit of collaboration is

pro-active rather than re-active; complementary rather than competitive; integrative rather than disintegrative; programme-driven rather than project driven; people centred rather than institution centred, deed oriented rather than word oriented; participatory rather than autocratic; regenerative rather than degenerative; future sensitive rather than past sensitive; cooperative rather than confrontational; consultative rather than impositional.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Cf. Book of Nehemiah, Chapters 1-13.

¹⁵⁴ L. BARASA, Telephone conversation with the author. The author in his argument pointed out that old Christianity was good and people were much willing to help each other as a community unlike current Christianity which is coupled with the spirit of indifference and hatred.

¹⁵⁵ J.N.K. MUGAMBI, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*: Introductory Remarks, xv.

4.1.2 Service – Providing Attitude

The service-providing attitude in mission is where a pastor provides everything for the community by organizing and putting up various occasional services for different purposes, and money is the key for all his activities.¹⁵⁶ A number of Mill Hill Missionaries in CDBGM employed this attitude in their pastoral planning and organization within their mission territories, they seemed to own everything, oriented themselves in developmental and social work like building of hospitals and schools within the parish set up, and even they funded the parish contribution towards the diocesan fund. On one hand, this is good for the social development of the community; on the other hand, the attitude was a one way tract of giving and doing things for the Christian communities, thus it encouraged dependence syndrome which worsened upon the departure of the missionaries since the Christian faithful were used to being given with limited self-driven spirit of participation and ownership of their respective parishes. We therefore recommend that future Mill Hill Missionaries should create a balance in their models of pastoral planning and organization by encouraging the parishioners to nurture the spirit of self-motivation and a self-reliance within the parish.

4.1.3 Simple Life style

Mill Hill Missionaries do take the oath of obedience and a call to living a simple life style in their rite for the acceptance into the Society as either temporary or perpetual members. It is an invitation to live on a bare minimum and not extravagant life style. Simplicity in mission makes a missionary neither to complicate life nor over expect but to be in touch with his daily experiences; allowing oneself to be shaped by them and enjoy the process with an open heart and mind, living in accordance with the social-economic demands of the mission placements. Consequently, young Mill Hill

¹⁵⁶ N. OBIERO, “Models of Pastoral Planning and Organization”, class held on 9th February, 2022.

Missionaries ought to live according to the promises as a prophetic sign and a missionary identity with the evangelized in becoming a shepherd who smells the sheep.

4.1.4 Fraternal Dialogue

This is the ability of a missionary to open up, listen and welcome the other in an authentic conversation making the other feel supported and listened to. It also evolves setting up structures of learning from each other and appreciating the value of what others have to offer in order to improve in becoming a better and a relevant missionary to the people. Mill Hill Missionaries in most parishes within the diocese worked through Jumuiyas and Baraza la Wazee (Council of the Elders) in addressing matter of great concern. Joseph Ayieri and Lucas Barasa pointed out that those MHMs who worked within the diocese endeavored to cultivate '*Enomanoma yohorera alala*' i.e. a communal dialogue of working together. For this reason, Joseph Ayieri narrates how appreciating and valuing each other in the spirit of fraternal dialogue was crucial at the initial inauguration of Dahiyo parish. A number of merry-go-rounds were organized, the site was cleared of all bushes, stones collected for initial and terminal work; heaps of building sand and enough cement blocks were made by Christians. They voluntarily contributed in their various ways. The most interesting part is the way they worked together as a family; conversing and taking tea together, singing and building in the spirit of '*Khuyasiria nende khukhorera khulala nge Chimilie*' i.e. We respond and we work together as Quelea.¹⁵⁷

In the spirit of *Fratelli Tutti*, we recommend that Mill Hill Missionaries in their mission territories should learn to integrate everyone in a reciprocal sharing of their giftedness and in a spirit of fraternal dialogue and common commitments (cf. *FT*, 5).

¹⁵⁷ A brownish weaver bird commonly found in the bushy grassland, cultivations or during harvesting season in my locality. The male has either a black face or a red head. It is also called dioch. These birds fly and coordinate their activities as a flock.

4.2 General Recommendations

This refers to the recommendations of those attitudes that may be applicable to both the Mill Hill Missionaries and to all missionaries at the level of the universal church's missionary activity in building up the Reign of God. We therefore recommend the following.

4.2.1 Attitude of Humility and Selflessness

Since the beginning of the Society, Herbert Vaughan deliberately abstained from attracting public attention to the work. His wish was to concentrate in the formation of a good tradition, upon "laying the essential foundation of an apostolic spirit of faith and self-sacrifice."¹⁵⁸ Lowering of oneself (humility) and leaving aside status quo in becoming the least and the servant in mission, makes a missionary an attentive listener to God and to the pain, joy and anguish of parishioners, not making them feel small but treating them like an equal. This attitude builds a rapport between the missionary and the Christian community, who in turn experience the presence of God through their pastor, and even in the moments of crises, they will always stretch out their hands to uplift him.

Selflessness entails the very fact that missionary tasks are geared towards the people and not centered on an individual missionary. He is just the agent of evangelization, and not a 'deity' to be revered in mission. The projects and human developmental projects he does should be done with a deep sense of meekness and geared towards the establishment of the Reign of God which is the source and summit of the evangelizing mission of the church.¹⁵⁹ The late Bishop Nicholas Stam after working with the people

¹⁵⁸Cf. F. MOL, ed., "The Beginning of St. Joseph's Society", 5-6.

¹⁵⁹Cf. Theological Advisory Commission of the Federation of Asian Bishop's Conferences (FABC) which affirmed the above mentioned notion by saying: "The focus of the Church's mission of evangelization is building up the Kingdom of God and building up the Church to be at the service of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is, therefore, wider than the church. The church is the sacrament of the

of CDBGM, concluded that the missionary sets his heart and sentiments in motion. For he said:

As a missionary I live not only my own life, but that of hundreds of others too [...] whether I sleep in bed or on the floor, whether I am deprived of cultural delights or intellectual stimulation is fairly indifferent to me. What I mean is that you don't just live your own life, but you live the lives of many others. I don't just live to work out my own salvation, but that of many others, who depends on me, for when anyone in my charge loses the way, it is as though I myself feel his anxiety.¹⁶⁰

4.2.2 Take off the Shoe Attitude in Mission

Dialogue and encounter paves the way for celebrating the difference and uniqueness of the individuals, cultures and religion contextually. A missionary is not the custodian of absolute truth, but should endeavor to find the beauty, the graces in the cultures different from ours by asking, "Where should I begin from and what can I learn from this particular individual or culture?" Taking off the shoe attitude in mission requires openness from the side of both evangelizer and the evangelized, putting Christ at the center of mission and looking beyond the other in the very encounter. It is being incarnated within the context of the people and getting to know their customs, cultures, traditional worldviews and the basic questions they ask in their day to day lives. In doing this, any kind of transformation will take place since a missionary will be able to draft the missionary approach which is relevant to the needs of the people to whom he sought to minister.

4.2.3 A Prayerful and a Discerning Attitude

Spirituality and mission are intertwined, and a missionary should nurture a meditating, prayerful life and a discerning heart in order to minister well to the people by bringing them closer to God. For this reason, Maganya Innocent in his introductory class on

Kingdom, visibilizing it, ordained to it, promoting it, but not equating itself to it" (6, 3) [FABC] 1987, 16).

¹⁶⁰ F. GROOT, *STAM of Mumias*, 165-166.

African Theology affirmed that “Theology as a method of knowing God in the person of Jesus Christ according to the scriptures, and it should be done in a prayerful way within the context of a worshipping community.”¹⁶¹ There should be “a correlation between theological reflection (orthodoxy), orthopraxis and orthospiritality.”¹⁶² In short, attitude of prayer and discernment helps a missionary to evaluate and re-evaluate self in finding the appropriate ways of inserting, and of appropriating oneself in mission. He should always pray for guidance that God may teach him to do His will so that those whom he minister may experience God’s transformative love through him.

4.2.4 Faithful Witnessing Attitude

Mission is also effective in the way we relate with the locals in the evangelization and invitation of them “to a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ and to entry through baptism in the community of believers which is the Church” (DP, 10). This attitude entails not necessary doing things for the people but making myself available for them and with them in their concrete human situation with a heart filled empathy, “rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep” (Rom 12:15). That's why, Madam Wilmina Ogola affirmed this by saying that Fr. Konings who worked in Nangina parish, used to visit them at their home in the village, talk and share with them a meal and even take the mother to the hospital in time of sickness.

Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical Letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, on the Evangelization in the Modern World, reiterated on being authentic missionaries and faithful witnesses when he said: “*Modern man listens more willingly to witness than teachers, and if he does listen to teachers it is because they are witness [...] authentic witness to the mission of Christ involves faithful presence, sharing and solidarity.*” (EN, 21 & 41). The aspect

¹⁶¹ H.I. MAGANYA, “Introduction to African Theology”, class held on 20th August, 2021.

¹⁶² Ibid.

of witness, faithful and active presence as emphasized by the Pope is an attitude I learnt in my three years of MEP in Turda-Philippines and Oololaimutia-Kenya respectively. I learnt through my daily activities that Christians do not necessarily need doing things for them but rather our availability in being cultivators of hope, ministers of consolation who creates a significant joyful moments to and with them in their concrete situations.

4.2.5 Loving Service Attitude

The motto of MHM is “*Amare et Servire*” i.e. “To Love and To Serve” and it continually reminds MHM members to continually nurture the spirit of loving service in their missionary tasks of evangelization. Personally I believe that mission is born out of love and nurtured by love. It is this very unconditional love that propelled God in the person of his son Jesus Christ to enter dialectically into human history for their holistic redemption. The same love drives a missionary, as St. Paul says, “For the love of Christ compels us” (2 Cor 5:14), to willingly cross the barriers and offer ourselves joyfully to take care of each other just like the Good Samaritan in our missioning.

In addition, attitude of loving service makes a missionary to open his or her heart and mind, to be joined together with those of the faithful in mission for a common goal.

This fellowship in unconditional love attracts them to work together as Pedro Arrupe poetically said:

What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of the bed in the mornings, what you will do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with love and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love and it determine everything.

4.2.6 Mentoring and Empowering Attitude

Missionaries should mentor and empower the laity in mission territories to cultivate a sense of self-reliance and ownership of their respective churches or Christian communities. They should teach them how to fish rather than dishing out money and

handouts. Jesse Mugambi affirms this attitude of mentoring and empowering of the laity by saying:

Africans must respond in their own way to the Gospel, and only God is justified to pass judgments on the appropriations of the Gospel by Africans [...] thus a missionary, as soon as he or she has introduced the Gospel in the new culture, has the responsibility to listen to the new Christian community, and, should he choose to stay, at best become a partner with that community, in its endeavor to appropriate the Gospel to its culture. Thus responding to their own needs as appropriate, and if need be, a missionary can only encourage, counsel, offer moral, material and financial support appropriately; however, the Christian community themselves must carry their own cross in the context of their own cultural limitations and opportunities.¹⁶³

There have been concerns that a number of the MHM who worked in CDBGM did very minimal in training the parishioners to be self-reliant in terms of financial support since majority of funded the parish projects with donations from Europe, which upon their time of departure, it became a struggle for the financial sustainability of those parishes by local clergies who took over from them. On contrary, a significant number of MHM endeavored to empower the laity in line with the AMECEA's vision of 1976 of having a self-ministering, self-evangelizing and self-sustaining church through the formation of SCCs and Lay Apostolate who helped the missionaries in mission outreach and evangelization as discussed in chapter three on the MHM's means of evangelization.

4.2.7 Obedience and Surrendering Attitude

The attitudes help a missionary to realize that his project is to respond continuously to the call of Christ of "Come and follow me" (Mt 4:9), "learn from me" (Mt 11:29) and that of "Go therefore..." (Mt 28:19-20) by being willing to be sent anywhere and enter into dialogue with diverse people and cultures that present themselves before him. This became evident during my MEP where I come to the knowledge that God and His people are the center of mission and not me or what I can gain from a particular mission

¹⁶³J.N.K. MUGAMBI, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*: Introductory Remarks, xiii-xiv.

placement. In obeying and gracious surrendering, a missionary come to the realization that “it does not matter WHERE I am sent for mission or WHO I am going to work with, but it is all about HOW open I am in working with or relating with the people in mission.”¹⁶⁴

4.2.8 The Person on the Move

Missionaries are men and women on the move into new areas and unknown situations. The pioneer MHM as well started somewhere from scratch, endured lots of hurdles and they were ready to take risks in mission just like the great apostles especially Paul in all his missionary journeys. Wherever Paul went, he endeavored to incarnate himself in the context and cultivate dialogue in mission. We have a number of MHM who tried to root themselves in mission territories by learning the culture and tradition of the people. However, some of them ended up taking ‘the vow of stability’ in particular mission stations and with a resistant attitude to move into new mission frontiers.

Any missionary should therefore inculcate the attitude of moving or transiting either to unfamiliar situations or retirement no matter how wonderful the mission placement can be; and “young men and women in their turn should be willing to cross both familiar and unfamiliar boundaries, boundaries of home countries and boundaries of cultures, and seek to spread and establish God’s Kingdom elsewhere.”¹⁶⁵

4.2.9 Community Life as a Mission

True missionary attitudes and identity starts right from the moment of recruitment and formation of missionaries. This is because it is the community life that shapes who we are or ought to be in relation to others. If the future missionary cannot open his or her heart and mind to be formed and configured to Christ in the spirit of brotherhood, and

¹⁶⁴ D.B. WANJALA, “Final Self Evaluation”, 1-2.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. F. MOL, ed., “In all this We give thanks to God”, 2.

being there for each other, in vain will that individual be willing to enter into dialogue and work with the faithful in mission territories.

From my personal assessment, I realized that there are some parishes established by some Mill Hillers simply because the members could not relate well or stomach each other, or even had unsolved past grudges and wrangles and so they preferred to stay on their own. The attitude of brotherhood and friendship as missionaries should be nurtured right from formation in our living and sharing, and must be evident between us, amongst us and within us as missionaries. In this regard, the entire formation process focusing on personal, spiritual, academic and pastoral formation ought to nurture in me the skills on integration of what I have learnt, seen and heard throughout my formation life, in mission placement with those whom I am or will be working with in mission,¹⁶⁶ or in the words of Cardinal Tagle Antonio: “Sharing my person to others.”¹⁶⁷

4.3 Conclusion

The objective of our missionary activities as I mentioned earlier should not be centered on doing things for the people but rather of mutual exchange in the spirit of dialogue thus responding comprehensively to the spiritual and material well-being of those to be evangelized. All the missionary encounters invite a missionary to find out the possible avenues for dialogue in order to be effective in the evangelizing mission of the Church, and establishment of the Reign of God here and now guided by the Holy Spirit. The failure to nurture the spirit of dialogue in mission results in the failure of mission and poses a danger of clericalism and power driven approach.

In short, a missionary should learn that dialogue and encounter in mission is the basis for the evangelization of the people for it shapes one’s attitude to learn that I need to

¹⁶⁶ D.B. WANJALA, “First MEP Report”, 5.

¹⁶⁷ D.B. WANJALA, - Cardinal Tagle Antonio, “The Power of Listening”, personal notes during his brief talk with students in Christ the King Seminary, Cubao, Manila.

evangelize with the laity and be evangelized by them in their diverse ecological, socio-political, cultural, religious and economical spheres.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Mission as dialogue and encounter became the basis for the Mill Hill Missionaries attitudes in evangelizing the people of Bungoma diocese. This is because the process entails journeying together, mutuality in that one asks his or herself, “What do they have that I can learn from them as a missionary? What I am bringing to them that they do not have?” The core point here is the individual missionaries’ response to those particular socio-cultural situations. This is in line with the spirit of Synod 2021-2023 where all the clergy, laity and religious men and women (the people of God) are invited to journey together right from the grassroots; in their ordinary way of living and working.

The main focus for the Mill Hill Missionaries in their missionary evangelization was first to establish the local church in their mission territories, and not just immediately start recruiting local young men to join the congregation. They really encouraged the local vocation through the establishment of vocational institutes for the clergy and laity in their respective dioceses as articulated in chapter three. This is the reason as to why Mill Hill Missionaries started recruiting Africans very late after the 1988 General Chapter which revolutionized the Society’s missionary attitude from a one-way street to a two-way street, i.e. mutuality of mission. Since the departure of Mill Hill Missionaries’ physical presence in the Catholic diocese of Bungoma, with the last parishes¹⁶⁸ being handed over to the diocese in 2015: We have seen a number of local bishops and clergy, most of them having been nurtured by the pioneer Mill Hill Missionaries, and as well as religious, claiming a voice to partake in the role and place of mission.

¹⁶⁸ St. Cecilia Dahiyo which was under Fr. Martin Rijk, MHM as the parish priest, and St. Cajetan Sirimba under Fr. Harry Linsen, MHM.

Conclusively, mission in a broader sense is perceived as dialogue and encounter from the perspective of “sharing, of learning, of helping, of prodding. Through this, all the incultured churches of the world listen to each other, learn from each, and complement what they possess with what is offered them.”¹⁶⁹ Therefore, the Mill Hill Missionaries wherever they find themselves in mission should always endeavor to incarnate themselves and engage in a heart to heart dialogue amongst themselves and with the natives ranging from children, youths, young adults and old bearing in mind that they are just God’s instruments of loving service. In short, it is only through dialogue and encounter in mission that the other, i.e. the evangelized will feel drawn to God, with their hearts touched¹⁷⁰ thus experiencing an integral transformational encounter as both the missioner and the missioned reach out to each other in a dialectical total self-offering.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. A. BELLAGAMBA, *Mission & Ministry in the Global Church*, 59.

¹⁷⁰ Paraphrased from Tangaza University College Motto which states: “Teaching Minds, Touching Hearts and Transforming Lives.”

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